Dhúmráksha saw: he raised his mace
And smote Hanúmán on the face,
Who maddened by the wound's keen pang
Again upon his foeman sprang;
And on the giant's head the rock
Descended with resistless shock.
Crushed was each limb: a shapeless mass
He lay upon the blood-stained grass.
CANTO LIII.

VAJRADANŚHTRA'S SALLY.

When Rāvaṇ in his palace heard
The mournful news, his wrath was stirred;
And, gasping like a furious snake,
To Vajradanśhtra thus he spake:
'Go forth, my fiercest captain, lead
The bravest of the giants' breed.
Go forth, the sons of Raghu slay
And by their side Sugrīva lay.'

He ceased: the chieftain bowed his head,
And forth with gathered troops he sped.
Cars, camels, steeds were well arrayed,
And coloured banners o'er them played.
Rings decked his arms: about his waist
The life-protecting mail was braced,
And on the chieftain's forehead set
Glittered his cap and coronet.
Borne on a banded car that glowed
With golden sheen the warrior rode,
And footmen marched with spear and sword
And bow and mace behind their lord.
In pomp and pride of warlike state
They sallied from the southern gate,
But saw, as on their way they sped,
Dread signs around and overhead.
For there were meteors falling fast,
Though not a cloud its shadow cast;
And each ill-bomened bird and beast,
Forboding death, the fear increased,
While many a giant slipped and reeled,
Falling before he reached the field.
They met in mortal strife engaged,
And long and fierce the battle raged.
Spears, swords uplifted, gleamed and flashed,
And many a chief to earth was dashed.
A ceaseless storm of arrows rained,
And limbs were pierced and blood-distained.
Terrific was the sound that filled
The air, and every heart was chilled,
As hurtling o'er the giants flew
The rocks and trees which Vánars threw.
Fierce as a hungry lion when
Unwary deer approach his den,
Angad, his eyes with fury red,
Waving a tree above his head,
Rushed with wild charge which none could stay
Where stood the giants' dense array.
Like tall trees levelled by the blast
Before him fell the giants fast,
And earth that streamed with blood was strown
With warriors, steeds, and cars o'erthrown.
CANTO LIV.

VAJRADANSHTRA'S DEATH.

The giant leader fiercely rained,
His arrows and the fight maintained:
Each time the clanging cord he drew.
His certain shaft a Vânar slew.
Then, as the creatures he has made
Fly to the Lord of Life for aid,
To Angad for protection fled
The Vânar hosts dispirited.
Then raged the battle fiercer yet
When Angad and the giant met.
A hundred thousand arrows hot
With flames of fire, the giant shot;
And every shaft he deftly sent
His foeman's body pierced and rent.
From Angad's limbs ran floods of gore:
A stately tree from earth he tore,
Which, maddened as his gashes bled,
He hurled at his opponent's head.
His bow the dauntless giant drew;
To meet the tree swift arrows flew,
Checked the huge missile's onward way,
And harmless on the earth it lay.
A while the Vânar chieftain gazed,
Then from the earth a rock he raised
Rent from a thunder-splitten height,
And cast it with resistless might.
The giant marked, and, mace in hand,
Leapt from his chariot to the sand,
Ere the rough mass descending broke
The seat, the wheel, the pole and yoke,
Then Angad seized a shattered hill,
Whereon the trees were flowering still,
And with full force the jagged peak
Fell crashing on the giant's cheek.
He staggered, reeled, and fell: the blood
Gushed from the giant in a flood.
Rest of his might, each sense astray,
A while upon the sand he lay.
But strength and wandering sense returned:
Again his eyes with fury burned,
And with his mace upraised on high
He wounded Angad on the thigh.
Then from his hand his mace he threw,
And closer to his foeman drew.
Then with their fists they fought, and smote
On brow and cheek and chest and throat.
Worn out with toil, their limbs bedewed
With blood, the strife they still renewed,
Like Mercury and fiery Mars
Met in fierce battle mid the stars.
A while the deadly fight was stayed:
Each armed him with his trusty blade
Whose sheath with tinkling bells supplied,
And golden net, adorned his side;
And grasped his ponderous leather shield
To fight, till one should fall or yield.
Unnumbered wounds they gave and took:
Their wearied bodies reeled and shook.
At length upon the sand that drank
Streams of their blood the warriors sank.
But as a serpent rears his head
Sore wounded by a peasant’s tread,
So Angad, fallen on his knees,
Yet gathered strength his sword to seize;
And, severed by the glittering blade,
The giant’s head on earth was laid.

I omit Cantos LV. LVI. LVII. and LVIII. which relate how Akampan and Prahasta sally out and fall. There is little novelty of incident in these Cantos and the results are exactly the same as before. In Canto LV. Akampan, at the command of Rávaṇ, leads forth his troops. Evil omens are seen and heard. The enemies meet, and many fall on each side, the Vánaras transfixed with arrows, the Rákshases crushed with rocks and trees.

In Canto LVI. Akampan sees that the Rákshases are worsted, and fights with redoubled rage and vigour. The Vánaras fall fast under his “nets of arrows.” Hanumán comes to the rescue. He throws mountain peaks at the giant which are dexterously stopped with flights of arrows; and at last beats him down and kills him with a tree.

In Canto LVII. Rávaṇ is seriously alarmed. He declares that he himself, Kumbhakarna or Prahasta, must go forth. Prahasta sallies out vaunting that the fowls of the air shall eat their fill of Vánar flesh.

In Canto LVIII. the two armies meet. Dire is the conflict; ceaseless is the rain of stones and arrows. At last Nila meets Prahasta and breaks his bow. Prahasta leaps from his car, and the giant and the Vánar fight on foot. Nila with a huge tree crushes his opponent who falls like a tree when its roots are cut.
CANTO LIX.

RĀVAN’S SALLY.

They told him that the chief was killed,
And Rāvan’s breast with rage was filled.
Then, fiercely moved by wrath and pride,
Thus to his lords the tyrant cried:
‘No longer, nobles, may we show
This lofty scorn for such a foe
By whom our bravest, with his train
Of steeds and elephants, is slain.
Myself this day will take the field,
And Rāghu’s sons their lives shall yield.’

High on the royal car, that glowed
With glory from his face, he rode;
And tambour shell and drum pealed out,
And joyful was each giant’s shout.
A mighty host, with eyeballs red
Like flames of kindled fire, he led.
He passed the city gate, and viewed,
Arrayed, the Vānār multitude,
Those wielding massy rocks, and these
Armed with the stems of uptorn trees.
And Rāma with his eyes aglow
With warlike ardour viewed the foe,
And thus the brave Vibhīśan, best
Of weapon-wielding chiefs, addressed:
‘What captain leads this bright array
Where lances gleam and banners play,
And thousands armed with spear and sword
Await the bidding of their lord?
‘Seest thou,’ Vibhīṣaṇ answered, ‘one
Whose face is as the morning sun,
Preëminent for hugest frame?
Akampan ‘is the giant’s name.
Behold that chieftain, chariot-borne,
Whom Brahmā’s chosen gifts adorn.
He wields a bow like Indra’s own;
A lion on his flag is shown.
His eyes with baleful fire are lit:
’Tis Rāvaṇ’s son, ’tis Indrajit.
There, brandishing in mighty hands
His huge bow, Atikāya stands.
And that proud warrior o’er whose head
A moon-bright canopy is spread;
Whose might, in many a battle tried,
Has tamed imperial Indra’s pride;
Who wears a crown of burnished gold,
Is Lankā’s lord the lofty-souled.’
  He ceased: and Rāma knew his foe,
And laid an arrow on his bow:
‘Woe to the wretch’, he cried, ‘whom fate
Abandons to my deadly hate.’
He spoke, and, firm by Lakshman’s side,
The giant to the fray defied.
The lord of Lankā bade his train
Of warriors by the gates remain,
To guard the city from surprise
By Rāma’s forest-born allies.
Then as some monster of the sea
Cleaves swift-advancing billows, he
Charged with impetuous onset through

1 ‘It is to be understood,’ says the commentator, ‘that this is not the Akampan who has recently been slain.’
The foe, and cleft the host in two.
Sugrīva ran, the king to meet:
A hill uprooted from its seat
He hurled, with trees that graced the height,
Against the rover of the night;
But cleft with shafts that checked its way
Harmless upon the earth it lay.
Then fiercer Rāvan's fury grew:
An arrow from his side he drew,
Swift as a thunderbolt, aglow
With fire, and launched it at the foe.
Through flesh and bone a way it found,
And stretched Sugrīva on the ground.
Sūrēṇ and Nāla saw him fall,
Gavāksha, Gavaya heard their call,
And, poising hills, in act to fling
They charged amain the giant king.
They charged, they hurled the hills in vain:
He checked them with his arrowy rain,
And every brave assailant felt
The piercing wounds his missiles dealt.
Then smitten by the shafts that came
Keen, fleet, and thick, with certain aim,
They fled to Rāma, sure defence
Against the oppressor’s violence.
Then, reverent palm to palm applied,
Thus Lakshman to his brother cried:
'To me, my lord, the task entrust
To lay this giant in the dust.'
'Go, then,' said Rāma, 'bravely fight;
Beat down this rover of the night.
But he, unmatched in bold emprise,
Fears not the Lord of earth and skies.
Keep on thy guard: with keenest eye
Thy moments of attack espy.
Let hand and eye in due accord
Protect thee with the bow and sword.'

Then Lakshman round his brother threw
His mighty arms in honour due,
Bent lowly down his reverent head,
And onward to the battle sped.
Hanuman from afar beheld
How Ravan's shafts the Vanars quelled;
To meet the giant's car he ran,
Raised his right arm and thus began:
'If Brahma's boon thy life has screened
From Yaksha, God, Gandharva, fiend,
With these contending fear no ill,
But tremble at a Vanar still.'
With fury flashing from his eye
The lord of Lanké made reply:
'Strike, Vanar, strike: the fray begin,
And hope eternal fame to win.
This arm shall prove thee in the strife
And end thy glory and thy life.'
'Remember,' cried the Wind-God's son,
'Remember all that I have done,
My prowess, King, thou knowest well,
Shown in the fight when Aksha fell.'

