

Drew nigh. And Damayanti, in her bower,  
 Far off that rattling of the chariot heard,  
 As when at time of rains is heard the voice  
 Of clouds low thundering; and her bosom thrilled  
 At echo of that ringing sound. It came  
 Loud and more loud, like Nala's, when of old,  
 Gripping the reins, he cheered his mares along.  
 It seemed like Nala to the Princess then—  
 That clatter of the trampling of the hoofs;  
 It seemed like Nala to the stabled steeds:  
 Upon the palace-roof the peacocks heard  
 And screamed; the elephants within their stalls  
 Heard it and trumpeted; the coursers, tied;  
 Snorted for joy to hear that leaping car;

Peacocks and elephants and cattle stalled  
 All called and clamored with uplifted heads,  
 As wild things do at noise of coming rain.

Then to herself the Princess spake: "This car,  
 The rolling of it, echoing all around,  
 Gladdens my heart. It must be Nala comes,  
 My King of men! If I see not, this day,  
 My Prince that hath the bright and moon-like face,  
 My hero of unnumbered gifts, my lord,  
 Ah, I shall die! If this day fall I not  
 Into his opening arms—at last, at last—  
 And feel his close embrace, oh, beyond doubt,  
 I cannot live! If—ending all—to-day  
 Nishadha cometh not, with this deep sound  
 Like far-off thunder, then to-night I'll leap  
 Into the golden, flickering, fiery flames!  
 If now, now, now, my lion draws not nigh,  
 My warrior-love, like the wild elephant,  
 My Prince of princes—I shall surely die!  
 Nought call I now to mind he said or did  
 That was not rightly said and justly done.  
 No idle word he spake, even in free speech;  
 Patient and lordly; generous to bestow  
 Beyond all givers; scorning to be base,  
 Yea, even in secret—such Nishadha was.  
 Alas! when, day and night, I think of him,  
 How is my heart consumed, reft of its joy!"



So meditating, like one torn by thoughts,  
She mounted to the palace-roof to see;  
And thence, in the mid-court, the car beheld  
Arriving. Rituparna and Vahûka  
She saw, with Vrishni's son, descend and loose  
The panting horses, wheeling back the car.

Then Rituparna, alighting, sought the King,  
Bhima the Maharaja, far-renowned—  
Whom Bhima with fair courtesies received;  
Since well he deemed such breathless visit made  
With deep cause, knowing not the women's plots.  
“*Swâgatam!*” cried he; “what hath brought thee,  
Prince?”

For nothing wist he that the Raja came  
Suitor of Damayanti. Questioned so,  
This Raja Rituparna, wise and brave,  
Seeing no kings nor princes in the court,  
Nor noise of the Swayamvara, nor crowd  
Of Brâhmanas gathering—weighing all those things,  
Answered in this wise: “I am come, great Lord,  
To make thee salutations!” But the King  
Laughed in his beard at Rituparna's word—  
That this of many weary yojanas  
Should be the mark. “*Ahoswid!* Hath he passed  
Through twenty towns,” thought he, “and hither flown  
To bid good-morrow? Nay, it is not that.  
Good! I shall know it when he bids me know.”

Thereat, with friendly speech his noble guest  
The King to rest dismissed. “Repose thyself,”  
He said; “the road was long; weary thou art.”  
And Rituparna, with sentences of grace  
Replying to this graciousness, was led  
By slaves to the allotted sleeping-room;  
And after Rituparna, Varshneya went.  
Vahûka, left alone, the chariot ran  
Into its shed, and from the foamy steeds  
Unbuckled all the harness, thong by thong,  
Speaking soft words to them; then sat him down,  
Alone, forgotten, on the driving-seat.

But Damayanti, seeing Rituparna,  
And Vrishni's son, and him called Vahûka,



Spake sorrowful: "Whose was the thunder, then,  
Of that fleet car? It seemed like Nala's own;  
Yet here I see no Nala! Hath yon man  
My lord's art learned, or th' other one, that thus  
Their car should thunder as when Nala comes?  
Could Rituparna drive as Nala doth,  
So that those chariot-wheels should sound like his?"  
And, after having pondered (O my King!),  
The beauteous Princess sent her handmaiden  
To Vahûka, that she might question him.

"Go, Keshini," the Princess said; "inquire  
Who is that man upon the driving-seat,  
Misshapen, with the shrunken arm. Approach  
Composedly, question him winningly  
With greetings kind, and bid him answer thee  
According to the truth. I feel at heart  
A doubt—a hope—that this, perchance, may be  
My Lord and Prince; there is some new-born joy  
Fluttering within my breast. Accost him, girl;  
And, ere thou partest, what Parnâda said,  
Say thou, and hear him answer, blameless one,  
And bring it on thy lips!"

Then went the maid  
Demurely, and accosted Vahûka,  
While Damayanti watched them from the roof.

"*Kushalam tē bravîmi*—health and peace  
I wish thee!" said she. "Wilt thou answer true  
What Damayanti asks? She sends to ask  
Whence set ye forth, and wherefore are ye come  
Hither? Vidarbha's Princess fain would know."

"'T was told my Raja," Vahûka replied,  
"That Damayanti for the second turn  
Holds her Swayamvara: the Brâhman's word  
Was, 'This shall be to-morrow.' So he sped,  
Hearing that news, with steeds which in one day  
Fly fifty yojanas, swift as the winds,  
Exceeding fleet. His charioteer am I."

"Who, then," Keshini asked, "is he that rode  
The third? whence cometh he, and what his race?  
And thou thyself whence sprung? and tell me why  
Thou servest thus?"



Then Vahûka replied:—

“Varshneya is the third who rode with us,  
 The famous charioteer of Nala he:  
 When thy Prince fled, he went to Koshala  
 And took our service. I in horse-taming  
 And dressing meat have skill; so am I made  
 King Rituparna’s driver and his cook.”

“Knoweth Varshneya, then, where Nala fled?”  
 Inquired the maid; “and did he tell thee this,  
 Or what spake he?”

“Of that unhappy Prince  
 He brought the children hither, and then went  
 Even where he would, of Nala wotting nought;  
 Nor wotteth any man, fair damsel! more.  
 Hidden from mortal eyes Nishadha lives,  
 Wandering the world, his very body changed.  
 Of Nala only Nala’s own heart knows,  
 And by no sign doth he bewray himself.”

Keshini said: “That Brâhman who did wend  
 First to Ayodhyâ bore a verse to say  
 Over and over, everywhere—strange words,  
 Wove by a woman’s wit. Listen to these:—

‘Whither art thou departed, cruel lover,  
 Who stole the half of thy belovèd’s cloth,  
 And left her to awaken, and discover  
 The wrong thou wroughtest to the love of both?  
 She, as thou didst command, a sad watch keepeth,  
 With woful heart wearing the rended dress.  
 Prince, hear her cry who thus forever weepeth;  
 Be mindful, hero; comfort her distress!’

What was it thou didst utter, hearing this?  
 Some gentle speech! Say it again—the Queen,  
 My peerless mistress, fain would know from me.  
 Nay, on thy faith, when thou didst hear that man,  
 What was it thou replied? She would know.”

(Descendant of the Kurus!) Nala’s heart,  
 While so the maid spoke, well-nigh burst with grief,  
 And from his eyes fast flowed the rolling tears;  
 But, mastering his anguish, holding down  
 The passion of his pain, with voice which strove  
 To speak through sobs, the Prince repeated this:—



“ Even against the ruined, rash, ungrateful,  
 Faithless, fond Prince, from whom the birds did steal  
 His only cloth, whom now a penance fateful  
 Dooms to sad days, that dark-eyed will not feel  
 Anger; for if she saw him she should see  
 A man consumed with grief and loss and shame;  
 Ill or well lodged, ever in misery,  
 Her unthroned lord, a slave without a name.”

Speaking these verses, woful Nala moaned,  
 And, overcome by thought, restrained no more  
 His trickling tears; fast broke they forth (O King!).  
 But Keshini, returning, told his words  
 To Damayanti, and the grief of him.

When Damayanti heard, sore-troubled still,  
 Yet in her heart supposing him her Prince,  
 Again she spake: “ Go, Kashini, and watch  
 Whatever this man doeth; near him stand,  
 Holding thy peace, and mark the ways of him  
 And all his acts, going and coming; note  
 If aught there be of strange in any deed.  
 Let them not give him fire, my girl—not though  
 This hindereth sore; nor water, though he ask  
 Even with beseeching. Afterwards observe,  
 And bring me what befalls, and every sign  
 Of earthly or unearthly power he shows;  
 And whatsoever else Vahûka doth,  
 See it, and say.”

Thereon Keshini sped,  
 Obeying Damayanti and—at hand—  
 Whatever by that horse-tamer was wrought,  
 The damsel watched, and all his ways; and came  
 Back to the Princess, unto whom she told  
 Each thing Vahûka did, as it befell,  
 And what the signs were, and the wondrous works  
 Of earthly and unearthly gifts in him.

“ *Subhê!* ”<sup>5</sup> quoth she, “ the man is magical,  
 But high and holy mannered; never yet  
 Saw I another such, nor heard of him.  
 Passing the low door of the inner court,  
 Where one must stoop, he did not bow his head,

<sup>5</sup> “ O Beautiful One! ”



But as he came the lintel lifted up  
And gave him space. Bhima the King had sent  
Many and diverse meats for Rituparna,  
Of beast and bird and fish—great store of food—  
The which to cleanse some chatties stood hard by,  
All empty; yet he did but look on them,  
Wishful, and lo! the water brimmed the pots.  
Then, having washed the meats, he hastened forth  
In quest of fire, and, holding towards the sun  
A knot of withered grass, the bright flame blazed  
Instant amidst it. Wonderstruck was I  
This miracle to see, and hither ran  
With other strangest marvels to impart:—  
For, Princess, when he touched the blazing grass  
He was not burned, and water flows for him  
At will, or ceases flowing; and this, too,  
The strangest thing of all, did I behold—  
He took some faded leaves and flowers up,  
And idly handled them; but while his hands  
Toyed with them, lo! they blossomed forth again  
With lovelier life than ever, and fresh scent,  
Straight on their stalks. These marvels have I seen,  
And fly back now to tell thee, mistress dear!”

But when she knew such wonders of the man,  
More certainly she deemed those acts and gifts  
Betokened Nala; and so-minded, full  
Of trust to find her lord in Vahûka,  
With happier tears and softening voice she said  
To Keshini: “Speed yet again, my girl;  
And, while he wots not, from the kitchen take  
Meat he hath dressed, and bring it here to me.”  
So went the maid, and, waiting secretly,  
Broke from the mess a morsel, hot and spiced,  
And, bearing it with faithful swiftness, gave  
To Damayanti. She (O Kuru King!)—  
That knew so well the dishes dressed by him—  
Touched, tasted it, and, laughing—weeping—cried,  
Beside herself with joy: “Yes, yes; ’t is he!  
That charioteer is Nala!” then, a-pant,  
Even while she washed her mouth, she bade the maid  
Go with the children twain to Vahûka;



Who, when he saw his little Indrasen  
And Indrasena, started up, and ran,  
And caught, and folded them upon his breast;  
Holding them there, his darlings, each as fair  
As children of the gods. Then, quite undone  
With love and yearning, loudly sobbed the Prince.

Until, perceiving Keshini, who watched,  
Shamed to be known, he set his children down,  
And said: "In sooth, good friend, this lovely pair  
So like mine own are, that at seeing them  
I am surprised into these foolish tears.  
Thou comest here too often; men will think  
Thee light, or me; remember, we are here,  
Strangers and guests, girl! Go thy ways in peace!"

But seeing that great trouble of his soul,  
Lightly came Keshini, and pictured all  
To Damayanti. She, burning to know  
If truly this were Nala, bade the girl  
Seek the Queen's presence, saying thus for her:—  
"Mother! long watching Vahûka, I deem  
The charioteer is Nala. One doubt lives—  
His altered form. I must myself have speech  
With Vahûka; thou, therefore, bid him come,  
Or suffer me to seek him. Be this done  
Forthwith, good mother!—whether known or not  
Unto the Maharaja."

When she heard,  
The Queen told Bhima what the Princess prayed,  
Who gave consent; and having this good leave  
From father and from mother (O my King!),  
Command was sent that Vahûka be brought  
Where the court ladies lodged.

So met those twain;  
And when Prince Nala's gaze fell on his wife,  
He stood with beating heart and tearful eyes.  
And when sweet Damayanti looked on him,  
She could not speak for anguish of keen joy  
To have him close; but sat there, mute and wan,  
Wearing a sad-hued cloth, her lustrous hair  
Falling unbanded, and the mourning-mark  
Stamped in gray ashes on her lovely brow.

And, when she found a voice, these were the words  
 That came from her: "Didst ever, Vahûka—  
 If Vahûka thy name be, as thou say'st—  
 Know one of noble nature, honorable,  
 Who in the wild woods left his wife asleep—  
 His innocent, fond wife—weary and worn?  
 Know'st thou the man. I'll say his name to thee;  
 'Twas Nala, Raja Nala! Ah, and when  
 In any thoughtless hour had I once wrought  
 The smallest wrong, that he should leave me so,  
 There in the wood, by slumber overcome?  
 Before the gods I chose him for my lord,  
 The gods themselves rejecting; tell me how  
 This Prince could so abandon, in her need,  
 His true, his loving wife, she who did bear  
 His babes—abandon her to whom he swore—  
 My hand clasped, in the sight of all the gods,  
 And Agni's self—'Thy true lord I will be!'  
 Thou saidst it!—where is now that promise fled?"

While thus she spake (O Victor of thy foes!),  
 Fast from her eyes the woe-sprung waters ran.  
 And Nala, seeing those night-black, loving eyes  
 Reddened with weeping, seeing her falling tears;  
 Broke forth: "Ah! that I lost my throne and realm  
 In dicing, was not done by fault of mine;  
 'T was Kali wrought it; Kali, O my wife,  
 Drove me to leave thee. Therefore, long ago  
 That evil one was stricken by the curse  
 Which thou didst utter, wandering in the wood,  
 Desolate, night and day, grieving for me.  
 Possessing me he dwelt; but, cursed by thee,  
 Tortured he dwelt, consuming with thy words  
 In fierce and fiercer pain, as when is piled  
 Brand upon burning brand. But he is gone;  
 Patience and penance have o'ermastered him.  
 Princess, the end is reached of our long woes.  
 That evil one being fled, freeing my will,  
 See, I am here; and wherefore would I come,  
 Fairest, except for thee? Yet, answer this:—  
 How should a wife, right-minded to her lord—  
 Her own and lawful lord—compass to choose



Another love, as thou, that tremblest, didst?  
Thy messengers over all regions ran,  
By the King's name proclaiming: ' Bhima's child  
A second husband chooseth for herself,  
Whomso she will—as pleaseth—being free.'  
Those shameless tidings brought the Raja here  
At headlong speed—and me!"

Tenderly smiled

Damayanti through her tears, with quivering lips,  
And joined palms, answering her aggrieved Prince:—  
"Judgest thou me guilty of such a sin?  
When for thy sake I put the gods aside—  
Thee did I choose, Nishadha, my one lord.  
In quest of thee did all those Brāhmans range  
In all ten regions, telling all one tale  
Taught them by me; and so Parnâda came  
To Koshala, where Rituparna dwells,  
And found thee in his house, and spake to thee  
Those words, and had thy gentle answer back.  
Mine the device was, Prince, to bring thee quick;  
For well I wist no man in all this world  
Could in one day the fleetest coursers urge  
So many yojanas, save thou, dear Prince!  
I touch thy feet, and tell thee this in truth;  
And true it is that never any wrong  
Against thee, even in fancy, have I dreamed.  
Witness for me, as I am loyal and pure,  
The ever-shifting, all-beholding Air,  
Who wanders o'er the earth; let him withdraw  
My breath and slay me, if I sinned in aught!  
Witness for me, yon golden Sun who goes  
With bright eye over us; let him withhold  
Warm life and kill me, if I sinned in aught!  
Witness for me the white Moon, whose pale spell  
Lies on all flesh and spirit; let that orb  
Deny me peace and end me, if I sinned!  
These be the watchers and the testifiers,  
The three chief gods that rule the three wide worlds;  
I cry unto them; let them speak for me;  
And thou shalt hear them answer for my faith,  
Or once again, this day, abandon me."



Then Vayu showed—the all-enfolding Air—  
And spake: “Not one wrong hath she wrought thee,  
Prince,

I tell thee sooth. The treasure of her truth  
Faultless and undefiled she hath kept  
By us regarded, and sustained by us,  
These many days. Her tender plot it was,  
Planned for thy sake, which brought thee; since who else  
Could in one day drive threescore yojanas?  
Nala, thou hast thy noble wife again;  
Thou, Damayanti, hast thy Nala back.  
Away with doubting; take her to thy breast,  
Thrice happy Prince!”

And while God Vayu spake,  
Look! there showered flowers down out of the sky<sup>6</sup>  
Upon them; and the drums of heaven beat  
Beautiful music, and a gentle wind,  
Fragrant, propitious, floated, kissing them.  
But Nala, when he saw these things befall—  
Wonderful, gracious—when he heard that voice  
Called the great snake to memory:—whereupon  
His proper self returned. Bhima's fair child  
Divinely sounding (Lord of Bhārat's line!)—  
Yielded all doubt of his delightful Love.  
Then cast he round about his neck the cloth—  
Unstained by earth, enchanted—and (O King!)  
Saw her dear lord his beauteous form resume.  
“Ah, Nala! Nala!” cried she, while her arms  
Clasped him and clung; and Nala to his heart  
Pressed that bright lady, glowing, as of old,  
With princely majesty. Their children twain  
Next he caressed; while she—at happy peace—  
Her beautiful glad face laid on his breast,  
Sighing with too much joy. And Nala stood  
A great space silent, gazing on her face,  
Sorrow-stamped yet, her long, deep-lidded eyes,  
Her melting smile—himself 'twixt joy and woe.  
Afterwards, all that story of the Prince,  
And all of Damayanti, Bhima's Queen

<sup>6</sup> This raining down of heavenly flowers on auspicious occasions is a frequent incident in ancient Indian poetry.



Told to the Maharaja joyously.

And Bhima said: "To-morrow will I see—  
 When Nala hath his needful offerings made—  
 Our daughter and this wandering lord well knit."

But all that night they sat, hand clasped in hand,  
 Rejoicing, and relating what befell  
 In the wild wood, and of the woful times.

That night being spent, Prince Nala in his state  
 Led forth Vidarbha's Pride before the court.  
 And Bhima—in an hour found fortunate—  
 Re-wed those married lovers. Dutifully  
 Nala paid homage to the Maharaja,  
 And reverently did Damayanti bow  
 Before her father. He the Prince received  
 With grace and gladness, as a son restored,  
 Making fair welcome, and with words of praise  
 Exalting Damayanti, tried and true;  
 Which in all dignity Prince Nala took,  
 Returning, as was meet, words honorable.  
 Therewith unto the city spread the noise  
 Of that rejoicing. All the townspeople,  
 Learning of Nala joyously returned,  
 Made all their quarters gay with float of flags,  
 Flutter of cloths, and garlands; sprinkled free  
 The King's-ways with fresh water, and the cups  
 Of fragrant flowers; and hung long wreaths of flowers.  
 From door to door the white street-fronts before;  
 And decked each temple-porch, and went about  
 The altar-gods.  
 And afterwards, in Bhima's royal house  
 Serenely dwelled the Princess and the Prince,  
 Each making for the other peaceful joy.  
 So in the fourth year Nala was rejoined  
 To Damayanti, comforted and free,  
 Restful, attained, tasting delights again.  
 Also the glad Princess, gaining her lord,  
 Laid sorrows by, and blossomed forth anew,  
 As doth the laughing earth when the rain falls,  
 And brings her unseen, waiting wonders forth  
 Of blade and flower and fruit. The ache was gone,  
 The loneliness and load. Heart-full of ease,



Lovelier she grew and brighter, like the moon  
Mounting at midnight in the cloudless blue.

When Rituparna heard  
How Vahûka is Nala in disguise,  
And of the meeting, right rejoiced at heart  
That Raja grew. And, being softly prayed  
By Nala favorable thought, the King  
Made royal and gentle answer, with like grace  
By Nala met. To whom spake Rituparna:—  
“Joy go with thee and her, happily joined.  
But say, Nishadha, wrought I any jot  
Wrongful to thee, whilst sojourning unknown  
Within my walls? If any word or deed,  
Purposed or purposeless, hath vexed thee, friend,  
For one and all thy pardon grant to me!”

And Nala answered: “Never act or word,  
The smallest, Raja, lingers to excuse!  
If this were otherwise, thy slave was I,  
And might not question, but must pardon thee.  
Yet good to me thou wert, princely and just,  
And kind thou art; and friendly from this time  
Deign thou to be. Happily was I lodged,  
Well-tended, well-befriended in thy house;  
In mine own palace never better stead.  
The skill in steeds which pleased thee, that is mine,  
And, Raja, I will give it all to thee,  
If thou art minded.”

So Nishadha gave  
All his great gift in horses to the King,  
Who learned each rule approved, and ordinance;  
And, having all this knowledge, gave in turn  
His deepest lore of numbers and the dice  
To Nala, afterwards departing home  
To his own place, another charioteer  
Driving his steeds; and, Rituparna gone,  
Not long did Nala dwell in Bhima's town.

When one moon he had tarried, taking leave,  
Nishadha to his city started forth  
With chosen train. A shining car he drove;  
And elephants sixteen, and fifty horse,  
And footmen thirty-score came in the rear.



Swiftly did Nala journey, making earth  
Quake 'neath his flying car; and wrathfully  
With quick steps entered he his palace doors.  
The son of Virasena, Nala, stood  
Once more before that gamester Pushkara!  
Spake he: "Play yet again; much wealth is mine,  
And that, and all I have—yea, my Princess—  
Set I for stakes: set thou this realm, and throw!  
My mind is fixed a second chance to try,  
Where, Pushkara, we will play for all or none.  
Who wins his throne and treasures from a prince,  
Must stand the hazard of the counter-cast—  
This is the accepted law. If thou dost blench,  
The next game we will play is 'life or death,'  
In chariot-fight; when, or of thee or me  
One shall lie satisfied: 'Descended realms,  
By whatsoever means, are to be sought,'  
The sages say, 'by whatsoever won.'  
Choose, therefore, Pushkara, which way of these  
Shall please thee; either meet me with the dice,  
Or with thy bow confront me in the field."

When Pushkara this heard, lightly he smiled,  
Concluding victory sure; and to the Prince  
Answered, exulting: "*Dishtya!* hast thou gained  
Stakes for a counter-game, Nishadha, now?  
*Dishtya!* shall I have my hard-won prize,  
Sweet Damayanti? *Dishtya!* didst thou come  
In kissing-reach again of thy fair wife?  
Soon, in thy new gold splendid, she shall shine  
Before all men beside me, as in heaven  
On Sakra waits the loveliest Apsarâ.  
See, now, I thought on thee, I looked for thee,  
Ever and ever, Prince. There is no joy  
Like casting in the game with such as thee.  
And when to-day I win thy blameless one—  
The smooth-limbed Damayanti—then shall be  
What was to be: and I can rest content,  
For always in my heart her beauty burns."

Listening the idle talk that babbler poured,  
Angry Prince Nala fain had lopped away  
His head with vengeful *khudga*;<sup>7</sup> but, unmoved,

<sup>7</sup> A short, broad-bladed sword.





Albeit the wrath blazed in his bloodshot eyes,  
He made reply: "Play! mock me not with jests;  
Thou wilt not jest when I have cast with thee!"

So was the game set, and the Princes threw  
Nala and Pushkara, and—the numbers named—  
By Nala was the hazard gained: he swept  
His brother's stake, gems, treasure, kingdom, off;  
At one stroke all that mighty venture won.

