Unworthy of his mournful fate,
The mighty king, unfortunate,
Lay prostrate in unseenly guise.
As, banished from the blissful skies,
Yayáti, in his evil day,
His merit all exhausted, lay.¹
The queen, triumphant in the power
Won by her beauty’s fatal dower,
Still terrible and unsubdued,
Her dire demand again renewed:
‘Great Monarch, ’twas thy boast till now
To love the truth and keep the vow;
Then wherefore would thy lips refuse
The promised boon ’tis mine to choose?’

King Daśaratha, thus addressed,
With anger raging in his breast,
Sank for a while beneath the pain,
Then to Kaikeyí spoke again:

¹ Only the highest merit obtains a home in heaven for ever. Minor degrees of merit procure only leases of heavenly mansions terminable after periods proportioned to the fund which buys them. King Yayáti went to heaven, and when his term expired was unceremoniously ejected, and thrown down to earth.
'Childless so long, at length I won,
With mighty toil, from Heaven a son,
Ráma, the mighty-armed; and how
Shall I desert my darling now?
A scholar wise, a hero bold,
Of patient mood, with wrath controlled,
How can I bid my Ráma fly,
My darling of the lotus eye?
In heaven itself I scarce could bear,
When asking of my Ráma there,
To hear the Gods his griefs declare,
And O, that death would take me hence
Before I wrong his innocence!'

As thus the monarch wept and wailed,
And maddening grief his heart assailed,
The sun had sought his resting-place,
And night was closing round apace.
But yet the moon-crowned night could bring
No comfort to the wretched king,
As still he mourned with burning sighs
And fixed his gaze upon the skies:
'O Night whom starry fires adorn,
I long not for the coming morn.
Be kind and show some mercy: see,
My suppliant hands are raised to thee.
Nay, rather fly with swifter pace;
No longer would I see the face
Of Queen Kaikeyí, cruel, dread,
Who brings this woe upon mine head.'
Again with suppliant hands he tried
To move the queen, and wept and sighed:
'To me, unhappy me, inclined
To good, sweet dame, thou shouldst be kind;
Whose life is well-nigh fled, who cling
To thee for succour, me thy king.
This, only this, is all my claim:
Have mercy, O my lovely dame.
None else have I to take my part:
Have mercy: thou art good at heart.
Hear, lady of the soft black eye,
And win a name that ne'er shall die:
Let Râma rule this glorious land,
The gift of thine imperial hand.
O lady of the dainty waist,
With eyes and lips of beauty graced,
Please Râma, me, each saintly priest,
Bharat, and all from chief to least.

She heard his wild and mournful cry,
She saw the tears his speech that broke,
Saw her good husband's reddened eye,
But, cruel still, no word she spoke.
His eyes upon her face he bent,
And sought for mercy, but in vain:
She claimed his darling's banishment,
He swooned upon the ground again.
CANTO XIV.

RĀMA SUMMONED.

The wicked queen her speech renewed,
When rolling on the earth she viewed
Ikshvāku's son, Ayodhya's king,
For his dear Rāma sorrowing:
'Why, by a simple promise bound,
Liest thou prostrate on the ground,
As though a grievous sin dismayed
Thy spirit? Why so sore afraid?
Keep still thy word. The righteous deem
That truth, mid duties, is supreme;
And now in truth and honour's name
I bid thee own the binding claim.
Śaivyā, a king whom earth obeyed,
Once to a hawk a promise made,
Gave to the bird his flesh and bone,
And by his truth made heaven his own.¹
Alarka, when a Brāhman famed
For Scripture lore his promise claimed,
Tore from his head his bleeding eyes
And unreluctant gave the prize.
His narrow bounds prescribed restrain
The Rivers' Lord, the mighty main,
Who, though his waters boil and rave,
Keeps faithful to the word he gave.
Truth all religion comprehends,
Through all the world its might extends:

¹ See Additional Notes, THE SUPPLIANT DOVE.
Canto XIV.  THE RAMAYAN.

In truth alone is justice placed,
On truth the words of God are based:
A life in truth unchanging past
Will bring the highest bliss at last.
If thou the right would still pursue,
Be constant to thy word and true:
Let me thy promise fruitful see,
For boons, O King, proceed from thee.
Now to preserve thy righteous fame,
And yielding to my earnest claim—
Thrice I repeat it—send thy child,
Thy Ráma, to the forest wild.
But if the boon thou still deny,
Before thy face, forlorn, I die.'

Thus was the helpless monarch stung
By Queen Kaikeyí's fearless tongue,
As Bali strove in vain to loose
His limbs from Indra's fatal noose.
Dismayed in soul and pale with fear,
The monarch, like a trembling steer
Between the chariots wheel and yoke,
Again to Queen Kaikeyí spoke.
With sad eyes fixt in vacant stare,
Gathering courage from despair:
'That hand I took, thou sinful dame,
With texts, before the sacred flame,
Thee and thy son, I scorn and hate,
And all at once repudiate.
The night is fled: the dawn is near:
On will the holy priests be here
Let me for the rite prepare
With my son the throne will share:
Separation made to grace
Ma in his royal place—
With this, e'en this, my darling for
My death the funeral flood shall pour.
Thou and thy son at least forbear
In offerings to my shade to share,
For by the plot thy guile has laid
His consecration will be stayed.
This very day how shall I brook
To meet each subject's altered look?
To mark each gloomy joyless brow
That was so bright and glad but now?

While thus the high-souled monarch spoke
To the stern queen, the morning broke,
And holy night had slowly fled,
With moon and stars engarlanded.
Yet once again the cruel queen
Spoke words in answer fierce and keen,
Still on her evil purpose bent,
Wild with her rage and eloquent:
'What speech is this? Such words as these
Seem sprung from poison-sown disease.
Quick to thy noble Ráma send
And bid him on his sire attend.
When to my son the rule is given;
When Ráma to the woods is driven;
When not a rival copes with me,
From chains of duty thou art free.'

Thus goaded, like a generous steed
Urged by sharp spurs to double speed,
'My senses are astray,' he cried,
'And duty's bonds my hands have tied.
I long to see mine eldest son,
My virtuous, my beloved one.'

And now the night had past away;
Out shone the Maker of the day,
Bringing the planetary hour
And moment of auspicious power.
Vasishtha, virtuous, far renowned,
Whose young disciples girt him round,
With sacred things without delay
Through the fair city took his way.
He traversed, where the people thronged,
And all for Rama's coming longed,
The town as fair in festive show
As his who lays proud cities low.¹
He reached the palace where he heard
The mingled notes of many a bird,
Where crowded thick high-honoured bands
Of guards with truncheons in their hands.
Begirt by many a sage, clate,
Vasishtha reached the royal gate,
And standing by the door he found
Sumantra, for his form renowned,
The king's illustrious charioteer
And noble counsellor and peer.
To him well skilled in every part
Of his hereditary art
Vasishtha said: 'O charioteer,
Inform the king that I am here.
Here ready by my side behold
These sacred vessels made of gold,
Which water for the rite contain
From Gangā and each distant main.
Here for installing I have brought
The seat prescribed of fig-wood wrought,
All kinds of seed and precious scent
And many a gem and ornament;
Grain, sacred grass, the garden's spoil,

¹ Indra, called also Purānda, Town-destroyer.
Honey and curds and milk and oil;
Eight radiant maids, the best of all
War elephants that feed in stall;
A four-horse car, a bow and sword,
A litter, men to bear their lord;
A white umbrella bright and fair
That with the moon may well compare;
Two chouries of the whitest hair;
A golden beaker rich and rare;
A bull high-humped and fair to view,
Girt with gold bands and white of hue,
A four-toothed steed with flowing mane,
A throne which lions carved sustain;
A tiger's skin, the sacred fire,
Fresh kindled, which the rites require;
The best musicians skilled to play,
And dancing-girls in raiment gay;
Kine, Brāhmans, teachers fill the court,
And bird and beast of purest sort
From town and village, far and near,
The noblest men are gathered here,
Here merchants with their followers crowd.
And men in joyful converse loud,
And kings from many a distant land
To view the consecration stand.
The dawn is come, the lucky day;
Go bid the monarch haste away,
That now Prince Rāma may obtain
The empire, and begin his reign.'

Soon as he heard the high behest
The driver of the chariot pressed
Within the chambers of the king,
His lord with praises honouring.
And none of all the warders checked
His entrance for their great respect
Of him well known, in place so high,
Still fain their king to gratify.
He stood beside the royal chief,
Umwitting of his deadly grief,
And with sweet words began to sing
The praises of his lord and king:
‘As, when the sun begins to rise,
The sparkling sea delights our eyes,
Wako, calm with gentle soul, and thus
Give rapture, mighty King, to us.
As Mátali' this selfsame hour
Sang lauds of old to Indra's power,
When he the Titan hosts o'erthrew,
So hymn I thee with praises due.
The Vedas, with their kindred lore,
Brahmá their soul-born Lord adore,
With all the doctrines of the wise,
And bid him, as I bid thee, rise.
As, with the moon, the Lord of Day
Wakes with the splendour of his ray -
Prolific Earth, who neath him lies,
So, mighty King, I bid thee rise.
With blissful words, O Lord of men,
Rise, radiant in thy form, as when
The sun ascending darts his light
From Meru's everlasting height.
May Śiva, Agni, Sun, and Moon
Bestow on thee each choicest boon,
Kuvera, Varuṇ, Indra bless
Kakutstha's son with all success.
Awake, the holy night is fled,
The happy light abroad is spread;

---

1 Indra's charioteer.
Awake, O best of kings, and share
The glorious task that claims thy care
The holy sage Vasiṣṭha waits,
With all his Brāhmans, at the gates
Give thy decree, without delay,
To consecrate thy son to-day.
As armies, by no captain led,
As flocks that feed unshepherded,
Such is the fortune of a state
Without a king and desolate.'

Such were the words the bard addressed.
With weight of sage advice impressed;
And, as he heard, the hapless king
Felt deeper yet his sorrow's sting
At length, all joy and comfort fled,
He raised his eyes with weeping red,
And, mournful for his Rāma's sake,
The good and glorious monarch spake
'Why seek with idle praise to greet
The wretch for whom no praise is meet,'
Thy words mine aching bosom tear,
And plunge me deeper in despair.'