With heavy hand the giant smote
Hanuman on the chest and throat,
Who reeled and staggered to, and fro,
Stunned for a moment by the blow,
Till, mustering strength, his hand he reared
And struck the foe whom Indra feared.
His huge limbs bent beneath the shock,
As mountains, in an earthquake, rock,

1 Ravan's son, whom Hanuman killed when he first visited Lanké.
And from the Gods and sages pealed
Shouts of loud triumph as he reeled.
But strength returning nervèd his frame:
His eyeballs flashed with fiercer flame.
No living creature might resist
That blow of his tremendous fist
Which fell upon Hanúmán's flank:
And to the ground the Vánar sank.
No sign of life his body showed:
And Rávaṇ in his chariot rode
At Níla; and his arrowy rain
Fell on the captain and his train.
Fierce Níla stayed his Vánar band,
And, heaving with his single hand
A mountain peak, with vigorous swing
Hurled the huge missile at the king.

Hanúmán life and strength regained,
Burned for the fight and thus complained:
‘Why, coward giant, didst thou flee
And leave the doubtful fight with me?’
Seven mighty arrows keen and fleet
The giant launched, the hill to meet;
And, all its force and fiery stayed,
The harmless mass on earth was laid.
Enraged the Vánar chief beheld
The mountain peak by force repelled,
And rained upon the foe a shower
Of trees uporn with branch and flower.
Still his keen shafts which pierced and rent
Each flying tree the giant sent:
Still was the Vánar doomed to feel
The tempest of the winged steel.
Then, smarting from that arrowy storm,
The Vánar chief condensed his form,
And lightly leaping from the ground
On Rávan's standard footing found;
Then springing unimpeded down
Stood on his bow and golden crown.
The Vánar's nimble leaps amazed
Ikshváku's son who stood and gazed.
The giant, raging in his heart,
Laid on his bow a fiery dart;
The Vánar on his flagstaff eyed,
And thus in tones of fury cried:
'Well skilled in magic lore art thou:
But will thine art avail thee now?
See if thy magic will defend
Thy life against the dart I send.'

Thus Rávan spake, the giant king,
And loosed the arrow from the string.
It pierced, with direst fury sped,
The Vánar with its flaming head.
His father's might, his power innate
Preserved him from the threatened fate.
Upon his knees he fell, distained
With streams of blood, but life remained.
Still Rávan for the battle burned:
At Lakshman next his car he turned,
And charged a'main with furious show,
Straining in mighty hands his bow.
'Come,' Lakshman cried, 'assay the fight:
Leave foes unworthy of thy might.'
Thus Lakshman spoke; and Lanká's lord
Heard the dread thunder of the cord,
And mad with burning rage and pride

---

1 Nila was the son of Agni the God of Fire, and possessed, like Milton's demons, the power of dilating and condensing his form at pleasure.
In hasty words like these replied:
'Joy, joy is mine, O Raghu's son;
Thy fate to-day thou canst not shun.
Slain by mine arrows thou shalt tread
The gloomy pathway of the dead.'
Thus as he spoke his bow he drew,
And seven keen shafts at Lakshmana flew.
But Raghu's son with surest aim
Cleft every arrow as it came.
Thus with fleet shafts each warrior shot
Against his foe, and rested not.
Then one choice weapon from his store,
By Brahma's self bestowed of yore,
Fierce as the flames that end the world,
The giant king at Lakshmana hurled.
The hero fell, and, racked with pain,
Scarce could his hand his bow retain.
But sense and strength resumed their scat,
And, lightly springing to his feet,
He struck with one tremendous stroke
And Ravana's bow in splinters broke.
From Lakshmana's cord three arrows flew
And pierced the giant monarch through.
Sore wounded Ravana closed, and round
Ikshvaku's son his strong arms wound.
With strength unrivalled, Brahma's gift,
He strove from earth his foe to lift.
'Shall I,' he cried, 'who overthrow
Mount Meru and the Lord of Snow,
And heaven and all who dwell therein,
Be foiled by one of Rama's kin?'
But though he heaved, and toiled, and strained,
Unmoved Ikshvaku's son remained.
His frame by those huge arms compressed
Canto LIX.  THE RAMAYAN.

The giant's God-given force confessed,
But conscious that himself was part
Of Vishṇu, he was firm in heart.

The Wind-God's son the fight beheld,
And rushed at Rāvan, rage-impelled,
Down crashed his mighty hand; the foe
Full in the chest received the blow.
His eyes grew dim, his knees gave way,
And senseless on the earth he lay.

The Wind-God's son to Rāma bore
Deep-wounded Lakshman stained with gore,
He whom no foe might lift or bend
Was light as air to such a friend.
The dart that Lakshman's side had dealt,
Untouched, the horo's body left,
And flashing through the air afar
Resumed its place in Rāvan's car;
And, waxing well though wounded sore,
He felt the deadly pain no more.

And Rāvan, though with deep wounds pained,
Slowly his sense and strength regained,
And furious still and undismayed
On bow and shaft his hand he laid.

Then Hanumān to Rāma cried:
'Ascend my back, great chief, and ride
Like Vishṇu borne on Garud's wing,
To battle with the giant king.'
So, burning for the dire attack,
Rode Rāma on the Vānar's back,
And with fierce accents loud and slow
Thus gave defiance to the foe,
While his strained bowstring made a sound
Like thunder when it shakes the ground:
'Stay, Monarch of the giants, stay,
The penalty of sin to pay.
Stay: whither wilt thou fly, and how
Escape the death that waits thee now?"

No word the giant king returned:
His eyes with flames of fury burned.
His arm was stretched, his bow was bent,
And swift his fiery shafts were sent.
Red torrents from the Vánar flowed:
Then Ráma near to Rávaṇ strode,
And, with keen darts that never failed,
The chariot of the king assailed.
With surest aim his arrows flew:
The driver and the steeds he slew,
And shattered with the pointed steel
Car, flag and pole and yoke and wheel.
As Indra hurls his bolt to smite
Mount Meru’s heaven-ascending height,
So Ráma with a flaming dart
Struck Lanká’s monarch near the heart,
Who reeled and fell beneath the blow
And from loose fingers dropped his bow.
Bright as the sun, with crescent head,
From Ráma’s bow an arrow sped,
And from his forehead, proud no more,
Cleft the bright coronet he wore.
Then Ráma stood by Rávaṇ’s side
And to the conquered giant cried:
'Well hast thou fought: thine arm has slain
Strong heroes of the Vánar train.
I will not strike or slay thee now,
For weary, faint with fight art thou.
To Lanká’s town thy footsteps bend,
And there the night securely spend.
To-morrow come with car and bow,
And then my prowess shalt thou know.

He ceased: the king in humbled pride
Rose from the earth and naught replied.
With wounded limbs and shattered crown
He sought again his royal town.
CANTO LX.

KUMBHAKARṇA ROUSED.

With humbled heart and broken pride
Through Lankā’s gate the giant hied,
Crushed, like an elephant beneath
A lion’s spring and murderous teeth,
Or like a serpent neath the wing
And talons of the Feathered King.
Such was the giant’s wild alarm
At arrows shot by Rāma’s arm;
Shafts with red lightning round them curled,
Like Brahmā’s bolts that end the world.

Supported on his golden throne,
With failing eye and humbled tone,
‘Giants,’ he cried, ‘the toil is vain,
Fruitless the penance and the pain,
If I whom Indra owned his peer,
Secure from Gods, a mortal fear.
My soul remembers, now too late,
Lord Brahmā’s words which spoke my fate:
‘Tremble, proud Giant,’ thus they ran,
‘And dread thy death from slighted man.
Secure from Gods and demons live,
And serpents, by the boon I give
Against their power thy life is charmed,
But against man is still unarmed.’
This Rāma is the man foretold
By Anaranya’s 1 lips of old:

1 An ancient king of Ayodhya said by some to have been Pritu’s father.
'Fear, Rāvan, basest of the base:
For of mine own imperial race
A prince in after time shall spring
And thee and thine to ruin bring.'
And Vedavatī, ere she died
Slain by my ruthless insult, cried:
'A scion of my royal line
Shall slay, vile wretch, both thee and thine.'
She in a later birth became
King Janak's child, now Rāma's dame.
Nandīśvara 2 foretold this fate,
And Umā 3 when I moved her hate,
And Rambhā, 4 and the lovely child
Of Varuṇa 5 by my touch defiled.
I know the fated hour is nigh:
Hence, captains, to your stations fly.
Let warders on the rampart stand:
Place at each gate a watchful band;
And, terror of immortal eyes,
Let mightiest Kumbhakarṇa rise.
He, slumbering, free from care and pain,
By Brahmā's curse, for months has lain.

1 The daughter of King Kuśadhwaja. She became an ascetic, and being insulted by Rāvan in the woods where she was performing penance, destroyed herself by entering fire, but was born again as Sitā to be in turn the destruction of him who had insulted her.

2 Nandīśvara was Śiva's chief attendant. Rāvan had despised and laughed at him for appearing in the form of a monkey, and the irritated Nandīśvara cursed him and foretold his destruction by monkeys.

3 Rāvan once upheaved and shook Mount Kailāsa the favourite dwelling place of Śiva the consort of Umā, and was cursed in consequence by the offended Goddess.

4 Rambhā, who has several times been mentioned in the course of the poem, was one of the nympha of heaven, and had been insulted by Rāvan.

