'Not if the Gods in heaven who dwell,  
Gandharvas, and the fiends of hell  
In banded opposition rise  
Against me, will I yield my prize.  
Still trembling from the ungentle touch  
Of Vānar hands ye fear too much,  
And bid me, heedless of the shame,  
Give to her lord the Maithil dame.'  

Thus spoke the king in stern reproof;  
Then mounted to his palace roof  
Aloft o'er many a story raised,  
And on the lands beneath him gazed.  
There by his faithful spics he stood  
And looked o'er sea and hill and wood.  
There stretched before him far away  
The Vānars' numberless array:  
Scarce could the meadows' tender green  
Beneath their trampling feet be seen.  
He looked a while with furious eye,  
Then questioned thus the nearer spy:  
'Bend, Sāraṇ, bend thy gaze, and show  
The leaders of the Vānar foe.  
Tell me their heroes' names, and teach  
The valour, power and might of each.'  

Obedient Sāraṇ eyed the van,  
The leaders marked, and thus began:  
'That chief conspicuous at the head
Canto XXVI. THE RÁMAYAN.

Of warriors in the forest bred,
Who hither bends his ruthless eye
And shouts his fearful battle cry:
Whose voice with pealing thunder shakes
All Lanká, with the groves and lakes
And hills that tremble at the sound,
Is Níla, for his might renowned:
First of the Vánar lords controlled
By King Sugríva lofty-souled.
He who his mighty arm extends,
And his fierce eye on Lanká bends,
In stature like a stately tower,
In colour like a lotus flower,
Who with his wild earth-shaking cries
Thee, Ráván, to the field defies,
Is Angad, by Sugríva's care
Anointed his imperial heir:
In wondrous strength, in martial fire
Peer of King Bálí's self, his sire;
For Ráma's sake in arms arrayed
Like Varuṇ called to Śakra's aid.
Behind him, girt by warlike bands,
Nalá the mighty Vánar stands,
The son of Viśvakarmá, he
Who built the bridge athwart the sea.
Look farther yet, O King, and mark
That chieftain clothed in Sandal bark.
'Tis Śweta, famed among his peers,
A sage whom all his race reveres.
See, in Sugríva's car he speaks,
Then, hasting back, his post reseeks,
And turns his practised eye to view
The squadrons he has formed anew.
Next Kumud stands who roamed of yore
On Gomati's delightful shore,
Feared where the waving woods invest
His seat on Mount Sanrochan's crest.
Next him, a chieftain strong and dread,
Comes Chaṇḍa at his legions' head;
Exulting in his warrior might
He hastens, burning for the fight,
And boasts that his unaided powers
Shall cast to earth thy walls and towers.
Mark, mark that chief of lion gait,
Who views thee with a glance of hate
As though his very eyes would burn
The city walls to which they turn:
'Tis Rambha, Vānar king; he dwells
In Kṛishṇagiri's tangled dells,
Where Vindhya's pleasant slopes are spread
Aml fain Sudarṣan lifts his head.
There, listening with erected ears,
Śarabha, mighty chief, appears.
His soul is burning for the strife,
Nor dreads the jeopardy of life.
He trembles as he moves, for ire,
And bends around his glance of fire.
Next, like a cloud that veils the skies,
A chieftain of terrific size,
Conspicuous mid the Vānars, comes
With battle shout like rolling drums.
'Tis Panas, trained in war and tried,
Who dwells on Pāriyātra's side.
He, far away, the chief who throws
A glory o'er the marshalled rows
That ranged behind their captain stand
Exulting on the ocean strand.

The Goonuce.
Canto XXVI. THE RAMAYAN.

Is Vidura the fierce in fight,
Preëminent like Dardur's height.
That chieftain bending down to drink
On lovely Veṇā's verdant brink,
Is Krathan; now he lifts his eyes
And thee to mortal fray defies.
Next Gavaya comes, whose haughty mind
Scorns all the warriors of his kind.
He comes to trample—such his boast—
On Lankā, with his single host.
CANTO XXVII.

THE VÁNAR CHIEFS.

"Yet more remain, brave chiefs who stake
Their noble lives for Ráma's sake.
See, glorious, golden-coated, one
Whó glisters like the morning sun,
Whom thousands of his race surround,
'Tis Hara for his strength renowned,
Next comes a mighty chieftain, he
Whose legions, armed with rock and tree,
Press on, in numbers passing tale,
The ramparts of our town to scale.
O Rávaṇ, see the king advance
Terrific with his fiery glance,
Girt by the bravest of his train,
Majestic as the God of Rain,
Parjanya, when his host of clouds
About the king, embattled, crowds:
On Rikshaván's high mountain nursed,
In Narmadá he slakes his thirst,
Dhúmra, proud ursine chief, who leads
Wild warriors whom the forest breeds.
His brother, next in strength and age,
In Jámbaván the famous sage.
Of yore his might and skill he lent
To him who rules the firmament,
And Indra's liberal boons repaid
The chieftain for the timely aid.

The Anglicized Nerbudda.
Canto XXVII. THE RAMAYAN.

There like a gloomy cloud that flies
Borne by the tempest through the skies,
Pramáthí stands; he roamed of yore
The forest wilds on Gangá's shore,
Where elephants were struck with dread
And trembling at his coming fled.
There on his foes he loved to sate
The old hereditary hate.  
Look, Gaja and Gaváksha show
Their lust of battle with the foe,
See Nala burning for the fray,
And Níla chafing at delay.
Behind the eager captains press
Wild hosts in numbers numberless,
And each for Ráma's sake would fall
Or force his way through Lanká's wall.'

1 According to a Pauranik legend Kesári Hanumán's putative father had killed an Asur or demon who appeared in the form of an elephant, and hence arose the hostility between Vánars and Elephants.
CANTO XXVIII.

THE CHIEFTAINS.

There Sāraṇ ceased: then Śuka brokē
The silence and to Rāvan spoke:
'O Monarch, yonder chiefs survey:
Like elephants in size are they,
And tower like stately trees that grow
Where Gangā's nursing waters flow;
Yea, tall as mountain pines that fling
Long shadows o'er the snow-crowned king.
They all in wild Kishkindhā dwell
And serve their lord Sugrīva well.
The Gods' and bright Gandharvas' seed,
They take each form that suits their need,
Now farther look, O Monarch, where
Those chieftain's stand, a glorious pair,
Conspicuous for their godlike frames;
 Dwivid and Mainda are their names.
Their lips the drink of heaven have known,
And Brahmā claims them for his own.
That chieftain whom thine eyes behold
Refulgent like a hill of gold,
Before whose wrathful might the sea
Roused from his rest would turn and flee,
The peerless Vānar, he who came
To Lankā for the Maithil dame,
The Wind-God's son Hanúmān; thou
Hast seen him once, behold him now.
Still nearer let thy glance be bent,
And mark that prince preëminent
Mid chieftains for his strength and size
And splendour of his lotus eyes.
Far through worlds his virtues shine,
The glory of Kashvāku's line.
The path of truth he never leaves,
And still through all to duty cleaves.
Deep in the Vedas, skilled to wield
The mystic shafts to him revealed:
Whose flaming darts to heaven ascend,
And through the earth a passage rend:
In might like him who rules the sky;
Like Yama, when his wrath grows high:
Whose queen, the darling of his soul,
Thy magic art deceived and stole:
There royal Rāma stands and longs
For battle to avenge his wrongs.
Near on his right a prince, in hue
Like pure gold freshly burnished, view:
Broad is his chest, his eye is red,
His black hair curls about his head:
'Tis Lakshman, faithful friend, who shares
His brother's joys, his brother's cares.
By Rāma's side he loves to stand
And serve him as his better hand,
For whose dear sake without a sigh
The warrior youth would gladly die.
On Rāma's left Vibhīśaṇ, vicē,
With giants for his retinue:
King-making drops have dewed his head,
Appointed monarch in thy stead.
Behold that chieftain sternly still,
High towering like a rooted hill,
Supreme in power and pride of place,
The monarch of the Vánár race.
Raised high above his woodland kind,
In might and glory, frame and mind,
His head above his host he shows.
Conspicuous as the Lord of Snows.
His home is far from hostile eyes
Where deep in woods Kishkindhá lies.
A glistening chain which flowers bedeck
With burnished gold adorns his neck.
Queen Fortune, loved by Gods and kings,
To him her chosen favourite clings.
That chain he owes to Ráma’s grace,
And Tárá and his kingly place.
In him the great Sugríva know,
Whom Ráma rescued from his foe.”

1 Here follows the enumeration of Sugríva’s forces which I do not attempt to follow. It soon reaches a hundred thousand billions.
CANTO XXIX.

SÁRDÚLA CAPTURED.

The giant viewed with earnest ken
The Vánars and the lords of men;
Then thus, with grief and anger moved,
In bitter tone the spies reproved:
‘Can faithful servants hope to please
Their master with such tales as these?
Or hope ye with wild words to wring
The bōsom of your lord and king?
Such words were better said by those
Who come arrayed our mortal foes.
In vain your ears have heard the sage,
And listened to the lore of age,
Untaught, though lectured many a day,
The first great lesson, to obey.