Then quoth the conquering Prince to Pushkara,  
Scornfully smiling: "Mine is now once more  
Nishadha's throne; mine is the realm again,  
Its curse plucked forth; Vidarbha's glory thou,  
Outcast, shalt ne'er so much as look upon!  
Fool! who to-day becom'st her bond and slave.  
Not by thy gifts that evil stroke was wrought  
Wherefrom I fled before; 't was Kali's spell—  
Albeit thou knew'st nought, fool—o'ermastered me;  
Yet will I visit not in wrathful wise

My wrong on thee; live as thou wilt; I grant  
Wherewith to live, and set apart henceforth  
Thy proper goods and substance, and fit food.  
Nay, doubt not I shall show thee favor, too,  
And be in friendship with thee, if thou wilt,  
Who art my brother. Peace abide with thee!"

Thus all-victorious Nala comforted  
His brother, and embraced him, sending him  
In honor to his town; and Pushkara—  
Gently entreated—to Nishadha spake,  
With folded palms and humbled face, these words:—  
"Unending be thy glory. May thy bliss  
Last and increase for twice five thousand years,  
Who grantest me wherewith to live, just Lord!  
And where to dwell." Thereafter, well bested,  
Pushkara sojourned with the Prince one moon;  
So to his town departed—heart-content—  
With slaves and foot-soldiers and followers,  
Gay as a rising sun (O Bhârat's glory!).  
Thus sent he Pushkara, rich and safe, away.  
Then, with flags and drums and jewels, robed and royally  
arrayed,  
Nala into fair Nishadha entry high and dazzling made;





At the gates the Raja, halting, spake his people words of love;  
Gathered were they from the city, gathered from the field and grove;  
From the mountain and the maidan, all a-thrill with joy to see  
Nala come to guard his children. "Happy now our days will be,"  
Said the townsfolk, said the elders, said the villagers, "O King!"  
Standing all with palms upfolded: "Peace and fortune thou wilt bring  
To thy city, to thy country! Boundless welcome do we give,  
As the gods in heaven to Indra, when with them he comes to live."  
After, when the show was ended, and the city, calm and glad,  
Rest from tumult of rejoicing and rich flood of feasting had,  
Girt with shining squadrons, Nala fetched his pearl of women home.  
Like a queen did Damayanti back unto her palace come,  
By the Maharaja Bhima, by that mighty monarch sent Royally, with countless blessings, to her kingdom, in content.  
There, beside his peerless Princess, and his children, bore he sway,  
Godlike, even as Indra ruling 'mid the bliss of Nandana.<sup>8</sup>  
Bore he sway—my noble Nala—princeliest of all lords—who reign  
In the lands of Jambudwipa;<sup>9</sup> winning power and fame again;  
Ruling well his realm reconquered, like a just and perfect king,  
All the appointed gifts bestowing, all the rites remembering.

<sup>8</sup> Nandana is the Paradise of Indra.

<sup>9</sup> Ancient name of India: "The Land of the Rose-apple Tree."



CSL

## CHOICE EXAMPLES OF BOOK ILLUMINATION.

Fac-similes from Illuminated Manuscripts and Illustrated Books  
of Early Date.

### *PAGE FROM THE PRAYER-BOOK OF JUANA OF CASTILE.*


This page from the prayer-book of the Castilian princess is a specimen of the finest work of the illuminator. It was executed by Gherart David, of Bruges, near the end of the fifteenth century.





Et in carceribus  
semper do  
mine intellige  
intellige clamo  
rem meum

intende uo

orationis mee: rex meus & dominus.  
 Omne ne in furore tuo arguas  
 me: neque in ira tua corripas me.

**I**ferre mei domine quoniam  
 in firmus sum sana me domine  
 quoniam conturbata sunt ossa  
 anima mea tur mei.

data est ualde. 13 tu dñe. usq; quo.  
**C**onuertere domine et eripe ani  
 mam meam saluum me fac prop  
 ter misericordiam tuam

**R**espice domine & exaudime.  
Domine deus meus.



CSL<sup>65</sup>

SELECTIONS FROM THE RĀMĀYANA

—

BY

VĀLMĪKI

[*Metrical translation by R. T. H. Griffiths*]



## INTRODUCTION

THE ideas of the human family are few, as is apparent from the study of the literature of widely different nations. Thus the "Rámáyana" ranks in Hindoo with the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" in Greek literature. The character of Ráma corresponds with that of Menelaus, for both the European and the Asiatic heroes have had their wives carried off from them—although Sítá, the bride of Ráma, is chaste as an icicle from Diana's temple, while Helen is the infamous type of wanton wives, ancient and modern. The Hindoo Lanka is Troy, and Ayódhyá is Sparta. The material civilization of the cities in the Hindoo epic is more luxurious and gorgeous than that which Homer attributes to Greece in the heroic age. Such splendor and refinement as invests social life at Lanka and Ayodhyá never appear amid the severe simplicity of Argos or Troy. The moral tone seems perhaps higher in India than in Greece during the periods described in their several epics—at least as far as mutual love and forbearance go—and the ideas of marriage and conjugal fidelity are equally exalted.

As to the literary quality of the Hindoo epic in comparison with Homer's work, we are at once impressed with the immense superiority of the Greek poem in artistic proportion, point, and precision. The Hindoo poet flounders along, amid a maze of prolix description and wearisome simile. Trifles are amplified and repeated, and the whole poem resembles a wild forest abounding in rich tropical vegetation, palms and flowers, but without paths, roads, or limits. Or rather, we are reminded of one of the highly painted and richly decorated idols of India, with their many heads and many hands: but when we turn to the Greek epic we stand before a statue of pure outline, flawless proportions, and more than human beauty.

It is difficult to fix the date of the "Rámáyana." Scholars



generally agree that it belongs to the third century before Christ, in its original form, but that some recent portions were added even during the Christian era. It is reckoned as one of the sacred books, and the study of it is supposed to bring forgiveness of sin, and prosperity. Its author is thought to have been the famous poet Válmíki, but the work has evidently been rehandled several times, and there are three versions of the poems still extant. The poem consists of twenty-four thousand verses, and the story of it—now overlaid as it is with extravagant and fabulous accretions—is evidently founded on fact. The scene of the poem is laid in the city of Ayodhyá, the modern Oudh, which is described in glowing colors as a place of health, beauty, and prosperity—

“In by-gone ages built and planned  
By sainted Manu’s princely hand.”

In the splendid palace of the Rajah, at Oudh, lives Daśaratha, mourning in childlessness. He is one of the princes descended from the sun, and his line now threatens to become extinct. He determines to appeal to the Gods by the Asva-medha, the great sacrifice in which a horse is the victim. The rites accordingly are performed with unparalleled magnificence, and, at the close of the ceremony, the high priest declares to the king—

“Four sons, O Monarch, shall be thine,  
Upholders of the royal line.”

Among the offspring duly granted to Daśaratha is Ráma, who is a typical Hindoo of the heroic type. His fair wife, Sítá, is carried off by the demon Ravana, who had assumed the form of a humble priest, or ascetic, in order to gain access to her. He carries her in his chariot to Lanka, the fair city built on an island of the sea. By the assistance of a large army of monkeys, Ráma marches against Lanka, and when they stand helpless—for the water separates them from Ceylon—he then invokes the goddess of the sea, as Achilles did Thetis, and she comes in radiant beauty, telling them how to bridge the waves. The monkeys bring timber and stones, the bridge is built, Lanka reached, and the battle begins. Indra sends his own chariot down from heaven to Ráma, who mounts it, and vanquishes Ravana in single combat, upon which Sítá is restored to her husband.

E. W.



# THE RÁMÁYANA

## INVOCATION

PRAISE to Válmiiki, bird of charming song,  
Who mounts on Poesy's sublimest spray,  
And sweetly sings with accent clear and strong  
Ráma, aye Ráma, in his deathless lay.

Where breathes the man can listen to the strain  
That flows in music from Válmiiki's tongue,  
Nor feel his feet the path of bliss attain  
When Ráma's glory by the saint is sung?

The stream Rámáyan leaves its sacred fount  
The whole wide world from sin and stain to free.  
The Prince of Hermits is the parent mount,  
The lordly Ráma is the darling sea.

Glory to him whose fame is ever bright!  
Glory to him, Prachet's holy son!  
Whose pure lips quaff with ever-new delight  
The nectar-sea of deeds by Ráma done.

Hail, arch-ascetic, pious, good, and kind!  
Hail, Saint Válmiiki, lord of every lore!  
Hail, holy Hermit, calm and pure of mind!  
Hail, First of Bards, Válmiiki, hail once more!

## BOOK I

### CANTO I

NÁRAD

*Om.*

TO sainted Nárad, prince of those  
Whose lore in words of wisdom flows,  
Whose constant care and chief delight  
Were Scripture and ascetic rite,  
The good Válmíki, first and best  
Of hermit saints, these words addressed:—  
“In all this world, I pray thee, who  
Is virtuous, heroic, true?  
Firm in his vows, of grateful mind,  
To every creature good and kind?  
Bounteous, and holy, just, and wise,  
Alone most fair to all men’s eyes?  
Devoid of envy, firm, and sage,  
Whose tranquil soul ne’er yields to rage?  
Whom, when his warrior wrath is high,  
Do Gods embattled fear and fly?  
Whose noble might and gentle skill  
The triple world can guard from ill?  
Who is the best of princes, he  
Who loves his people’s good to see?  
The store of bliss, the living mine  
Where brightest joys and virtues shine?  
Queen Fortune’s best and dearest friend,  
Whose steps her choicest gifts attend?  
Who may with Sun and Moon compare,  
With Indra, Vishnu, Fire, and Air?



Grant, Saint divine, the boon I ask,  
 For thee, I ween, an easy task,  
 To whom the power is given to know  
 If such a man breathe here below."

Then Nárada, clear before whose eye  
 The present, past, and future lie,  
 Made ready answer: "Hermit, where  
 Are graces found so high and rare?  
 Yet listen, and my tongue shall tell  
 In whom alone these virtues dwell.  
 From old Ikshváku's line he came,  
 Known to the world by Ráma's name:—  
 With soul subdued, a chief of might,  
 In Scripture versed, in glory bright.  
 His steps in virtue's paths are bent,  
 Obedient, pure, and eloquent.  
 In each emprise he wins success,  
 And dying foes his power confess.  
 Tall and broad-shouldered, strong of limb,  
 Fortune has set her mark on him.  
 Graced with a conch-shell's triple line,  
 His throat displays the auspicious sign.  
 High destiny is clear impressed  
 On massive jaw and ample chest.  
 His mighty shafts he truly aims,  
 And foemen in the battle tames.  
 Deep in the muscle, scarcely shown,  
 Embedded lies his collar-bone.  
 His lordly steps are firm and free,  
 His strong arms reach below his knee;  
 All fairest graces join to deck  
 His head, his brow, his stately neck,  
 And limbs in fair proportion set:—  
 The manliest form e'er fashioned yet.  
 Graced with each high imperial mark,  
 His skin is soft and lustrous dark.  
 Large are his eyes that sweetly shine  
 With majesty almost divine.  
 His plighted word he ne'er forgets;  
 On erring sense a watch he sets.

By nature wise, his teacher's skill  
Has trained him to subdue his will.  
Good, resolute and pure, and strong,  
He guards mankind from scathe and wrong,  
And lends his aid, and ne'er in vain,  
The cause of justice to maintain.  
Well has he studied o'er and o'er  
The Vedas and their kindred lore.  
Well skilled is he the bow to draw,  
Well trained in arts and versed in law;  
High-souled and meet for happy fate,  
Most tender and compassionate;  
The noblest of all lordly givers,  
Whom good men follow, as the rivers  
Follow the King of Floods, the sea:—  
So liberal, so just is he.  
The joy of Queen Kauśalyá's heart,  
In every virtue he has part;  
Firm as Himálaya's snowy steep,  
Unfathomed like the mighty deep;  
The peer of Vishnu's power and might,  
And lovely as the Lord of Night;  
Patient as Earth, but, roused to ire,  
Fierce as the world-destroying fire;  
In bounty like the Lord of Gold,  
And Justice' self in human mould.  
With him, his best and eldest son,  
By all his princely virtues won  
King Daśaratha willed to share  
His kingdom as the Regent Heir.  
But when Kaikeyí, youngest queen,  
With eyes of envious hate had seen  
The solemn pomp and regal state  
Prepared the prince to consecrate,  
She bade the hapless king bestow  
Two gifts he promised long ago,  
That Rāma to the woods should flee,  
And that her child the heir should be.

By chains of duty firmly tied,  
The wretched King perforce complied.



Ráma, to please Kaikeyí went  
 Obedient forth, to banishment.  
 Then Lakshman's truth was nobly shown,  
 Then were his love and courage known,  
 When for his brother's sake he dared  
 All perils, and his exile shared.  
 And Sítá, Ráma's darling wife,  
 Loved even as he loved his life,  
 Whom happy marks combined to bless,  
 A miracle of loveliness,  
 Of Janak's royal lineage sprung,  
 Most excellent of women, clung  
 To her dear lord, like Rohiní  
 Rejoicing with the Moon to be.  
 The King and people, sad of mood,  
 The hero's car awhile pursued.  
 But when Prince Ráma lighted down  
 At Śringavera's pleasant town,  
 Where Gangá's holy waters flow,  
 He bade his driver turn and go.  
 Guha, Nishádas' King, he met,  
 And on the farther bank was set.  
 Then on from wood to wood they strayed,  
 O'er many a stream, through constant shade,  
 As Bharadvája bade them, till  
 They came to Chitrakúta's hill.  
 And Ráma there, with Lakshman's aid,  
 A pleasant little cottage made,  
 And spent his days with Sítá, dressed  
 In coat of bark and deerskin vest.  
 And Chitrakúta grew to be  
 As bright with those illustrious three  
 As Meru's sacred peaks that shine  
 With glory, when the Gods recline  
 Beneath them: Siva's self between  
 The Lord of Gold and Beauty's Queen.

The aged King for Ráma pined,  
 And for the skies the earth resigned.  
 Bharat, his son, refused to reign,  
 Though urged by all the twice-born train.



Forth to the woods he fared to meet  
His brother, fell before his feet,  
And cried "Thy claim all men allow :—  
O come, our lord and King be thou."  
But Ráma nobly chose to be  
Observant of his sire's decree.  
He placed his sandals in his hand,  
A pledge that he would rule the land :—  
And bade his brother turn again.  
Then Bharat, finding prayer was vain,  
The sandals took and went away ;  
Nor in Ayodhyá would he stay,  
But turned to Nandigráma, where  
He ruled the realm with watchful care,  
Still longing eagerly to learn  
Tidings of Ráma's safe return.

Then lest the people should repeat  
Their visit to his calm retreat,  
Away from Chitrakúta's hill  
Fared Ráma, ever onward till  
Beneath the shady trees he stood  
Of Dandaká's primeval wood.  
Virádha, giant fiend, he slew,  
And then Agastya's friendship knew.  
Counselled by him he gained the sword  
And bow of Indra, heavenly lord :—  
A pair of quivers too, that bore  
Of arrows an exhaustless store.  
While there he dwelt in greenwood shade,  
The trembling hermits sought his aid,  
And bade him with his sword and bow  
Destroy the fiends who worked them woe :—  
To come like Indra strong and brave,  
A guardian God to help and save.  
And Ráma's falchion left its trace  
Deep cut on Śúrpanakhá's face :—  
A hideous giantess who came  
Burning for him with lawless flame.  
Their sister's cries the giants heard,  
And vengeance in each bosom stirred ;



The monster of the triple head,  
And Dúshan to the contest sped.  
But they and myriad fiends beside  
Beneath the might of Ráma died.

When Rávan, dreaded warrior, knew  
The slaughter of his giant crew—  
Rávan, the King, whose name of fear  
Earth, hell, and heaven all shook to hear—  
He bade the fiend Márícha aid  
The vengeful plot his fury laid.  
In vain the wise Márícha tried  
To turn him from his course aside:—  
Not Rávan's self, he said, might hope  
With Ráma and his strength to cope.  
Impelled by fate and blind with rage  
He came to Ráma's hermitage.  
There, by Márícha's magic art,  
He wiled the princely youths apart,  
The vulture slew, and bore away  
The wife of Ráma as his prey.  
The son of Raghu came and found  
Jatáyu slain upon the ground.  
He rushed within his leafy cot;  
He sought his wife, but found her not.  
Then, then the hero's senses failed;  
In mad despair he wept and wailed.  
Upon the pile that bird he laid,  
And still in quest of Sítá strayed.  
A hideous giant then he saw,  
Kabandha named, a shape of awe.

The monstrous fiend he smote and slew,  
And in the flame the body threw;  
When straight from out the funeral flame  
In lovely form Kabandha came,  
And bade him seek in his distress  
A wise and holy hermitess.  
By counsel of this saintly dame  
To Pampá's pleasant flood he came,



And there the steadfast friendship won  
Of Hanumán the Wind-God's son.  
Counselled by him he told his grief  
To great Sugriva, Vánar chief,  
Who, knowing all the tale, before  
The sacred flame alliance swore.  
Sugriva to his new-found friend  
Told his own story to the end:—  
His hate of Báli for the wrong  
And insult he had borne so long.  
And Ráma lent a willing ear  
And promised to allay his fear.  
Sugriva warned him of the might  
Of Báli, matchless in the fight,  
And, credence for his tale to gain,  
Showed the huge fiend by Báli slain.  
The prostrate corse of mountain size  
Seemed nothing in the hero's eyes;  
He lightly kicked it, as it lay,  
And cast it twenty leagues away.  
To prove his might his arrows through  
Seven palms in line, uninjured, flew.  
He cleft a mighty hill apart,  
And down to hell he hurled his dart.  
Then high Sugriva's spirit rose,  
Assured of conquest o'er his foes.  
With his new champion by his side  
To vast Kishkindhá's cave he hied.  
Then, summoned by his awful shout,  
King Báli came in fury out,  
First comforted his trembling wife,  
Then sought Sugriva in the strife.  
One shaft from Ráma's deadly bow  
The monarch in the dust laid low.  
Then Ráma bade Sugriva reign  
In place of royal Báli slain.  
Then speedy envoys hurried forth  
Eastward and westward, south and north,  
Commanded by the grateful King  
Tidings of Ráma's spouse to bring.



Then by Sampáti's counsel led,  
Brave Hanumán, who mocked at dread,  
Sprang at one wild tremendous leap  
Two hundred leagues, across the deep.  
To Lanká's \* town he urged his way,  
Where Rávan held his royal sway.  
There pensive 'neath Aśoka boughs  
He found poor Sítá, Ráma's spouse.  
He gave the hapless girl a ring,  
A token from her lord and King.  
A pledge from her fair hand he bore;  
Then battered down the garden door.  
Five captains of the host he slew,  
Seven sons of councillors o'erthrew;  
Crushed youthful Aksha on the field,  
Then to his captors chose to yield.  
Soon from their bonds his limbs were free,  
But honoring the high decree  
Which Brahmá had pronounced of yore,  
He calmly all their insults bore.  
The town he burnt with hostile flame,  
And spoke again with Ráma's dame,  
Then swiftly back to Ráma flew  
With tidings of the interview.

Then with Sugriva for his guide,  
Came Ráma to the ocean side.  
He smote the sea with shafts as bright  
As sunbeams in their summer height,  
And quick appeared the River's King  
Obedient to the summoning.  
A bridge was thrown by Nala o'er  
The narrow sea from shore to shore.  
They crossed to Lanká's golden town,  
Where Ráma's hand smote Rávan down.  
Vibhíshan there was left to reign  
Over his brother's wide domain.  
To meet her husband Sítá came;  
But Ráma, stung with ire and shame,  
With bitter words his wife addressed  
Before the crowd that round her pressed.

\* Ceylon.



But Sítá, touched with noble ire,  
Gave her fair body to the fire.  
Then straight the God of Wind appeared,  
And words from heaven her honor cleared.  
And Rāma clasped his wife again,  
Uninjured, pure from spot and stain,  
Obedient to the Lord of Fire  
And the high mandate of his sire.  
Led by the Lord who rules the sky,  
The Gods and heavenly saints drew nigh,  
And honored him with worthy meed,  
Rejoicing in each glorious deed.  
His task achieved, his foe removed,  
He triumphed, by the Gods approved.  
By grace of Heaven he raised to life  
The chieftains slain in mortal strife;  
Then in the magic chariot through  
The clouds to Nandigrāma flew.  
Met by his faithful brothers there,  
He loosed his votive coil of hair;  
Thence fair Ayodhyá's town he gained,  
And o'er his father's kingdom reigned.  
Disease or famine ne'er oppressed  
His happy people, richly blest  
With all the joys of ample wealth,  
Of sweet content and perfect health.  
No widow mourned her well-loved mate,  
No sire his son's untimely fate.  
They feared not storm or robber's hand,  
No fire or flood laid waste the land:  
The Golden Age seemed come again  
To bless the days of Rāma's reign.  
From him the great and glorious King,  
Shall many a princely scion spring.  
And he shall rule, beloved by men,  
Ten thousand years and hundreds ten,  
And when his life on earth is past  
To Brahmá's world shall go at last.

Whoe'er this noble poem reads  
That tells the tale of Rāma's deeds,



Good as the Scriptures, he shall be  
From every sin and blemish free.  
Whoever reads the saving strain,  
With all his kin the heavens shall gain.  
Bráhmans who read shall gather hence  
The highest praise for eloquence.  
The warrior, o'er the land shall reign,  
The merchant, luck in trade obtain;  
And Súdras, listening, ne'er shall fail  
To reap advantage from the tale.

[*Cantos II., III., IV., and V. are omitted.*]



## CANTO VI

## THE KING

THERE reigned a King of name revered,  
To country and to town endeared,  
Great Daśaratha, good and sage,  
Well read in Scripture's holy page:  
Upon his kingdom's weal intent,  
Mighty and brave and provident;  
The pride of old Ikshváku's seed  
For lofty thought and righteous deed.  
Peer of the saints, for virtues famed,  
For foes subdued and passions tamed;  
A rival in his wealth untold  
Of Indra and the Lord of Gold.  
Like Manu first of kings, he reigned,  
And worthily his state maintained.  
For firm and just and ever true  
Love, duty, gain, he kept in view,  
And ruled his city rich and free,  
Like Indra's Amarāvati.  
And worthy of so fair a place  
There dwelt a just and happy race  
With troops of children blest.  
Each man contented sought no more,  
Nor longed with envy for the store  
By richer friends possessed.  
For poverty was there unknown,  
And each man counted as his own  
Kine, steeds, and gold, and grain.  
All dressed in raiment bright and clean,  
And every townsman might be seen  
With ear-rings, wreath or chain.  
None deigned to feed on broken fare,  
And none was false or stingy there.



A piece of gold, the smallest pay,  
Was earned by labor for a day.  
On every arm were bracelets worn,  
And none was faithless or forsworn,  
A braggart or unkind.  
None lived upon another's wealth,  
None pined with dread or broken health,  
Or dark disease of mind.  
High-souled were all. The slanderous word,  
The boastful lie, were never heard.  
Each man was constant to his vows,  
And lived devoted to his spouse.  
No other love his fancy knew,  
And she was tender, kind, and true.  
Her dames were fair of form and face,  
With charm of wit and gentle grace,  
With modest raiment simply neat,  
And winning manners soft and sweet.  
The twice-born sages, whose delight  
Was Scripture's page and holy rite,  
Their calm and settled course pursued,  
Nor sought the menial multitude.  
In many a Scripture each was versed,  
And each the flame of worship nursed,  
And gave with lavish hand.  
Each paid to Heaven the offerings due,  
And none was godless or untrue  
In all that holy band.  
To Bráhmans, as the laws ordain,  
The Warrior caste were ever fain  
The reverence due to pay;  
And these the Vaiśyas' peaceful crowd,  
Who trade and toil for gain, were proud  
To honor and obey;  
And all were by the Śúdras served,  
Who never from their duty swerved.  
Their proper worship all addressed  
To Bráhman, spirits, God, and guest.  
Pure and unmixt their rites remained,  
Their race's honor ne'er was stained.  
Cheered by his grandsons, sons, and wife,  
Each passed a long and happy life.