Sumantra heard the sad reply,
And saw his master's tearful eye.
With reverent palm to palm applied
He drew a little space aside.
Then, as the king, with misery weak,
With vain endeavour strove to speak,
Kaikeyī, skilled in plot and plan,
To sage Sumantra thus began:
'The king, absorbed in joyful thought
For his dear son, no rest has sought:
Sleepless to him the night has past,
And now o'erwatched he sinks at last.
Then go, Sumantra, and with speed
The glorious Rāma hither lead:
Go, as I pray, nor longer wait;
No time is this to hesitate.'

'How can I go, O lady fair,
Unless my lord his will declare?'
'Fain would I see him,' cried the king,
'Quick, quick, my beauteous Rāma bring.'

Then rose the happy thought to cheer
The bosom of the charioteer,
'The king, I ween, of pious mind,
The consecration has designed.'
Sumantra for his wisdom famed,
Delighted with the thought he framed,
From the calm chamber, like a bay
Of crowded ocean, took his way.

He turned his face to neither side,

But forth he hurried straight;

Only a little while he eyed

The guards who kept the gate.

He saw in front a gathered crowd

Of men of every class,

Who, parting as he came, allowed

The charioteer to pass.
CANTO XV.

THE PREPARATIONS.

There slept the Brāhmans, deeply read
In Scripture, till the night had fled;
Then, with the royal chaplains, they
Took each his place in long array.
There gathered fast the chiefs of trade,
Nor peer nor captain long delayed,
Assembling all in order due
The consecrating rite to view.

The morning dawnded with cloudless ray
On Pushya's high auspicious day,
And Cancer with benignant power
Looked down on Rāma's natal hour.
The twice-born chiefs, with zealous heed,
Made ready what the rite would need.
The well-wrought throne of holy wood
And golden urns in order stood.
There was the royal car whereon
A tiger's skin resplendent shone;
There water, brought for sprinkling thence
Where, in their sacred confluence,
Blend Jumna's waves with Ganges's tide,
From many a holy flood beside,
From brook and fountain far and near,
From pool and river, sea and mere.
And there were honey, curd, and oil,
Parched rice and grass, the garden's spoil,
Fresh milk, eight girls in bright attire,
An elephant with eyes of fire;
And urns of gold and silver made,
With milky branches overlaid,
All brimming from each sacred flood,
And decked with many a lotus bud.
And dancing-women fair and free,
Gay with their gems, were there to sec,
Who stood in bright apparel by
With lovely brow and witching eye.
White flashed the jewelled chouri there,
And shone like moonbeams through the air;
The white umbrella overhead
A pale and moonlike lustre shed,
Wont in pure splendour to precede,
And in such rites the pomp to lead.
There stood the charger by the side
Of the great bull of snow-white hide;
There was all music soft and loud,
And bards and minstrels swelled the crowd.
For now the monarch bade combine
Each custom of his ancient line
With every rite Ayodhya's state
Observed, her kings to consecrate.

Then, summoned by the king's behest,
The multitudes together pressed,
And, missing still the royal sire,
Began, impatient, to inquire:
'Who to our lord will tidings bear
That all his people throng the square?
Where is the king? the sun is bright,
And all is ready for the rite.'

As thus they spoke, Sumantra, tried
In counsel, to the chiefs replied,
Gathered from lands on every side:
To Ráma's house I swiftly drave,
For so the king his mandate gave.
Our aged lord and Ráma too
In honour high hold all of you:
I in your words (be long your days')
Will ask him why he thus delays.'

Thus spoke the peer in Scripture read,
And to the ladies' bower he sped.
Quick through the gates Sumantra hied,
Which access ne'er to him denied.
Behind the curtained screen he drew,
Which veiled the chamber from the view.
In benediction loud he raised
His voice, and thus the monarch praised:
'Sun, Moon, Kuvera, Siva bless
Kakutstha's son with high success!
The Lords of air, flood, fire decree
The victory, my King, to thee!
The holy night has past away,
Auspicious shines the morning's ray.
Rise, Lord of men, thy part to take
In the great rite, awake! awake!
Bráhmans and captains, chiefs of trade,
All wait in festive garb arrayed;
For thee they look with eager eyes:
O Raghu's son, awake! arise!

To him in holy Scripture read,
Who hailed him thus, the monarch said.

Upraising from his sleep his head:
'Go, Ráma hither lead as thou
Wast ordered by the queen but now.
Come, tell me why my mandate laid
Upon thee thus is disobeyed.
Away! and Ráma hither bring;
I sleep not: make no tarrying.'
Thus gave the king command anew:
Sumantra from his lord withdrew;
With head in lowly reverence bent,
And filled with thoughts of joy, he went.
The royal street he traversed, where
Waved flag and pennon to the air,
And, as with joy the car he drove,
He let his eyes delighted rove.
On every side, where'er he came,
He heard glad words, their theme the same,
As in their joy the gathered folk
Of Ráma and the throning spoke.
Then saw he Ráma's palace bright
And vast as Mount Kailásá's height,
That glorious in its beauty showed
As Indra's own supreme abode:
With folding doors both high and wide;
With hundred porches beautified:
Where golden statues towering rose
O'er gemmed and coralled porticoes:
Bright like a cave in Meru's side,
Or clouds through Autumn's sky that ride:
Festooned with length of bloomy twine,
Flashing with pearls and jewels' shine,
While sandal-wood and aloe lent
The mingled riches of their scent;
With all the odorous sweets that fill
The breezy heights of Dardar's hill.
There by the gate the Sáras screamed,
And shrill-toned peacocks' plumage gleamed.
Its floors with deftest art inlaid,
Its sculptured wolves in gold arrayed,
With its bright sheen the palace took
The mind of man and chained the look,
For like the sun and moon it glowed,
And mocked Kuvera’s loved abode.
Circling the walls a crowd he viewed
Who stood in reverent attitude,
With throngs of countrymen who sought
Acceptance of the gifts they brought.
The elephant was stationed there,
Appointed Ráma’s self to bear;
Adorned with pearls, his brow and cheek
Were sandal-dyed in many a streak,
While he, in stature, bulk, and pride,
With Indra’s own Airávat viéd.
Sumantra, borne by courser’s fleet,
Flashing a radiance o’er the street,
   To Ráma’s palace flew,
And all who lined the royal road,
Or thronged the prince’s rich abode,
   Rejoiced as near he drew.
And with delight his bosom swelled
As onward still his course he held
   Through many a sumptuous court
Like Indra’s palace nobly made,
Where peacocks revelled in the shade,
   And beasts of silvan sort.
Through many a hall and chamber wide,
That with Kailásá’s splendour viéd,
   Or mansions of the Blest,
While Ráma’s friends, beloved and tried,
Before his coming stepped aside,
   Still on Sumantra pressed.
He reached the chamber door, where stood
Around his followers young and good,

he elephant of Indra.
Bard, minstrel, charioteer,
Well skilled the tuneful chords to sweep,
With soothing strain to lull to sleep,
Or laud their master dear.
Then, like a dolphin darting through
Unfathomed depths of ocean's blue
With store of jewels decked,
Through crowded halls that rock-like rose,
Or as proud hills where clouds repose,
    Sumantra sped unchecked—
Halls like the glittering domes on high
Reared for the dwellers of the sky
    By heavenly architect.
CANTO XVI.

RÁMA SUMMONED.

So through the crowded inner door
Sumantra, skilled in ancient lore,
On to the private chambers pressed
Which stood apart from all the rest.
There youthful warriors, true and bold,
Whose ears were ringed with polished gol
All armed with trusty bows and darts,
Watched with devoted eyes and hearts.
And hoary men, a faithful train,
Whose aged hands held staves of cane,
The ladies' guard, apparetled fair
In red attire, were stationed there.
Soon as they saw Sumantra nigh,
Each longed his lord to gratify,
And from his seat beside the door
Up sprang each ancient servitor.
Then to the warders quickly cried
The skilled Sumantra, void of pride:
‘Tell Ráma that the charioteer
Sumantra waits for audience here.’
The ancient men with one accord
Seeking the pleasure of their lord,
Passing with speed the chamber door
To Ráma’s ear the message bore.
Forthwith the prince with duteous heed
Called in the messenger with speed,
For ’twas his sire’s command, he knew.
That sent him for the interview.
Like Lord Kuvera, well arrayed,
   He pressed a couch of gold,
Wherefrom a covering of brocade
   Hung down in many a fold.
Oil and the sandal’s fragrant dust
   Had tinged his body o’er
Dark as the stream the spearman’s thrust
   Drains from the wounded boar.
Him Sita watched with tender care,
   A chauri in her hand.
As Chitra, ever loud and fair.
Beside the Moon will stand.
Him glorious with unborrowed light
A liberal lord of sunlike might,
Sumantra hailed in words like these.
Well skilled in gentle courtesies,
As, with joined hands in reverence raised,
Upon the beauteous prince he gazed
‘Happy Kaushalya!’ Blest is she.
The mother of a son like thee
Now rise, O Rama, speed away
Go to thy sire without delay;
For he and Queen Kaikeyi seek
An interview with thee to speak.’
The lion-lord of men, the best
Of splendid heroes, thus addressed
To Sita, spake with joyful cheer:
‘The king and queen, my lady dear.
Touching the throning, for my sake
Some salutary counsel take
The lady of the full black eye

---

1 A star in the spike of Virgo, hence the name of the month Chaitra or Chait.
Would fain her husband gratify,
And, all his purpose understood,
Counsels the monarch to my good.
A happy fate is mine, I ween,
When he, consulting with his queen,
Sumantra on this charge, intent
Upon my gain and good, has sent.
An envoy of so noble sort
Well suits the splendour of the court.
The consecration rite this day
Will join me in imperial sway.
To meet the lord of earth, for so
His order bids me, I will go.
Thou, lady, here in comfort stay,
And with thy maidens rest or play'

Thus Ráma spake. For meet reply
The lady of the large black eye
Attended to the door her lord,
And blessings on his head implored:
'The majesty and royal state
Which holy Brāhmans venerate,
The consecration and the rite
Which sanctifies the ruler's might,
And all imperial powers should be
Thine by thy father's high decree,
As He, the worlds who formed and planned,
The kingship gave to Indra's hand.
Then shall mine eyes my king adore
When lustral rites and fast are o'er,
And black deer's skin and roebuck's horn
Thy lordly limbs and hand adorn.
May He whose hands the thunder wield
Be in the east thy guard and shield;
May Yama's care the south befriend,
And Varuṇ's arm the west defend;
And let Kuvera, Lord of Gold,
The north with firm protection hold.'