’Tis marvel Rávaṇ reigns and rules.
Whose counsellors are blind and fools.
Has death no terrors that ye dare
To tempt your monarch to despair,
From whose imperial mandate flow
Disgrace and honour, weal and woe?
Yea, forest trees, when flames are fanned
About their scorching trunks, may stand;
But naught can set the sinner free
When kings the punishment decree.
I would not in mine anger spare
The traitorous foe-praising pair,
But years of faithful service plead
For pardon, and they shall not bleed.
Henceforth to me be dead: depart,
Far from my presence and my heart.'

Thus spoke the angry king: the two
Cried, Long live Rāvana, and withdrew.
The giant monarch turned and cried
To strong Mahodar at his side:
'Go thou, and spies more faithful bring,
More duteous to their lord the king.'

Swift at his word Mahodar sped,
And came returning at the head
Of long-tried messengers, who bent
Before their monarch reverent.
'Go quickly hence,' said Rāvana, 'scan
With keenest eyes the foeman's plan.
Learn who, as nearest friends, advise
And mould each secret enterprise.
Learn when he wakes and goes to rest,
Sound every purpose of his breast.
Learn what the prince intends to-day:
Watch keenly all, and come away.'

With joy they heard the words he said:
Then with Śārdūla at their head
About the giant king they went
With circling paces reverent.
By fair Suvela's grassy side
The chiefs of Rāghu's race they spied,
Where, shaded by the waving wood,
Vibhīśaṇ and Sugrīva stood.
While they rested there and viewed
The Vānars' countless multitude.
Vibhīśaṇ with observant eyes
Knew at a glance the giant spies,
And bade the warriors of his train
Bind the rash foes with cord and chain:
‘Śárdúla’s is the sin,’ he cried.
He neath the Vánars’ hands had died,
But Ráma from their fury freed
The captive in his utmost need,
And, merciful at sight of woe,
Loosed all the spies and bade them go.
Then home to Lanká’s monarch fled
The giant chiefs discomfited.
CANTO XXX.

SÁRDÚLA'S SPEECH.

They told their lord that Ráma still
Lay waiting by Suvela's hill.
The tyrant, flushed with angry glow,
Heard of the coming of the foe,
And thus with close inquiry pressed
Sárdúla spokesman for the rest:
'Why art thou sad, night-rover? speak:
Has grief or terror changed thy cheek?
Have the wild Vánars' hostile bands
Assailed thee with their mighty hands?'

Sárdúla heard, but scarce might speak;
His trembling tones were faint and weak:
'O Giant King, in vain we try
The purpose of the foe to spy.
Their strength and number none may tell,
And Ráma guards his legions well.
He leaves no hope to prying eyes,
And parley with the chiefs denies:
Each road and path a Vánar guard,
Of mountain size, has closed and barred.
Soon as my feet an entrance found
By giants was I seized and bound,
And wounded sore I fell beneath
Their fists and knees and hands and teeth.
Then trembling, bleeding, wellnigh dead
To Ráma's presence was I led.
He in his mercy stooped to save,
Canto XXX. THE RAMAYAN.

And freedom to the captive gave.
With rocks and shattered mountains he
Has bridged his way athwart the sea,
And he and all his legions wait
Embattled close to Lankâ's gate.
Soon will the host thy wall assail,
And, swarming on, the rampart scale.
Now, O my King, his consort yield,
Or arm thee with the sword and shield.
This choice is left thee: choose between
Thy safety and the Maithil queen.1

1 I omit the rest of this canto, which is mere repetition. Râvana gives in the same words his former answer that the Gods, Gandharvas and fiends combined shall not force him to give up Sîtâ. He then orders Sârdula to tell him the names of the Vânar chieftains whom he has seen in Râma's army. These have already been mentioned by Suka and Sârañ.
CANTO XXXI.

THE MAGIC HEAD.

The tyrant's troubled eye confessed
The secret fear that filled his breast.
With dread of coming woe dismayed
He called his counsellors to aid;
Then sternly silent, deep in thought,
His chamber in the palace sought.
Then, as the surest hope of all,
The monarch bade his servants call
Vidyujjihva, whom magic skill
Made master of the means of ill.
Then spake the lord of Lankā's isle:
'Come, Sītā with thine arts beguile.
With magic skill and deftest care
A head like Rāma's own prepare.
This head, long shafts and mighty bow,
To Janak's daughter will we show.'

He ceased: Vidyujjihva obeyed,
And wondrous magic skill displayed;
And Rāvāṇ for the art he showed
An ornament of price bestowed.
Then to the grove where Sītā lay
The lord of Lankā took his way.
Pale, wasted, weeping, on the ground
The melancholy queen he found,
Whose thoughts in utmost stress of ill
Were fixed upon her husband still.
The giant king approached the dame,
Declared in tones of joy his name;  
Then heeding naught her wild distress  
Bespake her, stern and pitiless:  
'The prince to whom thy fancies cling  
Though loved and wooed by Lankâ's king,—  
Who slew the noble Khara,—he  
Is slain by warriors sent by me.  
Thy living root is hewn away,  
Thy scornful pride is tamed to-day.  
Thy lord-in battle's front has died,  
And Sítâ shall be Râva'n's bride.  
Hence, idle thoughts: thy hope is fled;  
What wilt thou, Sítâ, with the dead?  
Rise, child of Janâk, rise and be  
The queen of all my queens and me.  
Incline thine ear, and I will tell,  
Dear lady, how thy husband fell.  
He bridged his way across the sea  
With countless troops to fight with me.  
The setting sun had flushed the west  
When on the shore they took their rest.  
Weary with toil no watch they kept:  
Securely on the sands they slept.  
Prahasta's troops assailed our foes,  
And smote them in their deep repose.  
Scarce could their bravest prove their might  
They perished in the dark of night.  
Axe, spear, and sword, directed well,  
Upon the sleeping myriads fell.  
First in the fight Prahasta's sword  
Reft of his head thy slumbering lord.  
Roused at the din Vibhúshan rose,  
The captive of surrounding foes,  
And Lakshman through the woods that spread
Around him with his Vānars fled,
Hanumān fell: one deadly stroke
The neck of King Sugrīva broke,
And Māinda sank, and Dwivid lay
Gasping in blood his life away.
The Vānars died, or fled dispersed
Like cloudlets when the storm has burst.
Some rose aloft in air, and more
Ran to the sea and filled the shore.
On shore, in woods, on hill and plain
Our conquering giants left the slain.
Thus my victorious host o’erthrew
The Vānars, and thy husband slew:
See, rudely stained with dust, and red
With dropping blood, the severed head.’

Then, turning to a Rākshas slave,
The ruthless king his mandate gave;
And straight Vidyujjihva who bore
The head still wet with dripping gore,
The arrows and the mighty bow,
Bent down before his master low.
‘Vidyujjihva,’ cried Rāvan, ‘place
The head before the lady’s face,
And let her see with weeping eyes
That low in death her husband lies.’

Before the queen the giant laid
The beauteous head his art had made.
And Rāvan cried: ‘Thinè eyes will know
These arrows and the mighty bow.
With fame of this by Rāma strung
The earth and heaven and hell have rung.
Prahasta brought it hither when
His hand had slain thy prince of men.
Now, widowed Queen, thy hopes resign:
Forget thy husband and be mine.’
CANTO XXXII.

SÍTÁ’S LAMENT.

Again her eyes with tears o’erflowed:
She gazed upon the head he showed,
Gazed on the bow so famed of yore,
The glorious bow which Ráma bore.
She gazed upon his cheek and brows,
The eyes of her beloved spouse;
His lips, the luster of his hair,
The priceless gem that glittered there.
The features of her lord she knew,
And, pierced with anguish at the view,
She lifted up her voice and cried:
‘Kaikeyí, art thou satisfied?
Now all thy longings are fulfilled;
The joy of Raghu’s race is killed,
And ruined is the ancient line.
Destroyer, by that fraud of thine.
Ah, what offence, O cruel dame,
What fault in Ráma couldst thou blame,
To drive him clad in hermit dress
With Sítá to the wilderness?’

Great trembling seized her frame, and she
Fell like a stricken plantain tree.
As lie the dead she lay: at length
Slowly regaining sense and strength,
On the dear head she fixed her eye
And cried with very bitter cry:
‘Ah, when thy cold dead cheek I view,

G
My hero, I am murdered too.
Then first a faithful woman's eyes
See sorrow, when her husband dies.
When thou, my lord, wast nigh to save,
Some stealthy hand thy death wound gave.
Thou art not dead: rise, hero, rise;
Long life was thine, as spake the wise
Whose words, I ween, are ever true,
For fate lies open to their view.
Ah lord, and shall thy head recline
On earth's cold breast, forsaking mine,
Counting her chill lap dearer far
Than I and my caresses are?
Ah, is it thus these eyes behold
Thy famous bow adorned with gold,
Whereon of yore I loved to bind
Sweeter garlands that my hands had twined?
And hast thou sought in heaven a place
Amid the founders of thy race,
Where in the home deserved so well
Thy sires and Daśaratha dwell?
Or dost thou shine a brighter star
In skies where blest immortals are,
Forsaking in thy lofty scorn
The race wherein thy sires were born?
Turn to my gaze, O turn thine eye:
Why are thy cold lips silent, why?
When first we met as youth and maid,
When in thy hand my hand was laid,
Thy promise was thy steps should be
Through life in duty's path with me.
Remember, faithful still, thy vow,
And take me with thee even now.
Is that broad bosom where I hung,
That neck to which I fondly clung,
Where flowery garlands breathed their scent,
By hungry dogs and vultures rent?
Shall not funereal honours grace
The parted lord of Rāghu’s race,
Whose bounty liberal fees bestowed,
For whom the fires of worship glowed?
Kausalyā wild with grief will see
One sole survivor of the three
Who in their hermit garments went
To the dark woods in banishment.
Then at her cry shall Lākṣāmaṇ tell
How, slain by night, the Vānars fell;
How to thy-side the giants crept,
And slew the hero as he slept.
Thy fate and mine the queen will know,
And broken-hearted die of woe.
For my unworthy sake, for mine,
Rāma, the glory of his line,
Who bridged his way across the main,
Is basely in a puddle slain;
And I, the graceless wife he wed,
Have brought this ruin on his head.
Me, too, on him, O Rāvān, slay:
The wife beside her husband lay.
By his dear body let me rest,
Cheek close to cheek and breast to breast.
My happy eyes I then will close,
And follow whither Rāma goes.’
‘Thus cried the miserable dame;
When to the king a warden came,
Before the giant monarch bowed
And said that, followed by a crowd
Of counsellors and lords of state,
Prahasta stood before the gate,
And, sent by some engrossing care,
Craved audience of his master there.
The anxious tyrant left his seat
And hastened forth the chief to meet:
Then summoning his nobles all,
Took counsel in his regal hall.