Thus was that famous city held  
By one who all his race excelled,  
Blest in his gentle reign,  
As the whole land aforetime swayed  
By Manu, prince of men, obeyed  
Her king from main to main.  
And heroes kept her, strong and brave,  
As lions guard their mountain cave;  
Fierce as devouring flame they burned,  
And fought till death, but never turned.  
Horses had she of noblest breed,  
Like Indra's for their form and speed,  
From Váhli's hills and Sindhu's sand,  
Vanáyu and Kámboja's land.  
Her noble elephants had strayed  
Through Vindhyan and Himálayan shade,  
Gigantic in their bulk and height,  
Yet gentle in their matchless might.  
They rivalled well the world-spread fame  
Of the great stock from which they came,  
Of Váman, vast of size,  
Of Mahápadma's glorious line,  
Thine, Anjan, and, Airávat, thine,  
Upholders of the skies.  
With those, enrolled in fourfold class,  
Who all their mighty kin surpass,  
Whom men Matangas name,  
And Mrigas spotted black and white,  
And Bhadras of unwearied might,  
And Mandras hard to tame.  
Thus, worthy of the name she bore,  
Ayodhyá for a league or more  
Cast a bright glory round,  
Where Daśaratha wise and great  
Governed his fair ancestral state,  
With every virtue crowned.  
Like Indra in the skies he reigned  
In that good town whose wall contained  
High domes and turrets proud,  
With gates and arcs of triumph decked,  
And sturdy barriers to protect  
Her gay and countless crowd.



## CANTO VII

### THE MINISTERS

TWO sages, holy saints, had he,  
His ministers and priests to be:—  
Vaśishtha, faithful to advise,  
And Vāmadeva, Scripture-wise.  
Eight other lords around him stood,  
All skilled to counsel, wise and good:—  
Jayanta, Vijay, Dhrishti bold  
In fight, affairs of war controlled;  
Siddhārth and Arthasádhak true  
Watched o'er expense and revenue,  
And Dharmapál and wise Aśok  
Of right and law and justice spoke.  
With these the sage Sumantra, skilled  
To urge the car, high station filled.  
All these in knowledge duly trained  
Each passion and each sense restrained:—  
With modest manners, nobly bred,  
Each plan and nod and look they read,  
Upon their neighbors' good intent,  
Most active and benevolent;  
As sits the Vasus round their King,  
They sate around him counselling.  
They ne'er in virtue's loftier pride  
Another's lowly gifts decried.  
In fair and seemly garb arrayed,  
No weak uncertain plans they made.  
Well skilled in business, fair and just,  
They gained the people's love and trust,  
And thus without oppression stored  
The swelling treasury of their lord.

Bound in sweet friendship each to each,  
They spoke kind thoughts in gentle speech.  
They looked alike with equal eye  
On every caste, on low and high.  
Devoted to their King, they sought,  
Ere his tongue spoke, to learn his thought,  
And knew, as each occasion rose,  
To hide their counsel or disclose.  
In foreign lands or in their own  
Whatever passed, to them was known.  
By secret spies they timely knew  
What men were doing or would do.  
Skilled in the grounds of war and peace  
They saw the monarch's state increase,  
Watching his weal with conquering eye  
That never let occasion by,  
While nature lent her aid to bless  
Their labors with unbought success.  
Never for anger, lust, or gain,  
Would they their lips with falsehood stain.  
Inclined to mercy they could scan  
The weakness and the strength of man.  
They fairly judged both high and low,  
And ne'er would wrong a guiltless foe;  
Yet if a fault were proved, each one  
Would punish e'en his own dear son.  
But there and in the kingdom's bound  
No thief or man impure was found:—  
None of loose life or evil fame,  
No tempter of another's dame.  
Contented with their lot each caste  
Calm days in blissful quiet passed;  
And, all in fitting tasks employed,  
Country and town deep rest enjoyed.  
With these wise lords around his throne  
The monarch justly reigned,  
And making every heart his own  
The love of all men gained.  
With trusty agents, as beseems,  
Each distant realm he scanned,  
As the sun visits with his beams



Each corner of the land.  
Ne'er would he on a mightier foe  
With hostile troops advance,  
Nor at an equal strike a blow  
In war's delusive chance.  
These lords in council bore their part  
With ready brain and faithful heart,  
With skill and knowledge, sense and tact,  
Good to advise and bold to act.  
And high and endless fame he won  
With these to guide his schemes—  
As, risen in his might, the sun  
Wins glory with his beams.

## CANTO VIII

### SUMANTRA'S SPEECH

**B**UT splendid, just, and great of mind,  
The childless King for offspring pined.  
No son had he his name to grace,  
Transmitter of his royal race.  
Long had his anxious bosom wrought,  
And as he pondered rose the thought:—  
“A votive steed ’twere good to slay,  
So might a son the gift repay.”  
Before his lords his plans he laid,  
And bade them with their wisdom aid;  
Then with these words Sumantra, best  
Of royal counsellors, addressed:—  
“Hither, Vāsishtha at their head,  
Let all my priestly guides be led.”

To him Sumantra made reply:—  
“Hear, sire, a tale of days gone by.  
To many a sage in time of old,  
Sanatkumār, the saint, foretold  
How from thine ancient line, O King,  
A son, when years came round, should spring.  
‘Here dwells,’ ’twas thus the seer began,  
‘Of Kāśyap’s race, a holy man,  
Vibhāṇḍak named: to him shall spring  
A son, the famous Rishyaśring.  
Bred with the deer that round him roam,  
The wood shall be that hermit’s home.  
To him no mortal shall be known  
Except his holy sire alone.  
Still by those laws shall he abide  
Which lives of youthful Brāhmans guide,



VÁLMÍKI

Obedient to the strictest rule  
That forms the young ascetic's school:—  
And all the wondering world shall hear  
Of his stern life and penance drear;  
His care to nurse the holy fire  
And do the bidding of his sire.  
Then, seated on the Angas' throne,  
Shall Lomapád to fame be known.  
But folly wrought by that great King  
A plague upon the land shall bring;  
No rain for many a year shall fall  
And grievous drought shall ruin all.  
The troubled King with many a prayer  
Shall bid the priests some cure declare:—  
"The lore of Heaven 'tis yours to know,  
Nor are ye blind to things below:—  
Declare, O holy men, the way  
This plague to expiate and stay."  
Those best of Bráhmans shall reply:—  
"By every art, O Monarch, try,  
Hither to bring Vibhándak's child,  
Persuaded, captured, or beguiled.  
And when the boy is hither led  
To him thy daughter duly wed."

But how to bring that wondrous boy  
His troubled thoughts will long employ,  
And hopeless to achieve the task  
He counsel of his lords will ask,  
And bid his priests and servants bring  
With honor saintly Rishyaśring.  
But when they hear the monarch's speech,  
All these their master will beseech,  
With trembling hearts and looks of woe,  
To spare them, for they fear to go.  
And many a plan will they declare  
And crafty plots will frame,  
And promise fair to show him there,  
Unforced, with none to blame.  
On every word his lords shall say,  
The King will meditate,

And on the third returning day  
Recall them to debate.  
Then this shall be the plan agreed,  
That damsels shall be sent  
Attired in holy hermits' weed,  
And skilled in blandishment,  
That they the hermit may beguile  
With every art and amorous wile  
Whose use they know so well,  
And by their witcheries seduce  
The unsuspecting young recluse  
To leave his father's cell.  
Then when the boy with willing feet  
Shall wander from his calm retreat  
And in that city stand,  
The troubles of the King shall end,  
And streams of blessed rain descend  
Upon the thirsty land.  
Thus shall the holy Rishyaśring  
To Lomapád, the mighty King,  
By wedlock be allied;  
For Sántá, fairest of the fair,  
In mind and grace beyond compare,  
Shall be his royal bride.  
He, at the Offering of the Steed,  
The flames with holy oil shall feed,  
And for King Daśaratha gain  
Sons whom his prayers have begged in vain.  
I have repeated, sire, thus far,  
The words of old Sanatkumár,  
In order as he spoke them then  
Amid the crowd of holy men."  
Then Daśaratha cried with joy,  
"Say how they brought the hermit boy."



## CANTO IX

### RISHYAŚRING

THE wise Sumantra, thus addressed,  
Unfolded at the King's behest  
The plan the lords in council laid  
To draw the hermit from the shade.  
The priest, amid the lordly crowd,  
To Lomapád thus spoke aloud:—  
“Hear, King, the plot our thoughts have framed,  
A harmless trick by all unblamed.  
Far from the world that hermit's child  
Lives lonely in the distant wild:  
A stranger to the joys of sense,  
His bliss is pain and abstinence;  
And all unknown are women yet  
To him, a holy anchoret.  
The gentle passions we will wake  
That with resistless influence shake  
The hearts of men; and he  
Drawn by enchantment strong and sweet  
Shall follow from his lone retreat,  
And come and visit thee.  
Let ships be formed with utmost care  
That artificial trees may bear,  
And sweet fruit deftly made;  
Let goodly raiment, rich and rare,  
And flowers, and many a bird be there  
Beneath the leafy shade.  
Upon the ships thus decked a band  
Of young and lovely girls shall stand,  
Rich in each charm that wakes desire,  
And eyes that burn with amorous fire;  
Well skilled to sing, and play, and dance,

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And ply their trade with smile and glance.  
Let these, attired in hermits' dress,  
Betake them to the wilderness,  
And bring the boy of life austere  
A voluntary captive here."  
He ended; and the King agreed,  
By the priest's counsel won,  
And all the ministers took heed  
To see his bidding done.  
In ships with wondrous art prepared  
Away the lovely women fared,  
And soon beneath the shade they stood  
Of the wild, lonely, dreary wood.  
And there the leafy cot they found  
Where dwelt the devotee,  
And looked with eager eyes around  
The hermit's son to see.  
Still, of Vibhāṇḍak sore afraid,  
They hid behind the creeper's shade.  
But when by careful watch they knew  
The elder saint was far from view,  
With bolder steps they ventured nigh  
To catch the youthful hermit's eye.  
Then all the damsels blithe and gay,  
At various games began to play.  
They tossed the flying ball about  
With dance and song and merry shout,  
And moved, their scented tresses bound  
With wreaths, in mazy motions round.  
Some girls as if by love possessed,  
Sank to the earth in feigned unrest,  
Up-starting quickly to pursue  
Their intermitted game anew.  
It was a lovely sight to see  
Those fair ones, as they played,  
While fragrant robes were floating free,  
And bracelets clashing in their glee  
A pleasant tinkling made.  
The anklet's chime, the Koīl's cry  
With music filled the place,  
As 'twere some city in the sky



Which heavenly minstrels grace.  
 With each voluptuous art they strove  
 To win the tenant of the grove,  
 And with their graceful forms inspire  
 His modest soul with soft desire.  
 With arch of brow, with beck and smile,  
 With every passion-waking wile  
 Of glance and lotus hand,  
 With all enticements that excite  
 The longing for unknown delight  
 Which boys in vain withstand.  
 Forth came the hermit's son to view  
 The wondrous sight to him so new,  
 And gazed in rapt surprise  
 For from his natal hour till then  
 On woman or the sons of men  
 He ne'er had cast his eyes.  
 He saw them with their waists so slim,  
 With fairest shape and faultless limb,  
 In variegated robes arrayed,  
 And sweetly singing as they played.  
 Near and more near the hermit drew,  
 And watched them at their game,  
 And stronger still the impulse grew  
 To question whence they came.  
 They marked the young ascetic gaze  
 With curious eye and wild amaze,  
 And sweet the long-eyed damsels sang,  
 And shrill their merry laughter rang.  
 Then came they nearer to his side,  
 And languishing with passion cried:—  
 "Whose son, O youth, and who art thou,  
 Come suddenly to join us now?  
 And why dost thou all lonely dwell  
 In the wild wood? We pray thee, tell.  
 We wish to know thee, gentle youth;  
 Come, tell us, if thou wilt, the truth."  
 He gazed upon that sight he ne'er  
 Had seen before, of girls so fair,  
 And out of love a longing rose  
 His sire and lineage to disclose:—

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"My father," thus he made reply,  
 "Is Kaśyap's son, a saint most high,  
 Vibhándak styled; from him I came,  
 And Rishyaśring he calls my name.  
 Our hermit cot is near this place:—  
 Come thither, O ye fair of face;  
 There be it mine, with honor due,  
 Ye gentle youths, to welcome you."

They heard his speech, and gave consent,  
 And gladly to his cottage went.  
 Vibhándak's son received them well  
 Beneath the shelter of his cell—  
 With guest-gift, water for their feet,  
 And woodland fruit and roots to eat.  
 They smiled and spoke sweet words like these,  
 Delighted with his courtesies:—  
 "We too have goodly fruit in store,  
 Grown on the trees that shade our door;  
 Come, if thou wilt, kind Hermit, haste  
 The produce of our grove to taste;  
 And let, O good Ascetic, first  
 This holy water quench thy thirst."  
 They spoke, and gave him comfits sweet  
 Prepared ripe fruits to counterfeit;  
 And many a dainty cate beside,  
 And luscious mead their stores supplied.  
 The seeming fruits, in taste and look,  
 The unsuspecting hermit took,  
 For, strange to him, their form beguiled  
 The dweller in the lonely wild.  
 Then round his neck fair arms were flung,  
 And there the laughing damsels clung,  
 And pressing nearer and more near  
 With sweet lips whispered at his ear;  
 While rounded limb and swelling breast  
 The youthful hermit softly pressed.  
 The pleasing charm of that strange bowl,  
 The touch of a tender limb,  
 Over his yielding spirit stole  
 And sweetly vanquished him—



But vows, they said, must now be paid;  
They bade the boy farewell,  
And of the aged saint afraid,  
Prepared to leave the dell.  
With ready guile they told him where  
Their hermit dwelling lay;  
Then, lest the sire should find them there,  
Sped by wild paths away.  
They fled and left him there alone  
By longing love possessed;  
And with a heart no more his own  
He roamed about distressed.  
The aged saint came home, to find  
The hermit boy distraught,  
Revolving in his troubled mind  
One solitary thought.  
“Why dost thou not, my son,” he cried,  
“Thy due obeisance pay?  
Why do I see thee in the tide  
Of whelming thought to-day?  
A devotee should never wear  
A mien so sad and strange.  
Come, quickly, dearest child, declare  
The reason of the change.”  
And Rishyaśring, when questioned thus,  
Made answer in this wise:—  
“O sire, there came to visit us  
Some men with lovely eyes.  
About my neck soft arms they wound  
And kept me tightly held  
To tender breasts so soft and round,  
That strangely heaved and swelled.  
They sing more sweetly as they dance  
Than e’er I heard till now,  
And play with many a sidelong glance  
And arching of the brow.”  
“My son,” said he, “thus giants roam  
Where holy hermits are,  
And wander round their peaceful home  
Their rites austere to mar.  
I charge thee, thou must never lay  
Thy trust in them, dear boy:—



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They seek thee only to betray,  
And woo but to destroy."  
Thus having warned him of his foes  
That night at home he spent,  
And when the morrow's sun arose  
Forth to the forest went.

But Rishyaśring with eager pace  
Sped forth and hurried to the place  
Where he those visitants had seen  
Of dainty waist and charming mien.  
When from afar they saw the son  
Of Saint Vibhándak toward them run,  
To meet the hermit boy they hied,  
And hailed him with a smile, and cried:—  
"O come, we pray, dear lord, behold  
Our lovely home of which we told:—  
Due honor there to thee we'll pay,  
And speed thee on thy homeward way."  
Pleased with the gracious words they said  
He followed where the damsels led.  
As with his guides his steps he bent,  
That Bráhmaṇ high of worth,  
A flood of rain from heaven sent  
That gladdened all the earth.

Vibhándak took his homeward road,  
And wearied by the heavy load  
Of roots and woodland fruit he bore  
Entered at last his cottage door.  
Fain for his son he looked around,  
But desolate the cell he found.  
He stayed not then to bathe his feet,  
Though fainting with the toil and heat,  
But hurried forth and roamed about  
Calling the boy with cry and shout.  
He searched the wood, but all in vain;  
Nor tidings of his son could gain.  
One day beyond the forest's bound  
The wandering saint a village found,  
And asked the swains and neatherds there  
Who owned the land so rich and fair,



With all the hamlets of the plain,  
And herds of kine and fields of grain.  
They listened to the hermit's words,  
And all the guardians of the herds,  
With suppliant hands together pressed,  
This answer to the saint addressed :—  
“ The Angas' lord who bears the name  
Of Lomapád, renowned by fame,  
Bestowed these hamlets with their kine  
And all their riches, as a sign  
Of grace, on Rishyaśring; and he  
Vibhándak's son is said to be.”  
The hermit with exulting breast  
The mighty will of fate confessed,  
By meditation's eye discerned;  
And cheerful to his home returned.

A stately ship, at early morn,  
The hermit's son away had borne.  
Loud roared the clouds, as on he sped,  
The sky grew blacker overhead;  
Till, as he reached the royal town,  
A mighty flood of rain came down.  
By the great rain the monarch's mind  
The coming of his guest divined.  
To meet the honored youth he went,  
And low to earth his head he bent.  
With his own priest to lead the train,  
He gave the gift high guests obtain,  
And sought, with all who dwelt within  
The city walls, his grace to win.  
He fed him with the daintiest fare,  
He served him with unceasing care,  
And ministered with anxious eyes  
Lest anger in his breast should rise;  
And gave to be the Bráhmaṇ's bride  
His own fair daughter, lotus-eyed.

Thus loved and honored by the King,  
The glorious Bráhmaṇ Rishyaśring  
Passed in that royal town his life  
With Sántá his beloved wife.

## CANTO X

### RISHYAŚRING INVITED

“**A** GAIN, O best of Kings, give ear:—  
My saving words attentive hear,  
And listen to the tale of old  
By that illustrious Bráhmaṇ told.  
‘Of famed Ikshváku’s line shall spring  
(’Twas thus he spoke) a pious king,  
Named Daśaratha, good and great,  
True to his word and fortunate.  
He with the Angas’ mighty lord  
Shall ever live in sweet accord,  
And his a daughter fair shall be,  
Sántá of happy destiny.  
But Lomapád, the Angas’ chief,  
Still pining in his childless grief,  
To Daśaratha thus shall say:—  
“Give me thy daughter, friend, I pray,  
Thy Sántá of the tranquil mind,  
The noblest one of womankind.”

The father, swift to feel for woe,  
Shall on his friend his child bestow;  
And he shall take her and depart  
To his own town with joyous heart.  
The maiden home in triumph led,  
To Rishyaśring the King shall wed.  
And he with loving joy and pride  
Shall take her for his honored bride.  
And Daśaratha to a rite  
That best of Bráhmans shall invite  
With supplicating prayer  
To celebrate the sacrifice



To win him sons and Paradise,  
 That he will fain prepare.  
 From him the lord of men at length  
 The boon he seeks shall gain,  
 And see four sons of boundless strength  
 His royal line maintain.  
 Thus did the godlike saint of old  
 The will of fate declare,  
 And all that should befall unfold  
 Amid the sages there.  
 O Prince, supreme of men, go thou,  
 Consult thy holy guide,  
 And win, to aid thee in thy vow,  
 This Brāhman to thy side."

Sumantra's counsel, wise and good,  
 King Daśaratha heard,  
 Then by Vāśishtha's side he stood  
 And thus with him conferred:—  
 "Sumantra counsels thus:—do thou  
 My priestly guide, the plan allow."  
 Vāśishtha gave his glad consent,  
 And forth the happy monarch went  
 With lords and servants on the road  
 That led to Rishyaśring's abode.  
 Forests and rivers duly past,  
 He reached the distant town at last—  
 Of Lomapád the Angas' King,  
 And entered it with welcoming.  
 On through the crowded streets he came,  
 And, radiant as the kindled flame,  
 He saw within the monarch's house  
 The hermit's son, most glorious.  
 There Lomapád, with joyful breast,  
 To him all honor paid,  
 For friendship for his royal guest  
 His faithful bosom swayed.  
 Thus entertained with utmost care  
 Seven days, or eight, he tarried there,  
 And then that best of men thus broke  
 His purpose to the King, and spoke:—

"O King of men, mine ancient friend,  
(Thus Daśaratha prayed),  
Thy Sántá with her husband send  
My sacrifice to aid."  
Said he who ruled the Angas, "Yea,"  
And his consent was won:—  
And then at once he turned away  
To warn the hermit's son.  
He told him of their ties beyond  
Their old affection's faithful bond:—  
"This King," he said, "from days of old  
A well beloved friend I hold.  
To me this pearl of dames he gave  
From childless woe mine age to save,  
The daughter whom he loved so much,  
Moved by compassion's gentle touch.  
In him thy Sántá's father see:—  
As I am, even so is he.  
For sons the childless monarch yearns,  
To thee alone for help he turns.  
Go thou, the sacred rite ordain  
To win the sons he prays to gain:—  
Go, with thy wife thy succor lend,  
And give his vows a blissful end."

The hermit's son with quick accord  
Obeyed the Angas' mighty lord,  
And with fair Sántá at his side  
To Daśaratha's city hied.  
Each king, with suppliant hands upheld,  
Gazed on the other's face:—  
And then by mutual love impelled  
Met in a close embrace.  
Then Daśaratha's thoughtful care,  
Before he parted thence,  
Bade trusty servants homeward bear  
The glad intelligence:—  
"Let all the town be bright and gay,  
With burning incense sweet;  
Let banners wave, and water lay  
The dust in every street."



Glad were the citizens to learn  
The tidings of their lord's return,  
And through the city every man  
Obediently his task began.  
And fair and bright Ayodhyá showed,  
As following his guest he rode  
Through the full streets, where shell and drum  
Proclaimed aloud the King was come.  
And all the people with delight  
Kept gazing on their king,  
Attended by that youth so bright,  
The glorious Rishyaśring.  
When to his home the King had brought  
The hermit's saintly son,  
He deemed that all his task was wrought,  
And all he prayed for won.  
And lords who saw the stranger dame  
So beautiful to view,  
Rejoiced within their hearts, and came  
And paid her honor, too.  
There Rishyaśring passed blissful days,  
Graced like the King with love and praise,  
And shone in glorious light with her,  
Sweet Sántá for his minister,  
As Brahmá's son Vaśishtha, he  
Who wedded Saint Arundhatí.

## CANTO XI

### THE SACRIFICE DECREED

**T**HE Dewy Season came and went;  
The spring returned again—  
Then would the King, with mind intent,  
His sacrifice ordain.  
He came to Rishyaśring, and bowed  
To him of look divine,  
And bade him aid his offering vowed  
For heirs, to save his line.  
Nor would the youth his aid deny,  
He spake the monarch fair,  
And prayed him for that rite so high  
All requisites prepare.  
The King to wise Sumantra cried  
Who stood aye ready near;  
“Go summon quick, each holy guide,  
To counsel and to hear.”  
Obedient to his lord’s behest  
Away Sumantra sped,  
And brought Vāśishtha and the rest,  
In Scripture deeply read.  
Suyajña, Vāmadeva came,  
Jávāli, Kaśyap’s son,  
And old Vāśishtha, dear to fame,  
Obedient, every one.  
King Daśaratha met them there  
And duly honored each,  
And spoke in pleasant words his fair  
And salutary speech:—  
“In childless longing doomed to pine,  
No happiness, O lords, is mine.