Then Rāma spoke a kind farewell,
And hailed the blessings as they fell
From Śītā's gentle lips; and then,
As a young lion from his den
Descends the mountain's stony side,
So from the hall the hero hied.
First Lakśman at the door he viewed
Who stood in reverent attitude,
Then to the central court he pressed
Where watched the friends who loved him best
To all his dear companions there
He gave kind looks and greeting fair.
On to the lofty car that glowed
Like fire the royal tiger strode.
Bright as himself its silver shone:
A tiger's skin was laid thereon.
With cloudlike thunder, as it rolled,
It flashed with gems and burnished gold,
And, like the sun's meridian blaze,
Blinded the eye that none could gaze
Like youthful elephants, tall and strong,
Fleet coursers whirled the car along:
In such a car the Thousand-eyed
Borne by swift horses loves to ride.
So like Parjanya,1 when he flies
Thundering through the autumn skies,
The hero from the palace sped,
As leaves the moon some cloud o'erhead,
Still close to Rāma Lakśman kept,
Behind him to the car he leapt.

1 The Rain God.
And, watching with fraternal care,
Waved the long chouri's silver hair.
As from the palace gate he came
Up rose the tumult of acclaim,
While loud huzza and jubilant shout
Pealed from the gathered myriads out.
Then elephants, like mountains vast,
And steeds who all their kind surpassed,
Followed their lord by hundreds, nay
By thousands, led in long array.
First marched a band of warriors trained,
With sandal dust and aloe stained;
Well armed was each with sword and bow,
And every breast with hope aglow.
And ever, as they onward went,
    Shouts from the warrior train,
And every sweet-toned instrument
    Prolonged the minstrel strain.
On passed the tamer of his tocs,
While well-clad dames, in crowded rows,
Each chamber lattice thronged to view,
And chaplets on the hero threw
Then all, of peerless face and limb,
Sang Ráma's praise for love of him,
And blent their voices, soft and sweet,
From palace high and crowded street:
    'Now, sure, Kausalya's heart must swell
To see the son she loves so well,
Thee, Ráma, thee, her joy and pride,
Triumphant o'er the realm preside.'
Then—for they knew his bride most fair
Of all who part the soft dark hair,
His love, his life, possessed the whole
Of her young hero's heart and soul: --
Canto XVI.  THE RAMAYAN.

'Be sure the lady's fate repays
Some mighty vow of ancient days,\(^1\)
For blest with Rāma's love is she
As, with the Moon's, sweet Rohini.'\(^2\)

Such were the witching words that came
From lips of many a peerless dame
Crowding the palace roofs to greet
The hero as he gained the street.

---

\(^1\) In a former life.

\(^2\) One of the lunar asterisms, represented as the favourite wife of the Moon. See Vol. 1. p. 9, note.
CANTO XVII.

RĀMA'S APPROACH.

As Rāma, rendering blithe and gay
His loving friends, pursued his way,
He saw on either hand a press
Of mingled people numberless.
The royal street he traversed, where
Incense of aloe filled the air,
Where rose high palaces, that vied
With paly clouds, on either side;
With flowers of myriad colours graced,
And food for every varied taste,
Bright as the glowing path o'erhead
Which feet of Gods celestial tread.
Loud benedictions, sweet to hear,
From countless voices soothed his ear,
While he to each gave due salute
His place and dignity to suit:
'Be thou,' the joyful people cried,
'Be thou our guardian, lord, and guide
Throned and anointed king to-day,
Thy feet set forth upon the way
Wherein, each honoured as a God,
Thy fathers and forefathers trod.
Thy sire and his have graced the throne,
And loving care to us have shown:
Thus blest shall we and ours remain,
Yea still more blest in Rāma's reign.
No more of dainty fare we need,
And but one cherished object heed,
That we may see our prince to-day
Invested with imperial sway.'

Such were the words and pleasant speech
That Rāma heard, unmoved, from each
Of the dear friends around him spread,
As onward through the street he sped
For none could turn his eye or thought
From the dear form his glances sought,
With fruitless ardour forward cast
Even when Raghu's son had past.
And he who saw not Rāma nigh,
Nor caught a look from Rāma's eye,
A mark for scorn and general blame,
Reproached himself in bitter shame.
For to each class his equal mind
With sympathy and love inclined
Most fully of the princely four,
So greatest love to him they bore.

His circling course the hero bent
Round shrine and altar, reverent,
Round homes of Gods, where cross-roads met,
Where many a sacred tree was set.
Near to his father's house he drew
Like Indra's beautiful to view,
And with the light his glory gave
Within the royal palace drave.

Through three broad courts, where bowmen kept
Their watch and ward, his coursers swept,
Then through the two remaining went
On foot that prince preëminent.
Through all the courts the hero passed,
And gained the ladies' bower at last;
Then through the door alone withdrew,
And left without his retinue.
When thus the monarch's noble boy
    Had gone his sire to meet,
The multitude, clave with joy.
    Stood watching in the street,
And his return with eager eyes
    Expected at the gates,
As for his darling moon to rise
    The King of Rivers¹ waits.

¹ The Sea.
CANTO XVIII.

THE SENTENCE.

With hopeless eye and pallid mien
There sat the monarch with the queen.
His father's feet with reverence due
He clasped, and touched Kaikeyi's too,
The king, with eyes still brimming o'er,
Cried Rama! and could do no more.
His voice was choked, his eye was dim,
He could not speak or look on him
Then sudden fear made Rama shake
As though his toot had roused a snake,
Soon as his eyes had seen the change
So mournful, terrible, and strange.
For there, in reason well-nigh fled,
Sighing, with soul disquieted,
To torturing pangs a prey,
Dismayed, despairing, and distraught,
In a fierce whirl of wildering thought
The hapless monarch lay.
Like Ocean wave-engerlanded
Storm-driven from his tranquil bed,
The Sun-God in eclipse,
Or like a holy seer, heart-stirred
With anguish, when a lying word
Has passed his heedless lips.
The sight of his dear father, pained
With woe and misery unexplained,
Filled Rama with unrest.
As Ocean's pulses rise and swell
When the great moon he loves so well
  Shines full upon his breast.
So grieving for his father's sake,
To his own heart the hero spake:
  'Why will the king my sire to-day
No kindly word of greeting say?
At other times, though wroth he be,
  His eyes grow calm that look on me.
Then why does anguish wring his brow
To see his well-beloved now?'
Sick and perplexed, distraught with woe,
To Queen Kaikeyí bowing low,
While pallor o'er his bright cheek spread,
With humble reverence he said:
  'What have I done, unknown, amiss
To make my father wroth like this?
Declare it, O dear Queen, and win
  His pardon for my heedless sin.
Why is the sire I ever find
Filled with all love to-day unkind?
With eyes cast down and pallid cheek
This day alone he will not speak.
Or lies he prostrate neath the blow
Of fierce disease or sudden woe?
For all our bliss is dashed with pain,
And joy unmint is hard to gain.
Does stroke of evil fortune smite
Dear Bharat, charming to the sight,
Or on the brave Satrughna fall,
Or consorts, for he loves them all?
Against his words when I rebel,
Or fail to please the monarch well;
When deeds of mine his soul offend,
That hour I pray my life may end.
How should a man to him who gave
His being and his life behave?
The sire to whom he owes his birth
Should be his deity on earth.
Hast thou, by pride and folly moved,
With bitter taunt the king reproved?
Has scorn of thine or cruel jest
To passion stirred his gentle breast?
Speak truly, Queen, that I may know
What cause has changed the monarch so'

Thus by the high-souled prince addressed,
Of Raghu's sons the chief and best,
She cast all ruth and shame aside,
And bold with greedy words replied:
'Not wrath, O Râma, stirs the king,
Nor misery stabs with sudden sting;
One thought that fills his soul has he,
But dares not speak for fear of thee.
Thou art so dear, his lips refrain
From words that might his darling pain
But thou, as duty bids, must still
The promise of thy sire fulfil.
He who to me in days gone by
Vouchsafed a boon with honours high,
Dares now, a king, his word regret,
And caitiff-like disowns the debt.
The lord of men his promise gave
To grant the boon that I might crave,
And now a bridge would idly throw
When the dried stream has ceased to flow.
His faith the monarch must not break
In wrath, or e'en for thy dear sake.
From faith, as well the righteous know,
Our virtue and our merits flow.
Now, be they good or be they ill,
Do thou thy father's words fulfil:
Swear that his promise shall not fail,
And I will tell thee all the tale.
Yes, Ráma, when I hear that thou
Hast bound thee by thy father's vow,
'Then, not till then, my lips shall speak,
Nor will he tell what boon I seek.'

He heard, and with a troubled breast
This answer to the queen addressed:
'Ah me, dear lady, canst thou deem
That words like these thy lips beseem?
I, at the bidding of my sire,
Would cast my body to the fire,
A deadly draught of poison drink,
Or in the waves of ocean sink:
If he command, it shall be done,—
My father and my king in one.
Then speak and let me know the thing
So longed for by my lord the king.
It shall be done: let this suffice:
Ráma ne'er makes a promise twice.

He ended. To the princely youth
Who loved the right and spoke the truth,
Cruel, abominable came
The answer of the ruthless dame:
'When Gods and Titans fought of yore,
Transfixed with darts and bathed in gore,
Two boons to me thy father gave
For the dear life 'twas mine to save.
Of him I claim the ancient debt,
That Bharat on the throne be set
And thou, O Ráma, go this day
To Dāṇḍak forest far away.
Now, Rāma, if thou wilt maintain
Thy father’s faith without a stain,
And thine own truth and honour clear,
Then, best of men, my bidding hear.
Do thou thy father’s word obey,
Nor from the pledge he gave me stray.
Thy life in Dāṇḍak forest spend
Till nine long years and five shall end.
Upon my Bharat’s princely head
Let consecrating drops be shed,
With all the royal pomp for thee
Made ready by the king’s decree
Seek Dāṇḍak forest and resign
Rites that would make the empire thine.
For twice seven years of exile wear
The coat of bark and matted hair.
Then in thy stead let Bharat reign
Lord of his royal sire’s domain,
Rich in the fairest gems that shine.
Cars, elephants, and steeds, and kine,
The monarch mourns thy altered fate;
And vails his brow compassionate:
Bowed down by bitter grief he lies
And dares not lift to thine his eyes.
Obey his word: be firm and brave,
And with great truth the monarch save.
While thus with cruel words she spoke,
No grief the noble youth betrayed;
But forth the father’s anguish broke,
At his dear Rāma’s lot dismayed.
CANTO XIX.