When Lankā's lord had left the queen,
The head and bow no more were seen.
The giant king his nobles eyed,
And, terrible as Yama, cried:
'O faithful lords, the time is come:
Gather our hosts with beat of drum.

Hight to the town our foeman draws:
Be prudent, nor reveal the cause.'

The nobles listened and obeyed:
Swift were the gathered troops arrayed,
And countless rovers of the night
Stood burning for the hour of fight.
CANTO XXXIII.

SARAMÁ.

But Saramá, of gentler mood,
With pitying eyes the mourner viewed;
Stole to her side and softly told
Glad tidings that her heart consoled,
Revealing with sweet voice and smile
The secret of the giant’s guile.
She, one of those who night and day
Watching in turns by Sítá lay,
Though Rákshas born felt pity’s touch,
And loved the hapless lady much.

‘I heard,’ she said, ‘thy bitter cry,
Heard Rávaṇ’s speech and thy reply,
For, hiding in the thicket near,
No word or tone escaped mine ear.
When Rávaṇ hastened forth I bent.
My steps to follow as he went,
And learnt the secret cause that drove
The monarch from the Aśoka grove.
Believe me, Queen, thou needst not weep.
For Ráma slaughtered in his sleep.
Thy lion lord of men defies.
By day attack, by night surprise.
Can even giants slay with ease
Vast hosts who fight with brandished trees,
For whom, with eye that never sleeps,
His constant watch thy Ráma keeps?
Lord of the mighty arm and chest,
Of earthly warriors first and best,
Whose fame through all the regions rings,
Proud scion of a hundred kings;
Who guards his life and loves to lend
His saving succour to a friend:
Whose bow no hand but his can strain,—
Thy lord, thy Rāma is not slain.
Obedient to his master's will,
A great magician, trained in ill,
With deftest art surpassing thought
That marvellous illusion wrought.
Let rising hope thy grief dispel:
Look up and smile, for all is well,
And gentle Lakshmi, Fortune's Queen,
Regards thee with a favouring mien.
Thy Rāma with his Vānar train
Has thrown a bridge athwart the main,
Has led his countless legions o'er,
And ranged them on this southern shore.
These eyes have seen the hero stand
Girt by his hosts, on Lankā's strand,
And breathless spies each moment bring
Fresh tidings to the giant king;
And every peer and lord of state
Is called to counsel and debate.'

She ceased: the sound, long loud and clear,
Of gathering armies smote her ear,
Where call of drum and shell rang out,
The tambour and the battle shout;
And, while the din the echoes woke,
Again to Janak's child she spoke:
'Hear, lady, hear the loud alarms
That call the Rākshas troops to arms.'
From stable and from stall they lead
Canto XXXIII. *The Ramayana.*

The elephant and neighing steed,
Brace harness on with deftest care,
And chariots for the fight prepare.
Swift o'er the trembling ground career
Mailed horsemen armed with axe and spear,
And here and there in road and street
The terrible battalions meet.
I hear the gathering near and far,
The snorting steed, the rattling car.
Bold chieftains, leaders of the brave,
Press densely on, like wave on wave,
And bright the evening sunbeams glance
On helm and shield, on sword and lance.
Hark, lady, to the ringing steel,
Hark to the rolling chariot wheel;
Hark to the mettled courser's neigh
And drums' loud thunder far away.
The Queen of Fortune holds thee dear,
For Lanká's troops are struck with fear,
And Ráma with the lotus eyes,
Like Indra monarch of the skies,
With conquering arm will slay his foe
And free his lady from her woe.
Soon will his breast support thy head,
And tears of joy thine eyes will shed.
Soon by his mighty arm embraced
The long-lost rapture wilt thou taste,
And Ráma, meet for highest bliss,
Will gain his guerdon in thy kiss.
CANTO XXXIV.

SARAMÁ'S TIDINGS.

Thus Saramá her story told:
And Sítá's spirit was consoled,
As when the first fresh rain is shed
The parching earth is comforted.
Then, filled with zeal for Sítá's sake,
Again in gentle tones she spake,
And, skilled in arts that soothe and please,
Addressed the queen in words like these:
Thy husband, lady, will I seek,
Say the fond words thy lips would speak,
And then, unseen of any eye,
Back to thy side will swiftly fly.
My airy flights are speedier far
Than Garuḍ's and the tempest are.'

Then Sítá spake; her former woe
Still left her accents faint and low:
I know thy steps, which naught can stay,
Can urge through heaven and hell their way.
Then if thy love and changeless will
Would serve the helpless captive still,
Go forth and learn each plot and guile
Planned by the lord of Lāṅkā's isle.
With magic art like maddening wine
He cheats these weeping eyes of mine,
Torments me with his suit, nor spares
Reproof or flattery, threats or prayers.
These guards surround me night and day;
My heart is sad, my senses stray;
And helpless in my woe I fear
The tyrant Rāvan even here.

Then Saramá replied: 'I go
To learn the purpose of thy foe,
Soon by thy side again to stand
And tell thee what the king has planned.'
She sped, she heard with eager ears
The tyrant speak his hopes and fears,
Where, gathered at their master's call,
The nobles filled the council hall;
Then swiftly, to her promise true,
Back to the Aśoka grove she flew.
The lady on the grassy ground,
Longing for her return, she found;
Who with a gentle smile, to greet
The envoy, led her to a seat.
Through her worn frame a shiver ran
As Saramá her tale began:
'There stood the royal mother: she
Besought her son to set thee free,
And to her counsel, tears and prayers,
The elder nobles added theirs:
'O be the Maithil queen restored
With honour to her angry lord.
Let Janasthán's unhappy fight
Be witness of the hero's might.
Hanúmán o'er the waters came
And looked upon the guarded dame.
Let Lanká's chiefs who fought and fell
The prowess of the leader tell.'
In vain they sued, in vain she wept,
His purpose still unchanged he kept.
As clings the miser to his gold,
He would not loose thee from his hold.
No, never till in death he lies,
Will Lanká's lord release his prize.
Soon slain by Ráma's arrows all.
The giants with their king will fall,
And Ráma to his home will lead
His black-eyed queen from bondage freed.

An awful sound that moment rose
From Lanká's fast-approaching foes,
Where drum and shell in mingled peal
Made earth in terror rock and reel.
The hosts within the walls arrayed
Stood trembling, in their hearts dismayed;
Thought of the tempest soon to burst,
And Lanká's lord, their ruin, cursed.
CANTO XXXV.

MÁLYAVÁN’S SPEECH.

The fearful notes of drum and shell
Upon the ear of Ráváñ fell.
One moment quailed his haughty look,
One moment in his fear he shook.
But, soon recalling wonted pride,
His counsellors he sternly eyed,
And with a voice that thundered through
The council hall began anew:
‘Lords, I have heard—your tongues have told—
How Raghu’s son is fierce and bold,
To Lanká’s shore has bridged his way,
And hither leads his wild array.
I know your might, in battle tried,
Fighting and conquering by my side.
Why now, when such a foe is near,
Looks eye to eye in silent fear?’