So have I for this cause decreed  
To slay the sacrificial steed.  
Fain would I pay that offering high  
Wherein the horse is doomed to die,  
With Rishyaśring his aid to lend,  
And with your glory to befriend."

With loud applause each holy man  
Received his speech, approved the plan,  
And, by the wise Vāśishtha led,  
Gave praises to the King, and said:—  
"The sons thou cravest shalt thou see,  
Of fairest glory, born to thee,  
Whose holy feelings bid thee take  
This righteous course for offspring's sake."  
Cheered by the ready praise of those  
Whose aid he sought, his spirits rose—  
And thus the King his speech renewed  
With looks of joy and gratitude:—  
"Let what the coming rites require  
Be ready, as the priests desire,  
And let the horse, ordained to bleed,  
With fitting guard and priest, be freed.  
Yonder on Sarjú's northern side  
The sacrificial ground provide;  
And let the saving rites, that nought  
Ill-omened may occur, be wrought.  
The offering I announce to-day  
Each lord of earth may claim to pay,  
Provided that his care can guard  
The holy rite by flaws unmarred.  
For wandering fiends, whose watchful spite  
Waits eagerly to spoil each rite—  
Hunting with keenest eye detect  
The slightest slip, the least neglect;  
And when the sacred work is crossed  
The workman is that moment lost.  
Let preparation due be made,  
Your powers the charge can meet,  
That so the noble rite be paid  
In every point complete."



And all the Bráhmans answered, "Yea,"  
His mandate honoring,  
And gladly promised to obey  
The order of the King.  
They cried with voices raised aloud:—  
"Success attend thine aim!"  
Then bade farewell, and lowly bowed,  
And hastened whence they came.  
King Daśaratha went within,  
His well-loved wives to see—  
And said: "Your lustral rites begin,  
For these shall prosper me.  
A glorious offering I prepare  
That precious fruit of sons may bear."  
Their lily faces brightened fast  
Those pleasant words to hear,  
As lilies, when the winter's past,  
In lovelier hues appear.



## CANTO XII

### THE SACRIFICE BEGUN

**A** GAIN the spring with genial heat  
Returning made the year complete.  
To win him sons, without delay  
His vow the King resolved to pay—  
And to Vāśishtha, saintly man,  
In modest words this speech began:—  
“Prepare the rite with all things fit  
As is ordained in Holy Writ,  
And keep with utmost care afar  
Whate’er its sacred forms might mar.  
Thou art, my lord, my trustiest guide,  
Kind-hearted, and my friend beside;  
So is it meet thou undertake  
This heavy task for duty’s sake.”

Then he, of twice-born men the best,  
His glad assent at once expressed:—  
“Fain will I do whate’er may be  
Desired, O honored King, by thee.”  
To ancient priests he spoke, who, trained  
In holy rites, deep skill had gained:—  
“Here guards be stationed, good and sage,  
Religious men of trusted age.  
And various workmen send and call,  
Who frame the door and build the wall—  
With men of every art and trade,  
Who read the stars and ply the spade,  
And mimes and minstrels hither bring,  
And damsels trained to dance and sing.”  
Then to the learned men he said,  
In many a page of Scripture read:—

“Be yours each rite performed to see  
According to the King’s decree.  
And stranger Brāhmans quickly call  
To this great rite that welcomes all.  
Pavilions for the princes, decked  
With art and ornament, erect,  
And handsome booths by thousands made  
The Brāhman visitors to shade—  
Arranged in order side by side,  
With meat and drink and all supplied.  
And ample stables we shall need  
For many an elephant and steed—  
And chambers where the men may lie,  
And vast apartments, broad and high,  
Fit to receive the countless bands  
Of warriors come from distant lands.  
For our own people too provide  
Sufficient tents, extended wide,  
And stores of meat and drink prepare,  
And all that can be needed there.  
And food in plenty must be found  
For guests from all the country round.  
Of various viands presents make,  
For honor, not for pity’s sake,  
That fit regard and worship be  
Paid to each caste in due degree.  
And let not wish or wrath excite  
Your hearts the meanest guest to slight;  
But still observe with special grace  
Those who obtain the foremost place,  
Whether for happier skill in art  
Or bearing in the rite their part  
Do you, I pray, with friendly mind  
Perform the task to you assigned,  
And work the rite, as bids the law,  
Without omission, slip, or flaw.”

They answered: “As thou seest fit  
So will we do and nought omit.”  
The sage Vāśishtha then addressed  
Sumantra, called at his behest:—



“ The princes of the earth invite,  
And famous lords who guard the rite,  
Priest, Warrior, Merchant, lowly thrall,  
In countless thousands summon all.  
Where'er their home be, far or near,  
Gather the good with honor here.  
And Janak, whose imperial sway  
The men of Mithilá obey,  
The firm of vow, the dread of foes,  
Who all the lore of Scripture knows,  
Invite him here with honor high,  
King Daśaratha's old ally.  
And Káśí's lord of gentle speech,  
Who finds a pleasant word for each—  
In length of days our monarch's peer,  
Illustrious King, invite him here.  
The father of our ruler's bride,  
Known for his virtues far and wide,  
The King whom Kekaya's realms obey,  
Him with his son invite, I pray.  
And Lomapád, the Angas King,  
True to his vows and godlike, bring.  
Far be thine invitations sent  
To west and south and orient.  
Call those who rule Suráshtra's land,  
Suvira's realm and Sindhu's strand,  
And all the kings of earth beside  
In friendship's bonds with us allied:—  
Invite them all to hasten in  
With retinue and kith and kin.”  
Vasishtha's speech without delay  
Sumantra bent him to obey,  
And sent his trusty envoys forth  
Eastward and westward, south and north.  
Obedient to the saint's request  
Himself he hurried forth, and pressed  
Each nobler chief and lord and king  
To hasten to the gathering.  
Before the saint Vāsishtha stood  
All those who wrought with stone and wood,  
And showed the work which every one

In furtherance of the rite had done.  
Rejoiced their ready zeal to see,  
Thus to the craftsmen all said he:—  
“ I charge ye, masters, see to this,  
That there be nothing done amiss.  
And this, I pray, in mind be borne,  
That not one gift ye give in scorn;  
Whenever scorn a gift attends  
Great sin is his who thus offends.”

And now some days and nights had passed,  
And Kings began to gather fast,  
And precious gems in liberal store  
As gifts to Daśaratha bore.  
Then joy thrilled through Vaśishtha's breast  
As thus the monarch he addressed:—  
“ Obedient to thy high decree  
The Kings, my lord, are come to thee.  
And it has been my care to greet  
And honor all with reverence meet.  
Thy servants' task is ended quite,  
And all is ready for the rite.  
Come forth then to the sacred ground  
Where all in order will be found.”  
Then Rishyaśring confirmed the tale:—  
Nor did their words to move him fail.  
The stars propitious influence lent  
When forth the world's great ruler went.  
Then by the sage Vaśishtha led,  
The priest began to speed  
Those glorious rites wherein is shed  
The lifeblood of the steed.





## CANTO XIII

## THE SACRIFICE FINISHED

THE circling year had filled its course,  
And back was brought the wandering horse:—  
Then upon Sarjú's northern strand  
Began the rite the King had planned.  
With Rishyaśring the forms to guide,  
The Bráhmans to their task applied,  
At that great offering of the steed  
Their lofty-minded King decreed.  
The priests, who all the Scripture knew,  
Performed their part in order due,  
And circled round in solemn train  
As precepts of the law ordain.  
Pravargya rites were duly sped:—  
For Upasads the flames were fed.  
Then from the plant the juice was squeezed,  
And those high saints, with minds well pleased,  
Performed the mystic rites begun  
With bathing ere the rise of sun.  
They gave the portion, Indra's claim,  
And hymned the King whom none can blame.  
The mid-day bathing followed next,  
Observed as bids the holy text.  
Then the good priests with utmost care,  
In form that Scripture's rules declare,  
For the third time pure water shed  
On high-souled Daśaratha's head.  
Then Rishyaśring and all the rest  
To Indra and the Gods addressed  
Their sweet-toned hymn of praise and prayer,  
And called them in the rite to share.



With sweetest song and hymn intoned  
They gave the Gods in heaven enthroned,  
As duty bids, the gifts they claim,  
The holy oil that feeds the flame.  
And many an offering there was paid,  
And not one slip in all was made.  
For with most careful heed they saw  
That all was done by Veda law.  
None, all those days, was seen oppressed  
By hunger or by toil distressed.  
Why speak of human kind? No beast  
Was there that lacked an ample feast.  
For there was store for all who came,  
For orphan child and lonely dame;  
The old and young were well supplied,  
The poor and hungry satisfied.  
Throughout the day ascetics fed,  
And those who roam to beg their bread:—  
While all around the cry was still,  
“Give forth, give forth,” and “Eat your fill.”  
“Give forth with liberal hand the meal,  
And various robes in largess deal.”

Urged by these cries on every side  
Unweariedly their task they plied,  
And heaps of food like hills in size  
In boundless plenty met the eyes:—  
And lakes of sauce, each day renewed,  
Refreshed the weary multitude.  
And strangers there from distant lands,  
And women folk in crowded bands  
The best of food and drink obtained  
At the great rite the King ordained,  
Apart from all, the Bráhmans there,  
Thousands on thousands, took their share  
Of various dainties sweet to taste,  
On plates of gold and silver placed—  
All ready set, as, when they willed,  
The twice-born men their places filled.  
And servants in fair garments dressed  
Waited upon each Bráhmaṇ guest.



Of cheerful mind and mien were they,  
With gold and jewelled ear-rings gay.  
The best of Bráhmans praised the fare  
Of countless sorts, of flavor rare—  
And thus to Raghu's son they cried:—  
“We bless thee, and are satisfied.”  
Between the rites some Bráhmans spent  
The time in learned argument,  
With ready flow of speech, sedate,  
And keen to vanquish in debate.  
There day by day the holy train  
Performed all rites as rules ordain.  
No priest in all that host was found  
But kept the vows that held him bound;  
None, but the holy Vedaś knew,  
And all their sixfold science too.  
No Bráhmaṇ there was found unfit  
To speak with eloquence and wit.

And now the appointed time came near  
The sacrificial posts to rear.  
They brought them, and prepared to fix  
Of Bel and Khádir six and six;  
Six, made of the Palása-tree,  
Of Fig-wood one, apart to be—  
Of Sleshmát and of Devadár  
One column each, the mightiest far:—  
So thick the two the arms of man  
Their ample girth would fail to span.  
All these with utmost care were wrought  
By hand of priests in Scripture taught,  
And all with gold were gilded bright  
To add new splendor to the rite;  
Twenty-and-one those stakes in all,  
Each one-and-twenty cubits tall:—  
And one-and-twenty ribbons there  
Hung on the pillars bright and fair.  
Firm in the earth they stood at last,  
Where cunning craftsmen fixed them fast;  
And there unshaken each remained,  
Octagonal and smoothly planed.



Then ribbons over all were hung,  
And flowers and scent around them flung.  
Thus decked they cast a glory forth  
Like the great saints who star the north.  
The sacrificial altar then  
Was raised by skilful twice-born men—  
In shape and figure to behold  
An eagle with his wings of gold,  
With twice nine pits and formed threefold.  
Each for some special God, beside  
The pillars were the victims tied;  
The birds that roam the wood, the air,  
The water, and the land were there,  
And snakes and things of reptile birth,  
And healing herbs that spring from earth:—  
As texts prescribe, in Scripture found,  
Three hundred victims there were bound.  
The steed devoted to the host  
Of Gods, the gem they honor most,  
Was duly sprinkled. Then the Queen  
Kauśalyá, with delighted mien,  
With reverent steps around him paced,  
And with sweet wreaths the victim graced;  
Then with three swords in order due  
She smote the steed with joy, and slew.  
That night the queen, a son to gain,  
With calm and steady heart was fain  
By the dead charger's side to stay  
From evening till the break of day.  
Then came three priests, their care to lead  
The other queens to touch the steed—  
Upon Kauśalyá to attend,  
Their company and aid to lend.  
As by the horse she still reclined,  
With happy mien and cheerful mind,  
With Rishyaśring the twice-born came  
And praised and blessed the royal dame.  
The priest who well his duty knew,  
And every sense could well subdue,  
From out the bony chambers freed  
And boiled the marrow of the steed.



Above the steam the monarch bent,  
And, as he smelt the fragrant scent,  
In time and order drove afar  
All error that his hopes could mar.  
Then sixteen priests together came,  
And cast into the sacred flame  
The severed members of the horse,  
Made ready all in ordered course.  
On piles of holy Fig-tree raised  
The meaner victims' bodies blazed:—  
The steed, of all the creatures slain,  
Alone required a pile of cane.  
Three days, as is by law decreed,  
Lasted that Offering of the Steed.  
The Chatushtom began the rite,  
And when the sun renewed his light,  
The Ukthya followed—after came  
The Atirātra's holy flame.  
These were the rites, and many more,  
Arranged by light of holy lore,  
The Aptoryām of mighty power,  
And, each performed in proper hour,  
The Abhijit and Viśvajit  
With every form and service fit;  
And with the sacrifice at night  
The Jyotishtom and Āyus rite.

The task was done, as laws prescribe:—  
The monarch, glory of his tribe,  
Bestowed the land in liberal grants  
Upon the sacred ministrants.  
He gave the region of the east,  
His conquest, to the Hotri priest.  
The west the celebrant obtained,  
The south the priest presiding gained—  
The northern region was the share  
Of him who chanted forth the prayer.  
Thus did each priest obtain his meed  
At the great Slaughter of the Steed,  
Ordained, the best of all to be,  
By self-existent deity.

Ikshvāku's son, with joyful mind,  
This noble fee to each assigned—  
But all the priests with one accord  
Addressed that unpolluted lord:—  
“ 'Tis thine alone to keep the whole  
Of this broad earth in firm control.  
No gift of lands from thee we seek,  
To guard these realms our hands were weak.  
On sacred lore our days are spent,  
Let other gifts our wants content.”

The chief of old Ikshvāku's line  
Gave them ten hundred thousand kine,  
A hundred millions of fine gold,  
The same in silver four times told.  
But every priest in presence there  
With one accord resigned his share.  
To Saint Vāśishtha, high of soul,  
And Rishyaśring they gave the whole.  
That largess pleased those Brāhmans well,  
Who bade the prince his wishes tell.  
Then Daśaratha, mighty King,  
Made answer thus to Rishyaśring:—  
“ O holy Hermit, of thy grace,  
Vouchsafe the increase of my race.”  
He spoke; nor was his prayer denied—  
The best of Brāhmans thus replied:—  
“ Four sons, O Monarch, shall be thine,  
Upholders of thy royal line.”



## CANTO XIV

### RĀVAN DOOMED

THE saint, well-read in holy lore,  
 Pondered awhile his answer o'er,  
 And thus again addressed the King,  
 His wandering thoughts regathering :—  
 “Another rite will I begin  
 Which shall the sons thou cravest win,  
 Where all things shall be duly sped  
 And first Atharva texts be read.”

Then by Vibhāṇḍak's gentle son  
 Was that high sacrifice begun,  
 The King's advantage seeking still  
 And zealous to perform his will.  
 Now all the Gods had gathered there,  
 Each one for his allotted share—  
 Brahmā, the ruler of the sky,  
 Sthānu, Nārāyan, Lord most high,  
 And holy Indra men might view  
 With Maruts for his retinue;  
 The heavenly chorister, and saint,  
 And spirit pure from earthly taint,  
 With one accord had sought the place  
 The high-souled monarch's rite to grace.  
 Then to the Gods who came to take  
 Their proper share, the hermit spake :—  
 “For you has Daśaratha slain  
 The votive steed, a son to gain;  
 Stern penance-rites the King has tried,  
 And in firm faith on you relied,  
 And now with undiminished care  
 A second rite would fain prepare.

But, O ye Gods, consent to grant  
 The longing of your supplicant.  
 For him beseeching hands I lift,  
 And pray you all to grant the gift,  
 That four fair sons of high renown  
 The offerings of the King may crown."  
 They to the hermit's son replied:—  
 "His longing shall be gratified.  
 For, Brāhman, in most high degree  
 We love the King and honor thee."

These words the Gods in answer said,  
 And vanished thence, by Indra led.  
 Thus to the Lord, the worlds who made,  
 The Immortals all assembled prayed:—  
 "O Brahmá, mighty by thy grace,  
 Rávan, who rules the giant race,  
 Torments us in his senseless pride,  
 And penance-loving saints beside.  
 For thou well pleased in days of old  
 Gavest the boon that makes him bold,  
 That God nor demon e'er should kill  
 His charmed life, for so thy will.  
 We, honoring that high behest,  
 Bear all his rage though sore distressed.  
 That lord of giants fierce and fell  
 Scourges the earth and heaven and hell.  
 Mad with thy boon, his impious rage  
 Smites saint and bard and God and sage.  
 The sun himself withholds his glow,  
 The wind in fear forbears to blow;  
 The fire restrains his wonted heat  
 Where stand the dreaded Rávan's feet,  
 And, necklaced with the wandering wave,  
 The sea before him fears to rave.  
 Kuvera's self in sad defeat  
 Is driven from his blissful seat.  
 We see, we feel the giant's might,  
 And woe comes o'er us and affright.  
 To thee, O Lord, thy suppliants pray  
 To find some cure this plague to stay."



Thus by the gathered Gods addressed  
He pondered in his secret breast,  
And said: "One only way I find  
To slay this fiend of evil mind.  
He prayed me once his life to guard  
From demon, God, and heavenly bard,  
And spirits of the earth and air,  
And I consenting heard his prayer.  
But the proud giant in his scorn  
Recked not of man of woman born.  
None else may take his life away,  
But only man the fiend may slay."

The Gods, with Indra at their head,  
Rejoiced to hear the words he said.  
Then, crowned with glory like a flame,  
Lord Vishnu to the council came;  
His hands shell, mace, and discus bore,  
And saffron were the robes he wore.  
Riding his eagle through the crowd,  
As the sun rides upon a cloud,  
With bracelets of fine gold, he came,  
Loud welcomed by the Gods' acclaim.  
His praise they sang with one consent,  
And cried, in lowly reverence bent:—  
"O Lord whose hand fierce Madhu slew,  
Be thou our refuge, firm and true;  
Friend of the suffering worlds art thou,  
We pray thee help thy suppliants now."  
Then Vishnu spake: "Ye Gods, declare,  
What may I do to grant your prayer?"

"King Daśaratha," thus cried they,  
"Fervent in penance many a day,  
The sacrificial steed has slain,  
Longing for sons, but all in vain.  
Now, at the cry of us forlorn,  
Incarnate as his seed be born.  
Three queens has he—each lovely dame  
Like Beauty, Modesty, or Fame.  
Divide thyself in four, and be



His offspring by these noble three.  
Man's nature take, and slay in fight  
Rávan who laughs at heavenly might—  
This common scourge, this rankling thorn  
Whom the three worlds too long have borne.  
For Rávan, in the senseless pride  
Of might unequalled, has defied  
The host of heaven, and plagues with woe  
Angel and bard and saint below,  
Crushing each spirit and each maid  
Who plays in Nandan's heavenly shade.  
O conquering Lord, to thee we bow;  
Our surest hope and trust art thou.  
Regard the world of men below,  
And slay the God's tremendous foe."

When thus the suppliant Gods had prayed,  
His wise reply Náráyan made:—  
"What task demands my presence there,  
And when this dread, ye Gods declare."  
The Gods replied: "We fear, O Lord,  
Fierce Rávan, ravener abhorred.  
Be thine the glorious task, we pray,  
In human form this fiend to slay.  
By thee of all the Blest alone  
This sinner may be overthrown.  
He gained by penance long and dire  
The favor of the mighty Sire.  
Then He who every gift bestows  
Guarded the fiend from heavenly foes,  
And gave a pledge his life that kept  
From all things living, man except.  
On him thus armed no other foe  
Than man may deal the deadly blow.  
Assume, O King, a mortal birth,  
And strike the demon to the earth."

Then Vishnu, God of Gods, the Lord  
Supreme by all the worlds adored,  
To Brahmá and the suppliants spake:—  
"Dismiss your fear: for your dear sake



In battle will I smite him dead,  
The cruel fiend, the Immortal's dread.  
And lords and ministers and all  
His kith and kin with him shall fall.  
Then, in the world of mortal men,  
Ten thousand years and hundreds ten  
I as a human King will reign,  
And guard the earth as my domain."  
God, saint, and nymph, and minstrel throng  
With heavenly voices raised their song  
In hymns of triumph to the God  
Whose conquering feet on Madhu trod:—

"Champion of Gods, as man appear,  
This cruel Rávan slay,  
The thorn that saints and hermits fear,  
The plague that none can stay.  
In savage fury uncontrolled  
His pride forever grows—  
He dares the Lord of Gods to hold  
Among his deadly foes."

## CANTO XV

### THE NECTAR

WHEN wisest Vishnu thus had given  
His promise to the Gods of heaven,  
He pondered in his secret mind  
A suited place of birth to find.  
Then he decreed, the lotus-eyed,  
In four his being to divide,  
And Daśaratha, gracious King,  
He chose as sire from whom to spring.  
That childless prince, of high renown,  
Who smote in war his foemen down,  
At that same time with utmost care  
Prepared the rite that wins an heir.  
Then Vishnu, fain on earth to dwell,  
Bade the Almighty Sire farewell,  
And vanished while a reverent crowd  
Of Gods and saints in worship bowed.

The monarch watched the sacred rite,  
When a vast form of awful might,  
Of matchless splendor, strength and size  
Was manifest before his eyes.  
From forth the sacrificial flame,  
Dark, robed in red, the being came.  
His voice was drumlike, loud and low,  
His face suffused with rosy glow.  
Like a huge lion's mane appeared  
The long locks of his hair and beard.  
He shone with many a lucky sign,  
And many an ornament divine;  
A towering mountain in his height,  
A tiger in his gait and might.



No precious mine more rich could be,  
No burning flame more bright than he.  
His arms embraced in loving hold,  
Like a dear wife, a vase of gold  
Whose silver lining held a draught  
Of nectar as in heaven is quaffed—  
A vase so vast, so bright to view,  
They scarce could count the vision true.  
Upon the King his eyes he bent,  
And said: "The Lord of life has sent  
His servant down, O Prince, to be  
A messenger from heaven to thee."  
The King with all his nobles by  
Raised reverent hands and made reply:—  
"Welcome, O glorious being! Say  
How can my care thy grace repay."  
Envoy of Him whom all adore,  
Thus to the King he spake once more:—  
"The Gods accept thy worship—they  
Give thee the blessed fruit to-day.  
Approach and take, O glorious King,  
This heavenly nectar which I bring,  
For it shall give thee sons and wealth,  
And bless thee with a store of health.  
Give it to those fair queens of thine,  
And bid them quaff the drink divine—  
And they the princely sons shall bear  
Long sought by sacrifice and prayer."

"Yea, O my lord," the monarch said,  
And took the vase upon his head,  
The gift of Gods, of fine gold wrought,  
With store of heavenly liquor fraught.  
He honored, filled with transport new,  
That wondrous being, fair to view,  
As round the envoy of the God  
With reverential steps he trod.  
His errand done, that form of light  
Arose and vanished from the sight.  
High rapture filled the monarch's soul,  
Possessed of that celestial bowl,



As when a man by want distressed  
With unexpected wealth is blest.  
And rays of transport seemed to fall  
Illuminating bower and hall,  
As when the autumn moon rides high,  
And floods with lovely light the sky.  
Quick to the ladies' bower he sped,  
And thus to Queen Kauśalyá said:—  
“This genial nectar take and quaff,”  
He spoke, and gave the lady half.  
Part of the nectar that remained  
Sumitrá from his hand obtained.  
He gave, to make her fruitful too,  
Kaikeyí half the residue.  
A portion yet remaining there,  
He paused awhile to think,  
Then gave Sumitrá, with her share,  
The remnant of the drink.  
Thus on each queen of those fair three  
A part the King bestowed,  
And with sweet hope a child to see  
Their yearning bosoms glowed.  
The heavenly bowl the King supplied  
Their longing souls relieved,  
And soon, with rapture and with pride,  
Each royal dame conceived.  
He gazed upon each lady's face,  
And triumphed as he gazed,  
As Indra in his royal place  
By Gods and spirits praised.



