CANTO LXIII.

THE HERMIT'S SON.

But soon by rankling grief oppressed
The king awoke from troubled rest,
And his sad heart was tried again
With anxious thought where all was pain.
Rāma and Lakṣmana's mournful fate
On Daśaratha, good and great
As Indra, pressed with crushing weight,
As when the demon's might assails
The Śūn-God, and his glory pales.
Ere yet the sixth long night was spent,
Since Rāma to the woods was sent,
The king at midnight sadly thought
Of the old crime his hand had wrought,
And thus to Queen Kaushalyā cried
Who still for Rāma moaned and sighed:
'If thou art wakening, give, I pray,
Attention to the words I say.
Whate'er the conduct men pursue,
Be good or ill the acts they do,
Be sure, dear Queen, they find the meed
Of wicked or of virtuous deed.
A heedless child we call the man
Whose feeble judgment fails to scan
The weight of what his hands may do,
Its lightness, fault, and merit too.
One lays the Mango garden low,
And bids the gay Palāsas grow:
Longing for fruit their bloom he sees,
But grieves when fruit should bend the trees.
Cut by my hand, my fruit-trees fell,
Palása trees I watered well.
My hopes this foolish heart deceive,
And for my banished son I grieve.
Kauśalya, in my youthful prime
Armed with my bow I wrought the crime,
Proud of my skill, my name renowned,
An archer prince who shoots by sound.
The deed this hand unwitting wrought
This misery on my soul has brought,
As children seize the deadly cup
And blindly drink the poison up.
As the unreasoning man may be
Charmed with the gay Palása tree,
I unaware have reaped the fruit
Of joying at a sound to shoot.
As regent prince I shared the throne,
Thou wast a maid to me unknown.
The early Rain-time duly came,
And strengthened love’s delicious flame.
The sun had drained the earth that lay
All glowing neath the summer day,
And to the gloomy clime had fled
Where dwell the spirits of the dead.¹
The fervent heat that moment ceased,
The darkening clouds each hour increased,
And frogs and deer and peacocks all
Rejoiced to see the torrents fall.
Their bright wings heavy from the shower,
The birds, new-bathed, had scarce the power

¹ The southern region is the abode of Yama the Indian Pluto, and of departed spirits.
To reach the branches of the trees  
Whose high tops swayed beneath the breeze.  
The fallen rain, and falling still,  
Hung like a sheet on every hill,  
Till, with glad deer, each flooded steep  
Showed glorious as the mighty deep.  
The torrents down its wooded side  
Poured, some unstained, while others dyed  
Gold, ashy, silver, ochre, bore  
The tints of every mountain ore.  
In that sweet time, when all are pleased,  
My arrows and my bow I seized;  
Keen for the chase, in field or grove,  
Down Sarjú's bank my car I drove.  
I longed with all my lawless will  
Some elephant by night to kill,  
Some buffalo that came to drink,  
Or tiger, at the river's brink.  
When all around was dark and still,  
I heard a pitcher slowly fill,  
And thought, obscured in deepest shade,  
An elephant the sound had made.  
I drew a shaft that glittered bright,  
Fell as a serpent's venomed bite;  
I longed to lay the monster dead,  
And to the mark my arrow sped.  
Then in the calm of morning, clear  
A hermit's wailing smote my ear:  
'Ah me, ah me,' he cried, and sauk,  
Pierced by my arrow, on the bank.  
E'en as the weapon smote his side,  
I heard a human voice that cried:  
'Why lights this shaft on one like me,  
A poor and harmless devotee?
I came by night to fill my jar
From this lone stream where no men are.
Ah, who this deadly shaft has shot?
Whom have I wronged, and knew it not?
Why should a boy so harmless feel
The vengeance of the winged steel?
Or who should slay the guiltless son
Of hermit sire who injures none,
Who dwells retired in woods, and there
Supports his life on woodland fare?
Ah me, ah me, why am I slain,
What booty will the murderer gain?
In hermit coils I bind my hair,
Coats made of skin and bark I wear.
Ah, who the cruel deed can praise
Whose idle toil no fruit repays,
As impious as the wretch's crime
Who dares his master's bed to climb?
Nor does my parting spirit grieve
But for the life which thus I leave:
Alas, my mother and my sire,—
I mourn for them when I expire.
Ah me, that aged, helpless pair,
Long cherished by my watchful care,
How will it be with them this day
When to the Five¹ I pass away?
Pierced by the self-same dart we die,
Mine aged mother, sire, and I.
Whose mighty hand, whose lawless mind
Has all the three to death consigned?

When I, by love of duty stirred,
That touching lamentation heard,

¹ The five elements of which the body consists, and to which returns.
Pierced to the heart by sudden woe,
I threw to earth my shafts and bow.
My heart was full of grief and dread
As swiftly to the place I sped,
Where, by my arrow wounded sore,
A hermit lay on Sarjú's shore.
His matted hair was all unbound,
His pitcher empty on the ground,
And by the fatal arrow pained,
He lay with dust and gore distained.
I stood confounded and amazed:
His dying eyes to mine he raised,
And spoke this speech in accents stern,
As though his light my soul would burn:
'How have I wronged thee, King, that I
Struck by thy mortal arrow die?
The wood my home, this jar I brought,
And water for my parents sought.
This one keen shaft that strikes me through
Slays sire and aged mother too.
Feeble and blind, in helpless pain,
They wait for me and thirst in vain.
They with parched lips their pangs must bear,
And hope will end in blank despair.
Ah me, there seems no fruit in store
For holy zeal or Scripture lore,
Or else ere now my sire would know
That his dear son is lying low.
Yet, if my mournful fate he knew,
What could his arm so feeble do?
The tree, firm-rooted, ne'er may be
The guardian of a stricken tree.
Haste to my father, and relate
While time allows, my sudden fate,
Lest he consume thee, as the fire
Burns up the forest, in his ire.
This little path, O King, pursue:
My father's cot thou soon wilt view.
There sue for pardon to the sage
Lest he should curse thee in his rage.
First from the wound extract the dart
That kills me with its deadly smart,
E'en as the flushed impetuous tide
Eats through the river's yielding side.'

I feared to draw the arrow out,
And pondered thus in painful doubt:
‘Now tortured by the shaft he lies,
But if I draw it forth he dies.’
Helpless I stood, faint, sorely grieved:
The hermit's son my thought perceived;
As one o'ercome by direst pain
He scarce had strength to speak again,
With writhing limb and struggling breath,
Nearer and ever nearer death:
‘My senses undisturbed remain,
And fortitude has conquered pain:
Now from one fear thy soul be freed,
Thy hand has made no Brāhman bleed.
Let not this pang thy bosom wring:
No twice-born youth am I, O King,
For of a Vaiśya sire I came,
Who wedded with a Śūdra dame.’

These words the boy could scarcely say,
As tortured by the shaft he lay,
Twisting his helpless body round,
Then trembling senseless on the ground.
Then from his bleeding side I drew
The rankling shaft that pierced him through.
With death's last fear my face he eyed,
And, rich in store of penance, died.
CANTO LXIV.

DAŚARATHA'S DEATH.

The son of Raghu to his queen
Thus far described the unequalled scene,
And, as the hermit's death he rued,
The mournful story thus renewed:
'The deed my heedless hand had wrought
Perplexed me with remorseful thought,
And all alone I pondered still
How kindly deed might salve the ill.
The pitcher from the ground I took,
And filled it from that fairest brook,
Then, by the path the hermit showed,
I reached his sainted sire's abode.
I came, I saw: the aged pair,
Feeble and blind, were sitting there,
Like birds with clipped wings, side by side,
With none their helpless steps to guide.
Their idle hours the twain beguiled
With talk of their returning child,
And still the cheering hope enjoyed,
The hope, alas, by me destroyed.
Then spoke the sage, as drawing near
The sound of footsteps reached his ear:
'Dear son, the water quickly bring;
Why hast thou made this tarrying?
Thy mother thirsts, and thou hast played,
And bathing in the brook delayed.
She weeps because thou camest not;
Haste, O my son, within the cot.
If she or I have ever done
A thing to pain thee, dearest son,
Dismiss the memory from thy mind:
A hermit thou, be good and kind.
On thee our lives, our all, depend:
Thou art thy friendless parents’ friend.
The eyeless couple’s eye art thou:
Then why so cold and silent now?’

With sobbing voice and bosom wrung
I scarce could move my faltering tongue,
And with my spirit filled with dread
I looked upon the sage, and said,
While mind, and sense, and nerve I strung
To fortify my trembling tongue,
And let the aged hermit know
His son’s sad fate, my fear and woe:
‘High-minded Saint, not I thy child,
A warrior, Daśaratha styled.
I bear a grievous sorrow’s weight
Born of a deed which good men hate.
My lord, I came to Sarjū’s shore,
And in my hand my bow I bore
For elephant or beast of chase
That seeks by night his drinking place.
There from the stream a sound I heard
As if a jar the water stirred.
An elephant, I thought, was nigh:
I aimed, and let an arrow fly.
Swift to the place I made my way,
And there a wounded hermit lay
Gasping for breath: the deadly dart
Stood quivering in his youthful heart.
I hastened near with pain oppressed:
He faltered out his last behest,
And quickly, as he bade me do,
From his pierced side the shaft I drew.
I drew the arrow from the rent,
And up to heaven the hermit went,
Lamenting, as from earth he passed,
His aged parents to the last.
Thus, unaware, the deed was done:
My hand, unwitting, killed thy son.
For what remains, O, let me win
Thy pardon for my heedless sin.'

As the sad tale of sin I told,
The hermit’s grief was uncontrolled;
With flooded eyes, and sorrow-faint,
Thus spake the venerable saint:
I stood with hand to hand applied,
And listened as he spoke and sighed:
‘If thou, O King, hadst left unsaid
By thine own tongue this tale of dread,
Thy head for hideous guilt accursed
Had in a thousand pieces burst.
A hermit’s blood by warrior spilt,
In such a case, with purposed guilt,
Down from his high estate would bring
Even the thunder’s mighty King.
And he a dart who conscious sends
Against the devotee who spends
His pure life by the law of Heaven—
That sinner’s head will split in seven.
Thou livest, for thy heedless hand
Has wrought a deed thou hast not planned,
Else thou and all of Raghu’s line
Had perished by this act of thine.
Now guide us,’ thus the hermit said,
Canto LXIV. THE RAMAYAN.