5 Punjīkaśthalī was the daughter of Varuṇa. Rāvan himself has mentioned in this book his insult to her, and the curse pronounced in consequence by Bāhrma.
But when Prabasta’s death he hears,  
Mine own defeat and doubts and fears,  
The chief will rise to smite the foe  
And his unrivalled valour show.  
Then Rāghu’s royal sons and all  
The Vānars neath his might will fall.’  
The giant lords his best obeyed,  
They left him, trembling and afraid,  
And from the royal palace strode  
To Kumbhayakarna’s vast abode.  
They carried garlands sweet and fresh,  
And reeking loads of blood and flesh.  
They reached the dwelling where he lay,  
A cave that stretched a league each way,  
Sweet with fair blooms of lovely scent  
And bright with golden ornament.  
His breathings came so fierce and fast,  
Scarce could the giants brook the blast.  
They found him on a golden bed  
With his huge limbs at length outspread.  
They piled their heaps of venison near,  
Fat buffaloes and boars and deer.  
With wreaths of flowers they fanned his face,  
And incense sweetened all the place.  
Each raised his mighty voice as loud  
As thunders of an angry cloud,  
And conchs their stirring summons gave  
That echoed through the giant’s cave.  
Then on his breast they rained their blows,  
And high the wild commotion rose  
When cymbal vied with drum and horn,  
And war cries on the gale upborne  
Through all the air loud discord spread,  
And, struck with fear, the birds fell dead.
But still he slept and took his rest.
Then dashed they on his shaggy chest
Clubs, maces, fragments of the rock:
He moved not once, nor felt the shock.
The giants made one effort more
With shell and drum and shout and roar.
Club, mallet, mace, in fury plied,
Rained blows upon his breast and side.
And elephants were urged to aid,
And camels groaned and horses neighed.
They drenched him with a hundred pails,
They tore his ears with tooth and nails.
They bound together many a mace
And beat him on the head and face;
And elephants with ponderous tread
Stamped on his limbs and chest and head.
The unusual weight his slumber broke:
He started, shook his sides, and woke;
And, heedless of the wounds and blows,
Yawning with thirst and hunger rose.
His jaws like hell gaped fierce and wide,
Dire as the flame neath ocean's tide.
Red as the sun on Meru's crest.
The giant's face his wrath expressed,
And every burning breath he drew
Was like the blast that rushes through
The mountain cedars. Up he raised
His awful head with eyes that blazed
Like comets, dire as Death in form
Who threats the worlds with fire and storm.
The giants pointed to their stores
Of buffaloes and deer and boars,
And straight he gorged him with a flood
Of wine, with marrow, flesh, and blood.
He ceased: the giants ventured near
And bent their lowly heads in fear.
Then Kumbhakarna glared with eyes
Still heavy in their first surprise,
Still drowsy from his troubled rest,
And thus the giant band addressed:
‘How have ye dared my sleep to break?
No trifling cause should bid me wake.
Say, is all well? or tell the need
That drives you with unruly speed
To wake me. Mark the words I say,
The king shall tremble in dismay,
The fire be quenched and Indra slain
Ere ye shall break my rest in vain.’

Yupaeksha answered: ‘Chieftain, hear;
No God or fiend excites our fear.
But men in arms our walls assail:
We tremble lest their might prevail.
For vengeanceful Rama vows to slay
The foe who stole his queen away,
And, matchless for his warlike deeds,
A host of mighty Vanars leads.
Ere now a monstrous Vanar came,
Laid Lanká waste with ruthless flame,
And Aksha, Ravan’s offspring, slew
With all his warrior retinue.
Our king who never trembled yet
For heavenly hosts in battle met,
At length the general dread has shared,
Overthrown by Rama’s arm and spared.’

He ceased: and Kumbhakarna spake:
‘I will go forth and vengeance take;
Will tread their hosts beneath my feet,
Then triumph-flushed our king will meet.’
Our giant bands shall eat their fill
Of Vánars whom this arm shall kill.
The princes’ blood shall be my draught,
The chieftains’ shall by you be quaffed.’
He spake, and, with an eager stride
That shook the earth, to Rávaṇ hied.
CANTO LXI.

THE VĀNARS' ALARM.

The son of Raghu near the wall
Saw, proudly towering over all,
The mighty giant stride along
Attended by the warrior throng;
Heard Kumbhakarna's heavy feet
Awake the echoes of the street;
And, with the lust of battle fired,
Turned to Vibhishan and inquired:
'Vibhishan, tell that chieftain's name
Who rears so high his mountain frame;
With glittering helm and lion eyes,
Preeminent in might and size
Above the rest of giant birth,
He towers the standard of the earth;
And all the Vānars when they see
The mighty warrior turn and flee.'

'In him', Vibhishan answered, 'know Viśravas' son, the Immortals' foe,
Fierce Kumbhakarna, mightier far
Than Gods and fiends and giants are.
He conquered Yama in the fight,
And Indra, trembling owned his might.
His arm the Gods and fiends subdued,
Gandharvas and the serpent brood.
The rest of his gigantic race
Are wondrous strong by God-given grace;
But nature at his birth to him
Canto LXI.  THF RAMAYAN.

Gave matchless power and strength of limb.
Scarce was he born, fierce monster, when
He killed and ate a thousand men.
The trembling race of men, appalled,
On Indra for protection called;
And he, to save the suffering world,
His bolt at Kumbhakarna hurled.

'So awful was the monster's yell
That fear on all the nations fell.
He, rushing on with furious roar,
A tusk from huge Airavat tore,
And dealt the God so dire a blow
That Indra reeling left his foe,
And with the Gods and mortals fled
To Brahma's throne dispirited.
'O Brahma,' thus the suppliants cried,
'Some refuge for this woe provide.
If thus his maw the giant sate
Soon will the world be desolate.'
The Self-existent calmed their woe,
And spake in anger to their foe:
'As thou wast born, Paulastya's son,
That worlds might weep by thee undone,
Thou like the dead henceforth shalt be:
Such is the curse I lay on thee.'
Senseless he lay, nor spoke nor stirred;
Such was the power of Brahma's word.
But Ravan, troubled for his sake,
Thus to the Self-existent spake:
'Who lops the tree his care has reared
When golden fruit has first appeared?
Not thus, O Brahma, deal with one
Descended from thine own dear son.'

1 Pulastya was the son of Brahma and father of Visravas or Paulastya
   the father of Ravan and Kumbhakarna.
Still thou, O Lord, thy word must keep:
He may not die, but let him sleep.
Yet fix a time for him to break
The chains of slumber and awake.'
He ceased: and Brahmá made reply:
'Six months in slumber shall he lie,
And then arising for a day
Shall cast the numbing bonds away.'
Now Rávana in his doubt and dread
Has roused the monster from his bed,
Who comes in this the hour of need
On slaughtered Vánars' flesh to feed.
Each Vánar, when his awe-struck eyes
Behold the monstrous chieftain, flies.
With hopeful words their minds deceive,
And let our trembling hosts believe
They see no giant, but, displayed,
A lifeless engine deftly made.'

Then Ráma called to Nila: 'Haste,
Let troops near every gate be placed,
And, armed with fragments of the rock
And trees, each lane and alley block.'

Thus Ráma spoke: the chief obeyed,
And swift the Vánars stood arrayed,
As when black clouds their battle form,
The summit of a hill to storm,
Along bright Lanká’s royal road
The giant, roused from slumber, strode,
While from the houses on his head
A rain of fragrant flowers was shed.
He reached the monarch’s gate whereon
Rich gems and golden fretwork shone.
Through court and corridor that shook
Beneath his tread his way he took,
And stood within the chamber where
His brother sat in dark despair.
But sudden, at the grateful sight
The monarch’s eye again grew bright.
He started up, forgot his fear,
And drew his giant brother near.
The younger pressed the elder’s feet
And paid the king observance meet,
Then cried: ‘O Monarch, speak thy will,
And let my care thy word fulfil.
What sudden terror and dismay
Have burst the bonds in which I lay?’
Fierce flashed the flame from Rávana’s eye
As thus in wrath he made reply:
‘Fair time, I ween, for sleep is this,
To lull thy soul in tranquil bliss,
Unheeding, in oblivion drowned,
The dangers that our lives surround.
Brave Ráma, Daśaratha’s son,
A passage o'er the sea has won,
And, with the Vánar monarch's aid,
Round Lankā's walls his hosts arrayed.
Though never in the deadly field
My Rákshas troops were known to yield,
The bravest of the giant train
Have fallen by the Vánars slain.
Hence comes my fear. O fierce and brave,
Go forth, our threatened Lankā save.
Go forth, a dreadful vengeance take:
For this, O chief, I bade thee, wake.
The Gods and trembling fiends have felt
The furious blows thine arm has dealt.
Earth has no warrior, heaven has none
To match thy might, Paulastya's son.
CANTO LXIII.

KUMBHAKARNA'S BOAST.

Then Kumbhakarna laughed aloud
And cried: 'O Monarch, once so proud;
We warned thee, but thou wouldst not hear;
And now the fruits of sin appear.
We warned thee, I, thy nobles, all
Who loved thee, in thy council hall.
Those sovereigns who with blinded eyes
Neglect the foe their hearts despise,
Soon, falling from their high estate,
Bring on themselves the stroke of fate.
Accept at length, thy life to save,
The counsel sage Vibhishan gave,
The prudent counsel spurned before,
And Sita to her lord restore.'

The monarch frowned, by passion moved,
And thus in angry words reproved:
'Wilt thou thine elder brother school,
Forgetful of the ancient rule
That bids thee treat him as the sage
Who guides thee with the lore of age?
Think on the dangers of the day,
Nor idly throw thy words away:
If led astray, by passion stirred,
I in the pride of power have erred;
If deeds of old were done amiss,

1 I omit a tedious sermon on the danger of rashness and the advantages of prudence, sufficient to irritate a less passionate hearer than Ravan.
No time for vain reproach is this.
Up, brother; let thy loving care
The errors of thy king repair'
To calm his wrath, his soul to ease,
The younger spake in words like these:
'Yea, from our bosoms let us cast
All idle sorrow for the past.
Let grief and anger be repressed:
Again be firm and self-possessed.
This day, O Monarch, shalt thou see
The Vánar legions turn and file,
And Ráma and his brother slain
With their hearts' blood shall dye the plain.
Yea, if the God who rules the dead,
And Varuṇa, their battalions led;
If Indra with the Storm-Gods came
Against me, and the Lord of Flame,
Still would I fight with all and slay
Thy banded foes, my King, to-day.
If Raghu's son this day withstand
The blow of mine uplifted hand,
Deep in his breast my darts shall sink,
And torrents of his life-blood drink.
O fear not, in my promise trust:
This arm shall lay him in the dust,
Shall leave the fierce Sugriva dyed
With gore, and Lakshmana by his side,
And strike the great Hānúmán down,
The spoiler of our glorious town.'