## CANTO XVI

### THE VÂNARS

WHEN Vishnu thus had gone on earth,  
From the great King to take his birth,  
The self-existent Lord of all  
Addressed the Gods who heard his call:—  
“For Vishnu’s sake, the strong and true,  
Who seeks the good of all of you,  
Make helps, in war to lend him aid,  
In forms that change at will, arrayed,  
Of wizard skill and hero might,  
Outstrippers of the wind in flight,  
Skilled in the arts of counsel, wise,  
And Vishnu’s peers in bold emprise;  
With heavenly arts and prudence fraught,  
By no devices to be caught;  
Skilled in all weapons’ lore and use  
As they who drink the immortal juice.  
And let the nymphs supreme in grace,  
And maidens of the minstrel race,  
Monkeys and snakes, and those who rove  
Free spirits of the hill and grove,  
And wandering Daughters of the Air,  
In monkey form brave children bear.  
So erst the lord of bears I shaped,  
Born from my mouth as wide I gaped.”

Thus by the mighty Sire addressed  
They all obeyed his high behest,  
And thus begot in countless swarms  
Brave sons disguised in sylvan forms.  
Each God, each sage became a sire,  
Each minstrel of the heavenly choir,



Each faun, of children strong and good  
Whose feet should roam the hill and wood.  
Snakes, bards, and spirits, serpents bold  
Had sons too numerous to be told.  
Báli, the woodland hosts who led,  
High as Mahendra's lofty head,  
Was Indra's child. That noblest fire,  
The Sun, was great Sugrīva's sire.  
Tāra, the mighty monkey, he  
Was offspring of Vrihaspati—  
Tāra the matchless chieftain, boast  
For wisdom of the Vānar host.  
Of Gandhamādan brave and bold  
The father was the Lord of Gold.  
Nala the mighty, dear to fame,  
Of skilful Viśvakarmā came.  
From Agni, Nīla bright as flame,  
Who in his splendor, might, and worth,  
Surpassed the sire who gave him birth.  
The heavenly Aśvins, swift and fair,  
Were fathers of a noble pair,  
Who, Dwivida and Mainda named,  
For beauty like their sires were famed.  
Varun was father of Sushen,  
Of Śarabh, he who sends the rain.  
Hanumān, best of monkey kind,  
Was son of him who breathes the wind—  
Like thunderbolt in frame was he,  
And swift as Garud's self could flee.  
These thousands did the Gods create  
Endowed with might that none could mate,  
In monkey forms that changed at will—  
So strong their wish the fiend to kill.  
In mountain size, like lions thewed,  
Up-sprang the wondrous multitude,  
Auxiliar hosts in every shape,  
Monkey and bear and highland ape.  
In each the strength, the might, the mien  
Of his own parent God were seen.  
Some chiefs of Vānar mothers came,  
Some of she-bear and minstrel dame,



Skilled in all arms in battle's shock,  
The brandished tree, the loosened rock;  
And prompt, should other weapons fail,  
To fight and slay with tooth and nail.  
Their strength could shake the hills amain,  
And rend the rooted trees in twain,  
Disturb with their impetuous sweep  
The Rivers' Lord, the Ocean deep,  
Rend with their feet the seated ground,  
And pass wide floods with airy bound—  
Or forcing through the sky their way  
The very clouds by force could stay.  
Mad elephants that wander through  
The forest wilds, could they subdue,  
And with their furious shout could scare  
Dead upon earth the birds of air.  
So were the sylvan chieftains formed;  
Thousands on thousands still they swarmed.  
These were the leaders honored most,  
The captains of the Vānar host,  
And to each lord and chief and guide  
Was monkey offspring born beside.  
Then by the bears' great monarch stood  
The other roamers of the wood,  
And turned, their pathless homes to seek,  
To forest and to mountain peak.  
The leaders of the monkey band  
By the two brothers took their stand,  
Sugrīva, offspring of the Sun,  
And Bāli, Indra's mighty one.  
They both endowed with Garud's might,  
And skilled in all the arts of fight,  
Wandered in arms the forest through,  
And lions, snakes, and tigers, slew.  
But every monkey, ape, and bear  
Ever was Bāli's special care;  
With his vast strength and mighty arm  
He kept them from all scathe and harm.  
And so the earth with hill, wood, seas,  
Was filled with mighty ones like these—



## THE RÁMÁYANA

225

CSL

Of various shape and race and kind,  
With proper homes to each assigned.  
With Ráma's champions fierce and strong  
The earth was overspread,  
High as the hills and clouds, a throng  
With bodies vast and dread.

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## CANTO XVII

### RISHYASRING'S RETURN

NOW when the high-souled monarch's rite,  
The Aśvamedh, was finished quite,  
Their sacrificial dues obtained,  
The Gods their heavenly homes regained.  
The lofty-minded saints withdrew,  
Each to his place, with honor due,  
And kings and chieftains, one and all,  
Who came to grace the festival.  
And Daśaratha, ere they went,  
Addressed them thus benevolent:—  
“Now may you, each with joyful heart,  
To your own realms, O Kings, depart.  
Peace and good luck attend you there,  
And blessing, is my friendly prayer;  
Let cares of state each mind engage  
To guard his royal heritage.  
A monarch from his throne expelled  
No better than the dead is held.  
So he who cares for power and might  
Must guard his realm and royal right.  
Such care a meed in heaven will bring  
Better than rites and offering.  
Such care a king his country owes  
As man upon himself bestows,  
When for his body he provides  
Raiment and every need besides.  
For future days should kings foresee,  
And keep the present error-free.”  
Thus did the King the kings exhort—  
They heard, and turned them from the court,  
And, each to each in friendship bound,



Went forth to all the realms around.  
The rites were o'er, the guests were sped,  
The train the best of Bráhmans led—  
In which the King with joyful soul,  
With his dear wives, and with the whole  
Of his imperial host and train  
Of cars and servants turned again,  
And, as a monarch dear to fame,  
Within his royal city came.

Next, Rishyaśring, well-honored sage,  
And Sántá, sought their hermitage.  
The King himself, of prudent mind,  
Attended him, with troops behind,  
And all her men the town outpoured  
With Saint Vaśishtha and their lord.  
High mounted on a car of state,  
O'ercanopied fair Sántá sate,  
Drawn by white oxen, while a band  
Of servants marched on either hand.  
Great gifts of countless price she bore,  
With sheep and goats and gems in store.  
Like Beauty's self the lady shone  
With all the jewels she had on,  
As, happy in her sweet content,  
Peerless amid the fair she went.  
Not Queen Paulomí's self could be  
More loving to her lord than she.  
She who had lived in happy ease,  
Honored with all her heart could please,  
While dames and kinsfolk ever vied  
To see her wishes gratified—  
Soon as she knew her husband's will  
Again to seek the forest, still  
Was ready for the hermit's cot,  
Nor murmured at her altered lot.  
The King attended to the wild  
That hermit and his own dear child,  
And in the centre of a throng  
Of noble courtiers rode along.  
The sage's son had let prepare



A lodge within the wood, and there  
 Awhile they lingered blithe and gay,  
 Then, duly honored, went their way.  
 The glorious hermit Rishyaśring  
 Drew near and thus besought the King:—  
 “Return, my honored lord, I pray,  
 Return, upon thy homeward way.”  
 The monarch, with the waiting crowd,  
 Lifted his voice and wept aloud,  
 And with eyes dripping still to each  
 Of his good queens he spake this speech:—  
 “Kauśalyá and Sumitrá dear,  
 And thou, my sweet Kaikeyí, hear—  
 All upon Sántá feast your gaze,  
 The last time for a length of days.”  
 To Sántá’s side the ladies leapt,  
 And hung about her neck and wept,  
 And cried, “O, happy be the life  
 Of this great Bráhmaṇ and his wife.  
 The Wind, the Fire, the Moon on high,  
 The Earth, the Streams, the circling Sky,  
 Preserve thee in the wood, true spouse,  
 Devoted to thy husband’s vows.  
 And O dear Sántá, ne’er neglect  
 To pay the dues of meek respect  
 To the great saint, thy husband’s sire,  
 With all observance and with fire.  
 And, sweet one, pure of spot and blame,  
 Forget not thou thy husband’s claim;  
 In every change, in good and ill,  
 Let thy sweet words delight him still,  
 And let thy worship constant be—  
 Her lord is woman’s deity.  
 To learn thy welfare, dearest friend,  
 The King will many a Bráhmaṇ send.  
 Let happy thoughts thy spirit cheer,  
 And be not troubled, daughter dear.”

These soothing words the ladies said,  
 And pressed their lips upon her head.  
 Each gave with sighs her last adieu,

Then at the King's command withdrew.  
The King around the hermit went  
With circling footsteps reverent,  
And placed at Rishyaśring's command  
Some soldiers of his royal band.  
The Brāhman bowed in turn and cried,  
"May fortune never leave thy side.  
O mighty King, with justice reign,  
And still thy people's love retain."  
He spoke, and turned away his face,  
And, as the hermit went,  
The monarch, rooted to the place,  
Pursued with eyes intent.  
But when the sage had passed from view  
King Daśaratha turned him too,  
Still fixing on his friend each thought,  
With such deep love his breast was fraught.  
Amid his people's loud acclaim  
Home to his royal seat he came,  
And lived delighted there—  
Expecting when each queenly dame,  
Upholder of his ancient fame,  
Her promised son should bear.  
The glorious sage his way pursued  
Till close before his eyes he viewed  
Sweet Champá, Lomapád's fair town,  
Wreathed with her Champac's leafy crown.  
Soon as the saint's approach he knew,  
The King, to yield him honor due,  
Went forth to meet him with a band  
Of priests and nobles of the land:—  
"Hail, Sage," he cried, "O joy to me!  
What bliss it is, my lord, to see  
Thee with thy wife and all thy train  
Returning to my town again.  
Thy father, honored Sage, is well,  
Who hither from his woodland cell  
Has sent full many a messenger  
For tidings both of thee and her."  
Then joyfully, for due respect,





## VÁLMÍKI

CSL

The monarch bade the town be decked.  
The King and Rishyaśring elate  
Entered the royal city's gate—  
In front the chaplain rode.  
Then, loved and honored with all care  
By monarch and by courtier, there  
The glorious saint abode.

## CANTO XVIII

### RISHYAŚRING'S DEPARTURE

THE monarch called a Brāhman near  
And said, "Now speed away  
To Kaśyap's son, the mighty seer,  
And with all reverence say—  
The holy child he holds so dear,  
The hermit of the noble mind,  
Whose equal it were hard to find,  
Returned, is dwelling here.  
Go, and instead of me do thou  
Before that best of hermits bow,  
That still he may for his dear son,  
Show me the favor I have won."  
Soon as the King these words had said,  
To Kaśyap's son the Brāhman sped.  
Before the hermit low he bent  
And did obeisance, reverent;  
Then with meek words his grace to crave  
The message of his lord he gave:—  
"The high-souled father of his bride  
Had called thy son his rites to guide—  
Those rites are o'er, the steed is slain;  
Thy noble child is come again."

Soon as the saint that speech had heard  
His spirit with desire was stirred  
To seek the city of the King  
And to his cot his son to bring.  
With young disciples at his side  
Forth on his way the hermit hied,  
While peasants from their hamlets ran  
To reverence the holy man.



Each with his little gift of food,  
Forth came the village multitude,  
And, as they humbly bowed the head,  
“What may we do for thee?” they said.  
Then he, of Bráhmans first and best,  
The gathered people thus addressed:—  
“Now tell me, for I fain would know,  
Why is it I am honored so?”  
They to the high-souled saint replied:—  
“Our ruler is with thee allied.  
Our master’s order we fulfil;  
O Bráhman, let thy mind be still.”

With joy the saintly hermit heard  
Each pleasant and delightful word,  
And poured a benediction down  
On King and ministers and town.  
Glad at the words of that high saint  
Some servants hastened to acquaint  
Their King, rejoicing to impart  
The tidings that would cheer his heart.  
Soon as the joyful tale he knew  
To meet the saint the monarch flew,  
The guest-gift in his hand he brought,  
And bowed before him and besought:—  
“This day by seeing thee I gain  
Not to have lived my life in vain.  
Now be not wroth with me, I pray,  
Because I wiled thy son away.”  
The best of Bráhmans answer made:—  
“Be not, great lord of Kings, afraid.  
Thy virtues have not failed to win  
My favor, O thou pure of sin.”  
Then in the front the saint was placed,  
The King came next in joyous haste,  
And with him entered his abode,  
’Mid glad acclaim as on they rode.  
To greet the sage the reverent crowd  
Raised suppliant hands and humbly bowed.  
Then from the palace many a dame  
Following well-dressed Sántá came,



Stood by the mighty saint and cried:—  
“See, honor’s source, thy son’s dear bride.”  
The saint, who every virtue knew,  
His arms around his daughter threw,  
And with a father’s rapture pressed  
The lady to his wondering breast.  
Arising from the saint’s embrace  
She bowed her low before his face,  
And then, with palm to palm applied,  
Stood by her hermit father’s side.  
He for his son, as laws ordain,  
Performed the rite that frees from stain,  
And, honored by the wise and good,  
With him departed to the wood.



## CANTO XIX

### THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCES

THE seasons six, in rapid flight,  
Had circled since that glorious rite.  
Eleven months had passed away—  
'Twas Chaitra's ninth returning day.  
The moon within that mansion shone  
Which Aditi looks so kindly on.  
Raised to their apex in the sky  
Five brilliant planets beamed on high.  
Shone with the moon, in Cancer's sign,  
Vrihaspati with light divine.  
Kauśalyā bore an infant blest  
With heavenly marks of grace impressed;  
Rāma, the universe's lord,  
A prince by all the worlds adored.  
New glory Queen Kauśalyā won  
Reflected from her splendid son.  
So Aditi shone more and more,  
The Mother of the Gods, when she  
The King of the Immortals bore,  
The thunder-wielding deity.  
The lotus-eyed, the beauteous boy,  
He came fierce Rāvan to destroy;  
From half of Vishnu's vigor born,  
He came to help the worlds forlorn.  
And Queen Kaikeyī bore a child  
Of truest valor, Bharat styled,  
With every princely virtue blest,  
One-fourth of Vishnu manifest.  
Sumitrā too a noble pair,  
Called Lakshman and Satrugghna, bare,  
Of high emprise, devoted, true,



Sharers in Vishnu's essence too.  
'Neath Pushya's mansion, Mína's sign,  
Was Bharat born, of soul benign.  
The sun had reached the Crab at morn  
When Queen Sumitrá's babes were born,  
What time the moon had gone to make  
His nightly dwelling with the Snake.  
The high-souled monarch's consorts bore  
At different times those glorious four,  
Like to himself and virtuous, bright  
As Proshthapadá's fourfold light.

Then danced the nymphs' celestial throng,  
The minstrels raised their strain;  
The drums of heaven pealed loud and long,  
And flowers came down in rain.  
Within Ayodhyá, blithe and gay,  
All kept the joyous holiday.  
The spacious square, the ample road  
With mimes and dancers overflowed,  
And with the voice of music rang—  
Where minstrels played and singers sang—  
And shone, a wonder to behold,  
With dazzling show of gems and gold.  
Nor did the King his largess spare,  
For minstrel, driver, bard, to share;  
Much wealth the Bráhmans bore away,  
And many thousand kine that day.  
Soon as each babe was twelve days old  
'Twas time the naming rite to hold,  
When Saint Váśishtha, rapt with joy,  
Assigned a name to every boy.  
Ráma, to him the high-souled heir,  
Bharat, to him Kaikeyí bare—  
Of Queen Sumitrá one fair son  
Was Lakshman, and Śatrughna one.  
Ráma, his sire's supreme delight,  
Like some proud banner cheered his sight,  
And to all creatures seemed to be  
The self-existent deity.  
All heroes, versed in holy lore,



To all mankind great love they bore.  
Fair stores of wisdom all possessed,  
With princely graces all were blest.  
But mid those youths of high descent,  
With lordly light preëminent,  
Like the full moon unclouded shone  
Ráma, the world's dear paragon.  
He best the elephant could guide,  
Urge the fleet car, the charger ride—  
A master he of bowman's skill,  
Joying to do his father's will.  
The world's delight and darling, he  
Loved Lakshman best from infancy;  
And Lakshman, lord of lofty fate,  
Upon his elder joyed to wait,  
Striving his second self to please  
With friendship's sweet observances.  
His limbs the hero ne'er would rest  
Unless the couch his brother pressed;  
Except beloved Ráma shared  
He could not taste the meal prepared.  
When Ráma, pride of Raghu's race,  
Sprang on his steed to urge the chase,  
Behind him Lakshman loved to go  
And guard him with his trusty bow.  
As Ráma was to Lakshman dear  
More than his life and ever near,  
So fond Śatrughna prized above  
His very life his Bharat's love.  
Illustrious heroes, nobly kind  
In mutual love they all combined,  
And gave their royal sire delight  
With modest grace and warrior might;  
Supported by the glorious four  
Shone Daśaratha more and more,  
As though, with every guardian God  
Who keeps the land and skies,  
The Father of all creatures trod  
The earth before men's eyes.

## CANTO XX

### VIŚVÁMITRA'S VISIT

**N**OW Daśaratha's pious mind  
Meet wedlock for his sons designed;  
With priests and friends the King began  
To counsel and prepare his plan.  
Such thoughts engaged his bosom, when,  
To see Ayodhyá's lord of men,  
A mighty saint of glorious fame,  
The hermit Viśvámitra came.  
For evil fiends that roam by night  
Disturbed him in each holy rite,  
And in their strength and frantic rage  
Assailed with witcheries the sage.  
He came to seek the monarch's aid  
To guard the rites the demons stayed,  
Unable to a close to bring  
One unpolluted offering.  
Seeking the King in this dire strait  
He said to those who kept the gate:—  
"Haste, warders, to your master run,  
And say that here stands Gádhi's son."  
Soon as they heard the holy man,  
To the King's chamber swift they ran  
With minds disordered all, and spurred  
To wildest zeal by what they heard.  
On to the royal hall they sped,  
There stood and lowly bowed the head,  
And made the lord of men aware  
That the great saint was waiting there.  
The King with priest and peer arose  
And ran the sage to meet,  
As Indra from his palace goes



Lord Brahmá's self to greet.  
When glowing with celestial light  
The pious hermit was in sight,  
The King, whose mien his transport showed,  
The honored gift for guests bestowed.  
Nor did the saint that gift despise,  
Offered as holy texts advise;  
He kindly asked the earth's great King  
How all with him was prospering.  
The son of Kusík bade him tell  
If all in town and field were well,  
All well with friends, and kith and kin,  
And royal treasure stored within:—  
“Do all thy neighbors own thy sway?  
Thy foes confess thee yet?  
Dost thou continue still to pay  
To Gods and men each debt?”  
Then he, of hermits first and best,  
Vaśishtha with a smile addressed,  
And asked him of his welfare too,  
Showing him honor as was due.  
Then with the sainted hermit all  
Went joyous to the monarch's hall,  
And sate them down by due degree,  
Each one, of rank and dignity.  
Joy filled the noble prince's breast  
Who thus bespoke the honored guest:—  
“As Amrit by a mortal found,  
As rain upon the thirsty ground,  
As to an heirless man a son  
Born to him of his precious one—  
As gain of what we sorely miss,  
As sudden dawn of mighty bliss,  
So is thy coming here to me—  
All welcome, mighty Saint, to thee.  
What wish within thy heart hast thou?  
If I can please thee, tell me how.  
Hail, Saint, from whom all honors flow,  
Worthy of all I can bestow.  
Blest is my birth with fruit to-day,  
Nor has my life been thrown away.



I see the best of Bráhmaṇ race,  
And night to glorious morn gives place.  
Thou, holy Sage, in days of old  
Among the royal saints enrolled,  
Didst, penance-glorified, within  
The Bráhmaṇ caste high station win.  
'Tis meet and right in many a way  
That I to thee should honor pay.  
This seems a marvel to mine eyes—  
All sin thy visit purifies;  
And I by seeing thee, O Sage,  
Have reaped the fruit of pilgrimage.  
Then say what thou wouldst have me do,  
That thou hast sought this interview.  
Favored by thee, my wish is still,  
O Hermit, to perform thy will.  
Nor needest thou at length explain  
The object that thy heart would gain.  
Without reserve I grant it now—  
My deity, O Lord, art thou.”  
The glorious hermit, far renowned,  
With highest fame and virtue crowned,  
Rejoiced these modest words to hear  
Delightful to the mind and ear.



## CANTO XXI

### VIŚVĀMITRA'S SPEECH

THE hermit heard with high content  
That speech so wondrous eloquent,  
And while each hair with joy arose,  
He thus made answer at the close:—  
“Good is thy speech, O noble King,  
And like thyself in everything.  
So should their lips be wisdom-fraught  
Whom kings begot, Vāśishtha taught.  
The favor which I came to seek  
Thou grantest ere my tongue can speak.  
But let my tale attention claim,  
And hear the need for which I came.  
O King, as Scripture texts allow,  
A holy rite employs me now.  
Two fiends who change their forms at will  
Impede that rite with cursed skill.  
Oft when the task is nigh complete,  
These worst of fiends my toil defeat,  
Throw bits of bleeding flesh, and o'er  
The altar shed a stream of gore.  
When thus the rite is mocked and stayed,  
And all my pious hopes delayed,  
Cast down in heart the spot I leave,  
And spent with fruitless labor grieve.  
Nor can I, checked by prudence, dare  
Let loose my fury on them there—  
The muttered curse, the threatening word,  
In such a rite must ne'er be heard.  
Thy grace the rite from check can free,  
And yield the fruit I long to see.  
Thy duty bids thee, King, defend



The suffering guest, the suppliant friend.  
Give me thy son, thine eldest born,  
Whom locks like raven's wings adorn.  
That hero youth, the truly brave,  
Of thee, O glorious King, I crave.  
For he can lay those demons low  
Who mar my rites and work me woe:  
My power shall shield the youth from harm,  
And heavenly might shall nerve his arm.  
And on my champion will I shower  
Unnumbered gifts of varied power—  
Such gifts as shall ensure his fame  
And spread through all the worlds his name.  
Be sure those fiends can never stand  
Before the might of Rāma's hand,  
And mid the best and bravest none  
Can slay that pair but Raghu's son.  
Entangled in the toils of Fate  
Those sinners, proud and obstinate,  
Are, in their fury overbold,  
No match for Rāma, mighty-souled.  
Nor let a father's breast give way  
Too far to fond affection's sway.  
Count thou the fiends already slain:  
My word is pledged, nor pledged in vain.  
I know the hero Rāma well  
In whom high thoughts and valor dwell;  
So does Vāśishtha, so do these  
Engaged in long austerities.  
If thou would do the righteous deed,  
And win high fame, thy virtue's meed,  
Fame that on earth shall last and live,  
To me, great King, thy Rāma give.  
If to the words that I have said,  
With Saint Vāśishtha at their head  
Thy holy men, O King, agree,  
Then let thy Rāma go with me.  
Ten nights my sacrifice will last,  
And ere the stated time be past  
Those wicked fiends, those impious twain,  
Must fall by wondrous Rāma slain.



Let not the hours, I warn thee, fly,  
Fixt for the rite, unheeded by;  
Good luck have thou, O royal Chief,  
Nor give thy heart to needless grief."