RĀMA'S PROMISE.

Calm and unmoved by threatened woe
The noble conqueror of the foe
Answered the cruel words she spoke,
Nor quailed beneath the murderous stroke
'Yea, for my father's promise sake
I to the wood my way will take,
And dwell a lonely exile there
In hermit dress with matted hair
One thing alone I fain would learn,
Why is the king this day so stern
Why is the scourge of foes so cold,
Nor gives me greeting as of old
Now let not anger flush thy cheek:
Before thy face the truth I speak
In hermit's coat with matted hair
To the wild wood will I repair
How can I fail his will to do,
Friend, master, grateful sovereign too?
One only pang consumes my breast,
That his own lips have not expressed
His will, nor made his longing known
That Bharat should ascend the throne.
To Bharat I would yield my wife,
My realm and wealth, mine own dear life.
Unasked I fain would yield them all:
More gladly at my father's call,
More gladly when the gift may free
His honour and bring joy to thee.
Thus, lady, his sad heart release
From the sore shame, and give him peace.
But tell me, O, I pray thee, why
The lord of men, with downcast eye,
Lies prostrate thus, and one by one
Down his pale cheek the tear-drops run.
Let couriers to thy father speed
On horses of the swiftest breed,
And, by the mandate of the king,
Thy Bharat to his presence bring.
My father's words I will not stay
To question, but this very day
To Daṇḍak's pathless wild will fare,
For twice seven years an exile there.'

When Rāma thus had made reply
Kaikeyī's heart with joy beat high.
She, trusting to the pledge she held,
The youth's departure thus impelled:
'Tis well. Be messengers despatched
On coursers ne'er for fleetness matched,
To sock my father's home and lead
My Bharat back with all their speed.
And, Rāma, as I ween that thou
Wilt scarce endure to linger now,
So surely it were wise and good
This hour to journey to the wood.
And if, with shame cast down and weak,
No word to thee the king can speak,
Forgive, and from thy mind dismiss
A trifle in an hour like this.
But till thy feet in rapid haste
Have left the city for the waste,
And to the distant forest fled,
He will not bathe nor call for bread.'
    'Woe' woe!' from the sad monarch burst,
In surging floods of grief immersed;
Then swooning, with his wits astray.
Upon the gold-wrought couch he lay
And Râma raised the aged king.
But the stern queen, unpitying,
Checked not her needless words, nor spared
The hero for all speed prepared,
But urged him with her bitter tongue
Like a good horse with lashes stung
She spoke her shameful speech. Serene
He heard the fury of the queen,
And to her words so vile and dread
Gently, unmoved in mind, he said
    'I would not in this world remain
A grovelling thrall to paltry gain,
But duty's path would fain pursue,
True as the saints themselves are true
From death itself I would not fly
My father's wish to gratify.
What deed so'er his loving son
May do to please him, think it done
Amid all duties, Queen, I count
This duty first and paramount,
That sons, obedient, aye fulfil
Their honoured fathers' word and will
Without his word, if thou decree,
Forth to the forest will I flee,
And there shall fourteen years be spent
Mid lonely wilds in banishment
Methinks thou couldst not hope to find
One spark of virtue in my mind,
If thou, whose wish is still my lord.
Hast for this grace the king implored.
This day I go, but, ere we part,
Must cheer my Sita's tender heart,
To my dear mother bid farewell;
Then to the woods, a while to dwell.
With thee, O Queen, the care must rest
That Bharat hear his sire's behest,
And guard the land with righteous sway.
For such the law that lives for aye.'

In speechless woe the father heard,
Wept with loud cries, but spoke no word.
Then Ráma touched his senseless feet,
And hers, for honour most unmeet;
Round both his circling steps he bent,
Then from the bower the hero went.
Soon as he reached the gate he found
His dear companions gathered round.
Behind him came Sumitrá's child
With weeping eyes so sad and wild.
Then saw he all that rich array
Of vases for the glorious day.
Round them with reverent steps he paced,
Nor vailed his eye, nor moved in haste.
The loss of empire could not dim
The glory that encompassed him.
So will the Lord of Cooling Rays ¹
On whom the world delights to gaze,
Through the great love of all retain
Sweet splendour in the time of wane.
Now to the exile's lot resigned
He left the rule of earth behind:
As though all worldly cares he spurned
No trouble was in him discerned.

¹ The Moon.
The chouries that for kings are used,
And white umbrella, he refused,
Dismissed his chariot and his men,
And every friend and citizen.
He ruled his senses, nor betrayed
The grief that on his bosom weighed,
And thus his mother’s mansion sought
To tell the mournful news he brought.
Nor could the gay-clad people there
Who flocked round Ráma true and fair,
One sign of altered fortune trace
Upon the splendid hero’s face
Nor had the chieftain, mighty-armed,
Lost the bright look all hearts that charmed,
As e’en from autumn morn is thrown
A splendour which is all their own
With his sweet voice the hero spoke
Saluting all the gathered folk,
Then righteous-souled and great in fame
Close to his mother’s house he came.
Lakshman the brave, his brother’s peer
In princely virtues, followed near,
Sore troubled, but resolved to show
No token of his secret woe.
Thus to the palace Ráma went
Where all were gay with hope and joy;
But well he knew the dire event
That hope would mar, that bliss destroy.
So to his grief he would not yield
Lest the sad change their hearts might rend,
And, the dread tidings unrevealed,
Spared from the blow each faithful friend.
CANTO XX.

KAUSALYÁ'S LAMENT.

But in the monarch's palace, when
Sped from the bower that lord of men,
Up from the weeping women went
A mighty wail and wild lament:
'Ah, he who ever freely did
His duty ere his sire could bud,
Our refuge and our sure defence,
This day will go an exile hence
He on Kausalyá loves to wait
Most tender and affectionate.
And as he treats his mother, thus
From childhood has he treated us.
On themes that sting he will not speak,
And when reviled is calm and meek. *
He soothes the angry, heals offence:
He goes to-day an exile hence
Our lord the king is most unwise,
And looks on life with doting eyes,
Who in his folly casts away
The world's protection, hope, and stay.'

Thus in their woe, like kine bereaved
Of their young calves,' the ladies grieved,

---

1 The comparison may to a European reader seem a homely one.
But Spenser likens an infantate woman to a cow

2 'That is bereaved of her youngling dere.' Shakespeare also makes
King Henry VI compare himself to the calf's mother that

3 'Rugs lowing up and down, Looking the way her harmless young
And ever as they wept and wailed
With keen reproach the king assailed.
Their lamentation, mixed with tears,
Smote with new grief the monarch's ears,
Who, burnt with woe too great to bear,
Fell on his couch and fainted there.

Then Ráma, smitten with the pain
His heaving heart could scarce restrain,
Groaned like an elephant and strode
With Lakshmana to the queen's abode
A warder there, whose hoary old
In honour high by all was held,
Guarding the mansion, sat before
The portal, girt with many more
Swift to their feet the warders sprang,
And loud the acclamation rang,
Hail, Ráma! as to him they bent,
Of victor chiefs preëminent.
One court he passed, and in the next
Saw, masters of each Veda text,
A crowd of Bráhmans, good and sage
Dear to the king for lore and age.
To these he bowed his reverent head,
Thence to the court beyond he sped.
Old dames and tender girls, their care
To keep the doors, were stationed there.
And all, when Ráma came in view,
Delighted, to the chamber flew,
To bear to Queen Kauśalya's ear
The tidings that she loved to hear.

one went." *Cows," says De Quincey, "are amongst the gentlest of breathing creatures; none show more passionate tenderness to their young, when deprived of them, and, in short, I am not ashamed to profess a deep love for these gentle creatures."
Canto XX.  THE RAMAYANA

The queen, on rites and prayer intent,
In careful watch the night had spent,
And at the dawn, her son to aid,
To Vishṇu holy offerings made.
Firm in her vows, serenely glad,
In robes of spotless linen clad,
As texts prescribe, with grace implored,
Her offerings in the fire she poured
Within her splendid bower he came,
And saw her feed the sacred flame.
There oil, and grain, and vases stood,
With wreaths, and curds, and cates, and wood,
And milk, and sesamum, and rice,
The elements of sacrifice.
She, worn and pale with many a fast
And midnight hours in vigil past,
In robes of purest white arrayed,
To Lakṣmī Queen drink-offerings paid.
So long away, she flew to meet
  The darling of her soul:
So runs a mare with eager feet
  To welcome back her foal.
He with his firm support upheld
  The queen, as near she drew,
And, by maternal love impelled,
  Her arms around him threw.
Her hero son, her matchless boy
  She kissed upon the head:
She blessed him in her pride and joy
  With tender words, and said:
  Be like thy royal sires of old,
The nobly good, the lofty-souled!
Their lengthened days and fame be thine,
And virtue, as becometh thy line!
The pious king, thy father, see
True to his promise made to thee:
That truth thy sire this day will show,
And regent's power on thee bestow.'

She spoke. He took the proffered seat,
And as she pressed her son to eat,
Raised reverent hands, and, touched with shame,
Made answer to the royal dame:
'Dear lady, thou hast yet to know
That danger threatens, and heavy woe:
A grief that will with sore distress
On Sítā, thee, and Lakshman press.
What need of seats have such as I?
This day to Danḍak wood I fly
The hour is come, a time unmeet
For silken couch and gilded seat.
I must to lonely wilds repair,
Abstain from flesh, and living there
On roots, fruit, honey, hermit's food,
Pass twice seven years in solitude
To Bharat's hand the king will yield
The regent power I thought to wield,
And me, a hermit, will he send
My days in Danḍak wood to spend.'

As when the woodman's axe has lopped
A Sál branch in the grove, she dropped:
So from the skies a Goddess falls
Ejected from her radiant halls.