‘Forth to the spot where he lies dead. Guide us, this day, O Monarch, we For the last time our son would see: The hermit dress of skin he wore Rent from his limbs distained with gore; His senseless body lying slain, His soul in Yama’s dark domain.’

Alone the mourning pair I led, Their souls with woe disquieted, And let the dame and hermit lay Their hands upon the breathless clay. The father touched his son, and pressed The body to his aged breast; Then falling by the dead boy’s side, He lifted up his voice, and cried:

‘Hast thou no word, my child, to say? No greeting for thy sire to-day? Why art thou angry, darling? why Wilt thou upon the cold earth lie? If thou, my son, art wroth with me, Here, duteous child, thy mother see. What! no embrace for me, my son? No word of tender love—not one? Whose gentle voice, so soft and clear, Soothing my spirit, shall I hear When evening comes, with accents sweet Scripture or ancient lore repeat? Who, having fed the sacred fire, And duly bathed, as texts require, Will cheer, when evening rites are done, The father mourning for his son? Who will the daily meal provide For the poor wretch who lacks a guide, Feeding the helpless with the best
Berries and roots, like some dear guest?
How can these hands subsistence find
For thy poor mother, old and blind?
The wretched votaress how sustain,
Who mourns her child in ceaseless pain?
Stay yet a while, my darling, stay,
Nor fly to Yama's realm to-day.
To-morrow I thy sire and she
Who bare thee, child, will go with thee.'
Then when I look on Yama, I
To great Vivasvat's son will cry:
'hear, King of justice, and restore
Our child to feed us, I implore.
Lord of the world, of mighty fame,
Faithful and just, admit my claim,
And grant this single boon, to free
My soul from fear, to one like me.'
Because, my son, untouched by stain,
By sinful hands thou fallest slain,
Win, through thy truth, the sphere where those
Who die by hostile darts repose.
Seek the blest home prepared for all
The valiant who in battle fall,
Who face the foe and scorn to yield,
In glory dying on the field.
Rise to the heaven where Dhundhumár
And Nahush, mighty heroes, are,
Where Janamejāy and the blest
Dilīpa, Sagar, Saivya, rest:
Home of all virtuous spirits, earned

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"So dying York cries over the body of Suffolk:
'Tarry, dear cousin Suffolk! My soul shall thine keep company to heaven:
Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly abreast.'

King Henry V. Act. IV. 3.
By fervent rites and Scripture learned:
By those whose sacred fires have glowed,
Whose liberal hands have fields bestowed:
By givers of a thousand cows,
By lovers of one faithful spouse:
By those who serve their masters well,
And cast away this earthy shell.
None of my race can ever know
The bitter pain of lasting woe.
But doomed to that dire fate is he
Whose guilty hand has slaughtered thee.'

Thus with wild tears the aged saint
Made many a time his piteous plaint,
Then with his wife began to shed
The funeral water for the dead.
But in a shape celestial clad,
Won by the merits of the lad,
The spirit from the body brake
And to the mourning parents spake:
'T A glorious home in realms above
Rewards my care and filial love.
You, honoured parents, soon shall be
Partakers of that home with me.'

He spake, and swiftly mounting high,
With Indra near him, to the sky
On a bright car, with flame that glowed,
Sublime the duteous hermit rode.

The father, with his consort's aid,
The funeral rites with water paid,
And thus his speech to me renewed
Who stood in suppliant attitude:
'Slay me this day, O, slay me, King,
For death no longer has a sting.
Childless am I: thy dart has done
To death my dear, my only son.
Because the boy I loved so well
Slain by thy heedless arrow fell,
My curse upon thy soul shall press
With bitter woe and heaviness.
I mourn a slaughtered child, and thou
Shalt feel the pangs that kill me now.
Bereft and suffering e'en as I,
So shalt thou mourn thy son, and die.
Thy hand unwitting dealt the blow
That laid a holy hermit low,
And distant, therefore, is the time
When thou shalt suffer for the crime.
The hour shall come when, crushed by woes
Like these I feel, thy life shall close:
A debt to pay in after days
Like his the priestly fee who pays.'
This curse on me the hermit laid,
Nor yet his tears and groans were stayed.
Then on the pyre their bodies cast
The pair; and straight to heaven they passed.
As in sad thought I pondered long
Back to my memory came the wrong
Done in wild youth, O lady dear,
When 'twas my boast to shoot by ear.
The deed has borne the fruit, which now
Hangs ripe upon the bending bough:
Thus dainty meats the palate please,
And lure the weak to swift disease.
Now on my soul return with dread
The words that noble hermit said,
That I for a dear son should grieve,
And of the woe my life should leave.'

Thus spake the king with many a tear;
Canto LXIV. THE RAMAYAN.

Then to his wife he cried in fear:
'I cannot see thee, love; but lay
Thy gentle hand in mine, I pray.
Ah me, if Ráma touched me thus,
If once, returning home to us,
He bade me wealth and lordship give,
Then, so I think, my soul would live.
Unlike myself, unjust and mean
Have been my ways with him, my Queen,
But like himself is all that he,
My noble son, has done to me.
His son, though far from right he stray,
What prudent sire would cast away?
What banished son would check his ire,
Nor speak reproaches of his sire?
I see thee not: these eyes grow blind,
And memory quits my troubled mind.
Angels of Death are round me: they
Summon my soul with speed away.
What woe more grievous can there be,
That, when from light and life I flee,
I may not, ere I part, behold
My virtuous Ráma, true and bold?
Grief for my son, the brave and true,
Whose joy it was my will to do,
Dries up my breath, as summer dries
The last drop in the pool that lies.
Not men, but blessed Gods, are they
Whose eyes shall see his face that day;
See him, when fourteen years are past,
With earrings decked return at last.
My fainting mind forgets to think:
Low and more low my spirits sink.
Each from its seat, my senses steal:
I cannot hear, or taste, or feel.
This lethargy of soul o'ercomes
Each organ, and its function numb's:
So when the oil begins to fail,
The torch's rays grow faint and pale.
This flood of woe caused by this hand
Destroys me helpless and unmanned,
Resistless as the floods that bore
A passage through the river shore.
Ah Raghu's son, ah mighty-armed,
By whom my cares were soothed and charmed,
My son in whom I took delight,
Now vanished from thy father's sight!
Kauśalyā, ah, I cannot see;
Sumitrā, gentle devotee!
Alas, Kaikeyī, cruel dame,
My bitter foe, thy father's shame!

Kauśalyā and Sumitrā kept
Their watch beside him as he wept.
And Daśaratha moaned and sighed,
And grieving for his darling died.
CANTO LXV.

THE WOMEN'S LAMENT.

And now the night had past away,
And brightly dawned another day;
The minstrels, trained to play and sing,
Flocked to the chamber of the king:
Bards, who their gayest raiment wore,
And heralds famed for ancient lore:
And singers, with their songs of praise,
Made music in their several ways
There as they poured their blessings choice,
And hailed their king with hand and voice,
Their praises with a swelling roar
Echoed through court and corridor.
Then as the bands his glory sang,
From beaten palms loud answer rang,
As glad applauders clapped their hands,
And told his deeds in distant lands.
The swelling concord woke a throng
Of sleeping birds to life and song:
Some in the branches of the trees,
Some caged in halls and galleries.
Nor was the soft string music mute;
The gentle whisper of the lute,
And blessings sung by singers skilled
The palace of the monarch filled.
Eunuchs and dames of life unstained,
Each in the arts of waiting trained,
Drew near attentive as before,
And crowded to the chamber door:
These skilful when and how to shed
The lustral stream o'er limb and head,
Others with golden ewers stood
Of water stained with sandal wood.
And many a maid, pure, young, and fair,
Her load of early offerings bare,
Cups of the flood which all revere,
And sacred things, and toilet gear.
Each several thing was duly brought
As rule of old observance taught,
And lucky signs on each impressed
Stamped it the fairest and the best.
There anxious, in their long array,
All waited till the shine of day:
But when the king nor rose nor spoke,
Doubt and alarm within them woke.
Forthwith the dames, by duty led,
Attendants on the monarch's bed,
Within the royal chamber pressed
To wake their master from his rest.
Skilled in the lore of dreaming, they
First touched the bed on which he lay.
But none replied: no sound was heard,
Nor hand, nor head, nor body stirred.
They trembled, and their dread increased,
Fearing his breath of life had ceased,
And bending low their heads, they shook
Like the tall reeds that fringe the brook.
In doubt and terror down they knelt,
Looked on his face, his cold hand felt,
And then the gloomy truth appeared
Of all their hearts had darkly feared.
Kauśalyā and Sumitrā, worn
Canto LXV. THE RAMAYAN.

With weeping for their sons, forlorn,
Woke not, but lay in slumber deep.
And still as death’s unending sleep.
Bowed down by grief, her colour fled,
Her wonted lustre dull and dead,
Kauśalyā shone not, like a star
Obscured behind a cloudy bar.
Beside the king’s her couch was spread,
And next was Queen Sumitrā’s bed,
Who shone no more with beauty’s glow,
Her face bedewed with tears of woe.
There lapped in sleep each wearied queen,
There as in sleep, the king was seen;
And swift the troubling thought came o’er.
Their spirits that he breathed no more.
At once with wailing loud and high
The matrons shrieked a bitter cry,
As widowed elephants bewail
Their dead lord in the woody vale.
At the loud shriek that round them rang,
Kauśalyā and Sumitrā sprang
Awakened from their beds, with eyes
Wide open in their first surprise.
Quick to the monarch’s side they came,
And saw and touched his lifeless frame;
One cry, O husband! forth they sent,
And prostrate to the ground they went.
The king of Kośal’s daughter¹ there
Writhed, with the dust on limb and hair,
Lustreless, as a star might lie
Hurled downward from the glorious sky.
When the king’s voice in death was stilled,
The women who the chamber filled,

¹ Kauśalyā, daughter of the king of another Kośal.
Saw, like a widow elephant slain,
Kausalyā prostrate in her pain.
Then all the monarch's ladies led
By Queen Kaikeyī at their head,
Poured forth their tears, and, weeping so,
Sank on the ground, consumed by woe.
The cry of grief so long and loud
Went up from all the royal crowd,
That, doubled by the matron train,
It made the palace ring again.
Filled with dark fear and eager eyes,
Anxiety and wild surmise;
Echoing with the cries of grief
Of sorrowing friends who mourned their chief,
Dejected, pale with deep distress,
Hurled from their height of happiness:
Such was the look the palace wore
Where lay the king who breathed no more.
CANTO LXVI.