He ceased: his mother’s sire, well known
For wisdom in the council shown,
Mályaván, sage and faithful guide,
Thus to the monarch’s speech replied:
‘Long reigns the king in safe repose,
Unmoved by fear of vanquished foes,
Whose feet by saving knowledge led
In justice path delight to tread:
Who knows to sheath the sword or wield,
To offer peace, to strike or yield:
Prefers, when foes are stronger, peace,
And bids a doubtful conflict cease.
Now, King, the choice before thee lies,
Make peace with Rāma, and be wise.
This day the captive queen restore
Who brings the foe to Lanka’s shore.
The Sire by whom the worlds are swayed
Of yore the Gods and demons made.
With these Injustice sided; those
Fair Justice for her champions chose.
Still Justice dwells with Gods above;
Injustice, fiends and giants love.
Thou, through the worlds that fear thee, long
Hast scorned the right and loved the wrong,
And Justice, with thy foes allied,
Gives might resistless to their side.
Thou, guided by thy wicked will,
Hast found delight in deeds of ill,
And sages in their holy rest
Have trembled, by thy power oppressed.
But they, who check each vain desire,
Are clothed with might which burns like fire.
In them the power and glory live
Which zeal and saintly fervour give.
Their constant task, their sole delight
Is worship and each holy rite,
To chant aloud the Veda hymn,
Nor let the sacred fires grow dim.
Now through the air like thunder ring
The echoes of the chants they sing.
The vapours of their incense rise
And veil with cloudy pall the skies,
And Rākshas might grows weak and faint
Killed by the power of sage and saint.
By Brahmā’s boon thy life was screened.
From God, Gandharva, Yaksha, fiend;
But Vánars, men, and bears, arrayed
Against thee now, thy shores invade.
Red meteors, heralds of despair,
Flash frequent through the lurid air,
Foretelling to my troubled mind
The ruin of the Rákshás kind.
With awful thunderings overhead
Clouds black as night are densely spread,
And oozing from the gloom, pall
Great drops of blood on Lanká fall.
Dogs roam through house and shrine to steal
The sacred oil and curd and meal.
Cats pair with tigers, hounds with swine,
And asses' foals are born of kine.
In these and countless signs I trace
The ruin of the giant race.
'Tis Vishńu's self who comos to storm
Thy city, clothed in Ráma's form;
For, well I ween, no mortal hand
The ocean with a bridge has spanned.
O giant King, the dame release,
And sue to Raghu's son for peace.
CANTO XXXVI.

RĀVAN'S REPLY.

But Rāvan's breast with fury swelled,
And thus he spake by Death impelled,
While, under brows in anger bent,
Fierce glances from his eyes were sent:
The bitter words which thou, misled
By friendly thought, hast fondly said,
Which praise the foe and counsel fear,
Unheeded fall upon mine ear.
How canst thou deem a mighty foe
This Rāma who, in stress of woe,
Seeks, vanished as his sire decreed,
Assistance from the Vānar breed?
Am I so feeble in thine eyes,
Though feared by dwellers of the skies,—
Whose might in many a battle shown
The glorious race of giants own?
Shall I for fear of him restore
The lady whom I hither bore;
Exceeding fair like Beauty's Queen
Without her well-loved lotus seen?
Around the chief let Lakshman stand,
Sugrīva, and each Vānar band,
Soon, Mālyavān, thine eyes will see
This boasted Rāma slain by me.
I in the brunt of war defy

¹ Lakshmi is the Goddess both of beauty and fortune, and is represented with a lotus in her hand.
Canto XXXVI. THE RAMAYAN.

The mightiest warriors of the sky;
And if I stoop to combat men,
Shall I be weak and tremble then?
This mangled trunk the foe may rend,
But Rāvan ne'er can yield or bend,
And be it vice or virtue, I
This nature never will belie.
What marvel if he bridged the sea?
Why should this deed disquiet thee?
This, only this, I surely knew,
Back with his life he shall not go.'

Thus in loud tones the king exclaimed
And mute stood Mālyavān ashamed.
His reverent head he humbly bent,
And slowly to his mansion went.
But Rāvan stayed, and deep in care
Held counsel with his nobles there,
All entrance to secure and close,
And guard the city from their foes.
He bade the chief Prahasta wait,
Commander at the eastern gate.
To fierce Mahodar, strong and brave,
To keep the southern gate, he gave,
Where Mahāpārśva's might should aid
The chieftain with his hosts arrayed.
To guard the west—no chief more fit—
He placed the warrior Indrajit,
His son, the giant's joy and boast,
Surrounded by a Rākshas host;
And mighty Sāraṇ hastened forth
With Śuka to protect the north.1
'I will myself', the monarch cried,
'Be present on the northern side.'

1 The poet appears to have forgotten that Śuka and Sāraṇ were dismissed with ignominy in Canto XXIX., and have not been reinstated.
Those orders for the walls' defence
The tyrant gave, then parted thence,
And, by the hope of victory fired,
To chambers far within, retired.
CANTO XXXVII.

PREPARATIONS.

Lords of the legions of the wood,
The chieftains with Vibhīṣaṇ stood,
And, strangers in the foeman’s land,
Their hopes and fears in council scanned:

‘See, see where Lankā’s towers ascend,
Which Rāvaṇ’s power and might defend,
Which Gods, Gandharvas, fiends would fail
To conquer, if they durst assault.
How shall our legions pass within,
The city of the foe to win,
With massive walls and portals barred
Which Rāvaṇ keeps with surest guard?’
With anxious looks the walls they eyed:
And sage Vibhīṣaṇ thus replied:

‘These lords of mine’ can answer: they
Within the walls have found their way,
The foeman’s plan and order learned,
And hither to my side returned.
Now, Rāma, let my tongue declare
How Rāvaṇ’s hosts are stationed there.
Prahasta heads, in warlike state,
His legions at the eastern gate.
To guard the southern portal stands
Mahodar, girt by Rākṣas bands,
Where mighty Mahāpārśva, sent

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1 The four who fled with him. Their names are Anaśa, Panasa,
   Sampati, and Pramati.

H
By Rāvaṇ’s best, his aid has lent.
Guard of the gate that fronts the west
Is valiant Indrajit, the best
Of warriors, Rāvaṇ’s joy and pride;
And by the youthful chieftain’s side
Are giants, armed for fierce attacks
With sword and mace and battle-axe.
North, where approach is dreaded most,
The king, encompassed with a host
Of giants trained in war, whose hands
Wield maces, swords, and lances, stands.
All these are chiefs whom Rāvaṇ chose
As mightiest to resist his foes;
And each a countless army leads
With elephants and cars and steeds.

Then Rāma, while his spirit burned
For battle, words like these returned:
‘The eastern gate be Nīla’s care,
Opponent of Prahasta there.
The southern gate, with troops arrayed
Let Angad, Bāli’s son, invade.
The gate that fronts the falling sun
Shall be by brave Hanūmān won;
Soon through its portals shall he lead
His myriads of Vānār breed.
The gate that fronts the north shall be
Assailed by Lakshmana and by me.
For I myself have sworn to kill
The tyrant who delights in ill.
Armed with the boon which Brahmā gave,
The Gods of heaven he loves to brave,
And through the trembling worlds he flies.

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1 The numbers here are comparatively moderate: ten thousand elephants, ten thousand chariots, twenty thousand horses, and ten million giants.
Oppressor of the just and wise,
Thou, Jámbaván, and thou, O King
Of Vánars, all your bravest bring,
And with your hosts in dense array
Straight to the centre force your way.
But let no Vánar in the storm
Disguise him in a human form.
Ye chiefs who change your shapes at will,
Retain your Vánar semblance still.
Thus, when we battle with the foe,
Both men and Vánars will ye know.
In human form will seven appear;
Myself, my brother Lakshman here;
Vibhíshana, and the four he led
From Lanká's city when he fled.'

Thus Raghu's son the chiefs addressed:
Then, gazing on Suvela's crest,
Transported by the lovely sight,
He longed to climb the mountain height.
CANTO XXXVIII.

THE ASCENT OF SUVELA.

'Come let us scale,' the hero cried,
'This hill with various metals dyed.
This night upon the breezy crest
Sugrīva, Lakṣman, I, will rest,
With sage Vibhīṣaṇa, faithful friend,
His counsel and his lore to lend.
From those tall peaks each eager eye
The foeman's city shall espy,
Who from the wood my darling stole
And brought long anguish on my soul.'

Thus spake the lord of men, and bent
His footsteps to the steep ascent;
And Lakṣman, true in weal and woe,
Next followed with his shafts and bow.
Vibhīṣaṇa followed, next in place,
The sovereign of the Vānara race,
And hundreds of the forest kind
Thronged with impetuous feet behind.
The chiefs in woods and mountains bred
Fast followed to Suvela's head,
And gazed on Lankā bright and fair
As some gay city in the air.
On glittering gates, on ramparts raised
By giant hands, the chieftains gazed.
They saw the mighty hosts that, skilled
In arts of war, the city filled,
And ramparts with new ramparts lined,
The swarthy hosts that stood behind,
With spirits burning for the fight.
They saw the giants from the height,
And from a hundred throats rang out
Defiance, and the battle shout.
Then sank the sun with dying flame,
And soft the shades of twilight came,
And the full moon's delicious light
Was shed upon the tranquil night.
CANTO XXXIX.

LANKÁ.

They slept secure: the sun arose
And called the chieftains from repose,
Before the wondering Vánars, gay
With grove and garden, Lanká lay,
Where golden buds the Champak showed,
And bright with bloom Ásoka glowed,
And palm and Sál and many a tree
With leaf and flower were fair to see.
They looked on wood and lawn and glade,
On emerald grass and dusky shade,
Where creepers filled the air with scent,
And luscious fruit the branches bent,
Where bees inebriate loved to throng,
And each sweet bird was loud in song.
The wondering Vánars passed the bound
That circled that enchanting ground,
And as they came a sweet breeze through
The odorous alleys softly blew.
Some Vánars, at their king’s behest,
Onward to bannered Lanká pressed,
While, startled by the stranger tread,
The birds and deer before them fled.
Earth trembled at each step they took,
And Lanká at their shouting shook.
Bright rose before their wondering eyes
Trikuṭa’s peak that kissed the skies,
And, clothed with flowers of every hue,
Canto XXXIX. THE RAMAYAN.