When Ráma saw her lying low,
Prostrate by too severe a blow,
Around her form his arms he wound
And raised her fainting from the ground,
His hand upheld her like a mare
Who feels her load too sore to bear.
And sinks upon the way o'ertwined,
And all her limbs with dust are soiled.
He soothed her in her wild distress
With loving touch and soft caress.
She, meet for highest fortune, eyed
The hero watching by her side,
And thus, while Lakshman bent to hear,
Addressed her son with many a tear:
'If, Rāma, thou had no'er been born
My child to make thy mother mourn,
Though rest of joy, a childless queen,
Such woe as this I ne'er had seen.
Though to the childless wife there clings
One sorrow armed with keenest stings,
'No child have I: no child have I,'
No second misery prompts the sigh.
When long I sought, alas, in vain,
My husband's love and bliss to gain,
In Rāma all my hopes I set
And dreamed I might be happy yet.
I, of the consorts first and best,
Must bear my rivals' taunt and jest.
And brook, though better far than they,
The soul-distressing words they say.
What woman can be doomed to pine
In misery more sore than mine,
Whose hopeless days must still be spent
In grief that ends not and lament?
They scorned me when my son was nigh;
When he is banished I must die.
Me, whom my husband never prized,
Kaikeyi's retinue despised
With boundless insolence, though she Tops not in rank nor equals me.
And they who do me service yet,
Nor old allegiance quite forget,
Whene'er they see Kaikeyi's son,
With silent lips my glances shun.
How, O my darling, shall I brook
Each menace of Kaikeyi's look,
And listen, in my low estate,
To taunts of one so passionate?
For seventeen years since thou wast born
I sat and watched, ah me, forlorn!
Hoping some blessed day to see
Deliverance from my woes by thee.
Now comes this endless grief and wrong,
So dire I cannot bear it long,
Sinking, with age and sorrow worn,
Beneath my rivals' taunts and scorn.
How shall I pass in dark distress
My long lone days of wretchedness
Without my Rāma's face, as bright
As the full moon to cheer my sight?
Alas, my cares thy steps to train,
And fasts, and vows, and prayers are vain.
Hard, hard, I ween, must be this heart
To bear this blow nor burst apart,
As some great river bank, when first
The floods of Rain-time on it burst.
No, Fate that speeds not will not slay,
Nor Yama's halls vouchsafe me room;
Or, like a lion's weeping prey,
Death now had borne me to my doom.
Hard is my heart and wrought of steel
That breaks not with the crushing blow,
Or in the pangs this day I feel
My lifeless frame had sunk below.
Death waits his hour, nor takes me now:
But this sad thought augments my pain,
That prayer and largess, fast and vow,
And Heavenward service are in vain.
Ah me, ah me! with fruitless toil
Of rites austere a child I sought:
Thus seed cast forth on barren soil
Still lifeless lies and comes to naught.
If ever wretch by anguish grieved
Before his hour to death had fled,
I mourning, like a cow bereaved,
Had been this day among the dead.
CANTO XXI.

KAUŚALYÁ CALMED.

While thus Kauśalyá wept and sighed,
With timely words sad Lakshman cried:
'O honoured Queen I like it ill
That, subject to a woman's will,
Ráma his royal state should quit
And to an exile's doom submit.
The aged king, fond, changed, and weak,
Will as the queen compels him speak
But why should Ráma thus be sent
To the wild woods in banishment?
No least offence I find in him,
I see no fault his fame to dune.
Not one in all the world I know,
Not outcast wretch, not secret foe,
Whose whispering lips would dare assail
His spotless life with slanderous tale
Godlike and bounteous, just, sincere,
E'en to his very foemen dear:
Who would without a cause neglect
The right, and such a son reject?
And if a king such order gave,
In second childhood, passion's slave,
What son within his heart would lay
The senseless order, and obey?
Come, Ráma, ere this plot be known
Stand by me and secure the throne,
Stand like the King who rules below,
Cunto XXI. THE RAMAYAN.

Stand aided by thy brother's bow:
How can the might of meeker men
Resist thy royal purpose then?
My shafts, if rebels court their fate,
Shall lay Ayodhya desolate.
Then shall her streets with blood be dyed
Of those who stand on Bharat's side:
None shall my slaugthering hand exempt,
For gentle patience earns contempt.
If, by Kaikeyi's counsel changed,
Our father's heart be thus estranged,
No mercy must our arm restrain,
But let the foe be slain, be slain.
For should the guide, respected long,
No more discerning right and wrong,
'Gainst pernicious paths to stray,
'Tis meet that force his steps should stay.
What power sufficient can he see,
What motive for the wish has he,
That to Kaikeyi would resign
The empire which is justly thine?
Can he, O conqueror of thy foes,
Thy strength and mine in war oppose?
Can he entrust, in our despite,
To Bharat's hand thy royal right?
I love this brother with the whole
Affection of my faithful soul.
Yea, Queen, by bow and truth I swear,
By sacrifice, and gift, and prayer,
If Rama to the forest goes,
Or where the burning furnace glows,
First shall my feet the forest tread,
The flames shall first surround my head.
My might shall chase thy grief and tears,
As darkness flies when morn appears
Do thou, dear Queen, and Ráma too
Behold what power like mine can do.
My aged father I will kill,
The vassal of Kaikóyí's will,
Old, yet a child, the woman's thrall,
Infirm, and base, the scorn of all'

Thus Lakshman cried, the mighty-souled:
Down her sad cheeks the torrents rolled,
As to her son Kauśalyá spake:
'Now thou hast heard thy brother, take
His counsel if thou hold it wise,
And do the thing his words advise
Do not, my son, with tears I pray,
My rival's wicked word obey
Leave me not here consumed with woe,
Nor to the wood, an exile, go.
If thou, to virtue ever true,
Thy duty's path would still pursue,
The highest duty bids thee stay
And thus thy mother's voice obey
Thus Kaśyap's great ascetic son
A seat among the Immortals won:
In his own home, subdued, he stayed,
And honour to his mother paid.
If reverence to thy sire be due,
Thy mother claims like honour too.
And thus I charge thee, O my child,
Thou must not seek the forest wild.
Ah, what to me were life and bliss,
Condemned my darling son to miss?
But with my Ráma near, to eat
The very grass itself were sweet.
But if thou still wilt go and leave
Thy hapless mother here to grieve,
I from that hour will food abjure,
Nor life without my son endure.
Then it will be thy fate to dwell
In depth of world-detested hell,
As Ocean in the olden time
Was guilty of an impious crime
That marked the lord of each fair flood
As one who spills a Brähman’s blood.  

Thus spake the queen, and wept, and sighed
Then righteous Ráma thus replied:
‘I have no power to slight or break
Commandments which my father spake
I bend my head, dear lady, low,
Forgive me, for I needs must go
Once Kandu, mighty saint, who made
His dwelling in the forest shade,
A cow—and duty’s claims he knew—
Obedient to his father, slew.
And in the line from which we spring,
When ordered by their sire the king,
Through earth the sons of Sagar went,
And countless things of life bereft
So Jamadagni’s son obeyed
His sire, when in the wood he land
His hand upon his axe, and smote
Through Renuká his mother’s throat.
The deeds of these and more beside,
Peers of the Gods, my steps shall guide,
And resolute will I fulfil

---

1 The commentators say that, in a former creation, Ocean grieved his mother and suffered in consequence the pains of hell.

2 As described in Book I Canto XI.

3 Parasuráma
My father’s word, my father’s will.
Nor I, O Queen, unsanctioned tread
This righteous path, by duty led:
The road my footsteps journey o’er
Was traversed by the great of yore
This high command which all accept
Shall faithfully by me be kept,
For duty ne’er will him forsake
Who fears his sire’s command to break.’

Thus to his mother wild with grief:
Then thus to Lakshman spake the chief
Of those by whom the bow is bent,
Mid all who speak, most eloquent:
‘I know what love for me thou hast,
What firm devotion unsurpassed:
Thy valour and thy worth I know,
And glory that appals the foe.
Blest youth, my mother’s woe is great,
It bends her neath its matchless weight:
No claims will she, with blinded eyes,
Of truth and patience recognize.
For duty is supreme in place,
And truth is duty’s noblest base.
Obedient to my sire’s behest
I serve the cause of duty best
For man should truly do whate’er
To mother, Bráhman, sire, he sware:
He must in duty’s path remain,
Nor let his word be pledged in vain.
And, O my brother, how can I
Obedience to this charge deny?
Kaikeyi’s tongue my purpose spurred,
But ’twas my sire who gave the word.
Cast these unholy thoughts aside
Canto XXI. THE RAMAYAN.

Which smack of war and Warriors' pride;
To duty's call, not wrath attend,
And tread the path which I commend.'

Râma by fond affection moved
His brother Lâkshman thus reproved;
Then with joined hands and reverent head
Again to Queen Kauśalyâ said:

'I need: must go—do thou consent—
To the wild wood in banishment.
O give me, by my life I pray,
Thy blessing ere I go away.
I, when the promised years are o'er,
Shall see Ayodhyâ's town once more.
Then, mother dear, thy tears restrain,
Nor let thy heart be wrung by pain:
In time, my father's will obeyed,
Shall I return from Greenwood shade.
My dear Vîdehan, thou, and I,
Lâkshman, Sumitrâ, feel this tie,
And must my father's word obey,
As duty bids that rules for aye.
Thy preparations now forgo,
And lock within thy breast thy woe,
Nor be my pious wish withstood
To go an exile to the wood.'

Calm and unmoved the prince explained
His duty's claim and purpose high.
The mother life and sense regained,
Looked on her son and made reply:

'If reverence be thy father's due,
The same by right and love is mine:
Go not, my charge I thus renew,
Nor leave me here in woe to pine.
What were such lonely life to me,
Rites to the shades, or deathless lot?
More dear, my son, one hour with thee
Than all the world where thou art not.'
As bursts to view, when brands blaze high,
   Some elephant concealed by night,
So, when he heard his mother's cry,
   Burnt Ráma's grief with fiercer might.
Thus to the queen, half senseless still,
   And Lakshman, burnt with heart-felt pain,
True to the right, with steadfast will,
   His duteous speech he spoke again.
'Brother, I know thy loving mind,
Thy valour and thy truth I know,
But now to claims of duty blind
Thou and my mother swell my woe.
The fruits of deeds in human life
   Make love, gain, duty, manifest,
Dear when they meet as some fond wife
   With her sweet babes upon her breast.
But man to duty first should turn
   Whene'er the three are not combined:
For those who heed but gain we spurn,
   And those to pleasure all resigned.
Shall then the virtuous disobey
   Hests of an aged king and sire,
Though feverous joy that father sway,
   Or senseless love or causeless ire?
I have no power, commanded thus,
   To slight his promise and decree:
The honoured sire of both of us,
   My mother's lord and life is he.
Shall she, while yet the holy king
   Is living, on the right intent,—
Shall she, like some poor widowed thing,
Go forth with me to banishment?
Now, mother, speed thy parting son,
And let thy blessing soothe my pain,
That I may turn, mine exile done,
Like King Yayati, home again.
Fair glory and the fruit she gives,
For lust of sway I ne'er will slight:
What, for the span a mortal lives,
Were rule of earth without the right?
He soothed her thus, firm to the last
His counsel to his brother told:
Then round the queen in reverence passed,
And held her in his loving hold.
CANTO XXII.