THE EMBALMING.

Kausalyā's eyes with tears o'erflowed,
Weighed down by varied sorrows' load;
On her dead lord her gaze she bent,
Who lay like fire whose might is spent,
Like the great deep with waters dry,
Or like the clouded sun on high.
Then on her lap she laid his head,
And on Kaikeyī looked and said:
'Triumphant now enjoy thy reign
Without a thorn thy side to pain.
Thou hast pursued thy single aim,
And killed the king, O wicked dame.
Far from my sight my Rāma flies,
My perished lord has sought the skies.
No friend, no hope my life to cheer,
I cannot tread the dark path here.
Who would forsake her husband, who
That God to whom her love is due,
And wish to live one hour, but she
Whose heart no duty owns, like thee?
The ravenous sees no fault: his greed
Will e'en on poison blindly feed.
Kaikeyī, through a hump-back maid,
This royal house in death has laid.
King Janak, with his queen, will hear
Heart-rent like me the tidings drear
Of Rāma banished by the king,
Urged by her impious counselling.
No son has he, his age is great,
And sinking with the double weight,
He for his darling child will pine,
And pierced with woe his life resign.
Sprung from Videha’s monarch, she
A sad and lovely devotee,
Roaming the wood, unmeet for woe,
Will toil and trouble undergo.
She in the gloomy night with fear
The cries of beast and bird will hear,
And trembling in her wild alarm
Will cling to Ráma’s sheltering arm.
Ah, little knows my duteous son
That I am widowed and undone—
My Ráma of the lotus eye,
Gone hence, gone hence, alas, to die.
Now, as a loving wife and true,
I, e’en this day, will perish too:
Around his form these arms will throw,
And to the fire with him will go.’

Clasping her husband’s lifeless clay
A while the weeping votaress lay,
Till chamberlains removed her thence
O’ercome by sorrow’s violence.
Then in a cask of oil they laid
Him who in life the world had swayed,
And finished, as the lords desired,
All rites for parted souls required.
The lords, all-wise, refused to burn
The monarch ere his son’s return;
So for a while the corpse they set
Embalmed in oil, and waited yet.
The women heard: no doubt remained,
And wildly for the king they plained.
With gushing tears that drowned each eye
Wildly they waved their arms on high,
And each her mangling nails impressed
Deep in her head and knee and breast:
‘Of Ráma reft,—who ever spake
The sweetest words the heart to take,
Who firmly to the truth would cling.—
Why dost thou leave us, mighty King?
How can the consorts thou hast left
Widowed, of Raghu’s son bereft,
Live with our foe Kaikeyí near,
The wicked queen we hate and fear?
She threw away the king, her spite
Drove Ráma forth and Lakshmaú’s might,
And gentle Sítá: how will she
Spare any, whoso’er it be?’

Oppressed with sorrow, tear-distained,
The royal women thus complained.
Like night when not a star appears,
Like a sad widow drowned in tears,
Ayodhyá’s city, dark and dim,
Reft of her lord was sad for him.
When thus for woe the king to heaven had fled,
    And still on earth his lovely wives remained.
With dying light the sun to rest had sped,
    And night triumphant o’er the landscape reigned.
CANTO LXVII.

THE PRAISE OF KINGS.

That night of sorrow passed away,
And rose again the God of Day.
Then all the twice-born peers of state
Together met for high debate.
Jáváli, lord of mighty fame,
And Gautam, and Kátyáyan came,
And Márkaṇḍeya’s reverend age,
And Vámadeva, glorious sage:
Sprung from Mudgalya’s seed the one,
The other ancient Kaśyap’s son.
With lesser lords these Bráhmans each
Spoke in his turn his several speech,
And turning to Vaśishṭha, best
Of household priests, him thus addressed:
‘The night of bitter woe has past,
Which seemed a hundred years to last,
Our king, in sorrow for his son,
Reunion with the Five has won.
His soul is where the Blessed are,
While Ráma roams in woods afar,
And Lakshman, bright in glorious deeds,
Goes where his well-loved brother leads.
And Bharat and Śatrughna, they
Who smite their foes in battle fray,
Far in the realm of Kekaya stay,
Where their maternal grandsire’s care
Keeps Réjagriha’s city fair.
Let one of old Ikshvaku's race
Obtain this day the sovereign's place,
Or havoc and destruction straight
Our kingless land will devastate.
In kingless lands no thunder's voice,
No lightning wreaths the heart rejoice,
Nor does Parjanya's heavenly rain
Descend upon the burning plain.
Where none is king, the sower's hand
Casts not the seed upon the land;
The son against the father strives,
And husbands fail to rule their wives.
In kingless realms no princes call
Their friends to meet in crowded hall;
No joyful citizens resort
To garden trim or sacred court.
In kingless realms no Twice-born care
To sacrifice with text and prayer,
Nor Brâhmans, who their vows maintain,
The great solemnities ordain.
The joys of happier days have ceased:
No gathering, festival, or feast
Together calls the merry throng
Delighted with the play and song.
In kingless lands it ne'er is well
With sons of trade who buy and sell:
No men who pleasant tales repeat
Delight the crowd with stories sweet.
In kingless realms we ne'er behold
Young maidens decked with gems and gold.
Flock to the gardens blithe and gay
To spend their evening hours in play.
No lover in the flying car
Rides with his love to woods afar.
In kingless lands no wealthy swain
Who keeps the herd and reaps the grain,
Lies sleeping, blest with ample store,
Securely near his open door.
Upon the royal roads we see
No tusked elephant roaming free,
Of three-score years, whose head and neck
Sweet tinkling bells of silver deck.
We hear no more the glad applause
When his strong bow each rival draws,
No clap of hands, no eager cries
That cheer each martial exercise.
In kingless realms no merchant bands
Who travel forth to distant lands,
With precious wares their wagons load,
And fear no danger on the road.
No sage secure in self-control,
Brooding on God with mind and soul,
In lonely wanderings finds his home
Where'er at eve his feet may roam.
In kingless realms no man is sure
He holds his life and wealth secure.
In kingless lands no warriors smite
The toman's host in glorious fight.
In kingless lands the wise no more,
Well trained in Scripture's holy lore,
In shady groves and gardens meet
To argue in their calm retreat.
No longer, in religious fear,
Do they who pious vows revere,
Bring dainty cates and wreaths of flowers
As offerings to the heavenly powers.
No longer, bright as trees in spring,
Shine forth the children of the king
Resplendent in the people's eyes
With aloe wood and sandal dyes.
A brook where water once has been,
A grove where grass no more is green,
Kine with no herdsman's guiding hand—
So wretched is a kingless land.
The car its waving banner rears,
Banner of fire the smoke appears:
Our king, the banner of our pride,
A God with Gods is glorified.
In kingless lands no law is known,
And none may call his wealth his own,
Each preys on each from hour to hour,
As fish the weaker fish devour.
Then, fearless, atheists overlap
The bounds of right the godly keep,
And when no royal powers restrain,
Preëminence and lordship gain.
As in the frame of man the eye
Keeps watch and ward, a careful spy,
The monarch in his wide domains
Protects the truth, the right maintains.
He is the right, the truth is he,
Their hopes in him the well-born see.
On him his people's lives depend,
Mother is he, and sire, and friend.
The world were veiled in blinding night,
And none could see or know aright,
Ruled there no king in any state
The good and ill to separate.
We will obey thy word and will
As if our king were living still:
As keeps his bounds the faithful sea,
So wo we observe thy high decree.
O best of Bráhmans, first in place,
    Our kingless land lies desolate:
Some scion of Ikshváku’s race
    Do thou as monarch consecrate.'
CANTO LXVIII.

THE ENVOYS.

Vāsishṭha heard their speech and prayer,
And thus addressed the concourse there,
Friends, Brāhmans, counsellors, and all
Assembled in the palace hall:
‘Ye know that Bharat, free from care,
Still lives in Rājagriha\(^1\) where
The father of his mother reigns:
Śatrughna by his side remains.
Let active envoys, good at need,
Thither on fleeter horses speed,
To bring the hero youths away:
Why waste the time in dull delay?’
Quick came from all the glad reply:
‘Vāsishṭha, let the envoys fly.’
He heard their speech, and thus renewed
His charge before the multitude:
‘Nandana, Aśok, Siddhārth, attend,
Your ears, Jayanta, Vijay, lend:
Be yours, what need requires, to do:
I speak these words to all of you.
With coursers of the fleetest breed
To Rājagriha’s city speed.
Then rid your bosoms of distress,
And Bharat thus from me address:
‘The household priest and peers by us

\(^1\) Rājagriha, or Girivraja was the capital of Aśvapati, Bharat’s maternal grandfather.
Send health to thee and greet thee thus:
‘Come to thy father’s home with haste:
Thine absent time no longer waste.’
But speak no word of Ráma fled,
Tell not the prince his sire is dead,
Nor to the royal youth the fate
That ruins Raghu’s race relate.
Go quickly hence, and with you bear
Fine silken vestures rich and rare,
And gems and many a precious thing
As gifts to Bharat and the king.’

With ample stores of food supplied,
Each to his home the envoys hied,
Prepared, with steeds of swiftest race,
To Kekaya’s land¹ their way to trace.
They made all due provision there,
And every need arranged with care,
Then ordered by Vaśishṭha, they
Went forth with speed upon their way.
Then northward of Pralamba, west
Of Apartála, on they pressed,
Crossing the Málini that flowed
With gentle stream athwart the road.
They traversed Gangá’s holy waves
Where she Hástinapura² laves,
Thence to Panchála² westward fast
Through Kurujángal’s land¹ they passed.