Afar its golden radiance threw.
Most fair to see, the mountain's head
A hundred leagues in length was spread.
There Rávan's town, securely placed,
The summit of Trikúta graced.
O'er leagues of land she stretched in pride,
A hundred long and twenty wide.
They saw a lofty wall enfold
The city, built of blocks of gold.
They saw the beams of morning fall
On dome and fane within the wall,
Bright with the shine that mansion gives
Where Vishnú in his glory lives.
White-crested like the Lord of Snows
Before them Ráván's palace rose.
High on a thousand pillars raised
With gold and precious stone it blazed,
Guarded by giant warders, crown
And ornament of Lanká's town.
CANTO XL:

RÁVAṆ ATTACKED.

Still stood the son of Raghu where
Suvela's peak rose high in air,
And with Sugrîva turned his eye
To scan each quarter of the sky.
There on Trikúṭa, nobly planned
And built by Viśvakarmâ's hand,
He saw the lovely Lankâ, dressed
In all her varied beauty, rest.
High on a tower above the gate
The tyrant stood in kingly state.
The royal canopy displayed
Above him lent its grateful shade,
And servants, from the giant band,
His cheek with jewelled chowries fanned.
Red sandal o'er his breast was spread,
His ornaments and robe were red:
Thus shows a cloud of darksome hue
With golden sunbeams flashing through.
While Ráma and the chiefs intent
Upon the king their glances bent,
Up sprang Sugrîva from the ground
And reached the turret at a bound.
Unterrified the Vánar stood,
And wroth, with wondrous hardihood,
The king in bitter words addressed,
And thus his scorn and hate expressed:
"King of the giant race, in me
The friend and slave of Râma see,
Lord of the world, he gives me power
To smite thee in thy fenced tower.
While through the air his challenge rang,
At Râvan’s face the Vânar sprang,
Snatched from his head the kingly crown
And dashed it in his fury down.
Straight at his foe the giant flew,
His mighty arms about him threw,
With strength resistless swung him round
And dashed him panting to the ground.
Unharmed amid the storm of blows
Swift to his feet Sugrîva rose.
Again in furious fight they met:
With streams of blood their limbs were wet,
Each grasping his opponent’s waist.
Thus with their branches interlaced,
Which, crimson with the flowers of spring,
From side to side the breezes swing,
In furious wrestle you may see
The Kinsuk and the Seemul tree.
They fought with fists and hands, alike
Prepared to parry and to strike.
Long time the doubtful combat, waged
With matchless strength and fury, raged.
Each fiercely struck, each guarded well,
Till, closing, from the tower they fell,
And, grasping each the other’s throat,
Lay for an instant in the moat.
They—rose, and each in fiercer mood
The sanguinary strife renewed.

1 The Kinsuk, also called Palâsa, is the Butea Frondosa, a tree that bears beautiful red crescent-shaped blossoms and is deservedly a favourite with poets. The Seemul or Salmali in the silk-cotton tree which also bears red blossoms.
Well matched in size and strength and skill
They fought the dubious battle still.
While sweat and blood their limbs bedewed,
They met, retreated, and pursued;
Each stratagem and art they tried,
Stood front to front and swerved aside.
His hand a while the giant stayed
And called his magic to his aid.
But brave Sugríva, swift to know
The guileful purpose of the foe,
Gained with light leap the upper air,
And breath and strength and spirit there;
Then, joyous as for victory won,
Returned to Raghu's royal son.
CANTO XLII.

RÁMA'S ENVOY.

When Ráma saw each bloody trace
On King Sugriva's limbs and face,
He cried, while, sorrowing at the view,
His arms about his friend he threw:
'Too venturous chieftain, kings like us
Bring not their lives in peril thus;
Nor, save when counsel shows the need,
Attempt so bold, so rash a deed.
Remember, I, Vibhishan, all
Have sorrowed fearing for thy fall.
O do not—for us all I speak—
These desperate adventures seek.'
'I could not,' cried Sugriva, 'brook
Upon the giant king to look,
Nor challenge to the deadly strife
The fiend who robbed thee of thy wife.'
'Now Lakshman, marshal,' Ráma cried,
'Our legions where the woods are wide,
And stand we ready to oppose
The fury of our giant foes.
This day our armies shall ascend
The walls which Rávan's powers defend,
And floods of Rákshas blood shall stain
The streets encumbered with the slain.'

Down from the peak he came, and viewed
The Vánars' ordered multitude.
Each captain there for battle burned,
Each fiery eye to Lánka turned.
On, where the royal brothers led,
To Lánka's walls the legions sped.
The northern gate, where giant foes
Swarmed round their monarch, Ráma chose
Where he in person might direct
The battle, and his troops protect.
What arm but his the post might keep
Where, strong as he who sways the deep,¹
Mid thousands armed with bow and mace,
Stood Rávana mightiest of his race?
The eastern gate was Níla's post,
Where marshalled stood his Vánar host,
And Mainda with his troops arrayed,
And Dwivid stood to lend him aid.
The southern gate was Angad's care,
Who ranged his bold battalions there.
Hanúman by the port that faced
The setting sun his legions placed,
And King Sugríva held the wood
East of the gate where Rávana stood.
On every side the myriads met,
And Lánka's walls so close beset
That scarce the roving gale could win
A passage to the hosts within.
Loud as the angry ocean's roar
When wild waves lash the rocky shore,
Ten thousand thousand throats upsent
A shout that tore the firmament,
And Lánka with each grove and brook
And tower and wall and rampart shook.
The giants heard, and were appalled:
Then Raghu's son to Angad called,

¹ Varúṇa.
And, led by kingly duty, gave
This order merciful as brave:
'Go, Angad, Rāvan's presence seek,
And thus my words of warning speak:
'How art thou changed and fallen now,
O Monarch of the giants, thou
Whose impious fury would not spare
Saint, nymph, or spirit of the air;
Whose foot in haughty triumph trod
On Yakṣa, king, and Serpent God:
How art thou fallen from thy pride
Which Brahmā's favour fortified!
With myriads at thy Lāṅka's gate
I stand my righteous ire to sate,
And punish thee with sword and flame,
The tyrant fiend who stole my dame.
Now show the might, employ the guile,
O Monarch of the giants' isle,
Which stole a helpless dame away:
Call up thy power and strength to-day.
Once more I warn thee, Rākshas King,
This hour the Maithil lady bring,
And, yielding while there yet is time,
Seek, suppliant, pardon for the crime,
Or I will leave beneath the sun
No living Rākshas, no, not one.
In vain from battle wilt thou fly,
Or borne on pinions seek the sky;
The hand of Rāma shall not spare;
His fiery shaft shall smite thee there.'

He ceased: and Angad bowed his head;
Thence like embodied flame he sped,

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1 The duty of a king to save the lives of his people and avoid bloodshed until milder methods have been tried in vain.
And lighted from his airy road
Within the Râkshas king's abode.
There sate, the centre of a ring
Of counsellors, the giant king.
Swift through the circle Angad pressed,
And spoke with fury in his breast:
'Sent by the lord of Kosal's land,
His envoy here, O King, I stand,
Angad the son of Bâli: fame
Has haply taught thine ears my name.
Thus in the words of Râma I
Am come to warn thee or defy:
Come forth, and fighting in the van
Display the spirit of a man.
This arm shall slay thee, tyrant; all
Thy nobles, kith and kin shall fall:
And earth and heaven, from terror freed,
Shall joy to see the oppressor bleed.
Vibhîshañ, when his foe is slain,
Anointed king in peace shall reign.
Once more I counsel thee: repent,
Avoid the mortal punishment.
With honour due the dame restore,
And pardon for thy sin implore.'

Loud rose the king's infuriate cry:
'Seize, seize the Vánar: let him die.'
Four of his band their lord obeyed,
And eager hands on Angad laid.
He purposing his strength to show
Gave no resistance to the foe,
But swiftly round his captors cast
His mighty arms and held them fast.
Fierce shout and cry around him râng:
Light to the palace roof he sprang,
There his detaining arms unwound,
And hurled the giants to the ground.
Then, smiting with a fearful stroke,
A turret from the roof he broke,—
As when the fiery levin sent
By Indra from the clouds has rent
The proud peak of the Lord of Snow,—
And flung the stony mass below.
Again with loud terrific cry
He sprang exulting to the sky,
And, joyous for his errand done,
Stood by the side of Raghu's son.
CANTO XLII.

THE SALLY.

Still was the cry, 'The Vānar foes
Around the leaguered city close.'
King Rāvaṇ from the terrace gazed
And saw, with eyes where fury blazed,
The Vānar host in serried ranks
Press to the moat and line the banks;
And, first in splendour and in place,
The lion lord of Rāghu's race.
And Rāma looked on Lankā where
Gay flags were streaming to the air,
And, while keen sorrow pierced him through,
His loving thoughts to Sītā flew:
'There, there in deep affliction lies
My darling with the fawn-like eyes.
There on the cold'bare ground she keeps
Sad vigil and for Rāma weeps.'
Mad with the thought 'Charge, charge,' he cried,
'Let earth with Rākshas blood be dyed.'
Responsive to his call rang out
A loud, a universal shout,
As myriads filled the moat with stone,
Trees, rocks, and mountains overthrown,
And charging at their leader's call
Pressed forward furious to the wall.
Some in their headlong ardour scaled
The rampart's height, the guard assailed,
And many a ponderous fragment rent.
From portal, tower, and battlement,
Huge gates adorned with burnished gold;
Were loosed and lifted from their hold;
And pest and pillar, with a sound
Like thunder, fell upon the ground.
At every portal, east and west
And north and south, the chieftains pressed:
Each in his post appointed led
His myriads in the forest bred.