1 The Bengal recension assigns a very different speech to Kumára-kárpa and makes him say that Nárada the messenger of the Gods had formerly told him that Viṣṇu himself incarnate as Daśaratha's son should come to destroy Rávaṇa.
CANTO LXIV.

MAHODAR'S SPEECH.

He ceased: and when his lips were closed
Mahodar thus his rede opposed:
'Why wilt thou shame thy noble birth
And speak like one of little worth?
Why boast thee thus in youthful pride
Rejecting wisdom for thy guide?
How will thy single arm oppose
The victor of a thousand foes,
Who proved in Janasthán his might
And slew the rovers of the night?
The remnant of those legions, they
Who saw his power that fatal day,
Now in this leaguered city dread
The mighty chief from whom they fled.
And wouldst thou meet the lord of men,
Beard the great lion in his den,
And, when thine eyes are open, break
The slumber of a deadly snake?
Who may an equal battle wage
With him, so awful in his rage,
Fierce as the God of Death whom none
May vanquish, Daśaratha's son?
But, Rávan, shall the lady still
Refuse compliance with thy will?
No, listen, King, to this design
Which soon shall make the captive thine.
This day through Lanká's streets proclaim
That four of us of highest fame
With Kumbhakarna at our head
Will strike the son of Raghú dead.
Forth to the battle will we go
And prove our prowess on the foe.
Then, if our bold attempt succeed,
No further plans thy hopes will need.
But if in vain our warriors strive,
And Rághu's son be left alive,
We will return, and, wounded sore,
Our armour stained with gouts of gore,
Will show the shafts that rent each frame,
Keen arrows marked with Ráma's name,
And say we giants have devoured
The princes whom our might o'erpowered.
Then let the joyful tidings spread
That Rághu's royal sons are dead.
To all around thy pleasure show,
Gold, pearls, and precious robes, bestow.
Gay garlands round the portals twine,
Enjoy the banquet and the wine.
Then go, the scornful lady seek,
And woo her when her heart is weak.
Rich robes and gold and gems display,
And gently wile her grief away.
Then will she feel her hopeless state,
Widowed, forlorn, and desolate;
Know that on thee her bliss depends,
Far from her country and her friends;
Then, her proud spirit overthrown,
The lady will be all thine own.

1 Mahodar, Dwijihva, Sanhráda, and Vitardan.
CANTO LXV.

KUMBHAKARNA'S SPEECH.

But haughty Kumbhakarna spurned
His counsel, and to Ravana turned:
'Thy life from peril will I free
And slay the foe who threatens thee.
A hero never vaunts in vain,
Like bellowing clouds devoid of rain.
Nor, Monarch, be thine ear inclined
To counsellors of slavish kind,
Who with mean arts their king mislead
And mar each gallant plan and deed.
O, let not words like his beguile
The glorious king of Lanká's isle.'

Thus scornful Kumbhakarna cried,
And Ravana with a laugh replied:
'Mahodar fears and fain would shun
The battle with Ikshvaku's son.
Of all my giant warriors, who
Is strong as thou, and brave and true?
Ride, conqueror, to the battle ride,
And tame the foeman's senseless pride.
Go forth like Yama to the field,
And let thine arm thy trident wield.
Scared by the lightning of thine eye
The Vanar hosts will turn and fly;
And Rama, when he sees thee near,
With trembling heart will own his fear.'

The champion heard, and, well content,
Forth from the hall his footsteps bent.
He grasped his spear, the foeman’s dread,
Black iron all, both shaft and head,
Which, dyed in many a battle, bore.
Great spots of slaughtered victims’ gore.
The king upon his neck had thrown
The jewelled chain which graced his own,
And garlands of delicious scent
About his limbs for ornament.
Around his arms gay bracelets clung,
And pendants in his cars were hung.
Adorned with gold, about his waist
His coat of mail was firmly braced,
And like Náráyana or the God
Who rules the sky he proudly trod.
Behind him went a mighty throng
Of giant warriors tall and strong,
On elephants of noblest breeds,
With cars, with camels, and with steeds;
And, armed with spear and axe and sword,
Were fain to battle for their lord. 

1 A name of Vishnu.
2 There is so much commonplace repetition in these Sallies of the Rákshas chastains that omissions are frequently necessary. The usual ill omens attend the sally of Kumbhakaṇṭha, and the Canto ends with a description of the terrified Vánars’ flight which is briefly repeated in different words at the beginning of the next Canto.
CANTO LXVI.

KUMBHAKARNA'S SALLY.

In pomp and pride of warlike state
The giant passed the city gate.
He raised his voice: the hills, the shore
Of Lanká's sea returned the roar.
The Vánars saw the chief draw nigh
Whom not the ruler of the sky,
Nor Yama, monarch of the dead,
Might vanquish, and affrighted fled.
When royal Angad, Bálí's son,
Saw the scared Vánars turn and run,
Undaunted still he kept his ground,
And shouted as he gazed around:
'O Nala, Níla, stay, nor let
Your souls your generous worth forget.
O Kumud and Gaváksha, why
Like base-born Vánars will ye fly?
Turn, turn, nor shame your order thus:
This giant is no match for us.'
    They heard his voice: the flight was stayed;
Again for war they stood arrayed,
And hurled upon the foe a shower
Of mountain peaks and trees in flower.
Still on his limbs their missiles rained:
Unmoved, their blows he still sustained,
And seemed unconscious of the stroke.
When rocks against his body broke.
Fierce as the flame when woods are dry
He charged with fury in his eye.
Like trees consumed with fervent heat
They fell beneath the giant’s feet.
Some o’er the ground, dyed red with gore,
Fled wild with terror to the shore,
And, deeming that all hope was lost,
Ran to the bridge they erst had crossed.
Some clomb the trees their lives to save,
Some sought the mountain and the cave;
Some hid them in the bosky dell,
And there in deathlike slumber fell.

When Angad saw the chieftains fly
He called them with a mighty cry:
‘Once more, O Vāmars, charge once more,
On to the battle as before.
In all her compass earth has not,
To hide you safe, one secret spot.
What! leave your arms? each nobler dame
Will scorn her consort for the shame.
This blot upon your names efface,
And keep your valour from disgrace.
Stay, chieftains; wherefore will ye run,
A band of warriors scared by one?’

Searce would they hear; they would not stay,
And basely spoke in wild dismay:
‘Have we not fought, and fought in vain?
Have we not seen our mightiest slain?
The giant’s matchless force we fear,
And fly because our lives are dear.’
But Bāli’s son with gentle art
Dispelled their dread and cheered each heart.
They turned and formed and waited still
Obedient to the prince’s will.
CANTO LXVII.

KUMBHAKARNA'S DEATH.

Thus from their flight the Vánars turned,
And every heart for battle burned,
Determined on the spot to die
Or gain a warrior's meed on high.
Again the Vánars stooped to seize
Their weapons, rocks and fallen trees;
Again the deadly fight began,
And fiercely at the giant ran.
Unmoved the monster kept his place:
He raised on high his awful mace,
Whirled the huge weapon round his head
And laid the foremost Vánars dead.
Eight thousand fell bedewed with gore,
Then sank and died seven hundred more.
Then thirty, twenty, ten, or eight
At each fierce onset met their fate,
And fast the fallen were devoured
Like snakes by Garuḍ's beak o'erpowered.
Then Dwivid from the Vánar van,
Armed with an uptorn mountain, ran,
Like a huge cloud when fierce winds blow,
And charged amain the mountain foe.
With wondrous force the hill he threw:
O'er Kumbhakarna's head it flew,
And falling on his host afar
Crushed many a giant, steed, and car.
Rocks, trees, by fierce Hanúmán sped,
Rained fast on Kumbhakarna’s head,
Whose spear each deadlier missile stopped,
And harmless on the plain it dropped.
Then with his furious eyes aglow
The giant rushed upon the foe,
Where, with a woody hill upheaved,
Hanumán’s might his charge received.
Through his vast frame the giant felt
The angry blow Hanumán dealt.
He reeled a moment, sore distressed,
Then smote the Vánar on the breast,
As when the War-God’s furious stroke
Through Krañchasa’s hill a passage broke. ¹
Fierce was the blow, and deep and wide
The rent: with crimson torrents dyed,
Hanumán, maddened by the pain,
Roared like a cloud that brings the rain,
And from each Rákshas throat rang out
Loud clamour and exultant shout.
Then Nila hurled with mustered might
The fragment of a mountain height;
Nor would the rock the foe have missed,
But Kumbhakarna raised his fist
And smote so fiercely that the mass
Fell crushed to powder on the grass.
Five chieftains of the Vánar race ²
Charged Kumbhakarna face to face,
And his huge frame they wildly beat
With rocks and trees and hands and feet.

¹ Kárttikéya the God of War, and the hero and incarnation Para-
suráma are said to have cut a passage through the mountain Kraunche,
a part of the Himalayan range, in the same way as the immense gorge
that splits the Pyrenees under the towers of Maoré was cloven at one
blow of Boland’s sword Durandal.

² Rishabh, Sarabh, Nila, Gaváksha, and Gandhamádan.
Canto LXVII.  THE RAMAYAN.

Round Rishabh first the giant wound
His arms and hurled him to the ground,
Where speechless, senseless, wounded sore,
He lay, his face besmeared with gore.

Then Nila with his fist he slew,
And Sarabh with his knee o'erthrew,
Nor could Gavaksha's strength withstand
The force of his terrific hand.

At Gandhamadana's eager call
Rushed thousands to avenge their fall,
Nor ceased those Vanars to assail
With knee and fist and tooth and nail.

Around his foes the giant threw
His mighty arms, and nearer drew
The captives subject to his will:
Then snatched them up and ate his fill.

There was no respite then, no pause:
Fast gaped and closed his hell-like jaws;
Yet, prisioned in that gloomy cave,
Some Vanars still their lives could save:

Some through his nostrils found a way,
Some through his ears resought the day.
Like Indra with his thunder, like
The God of Death in act to strike,
The giant seized his ponderous spear,
And charged the foe in swift career.