¹ The Kekayas or Kaikays in the Punjab appear amongst the chief
nations in the war of the Mahábhárata; their king being a kinsman of
Krishna.
² Hástinapura was the capital of the kingdom of Kuru, near the
modern Delhi.
³ The Panchálas occupied the upper part of the Doab.
⁴ ‘Kurujángal and its inhabitants are frequently mentioned in the
Mahábhárata, as in the Ádi-parva. 3789, 4387, et al.’ Wilson’s
Vishnu
Purána. Vol. II. P. 178. Dr. Hall’s Note.
On, on their course the envoys held
By urgency of task impelled,
Quick glancing at each lucid flood
And sweet lake gay with flower and bud.
Beyond, they passed unwearied o'er,
Where glad birds fill the flood and shore
Of Saradāḍā racing fleet
With heavenly waters clear and sweet.
Thereby a tree celestial grows
Which every boon on prayer bestows:
To its blest shade they humbly bent,
Then to Kulingā's town they went.
Then, having passed the Warrior's Wood,
In Abhikāla next they stood,
O'er sacred Ikshumati came,
Their ancient kings' ancestral claim.
They saw the learned Brāhmans stand,
Each drinking from his hollowed hand,
And through Bāhíka journeying still
They reached at length Sudāman's hill:
There Vishṇu's footstep turned to see,
Vipāśā viewed, and Sālmalā,
And many a lake and river met,
Tank, pool, and pond, and rivulet.
And lions saw, and tigers near,
And elephants and herds of deer,
And still, by prompt obedience led,
Along the ample road they sped.


2 'The Bāhikas are described in the Mahābhārata, Karṇa Parvam, with some detail, and comprehend the different nations of the Punjab from the Sutlej to the Indus.' Wilson’s Vishṇu Purāṇa. Vol. I. p. 167.

3 The Beas, Hyphasis or, Bibasis.
Then when their course so swift and long,
Had worn their steeds though fleet and strong,
To Girivraja's splendid town
They came by night, and lighted down.
To please their master, and to guard

The royal race, the lineal right,

The envoys, spent with riding hard,

To that fair city came by night.¹

¹ It would be lost labour to attempt to verify all the towns and streams mentioned in Cuntos LXVIII and LXXII. Professor Wilson observes (Vishnu Purana, p. 129, Dr. Hall’s Edition). States, and tribes, and cities have disappeared, even from recollection; and some of the natural features of the country, especially the rivers, have undergone a total alteration. Notwithstanding these impediments, however, we should be able to identify at least mountains and rivers, to a much greater extent than is now practicable, if our maps were not so imperfectly descriptive in their nomenclature. None of our surveyors or geographers have been oriental scholars. It may be doubted if any of them have been conversant with the spoken language of the country. They have, consequently put down names at random, according to their own inaccurate appreciation of sounds carelessly, vulgarly, and corruptly uttered, and their maps of India are crowded with appellations which bear no similitude whatever either to past or present denominations. We need not wonder that we cannot discover Sanskrit names in English maps, when, in the immediate vicinity of Calcutta, Baranagar represents Barilhnagar, Dakshinawar is metamorphosed into Duckinsore, and Ulubaria into Willoughby. There is scarcely a name in our Indian maps that does not afford proof of extreme indifference to accuracy in nomenclature, and of an incorrectness in estimating sounds, which is, to some degree, perhaps, a national defect.

For further information regarding the road from Ayodhya to Rajagriha, see Additional Notes.
CANTO LXIX.

BHARAT'S DREAM.

The night those messengers of state
Had past within the city's gate,
In dreams the slumbering Bharat saw
A sight that chilled his soul with awe.
The dream that dire events foretold
Left Bharat's heart with horror cold,
And with consuming woes distraught,
Upon his aged sire he thought.
His dear companions, swift to trace
The signs of anguish on his face,
Drew near, his sorrow to expel,
And pleasant tales began to tell.
Some woked sweet music's cheering sound,
And others danced in lively round.
With joke and jest they strove to raise
His spirits, quoting ancient plays;
But Bharat still, the lofty-souled,
Deaf to sweet tales his fellows told,
Unmoved by music, dance, and jest,
Sat silent, by his woe oppressed.
To him, begirt by comrades near,
Thus spoke the friend he held most dear:
'Why ringed around by friends, art thou
So silent and so mournful now?'
'Hear thou,' thus Bharat made reply,
'What chills my heart and dims mine eye.
I dreamt I saw the king my sire

R
Sink headlong in a lake of mire
Down from a mountain high in air,
His body soiled, and loose his hair.
Upon the mire lake he seemed
To lie and welter, as I dreamed;
With hollowed hands full many a draught
Of oil he took, and loudly laughed.
With head cast down I saw him make
A meal on sesamum and cake;
The oil from every member dipped,
And in its clammy flood he dipped.
The ocean's bed was bare and dry,
The moon had fallen from the sky,
And all the world lay still and dead,
With overwhelming darkness overspread.
The earth was rent and opened wide,
The leafy trees were scorched, and died;
I saw the seared mountains split,
And wreaths of rising smoke emit.
The stately beast the monarch rode
His long tusks rent and splintered showed;
And flames that quenched and cold had lain
Blazed forth with kindled light again.
I looked, and many a handsome dame,
Arrayed in brown and sable came,
And bore about the monarch, dressed,
On iron stool, in sable vest
And then the king, of virtuous mind,
A blood-red wreath around him twined,
Forth on an ass-drawn chariot sped,
As southward still he bent his head.
Then, crimson-clad, a dame appeared
Who at the monarch laughed and jeered;
And a she-monster, dire to view,
Canto LXIX.  THE RAMAYAN.

Her hand upon his body threw.
Such is the dream I dreamt by night,
Which chills me yet with wild affright:
Either the king or Ráma, I
Or Lakshmana now must surely die.
For when an ass-drawn chariot seems
To bear away a man in dreams,
Be sure above his funeral pyre
The smoke soon rears its cloudy spire.
This makes my spirit low and weak,
My tongue is slow and loth to speak:
My lips and throat are dry for dread,
And all my soul disquieted.
My lips, relaxed, can hardly speak,
And chilling dread has changed my cheek.
I blame myself in aimless fears,
And still no cause of blame appears.
I dwell upon this dream of ill
    Whose changing scenes I viewed,
And on the startling horror still
    My troubled thoughts will brood.
Still to my soul these terrors cling,
    Reluctant to depart,
And the strange vision of the king
    Still weighs upon my heart.'
CANTO LXX.

BHARAT'S DEPARTURE.

While thus he spoke, the envoys borne
On horses faint and travel-worn
Had gained the city fenced around
With a deep moat's protecting bound.
An audience of the king they gained,
And honours from the prince obtained;
The monarch's feet they humbly pressed,
To Bharat next these words addressed:
'The household priest and peers by us
Send health to thee and greet thee thus:
'Come to thy father's house with haste:
Thine absent time no longer waste.
Receive these vestures rich and rare,
These costly gems and jewels fair,
And to thy uncle here present
Each precious robe and ornament.
These for the king and him suffice—
Two hundred millions is their price—
These, worth a hundred millions, be
Reserved, O large-eyed Prince, for thee.'

Loving his friends with heart and soul,
The joyful prince received the whole,
Due honour to the envoys paid,
And thus in turn his answer made:
'Of Dāsaratha tidings tell:
Is the old king my father well?
Is Rāma, and is Lakshman, he
Of the high-soul, from sickness free?
And she who walks where duty leads,
Kauśalyā, known for gracious deeds,
Mother of Rāma, loving spouse,
Bound to her lord by well kept vows?
And Lakshman's mother too, the dame
Sumitrā skilled in duty's claim,
Who brave Śatrughna also bare,
Second in age,—her health declare.
And she, in self-conceit most sage,
With selfish heart most prone to rage,
My mother, fares she well? has she
Sent message or command to me?'

Thus Bharat spake, the mighty-souled,
And they in brief their tidings told:
'All they of whom thou askest dwell,
O lion lord, secure and well:
Thine all the smiles of fortune are:
Make ready: let them yoke the car.'

'Thus by the royal envoys pressed,
Bharat again the band addressed:
'I go with you: no long delay,
A single hour I bid you stay.'

Thus Bharat, son of him who swayed
Ayodhyā's realm, his answer made,
And then bespoke, his heart to please,
His mother's sire in words like these:
'I go to see my father, King,
Urged by the envoys' summoning;
And when thy soul desires to see
Thy grandson, will return to thee.'

The king his grandsire kissed his head,
And in reply to Bharat said:
'Go forth, dear child; how blest is she,
The mother of a son like thee!
Greet well thy sire, thy mother greet,
O thou whose arms the foe defeat;
The household priest, and all the rest
Amid the Twice-born chief and best;
And Ráma and brave Lakshmana, who
Shoot the long shaft with aim so true.'

To him the king high honour showed,
And store of wealth and gifts bestowed,
The choicest elephants to ride,
And skins and blankets deftly dyed,
A thousand strings of golden beads,
And sixteen hundred mettled steeds;
And boundless wealth before him piled
Gave Kekaya to Kaikeyi's child.
And men of counsel, good and tried,
On whose firm truth he aye relied,
King Aśvapati gave with speed
Prince Bharat on his way to lead.
And noble elephants, strong and young,
From sires of Indraśira sprung,
And others tall and fair to view
Of great Airávat's lineage true:
And well yoked asses fleet of limb
The prince his uncle gave to him.
And dogs within the palace bred,
Of body vast and massive head,
With mighty fangs for battle, brave,
The tiger's match in strength, he gave.
Yet Bharat's bosom hardly glowed
To see the wealth the king bestowed;
For he would speed that hour away,
Such care upon his bosom lay:
Those eager envoys urged him thence,
And that sad vision's influence.
He left his court-yard, crowded then
With elephants and steeds and men,
And, peerless in immortal fame,
To the great royal street he came.
He saw, as farther still he went,
The inner rooms most excellent,
And passed the doors, to him unclosed,
Where check nor bar his way opposed.
There Bharat stayed to bid adieu
To grandsire and to uncle too,
Then, with Śatrughna by his side,
Mounting his car, away he hied.
The strong-wheeled cars were yoked, and they,
More than a hundred, rolled away:
Servants, with horses, asses, kine,
Followed their lord in endless line.
So, guarded by his own right hand,
Forth high-souled Bharat hied,
Surrounded by a lordly band
On whom the king relied.
Beside him sat Śatrughna dear,
The scourge of trembling foes:
Thus from the light of Indra's sphere
A saint made perfect goes.
CANTO LXXI.

BHARAT'S RETURN.