'Charge, let the gates be opened wide:
'Charge, charge, my giants,' Rāvan cried.
They heard his voice, and loud and long
Rang the wild clamour of the throng,
And shell and drum their notes upsent,
And every martial instrument.
Forth, at the bidding of their lord,
From every gate the giants poured,
As, when the waters rise and swell,
Huge waves preceding waves impel.
Again from every Vānar throat
A scream of fierce defiance smote
The welkin: earth and sea and sky
Reëchoed with the awful cry,
The roar of elephants, the neigh
Of horses eager for the fray,
The frequent clash of warriors' steel,
The rattling of the chariot wheel.
Fierce was the deadly fight: opposed
In terrible array they closed,
As when the Gods of heaven enraged
With rebel fiends wild battle waged.
Axe, spear, and mace were wielded well:
At every blow a Vānar fell.
But shivered rock and brandished tree.
Brought many a giant on his knee,
To perish in his turn beneath
The deadly wounds of nails and teeth.
CANTO XLIII.

THE SINGLE COMBATS.

Brave chiefs of each opposing side
Their strength in single combat tried.
Fierce Indrajit the fight began
With Angad in the battle's van.
Sampáti, strongest of his race,
Stood with Prajanglesha face to face.
Hanumán, Jambumálí met
In mortal opposition set.
Vibhíshan, brother of the lord
Of Lanká, raised his threatening sword,
And singled out, with eyes aglow
With wrath, Satrughna for his foe.
The mighty Gaja Tapan sought,
And Nila with Nikumbha fought.
Sugriva, Vánar king, defied
Fierce Praghas long in battle tried,
And Lakshmana fearless in the fight
Encountered Virúpáksha's might.
To meet the royal Ráma came
Wild Agniketu fierce as flame;
Mitragnha, he who loved to strike
His foeman and his friend alike;
With Ráśniketu, known and feared
Where'er his ponderous flag was reared;
And Yajnakopa whose delight
Was ruin of the sacred rite.
These met and fought, with thousands more,
And trampled earth was red with gore.
Swift as the bolt which Indra sends
When fire from heaven the mountain rends,
Smote Indrajit with furious blows
On Angad queller of his foes.
But Angad from his foeman tore
The murderous mace the warrior bore,
And low in dust his coursers rolled,
His driver, and his car of gold.
Struck by the shafts Prajanga sped,
The Vánar chief Sampáti bled;
But, heedless of his gashes, he
Crushed down the giant with a tree.
Then car-borne Jambumálí smote
Hanúmán on the chest and throat;
But at the car the Vánar rushed,
And chariot, steeds, and rider crushed.
Sugríva whirled a huge tree round,
And struck fierce Praghas to the ground.
One arrow shot from Lakshman’s bow
Laid mighty Virúpáskha low.
His giant foes round Ráma pressed
And shot their shafts at head and breast;
But, when the iron shower was spent,
Four arrows from his bow he sent,
And every missile, deftly sped;
Cleft from the trunk a giant head.¹

¹ I have omitted several of these single combats, as there is little variety in the details and each duel results in the victory of the Vánar or his ally.
CANTO XLIV.

THE NIGHT.

The Lord of Light had sunk and set:
Night came; the foeman struggled yet
And fiercer for the gloom of night
Grew the wild fury of the fight.
Scarce could each warrior's eager eye
The foeman from the friend descry.
'Rákshas or Vánar? say;' cried each,
And foe knew foeman by his speech.
'Why wilt thou fly? O warrior, stay:
'Turn on the foe, and rend and slay.'
Such were the cries, such words of fear
Smote through the gloom each listening ear.
Each swarthy rover of the night
Whose golden armour flashed with light,
Showed like a towering hill embraced
By burning woods about his waist.
The giants at the Vánars flew,
And ravening ate the foes they slew:
With mortal bite like serpent's fang,
The Vánars at the giants sprang,
And car and steeds and they who bore
The pennahs fell bedewed with gore.
No serried band, no firm array
The fury of their charge could stay.
Down went the horse and rider, down
Went giant lords of high renown.
Though midnight's shade was dense and dark,
With skill that swerved not from the mark
Their bows the sons of Raghu drew,
And each keen shaft a chieftain slew.
Uprose the blinding dust from meads
Ploughed by the cars and trampling steeds,
And where the warriors fell the flood
Was dark and terrible with blood.
Six giants' singled Ráma out,
And charged him with a furious shout
Loud as the roaring of the sea
When every wind is raging free.
Six times he shot: six heads were cleft;
Six giants dead on earth were left.
Nor ceased he yet: his bow he strained,
And from the sounding weapon rained
A storm of shafts whose fiery glare
Filled all the region of the air;
And chieftains dropped before his aim
Like moths that perish in the flame.
Earth glistened where the arrows fell,
As shines in autumn nights a dell
Which fireflies, flashing through the gloom,
With momentary light illumine.

But Indrajit, when Bali's son
The victory o'er the foe had won,
Saw with a fury-kindled eye
His mangled steeds and driver die;
Then, lost in air, he fled the fight,
And vanished from the victor's sight.
The Gods and saints glad voices raised,
And Angad for his virtue praised;

1 Yajnasatri, Mahápuráva, Mahodar; Vajradaushtra, Suka, and Sáran.
2 Angad.
And Raghu's sons bestowed the mood
Of honour due to valorous deed.
    Compelled his shattered car to quit,
Rage filled the soul of Indrajit,
Who brooked not, strong by Brahma's grace,
Defeat from one of Vānār race.
In magic mist concealed from view
His bow the treacherous warrior drew,
And Raghu's sons were first to feel
The tempest of his winged steel.
Then when his arrows failed to kill
The princes who defied him still,
He bound them with the serpent noose,¹
The magic bond which none might loose.

¹ A mysterious weapon consisting of serpents transformed to arrows which deprived the wounded object of all sense and power of motion.
CANTO XLV.

INDERJIT'S VICTORY.

Brave Rāma, burning still to know
The station of his artful foe,
Gave to ten chieftains, mid the best
Of all the host, his high behest.
Swift rose in air the Vānar band:
Each region of the sky they scanned:
But Rāvan’s son by magic skill
Checked them with arrows swifter still.
When streams of blood from chest and side
The dauntless Vānars’ limbs had dyed,
Thē giant in his misty shroud
Showed like the sun obscured by cloud.
Like serpents hissing through the air,
His arrows smote the princely pair;
And from their limbs at every rent
A stream of rushing blood was sent.
Like Kinśuk trees they stood, that show
In spring their blossoms’ crimson glow.
Then Indrajit with fury eyed
Ikshvāku’s royal sons, and cried:
‘Not mighty Indra can assail
Or see me when I choose to veil
My form in battle: and can ye,
Children of earth, contend with me?
The arrowy noose this hand has shot
Has bound you with a hopeless knot;
And, slaughtered by my shafts and bow,
To Yama's hall this hour ye go.'

He spoke, and shouted. Then anew
The arrows from his bowstring flew,
And pierced, well aimed with perfect art,
Each limb and joint and vital part.
    Transfixed with shafts in every limb,
Their strength relaxed, their eyes grew dim.
As two tall standards side by side,
With each sustaining rope untied,
Fall levelled by the howling blast,
So earth's majestic lords at last
Beneath the arrowy tempest reeled,
And prostrate pressed the battle field.
CANTO XLVI.

INDRAJIT'S TRIUMPH.

The Vānar chiefs whose piercing eyes
Scanned eagerly the earth and skies,
Saw the brave brothers wounded sore,
Transfixed with darts and stained with gore.
The monarch of the Vānar race,
With wise Vibhīshan, reached the place;
Angad and Nīlā came behind,
And others of the forest kind,
• And standing with Hanumān there

Lamented for the fallen pair.
Their melancholy eyes they raised;
In fruitless search a while they gazed.
But magic arts Vibhīshan knew;
Not hidden from his keener view,
Though veiled by magic from the rest,
The son of Rāvan stood confessed.
Fierce Indrajit with savage pride
The fallen sons of Raghu eyed;
And every giant heart was proud
As thus the warrior cried aloud:
‘Slain by mine arrows Rāma lies,
And closed in death are Lakshman’s eyes.
Dead are the mighty princes who
Dūshan and Khara smote and slew.
The Gods and fiends may toil in vain
To free them from the binding chain.
The haughty chief, my father’s dread,
Who drove him sleepless from his bed,
While Lanká, troubled like a brook.
In rain time, heard his name and shook:
He whose fierce hate our lives pursued,
Lies helpless by my shafts subdued.
Now fruitless is each wondrous deed
Wrought by the race the forests breed,
And fruitless every toil at last
Like cloudlets when the rains are past.
Then rose the shout of giants loud
As thunder from a bursting cloud,
When, deeming Ráma dead, they raised
Their voices and the conqueror praised.

Still motionless, as lie the slain,
The brothers pressed the bloody plain.
No sigh they drew, no breath they heaved,
And lay as though of life bereaved.
Proud of the deed his art had done,
To Lanká's town went Rávaṇ's son,
Where, as he passed, all fear was stilled,
And every heart with triumph filled.
Sugríva trembled as he viewed
Each fallen prince with blood bedewed,
And in his eyes which overflowed
With tears the flame of anger glowed.
‘Calm,’ cried Vibhíśan, ‘calm thy fears,
And stay the torrent of thy tears.
Still must the chance of battle change,
And victory still delight to range.
Our cause again will she befriend
And bring us triumph in the end.
This is not death: each prince will break
The spell that holds him, and awake;
Nor long shall numbing magic bind
The mighty arm, the lofty mind.'