Thus in fair words with virtue fraught,  
The pious glorious saint besought.  
But the good speech with poignant sting  
Pierced ear and bosom of the King,  
Who, stabbed with pangs too sharp to bear,  
Fell prostrate and lay fainting there.

## CANTO XXII

### DASARATHA'S SPEECH

**H**IS tortured senses all astray,  
Awhile the hapless monarch lay,  
Then slowly gathering thought and strength  
To Viśvámitra spoke at length:—  
“My son is but a child, I ween;  
This year he will be just sixteen.  
How is he fit for such emprise,  
My darling with the lotus eyes?  
A mighty army will I bring  
That calls me master, lord, and King,  
And with its countless squadrons fight  
Against these rovers of the night.  
My faithful heroes skilled to wield  
The arms of war will take the field;  
Their skill the demons' might may break:  
Ráma, my child, thou must not take.  
I, even I, my bow in hand,  
Will in the van of battle stand,  
And, while my soul is left alive,  
With the night-roaming demons strive.  
Thy guarded sacrifice shall be  
Completed, from all hindrance free.  
Thither will I my journey make:  
Ráma, my child, thou must not take.  
A boy unskilled, he knows not yet  
The bounds to strength and weakness set.  
No match is he for demon foes  
Who magic arts to arms oppose.  
O chief of saints, I have no power,  
Of Ráma reft, to live one hour—  
Mine aged heart at once would break:



Ráma, my child, thou must not take.  
 Nine thousand circling years have fled  
 With all their seasons o'er my head,  
 And as a hard-won boon, O Sage,  
 These sons have come to cheer mine age.  
 My dearest love amid the four  
 Is he whom first his mother bore,  
 Still dearer for his virtue's sake;  
 Ráma, my child, thou must not take.  
 But if, unmoved by all I say,  
 Thou needs must bear my son away,  
 Let me lead with him, I entreat,  
 A fourfold army all complete.  
 What is the demons' might, O Sage?  
 Who are they? What their parentage?  
 What is their size? What beings lend  
 Their power to guard them and befriend?  
 How can my son their arts withstand?  
 Or I or all my armed band?  
 Tell me the whole that I may know  
 To met in war each evil foe  
 Whom conscious might inspires with pride."

And Viśvámitra thus replied:—  
 "Sprung from Pulastya's race there came  
 A giant known by Rávan's name.  
 Once favored by the Eternal Sire  
 He plagues the worlds in ceaseless ire,  
 For peerless power and might renowned,  
 By giant bands encompassed round.  
 Viśravas for his sire they hold,  
 His brother is the Lord of Gold.  
 King of the giant hosts is he,  
 And worst of all in cruelty.  
 This Rávan's dread commands impel  
 Two demons who in might excel,  
 Máricha and Suváhu Light,  
 To trouble and impede the rite."  
 Then thus the King addressed the sage:—  
 "No power have I, my lord, to wage  
 War with this evil-minded foe;



Now pity on my darling show,  
And upon me of hapless fate,  
For thee as God I venerate.  
Gods, spirits, bards of heavenly birth,  
The birds of air, the snakes of earth  
Before the might of Rávan quail,  
Much less can mortal man avail.  
He draws, I hear, from out the breast,  
The valor of the mightiest.  
No, ne'er can I with him contend,  
Or with the forces he may send.  
How can I then my darling lend,  
Godlike, unskilled in battle? No,  
I will not let my young child go.  
Foes of thy rite, those mighty ones,  
Sunda and Upasunda's sons,  
Are fierce as Fate to overthrow:  
I will not let my young child go.  
Márícha and Suváhu fell  
Are valiant and instructed well.  
One of the twain I might attack  
With all my friends their lord to back."



## CANTO XXIII

### VAŚISHTHA'S SPEECH

WHILE thus the hapless monarch spoke,  
Paternal love his utterance broke.  
Then words like these the saint returned,  
And fury in his bosom burned :—  
“Didst thou, O King, a promise make,  
And wishest now thy word to break?  
A son of Raghu's line should scorn  
To fail in faith, a man forsworn.  
But if thy soul can bear the shame  
I will return e'en as I came.  
Live with thy sons, and joy be thine,  
False scion of Kakutstha's line.”  
As Viśvámitra, mighty sage,  
Was moved with this tempestuous rage,  
Earth rocked and reeled throughout her frame,  
And fear upon the Immortals came.  
But Saint Vaśishtha, wisest seer,  
Observant of his vows austere,  
Saw the whole world convulsed with dread,  
And thus unto the monarch said :—  
“Thou, born of old Ikshváku's seed,  
Art Justice' self in mortal weed.  
Constant and pious, blest by fate,  
The right thou must not violate.  
Thou, Raghu's son, so famous through  
The triple world as just and true,  
Perform thy bounden duty still,  
Nor stain thy race by deed of ill.  
If thou have sworn and now refuse  
Thou must thy store of merit lose.  
Then, Monarch, let thy Ráma go,



Nor fear for him the demon foe.  
The fiends shall have no power to hurt  
Him trained to war or inexperienced—  
Nor vanquish him in battle field,  
For Kuśik's son the youth will shield.  
He is incarnate Justice, he  
The best of men for bravery—  
Embodied love of penance drear,  
Among the wise without a peer.  
Full well he knows, great Kuśik's son,  
The arms celestial, every one,  
Arms from the Gods themselves concealed,  
Far less to other men revealed.  
These arms to him, when earth he swayed,  
Mighty Kriśáśva, pleased, conveyed.  
Kriśáśva's sons they are indeed,  
Brought forth by Daksha's lovely seed,  
Heralds of conquest, strong and bold,  
Brilliant, of semblance manifold.  
Jayá and Vijayá, most fair,  
A hundred splendid weapons bare.  
Of Jayá, glorious as the morn,  
First fifty noble sons were born,  
Boundless in size yet viewless too,  
They came the demons to subdue.  
And fifty children also came  
Of Vijayá the beauteous dame,  
Sanháras named, of mighty force,  
Hard to assail or check in course.  
Of these the hermit knows the use,  
And weapons new can he produce.  
All these the mighty saint will yield  
To Ráma's hand, to own and wield;  
And armed with these, beyond a doubt  
Shall Ráma put those fiends to rout.  
For Ráma and the people's sake,  
For thine own good my counsel take,  
Nor seek, O King, with fond delay,  
The parting of thy son to stay."



## CANTO XXIV

### THE SPELLS

VĀŚISHTHA thus was speaking still:  
The monarch, of his own free will,  
Bade with quick zeal and joyful cheer  
Rāma and Lakshman hasten near.  
Mother and sire in loving care  
Sped their dear son with rite and prayer;  
Vāśishtha blessed him ere he went,  
O'er his loved head the father bent—  
And then to Kuśik's son resigned  
Rāma with Lakshman close behind.  
Standing by Viśvāmitra's side,  
The youthful hero, lotus-eyed,  
The Wind-God saw, and sent a breeze  
Whose sweet pure touch just waved the trees.  
There fell from heaven a flowery rain,  
And with the song and dance the strain  
Of shell and tambour sweetly blent  
As forth the son of Raghu went.  
The hermit led: behind him came  
The bow-armed Rāma, dear to fame,  
Whose locks were like the raven's wing:—  
Then Lakshman, closely following.  
The Gods and Indra, filled with joy,  
Looked down upon the royal boy,  
And much they longed the death to see  
Of their ten-headed enemy.  
Rāma and Lakshman paced behind  
That hermit of the lofty mind,  
As the young Āśvins, heavenly pair,  
Follow Lord Indra through the air.



On arm and hand the guard they wore,  
Quiver and bow and sword they bore;  
Two fire-born Gods of War seemed they,  
He, Śiva's self who led the way.  
Upon fair Sarjú's southern shore  
They now had walked a league or more,  
When thus the sage in accents mild  
To Ráma said: "Beloved child,  
This lustral water duly touch:  
My counsel will avail thee much.  
Forget not all the words I say,  
Nor let the occasion slip away.  
Lo, with two spells I thee invest,  
The mighty and the mightiest.  
O'er thee fatigue shall ne'er prevail,  
Nor age nor change thy limbs assail.  
Thee powers of darkness ne'er shall smite  
In tranquil sleep or wild delight.  
No one is there in all the land  
Thine equal for the vigorous hand.  
Thou, when thy lips pronounce the spell,  
Shalt have no peer in heaven or hell.  
None in the world with thee shall vie,  
O sinless one, in apt reply—  
In fortune, knowledge, wit, and tact,  
Wisdom to plan and skill to act.  
This double science take, and gain  
Glory that shall for aye remain.  
Wisdom and judgment spring from each  
Of these fair spells whose use I teach.  
Hunger and thirst unknown to thee,  
High in the worlds thy rank shall be.  
For these two spells with might endued,  
Are the Great Father's heavenly brood,  
And thee, O Chief, may fitly grace,  
Thou glory of Kakutstha's race.  
Virtues which none can match are thine,  
Lord, from thy birth, of gifts divine—  
And now these spells of might shall cast  
Fresh radiance o'er the gifts thou hast."  
Then Ráma duly touched the wave,





## VÁLMÍKI

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Raised suppliant hands, bowed low his head,  
And took the spells the hermit gave,  
Whose soul on contemplation fed.  
From him whose might these gifts enhanced,  
A brighter beam of glory glanced:—  
So shines in all his autumn blaze  
The Day-God of the thousand rays.  
The hermit's wants those youths supplied,  
As pupils used to holy guide.  
And then the night in sweet content  
On Sarjú's pleasant bank they spent.

## CANTO XXV

### THE HERMITAGE OF LOVE

SOON as appeared the morning light  
Up rose the mighty anchorite,  
And thus to youthful Râma said,  
Who lay upon his leafy bed :—  
“ High fate is hers who calls thee son :  
Arise, 'tis break of day ;  
Rise, Chief, and let those rites be done  
Due at the morning's ray.”  
At that great sage's high behest  
Up sprang the princely pair,  
To bathing rites themselves addressed,  
And breathed the holiest prayer.  
Their morning task completed, they  
To Viśvâmitra came,  
That store of holy works, to pay  
The worship saints may claim.  
Then to the hallowed spot they went  
Along fair Sarjû's side  
Where mix her waters confluent  
With three-pathed Gangâ's tide.  
There was a sacred hermitage  
Where saints devout of mind  
Their lives through many a lengthened age  
To penance had resigned.  
That pure abode the princes eyed  
With unrestrained delight,  
And thus unto the saint they cried,  
Rejoicing at the sight :—  
“ Whose is that hermitage we see?  
Who makes his dwelling there?  
Full of desire to hear are we :  
O Saint, the truth declare.”



The hermit, smiling, made reply  
To the two boys' request:—  
“Hear, Râma, who in days gone by  
This calm retreat possessed—  
Kandarpa in apparent form,  
(Called Kâma by the wise,)  
Dared Umâ's new-wed lord to storm  
And make the God his prize.  
'Gainst Sthânu's self, on rites austere  
And vows intent, they say,  
His bold rash hand he dared to rear,  
Though Sthânu cried, Away!  
But the God's eye with scornful glare  
Fell terrible on him,  
Dissolved the shape that was so fair  
And burnt up every limb.  
Since the great God's terrific rage  
Destroyed his form and frame,  
Kâma in each succeeding age  
Has borne Ananga's name.  
So, where his lovely form decayed,  
This land is Anga styled:—  
Sacred to him of old this shade,  
And hermits undefiled.  
Here Scripture-talking elders sway  
Each sense with firm control,  
And penance-rites have washed away  
All sin from every soul.  
One night, fair boy, we here will spend,  
A pure stream on each hand,  
And with to-morrow's light will bend  
Our steps to yonder strand.  
Here let us bathe, and free from stain  
To that pure grove repair,  
Sacred to Kâma, and remain  
One night in comfort there.”  
With penance' far-discerning eye  
The saintly men beheld  
Their coming, and with transport high  
Each holy bosom swelled.  
To Kuśik's son the gift they gave



That honored guest should greet—  
Water they brought his feet to lave,  
And showed him honor meet.  
Ráma and Lakshman next obtained  
In due degree their share—  
Then with sweet talk the guests remained,  
And charmed each listener there.  
The evening prayers were duly said  
With voices calm and low :—  
Then on the ground each laid his head  
And slept till morning's glow.



## CANTO XXVI

### THE FOREST OF TĀDAKĀ

WHEN the fair light of morning rose  
The princely tamers of their foes  
Followed, his morning worship o'er,  
The hermit to the river's shore.  
The high-souled men with thoughtful care  
A pretty barge had stationed there.  
All cried, "O lord, this barge ascend,  
And with thy princely followers bend  
To yonder side thy prosperous way—  
With nought to check thee or delay."  
Nor did the saint their rede reject:  
He bade farewell with due respect,  
And crossed, attended by the twain,  
That river rushing to the main.  
When now the bark was half-way o'er,  
Rāma and Lakshman heard the roar,  
That louder grew and louder yet,  
Of waves by dashing waters met.  
Then Rāma asked the mighty seer:—  
"What is the tumult that I hear  
Of waters cleft in mid-career?"  
Soon as the speech of Rāma, stirred  
By deep desire to know, he heard,  
The pious saint began to tell  
What caused the waters' roar and swell:—  
"On high Kailāsa's distant hill  
There lies a noble lake  
Whose waters, born from Brahmā's will,  
The name of Mānas take.  
Thence, hallowing where'er they flow,  
The streams of Sarjū fall,



And wandering through the plains below  
Embrace Ayodhyá's wall.  
Still, still preserved in Sarjú's name  
Sarovar's fame we trace,  
The flood of Brahmá whence she came  
To run her holy race.  
To meet great Gangá here she hies  
With tributary wave—  
Hence the loud roar ye hear arise,  
Of floods that swell and rave.  
Here, pride of Raghu's line, do thou  
In humble adoration bow."

He spoke. The princes both obeyed,  
And reverence to each river paid.  
They reached the southern shore at last,  
And gayly on their journey passed.  
A little space beyond there stood  
A gloomy awe-inspiring wood.  
The monarch's noble son began  
To question thus the holy man:—  
"Whose gloomy forest meets mine eye,  
Like some vast cloud that fills the sky?  
Pathless and dark it seems to be,  
Where birds in thousands wander free;  
Where shrill cicadas' cries resound,  
And fowl of dismal note abound.  
Lion, rhinoceros, and bear,  
Boar, tiger, elephant, are there,  
There shrubs and thorns run wild:  
Dháo, Sál, Bignonia, Bel, are found,  
And every tree that grows on ground:  
How is the forest styled?"  
The glorious saint this answer made:—  
"Dear child of Raghu, hear  
Who dwells within the horrid shade  
That looks so dark and drear.  
Where now is wood, long ere this day  
Two broad and fertile lands,  
Malajā and Karúsha lay,  
Adorned by heavenly hands.



Here, mourning friendship's broken ties,  
Lord Indra of the thousand eyes  
Hungered and sorrowed many a day,  
His brightness soiled with mud and clay,  
When in a storm of passion he  
Had slain his dear friend Namuchi.  
Then came the Gods and saints who bore  
Their golden pitchers brimming o'er  
With holy streams that banish stain,  
And bathed Lord Indra pure again.  
When in this land the God was freed  
From spot and stain of impious deed  
For that his own dear friend he slew,  
High transport thrilled his bosom through.  
Then in his joy the lands he blessed,  
And gave a boon they long possessed:—  
“Because these fertile lands retain  
The washings of the blot and stain,  
('Twas thus Lord Indra sware,)  
Malaja and Karúsha's name  
Shall celebrate with deathless fame  
My malady and care.”  
“So be it,” all the Immortals cried,  
When Indra's speech they heard—  
And with acclaim they ratified  
The names his lips conferred.  
“Long time, O victor of thy foes,  
These happy lands had sweet repose,  
And higher still in fortune rose.  
At length a spirit, loving ill,  
Tádaká, wearing shapes at will—  
Whose mighty strength, exceeding vast,  
A thousand elephants' surpassed,  
Was to fierce Sunda, lord and head  
Of all the demon armies, wed.  
From her, Lord Indra's peer in might  
Giant Márícha sprang to light;  
And she, a constant plague and pest,  
These two fair realms has long distressed,  
Now dwelling in her dark abode  
A league away she bars the road:



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And we, O Ráma, hence must go  
Where lies the forest of the foe.  
Now on thine own right arm rely,  
And my command obey:  
Smite the foul monster that she die,  
And take the plague away.  
To reach this country none may dare,  
Fallen from its old estate,  
Which she, whose fury nought can bear,  
Has left so desolate.  
And now my truthful tale is told—  
How with accursed sway  
The spirit plagued this wood of old,  
And ceases not to-day.”

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## CANTO XXVII

### THE BIRTH OF TĀDAKĀ

WHEN thus the sage without a peer  
Had closed that story strange to hear,  
Rāma again the saint addressed,  
To set one lingering doubt at rest :—  
“O holy man, ’tis said by all  
That spirits’ strength is weak and small,  
How can she match, of power so slight,  
A thousand elephants in might?”  
And Viśvámitra thus replied  
To Raghu’s son, the glorified :—  
“Listen, and I will tell thee how  
She gained the strength that arms her now.  
A mighty spirit lived of yore;  
Suketu was the name he bore.  
Childless was he, and free from crime  
In rites austere he passed his time.  
The mighty Sire was pleased to show  
His favor, and a child bestow,  
Tādakā named, most fair to see,  
A pearl among the maids was she—  
And matched, for such was Brahmá’s dower,  
A thousand elephants in power.  
Nor would the Eternal Sire, although  
The spirit longed, a son bestow.  
That maid in beauty’s youthful pride  
Was given to Sunda for a bride.  
Her son, Márícha was his name,  
A giant, through a curse, became.  
She, widowed, dared with him molest  
Agastya, of all saints the best.  
Inflamed with hunger’s wildest rage,  
Roaring she rushed upon the sage.

When the great hermit saw her near,  
 On-speeding in her fierce career,  
 He thus pronounced Máraicha's doom:—  
 'A giant's form and shape assume.'  
 And then, by mighty anger swayed,  
 On Tádaká this curse he laid:—  
 'Thy present form and semblance quit,  
 And wear a shape thy mood to fit;  
 Changed form and feature by my ban,  
 A fearful thing that feeds on man.'  
 She, by his awful curse possessed,  
 And mad with rage that fills her breast,  
 Has on this land her fury dealt  
 Where once the saint Agastya dwelt.  
 Go, Ráma, smite this monster dead,  
 The wicked plague, of power so dread,  
 And further by this deed of thine  
 The good of Bráhmans and of kine.  
 Thy hand alone can overthrow,  
 In all the worlds, this impious foe.  
 Nor let compassion lead thy mind  
 To shrink from blood of womankind;  
 A monarch's son must ever count  
 The people's welfare paramount—  
 And whether pain or joy he deal  
 Dare all things for his subjects' weal;  
 Yea, if the deed bring praise or guilt,  
 If life be saved or blood be spilt:—  
 Such, through all time, should be the care  
 Of those a kingdom's weight who bear.  
 Slay, Ráma, slay this impious fiend,  
 For by no law her life is screened.  
 So Manthará, as bards have told,  
 Virochan's child, was slain of old  
 By Indra, when in furious hate  
 She longed the earth to devastate.  
 So Kávya's mother, Bhrigu's wife,  
 Who loved her husband as her life,  
 When Indra's throne she sought to gain,  
 By Vishnu's hand of yore was slain.  
 By these and high-souled kings beside,  
 Struck down, have 'awless women died."



## CANTO XXVIII

### THE DEATH OF TADAKA

**T**HUS spoke the saint. Each vigorous word  
The noble monarch's offspring heard—  
And, reverent hands together laid,  
His answer to the hermit made:—  
“My sire and mother bade me aye  
Thy word, O mighty Saint, obey.  
So will I, O most glorious, kill  
This Tádaká who joys in ill—  
For such my sire's, and such thy will.  
To aid with mine avenging hand  
The Bráhmans, kine, and all the land,  
Obedient, heart and soul, I stand.”  
Thus spoke the tamer of the foe,  
And by the middle grasped his bow.  
Strongly he drew the sounding string  
That made the distant welkin ring.  
Scared by the mighty clang the deer  
That roamed the forest shook with fear.  
And Tádaká the echo heard,  
And rose in haste from slumber stirred.  
In wild amaze, her soul aflame  
With fury towards the spot she came.  
When that foul shape of evil mien  
And stature vast as e'er was seen  
The wrathful son of Raghu eyed,  
He thus unto his brother cried:—  
“Her dreadful shape, O Lakshman, see,  
A form to shudder at and flee.  
The hideous monster's very view  
Would cleave a timid heart in two.  
Behold the demon hard to smite,

Defended by her magic might.  
My hand shall stay her course to-day,  
And shear her nose and ears away.  
No heart have I her life to take:  
I spare it for her sex's sake.  
My will is but—with minished force—  
To check her in her evil course.”  
While thus he spoke, by rage impelled—  
Roaring as she came nigh,  
The fiend her course at Rāma held  
With huge arms tossed on high,  
Her, rushing on, the seer assailed  
With a loud cry of hate;  
And thus the sons of Raghu hailed:—  
“Fight, and be fortunate.”  
Then from the earth a horrid cloud  
Of dust the demon raised,  
And for awhile in darkling shroud  
Wrapt Raghu's sons amazed.  
Then calling on her magic power  
The fearful fight to wage,  
She smote him with a stony shower,  
Till Rāma burned with rage.  
Then pouring forth his arrowy rain  
That stony flood to stay,  
With wingèd darts, as she charged amain,  
He shore her hands away.  
As Tādakā still thundered near  
Thus maimed by Rāma's blows,  
Lakshman in fury severed sheer  
The monster's ears and nose.  
Assuming by her magic skill  
A fresh and fresh disguise,  
She tried a thousand shapes at will,  
Then vanished from their eyes.  
When Gādhi's son of high renown  
Still saw the stony rain pour down  
Upon each princely warrior's head,  
With words of wisdom thus he said:—  
“Enough of mercy, Rāma, lest  
This sinful evil-working pest,



Disturber of each holy rite,  
Repair by magic arts her might.  
Without delay the fiend should die,  
For, see, the twilight hour is nigh.  
And at the joints of night and day  
Such giant foes are hard to slay."  
Then Ráma, skilful to direct  
His arrow to the sound—  
With shafts the mighty demon checked  
Who rained her stones around.  
She, sore impeded and beset  
By Ráma and his arrowy net—  
Though skilled in guile and magic lore,  
Rushed on the brothers with a roar.  
Deformed, terrific, murderous, dread,  
Swift as the levin on she sped—  
Like cloudy pile in autumn's sky,  
Lifting her two vast arms on high:  
When Ráma smote her with a dart  
Shaped like a crescent, to the heart.  
Sore wounded by the shaft that came  
With lightning speed and surest aim,  
Blood spurting from her mouth and side,  
She fell upon the earth and died.  
Soon as the Lord who rules the sky  
Saw the dread monster lifeless lie,  
He called aloud, Well done! well done!  
And the Gods honored Raghu's son.  
Standing in heaven the Thousand-eyed,  
With all the Immortals, joying cried:—  
"Lift up thine eyes, O Saint, and see  
The Gods and Indra nigh to thee.  
This deed of Ráma's boundless might  
Has filled our bosoms with delight.  
Now, for our will would have it so,  
To Raghu's son some favor show.  
Invest him with the power which nought  
But penance gains, and holy thought.  
Those heavenly arms on him bestow—  
To thee entrusted long ago  
By great Kṛiśáśva best of kings,

Son of the Lord of living things.  
More fit recipient none can be  
Than he who joys in following thee;  
And for our sakes the monarch's seed  
Has yet to do a mighty deed."