Then Bharat's face was eastward bent
As from the royal town he went.
He reached Sudáma's farther side,
And glorious, gazed upon the tide;
Passed Hládíní, and saw her toss
Her westering billows hard to cross.
Then old Ikshváku's famous son
O'er Śatadrú¹ his passage won,
Near Ailadhána on the strand,
And came to Aparparyaṭ's land.
O'er Śilá's flood he hurried fast,
Akurvati's fair stream he passed,
Crossed o'er Agneya's rapid rill,
And Śalyakartan onward still.
Śilávahá's swift stream he eyed,
True to his vows and purified,
Then crossed the lofty hills, and stood
In Chaitraratha's mighty wood.
He reached the confluence where meet
Sarasvátí² and Gángá fleet,
And through Bhárunda forest, spread
Northward of Víramatsya, sped.
He sought Kalinda's child, who fills


² The Sarasvátí or Sursooty is a tributary of the Caggar or Guggur in Sirhind.
The soul with joy, begirt by hills,
Reached Yamuná, and passing o'er,
Rested his army on the shore:
He gave his horses food and rest,
Bathed reeking limb and drooping crest.
They drank their fill and bathed them there,
And water for their journey bare.
Thence through a mighty wood he sped
All wild and uninhabited,
As in fair chariot through the skies,
Most fair in shape a Storm-God flies.
At Anśudhána Gangá, hard
To cross, his onward journey barred,
So turning quickly thence he came
To Prágyaṭ's city dear to fame.
There having gained the farther side
To Kuṭikoshtiká he hied:
The stream he crossed, and onward then
To Dharmavardhan brought his men.
Thence, leaving Toran on the north,
To Jambuprastha journeyed forth.
Then onward to a pleasant grove,
By fair Varútha's town he drove,
And when a while he there had stayed,
Went eastward from the friendly shade.
Eastward of Ujjiháná, where
The Priyak trees are tall and fair,
He passed, and rested there each steed
Exhausted with the journey's speed.
There orders to his men addressed,
With quickened pace he onward pressed,
A while at Sarvatírtha spent,
Then o'er Uttániká he went.
O'er many a stream beside he sped
With coursers on the mountains bred,
And passing Hastiprishṭak, took
The road o'er Kuṭikā's fair brook.
Then, at Lohitya's village, he
Crossed o'er the swift Kapívatí,
Then passed, where Ekaśāla stands,
The Sthánumati's flood and sands,
And Gomatí of fair renown
By Vinata's delightful town.
When to Kalinga near he drew,
A wood of Sál trees charmed the view;
That passed, the sun began to rise,
And Bharat saw with happy eyes,
Ayodhya's city, built and planned
By ancient Manu's royal hand.
Seven nights upon the road had passed,
And when he saw the town at last
Before him in her beauty spread,
Thus Bharat to the driver said:
'This glorious city from afar,
Wherein pure groves and gardens are,
Seems to my eager eyes to-day
A lifeless pile of yellow clay.
Through all her streets where erst a throng
Of men and women streamed along,
Uprose the multitudinous roar:
To-day I hear that sound no more.
No longer do mine eyes behold
The leading people, as of old,
On elephants, cars, horses, go
Abroad and homeward, to and fro.
The brilliant gardens where we heard
The wild note of each rapturous bird,
Where men and women loved to meet,
In pleasant shades, for pastime sweet,—
These to my eyes this day appear
Joyless, and desolate, and drear:
Each tree that graced the garden grieves,
And every path is spread with leaves.
The merry cry of bird and beast,
That spake aloud their joy, has ceased:
Still is the long melodious note
That charmed us from each warbling throat.
Why blows the blessed air no more,
The incense-breathing air that bore
Its sweet incomparable scent
Of sandal and of aloe blent?
Why are the drum and tabour mute?
Why is the music of the lute
That woke responsive to the quill,
Loved by the happy, hushed and still?
My boding spirit gathers hence
Dire sins of awful consequence,
And omens, crowding on my sight,
Weigh down my soul with wild affright.
Scarce shall I find my friends who dwell
Here in Ayodhyā safe and well:
For surely not without a cause
This crushing dread my soul o'erawes.'

Heart-sick, dejected, every sense
Confused by terror's influence,
On to the town he quickly swept
Which King Ikshvāku's children kept.
He passed through Vaijayanta's gate,
With weary steeds, disconsolate,
And all who near their station held,
His escort, crying Victory, swelled.
With heart distracted still he bowed
Farewell to all the following crowd,
Turned to the driver and began
To question thus the weary man:
‘Why was I brought, O free from blame,
So fast, unknown for what I came?
Yet fear of ill my heart appals,
And all my wonted courage falls.
For I have heard in days gone by
The changes seen when monarchs die;
And all those signs, O charioteer,
I see to-day surround me here:
Each kinsman’s house looks dark and grim,
No hand delights to keep it trim:
The beauty vanished, and the pride,
The doors, unkept, stand open wide.
No morning rites are offered there,
No grateful incense loads the air,
And all therein, with brows o’ercast,
Sit joyless on the ground and fast.
Their lovely chaplets dry and dead,
Their courts unswept, with dust o’erspread,
The temples of the Gods to-day
No more look beautiful and gay.
Neglected stands each holy shrine,
Each image of a Lord divine.
No shop where flowery wreaths are sold
Is bright and busy as of old.
The women and the men I mark
Absorbed in fancies dull and dark,
Their gloomy eyes with tears bedewed,
A poor afflicted multitude.’

His mind oppressed with woe and dread,
Thus Bharat to his driver said,
Viewed the dire signs Ayodhya showed,
And onward to the palace rode.
CANTO LXXII.

BHARAT'S INQUIRY.

He entered in, he looked around,
Nor in the house his father found;
Then to his mother's dwelling, bent
To see her face, he quickly went.
She saw her son, so long away,
Returning after many a day,
And from her golden seat in joy
Sprang forward to her darling boy.
Within the bower, no longer bright,
Came Bharat lover of the right,
And bending with observance sweet
Clasped his dear mother's lovely feet.
Long kisses on his brow she pressed,
And held her hero to her breast,
Then fondly drew him to her knees,
And questioned him in words like these:
'How many nights have fled, since thou
Leftest thy grandsire's home, till now?
By flying steeds so swiftly borne,
Art thou not weak and travel-worn?
How fares the king my father, tell;
Is Yudhājit thine uncle well?
And now, my son, at length declare
The pleasures of thy visit there.'

Thus to the offspring of the king
She spake with tender questioning,
And to his mother made reply
Young Bharat of the lotus eye:
The seventh night has come and fled
Since from my grandsire's home I sped:
My mother's sire is well, and he,
Yudhájit, from all trouble free.
The gold and every precious thing
Presented by the conqueror king,
The slower guards behind convey:
I left them weary on the way.
Urged by the men my father sent,
My hasty course I hither bent:
Now, I implore, an answer deign,
And all I wish to know, explain.
Unoccupied I now behold
This couch of thine adorned with gold,
And each of King Ikshváku's race
Appears with dark and gloomy face.
The king is aye, my mother dear,
Most constant in his visits here.
To meet my sire I sought this spot:
How is it that I find him not?
I long to clasp my father's feet:
Say where he lingers, I entreat.
Perchance the monarch may be seen
Where dwells Kauśalyá, eldest queen.'

His father's fate, from him concealed,
Kaikeyí to her son revealed:
Told as glad news the story sad,
For lust of sway had made her mad:
'Thy father, O my darling, know,
Has gone the way all life must go:
Devout and famed, of lofty thought,
In whom the good their refuge sought.'
. When Bharat pious, pure, and true,
Heard the sad words which pierced him through,
Grieved for the sire he loved so well.
Prostrate upon the ground he fell:
Down fell the strong-armed hero, high
Tossing his arms, and a sad cry,
'Ah, woe is me, unhappy, slain!'
Burst from his lips again, again.
Afflicted for his father's fate
By grief's intolerable weight,
With every sense amazed and cowed
The splendid hero wailed aloud:
'Ah me, my royal father's bed
Of old a gentle radiance shed,
Like the pure sky when clouds are past,
And the moon's light is o'er it cast:
Ah, of its wisest lord bereft,
It shows to-day faint radiance left,
As when the moon has left the sky,
Or mighty Ocean's depths are dry.'

With choking sobs, with many a tear,
Pierced to the heart with grief sincere,
The best of conquerors poured his sighs,
And with his robe veiled face and eyes.
Kaikeyí saw him fallen there,
Godlike, afflicted, in despair,
Used every art to move him thence,
And tried him thus with eloquence:
'Arise, arise, my dearest; why
Wilt thou, famed Prince, so lowly lie?
Not by such grief as this are moved
Good men like thee, by all approved.
The earth thy father nobly swayed,
And rites to Heaven he duly paid.
At length his race of life was run:
Thou shouldst not mourn for him, my son.'
Long on the ground he wept, and rolled
From side to side, still unconsolated,
And then, with bitter grief oppressed,
His mother with these words addressed:
‘This joyful hope my bosom fed
When from my grandsire’s halls I sped—
‘The king will throne his eldest son,
And sacrifice, as should be done.’
But all is changed, my hope was vain,
And this sad heart is rent in twain,
For my dear father’s face I miss,
Who ever sought his loved ones’ bliss.
But in my absence, mother, say,
What sickness took my sire away?
Ah, happy Ráma, happy they
Allowed his funeral rites to pay!
The glorious monarch has not learned
That I his darling have returned,
Or quickly had he hither sped,
And pressed his kisses on my head.
Where is that hand whose gentle touch,
Most soft and kind I loved so much,
The hand that loved to brush away
The dust that on his darling lay?
Quick, bear the news to Itáma’s ear;
Tell the great chief that I am here:
Brother, and sire, and friend, and all
Is he, and I his trusty thrall.
For noble hearts, to virtue true,
Their sires in elder brothers view.
To clasp his feet I fain would bow:
He is my hope and refuge now.
What said my glorious sire, who knew
Virtue and vice, so brave and true?
Firm in his vows, dear lady, say,
What said he ere he passed away?
What was his redo to me? I crave
To hear the last advice he gave.'

Thus closely questioned by the youth,
Kaikeyi spoke the mournful truth:
'The high-souled monarch wept and sighed,
For Rama, Sita, Lakshman, cried,
Then, best of all who go to bliss,
Passed to the world which follows this.
'Ah, blessed are the people who
Shall Rama and his Sita view,
And Lakshman of the mighty arm,
Returning free from scathe and harm.'
Such were the words, the last of all,
Thy father, ere he died, let fall,
By Fate and Death's dread coils enwound,
As some great elephant is bound.'