He ceased: his finger bathed in dew
Across Sugrīva's eyes he drew,
From dulling mist his vision freed,
And spoke these words to suit the need:
'No time is this for fear: away
With fainting heart and weak delay.
Now, e'en the tear which sorrow wrings
From loving eyes destruction brings.
Up, on to battle at the head.
Of those brave troops which Rāma led.
Or guardian by his side remain
Till sense and strength the prince regain.
Soon shall the trance-bound pair revive,
And from our hearts all sorrow drive.
Though prostrate on the earth he lie,
Deem not that Rāma's death is nigh;
Deem not that Lakshmi will forget
Or leave her darling champion yet.
Rest here and be thy heart consoled;
Ponder my words, be firm and bold.
I, foremost in the battle field,
Will rally all who faint or yield.
Their staring eyes betray their fear;
They whisper each in other's ear.
They, when they hear my cheering cry
And see the friend of Rāma nigh,
Will cast their gloom and fears away
Like faded wreaths of yesterday.'

Thus calmed he King Sugrīva's dread;
Then gave new heart to those who fled.
Fierce Indrajit, his soul on fire
With pride of conquest, sought his sire,
Raised reverent hands, and told him all,
The battle and the princes' fall.
Rejoicing at his foes' defeat
Usprang the monarch from his seat,
Girt by his giant courtiers: round
His warrior son his arms he wound,
Close kisses on his head applied,
And heard again how Ráma died.
CANTO XLVII.

SITÁ.

Still on the ground where Ráma slept
Their faithful watch the Vánars kept.
There Angad stood o'erwhelmed with grief,
And many a lord and warrior chief;
And, ranged in densest mass around,
Their tree-armed legions held the ground.
Far ranged each Vánar's eager eye,
Now swept the land, now sought the sky,
All fearing, if a leaf was stirred,
A Rákshas in the sound they heard.
The Tód of Lanká in his hall,
Rejoicing at his foeman's fall,
Commanded and the warders came
Who ever watched the Maithil dame.
'Go,' cried the Rákshas king, 'relate
To Janak's child her husband's fate.
Low on the earth her Ráma lies,
And dark in death are Lakshman's eyes.
Bring forth my car and let her ride
To view the chieftains side by side.
The lord to whom her fancy turned,
For whose dear sake my love she spurned,
Lies smitten, as he fiercely led
The battle, with his brother dead.
Lead forth the royal lady: go,
Her husband's lifeless body show.
Then from all doubt and terror free
Her softening heart will turn to me.
They heard his speech: the car was brought;
That shady grove the warders sought
Where, mourning Rāma night and day,
The melancholy lady lay.
They placed her in the car and through
The yielding air they swiftly flew.
The lady looked upon the plain,
Looked on the heaps of Vānar slain,
Saw where, triumphant in the fight,
Thronged the fierce rovers of the night,
And Vānar chieftains, mournful-eyed,
Watched by the fallen brothers' side.
There stretched upon his gory bed
Each brother lay as lie the dead,
With shattered mail and splintered bow,
Pierced by the arrows of the foe.
When on the pair her eyes she bent,
Burst from her lips a wild lament.
Her eyes o'erflowed, she groaned and sighed,
And thus in trembling accents cried:
CANTO XLVIII.

SÍTÁ'S LAMENT.

'False are they all, proved false to-day,
The prophets of my fortune, they
Who in the tranquil time of old
A blessed life for me foretold,
Predicting I should never know
A childless dame's, a widow's woe.
False are they all, their words are vain;
For thou, my lord and life, art slain
False was the priest and vain his lore
Who blessed me in those days of yore
By Káma's side in bliss to reign;
For thou, my lord and life, art slain.
They hailed me happy from my birth,
Proud empress of the lord of earth.
They blessed me—but the thought is pain—
For thou, my lord and life, art slain.
Ah, fruitless hope! each glorious sign
That stamps the future queen is mine,
With no ill-omened mark to show
A widow's crushing hour of woe.
They say my hair is black and fine,
They praise my brows' continuous line;
My even teeth divided well,
My bosom for its graceful swell.
They praise my feet and fingers oft;
They say my skin is smooth and soft,
And call me happy to possess
The twelve fair marks that bring success,
But ah, what profit shall I gain?
Thou, O my lord and life, art slain.
The flattering seer in former days
My gentle girlish smile would praise,
And swear that holy water shed
By Brāhma's hands upon my head
Should make me queen, a monarch's bride:
How is the promise verified?
Matchless in might the brothers slew
In Janasthán the giant crew,
And forced the indomitable sea
To let them pass to rescue me.
Their was the fiery weapon hurled
By him who rules the watery world;  
Their the dire shaft by Indra sped;
Their was the mystic Brāhma's Head.  
In vain they fought, the bold and brave;
A coward's hand their death-wounds gave.
By secret shafts and magic spell
The brothers, peers of Indra, fell.
That foe, if seen by Ráma's eye
One moment, had not lived to fly.
Though swift as thought, his utmost speed
Had failed him in the hour of need.
No might, no fear, no prayer may stay
Fate's dark inevitable day.
Nor could their matchless valor shield
These heroes on the battle field.
I sorrow for the noble dead,
I mourn my hopes for ever fled;

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1 On each foot, and at the root of each finger.
2 Varuṇ.
3 The name of one of the mystical weapons the command over which was given by Viśvāmitra to Ráma, as related in Book 1.
But chief my weeping eyes o'erflow  
For Queen Kausalyā's hopeless woe.
The widowed queen is counting now  
Each hour prescribed by Rāma's vow,  
And lives because she longs to see  
Once more her princely sons and me.'

Then Trijātā, of gentler mould
Though Rākshas born, her grief consoled:
'Dear Queen, thy causeless woe dispel:
Thy husband lives, and all is well.
Look round: in every Vānar face
The light of joyful hope I trace.
Not thus, believe me, shine the eyes
Of warriors when their leader dies.
An army, when the chief is dead,
Flies from the field dispirited.
Here, undisturbed in firm array,
The Vānars by the brothers stay.
Love prompts my speech: no longer grieve;
Ponder my counsel, and believe.
These lips of mine from earliest youth
Have spoken, and shall speak, the truth.
Deep in my heart thy gentle grace
And patient virtues hold their place.
Turn, lady, turn once more thine eye:
Though pierced with shafts the heroes lie,
On brows and cheeks with blood-drops wet
The light of beauty lingers yet.
Such beauty ne'er is found in death,
'But vanishes with parting breath.
O, trust the hope these tokens give;
The heroes are not dead, but live.'

Then Sītā joined her hands, and sighed,

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* One of Sītā's guard, and her comforter on a former occasion also.
O, may thy words be verified!
The car was turned, which fleet as thought
The mourning queen to Lanká brought.
They led her to the garden, where
Again she yielded to despair,
Lamenting for the chiefs who bled
On earth's cold bosom with the dead.
Ranged round the spot where Ráma fell
Each Vánár chief stood sentinel.
At length the mighty hero broke
The trance that held him, and awoke.
He saw his senseless brother, dyed
With blood from head to foot, and cried:
‘What have I now to do with life
Or rescue of my imprisoned wife,
When thus before my weeping eyes,
Slain in the fight, my brother lies?
A queen like Sítá I may find
Among the best of womankind,
But never such a brother, tried
In war, my guardian, friend, and guide.
If he be dead, the brave and true,
I will not live but perish too.
How, reft of Lakshman, shall I meet
My mother, and Káikeyí greet?
My brother’s eager question brook,
And fond Sumitrá’s longing look?
What shall I say, o’erwhelmed with shame,
To cheer the miserable dame?
How, when she hears her son is dead,
Will her sad heart be comforted?
Ah me, for longer life unfit
This mortal body will I quit;
For Lakshman, slaughtered for my sake.”
From sleep of death will never wake.
Ah, when I sank oppressed with care,
Thy gentle voice could soothe despair.
And art thou, O my brother, killed?
Is that dear voice for ever stilled?
Cold are those lips, my brother, whence
Came never word to breed offence?
Ah, stretched upon the gory plain
My brother lies untimely slain;
Numbèd is the mighty arm that slew
The leaders of the giant crew.
Transfixed with shafts, with blood-streams red,
Thou liest on thy lowly bed:
So sinks to rest, his journey done,
Mid arrowy rays the crimson sun.
Thou, when from home and sire I fled,
The wood's wild ways with me wouldst tread:
Now close to thine my steps shall be,
For I in death will follow thee.
Vibhíśaṇ now will curse my name,
And Ráma as a braggart blame,
Who promised—but his word is vain—
That he in Lanká's isle should reign.
Return, Sugríva: reft of me
Lead back thy Vánars o'er the sea,
Nor hope to battle face to face
With him who rules the giant race.
Well have ye done and nobly fought,
And death in desperate combat sought.
All that heroic might can do,
Brave Vánars, has been done by you.
My faithful friends I now dismiss:
Return: my last farewell is this.
   Bedewed with tears was every cheek
As thus the Vānarś heard him speak.
Vibhīśaṇṭ on the field had stayed
The Vānar hosts who fled dismayed.
Now lifting up his mace on high
With martial step the chief drew nigh.
The hosts who watched by Rāma’s side
Beheld his shape and giant stride.
’Tis he, ’tis Rāvaṇ’s son, they thought:
And all in flight their safety sought.
CANTO L.