He spoke; and all the heavenly train  
Rejoicing sought their homes again,  
While honor to the saint they paid—  
Then came the evening's twilight shade.  
The best of hermits overjoyed  
To know the monstrous fiend destroyed,  
His lips on Ráma's forehead pressed,  
And thus the conquering chief addressed:—  
"O Ráma, gracious to the sight,  
Here will we pass the present night,  
And with the morrow's earliest ray  
Bend to my hermitage our way."  
The son of Daśaratha heard,  
Delighted, Viśvámitra's word—  
And as he bade, that night he spent  
In Tádaká's wild wood, content.  
And the grove shone that happy day,  
Freed from the curse that on it lay—  
Like Chaitraratha fair and gay.



## CANTO XXIX

### THE CELESTIAL ARMS

THAT night they slept and took their rest;  
And then the mighty saint addressed,  
With pleasant smile and accents mild  
These words to Raghu's princely child:—  
“Well pleased am I. High fate be thine,  
Thou scion of a royal line.  
Now will I, for I love thee so,  
All heavenly arms on thee bestow.  
Victor with these, whoe'er oppose,  
Thy hand shall conquer all thy foes—  
Though Gods and spirits of the air,  
Serpents and fiends, the conflict dare.  
I'll give thee as a pledge of love  
The mystic arms they use above,  
For worthy thou to have revealed  
The weapons I have learnt to wield.  
First, son of Raghu, shall be thine  
The arm of Vengeance, strong, divine:  
The arm of Fate, the arm of Right,  
And Vishnu's arm of awful might:—  
That, before which no foe can stand,  
The thunderbolt of Indra's hand;  
And Siva's trident, sharp and dread,  
And that dire weapon, Brahmá's Head.  
And two fair clubs, O royal child,  
One Charmer and one Pointed styled—  
With flame of lambent fire aglow,  
On thee, O Chieftain, I bestow.  
And Fate's dread net and Justice' noose  
That none may conquer, for thy use:—  
And the great cord, renowned of old,



Which Varun ever loves to hold.  
Take these two thunderbolts, which I  
Have got for thee, the Moist and Dry.  
Here Śiva's dart to thee I yield,  
And that which Vishnu wont to wield.  
I give to thee the arm of Fire,  
Desired by all and named the Spire.  
To thee I grant the Wind-God's dart,  
Named Crusher, O thou pure of heart.  
This arm, the Horse's Head, accept,  
And this, the Curlew's Bill yclept,  
And these two spears, the best e'er flew,  
Named the Invincible and True.  
And arms of fiends I make thine own,  
Skull-wreath and mace that smashes bone.  
And Joyous, which the spirits bear,  
Great weapon of the sons of air.  
Brave offspring of the best of lords,  
I give thee now the Gem of swords—  
And offer next, thine hand to arm,  
The heavenly bard's beloved charm.  
Now with two arms I thee invest  
Of never-ending Sleep and Rest—  
With weapons of the Sun and Rain,  
And those that dry and burn amain;  
And strong Desire with conquering touch,  
The dart that Káma prizes much.  
I give the arm of shadowy powers  
That bleeding flesh of man devours.  
I give the arms the God of Gold  
And giant fiends exult to hold.  
This smites the foe in battle-strife,  
And takes his fortune, strength, and life.  
I give the arms called False and True,  
And great Illusion give I too;  
The hero's arm called Strong and Bright  
That spoils the foeman's strength in fight.  
I give thee as a priceless boon  
The Dew, the weapon of the Moon,  
And add the weapon, deftly planned,  
That strengthens Viśvakarmá's hand.



The Mortal dart whose point is chill,  
And Slaughter, ever sure to kill;  
All these and other arms, for thou  
Art very dear, I give thee now.  
Receive these weapons from my hand,  
Son of the noblest in the land."  
Facing the east, the glorious saint  
Pure from all spot of earthly taint,  
To Rāma, with delighted mind,  
That noble host of spells consigned.  
He taught the arms, whose lore is won  
Hardly by Gods, to Raghu's son.  
He muttered low the spell whose call  
Summons those arms and rules them all—  
And each, in visible form and frame,  
Before the monarch's son they came.  
They stood and spoke in reverent guise  
To Rāma with exulting cries:—  
"O noblest child of Raghu, see,  
Thy ministers and thralls are we."  
With joyful heart and eager hand  
Rāma received the wondrous band,  
And thus with words of welcome cried:—  
"Aye present to my will abide"—  
Then hastened to the saint to pay  
Due reverence, and pursued his way.

## CANTO XXX

### THE MYSTERIOUS POWERS

PURE, with glad cheer and joyful breast,  
Of those mysterious arms possessed,  
Ráma, now passing on his way,  
Thus to the saint began to say:—  
“Lord of these mighty weapons, I  
Can scarce be harmed by Gods on high;  
Now, best of saints, I long to gain  
The powers that can these arms restrain.”  
Thus spoke the prince. The sage austere,  
True to his vows, from evil clear,  
Called forth the names of those great charms  
Whose powers restrain the deadly arms.  
“Receive thou True and Truly-famed,  
And Bold and Fleet: the weapons named  
Warder and Progress, swift of pace,  
Averted-head and Drooping-face;  
The Seen, and that which Secret flies—  
The weapon of the thousand eyes;  
Ten-headed, and the Hundred-faced,  
Star-gazer and the Layer-waste;  
The Omen-bird, the Pure-from-spot,  
The pair that wake and slumber not;  
The Fiendish, that which shakes amain,  
The Strong-of-Hand, the Rich-in-Gain;  
The Guardian, and the Close-allied,  
The Gaper, Love, and Golden-side:—  
O Raghu’s son receive all these,  
Bright ones that wear what forms they please;  
Kriśásva’s mystic sons are they,  
And worthy thou their might to sway.”



With joy the pride of Raghu's race  
 Received the hermit's proffered grace—  
 Mysterious arms, to check and stay,  
 Or smite the foeman in the fray.  
 Then, all with heavenly forms endued,  
 Nigh came the wondrous multitude.  
 Celestial in their bright attire  
 Some shone like coals of burning fire—  
 Some were like clouds of dusky smoke;  
 And suppliant thus they sweetly spoke:—  
 "Thy thralls, O Ráma, here we stand—  
 Command, we pray, thy faithful band."  
 "Depart," he cried, "where each may list,  
 But when I call you to assist,  
 Be present to my mind with speed,  
 And aid me in the hour of need."

To Ráma then they lowly bent,  
 And round him in due reverence went—  
 To his command they answered, "Yea,"  
 And as they came so went away.  
 When thus the arms had homeward flown,  
 With pleasant words and modest tone,  
 E'en as he walked, the prince began  
 To question thus the holy man:—  
 "What cloudlike wood is that which near  
 The mountain's side I see appear?  
 O tell me, for I long to know:  
 Its pleasant aspect charms me so.  
 Its glades are full of deer at play,  
 And sweet birds sing on every spray.  
 Passed is the hideous wild—I feel  
 So sweet a tremor o'er me steal—  
 And hail with transport fresh and new  
 A land that is so fair to view.  
 Then tell me all, thou holy Sage,  
 And whose this pleasant hermitage  
 In which those wicked ones delight  
 To mar and kill each holy rite—  
 And with foul heart and evil deed  
 Thy sacrifice, great Saint, impede.



## THE RÁMÁYANA

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CSL

To whom, O Sage, belongs this land  
In which thine altars ready stand?  
'Tis mine to guard them, and to slay  
The giants who the rites would stay.  
All this, O best of saints, I burn  
From thine own lips, my lord, to learn."



## CANTO XXXI

### THE PERFECT HERMITAGE

**T**HUS spoke the prince of boundless might,  
And thus replied the anchorite:—  
“ Chief of the mighty arm, of yore  
Lord Vishnu, whom the Gods adore  
For holy thought and rites austere,  
Of penance made his dwelling here.  
This ancient wood was called of old  
Grove of the Dwarf, the mighty-souled—  
And when perfection he attained  
The grove the name of Perfect gained.  
Bali of yore, Virochan's son,  
Dominion over Indra won—  
And when with power his proud heart swelled,  
O'er the three worlds his empire held.  
When Bali then began a rite,  
The Gods and Indra in affright  
Sought Vishnu in this place of rest,  
And thus with prayers the God addressed:—  
'Bali, Virochan's mighty son,  
His sacrifice has now begun:  
Of boundless wealth, that demon king  
Is bounteous to each living thing.  
Though suppliants flock from every side  
The suit of none is e'er denied.  
Whate'er, where'er, howe'er the call,  
He hears the suit and gives to all.  
Now with thine own illusive art  
Perform, O Lord, the helper's part:  
Assume a dwarfish form, and thus  
From fear and danger rescue us.' ”



Thus in their dread the Immortals sued  
The God, a dwarfish shape induced :—  
Before Virochan's son he came,  
Three steps of land his only claim.  
The boon obtained, in wondrous wise  
Lord Vishnu's form increased in size;  
Through all the worlds, tremendous, vast,  
God of the Triple Step, he passed.  
The whole broad earth from side to side  
He measured with one mighty stride—  
Spanned with the next the firmament,  
And with the third through heaven he went.  
Thus was the king of demons hurled  
By Vishnu to the nether world—  
And thus the universe restored  
To Indra's rule, its ancient lord.  
And now because the Immortal God  
This spot in dwarflike semblance trod,  
The grove has aye been loved by me  
For reverence of the devotee.  
But demons haunt it, prompt to stay  
Each holy offering I would pay.  
Be thine, O lion-lord, to kill  
These giants that delight in ill.  
This day, beloved child, our feet  
Shall rest within the calm retreat;  
And know, thou chief of Raghu's line,  
My hermitage is also thine."  
He spoke; and soon the anchorite,  
With joyous looks that beamed delight,  
With Ráma and his brother stood  
Within the consecrated wood.  
Soon as they saw the holy man,  
With one accord together ran  
The dwellers in the sacred shade,  
And to the saint their reverence paid—  
And offered water for his feet,  
The gift of honor, and a seat;  
And next with hospitable care  
They entertained the princely pair.  
The royal tamers of their foes



Rested awhile in sweet repose—  
Then to the chief of hermits sued  
Standing in suppliant attitude:—  
“Begin, O best of saints, we pray,  
Initiatory rites to-day.  
This Perfect Grove shall be anew  
Made perfect, and thy words be true.”

Then, thus addressed, the holy man,  
The very glorious sage, began  
The high preliminary rite,  
Restraining sense and appetite.  
Calmly the youths that night reposed,  
And rose when morn her light disclosed—  
Their morning worship paid, and took  
Of lustral water from the brook.  
Thus purified they breathed the prayer,  
Then greeted Viśvámitra where  
As celebrant he sate beside  
The flame with sacred oil supplied.

## CANTO XXXII

### VIŚVĀMITRA'S SACRIFICE

THAT conquering pair, of royal race,  
Skilled to observe due time and place—  
To Kúśik's hermit son addressed,  
In timely words, their meet request:—  
“When must we, lord, we pray thee tell,  
Those Rovers of the Night repel?  
Speak, lest we let the moment fly,  
And pass the due occasion by.”  
Thus longing for the strife, they prayed,  
And thus the hermits answer made:—  
“Till the fifth day be come and past,  
O Raghu's sons, your watch must last.  
The saint his Dīkshá has begun,  
And all that time will speak to none.”  
Soon as the steadfast devotees  
Had made reply in words like these,  
The youths began, disdaining sleep,  
Six days and nights their watch to keep—  
The warrior pair who tamed the foe,  
Unrivalled benders of the bow,  
Kept watch and ward unwearied still  
To guard the saint from scathe and ill.  
'Twas now the sixth returning day,  
The hour foretold had passed away.  
Then Ráma cried: “O Lakshman, now  
Firm, watchful, resolute be thou.  
The fiends as yet have kept afar  
From the pure grove in which we are;  
Yet waits us, ere the day shall close,  
Dire battle with the demon foes.”  
While thus spoke Ráma, borne away



By longing for the deadly fray,  
See! bursting from the altar came  
The sudden glory of the flame;  
Round priest and deacon, and upon  
Grass, ladles, flowers, the splendor shone—  
And the high rite, in order due,  
With sacred texts began anew.  
But then a loud and fearful roar  
Re-echoed through the sky;  
And like vast clouds that shadow o'er  
The heavens in dark July,  
Involved in gloom of magic might  
Two fiends rushed on amain—  
Márícha, Rover of the Night,  
Suváhu, and their train.  
As on they came in wild career  
Thick blood in rain they shed;  
And Ráma saw those things of fear  
Impending overhead.  
Then, soon as those accursed two  
Who showered down blood he spied,  
Thus to his brother brave and true  
Spoke Ráma lotus-eyed:—  
“Now, Lakshman, thou these fiends shalt see,  
Man-eaters, foul of mind,  
Before my mortal weapon flee  
Like clouds before the wind.”  
He spoke. An arrow, swift as thought,  
Upon his bow he pressed,  
And smote, to utmost fury wrought,  
Márícha on the breast.  
Deep in his flesh the weapon lay  
Winged by the mystic spell,  
And, hurled a hundred leagues away,  
In ocean's flood he fell.  
Then Ráma, when he saw the foe  
Convulsed and mad with pain  
'Neath the chill-pointed weapon's blow,  
To Lakshman spoke again:—  
“See, Lakshman, see! this mortal dart  
That strikes a numbing chill,



## THE RÁMÁYANA

CSL  
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Hath struck him senseless with the smart,  
But left him breathing still.  
But these who love the evil way  
And drink the blood they spill,  
Rejoicing holy rites to stay,  
Fierce plagues, my hand shall kill."  
He seized another shaft, the best,  
Aglow with living flame;  
It struck Suváhu on the chest,  
And dead to earth he came.  
Again a dart, the Wind-God's own,  
Upon his string he laid,  
And all the demons were o'erthrown—  
The saints no more afraid.  
When thus the fiends were slain in fight,  
Disturbers of each holy rite,  
Due honor by the saints was paid  
To Ráma for his wondrous aid:—  
So Indra is adored when he  
Has won some glorious victory.  
Success at last the rite had crowned,  
And Viśvámitra gazed around—  
And seeing every side at rest,  
The son of Raghu thus addressed:—  
"My joy, O Prince, is now complete—  
Thou hast obeyed my will:  
Perfect before, this calm retreat  
Is now more perfect still."



## CANTO XXXIII

### THE SONE

THEIR task achieved, the princes spent  
That night with joy and full content.  
Ere yet the dawn was well displayed  
Their morning rites they duly paid—  
And sought, while yet the light was faint,  
The hermits and the mighty saint.  
They greeted first that holy sire  
Resplendent like the burning fire,  
And then with noble words began  
Their sweet speech to the sainted man:—  
“Here stand, O lord, thy servants true—  
Command what thou wouldst have us do.”  
The saints, by Viśvāmitra led,  
To Rāma thus in answer said:—  
“Janak, the king who rules the land  
Of fertile Mithilā, has planned  
A noble sacrifice, and we  
Will thither go the rite to see.  
Thou, Prince of men, with us shalt go,  
And there behold the wondrous bow—  
Terrific, vast, of matchless might,  
Which, splendid at the famous rite,  
The Gods assembled gave the King.  
No giant, fiend, or God can string  
That gem of bows, no heavenly bard;  
Then, sure, for man the task were hard.  
When lords of earth have longed to know  
The virtue of that wondrous bow,  
The strongest sons of kings in vain  
Have tried the mighty cord to strain.  
This famous bow thou there shalt view,



And wondrous rites shalt witness too.  
The high-souled king who lords it o'er  
The realm of Mithilá, of yore  
Gained from the Gods this bow, the price  
Of his imperial sacrifice.  
Won by the rite the glorious prize  
Still in his royal palace lies—  
Laid up in oil of precious scent  
With aloes-wood and incense blent.”  
Then Ráma answering, “Be it so,”  
Made ready with the rest to go.  
The saint himself was now prepared,  
But ere beyond the grove he fared,  
He turned him and in words like these  
Addressed the sylvan deities:—  
“Farewell! each holy rite complete,  
I leave the hermits’ perfect seat:  
To Gangá’s northern shore I go  
Beneath Himálaya’s peaks of snow.”  
With reverent steps he paced around  
The limits of the holy ground—  
And then the mighty saint set forth  
And took his journey to the north.  
His pupils, deep in Scripture’s page,  
Followed behind the holy sage,  
And servants from the sacred grove  
A hundred wains for convoy drove.  
The very birds that winged that air,  
The very deer that harbored there,  
Forsook the glade and leafy brake  
And followed for the hermits’ sake.  
They travelled far, till in the west  
The sun was speeding to his rest,  
And made, their portioned journey o’er,  
Their halt on Sona’s distant shore.  
The hermits bathed when sank the sun,  
And every rite was duly done—  
Oblations paid to Fire, and then  
Sate round their chief the holy men.  
Ráma and Lakshman lowly bowed  
In reverence to the hermit crowd—



And Ráma, having sate him down  
Before the saint of pure renown,  
With humble palms together laid  
His eager supplication made:—  
“What country, O my lord, is this,  
Fair-smiling in her wealth and bliss?  
Deign fully, O thou mighty Seer,  
To tell me, for I long to hear.”  
Moved by the prayer of Ráma, he  
Told forth the country's history.



## CANTO XXXIV

## BRAHMADATTA

**A** KING of Brahmá's seed who bore  
The name of Kúsa reigned of yore.  
Just, faithful to his vows, and true,  
He held the good in honor due.  
His bride, a queen of noble name,  
Of old Vidarbha's monarchs came.  
Like their own father, children four,  
All valiant boys, the lady bore.  
In glorious deeds each nerve they strained,  
And well their Warrior part sustained.  
To them most just, and true, and brave,  
Their father thus his counsel gave:—  
“Beloved children, ne'er forget  
Protection is a prince's debt:  
The noble work at once begin,  
High virtue and her fruits to win.”  
The youths, to all the people dear,  
Received his speech with willing ear;  
And each went forth his several way,  
Foundations of a town to lay.  
Kuśámba, prince of high renown,  
Was builder of Kauśámbi's town,  
And Kuśanábhā, just and wise,  
Bade high Mahodaya's towers arise.  
Amúrtarajas chose to dwell  
In Dharmáraya's citadel,  
And Vasu bade his city fair  
The name of Girivraja bear.  
This fertile spot whereon we stand  
Was once the high-souled Vasu's land.  
Behold! as round we turn our eyes,





Five lofty mountain peaks arise.  
See! bursting from her parent hill,  
Sumágadhí, a lovely rill,  
Bright gleaming as she flows between  
The mountains, like a wreath is seen—  
And then through Magadh's plains and groves  
With many a fair meander roves.  
And this was Vasu's old domain,  
The fertile Magadh's broad campaign,  
Which smiling fields of tilth adorn  
And diadem with golden corn.  
The queen Ghritáchí, nymph most fair,  
Married to Kuśanábha, bare  
A hundred daughters lovely faced,  
With every charm and beauty graced.  
It chanced the maidens, bright and gay  
As lightning-flashes on a day  
Of rain-time, to the garden went  
With song and play and merriment—  
And there in gay attire they strayed,  
And danced, and laughed, and sang, and played.  
The God of Wind who roves at will  
All places, as he lists, to fill,  
Saw the young maidens dancing there,  
Of faultless shape and mien most fair—  
"I love you all, sweet girls," he cried,  
"And each shall be my darling bride.  
Forsake, forsake your mortal lot,  
And gain a life that withers not.  
A fickle thing is youth's brief span,  
And more than all is mortal man.  
Receive unending youth, and be  
Immortal, O my loves, with me."  
The hundred girls, to wonder stirred,  
The wooing of the Wind-God heard,  
Laughed, as a jest, his suit aside,  
And with one voice they thus replied:—  
"O mighty Wind, free spirit who  
All life pervadest, through and through—  
Thy wondrous power we maidens know;  
Then wherefore wilt thou mock us so?



Our sire is Kuśanábha, King;  
And we, forsooth, have charms to bring  
A God to woo us from the skies;  
But honor first we maidens prize.  
Far may the hour, we pray, be hence,  
When we, O thou of little sense,  
Our truthful father's choice refuse,  
And for ourselves our husbands choose.  
Our honored sire our lord we deem,  
He is to us a God supreme—  
And they to whom his high decree  
May give us shall our husbands be.”

He heard the answer they returned,  
And mighty rage within him burned.  
On each fair maid a blast he sent—  
Each stately form he bowed and bent.  
Bent double by the Wind-God's ire  
They sought the palace of their sire,  
There fell upon the ground with sighs,  
While tears and shame were in their eyes.  
The King himself, with troubled brow,  
Saw his dear girls so fair but now,  
A mournful sight all bent and bowed—  
And grieving, thus he cried aloud:—  
“What fate is this, and what the cause?  
What wretch has scorned all heavenly laws?  
Who thus your forms could curve and break?  
You struggle, but no answer make.”  
They heard the speech of that wise king  
Of their misfortune questioning.  
Again the hundred maidens sighed,  
Touched with their heads his feet, and cried:—  
“The God of Wind, pervading space,  
Would bring on us a foul disgrace,  
And choosing folly's evil way  
From virtue's path in scorn would stray.  
But we in words like these reprieved  
The God of Wind whom passion moved:—  
‘Farewell, O Lord! A sire have we,  
No women uncontrolled and free.



Go, and our sire's consent obtain  
If thou our maiden hands wouldst gain.  
No self-dependent life we live:  
If we offend, our fault forgive,  
But led by folly as a slave,  
He would not hear the rede we gave,  
And even as we gently spoke  
We felt the Wind-God's crushing stroke."  
The pious King, with grief distressed,  
The noble hundred thus addressed:—  
"With patience, daughters, bear your fate,  
Yours was a deed supremely great  
When with one mind you kept from shame  
The honor of your father's name.  
Patience, when men their anger vent,  
Is woman's praise and ornament;  
Yet when the Gods inflict the blow  
Hard is it to support the woe.  
Patience, my girls, exceeds all price—  
'Tis alms, and truth, and sacrifice.  
Patience is virtue, patience fame:  
Patience upholds this earthly frame.  
And now, I think, is come the time  
To wed you in your maiden prime.  
Now, daughters, go where'er you will:  
Thoughts for your good my mind shall fill."  
The maidens went, consoled, away:—  
The best of kings, that very day,  
Summoned his ministers of state  
About their marriage to debate.  
Since then, because the Wind-God bent  
The damsels' forms for punishment,  
That royal town is known to fame  
By Kanyákubja's borrowed name.

There lived a sage called Chúi then,  
Devoutest of the sons of men;  
His days in penance rites he spent,  
A glorious saint, most continent.  
To him absorbed in tasks austere  
The child of Urmílá draw near—



Sweet Somadā, the heavenly maid,  
And lent the saint her pious aid.  
Long time near him the maiden spent,  
And served him meek and reverent,  
Till the great hermit, pleased with her,  
Thus spoke unto his minister:—  
“Grateful am I for all thy care—  
Blest maiden, speak, thy wish declare.”  
The sweet-voiced nymph rejoiced to see  
The favor of the devotee,  
And to that excellent old man,  
Most eloquent she thus began:—  
“Thou hast, by heavenly grace sustained,  
Close union with the Godhead gained.  
I long, O Saint, to see a son  
By force of holy penance won.  
Unwed, a maiden life I live:  
A son to me, thy suppliant, give.”  
The saint with favor heard her prayer,  
And gave a son exceeding fair.  
Him, Chūli's spiritual child,  
His mother Brahmadatta styled.  
King Brahmadatta, rich and great,  
In Kāmpilī maintained his state—  
Ruling, like Indra in his bliss,  
His fortunate metropolis.  
King Kuśanābha planned that he  
His hundred daughters' lord should be.  
To him, obedient to his call,  
The happy monarch gave them all.  
Like Indra then he took the hand  
Of every maiden of the band.  
Soon as the hand of each young maid  
In Brahmadatta's palm was laid,  
Deformity and cares away,  
She shone in beauty bright and gay.  
Their freedom from the Wind-God's might  
Saw Kuśanābha with delight.  
Each glance that on their forms he threw  
Filled him with raptures ever new.  
Then when the rites were all complete,



VAĻMĪKI

CSL

With highest marks of honor meet  
The bridegroom with his brides he sent  
To his great seat of government.  
The nymph received with pleasant speech  
Her daughters; and, embracing each,  
Upon their forms she fondly gazed,  
And royal Kuśanábha praised.