Before his might the Vanars fell,
Nor could their hosts his charge repel.

Then trembling, nor ashamed to run,
They turned and fled to Raghu's son.

When Bali's warrior son 1 beheld
Their flight, his heart with fury swelled.
He rushed, with his terrific shout,

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1 Angad. The text calls him the son of the son of him who holds the thunderbolt, i.e. the grandson of Indra.
To meet the foe and stay the rout.
He came, he hurled a mountain peak,
And smote the giant on the cheek.
His ponderous spear the giant threw:
Fierce was the cast, the aim was true;
But Angad, trained in war and tried,
Saw ere it came, and leapt aside.
Then with his open hand he smote
The giant on the chest and throat.
That blow the giant scarce sustained;
But sense and strength were soon regained.
With force which nothing might resist
He caught the Vánar by the wrist,
Whirled him, as if in pastime, round,
And dashed him senseless on the ground.
There low on earth his foe lay crushed:
At King Sugríva next he rushed,
Who, waiting for the charge, stood still,
And heaved on high a shattered hill.
He looked on Kumbhakarna dyed
With streams of blood, and fiercely cried:
'Great glory has thine arm achieved,
And thousands of their lives bocaread.
Now leave a while thy meaner foes,
And brook the hill Sugríva throws.'

He spoke, and hurled the mass he held:
The giant's chest the stroke repelled.
Then on the Vánars fell despair,
And Rákshas clamour filled the air.
The giant raised his arm, and fast
Came the tremendous\(^1\) spear he cast.

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\(^1\) Literally, weighing a thousand bháras. The bhára is a weight equal to 2000 pala, the pala is equal to four karás, and the karás to 11375 French grammes or about 176 grains troy. The spear seems very light for a warrior of Kumbhakarṇa's strength and stature and the work performed with it.
Hanúmán caught it as it flew,
And knapped it on his knee in two.
The giant saw the broken spear:
His clouded eye confessed his fear;
Yet, at Sugríva's head he sent
A peak from Lánká's mountain rent.
The rushing mass no might could stay:
Sugríva fell and senseless lay.
The giant stooped his foe to seize,
And bore him thence, as bears the breeze
A cloud in autumn through the sky.
He heard the sad Immortals sigh,
And shouts of triumph long and loud
Went up from all the Rákshás crowd.
Through Lánká's gate the giant passed
Holding his struggling captive fast,
While from each terrace, house, and tower
Fell on his haughty head a shower
Of fragrant scent and flowery rain,
Blossoms and leaves and scattered grain.

By slow degrees the Vánars' lord
Felt life and sense and strength restored.
He heard the giants' joyful boast:
He thought upon his Vánar host.
His teeth and feet he fiercely plied,
And bit and rent the giant's side,
Who, mad with pain and smeared with gore,
Hurled to the ground the load he bore.
Regardless of a storm of blows
Swift to the sky the Vánar rose,
Then lightly like a flying ball
High overleapt the city wall,

1 The custom of throwing parched or roasted grain, with wreaths
and flowers, on the heads of kings and conquerors when they go forth
to battle and return is frequently mentioned by Indian poets.
And joyous for deliverance won
Regained the side of Raghur's son.
And Kumbhakarna, mad with hate
And fury, sallied from the gate,
The carnage of the foe renewed
And filled his maw with gory food,
Slaying, with headlong frenzy blind,
Both Vanar foes and giant kind.

Nor would Sumitra's valiant son
The might of Kumbhakarna shun,
Who through his harness felt the sting
Of keen shafts loosened from the string.
His heart confessed the warrior's power,
And, bleeding from the ceaseless shower
That smote him on the chest and side,
With words like these the giant cried:
'Well fought, well fought, Sumitra's son;
Eternal glory hast thou won,
For thou in desperate fight hast met
The victor never conquered yet,
Whom, borne on huge Airavat's back,
E'en Indra trembles to attack.
Go, son of Queen Sumitra, go:
Thy valour and thy strength I know.
Now all my hope and earnest will
Is Rama in the fight to kill.
Let him beneath my weapons fall,
And I will meet and conquer all.'

The chieftain, of Sumitra born,
Made answer as he laughed in scorn:
'Yea, thou hast won a victor's fame
From trembling Gods and Indra's shame.
There waits thee now a mightier foe

* Lakshman
Whose prowess thou hast yet to know.
There, famous in a hundred lands,
Rāma the son of Raghu stands.'

Straight at the king the giant sped,
And earth was shaken at his tread.
His bow the hero grasped and strained,
And deadly shafts in torrents rained.

As Kumbhakarna felt each stroke
From his huge mouth burst fire and smoke;
His hands were loosed in mortal pain
And dropped his weapons on the plain.
Though reft of spear and sword and mace
No terror changed his haughty face.
With heavy hands he rained his blows
And smote to death a thousand foes.
Where'er the furious monster strode,
While down his limbs the red blood flowed
Like torrents down a mountain's side,
Vānars and bears and giants died.

High o'er his head a rock he swung,
And the huge mass at Rāma flung.
But Rāma's arrows bright as flame
Shattered the mountain as it came.

Then Raghu's son, his eyes aglow
With burning anger, charged the foe,
And as his bow he strained and tried
With fearful clang the cord replied.
Wroth at the bowstring's threatening clang
To meet his foe the giant sprang.

High towering with enormous frame
Huge as a wood-crowned hill he came.
But Rāma firm and self-possessed
In words like these the foe addressed:
'Draw near, O Rākshas lord, draw near,
Nor turn thee from the fight in fear.
Thou meetest Rāma face to face,
Destroyer of the giant race.
Come, fight, and thou shalt feel this hour,
Laid low in death, thy conqueror’s power.’

He ceased: and mad with wrath and pride
The giant champion thus replied:
‘Come thou to me and thou shalt find
A foeman of a different kind.
No Khara, no Virádha,—thou
Hast met a mightier warrior now.
The strength of Kumbhakarna fear,
And dread the iron mace I rear.
This mace in days of yore subdued
The Gods and Dānav multitude.
Prove, lion of Ikshvaku’s line,
Thy power upon these limbs of mine.
Then, after trial, shalt thou bleed,
And with thy flesh my hunger feed.’

He ceased: and Rāma, undismayed,
Upon his cord those arrows laid
Which pierced the stately Sát trees through,
And Bāli king of Vánars slew.
They flew, they smote, but smote in vain
Those mighty limbs that felt no pain.
Then Rāma sent with surest aim
The dart that bore the Wind-God’s name.
The missile from the giant tore
His huge arm and the mace it bore,
Which crushed the Vánars where it fell:
And dire was Kumbhakarna’s yell.
The giant seized a tree, and then
Rushed madly at the lord of men.
Another dart, Lord Indra’s own,
To meet his furious onset thrown,
His left arm from the shoulder lopped,
And like a mountain peak it dropped.
Then from the bow of Ráma sped
Two arrows, each with crescent head;
And, winged with might which naught could stay,
They cut the giant’s legs away.
They fell, and awful was the sound
As those vast columns shook the ground;
And sky and sea and hill and cave
In echoing roars their answer gave.
Then from his side the hero drew
A dart that like the tempest flew—
No deadlier shaft has ever flown
Than that which Indra called his own—
Nor could the giant’s mail-armed neck
The fury of the missile check.
Through skin and flesh and bone it smote
And rent asunder head and throat.
Down with the sound of thunder rolled
The head adorned with rings of gold,
And crushed to pieces in its fall
A gate, a tower, a massive wall.
Hurled to the sea the body fell:
Terrific was the ocean’s swell,
Nor could swift fin and nimble leap
Save the crushed creatures of the deep.
Thus he who plagued in impious pride
The Gods and Bráhmans fought and died.
Glad were the hosts of heaven, and long
The air re-echoed with their song.¹

¹ I have abridged this long Canto by omitting some vain repetitions
common place epithets and similes and other unimportant matter. There
are many verses in this Canto which European scholars would rigidly
exclude as unmistakeably the work of later rhapsodists. Even the re-
verent Commentator whom I follow ventures to remark once or twice:
CAm ślokah prakshipta iti bahavah, ‘This śloka or verse is in the
opinion of many interpolated.’
CANTO LXVIII.

RÁVAN’S LAMENT.

They ran to Rávan in his hall
And told him of his brother’s fall:
‘Fierce as the God who rules the dead,
Upon the routed foe he fed;
And, victor for a while, at length
Fell slain by Ráma’s matchless strength.
Now like a mighty hill in size
His mangled trunk extended lies,
And where he fell, a bleeding mass,
Blocks Lanká’s gate that none may pass.’
The monarch heard: his strength gave way;
And fainting on the ground he lay.
Grieved at the giants’ mournful tale,
Long, shrill was Atikáya’s wail;
And Trisíras in sorrow bowed
His triple head, and wept aloud.
Mahodar, Mahápáráva shed
Hot tears and mourned their brother dead
At length, his wandering sense restored,
In loud lament cried Lanká’s lord:
‘Ah chief, for might and valour famed,
Whose arm the haughty foeman tamed,
Forsaking me, thy friends and all,
Why hast thou fled to Yama’s hall?
Why hast thou fled, to taste no more
The slaughtered foeman’s flesh and gore?
Ah me, my life is done to-day:’
My better arm is lopped away,
Whereon in danger I relied,
And, fearless, Gods and fiends defied.
How could a shaft from Ráma’s bow
The matchless giant overthrow,
Whose iron frame so strong of yore
The crushing bolt of Indra bore?
This day the Gods and sages meet
And triumph at their foe’s defeat.
This day the Vánar chiefs will boast
And, with new ardour fired, their host
In fiercer onset will assail
Our city, and the ramparts scale.
What care I for a monarch’s name,*
For empire, or the Maithil dame?
What joy can power and riches give,
Or life that I should care to live,
Unless this arm in mortal fray
The slayer of my brother slay?
For me, of Kumbhakarna reft,
Death is the only solace left;
And I will seek, o’erwhelmed with woes,
The realm to which my brother goes.
Ah me ill-minded, not to take
His counsel when Vibhisana spake.
When he this evil day foretold
My foolish heart was overbold:
I drove my sage adviser hence,
And reap the fruits of mine offence.’
CANTO LXIX.