He heard, yet deeper in despair,
Her lips this double woe declare,
And with sad brow that showed his pain
Questioned his mother thus again:
'But where is he, of virtue tried,
Who fills Kausalya's heart with pride,
Where is the noble Rama? where
Is Lakshman brave, and Sita fair?'

Thus pressed, the queen began to tell
The story as each thing befell,
And gave her son in words like these,
The mournful news she meant to please:
'The prince is gone in hermit dress
To Danjak's mighty wilderness,
And Lakshman brave and Sita share
The wanderings of the exile there.'

Then Bharat’s soul with fear was stirred
Lest Ráma from the right had erred,
And jealous for ancestral fame,
He put this question to the dame:

‘Has Ráma grasped with lawless hold
A Bráhman’s house, or land, or gold?
Has Ráma harmed with ill intent
Soine poor or wealthy innocent?
Was Ráma, faithless to his vows,
Enamoured of another’s spouse?
Why was he sent to Dañdak’s wild,
Like one who kills an unborn child?’

He questioned thus: and she began
To tell her deeds and crafty plan,
Deceitful-hearted, fond, and blind
As is the way of womankind:

‘No Bráhman’s wealth has Ráma seized,
No dame his wandering fancy pleased:
His very eyes he ne’er allows
To gaze upon a neighbour’s spouse.
But when I heard the monarch plann’d
To give the realm to Ráma’s hand,
I prayed that Ráma hence might flee,
And claimed the throne, my son, for thee.
The king maintained the name he bare,
And did according to my prayer,
And Ráma, with his brother, sent,
And Sítá, forth to banishment.
When his dear son was seen no more,
The lord of earth was troubled sore:
Too feeble with his grief to strive,
He joined the elemental Five.
Up then, most dutiful! maintain
Thy royal state, arise, and reign.
For thee, my darling son, for thee
All this was planned and wrought by me.
Come, cast thy grief and pain aside,
With manly courage fortified.
This town and realm are all thine own,
And fear and grief are here unknown.
Come, with Vasishtha's guiding aid,
And priests in ritual skilled
Let the king's funeral dues be paid,
And every claim fulfilled.
Perform his obsequies with all
That suits his rank and worth,
Then give the mandate to install
Thyself as lord of earth.
CANTO LXXIII

KADEYI REPROACHED.

But when he heard the queen relate
His brothers' doom, his father's fate,
Thus Bharat to his mother said
With burning grief disquieted:
'Alas, what boots it now to reign,
Struck down by grief and well-nigh slain?
Ah, both are gone, my sire, and he
Who was a second sire to me.
Grief upon grief thy hand has made,
And salt upon my gashes laid:
For my dear sire has died through thee,
And Râma roams a devotee.
Thou camest like the night of Fate
This royal house to devastate.
Unwitting ill, my hapless sire
Placed in his bosom coals of fire,
And through thy crimes his death he met,
O thou whose heart on sin is set.
Shame of thy house! thy senseless deed
Has reft all joy from Râghu's seed
The truthful monarch, dear to fame,
Received thee as his wedded dame,
And by thy act to misery doomed
Has died by flames of grief consumed.
Kauvalyâ and Sumitra too
The coming of my mother rue,
And if they live oppressed by woe,
For their dear sons their sad tears flow,
Was he not ever good and kind,—
That hero of the duteous mind?
Skilled in all filial duties, he
As a dear mother treated thee.
Kauśalyā too, the eldest queen,
Who far foresees with insight keen,
Did she not ever show thee all
A sister’s love at duty’s call?
And hast thou from the kingdom chased
Her son, with bark around his waist,
To ‘he wild wood, to dwell therein,
And dost not sorrow for thy sin?
The love I bare to Raghu’s son
Thou knewest not, ambitious one,
If thou hast wrought this impious deed
For royal sway, in lawless greed.
With him and Lakṣman far away,
What power have I the realm to sway?
What hope will fire my bosom, when
I see no more those lords of men?
The holy king who loved the right
Relied on Rāma’s power and might,
His guardian and his glory: so
Joys Meru in his woods below.
How can I bear, a steer untrained,
The load his mightier strength sustained?
What power have I to brook alone
This weight on feeble shoulders thrown?
But if the needful power were bought
By strength of mind and brooding thought,
No triumph shall attend the dame
Who dooms her son to lasting shame.
Now should no doubt that son prevent
From quitting thee on evil bent,
But Rāma’s love o’erpowers my will,
Who holds thee as his mother still.
Whence did the thought, O thou whose eyes
Are turned to sinful deeds, arise—
A plan our ancient sires would hate,
O fallen from thy virtuous state?
For in the line from which we spring
The eldest is anointed king:
No monarchs from the rule decline,
And, least of all, Ikshvāku’s line.
Our holy sires, to virtue true,
Upon our race a lustre threw,
But with subversive frenzy thou
Hast marred our lineal honour now.
Of lofty birth, a noble line
Of previous kings is also thine:
Then whence this hated folly? whence
This sudden change that steals thy sense?
Thou shalt not gain thine impious will,
O thou whose thoughts are bent on ill,
Thou from whose guilty hand descend
These sinful blows my life to end.
Now to the forest will I go,
Thy cherished plans to overthrow,
And bring my brother, free from stain,
His people’s darling, home again.
And Rāma, when again he turns,
Whose glory like a beacon burns,
In me a faithful slave shall find
To serve him with contented mind.”
CANTO LXXIV.

BHARAT'S LAMENT.

When Bharat's anger-sharpened tongue
Reproaches on the queen had flung,
Again, with mighty rage possessed,
The guilty dame he thus addressed:
'Flee, cruel, wicked sinner, flee,
Let not this kingdom harbour thee.
Thou who hast thrown all right aside,
Weep thou for me when I have died.
Canst thou one charge against the king,
Or the most duteous Ráma, bring?
The one thy sin to death has sent,
The other chased to banishment.
Our line's destroyer, sin-defiled
Like one who kills an unborn child,
Ne'er with thy lord in heaven to dwell,
Thy portion shall be down in hell.
Because thy hand, that stayed for naught,
This awful wickedness has wrought,
And ruined him whom all held dear,
My bosom too is stirred with fear.
My father by thy sin is dead,
And Ráma to the wood is fled;
And of thy deed I bear the stain,
And nameless in the world remain.
Ambitious, evil-souled, in show
My mother, yet my direst foe,
My throning ne'er thine eyes shall bless,
Thy husband's wicked murderess.
Thou art not Aśvapati's child,
That righteous king, most sage and mild,
But thou wast born a fiend, a foe
My father's house to overthrow.
Thou who hast made Kauśalyā, pure,
Gentle, affectionate, endure
The loss of him who was her bliss,—
What worlds await thee, Queen, for this?
Was it not patent to thy sense
That Rāma was his friends' defence,
Kauśalyā's own true child most dear,
The eldest and his father's peer?
Men in the son not only trace
The father's figure, form, and face,
But in his heart they also find
The offspring of the father's mind;
And hence, though dear their kinsmen are,
To mothers sons are dearer far.
There goes an ancient legend how
Good Surabhi, the God-loved cow,
Saw two of her dear children strain,
Drawing a plough and faint with pain.
She saw them on the earth outworn,
Toiling till noon from early morn,
And as she viewed her children's woe,
A flood of tears began to flow.
As through the air beneath her swept
The Lord of Gods, the drops she wept,
Fine, laden with delicious smell,
Upon his heavenly body fell.
And Indra lifted up his eyes
And saw her standing in the skies,
Afflicted with her sorrow's weight,
Sad, weeping, all disconsolate.
The Lord of Gods in anxious mood
Thus spoke in suppliant attitude:
'No fear disturbs our rest, and how
Comes this great dread upon thee now?
Whence can this woe upon thee fall,
Say, gentle one who loveth all?'

Thus spake the God who rules the skies,
Indra, the Lord supremely wise;
And gentle Surabhi, well learned
In eloquence, this speech returned:
'Not thine the fault, great God, not thine,
And guiltless are the Lords divine:
I mourn two children faint with toil,
Labouring hard in stubborn soil.
Wasted and sad I see them now,
While the sun beats on neck and brow,
Still goaded by the cruel hind,—
No pity in his savage mind.
O Indra, from this body sprang
These children, worn with many a pang.
For this sad sight I mourn, for none
Is to the mother like her son.'

He saw her weep whose offspring feed
In thousands over hill and mead,
And knew that in a mother's eye
Naught with a son, for love, can vie.
He deemed her, when the tears that came
From her sad eyes bedewed his frame,
Laden with their celestial scent,
Of living things most excellent.
If she these tears of sorrow shed
Who many a thousand children bred,
Think what a life of woe is left
Kauśalyā, of her Rāma reft.
An only son was hers, and she
Is rendered childless now by thee.
Here and hereafter, for thy crime,
Woe is thy lot through endless time.

And now, O Queen, without delay,
With all due honour will I pay
Both to my brother and my sire
The rites their several fates require.
Back to Ayodhyā will I bring
The long-armed chief, her lord and king,
And to the wood myself betake
Where hermit saints their dwelling make.
For, sinner both in deed and thought!
This hideous crime which thou hast wrought
I cannot bear, or live to see
The people's sad eyes bent on me.
Begone, to Daṇḍak wood retire,
Or cast thy body to the fire,
Or bind around thy neck the rope:
No other refuge mayst thou hope.
When Rāma, lord of valour true,
Has gained the earth, his right and due,
Then, free from duty's binding debt,
My vanished sin shall I forget.'