## CANTO XXXV

### VIŚVAMITRA'S LINEAGE

“THE rites were o’er, the maids were wed,  
The bridegroom to his home was sped.  
The sonless monarch bade prepare  
A sacrifice to gain an heir.  
Then Kuśa, Brahmá’s son, appeared,  
And thus King Kuśanábha cheered:—  
‘Thou shalt, my child, obtain a son  
Like thine own self, O holy one.  
Through him forever, Gádhi named,  
Shalt thou in all the worlds be famed.’  
He spoke and vanished from the sight  
To Brahmá’s world of endless light.  
Time fled, and, as the saint foretold,  
Gádhi was born, the holy-souled.  
My sire was he; through him I trace  
My line from royal Kúsa’s race.  
My sister—elder-born was she—  
The pure and good Satyavatí,  
Was to the great Richíka wed.  
Still faithful to her husband dead,  
She followed him, most noble dame,  
And, raised to heaven in human frame,  
A pure celestial stream became.  
Down from Himálaya’s snowy height,  
In floods forever fair and bright,  
My sister’s holy waves are hurled  
To purify and glad the world.  
Now on Himálaya’s side I dwell  
Because I love my sister well.  
She, for her faith and truth renowned,  
Most loving to her husband found,



High-fated, firm in each pure vow,  
Is queen of all the rivers now.  
Bound by a vow I left her side  
And to the Perfect convent hied.  
There, by the aid 'twas thine to lend,  
Made perfect, all my labors end.  
Thus, mighty Prince, I now have told  
My race and lineage, high and old,  
And local tales of long ago  
Which thou, O Rāma, fain wouldst know.  
As I have sate rehearsing thus  
The midnight hour is come on us.  
Now, Rāma, sleep, that nothing may  
Our journey of to-morrow stay.  
No leaf on any tree is stirred—  
Hushed in repose are beast and bird:  
Where'er you turn, on every side,  
Dense shades of night the landscape hide.  
The light of eve is fled: the skies,  
Thick-studded with their host of eyes,  
Seem a star-forest overhead,  
Where signs and constellations spread.  
Now rises, with his pure cold ray,  
The moon that drives the shades away,  
And with his gentle influence brings  
Joy to the hearts of living things.  
Now, stealing from their lairs, appear  
The beasts to whom the night is dear.  
Now spirits walk, and every power  
That revels in the midnight hour."

The mighty hermit's tale was o'er,  
He closed his lips and spoke no more.  
The holy men on every side,  
"Well done! well done," with reverence cried  
"The mighty men of Kuśa's seed  
Were ever famed for righteous deed.  
Like Brahmá's self in glory shine  
The high-souled lords of Kuśa's line.  
And thy great name is sounded most,  
O Saint, amid the noble host.



## THE RÁMÁYANA

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CSL

And thy dear sister—fairest she  
Of streams, the high-born Kausikí—  
Diffusing virtue where she flows,  
New splendor on thy lineage throws.”  
Thus by the chief of saints addressed  
The son of Gádhi turned to rest;  
So, when his daily course is done,  
Sinks to his rest the beaming sun.  
Ráma, with Lakshman, somewhat stirred  
To marvel by the tales they heard,  
Turned also to his couch, to close  
His eyelids in desired repose.



## CANTO XXXVI

### THE BIRTH OF GANGA

THE hours of night now waning fast  
 On Sona's pleasant shore they passed.  
 Then, when the dawn began to break,  
 To Ráma thus the hermit spake:—  
 "The light of dawn is breaking clear,  
 The hour of morning rites is near.  
 Rise, Ráma, rise, dear son, I pray,  
 And make thee ready for the way."  
 Then Ráma rose, and finished all  
 His duties at the hermit's call—  
 Prepared with joy the road to take,  
 And thus again in question spake:—  
 "Here fair and deep the Sona flows,  
 And many an isle its bosom shows:  
 What way, O Saint, will lead us o'er  
 And land us on the farther shore?"  
 The saint replied: "The way I choose  
 Is that which pious hermits use."  
 For many a league they journeyed on  
 Till, when the sun of mid-day shone,  
 The hermit-haunted flood was seen  
 Of Jáhnaví, the Rivers' Queen.  
 Soon as the holy stream they viewed,  
 Thronged with a white-winged multitude  
 Of sárases and swans, delight  
 Possessed them at the lovely sight;  
 And then prepared the hermit band  
 To halt upon that holy strand.  
 They bathed as Scripture bids, and paid  
 Oblations due to God and shade.  
 To Fire they burnt the offerings meet,



And sipped the oil, like Amrit sweet.  
Then pure and pleased they sate around  
Saint Viśvámitra, on the ground.  
The holy men of lesser note,  
In due degree, sate more remote,  
While Raghu's sons took nearer place  
By virtue of their rank and race.  
Then Ráma said: "O Saint, I yearn  
The three-pathed Gangá's tale to learn."

Thus urged, the sage recounted both  
The birth of Gangá and her growth:—  
"The mighty hill with metals stored,  
Himálaya, is the mountains' lord,  
The father of a lovely pair  
Of daughters fairest of the fair—  
Their mother, offspring of the will  
Of Meru, everlasting hill,  
Mená, Himálaya's darling, graced  
With beauty of her dainty waist.  
Gangá was elder-born:—then came  
The fair one known by Umá's name.  
Then all the Gods of heaven, in need  
Of Gangá's help their vows to speed,  
To great Himálaya came and prayed  
The Mountain King to yield the maid.  
He, not regardless of the weal  
Of the three worlds, with holy zeal  
His daughter to the Immortals gave,  
Gangá whose waters cleanse and save—  
Who roams at pleasure, fair and free,  
Purging all sinners, to the sea.  
The three-pathed Gangá thus obtained,  
The Gods their heavenly homes regained.  
Long time the sister Umá passed  
In vows austere and rigid fast,  
And the King gave the devotee  
Immortal Rudra's bride to be—  
Matching with that unequalled Lord  
His Umá through the worlds adored.  
So now a glorious station fills  
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Each daughter of the King of Hills—  
One honored as the noblest stream,  
One mid the Goddesses supreme.  
Thus Gangá, King Himálaya's child,  
The heavenly river, undefiled,  
Rose bearing with her to the sky  
Her waves that bless and purify.”

[*Cantos XXXVII and XXXVIII are omitted.*]

## CANTO XXXIX

### THE SONS OF SAGAR

THE saint in accents sweet and clear  
Thus told his tale for Rāma's ear—  
And thus anew the holy man  
A legend to the prince began :—  
“ There reigned a pious monarch o'er  
Ayodhyá in the days of yore :  
Sagar his name :—no child had he,  
And children much he longed to see.  
His honored consort, fair of face,  
Sprang from Vidarbha's royal race—  
Keśiní, famed from early youth  
For piety and love of truth.  
Arishtanemi's daughter fair,  
With whom no maiden might compare  
In beauty, though the earth is wide,  
Sumati, was his second bride.  
With his two queens afar he went,  
And weary days in penance spent,  
Fervent, upon Himálaya's hill  
Where springs the stream called Bhṛigu's rill.  
Nor did he fail that saint to please  
With his devout austerities,  
And, when a hundred years had fled,  
Thus the most truthful Bhṛigu said :—  
' From thee, O Sagar, blameless King,  
A mighty host of sons shall spring,  
And thou shalt win a glorious name  
Which none, O Chief, but thou shall claim.  
One of thy queens a son shall bear  
Maintainer of thy race and heir ;  
And of the other there shall be  
Sons sixty thousand born to thee.'



Thus as he spake, with one accord,  
To win the grace of that high lord,  
The queens, with palms together laid,  
In humble supplication prayed:—  
‘Which queen, O Bráhmaṇ, of the pair,  
The many, or the one shall bear?  
Most eager, Lord, are we to know,  
And as thou sayest be it so.’  
With his sweet speech the saint replied:—  
‘Yourself, O Queens, the choice decide.  
Your own discretion freely use  
Which shall the one or many choose:  
One shall the race and name uphold,  
The host be famous, strong, and bold,  
Which will have which?’ Then Keśinī  
The mother of one heir would be.  
Sumatī, sister of the King  
Of all the birds that ply the wing,  
To that illustrious Bráhmaṇ sued  
That she might bear the multitude—  
Whose fame throughout the world should sound  
For mighty enterprise renowned.  
Around the saint the monarch went,  
Bowing his head, most reverent.  
Then with his wives, with willing feet,  
Resought his own imperial seat.  
Time passed. The elder consort bare  
A son called Asamanj, the heir.  
Then Sumatī, the younger, gave  
Birth to a gourd, O hero brave,  
Whose rind, when burst and cleft in two,  
Gave sixty thousand babes to view.  
All these with care the nurses laid  
In jars of oil; and there they stayed,  
Till, youthful age and strength complete,  
Forth speeding from each dark retreat—  
All peers in valor, years, and might,  
The sixty thousand came to light.  
Prince Asamanj, brought up with care,  
Scourge of his foes, was made the heir.  
But liegemen’s boys he used to cast



To Sarjú's waves that hurried past—  
Laughing the while in cruel glee  
Their dying agonies to see.  
This wicked prince who aye withstood  
The counsel of the wise and good,  
Who plagued the people in his hate,  
His father banished from the state.  
His son, kind-spoken, brave, and tall,  
Was Anśumán, beloved of all.  
Long years flew by. The King decreed  
To slay a sacrificial steed.  
Consulting with his priestly band  
He vowed the rite his soul had planned,  
And, Veda-skilled, by their advice  
Made ready for the sacrifice."



## CANTO XL

### THE CLEAVING OF THE EARTH

THE hermit ceased—the tale was done:—  
Then in a transport Rāghu's son  
Again addressed the ancient sire  
Resplendent as a burning fire:—  
“O holy man, I fain would hear  
The tale repeated full and clear  
How he from whom my sires descend  
Brought the great rite to happy end.”  
The hermit answered with a smile:—  
“Then listen, son of Rāghu, while  
My legendary tale proceeds  
To tell of high-souled Sagar's deeds:  
Within the spacious plain that lies  
From where Himālaya's heights arise  
To where proud Vindhya's rival chain  
Looks down upon the subject plain—  
A land the best for rites declared—  
His sacrifice the king prepared.  
And Anśumán the prince—for so  
Sagar advised—with ready bow  
Was borne upon a mighty car  
To watch the steed who roamed afar.  
But Indra, monarch of the skies,  
Veiling his form in demon guise,  
Came down upon the appointed day  
And drove the victim horse away.  
Reft of the steed the priests, distressed,  
The master of the rite addressed:—  
‘Upon the sacred day by force  
A robber takes the victim horse.



Haste, King! now let the thief be slain;  
Bring thou the charger back again:  
The sacred rite prevented thus  
Brings scathe and woe to all of us.  
Rise, Monarch, and provide with speed  
That nought its happy course impede.'

King Sagar in his crowded court  
Gave ear unto the priests' report.  
He summoned straightway to his side  
His sixty thousand sons, and cried:—  
' Brave sons of mine, I know not how  
These demons are so mighty now—  
The priests began the rite so well  
All sanctified with prayer and spell.  
If in the depths of earth he hide,  
Or lurk beneath the ocean's tide,  
Pursue, dear sons, the robber's track;  
Slay him and bring the charger back.  
The whole of this broad earth explore,  
Sea-garlanded, from shore to shore:  
Yea, dig her up with might and main  
Until you see the horse again.  
Deep let your searching labor reach,  
A league in depth dug out by each.  
The robber of our horse pursue,  
And please your sire who orders you.  
My grandson, I, this priestly train,  
Till the steed comes, will here remain.'

Their eager hearts with transport burned  
As to their task the heroes turned.  
Obedient to their father, they  
Through earth's recesses forced their way.  
With iron arms' unflinching toil  
Each dug a league beneath the soil.  
Earth, cleft asunder, groaned in pain,  
As emulous they plied amain—  
Sharp-pointed coulters, pick, and bar,  
Hard as the bolts of Indra are.  
Then loud the horrid clamor rose





Of monsters dying 'neath their blows,  
Giant and demon, fiend and snake,  
That in earth's core their dwelling make.  
They dug, in ire that nought could stay,  
Through sixty thousand leagues their way—  
Cleaving the earth with matchless strength  
Till hell itself they reached at length.  
Thus digging searched they Jambudvīp  
With all its hills and mountains steep.  
Then a great fear began to shake  
The heart of God, bard, fiend, and snake—  
And all distressed in spirit went  
Before the Sire Omnipotent.  
With signs of woe in every face  
They sought the mighty Father's grace,  
And trembling still and ill at ease  
Addressed their Lord in words like these:—  
'The sons of Sagar, Sire benign,  
Pierce the whole earth with mine on mine,  
And as their ruthless work they ply  
Innumerable creatures die.'  
'This is the thief,' the princes say,  
'Who stole our victim steed away.  
This marred the rite, and caused us ill.'  
And so their guiltless blood they spill.

## CANTO XLI

### KAPIL

“THE Father lent a gracious ear  
And listened to their tale of fear,  
And kindly to the Gods replied  
Whom woe and death had terrified:—  
‘The wisest Vāsudeva, who  
The Immortals’ foe, fierce Madhu, slew,  
Regards broad Earth with love and pride,  
And guards, in Kapil’s form, his bride.  
His kindled wrath will quickly fall  
On the King’s sons and burn them all.  
This cleaving of the earth his eye  
Foresaw in ages long gone by:  
He knew with prescient soul the fate  
That Sagar’s children should await.’  
The Three-and-thirty, freed from fear,  
Sought their bright homes with hopeful cheer.  
Still rose the great tempestuous sound  
As Sagar’s children pierced the ground.  
When thus the whole broad earth was cleft,  
And not a spot unsearched was left,  
Back to their home the princes sped,  
And thus unto their father said:—  
‘We searched the earth from side to side,  
While countless hosts of creatures died.  
Our conquering feet in triumph trod  
On snake and demon, fiend and God;  
But yet we failed, with all our toil,  
To find the robber and the spoil.  
What can we more? If more we can,  
Devise, O King, and tell thy plan.’



His children's speech King Sagar heard,  
And answered thus, to anger stirred :—  
' Dig on, and ne'er your labor stay  
Till through earth's depths you force your way.  
Then smite the robber dead, and bring  
The charger back with triumphing.'

The sixty thousand chiefs obeyed—  
Deep through the earth their way they made.  
Deep as they dug and deeper yet  
The immortal elephant they met—  
Famed Virúpāksha vast of size,  
Upon whose head the broad earth lies:  
The mighty beast who earth sustains  
With shaggy hills and wooded plains.  
When, with the changing moon, distressed,  
And longing for a moment's rest,  
His mighty head the monster shakes,  
Earth to the bottom reels and quakes.  
Around that warder strong and vast  
With reverential steps they passed—  
Nor, when the honor due was paid,  
Their downward search through earth delayed.  
But turning from the east aside  
Southward again their task they plied.  
There Mahápadma held his place,  
The best of all his mighty race—  
Like some huge hill, of monstrous girth,  
Upholding on his head the earth.  
When the vast beast the princes saw,  
They marvelled and were filled with awe.  
The sons of high-souled Sagar round  
That elephant in reverence wound.  
Then in the western region they  
With might unwearied cleft their way.  
There saw they with astonished eyes  
Saumanas, beast of mountain size.  
Round him with circling steps they went  
With greetings kind and reverent.



On, on—no thought of rest or stay—  
They reached the seat of Soma's sway.  
There saw they Bhadra, white as snow,  
With lucky marks that fortune show,  
Bearing the earth upon his head.  
Round him they paced with solemn tread,  
And honored him with greetings kind;  
Then downward yet their way they mined.  
They gained the tract 'twixt east and north  
Whose fame is ever blazoned forth,  
And by a storm of rage impelled,  
Digging through earth their course they held.  
Then all the princes, lofty-souled,  
Of wondrous vigor, strong and bold,  
Saw Vāsudeva standing there  
In Kapil's form he loved to wear,  
And near the everlasting God  
The victim charger cropped the sod.  
They saw with joy and eager eyes  
The fancied robber and the prize,  
And on him rushed the furious band  
Crying aloud, 'Stand, villain! stand!'  
'Avaunt! avaunt!' great Kapil cried,  
His bosom flushed with passion's tide;  
Then by his might that proud array  
All scorched to heaps of ashes lay.



## CANTO XLII

### SAGAR'S SACRIFICE

“**T**HEN to the prince his grandson, bright  
With his own fame's unborrowed light,  
King Sagar thus began to say,  
Marvelling at his sons' delay:—  
'Thou art a warrior skilled and bold,  
Match for the mighty men of old.  
Now follow on thine uncles' course  
And track the robber of the horse.  
To guard thee take thy sword and bow,  
For huge and strong are beasts below.  
There to the reverend reverence pay,  
And kill the foes who check thy way;  
Then turn successful home and see  
My sacrifice complete through thee.'"

Obedient to the high-souled lord  
Grasped Ansumán his bow and sword,  
And hurried forth the way to trace  
With youth and valor's eager pace.  
On sped he by the path he found  
Dug by his uncles underground.  
The warder elephant he saw  
Whose size and strength pass Nature's law—  
Who bears the world's tremendous weight,  
Whom God, fiend, giant, venerate.  
Bird, serpent, and each flitting shade,  
To him the honor meet he paid—  
With circling steps and greeting due,  
And further prayed him, if he knew,  
To tell him of his uncles' weal,  
And who had dared the horse to steal.



To him in war and council tried  
The warder elephant replied :—  
'Thou, son of Asamanj, shalt lead  
In triumph back the rescued steed.'

As to each warder beast he came  
And questioned all, his words the same,  
The honored youth with gentle speech  
Drew eloquent reply from each—  
That fortune should his steps attend,  
And with the horse he home should wend.  
Cheered with the grateful answer, he  
Passed on with step more light and free,  
And reached with careless heart the place  
Where lay in ashes Sagar's race.  
Then sank the spirit of the chief  
Beneath that shock of sudden grief—  
And with a bitter cry of woe  
He mourned his kinsmen fallen so.  
He saw, weighed down by woe and care,  
The victim charger roaming there.  
Yet would the pious chieftain fain  
Oblations offer to the slain :  
But, needing water for the rite,  
He looked and there was none in sight.  
His quick eye searching all around  
The uncle of his kinsmen found—  
King Garud, best beyond compare  
Of birds who wing the fields of air.  
Then thus unto the weeping man  
The son of Vinatā began :—  
'Grieve not, O hero, for their fall  
Who died a death approved of all.  
Of mighty strength, they met their fate  
By Kapil's hand whom none can mate.  
Pour forth for them no earthly wave,  
A holier flood their spirits crave.  
If, daughter of the Lord of Snow,  
Gangā would turn her stream below,  
Her waves that cleanse all mortal stain  
Would wash their ashes pure again.



Yea, when her flood whom all revere  
Rolls o'er the dust that moulders here,  
The sixty thousand, freed from sin,  
A home in Indra's heaven shall win.  
Go, and with ceaseless labor try  
To draw the Goddess from the sky.  
Return, and with thee take the steed;  
So shall thy grandsire's rite succeed.'

Prince Anśumán the strong and brave  
Followed the rede Suparna gave.  
The glorious hero took the horse,  
And homeward quickly bent his course.  
Straight to the anxious King he hied,  
Whom lustral rites had purified—  
The mournful story to unfold  
And all the King of birds had told.  
The tale of woe the monarch heard,  
No longer was the rite deferred:  
With care and just observance he  
Accomplished all, as texts decree.  
The rites performed, with brighter fame,  
Mighty in counsel, home he came.  
He longed to bring the river down,  
But found no plan his wish to crown.  
He pondered long with anxious thought,  
But saw no way to what he sought.  
Thus thirty thousand years he spent,  
And then to heaven the monarch went.

## CANTO XLIII

### BHAGÍRATH

“WHEN Sagar thus had bowed to fate,  
The lords and commons of the state  
Approved with ready heart and will  
Prince Anśumán his throne to fill.  
He ruled, a mighty king, unblamed,  
Sire of Dilípa justly famed.  
To him, his child and worthy heir,  
The King resigned his kingdom's care,  
And on Himálaya's pleasant side  
His task austere of penance plied.  
Bright as a God in clear renown  
He planned to bring pure Gangá down.  
There on his fruitless hope intent  
Twice sixteen thousand years he spent,  
And in the grove of hermits stayed  
Till bliss in heaven his rites repaid.  
Dilípa then, the good and great,  
Soon as he learnt his kinsmen's fate,  
Bowed down by woe, with troubled mind,  
Pondering long no cure could find.  
'How can I bring,' the mourner sighed,  
'To cleanse their dust, the heavenly tide?  
How can I give them rest, and save  
Their spirits with the offered wave?'  
Long with this thought his bosom skilled  
In holy discipline was filled.  
A son was born, Bhagírath named,  
Above all men for virtue famed.  
Dilípa many a rite ordained,  
And thirty thousand seasons reigned.  
But when no hope the king could see



His kinsmen from their woe to free,  
The lord of men, by sickness tried,  
Obeyed the law of fate, and died ;  
He left the kingdom to his son,  
And gained the heaven his deeds had won.  
The good Bhagíráth, royal sage,  
Had no fair son to cheer his age.  
He, great in glory, pure in will,  
Longing for sons was childless still.  
Then on one wish, one thought intent,  
Planning the heavenly stream's descent,  
Leaving his ministers the care  
And burden of his state to bear—  
Dwelling in far Gokarna he  
Engaged in long austerity.  
With senses checked, with arms upraised,  
Five fires around and o'er him blazed.  
Each weary month the hermit passed  
Breaking but once his awful fast.  
In winter's chill the brook his bed,  
In rain, the clouds to screen his head.  
Thousands of years he thus endured  
Till Brahmá's favor was assured—  
And the high Lord of living things  
Looked kindly on his sufferings.  
With trooping Gods the Sire came near  
The King who plied his task austere:—  
'Blest Monarch, of a glorious race,  
Thy fervent rites have won my grace.  
Well hast thou wrought thine awful task,  
Some boon in turn, O Hermit, ask.'

Bhagíráth, rich in glory's light,  
The hero with the arm of might,  
Thus to the Lord of earth and sky  
Raised suppliant hands and made reply:—  
'If the great God his favor deigns,  
And my long toil its fruit obtains,  
Let Sagar's sons receive from me  
Libations that they long to see.  
Let Gangá with her holy wave



## THE RÁMÁYANA

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The ashes of the heroes lave—  
That so my kinsmen may ascend  
To heavenly bliss that ne'er shall end.  
And give, I pray, O God, a son,  
Nor let my house be all undone.  
Sire of the worlds! be this the grace  
Bestowed upon Ikshváku's race.'  
The Sire, when thus the King had prayed,  
In sweet kind words his answer made:—  
'High, high thy thought and wishes are,  
Bhagíraṭh of the mighty car!  
Ikshváku's line is blest in thee,  
And as thou prayest it shall be.  
Gangá, whose waves in Swarga flow,  
Is daughter of the Lord of Snow.  
Win Siva that his aid be lent  
To hold her in her mid-descent—  
For earth alone will never bear  
Those torrents hurled from upper air;  
And none may hold her weight but He,  
The Trident-wielding deity.'  
Thus having said, the Lord supreme  
Addressed him to the heavenly stream;  
And then with Gods and Maruts went  
To heaven, above the firmament."





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