THE BROKEN SPELL.

Sugríva viewed the flying crowd,
And thus to Angad cried aloud:
‘Why run the trembling hosts, as flee
Storm-scattered barks across the sea?’
‘Dost thou not mark,’ the chief replied,
‘Transfixed with shafts, with blood-streams dyed,
With arrowy toils about them wound,
The sons of Raghu on the ground?’

That moment brought Vibhíšaṇ near:
Sugríva knew the cause of fear,
And ordered Jámbaván, who led
The bears, to check the hosts that fled.
The king of bears his hest obeyed:
The Vánars’ headlong flight was stayed:
A little while Vibhíšaṇ eyed
The brothers fallen side by side.
His giant fingers wet with dew
Across the heroes’ eyes he drew,
Still on the pair his sad look bent,
And spoke these words in wild lament:
‘Ah for the mighty chiefs brought low
By coward hand and stealthy blow!
Brave pair who loved the open fight,
Slain by that rover of the night.
Dishonest is the victory won
By Indrajit my brother’s son.
I on their might for aid relied,
And in my cause they fought and died.
Lost is the hope that soothed each pain:
I live, but live no more to reign,
While Lanka's lord, untouched by ill,
Exults in safe defiance still.'

'Not thus,' Sugrīva said, 'repine,
For Lanka's isle shall still be thine.
Nor let the tyrant and his son
Exult before the fight be done.
These royal chiefs, though now dismayed,
Freed from the spell by Garuḍa's aid,
Triumphant yet the foe shall meet
And lay the robber at their feet.'

His hope the Vānar monarch told,
And thus Vibhīṣaṇ's grief consoled.
Then to Susheṇ who at his side
Expectant stood, Sugrīva cried:

'When these regain their strength and sense,
Fly, bear them to Kishkindhā hence.
Here with my legions will I stay,
The tyrant and his kinsmen slay,
And, rescued from the giant king,
The Maithil lady will I bring,
Like Glory lost of old, restored
By Śakra, heaven's almighty lord.'

Susheṇ made answer: 'Hear me yet:
When Gods and fiends in battle met,
So fiercely fought the demon crew,
So wild a storm of arrows flew,
That heavenly warriors, faint with pain,
Sank smitten by the ceaseless rain.
Vrihaspati, with herb and spell,
Cured the sore wounds of those who fell.

1 The preceptor of the Gods.
And, skilled in arts that heal and save,
New life and sense and vigour gave.
Far, on the Milky Ocean’s shore,
Still grow those herbs in boundless store;
Let swiftest Vánars thither speed
And bring them for our utmost need.
Those herbs that on the mountain spring
Let Panas and Sampáti bring,
For well the wondrous leaves they know
That heal each wound and life bestow.
Beside that sea which, churned of yore,
The amrit on its surface bore,
Where the white billows lash the land,
Chandra’s fair height and Droṇa stand.
Planted by Gods each glittering steep
Looks down upon the milky deep.
Let fleet Hanúmán bring us thence
Those herbs of wondrous influence.

Meanwhile the rushing wind grew loud,
Red lightnings flashed from banks of cloud.
The mountains shook, the wild waves rose,
And smitten with resistless blows
Unrooted fell each stately tree
That fringed the margin of the sea.
All life within the waters feared:
Then, as the Vánars gazed, appeared
King Garuḍ’s self, a wondrous sight,
Disclosed in flames of fiery light.
From his fierce eye in sudden dread
All serpents in a moment fled.
And those transformed to shafts that bound
The princes vanished in the ground.
On Raghu’s sons his eyes he bent,
And hailed the lords armipotent.
Then o'er them stooped the feathered king,
And touched their faces with his wing.
His healing touch their pangs allayed,
And closed each rent the shafts had made.
Again their eyes were bright and bold,
Again the smooth skin shone like gold.
Again within their shell enshrined
Came memory and each power of mind;
And, from those numbing bonds released,
Their spirit, zeal, and strength increased.
Firm on their feet they stood, and then
Thus Ráma spake, the lord of men:

'By thy dear grace in sorest need
From deadly bonds we both are freed.
To these glad eyes as welcome now
As Aja, or my sire art thou.
Who art thou, mighty being? say.
Thus glorious in thy bright array.'

He ceased: the king of birds replied.
While flashed his eye with joy and pride:
'In me, O Rághu's son, behold
One who has loved thee from of old:
Garuḍ, the lord of all that fly,
Thy guardian and thy friend am I.
Not all the Gods in heaven could loose
These numbing bonds, this serpent noose,
Wherewith fierce Rávaṇ's son, renowned
For magic arts, your limbs had bound.
Those arrows fixed in every limb
Were mighty snakes, transformed by him.
Blood-thirsty race, they live beneath
The earth, and slay with venomed teeth.
On, smite the lord of Lákṣaṇa's isle,

1 Ráma's grandfather.
But guard you from the giants' guile
Who each dishonest art employ
And by deceit brave foes destroy.
So shall the tyrant Rāvan bleed,
And Sītā from his power be freed.'
Thus Garuḍ spake: then, swift as thought,
The region of the sky he sought,
Where in the distance like a blaze
Of fire he vanished from the gaze.

Then the glad Vānars' joy rang out
In many a wild tumultuous shout,
And the loud roar of drum and shell
Startled each distant sentinel.
CANTO LI.  

DHÚMRÁKSHA'S SALLY.

King Rávaṇ, where he sat within,
Heard from his hall the deafening din,
And with a spirit ill at ease *
Addressed his lords in words like these:
‘That warlike shout, those joyous cries,
Loud as the thunder of the skies,
Upsent from every Vánar throat,
Some new-born confidence denote.
Hark, how the sea and trembling shore
Re-echo with the Vánars’ roar.
Though arrowy chains, securely twined,
Both Ráma and his brother bind,
Still must the fierce triumphant shout
Disturb my soul with rising doubt.
Swift envoys to the army send,
And learn what change these cries portend.’

Obedient, at their master’s call,
Fleet giants clumb the circling wall.
They saw the Vánars formed and led:
They saw Sugríva at their head,
The brothers from their bonds released:
And hope grew faint and fear increased.
Their faces pale with doubt and dread,
Back to the giant king they sped,
And to his startled car revealed
The tidings of the battle field.

The flush of rage a while gave place
To chilling fear that changed his face:
‘What?’ cried the tyrant, ‘are my foes
Freed from the binding snakes that close
With venomed clasp round head and limb,
Bright as the sun and fierce like him:
The spell a God bestowed of yore,
The spell that never failed before?
If arts like these be useless, how
Shall giant strength avail us now?
Go forth, Dhúmráksha, good at need,
The bravest of my warriors lead:
Force through the foe thy conquering way,
And Ráma and the Vánars slay.’
Before his king with reverence due
Dhúmráksha bowed him, and withdrew.
Around him at his summons came
Fierce legions led by chiefs of fame.
Well armed with sword and spear and mace,
They hurried to the gathering place,
And rushed to battle, borne at speed
By elephant and car and steed.
CANTO LII.

DHÚMRÁKSHA'S DEATH.

The Vánars saw the giant foe
Pour from the gate in gallant show,
Rejoiced with warriors' fierce delight,
And shouted, longing for the fight
Near came the hosts and nearer yet:
Dire was the tumult as they met,
As, serried line to line opposed,
The Vánars and the giants closed.
Fierce on the foe the Vánars rushed,
And, wielding trees, the foremost crushed;
But, feathered from the heron's wing,
With eager flight from sounding string,
Against them shot with surest aim
A ceaseless storm of arrows came;
And, pierced in head and chest and side,
Full many a Vánar fell and died.
They perished slain in fierce attacks
With sword and pike and battle-axe;
But myriads following undismayed
Their valour in the fight displayed.
Unnumbered Vánars rent and torn
With shaft and spear to earth were borne.
But crushed by branchy trees and blocks
Of jagged stone and shivered rocks
Which the wild Vánars wielded well,
The bravest of the giants fell.
Their trampled banners strewed the fields,
And broken swords and spears and shields;
And, crushed by blows which none might stay,
Cars, elephants, and riders lay.
Dhúmráksha turned his furious eye
And saw his routed legions fly.
Still dauntless, with terrific blows,
He struck and slew his foremost foes.
At every blow, at every thrust,
He laid a Vánar in the dust.
So fell they neath the sword and lance
In battle's wild Gandharva's dance,
Where clang of bow and clash of sword
Did duty for the silvery chord,
And hoofs that rang and steeds that neighed
Loud concert for the dancers made.
So fiercely from Dhúmráksha's bow
His arrows rained in ceaseless flow,
The Vánar legions turned and fled
To all the winds discomfited.
Hanúmán saw the Vánars fly:
He heaved a mighty rock on high,
His keen eyes flashed with wrathful fire,
And, rapid as the Wind his sire,
Strong as the rushing tempests are,
He hurled it at the advancing car.
Swift through the air the missile sang:
The giant from the chariot sprang,
Ere crushed by that terrific blow
Lay pole and wheel and flag and bow.
Hanúmán's eyes with fury blazed:
A mountain's rocky peak he raised,
Poised it on high in act to throw,
And rushed upon his giant foe.

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1 The Gandharvas are warriors and Minstrels of Indra's heaven.