LAKSHMAN CALMED.

So Ráma kept unshaken still
His noble heart with iron will.
To his dear brother next he turned,
Whose glaring eyes with fury burned,
Indignant, panting like a snake,
And thus again his counsel spake:
'Thine anger and thy grief restrain,
And firm in duty's path remain.
Dear brother, lay thy scorn aside,
And be the right thy joy and pride.
Thy ready zeal and thoughtful care
To aid what rites should grace the heir,—
Thess 'tis another's now to ask;
Come, gird thee for thy noble task,
That Bharat's throning rites may be
Graced with the things prepared for me.
And with thy gentle care provide
That her fond heart, now sorely tried
With fear and longing for my sake,
With doubt and dread may never ache.
To know that thoughts of coming ill
One hour that tender bosom fill
With agony and dark despair
Is grief too great for me to bear.
I cannot, brother, call to mind
One wilful fault or undesigned,
When I have pained in anything
My mothers or my sire the king,
The right my father keeps in view,
In promise, word, and action true;
Let him then all his fear dismiss,
Nor dread the loss of future bliss.
He fears his truth herein will fail:
Hence bitter thoughts his heart assail.
He trembles lest the rites proceed,
And at his pangs my heart should bleed.
So now this earnest wish is mine,
The consecration to resign,
And from this city turn away
To the wild wood with no delay.
My banishment to-day will free
Kaikeyī from her cares, that she,
At last contented and elate,
May Bharat's throning celebrate.
Then will the lady's trouble cease,
Then will her heart have joy and peace,
When wandering in the wood I wear
Deerskin, and bark, and matted hair,
Nor shall by me his heart be grieved
Whose choice approved, whose mind conceived
This counsel which I follow. No,
Forth to the forest will I go.
'Tis Fate, Sumitā's son, confess,
That sends me to the wilderness.
'Tis Fate alone that gives away
To other hands the royal sway.
How could Kaikeyī's purpose bring
On me this pain and suffering,
Were not her change of heart decreed
By Fate whose will commands the deed?
I know my filial love has been
The same throughout for every queen,
And with the same affection she
Has treated both her son and me.
Her shameful words of cruel spite
To stay the consecrating rite,
And drive me banished from the throne,-
These I ascribe to Fate alone.

How could she, born of royal race,
Whom nature decks with fairest grace,
Speak like a dame of low degree
Before the king to torture me?

But Fate, which none may comprehend,
To which all life must bow and bend,
In her and me its power has shown,
And all my hopes are overthrown.

What man, Sumitra's darling, may
Contend with Fate's resistless sway,
Whose all-commanding power we find
Our former deeds alone can hint?

Our life and death, our joy and pain,
Anger and fear, and loss and gain,
Each thing that is, in every state,
All is the work of none but Fate.

E'en saints, inspired with rigid zeal,
When once the stroke of Fate they feel,
In sternest vows no more engage,
And fall enslaved by love and rage.

So now the sudden stroke whose weight Descends unlooked for, comes of Fate,
And with unpitying might destroys
The promise of commencing joys.

Weigh this true counsel in thy soul:
With thy firm heart thy heart control;
Then, brother, thou wilt cease to grieve
Canto XXII.  THE RAMAYAN.

For hindered rites which now I leave.
So cast thy needless grief away,
And strictly my commands obey.
These preparations check with speed,
Nor let my throning rites proceed.
These urns that stand prepared to shed
King-making drops upon my head,
Shall with their pure lustrations now
Inaugurate my hermit's vow.
Yet what have I to do with things
That touch the state and pomp of kings?
These hands of mine shall water take
To sanctify the vow I make.
Now Lakshman, let thy heart no more
My fortune changed and lost deplore.
A forest life more joys may bring
Than those that wait upon a king.
Now though her arts successful mar
My consecrating rite,
Let not the youngest queen too far
Thy jealous fear excite.
Nor let one thought suggesting ill
Upon our father fall,
But let thy heart remember still
That Fate is lord of all.'
CANTO XXIII.

LAKSHMAN'S ANGER.

Thus Rāma to his brother said;
And Lakshman bent his drooping head.
In turns by grief and pride impelled,
A middle course of thought he held.
Then in a frown of anger, bent
His brows that chief most excellent,
And like a serpent in his hole,
Breathed fierce and fast in wrath of soul.
His threatening brows so darkly howned,
His eyes so fiercely glanced around,
They made his glare, which none might brook,
Like some infuriate lion's look.
Like some wild elephant, full oft
He raised and shook his hand\(^1\) aloft.
Now turned his neck to left and right,
Now bent, now raised its stately height.
Now in his rage that sword he felt
Which mangling wounds to foemen dealt,
With sidelong glance his brother eyed,
And thus in burning words replied:
'Thy rash resolve, thy eager haste,
Thy mighty fear, are all misplaced:
No room is here for duty's claim,
No cause to dread the people's blame.
Can one so brave as thou consent

\(^1\) The Sanskrit word \textit{kāsa} signifies both \textit{hand}, and the trunk of
\textit{The beast that bears between his eyes a serpent for a hand,'
To use a coward's argument?
The glory of the Warrior race
With craven speech his lips debase?
Can one like thee so falsely speak,
Exalting Fate, confessed so weak?
Canst thou, undoubting still, restrain
Suspicions of those sinful twain?
Canst thou, most duteous, fail to know
Their hearts are set on duty's show?
They with deceit have set their trains,
And now the fruit rewards their pains.
Had they not long ago agreed,
O Ráma, on this treacherous deed,
That promised boon, so long retained,
He erst had given and she had gained.
I cannot, O my brother, bear
To see another throned as heir
With rites which all our people hate:
Then, O, this passion tolerate.
This vaunted duty which can guide
Thy steps from wisdom's path aside,
And change the counsel of thy breast,
O lofty-hearted, I detest.
Wilt thou, when power and might are thine,
Submit to this abhorred design?
Thy father's impious best fulfil,
That vassal of Kaikeyi's will?
But if thou still wilt shut thine eyes,
Nor see the guile herein that lies,
My soul is sad, I deeply mourn,
And duty seems a thing to scorn.
Canst thou one moment think to please
This pair who live for love and ease,
And 'gainst thy peace, as foes, allied,
With tenderest names their hatred hide?
Now if thy judgment still refers
To Fate this plot of his and hers,
My mind herein can ne'er agree:
And O, in this be ruled by me.
Weak, void of manly pride are they
Who bend to Fate's imputed sway:
The choicest souls, the nobly great
Disdain to bow their heads to Fate.
And he who dares his Fate control
With vigorous act and manly soul,
Though threatening Fate his hopes assail,
Unmoved through all need never quail.
This day mankind shall learn aright
The power of Fate and human might.
So shall the gulf that lies between
A man and Fate be clearly seen.
The might of Fate subdued by me
This hour the citizens shall see,
Who saw its intervention stay
Thy consecrating rites to-day.
My power shall turn this Fate aside,
That threatens, as, with furious stride,
An elephant who scorns to feel,
In rage unchecked, the driver's stecl.
Not the great Lords whose sleepless might
Protects the worlds, shall stay the rite
Though earth, hell, heaven combine their powers:
And shall we fear this sire of ours?
Then if their minds are idly bent
To doom thee, King, to banishment,
Through twice seven years of exile they
Shall in the lonely forest stay.
I will consume the hopes that fire
The queen Kaikeyi and our sire,
That to her son this check will bring
Advantage, making Bharat king.
The power of Fate will ne'er withstand
The might that arms my vigorous hand;
If danger and distress assail,
My fearless strength will still prevail.
A thousand circling years shall flee:
The forest then thy home shall be,
And thy good sons, succeeding, hold
The empire which their sire controlled.
The royal saints, of old who reigned,
For aged kings this rest ordained:
These to their sons their realm commit
That they, like sires, may cherish it.
O pious soul, if thou decline
The empire which is justly thine,
Lest, while the king distracted lies,
Disorder in the state should rise,
Or no mansion may I find
In worlds to hero souls assigned,—
The guardian of thy realm will be,
As the sea-bank protects the sea.
Then cast thine idle fears aside:
With prosperous rites be sanctified.
The lords of earth may strive in vain;
My power shall all their force restrain.
My pair of arms, my warrior's bow
Are not for pride of empty show:
For no support these shafts were made;
And binding up ill suits my blade:
To pierce the foe with deadly breach—
This is the work of all and each.
But small, methinks, the love I show
For him I count my mortal foe.
Soon as my trenchant steel is bare,
Flashing its lightning through the air,
I heed no foe, nor stand aghast
Though Indra's self the levin cast.
Then shall the ways be hard to pass,
Where chariots lie in ruinous mass;
When elephant and man and steed
Crushed in the murderous onslaught bleed,
And legs and heads fall, heap on heap,
Beneath my sword's tremendous sweep.
Struck by my keen brand's trenchant blade,
Thine enemies shall fall dismayed,
Like towering mountains rent in twain,
Or lightning clouds that burst in rain.
When armed with brace and glove I stand,
And take my trusty bow in hand,
Who then shall vaunt his might? who dare
Count him a man to meet me there?
Then will I loose my shafts, and strike
Man, elephant, and steed alike:
At one shall many an arrow fly,
And many a foe with one shall die.
This day the world my power shall see,
That none in arms can rival me:
My strength the monarch shall abase,
And set thee, lord, in lordliest place.

These arms which breathe the sandal's scent,
Which golden bracelets ornament,
These hands which precious gifts bestow,
Which guard the friend and smite the foe,
A nobler service shall assay,
And fight in Rāma's cause to-day,
The robbers of thy rights to stay.
Canto XXIII. THE RAMAYAN.