Thus like an elephant forced to brook
The goading of the driver's hook,
Quick panting like a serpent maimed,
He fell to earth with rage inflamed.
A while he lay: he rose at length,
And slowly gathering sense and strength,
With angry eyes which tears bedewed,
The miserable queen he viewed,
And spake with keen reproach to her
Before each lord and minister:
'No lust have I for kingly sway,
My mother I no more obey:
Naught of this consecration knew
Which Daśaratha kept in view.
I with Śatrughna all the time
Was dwelling in a distant clime:
I knew of Ráma's exile naught,
That hero of the noble thought:
I knew not how fair Sítá went,
And Lakshman, forth to banishment.'
Thus high-souled Bharat, mid the crowd,
Lifted his voice and cried aloud.
Kauśalyá heard, she raised her head,
And quickly to Sumitrá said:
'Bharat, Kaikeyí's son, is here,—
Hers whose fell deeds I loathe and fear:
That youth of foresight keen I fain
Would meet and see his face again.'
Thus to Sumitrá spake the dame,
And straight to Bharat's presence came
With altered mien, neglected dress,
Trembling and faint with sore distress,
Bharat, Śatrughna by his side,
To meet her, toward her palace hied.
And when the royal dame they viewed
Distressed with dire solicitude,
Sad, fallen senseless on the ground,
About her neck their arms they wound.
The noble matron prostrate there,
Embraced, with tears, the weeping pair,
And with her load of grief oppressed,
To Bharat then these words addressed:
‘Now all is thine, without a foe,
This realm for which thou longest so.
Ah, soon Kaikēyī’s ruthless hand
Has won the empire of the land,
And made my guiltless Rāma flee
Dressed like some lonely devotee.
Herein what profit has the queen,
Whose eye delights in havoc, seen?
Me also, me ’twere surely good
To banish to the distant wood,
To dwell amid the shades that hold
My famous son with limbs like gold.
Nay, with the sacred fire to guide,
Will I, Sumitrā by my side,
Myself to the drear wood repair
And seek the son of Raghu there.
This land which rice and golden corn
And wealth of every kind adorn,
Car, elephant, and steed, and gem,—
She makes thee lord of it and them.’

With taunts like these her bitter tongue
The heart of blameless Bharat wrung,
And direr pangs his bosom tore
Than when the lancet probes a sore,
With troubled senses all astray
Prone at her feet he fell and lay.
With loud lament a while he plained,
And slowly strength and sense regained.
With suppliant hand to hand applied
He turned to her who wept and sighed,
And thus bespake the queen, whose breast
With sundry woes was sore distressed:
'Why these reproaches, noble dame?
I, knowing naught, am free from blame.
Thou knowest well what love was mine
For Ráma, chief of Raghu's line.
O, never be his darkened mind
To Scripture's guiding lore inclined,
By whose consent the prince who led
The good, the truthful hero, fled.
May he obey the vilest lord,
Offend the sun with act abhorred, ¹
And strike a sleeping cow, who lent
His voice to Ráma's banishment.
May the good king who all befriends,
And, like his sons, the people tends,
Be wronged by him who gave consent
To noble Ráma's banishment.
On him that king's injustice fall,
Who takes, as lord, a sixth of all,
Nor guards, neglectful of his trust,
His people, as a ruler must.
The crime of those who swear to fee,
At holy rites, some devotee,
And then the promised gift deny,

¹ Súryamcha pratimechatu, adversus solena mingat. An offense expressly forbidden by the Laws of Manu.
Be his who willed the prince should fly.
When weapons clash and heroes bleed,
With elephant and harnessed steed,
Ne'er, like the good, be his to fight
Whose heart allowed the prince's flight.
Though taught with care by one expert
May he the Veda's text pervert,
With impious mind or evil bent,
Whose voice approved the banishment.
May he with traitor lips reveal
Whate'er he promised to conceal,
And bruit abroad his friend's offence,
Betrayed by generous confidence.
No wife of equal lineage born
The wretch's joyless home adorn:
Ne'er may he do one virtuous deed,
And dying see no child succeed.
When in the battle's awful day
Fierce warriors stand in dread array,
Let the base coward turn and fly,
And smitten by the foeman, die.
Long may he wander, rags his wear,
Doomed in his hand a skull to bear,
And like an idiot beg his bread,
Who gave consent when Râma fled.
His sin who holy rites forgets,
Asleep when shows the sun and sets,
A load upon his soul shall lie
Whose will allowed the prince to fly.
His sin who loves his Master's dame,
His, kindler of destructive flame,
His who betrays his trusting friend
Shall, mingled all, on him descend.
By him no reverence due be paid
To blessed God or parted shade:
May sire and mother's sacred name
In vain from him obedience claim.
Ne'er may he go where dwell the good,
Nor win their fame and neighbourhood,
But lose all hopes of bliss to-day,
Who willed the prince should flee away.
May he deceive the poor and weak
Who look to him and comfort seek,
Betray the suppliants who complain,
And make the hopeful hope in vain.
Long may his wife his kiss expect,
And pine away in cold neglect.
May he his lawful love despise,
And turn on other dames his eyes,
Fool, on forbidden joys intent.
Whose will allowed the banishment.
His sin who deadly poison throws
To spoil the water as it flows,
Lay on the wretch its burden dread
Who gave consent when Ráma fled.'

Thus with his words he undeceived
Kauśalyá's troubled heart, who grieved
For son and husband reft away;
Then prostrate on the ground he lay.
Him as he lay half-senseless there,
Freed by the mighty oaths he sware,
Kauśalyá, by her woe distressed,
With melancholy words addressed:
'Anew, my son, this sorrow springs
To rend my heart with keener stings;
These awful oaths which thou hast sworn

1 Bharat does not intend these curses for any particular person: he merely wishes to prove his own innocence by invoking them on his own head if he had any share in banishing Ráma.
My breast with double grief have torn
Thy soul, and faithful Lakshman's too,
Are still, thank Heaven! to virtue true.
True to thy promise, thou shalt gain
The mansions which the good obtain.'

Then to her breast that youth she drew,
Whose sweet fraternal love she knew,
And there in strict embraces held
The hero, as her tears outwelled.
And Bharat's heart grew sick and faint
With grief and oft-renewed complaint,
And all his senses were distraught
By the great woe that in him wrought.

Thus as he lay and still bewailed
With sighs and loud lament
Till all his strength and reason failed,
The hours of night were spent.
CANTO LXXVI.

THE FUNERAL.

The saint Vaśishṭha, best of all
Whose words with moving wisdom fall,
Bharat, Kaikeyi's son, addressed,
Whom burning fires of grief distressed:
'O Prince, whose fame is widely spread,
Enough of grief: be comforted.
The time is come: arise, and lay
Upon the pyre the monarch's clay.'

He heard the words Vaśishṭha spoke,
And slumbering resolution woke.
Then skilled in all the laws declare,
He bade his friends the rites prepare.
They raised the body from the oil,
And placed it, dripping, on the soil;
Then laid it on a bed, whereon
Wrought gold and precious jewels shone.
There, pallor o'er his features spread,
The monarch, as in sleep, lay dead.
Then Bharat sought his father's side,
And lifted up his voice and cried:
'O King, and has thy heart designed
To part and leave thy son behind?
Make Rāma flee, who loves the right,
And Lakṣman of the arm of might?
Whither, great Monarch, wilt thou go,
And leave this people in their woe,
Mourning their hero, wild with grief,
Of Rāma reft, their lion chief?
Ali, who will guard the people well
Who in Ayodhya’s city dwell,
When thou, my sire, hast sought the sky,
And Rāma has been forced to fly?
In widowed woe, bereft of thee,
The land no more is fair to see:
The city, to my aching sight,
Is gloomy as a moonless night.’

Thus, with o’erwhelming sorrow pained,
Sad Bharat by the bed complained:
And thus Vaśishṭha, holy sage,
Spoke his deep anguish to assuage:
‘O Lord of men, no longer stay;
The last remaining duties pay:
Haste, mighty-armed, as I advise,
The funeral rites to solemnize.’

And Bharat heard Vaśishṭha’s rede
With due attention, and agreed.
He summoned straight from every side
Chaplain, and priest, and holy guide.
The sacred fires he bade them bring
Forth from the chapel of the king,
Wherein the priests in order due,
And ministers, the offerings threw.
Distraught in mind, with sob and tear,
They laid the body on a bier,
And servants, while their eyes brimmed o’er,
The monarch from the palace bore.
Another band of mourners led
The long procession of the dead:
Rich garments in the way they cast,
And gold and silver, as they passed.
Then other hands the corse bedewed
With fragrant juices that exude
From sandal, cedar, aloe, pine,
And every perfume rare and fine.
Then priestly hands the mighty dead
Upon the pyre deposited.
The sacred fires they tended next,
And muttered low each funeral text;
And priestly singers who rehearse
The Sáman¹ sang their holy verse.
Forth from the town in litters came,
Or chariots, many a royal dame,
And honoured so the funeral ground,
With aged followers ringed around.
With steps in inverse order bent, ²
The priests in sad procession went
Around the monarch's burning pyre
Who well had nursed each sacred fire:
With Queen Kauśalyá and the rest,
Their tender hearts with woe distressed.
The voice of women, shrill and clear
As screaming curlews, smote the ear,
As from a thousand voices rose
The shriek that tells of woman's woes.
Then weeping, faint, with loud lament,
Down Sarju’s shelving bank they went.
There standing on the river side
With Bharat, priest, and peer,
Their lips the women purified
With water fresh and clear.
Returning to the royal town,
Their eyes with tear-drops filled,
Ten days on earth they laid them down,
And wept till grief was stilled.

¹ The Sáma-veda, the hymns of which are chanted aloud.
² Walking from right to left.
CANTO LXXVII.

THE GATHERING OF THE ASHES.

The tenth day passed: the prince again
Was free from every legal stain.
He bade them on the twelfth the great
Remaining honour celebrate.
Much gold he gave, and gems, and food,
To all the Brálhman multitude,
And goats whose hair was white and fine,
And many a thousand head of kine:
Slaves, men and damsels, he bestowed,
And many a cu and fair abode:
Such gifts he gave the Brálhman race,
His father’s obsequies to grace.
Then when the morning’s earliest ray
Appeared upon the thirteenth day,
Again the hero wept and sighed
Distraught and sorrow-stupefied;
Drew, sobbing in his anguish, near,
The last remaining debt to clear,
And at the bottom of the pyre,
He thus bespake his royal sire:
‘O father, hast thou left me so,
Deserted in my friendless woe,
When he to whom the charge was given
To keep me, to the wood is driven?
Her only son is forced away
Who was his helpless mother’s stay:
Ah, whither, father, art thou fled,
Leaving the queen uncomforted?