NARÁNTAK'S DEATH.

Pierced to the soul by sorrow's sting
Thus wailed the evil-hearted king.
Then Triśiras stood forth and cried:
'Yea, father, he has fought and died,
Our bravest: and the loss is sore:
But rouse thee, and lament no more.
Hast thou not still thy coat of mail,
Thy bow and shafts which never fail?
A thousand asses draw thy car
Which roars like thunder heard afar.
Thy valour and thy warrior skill,
Thy God-given strength, are left thee still.
Unarmed, thy matchless might subdued
The Gods and Dānay multitude.
Armed with thy glorious weapons, how
Shall Raghu's son oppose thee now?
Or, sire, within thy palace stay;
And I myself will sweep away.
Thy foes, like Garuḍ when he makes
A banquet of the writhing snakes.
Soon Raghu's son shall press the plain,
As Narak, fell by Vishnū slain,
Or Śambar in rebellious pride
Who met the King of Gods and died.'

1 Narak was a demon, son of Bhūmi or Earth, who haunted the city Prágyotśahā.
2 Śambar was a demon of drought.
3 Indra.
Canto LXIX.  THE RAMAYAN.

The monarch heard: his courage grew,
And life and spirit came anew.
Devántak and Narántak heard,
And their fierce souls with joy were stirred;
And Atikáya¹ burned to fight,
And heard the summons with delight;
While from the rest loud rang the cry,
‘I too will fight,’ ‘and I,’ ‘and I.’

The joyous king his sons embraced,
With gold and chains and jewels graced,
And sent them forth with stirring speech
Of benison and praise to each.
Forth from the gate the princes sped
And ranged for war the troops they led.
The Vánar legions charged anew,
And trees and rocks for missiles flew.
They saw Narántak’s mighty form
Borne on a steed that mocked the storm.
To check his charge in vain they strove:
Straight through their host his way he clove,
As springs a dolphin through the tide:
And countless Vánars fell and died,
And mangled limbs and corpses lay
To mark the chief’s ensanguined way.
Sugríva saw them fall or fly
When fierce Narántak’s steed was nigh,
And marked the giant where he sped
O’er heaps of dying or of dead.
He bade the royal Angad face
That bravest chief of giant race.
As springs the sun from clouds dispersed,
So Angad from the Vánars burst.

¹ Devántak (Slayer of Gods) Narántak (Slayer of Men) Atikáya (Huge of Frame) and Triśíras (Three-Headed) were all sons of Rávaṇ.
No weapon for the fight he bore  
Save nails and teeth, and sought no more.  
'Leave, giant chieftain,' thus he spoke,  
'Leave foes unworthy of thy stroke,  
And bend against a nobler heart  
The terrors of thy deadly dart.'

Narántak heard the words he spake:  
Fast breathing, like an angry snake,  
With bloody teeth his lips he pressed  
And hurled his dart at Angad's breast.  
True was the aim and fierce the stroke,  
Yet on his breast the missile broke.  
Then Angad at the giant flew,  
And with a blow his courser slow:  
The fierce hand crushed through flesh and bone,  
And steed and rider fell o'erthrown.  
Narántak's eyes with fury blazed.  
His heavy hand on high he raised  
And struck in savage wrath the head  
Of Báli's son, who reeled and bled,  
Fainted a moment and no more:  
Then stronger, fiercer than before  
Smote with that fist which naught could stay,  
And crushed to death the giant lay.
CANTO LXX.

THE DEATH OF TRIŚIRAS.

Then raged the Rākshas chiefs, and all
Burned to avenge Narantak's fall.
Devántak raised his club on high
And rushed at Angad with a cry.
Behind came Triśiras, and near
Mahodar charged with levelled spear.
There Angad stood to fight with three:
High o'er his head he waved a tree,
And at Devántak, swift and true
As Indra's flaming bolt, it flew.
But, cut by giant shafts in twain,
With diminished force it flew in vain.
A shower of trees and blocks of stone
From Angad's hand was fiercely thrown;
But well his club Devántak plied
And turned each rock and tree aside.
Nor yet, by three such foes assailed,
The heart of Angad sank or quailed.
He slew the mighty beast that bore
Mahodar: from his head he tore
A bleeding tusk, and blow on blow
Fell fiercely on his Rākshas foe.
The giant reeled, but strength regained,
And furious strokes on Angad rained,
Who, wounded by the storm of blows,
Sank on his knees, but swiftly rose.
Then Triśiras, as up he sprang,
Drew his great bow with awful clang,
And fixed three arrows from his sheaf
Full in the forehead of the chief
Hanumán saw, nor long delayed
To speed with Níla to his aid,
Who at the three-faced giant sent
A peak from Lanka’s mountain rent.
But Triśiras with certain aim
Shot rapid arrows as it came:
And shivered by their force it broke
And fell to earth with flash and smoke.
Then as the Wind-God’s son came nigh,
Devántak reased his mace on high.
Hanumán smote him on the head
And stretched the monstrous giant dead.
Fierce Triśiras with fury strained
His bow, and showers of arrows rained
That smote on Níla’s side and chest:
He sank a moment, sore distressed;
But quickly gathered strength to seize
A mountain with its crown of trees.
Crushed by the hill, distained with gore,
Mahodar fell to rise no more.

Then Triśiras raised high his spear
Which chilled the trembling foe with fear,
And, like a flashing meteor through
The air at Hanumán it flew.
The Vánár shunned the threatened stroke,
And with strong hands the weapon broke.
The giant drew his glittering blade:
Dire was the wound the weapon made
Deep in the Vánár’s ample chest,
Who, for a moment sore oppressed,
Raised his broad hand, regaining might,
And struck the rover of the night.
Fierce was the blow: with one wild yell
Low on the earth the monster fell.
Hanúmán seized his fallen sword
Which served no more its senseless lord,
And from the monster triple-necked
Smote his huge heads with crowns bedecked.
Then Mahápársáva burned with ire;
Fierce flashed his eyes with vengeful fire,
A moment on the dead he gazed,
Then his black mace aloft was raised,
And down the mass of iron came
That struck and shook the Vánar's frame,
Hanúmán's chest was wellnigh crushed,
And from his mouth red torrents gushed;
Yet served one instant to restore
His spirit: from the foe he tore
His awful mace, and smote, and laid
The giant in the dust dismayed.
Crushed were his jaws and teeth and eyes:
Breathless and still he lay as lies
A summit from a mountain rent
By him who rules the firmament.
CANTO LXXI.

ATIKÁYA'S DEATH.

But Atikáya's wrath grew high
To see his noblest kinsmen die.
He, fiercest of the giant race,
Presuming still on Brahmá's grace;
Proud tamer of the Immortals' pride,
Whose power and might with Indra's vied,
For blood and vengeful carnage burned,
And on the foe his fury turned.
High on a car that flashed and glowed
Bright as a thousand suns he rode.
Around his princely brows was set
A rich bejewelled coronet.
Gold pendants in his ears he wore;
He strained and tried the bow he bore,
And ever, as a shaft he aimed,
His name and royal race proclaimed.
Scarce might the Vánars brook to hear
His clanging bow and voice of fear:
To Raghu's elder son they fled,
Their sure defence in woe and dread.
Then Ráma bent his eyes afar
And saw the giant in his car
Fast following the flying crowd
And roaring like a rainy cloud.
He, with the lust of battle fired,
Turned to Vibhíšaná and inquired:
'Say, who is this, of mountain size,
This archer with the lion eyes?
His car, which strikes our host with awe,
A thousand eager coursers draw.
Surrounded by the flashing spears
Which line his car, the chief appears
Like some huge cloud when lightnings play
About it on a stormy day;
And the great bow he joys to hold
Whose bended back is bright with gold,
As Indra’s bow makes glad the skies,
That best of chariots glorifies.
O see the sunlike splendour flung
From the great flag above him hung,
Where, blazoned with refulgent lines,
Ráhu¹ the dreadful Dragon shines.
Full thirty quivers near his side,
His car with shafts is well supplied;
And flashing like the light of stars
Glowam his two mighty scimitars.
Say, best of giants, who is he
Before whose face the Vánars flee?

Thus Ráma spake. Vibhíśan eyed
The giant chief, and thus replied:
*This Ráma, this is Rávan’s son:
High fame his youthful might has won.
He, best of warriors, bows his ear
The wisdom of the wise to hear.
Supreme is he mid those who know
The mastery of sword and bow.
Unrivalled in the bold attack
On elephant’s or courser’s back,
He knows, beside, each subtler art,
To win the foe, to bribe, or part.

¹ The demon of eclipse who seizes the Sun and Moon.
On him the giant hosts rely,
And fear no ill when he is nigh.
This peerless chieftain bears the name
Of Atikáya huge of frame,
Whom Dhanyamáliní of yore
To Rávan lord of Lánká bore.

Roused by his bow-string’s awful clang,
To meet their foes the Vánars sprang.
Armed with tall trees from Lánká’s wood,
And rocks and mountain peaks, they stood.
The giant’s arrows, gold-bedecked,
The storm of hurtling missiles checked;
And ever on his foemen poured
Fierce tempest from his clanging cord;
Nor could the Vánar chiefs sustain
His shafts’ intolerable rain.
They fled: the victor gained the place
Where stood the lord of Rághu’s race,
And cried with voice of thunder: ‘Lo,
Borne on my car, with shaft and bow,
I, champion of the giants, scorn
To fight with weaklings humbly born.
Come forth your bravest, if he dare,
And fight with one who will not spare.’

Forth sprang Sumitrá’s noble child,
And strained his ready bow, and smiled;
And giants trembled as the clang
Through heaven and earth reëchoing rang.
The giant to his string applied
A pointed shaft, and proudly cried;
‘Turn, turn, Sumitrá’s son and fly,
For terrible as Death am I.
Fly, nor that youthful form oppose.
Untrained in war, to warriors' blows,  
What! wilt thou waste thy childish breath  
And wake the dormant fire of death?  
Cast down, rash boy, that useless bow:  
Preserve thy life; uninjured go.'  