Speak, brother, tell thy foeman's name
Whom I, in conquering strife,
May strip of followers and fame,
Of fortune, or of life.
Say, how may all this sea-girt land
Be brought to own thy sway:
Thy faithful servant here I stand,
To listen and obey.

Then strove the pride of Raghu's race
Sad Lakshman's heart to cheer,
While slowly down the hero's face,
Unchecked, there rolled a tear.

'The orders of my sire,' he cried,
'My will shall ne'er oppose:
I follow still, whate'er betide,
The path which duty shows.'
CANTO XXIV.

KAUŚALYĀ CALMED.

But when Kauśalyā saw that he
Resolved to keep his sire’s decree,
While tears and sobs her utterance broke,
Her very righteous speech she spoke:
‘Can he, a stranger yet to pain,
Whose pleasant words all hearts enchain,
Son of the king and me the queen,
Live on the grain his hands may glean?
Can he, whose slaves and menials eat
The finest cakes of sifted wheat—
Can Rāma in the forest live
On roots and fruit which woodlands give?
Who will believe, who will not fear
When the sad story smites his ear,
That one so dear, so noble held,
Is by the king his sire expelled?
Now surely none may Fate resist,
Which orders all as it may list,
If, Rāma, in thy strength and grace,
The woods become thy dwelling-place.
A childless mother long I grieved,
And many a sigh for offspring heaved,
With wistful longing weak and worn
Till thou at last, my son, wast born.
Fanned by the storm of that desire
Deep in my soul I felt the fire,
Whose offerings flowed from weeping eyes,
With fuel fed of groans and sighs,
While round the flame the smoke grew hot
Of tears because thou camest not.
Now rest of thee, too fiery fierce
The flame of woe my heart will pierce,
As, when the days of spring return,
The sun's hot beams the forest burn.
The mother cow still follows near
The wanderings of her youngling dear,
So close to thine my feet shall be,
Where'er thou goest following thee.'

Rāma, the noblest lord of men,
Heard his fond mother's speech, and then
In soothing words like these replied
To the sad queen who wept and sighed:
'Nay, by Kaikeyi's art beguiled.
When I am banished to the wild,
If thou, my mother, also fly,
The aged king will surely die.
When wedded dames their lords forsake,
Long for the crime their souls shall ache.
Thou must not e'en in thought within
Thy bosom frame so dire a sin.
Long as Kakutstha's son, who reigns
Lord of the earth, in life remains,
Thou must with love his will obey:
This duty claims, supreme for aye.
Yes, mother, thou and I must be
Submissive to my sire's decrec,
King, husband, sire is he confessed,
The lord of all, the worthiest.
I in the wilds my days will spend
Till twice seven years have reached an end,
'Then with great joy will come again,
THE RAMAYAN.

And faithful to thy hests remain.'

Kauśalyā, by her son addressed,
With love and passion sore distressed,
Afflicted, with her eyes bedewed,
To Rāma thus her speech renewed:

'Nay, Rāma, but my heart will break
If with these queens my home I make.
Lead me too with thee; let me go
And wander like a woodland roe.'

Then, while no tear the hero shed,
Thus to the weeping queen he said:
'Mother, while lives the husband, he
Is woman's lord and deity.
O dearest lady, thou and I
Our lord and king must ne'er deny;
The lord of earth himself have we
Our guardian wise and friend to be.
And Bharat, true to duty's call,
Whose sweet words take the hearts of all,
Will serve thee well, and ne'er forget
The virtuous path before him set.
Be this, I pray, thine earnest care,
That the old king my father ne'er,
,When I have parted hence, may know,
Grieved for his son, a pang of woe.
Let not this grief his soul distress,
To kill him with the bitterness.
With duteous care, in every thing,
Love, comfort, cheer the aged king.
Though, best of womankind, a spouse
Keeps firmly all her fasts and vows,
Not yet her husband's will obeys,
She treads in sin's forbidden ways.
She to her husband's will who bends
Canto XXIV. THE RAMAYAN.

Goes to high bliss that never ends,
Yea, though the Gods have found in her
No reverential worshipper.
Bent on his weal, a woman still
Must seek to do her husband’s will:
For Scripture, custom, law uphold
This duty Heaven revealed of old.
Honour true Brâhmans for my sake,
And constant offerings duly make,
With fire-oblations and with flowers,
To all the host of heavenly powers.
Look to the coming time, and yearn
For the glad hour of my return,
And still thy duteous course pursue,
Abstemious, humble, kind, and true.
The highest bliss shalt thou obtain
When I from exile come again,
If, best of those who keep the right,
The king my sire still see the light.’

The queen, by Râma thus addressed
Still with a mother’s grief oppressed,
While her long eyes with tears were dim,
Began once more and answered him:
‘Not by my pleading may be stayed
The firm resolve thy soul has made.
My hero, thou wilt go; and none
The stern commands of Fate may shun.
Go forth, dear child, whom naught can bend,
And may all bliss thy steps attend.
Thou wilt return, and that dear day
Will chase mine every grief away.
Thou wilt return, thy duty done,
Thy vows discharged, high glory won;
From filial debt thou be free,
And sweetest joy will come on me.
My son, the will of mighty Fate
At every time must dominate,
If now it drives thee hence to stray
Heedless of me who bid thee stay.
Go, strong of arm, go forth, my boy,
Go forth, again to come with joy,
And thine expectant mother cheer
With those sweet tones she loves to hear.
O that the blessed hour were nigh
When thou shalt glad this anxious eye,
With matted hair and hermit dress
Returning from the wilderness.'

Kauśalya’s conscious soul approved,
As her proud glance she bent
On Rāma constant and unmoved,
Resolved on banishment.
Such words, with happy omens fraught,
To her dear son she said,
Invoking with each eager thought
A blessing on his head.
CANTO XXV.

KAUSHALYĀ'S BLESSING.

Her grief and woe she cast aside,
Her lips with water purified,
And thus her benison began
That mother of the noblest man:
'If thou wilt hear no words of mine,
Go forth, thou pride of Raghu's line.
Go, darling, and return with speed,
Walking where noble spirits lead.
May Virtue on thy steps attend,
And be her faithful lover's friend.
May Those to whom thy vows are paid
In temple and in holy shade,
With all the mighty saints combine
To keep that precious life of thine.
The arms wise Viśvāmitra gave
Thy virtuous soul from danger save:
Long be thy life: thy sure defence
Shall be thy truthful innocence,
And that obedience, naught can tire,
To me thy mother and thy sire.
May fanes where holy fires are fed,
Altars with grass and fuel spread,
Each sacrificial ground, each tree,
Rock, lake, and mountain, prosper thee.
Let old Virāj, and Him who made

1 See Vol. I. p. 143.
2 The first progeny of Brahmā, or Brahmā himself.
The universe, combine to aid;
Let Indra and each guardian Lord
Who keeps the worlds, their help afford,
And be thy constant friend the Sun,
Lord Púshá, Bhaga, Aryaman.¹
Fortnights and seasons, nights and days,
Years, months, and hours, protect thy ways.
Vrihaspati shall still be nigh,
The War-God, and the Moon on high,
And Nárad ² and the sainted seven³
Shall watch thee from their starry heaven.
The mountains, and the seas which ring
The world, and Varuṇa the King,
Sky, ether, and the wind, whate’er
Moves not or moves, for thee shall care.
Each lunar mansion be benignant,
With happier light the planets shine;
All Gods, each light in heaven that glows,
Protect my child where’er he goes
The twilight hours, the day and night,
Keep in the wood thy steps aight.
Watch, minute, instant, as they flee,
Shall all bring happiness to thee.
Celestials and the Titan brood
Protect thee in thy solitude,
And haunt the mighty wood to bless
The wanderer in his hermit dress
Fear not, by mightier guardians screened,
The giant or night-roving fiend;
Nor let the cruel race who tear
Man’s flesh for food thy bosom scare.

¹ These are three names of the Sun.
² See Vol. I. p. 3.
³ The saints who form the constellation of Ursa Major.
Far be the ape, the scorpion's sting,
Fly, gnat, and worm, and creeping thing.
Thee shall the hungry lion spare,
The tiger, elephant, and bear:
Safe from their furious might repose,
Safe from the horned buffaloes.
Each savage thing the forests breed,
That loves on human flesh to feed,
Shall for my child its rage abate,
When thus its wrath I deprecate.
Blest be thy ways: may sweet success
The valour of my darling bless.
To all that Fortune can bestow,
Go forth, my child, my Ráma, go.
Go forth, O happy in the love
Of all the Gods below, above;
And in those guardian powers confide
Thy paths who keep, thy steps who guide.
May Śukra, Yama, Sun, and Moon,
And He who gives each golden boon,
Won by mine earnest prayers, be good
To thee, my son, in Daṇḍak wood.
Fire, wind, and smoke, each text and spell
From mouths of holy seers that fell,
Guard Ráma when his limbs he dips,
Or with the stream makes pure his lips!
May the great saints and He, the Lord
Who made the worlds, by worlds adored,
And every God in heaven beside
My barished Ráma keep and guide.'
Thus with due praise the long-eyed dame,
Ennobled by her spotless fame,

---

1 The regent of the planet Venus.

2 Kuvera.
With wreaths of flowers and precious scent
Worshipped the Gods, most reverent.
A high-souled Bráhman lit the fire,
And offered, at the queen’s desire,
The holy oil ordained to burn
For Ráma’s weal and safe return.
Kauśalyā, best of dames, with care
Set oil, wreaths, fuel, mustard, there.
Then when the rites of fire had ceased,
For Ráma’s bliss and health, the priest,
Standing without, gave what remained
In general offering,1 as ordained.
Dealing among the twice-born train
Honey, and curds, and oil, and grain,
He bade each heart and voice unite
To bless the youthful anchorite.
Then Ráma’s mother, glorious dame,
Bestowed, to meet the Bráhman’s claim,
A lordly fee for duty done,
And thus again addressed her son:

‘Such blessings as the Gods o’erjoyed
Poured forth, when Vritra2 was destroyed,
On Indra of the thousand eyes,
Attend, my child, thine enterprise!
Yea, such as Vinatá once gave
To King Supárna3 swift and brave,
Who sought the drink that cheers the skies,
Attend, my child, thine enterprise.’

1 Bali, or the presentation of food to all created beings, is one of the five great sacraments of the Hindu religion. It consists in throwing a small parcel of the offering, Ghee or rice, or the like, into the open air at the back of the house.