He looked upon the pile where lay
The bones half-burnt and ashes grey,
And uttering a piteous moan,
Gave way, by anguish overthrown.
Then as his tears began to well,
Prostrate to earth the hero fell;
So from its seat the staff they drag,
And cast to earth some glorious flag.
The ministers approached again
The prince whom rites had freed from stain:
So when Yayáti fell, each seer,
In pity for his fate, drew near.
Satruhná saw him lying low
O'erwhelmed beneath the rush of woe,
And as upon the king he thought,
He fell upon the earth distraught.
When to his loving memory came
Those noble gifts, that kingly frame,
He sorrowed, by his woe distressed,
As one by frenzied rage possessed:
'Ah me, this surging sea of woe.
Has drowned us with its overflow:
The source is Manthará, dire and dark,
Kaikeyí is the ravening shark:
And the great boons the monarch gave
Lend conquering might to every wave.
Ah, whither wilt thou go, and leave
Thy Bharat in his woe to grieve,
Whom ever 'twas thy greatest joy
To fondle as a tender boy?
Didst thou not give with thoughtful care
Our food, our drink, our robes to wear?
Whose love will now for us provide,
When thou, our king and sire, hast died?
At such a time bereft, forlorn,
Why is not earth in sunder torn,
Missing her monarch’s firm control,
His love of right, his lofty soul?
Ah me, for Rāma roams afar,
My sire is where the Blessed are:
How can I live deserted? I
Will pass into the fire and die.
Abandoned thus, I will not brook
Upon Ayodhyā’s town to look,
Once guarded by Ikshvāku’s race:
The wood shall be my dwelling-place.’

Then when the princes’ mournful train
Heard the sad brothers thus complain,
And saw their misery, at the view
Their grief burst wilder out anew.
Faint with lamenting, sad and worn,
Each like a bull with broken horn,
The brothers in their wild despair
Lay rolling, mad with misery, there.
Then old Vasishṭha good and true,
Their father’s priest, all lore who knew,
Raised weeping Bharat on his feet,
And thus bespake with counsel meet:
‘Twelve days, my lord, have past away
Since flames consumed thy father’s clay:
Delay no more: as rules ordain,
Gather what bones may yet remain.
Three constant pairs are ever found
To hem all mortal creatures round: ¹
Then mourn not thus, O Prince, for none
Their close companionship may shun.’

¹ Birth and death, pleasure and pain, loss and gain.
Canto LXXVII.  THE RAMAYAN.  311

Sumantra bade Satrughna rise,
And soothed his soul with counsel wise,
And skilled in truth, his hearer taught
How all things are and come to naught.
When rose each hero from the ground,
A lion lord of men, renowned,
He showed like Indra's flag,1 whereon
Fierce rains have dashed and suns have shone.
They wiped their red and weeping eyes,
And gently made their sad replies;
Then, urged to haste, the royal pair
Performed the rites that claimed their care.

1 Erected upon a tree or high staff in honour of Indra.
CANTO LXXVIII.

MANTHARÁ PUNISHED.

Śatrughna thus to Bharat spake
Who longed the forest road to take:
'He who in woe was wont to give
Strength to himself and all that live—
Dear Ráma, true and pure in heart,
Is banished by a woman's art.
Yet here was Lakshmana, brave and strong,
Could not his might prevent the wrong?
Could not his arm the king restrain,
Or make the banished free again?
One loving right and fearing crime
Had checked the monarch's sin in time,
When, vassal of a woman's will,
His feet approached the path of ill.'

While Lakshman's younger brother, dread
Śatrughna, thus to Bharat said,
Came to the fronting door, arrayed
In glittering robes, the hump-back maid.
There she, with sandal-oil besmear'd,
In garments meet for queens appeared:
And lustre to her form was lent
By many a gem and ornament.
She girdled with her brodered zone,
And many a chain about her thrown,
Showed like a female monkey round
Whose body many a string is bound.
When on that cause of evil fell
The quick eye of the sentinel,
He grasped her in his ruthless hold,
And hastening in, Śatrughna told:
‘Here is the wicked pest,’ he cried,
‘Through whom the king thy father died,
And Rāma wanders in the wood:
Do with her as thou deemest good.’
The warder spoke: and every word Śatrughna’s breast to fury stirred:
He called the servants, all and each,
And spake in wrath his hasty speech:
‘This is the wretch my sire who slow,
And misery on my brothers drew:
Let her this day obtain the meed,
Vile sinner, of her cruel deed.’
He spake; and moved by fury laid
His mighty hand upon the maid,
Who as her fellows ringed her round,
Made with her cries the hall resound.
Soon as the gathered women viewed Śatrughna in his angry mood,
Their hearts disturbed by sudden dread,
They turned and from his presence fled.
‘His rage,’ they cried, ‘on us will fall,
And ruthless, he will slay us all.
Come, to Kauśalyā let us flee:
Our hope, our sure defence is she,
Approved by all, of virtuous mind,
Compassionate, and good, and kind.’

His eyes with burning wrath aglow,
Śatrughna, shatterer of the foe,
Dragged on the ground the hump-back maid
Who shrieked aloud and screamed for aid.
This way and that with no remorse
He dragged her with resistless force,
And chains and glittering trinkets burst
Lay here and there with gems dispersed,
Till like the sky of Autumn shone
The palace floor they sparkled on.
The lord of men, supremely strong,
Haled in his rage the wretch along:
Where Queen Kaikeyí dwelt he came,
And sternly then addressed the dame.
Deep in her heart Kaikeyí felt
The stabs his keen reproaches dealt,
And of Šatrughna’s ire afraid,
To Bharat flew and cried for aid.
He looked and saw the prince inflamed
With burning rage, and thus exclaimed:
‘Forgive! thine angry arm restrain:
A woman never may be slain.
My hand Kaikeyí’s blood would spill,
The sinner ever bent on ill,
But Ráma, long in duty tried,
Would hate the impious matricide:
And if he knew thy vengeful blade
Had slaughtered e’en this hump back maid,
Never again, be sure, would he
Speak friendly word to thee or me.’
When Bharat’s speech Šatrughna heard,
He calmed the rage his breast that stirred,
Releasing from her dire constraint
The trembling wretch with terror faint.
Then to Kaikeyí’s feet she crept,
And prostrate in her misery wept.
Kaikeyí on the hump-back gazed,
And saw her weep and gasp,
Still quivering, with her senses dazed,
From fierce Śatrughna's grasp.
With gentle words of pity she
Assuaged her wild despair,
E'en as a tender hand might free
A curlew from the snare.
CANTO LXXIX.

BHARAT'S COMMANDS.

Now when the sun's returning ray
Had ushered in the fourteenth day,
The gathered peers of state addressed
To Bharat's car their new request:
'Our lord to heaven has parted hence,
Long served with deepest reverence;
Ráma, the eldest, far from home,
And Lakshman, in the forest roam.
O Prince, of mighty fame, be thou
Our guardian and our monarch now,
Lest secret plot or foeman's hate
Assail our unprotected state.
With longing eyes, O Lord of men,
To thee look friend and citizen,
And ready is each sacred thing
To consecrate our chosen king.
Come, Bharat, and accept thine own
Ancient hereditary throne.
Thee let the priests this day install
As monarch to preserve us all.'

Around the sacred gear he bent
His circling footsteps reverent,
And, firm to vows he would not break,
Thus to the gathered people spake:
'The eldest son is ever king:
So rules the house from which we spring
Nor should ye, Lords, like men unwisc,
With words like these to wrong advise.
Rāma is eldest born, and he
The ruler of the land shall be.
Now to the woods will I repair,
Five years and nine to lodge me there.
Assemble straight a mighty force,
Cars, elephants, and foot and horse,
For I will follow on his track
And bring my eldest brother back.
Whate'er the rites of throning need
Placed on a car the way shall lead:
The sacred vessels I will take
To the wild wood for Rāma's sake.
I o'er the lion prince's head
The sanctifying balm will shed,
And bring him, as the fire they bring
Forth from the shrine, with triumphing.
Nor will I let my mother's greed
In this her cherished aim succeed:
In pathless wilds will I remain,
And Rāma here as king shall reign.
To make the rough ways smooth and clear
Send workman out and pioneer:
Let skilful men attend beside
Our way through pathless spots to guide.'

As thus the royal Bharat spake,
Ordaining all for Rāma's sake,
The audience gave with one accord
Auspicious answer to their lord:
'Be royal Fortune aye benign
To thee for this good speech of thine,
Who wishest still thine elder's hand
To rule with kingly sway the land.'

Their glorious speech, their favouring cries
Made his proud bosom swell;
And from the prince's noble eyes
The tears of rapture fell.\(^1\)

\(^1\) I follow in this stanza the Bombay edition in preference to Schlegel's which gives the tears of joy to the courtiers.
CANTO LXXX.

THE WAY PREPARED.

All they who knew the joiner’s art,
Or distant ground in every part;
Each busied in his several trade,
To work machines or ply the spade;
Deft workmen skilled to frame the wheel,
Or with the ponderous engine deal;
Guides of the way, and craftsmen skilled
To sink the well, make bricks, and build;
And those whose hands the tree could hew,
And work with slips of cut bamboo,
Went forward, and to guide them, they
Whose eyes before had seen the way.
Then onward in triumphant mood
Went all the mighty multitude,
Like the great sea whose waves leap high
When the full moon is in the sky.
Then, in his proper duty skilled,
Each joined him to his several guild,
And onward in advance they went
With every tool and implement.
Where bush and tangled creeper lay
With trenchant steel they made the way;
They felled each stump, removed each stone,
And many a tree was overthrown.
In other spots, on desert lands,
Tall trees were reared by busy hands.
Where’er the line of road they took,
They plied the hatchet, axe, and hook.
Others, with all their strength applied,
Cast vigorous plants and shrubs aside,
In shelving valleys rooted deep,
And levelled every dale and steep.
Each pit and hole that stopped the way
They filled with stones, and mud, and clay,
And all the ground that rose and fell
With busy care was levelled well.
They bridged ravines with ceaseless toil,
And pounded fine the stony soil.
Now here, now there, to right and left,
A passage through the ground they cleft,
And soon the rushing flood was led
Abundant through the new-cut bed,
Which by the running stream supplied
With ocean’s boundless waters nigh.
In dry and thirsty spots they sank
Full many a well and ample tank,
And altars round about them placed
To deck the station in the waste.
With well-wrought plaster smoothly spread,
With bloomy trees that rose o’erhead,
With banners waving in the air,
And wild birds singing here and there,
With fragrant sandal-water wet,
With many a flower beside it set,
Like the Gods’ heavenly pathway showed
That mighty host’s imperial road.
Deft workmen, chosen for their skill
To do the high-souled Bharat’s will,
In every pleasant spot where grew
Trees of sweet fruit and fair to view,
As he commanded, toiled to grace