He ceased: and stirred by wrath and pride  
Sumitra's noble son replied:  
'By warlike deed, not words alone,  
The valour of the brave is shown.  
Cease with vain boasts my scorn to move,  
And with thine arm thy prowess prove.  
Borne on thy car, with sword and bow,  
With all thine arms, thy valour show.  
Fight, and my deadly shafts this day  
Low in the dust thy head shall lay,  
And, rushing fast in ceaseless flood,  
Shall rend thy flesh and drink thy blood.'  

His giant foe no answer made,  
But on his string an arrow laid.  
He raised his arm, the cord he drew,  
At Lakshmana's breast the arrow flew.  
Sumitra's son, his foemen's dread,  
Shot a fleet shaft with crescent head,  
Which cleft that arrow pointed well,  
And harmless to the earth it fell.  
A shower of shafts from Lakshmana's bow  
Fell fast and furious on the foe  
Who quailed not as the missiles smote  
With idle force his iron coat.  
Then came the friendly Wind-God near,  
And whispered thus in Lakshman's ear:  
'Such shafts as these in vain assail  
Thy foe's impenetrable mail.  
A more tremendous missile try,
Or never may the giant die.
Employ the mighty spell, and aim
The weapon known by Brahmá's name.
He ceased: Sumitrá's son obeyed:
On his great bow the shaft was laid,
And with a roar like thunder, true
As Indra's flashing bolt, it flew.
The giant poured his shafts like rain
To check its course, but all in vain.
With spear and mace and sword he tried
To turn the fiery dart aside.
Winged with a force which naught could check,
It smote the monster in the neck,
And, sundered from his shoulders, rolled
To earth his head and helm of gold.
CANTO LXXII.

RÁVAṈ'S SPEECH.

The giants bent, in rage and grief,
Their eyes upon the fallen chief;
Then flying wild with fear and pale
To Rávān bore the mournful tale.
He heard how Atikáya died,
Then turned him to his lords, and cried:
'Where are they now—my bravest—where,
Wise to consult and prompt to dare?
Where is Dhúmráksha, skilled to wield
All weapons in the battle field?
Akampan, and Prahasta's might,
And Kumbhakarna bold in fight?
These, these and many a Rákshas more,
Each master of the arms he bore,
Who every foe in fight o'erthrew,
The victors none could e'er subdue,
Have perished by the might of one,
The vengeful arm of Raghu's son.
In vain I cast mine eyes around,
No match for Ráma here is found,
No chief to stand before that bow
Whose deadly shafts have caused our woe.

Now, warriors, to your stations hence;
Provide ye for the wall's defence,
And be the Ásoka garden, where
The lady lies, your special care.
Be every lane and passage barred,
Set at each gate a chosen guard,
And with your troops, where danger calls,
Be ready to defend the walls.
Each movement of the Vánars mark;
Observe them when the skies grow dark;
Be ready in the dead of night,
And ere the morning bring the light.
Taught by our loss we may not scorn
These legions of the forest-born.’

He ceased: the Rákshas lords obeyed;
Each at his post his troops arrayed:
And, torn with pangs that pierced him through,
The monarch from the hall withdrew.
CANTO LXXIII.

INDRAJIT'S VICTORY.

But Indrajit the fierce and bold
With words like these his sire consoled:
'Dismiss, O King, thy grief and dread,
And be not thus disquieted.
Against this numbing sorrow strive,
For Indrajit is yet alive;
And none in battle may withstand
The fury of his strong right hand.
This day, O sire, thine eyes shall see
The sons of Raghu slain by me.'

He ceased: he bade the king farewell:
Clear, mid the roar of drum and shell,
The clash of sword and harness rang.
As to his ear the warrior sprang.
Close followed by his Rákshas train
Through Lanká's gate he reached the plain.
Then down he leapt, and bade a band
Of giants by the chariot stand:
Then with due rites, as rules require,
Did worship to the Lord of Fire.
The sacred oil, as texts ordain,
With wreaths of scented flowers and grain,
Within the flame in order due,
That mightiest of the giants threw.
There on the ground were spear and blade,
And arrowy leaves and fuel laid,
An iron ladle deep and wide,
And robes with sanguine colours dyed.
Beside him stood a sable goat:
The giant seized it by the throat,
And straight from the consuming flame
Auspicious signs of victory came.
For swiftly, curling to the right,
The fire leapt up with willing light
Undimmed by smoky cloud, and, red
Like gold, upon the offering fed.
They brought him, while the flame yet glowed,
The dart by Brahmá's grace bestowed,
And all the arms he wielded well
Were charmed with text and holy spell.

Then fiercer for the fight he burned,
And at the foe his chariot turned,
While all his followers lifting high
Their maces charged with furious cry.
Dire, yet more dire the battle grew,
As rocks and trees and arrows flew.
The giant shot his shafts like rain,
And Vánars fell in myriads slain.
Sugréva, Angad, Nila felt
The wounds his hurtling arrows dealt.
His shafts the blood of Gaya drank;
Hanúmán reeled and Mainda sank.
Bright as the glances of the sun
Came the swift darts they could not shun.
Caught in the arrowy nets he wove,
In vain the sons of Raghu strove;
And Ráma, by the darts oppressed,
His brother chieftain thus addressed:
'See, first this giant warrior sends
Destruction mid our Vánar friends,
And now his arrows thick and fast
Canto LXXIII. THE RAMAYAN.

Their binding net around us cast,
To Brahmá's grace the chieftain owes
The matchless power and might he shows;
And mortal strength in vain contends
With him whom Brahmá's self befriends.
Then let us still with dauntless hearts
Endure this storm of pelting darts.
Soon must we sink bereaved of sense;
And then the victor, hurrying hence,
Will seek his father in his hall
And tell him of his foemen's fall.'

He ceased: o'erpowered by shaft and spell
The sons of Raghu reeled and fell.
The Rákshas on their bodies gazed;
And, mid the shouts his followers raised,
Sped back to Lanká to relate
In Rávan's hall the princes' fate.
CANTO LXXIV.

THE MEDICINAL HERBS.

The shades of falling night concealed
The carnage of the battle field,
Which, bearing each a blazing brand,
Hanúmán and Vibhishana scanned,
Moving with slow and anxious tread
Among the dying and the dead.
Sad was the scene of slaughter shown
Where'er the torches' light was thrown.
Here mountain forms of Vánars lay
Whose heads and limbs were lopped away.
Arms legs and fingers strewed the ground,
And severed heads lay thick around.
The earth was moist with sanguine streams,
And sighs were heard and groans and screams.
There lay Sugrīva still and cold,
There Angad, once so brave and bold.
There Jámbaván his might reposed,
There Vegadarśi's eyes were closed;
There in the dust was Nala's pride,
And Dwivid lay by Mainda's side.
Where'er they looked the ensanguined plain
Was strewn with myriads of the slain;
They sought with keenly searching eyes
King Jámbaván supremely wise.
His strength had failed by slow decay.

1 In such cases as this I am not careful to reproduce the numbers of the poet, which in the text which I follow are 670000000; the Benga
gal recension being content with thirty million less.
And pierced with countless shafts he lay.
They saw, and hastened to his side,
And thus the sage Vibhíșaṇ cried:
'Thee, monarch of the bears, we seek:
Speak if thou yet art living, speak.'

Slow came the aged chief's reply;
Scarce could he say with many a sigh:
'Torn with keen shafts which pierce each limb,
My strength is gone, my sight is dim;
Yet though I scarce can raise mine eyes,
Thy voice, O chief, I recognize.
O, while these ears can hear thee, say,
Has Hanumán survived this day?'

'Why ask,' Vibhíșaṇ cried,' for one
Of lower rank, the Wind-God's son?
Hast thou forgotten, first in place,
The princely chief of Rághu's race?
Can King Sugríva claim no care,
And Angad, his imperial heir?'

'Yea, dearer than my noblest friends
Is he on whom our hope depends.
For if the Wind-God's son survive,
All we though dead are yet alive.
But if his precious life be fled
Though living still we are but dead:
He is our hope and sure relief.'
Thus slowly spoke the aged chief:
Then to his side Hanumán came,
And with low reverence named his name.
Cheered by the face he longed to view
The wounded chieftain lived anew.
'Go forth,' he cried, 'O strong and brave,
And in their woe the Vánars save.
No might but thine, supremely great,
May help us in our lost estate.
The trembling bears and Vánars cheer,
Calm their sad hearts, dispel their fear.
Save Rághu’s noble sons, and heal
The deep wounds of the winged steel.
High o’er the waters of the sea.
To far Himálaya’s summits flee.
Kailáśa there wilt thou behold,
And Rishabhí with his peaks of gold.
Between them see a mountain rise
Whose splendour will enchant thine eyes;
His sides are clothed above, below,
With all the rarest herbs that grow.
Upon that mountain’s lofty crest
Four plants, of sovereign powers possessed,
Spring from the soil, and flashing there
Shed radiance through the neighbouring air.
One draws the shaft; one brings again
The breath of life to warm the slain;
One heals each wound; one gives anew
To faded cheeks their wonted hue.
Fly, chieftain, to that mountain’s brow
And bring those herbs to save us now.

Hanúmán heard, and springing through
The air like Vishnú’s discus1 flew.
The sea was passed: beneath him, gay
With bright-winged birds, the mountains lay,
And brook and lake and lonely glen,
And fertile lands with toiling men.
On, on he sped: before him rose
The mansion of perennial snows.
There soared the glorious peaks as fair.