2 In mythology, a demon slain by Indra.

3 Called also Garud, the King of the birds, offspring of Vinata. See Vol I p. 185.
Yea, such as, when the Amrit rose, ¹
And Indra slew his Daitya foes,
The royal Aditi bestowed
On Him whose hand with slaughter glowed
Of that dire brood of monstrous size,
Attend, my child, thine enterprise ¹
E’en such as peerless Vishṇu graced,
When with his triple step he paced,
Outbursting from the dwarf’s disguise, ²
Attend, my child, thine enterprise!
Floods, isles, and seasons as they fly,
Worlds, Vedas, quarters of the sky,
Combine, O mighty-armed, to bless
Thee destined heir of happiness!”

The long-eyed lady ceased: she shed
Pure scent and grain upon his head,
And that prized herb whose sovereign power
Preserves from dark misfortune’s hour,
Upon the hero’s arm she set,
To be his faithful amulet,
While holy texts she murmured low,
And spoke glad words though crushed by woe,
Concealing with obedient tongue . .
The pangs with which her heart was wrung.
She bent, she kissed his brow, she pressed
Her darling to her troubled breast:
‘Firm in thy purpose, go,’ she cried,
‘Go Rāma, and may bliss betide.
Again returning safe and well,
Triumphant in Ayodhya dwell.
Then shall my happy eyes behold
The empire by thy will controlled.

¹ See Vol. I. p. 199.

Then grief and care shall leave no trace,
Joy shall light up thy mother's face,
And I shall see my darling reign,
In moonlike glory come again.
These eyes shall fondly gaze on thee
So faithful to thy sire's decree,
When thou the forest wild shalt quit
On thine ancestral throne to sit.
Yea, thou shalt turn from exile back,
Nor choicest blessings ever lack,
Then fill with rapture ever new
My bosom and thy consort's too.

To Śiva and the heavenly host
My worship has been paid,
To mighty saint, to godlike ghost,
To every wandering shade.
Forth to the forest thou wilt hie,
Therein to dwell so long:
Let all the quarters of the sky
Protect my child from wrong:
Her blessings thus the queen bestowed;
Then round him fondly paced,
And often, while her eyes o'erflowed,
Her dearest son embraced.
Kauśalyā's honoured feet he pressed,
As round her steps she bent,
And radiant with her prayers that blessed,
To Sītā's home he went.
CANTO XXVI.

ALONE WITH SÍTÁ.

So Ráma, to his purpose true,
To Queen Kauśalyá bade adieu,
Received the benison she gave,
And to the path of duty clave.
As through the crowded street he passed,
A radiance on the way he cast,
And each fair grace, by all approved,
The bosoms of the people moved.

Now of the woeful change no word
The fair Videhan bride had heard,
The thought of that imperial rite
Still filled her bosom with delight.
With grateful heart and joyful thought
The Gods in worship she had sought,
And, well in royal duties learned.
Sat longing till her lord returned.
Not all unmarked by grief and shame
Within his sumptuous home he came,
And hurried through the happy crowd
With eye dejected, gloomy-browed.
Up Sítá sprang, and every limb
Trembled with fear at sight of him.
She marked that cheek where anguish fed,
Those senses care-disquieted.
For, when he looked on her, no more
Could his heart hide the load it bore,
Nor could the pious chief control
The paleness o'er his cheek that stole.
His altered cheer, his brow bedewed
With clammy drops, his grief she viewed,
And cried, consumed with fires of woe,
'What, O my lord, has changed thee so?
Vrīhaspāti looks down benign,
And the moon rests in Pushya's sign,
As Brāhmans sage this day declare:
Then whence, my lord, this grief and care?
Why does no canopy, like foam
For its white beauty, shade thee home,
Its hundred ribs spread wide to throw
Splendour on thy fair head below?
Where are the royal fans, to grace
The lotus beauty of thy face,
Fair as the moon or wild-swan's wing.
And waving round the new-made king?
Why do no sweet-toned bards rejoice
To hail thee with triumphant voice?
No tuneful heralds love to raise
Loud music in their monarch's praise?
Why do no Brāhmans, Scripture-read,
Pour curds and honey on thy head,
Anointed, as the laws ordain,
With holy rites, supreme to reign?
Where are the chiefs of every guild?
Where are the myriads should have filled
The streets, and followed home their king
With merry noise and triumphing?
Why does no gold-wrought chariot lead
With four brave horses, best for speed?
No elephant precede the crowd
Like a huge hill or thunder cloud,
Marked from his birth for happy fate,
Whom signs auspicious decorate?
Why does no henchman, young and fair,
Precede thee, and delight to bear
Entrusted to his reverent hold.
The burthen of thy throne of gold?
Why, if the consecrating rite
Be ready, why this mournful plight?
Why do I see this sudden change,
This altered mien so sad and strange?

To her, as thus she weeping cried,
Raghu’s illustrious son replied:
‘Sita, my honoured sire’s decree
Commands me to the woods to flee.
O high-born lady, nobly bred
In the good paths thy footsteps tread,
Hear, Janak’s daughter, while I tell
The story as it all befell.
Of old my father true and brave
Two boons to Queen Kaikeyi gave.
Through these the preparations made
For me to-day by her are stayed,
For he is bound to disallow
This promise by that earlier vow.
In Dandak forest wild and vast
Must fourteen years by me be passed.
My father’s will makes Bharat heir.
The kingdom and the throne to share.
Now, ere the lonely wild I seek,
I come once more with thee to speak.
In Bharat’s presence, O my dame,
Ne’er speak with pride of Rama’s name:
Another’s eulogy to hear
Is hateful to a monarch’s ear.
Thou must with love his rule obey.
To whom my father yields the sway.
With love and sweet observance learn
His grace, and more the king's, to earn.
Now, that my father may not break
The words of promise that he spake,
To the drear wood my steps are bent:
Be firm, good Sītā, and content.
Through all that time, my blameless spouse,
Keep well thy fasts and holy vows.
Rise from thy bed at break of day,
And to the Gods due worship pay.
With meek and lowly love revere
The lord of men, my father dear,
And reverence to Kauśalyā show,
My mother, worn with eld and woe:
By duty's law, O best of dames,
High worship from thy love she claims.
Nor to the other queens refuse
Observance, rendering each her dues:
By love and fond attention shown
They are my mothers like mine own.
Let Bharat and Šatrughna bear
In thy sweet love a special share:
Dear as my life, O let them be
Like brother and like son to thee.
In every word and deed refrain
From aught that Bharat's soul may pain:
He is Ayodhya's king and mine,
The head and lord of all our line.
For those who serve and love them much
With weariless endeavour, touch
And win the gracious hearts of kings,
While wrath from disobedience springs.
Great monarchs from their presence send
Their lawful sons who still offend,
And welcome to the vacant place
Good children of an alien race.
Then, best of women, rest thou here,
And Bharat's will with love revere.
Obedient to thy king remain,
And still thy vows of truth maintain.

To the wide wood my steps I bend:
Make thou thy dwelling here;
See that thy conduct ne'er offend,
And keep my words, my dear.
CANTO XXVII.

SÍTÁ'S SPEECH.

His sweetly-speaking bride, who best
Deserved her lord, he thus addressed.
Then tender love bade passion wake,
And thus the fair Videhan spake:
'What words are these that thou hast said?
Contempt of me the thought has bred.
O best of heroes, I dismiss
With bitter scorn a speech like this:
Unworthy of a warrior's fame
It taints a monarch's son with shame,
Ne'er to be heard from those who know
The science of the sword and bow.
My lord, the mother, sire, and son
Receive their lots by merit won;
The brother and the daughter find
The portions to their deeds assigned.
The wife alone, whate'er await,
Must share on earth her husband's fate.
So now the king's command which sends
Thee to the wild, to me extends.
The wife can find no refuge, none,
In father, mother, self, or son:
Both here, and when they vanish hence,
Her husband is her sole defence.
If, Raghu's son, thy steps are led
Where Dāndak's pathless wilds are spread,
My feet before thine own shall pass
Through tangled thorn and matted grass.
Canto XXVII. THE RAMAYAN.

Dismiss thine auger and thy doubt: * 
Like refuse water cast them out, 
And lead me, O my hero, hence—
I know not sin—with confidence. 
Whate'er his lot, 'tis far more sweet 
To follow still a husband's feet 
Than in rich palaces to lie, 
Or roam at pleasure through the sky. 
My mother and my sire have taught 
What duty bids, and trained each thought, 
Nor have I now mine ear to turn 
The duties of a wife to learn. 
I'll seek with thee the woodland dell 
And pathless wild where no men dwell, 
Where tribes of silvan creatures roam, 
And many a tiger makes his home. 
My life shall pass as pleasant there 
As in my father's palace fair. 
The worlds shall wake no care in me; 
My only care be truth to thee. 
Thyere while thy wish I still obey, 
True to my vows with thee I'll stray. 
And there shall blissful hours be spent 
In woods with honey redolent. 
In forest shades thy mighty arm 
Would keep a stranger's life from harm, 
And how shall Sítá think of fear 
When thou, O glorious lord, art near? 
Heir of high bliss, my choice is made, 
Nor can I from my will be stayed. 
Doubt not, the earth will yield me roots, 
These will I eat, and woodland fruits; 
And as with thee I wander there 
I will not bring thee grief or care.
I long, when thou, wise lord, art nigh,
All fearless, with delighted eye
To gaze upon the rocky hill,
The lake, the fountain, and the rill;
To sport with thee, my limbs to cool,
In some pure lily-covered pool,
While the white swan’s and mallard’s wings
Are plashing in the water-springs.
So would a thousand seasons flee
Like one sweet day, if spent with thee.
Without my lord I would not prize
A home with Gods above the skies:
Without my lord, my life to bless.
Where could be heaven or happiness?

Forbid me not: with thee I go
The tangled wood to tread.
There will I live with thee, as though
This roof were o’er my head.
My will for thine shall be resigned;
Thy feet my steps shall guide.
Thou, only thou, art in my mind:
I heed not all beside.
Thy heart shall ne’er by me be grieved;
Do not my prayer deny:
Take me, dear lord; of thee bereaved
Thy Sítá swears to die.’
These words the duteous lady spake,
Nor would he yet consent
His faithful wife with him to take
To share his banishment.
He soothed her with his gentle speech;
To change her will he strove;
And much he said the woes to teach
Of those in wilds who rove.