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1 The discus or quoit, a sharp-edged circular missile, is the favourite weapon of Vishnú.
As white clouds in the summer air,
Here, bursting from the leafy shade,
In thunder leapt the wild cascade.
He looked on many a pure retreat
Dear to the Gods' and sages' feet:
The spot where Brahmá dwells apart,
The place whence Rudra launched his dart;
Vishnu's high seat and Indra's home,
And slopes where Yama's servants roam.
There was Kuvera's bright abode;
There Brahmá's mystic weapon glowed.
There was the noble hill whereon
Those herbs with wondrous lustre shone,
And, ravished by the glorious sight,
Hanumán rested on the height.
He, moving down the glittering peak,
The healing herbs began to seek;
But, when he thought to seize the prize,
They hid them from his eager eyes.
Then to the hill in wrath he spake:
'Mine arm this day shall vengeance take,
If thou wilt feel no pity, none,
In this great need of Raghu's son.'
He ceased: his mighty arms he bent
And from the trembling mountain rent
His huge head with the life it bore,
Snakes, elephants, and golden ore.
O'er hill and plain and watery waste
His rapid way again he traced,
And mid the wondering Vánars laid
His burthen through the air conveyed.

1 To destroy Tripura the triple city in the sky air and earth, built
by Maya for a celebrated Asur or demon, or as another commentator
explains, to destroy Kandarpa or Love.
The wondrous herbs' delightful scent
To all the host new vigour lent.
Free from all darts and wounds and pain
The sons of Raghu lived again,
And dead and dying Vánars healed
Rose vigorous from the battle field.
CANTO LXXV.

THE NIGHT ATTACK.

Sugrīva spake in words like these:  
'Now, Vānar lords, the occasion seize.  
For now, of sons and brothers rest,  
To Rāvan little hope is left;  
And if our host his gates assail  
His weak defence will surely fail.'

At dead of night the Vānar bands  
Rushed on with torches in their hands.  
Scared by the coming of the host  
Each giant warder left his post.  
Where'er the Vānar legions came  
Their way was marked with hostile flame  
That spread in fury to devour  
Palace and temple, gate and tower.  
Down came the walls and porches, down  
Came stately piles that graced the town.  
In many a house the fire was red,  
On sandal wood and aloe fed,  
And scorching flames in billows rolled  
O'er diamonds and pearls and gold.  
On cloth of wool, on silk brocade,  
On lineān robes their fury preyed.  
'Wheels, poles and yokes were burned, and all  
The coursers' harness in the stall;  
And elephants' and chariots' gear,  
The sword, the buckler, and the spear.  
Scared by the crash of falling beams,
Mid lamentations, groans and screams,
Forth rushed the giants through the flames
And with them dragged bewildered dames,
Each, with o'erwhelming terror wild,
Still clasping to her breast a child.
The swift fire from a cloud of smoke
Through many a gilded lattice broke,
And, melting pearl and coral, rose
O'er balconies and porticoes.
The startled crane and peacock screamed
As with strange light the courtyard gleamed,
And fierce unusual glare was thrown
On shrinking wood and heated stone.
From burning stall and stable freed
Rushed frantic elephant and steed,
And goaded by the driving blaze
Fled wildly through the crowded ways.
As earth with fervent heat will glow
When comes her final overthrow;
From gate to gate, from court to spire
Proud Lanká was one blaze of fire,
And every headland, rock and bay
Shone bright a hundred leagues away.
Forth, blinded by the heat and flame
Ran countless giants huge of frame;
And, mustering for fierce attack,
The Vánars charged to drive them back,
While shout and scream and roar and cry
Reéchoed through the earth and sky.
There Ráma stood with strength renewed,
And ever, as the foe he viewed,
Shaking the distant regions rang
His mighty bow's tremendous clang.
Then through the gates Nikumbha hied,
And Kumbha by his brother's side,
Sent forth—the bravest and the best—
To battle by the king's behest.
There fought the chiefs in open field,
And Angad fell and Dwivid reeled.
Sugrīva saw: by rage impelled
He crushed the bow which Kumbha held.
About his foe Sugrīva wound
His arms, and, heaving from the ground
The giant, hurled him o'er the bank;
And deep beneath the sea he sank.
Like Mandar hill with furious swell
Up leapt the waters where he fell.
Again he rose: he sprang to land
And raised on high his threatening hand:
Full on Sugrīva's chest it came
And shook the Vānar's massy frame,
But on the wounded bone he broke
His wrist—so furious was the stroke.
With force that naught could stay or check,
Sugrīva smote him neath the neck.
The fierce blow crashed through flesh and bone
And Kumbha lay in death o'erthrown.
Nikumbha saw his brother die,
And red with fury flashed his eye.
He dashed with mighty sway and swing
His axe against the Vānar king;
But shattered on that living rock
It split in fragments at the shock.
Sugrīva, rising to the blow,
Raised his huge hand and smote his foe,
And in the dust the giant lay
Gasping in blood his soul away.1

1 I have briefly despatched Kumbha and Nikumbha, each of whom
has in the text a long Canto to himself. When they fall Rāvaṇa sends forth Makarāksha or Crocodile-Eye, the son of Khara who was slain by Rāma in the forest before the abduction of Sītā. The account of his sallying forth, of his battle with Rāma and of his death by the fiery dart of that hero occupies two Cantos which I entirely pass over. Indrajit again comes forth and, rendered invisible by his magic art slays countless Vānars with his unerring arrows. He retires to the city and returns bearing in his chariot an effigy of Sītā, the work of magic, sweeping and wailing by his side. He grasps the lovely image by the hair and cuts it down with his scimitar in the sight of the enraged Hanumān and all the Vānar host. At last after much fighting of the usual kind Indrajit's chariot is broken in pieces, his charioteer is slain, and he himself falls by Lakshmana's hand, to the inexpressible delight of the high-souled saints, the nymphs of heaven and other celestial beings.
CANTO XCIII.

RÁVAN'S LAMENT.

They sought the king, a mournful train,
And cried, 'My lord, thy son is slain.
By Lakshmana's hand, before these eyes,
The warrior fell no more to rise.
No time is this for vain regret:
Thy hero son a hero met;
And he whose might in battle pressed
Lord Indra and the Gods confessed,
Whose power was stranger to defeat,
Has gained in heaven a blissful seat.'

The monarch heard the mournful tale:
His heart was faint, his cheek was pale;
His fleeting sense at length regained,
In trembling tones he thus complained:
'Ah me, my son, my pride: the boast
And glory of the giant host.
Could Lakshmana's puny might defeat
The foe whom Indra feared to meet?
Could not thy deadly arrows split
Proud Mandar's peaks, O Indrajit,
And the Destroyer's self destroy?
And wast thou conquered by a boy?

I will not weep: thy noble deed
Has blessed thee with immortal meed
Gained by each hero in the skies
Who fighting for his sovereign dies.
Now, fearless of all meaner foes,
The guardian Gods¹ will taste repose:
But earth to me, with hill and plain,
Is desolate, for thou art slain.
Ah, whither hast thou fled, and left
Thy mother, Lankā, me bereft;
Left pride and state and wives behind,
And lordship over all thy kind?
I fondly hoped thy hand should pay
Due honours on my dying day:
And couldst thou, O beloved, flee
And leave thy funeral rites to me?
Life has no comfort left me, none,
O Indrajit my son, my son.’

Thus wailed he broken by his woes:
But swift the thought of vengeance rose
In awful wrath his teeth he gnashed,
And from his eyes red lightning flashed.
Hot from his mouth came fire and smoke,
As thus the king in fury spoke:

‘Through many a thousand years of yore
The penance and the pain I bore,
And by fierce torment well sustained
The highest grace of Brahmā gained.
His plighted word my life assured,
From Gods of heaven and fiends secured.
He armed my limbs with burnished mail
Whose lustre turns the sunbeams pale,

¹ The Lokapālas are sometimes regarded as deities appointed by Brahmā at the creation of the world to act as guardians of different orders of beings, but more commonly they are identified with the deities presiding over the four cardinal and four intermediate points of the compass, which, according to Manu V. 96, are 1, Indra, guardian of the East; 2, Agni, of the South-east; 3, Yama, of the South; 4, Śūrya, of the South-west; 5, Varuṇa, of the West; 6, Pāvana or Vāyu, of the North-west; 7, Kuvera, of the North; 8, Soma or Candra, of the North-east.
In battle proof against heavenly bands
With thunder in their threatening hands.
Armed in this mail myself will go
With ऋषमास's gift my deadly bow,
And, cleaving through the foes my way,
The slayers of my son will slay.'

Then, by his grief to frenzy wrought,
The captive in the grove he sought.
Swift through the shady path he sped:
Earth trembled at his furious tread.
Fierce were his eyes: his monstrous hand
Held drawn for death his glittering brand.
There weeping stood the Maithil dame:
She shuddered as the giant came.
Near drew the rover of the night
And raised his sword in act to smite;
But, by his nobler heart impelled,
One Rākshas lord his arm withheld:
'Wilt thou, great Monarch,' thus he cried,
'Wilt thou, to heavenly Gods allied,
Blot for all time thy glorious fame,
The slayer of a gentle dame?
What! shall a woman's blood be spilt
To stain thee with eternal guilt,
Thee deep in all the Veda's lore?
Far be the thought for evermore.
Ah look, and let her lovely face
This fury from thy bosom chase.'

He ceased: the prudent counsel pleased
The monarch, and his wrath appeased;
Then to his council hall in haste
The giant lord his steps retraced.

1 I omit two Cantos in the first of which Rama with an enchanted Gandharva weapon deals destruction among the Rākshases sent out by Rāvaṇ, and in the second the Rākshas dames lament the slain and mourn over the madness of Rāvaṇ.
CANTO XCVI.

RÁVAN'S SALLY.

The groans and cries of dams who wailed
The ears of Lanká's lord assailed,
For from each house and home was sent
The voice of weeping and lament.
In troubled thought his head he bowed,
Then fiercely looking on the crowd
Of nobles near his throne he broke
The silence, and in fury spoke:
'This day my deadly shafts shall fly,
And Rághu's sons shall surely die.
This day shall countless Vánars bleed
And dogs and kites and vultures feed.
Go, bid them swift my car prepare,
Bring the great bow I long to bear:
And let my host with sword and shield
And spear be ready for the field.'

From street to street the captains passed,
And Rákshaś warriors gathered fast,
With spear and sword to pierce and strike,
And axe and club and mace and pike.'
Then Rávan's warrior chariot wrote

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1 I omit several weapons for which I cannot find distinctive names, and among them the Satagñi or Conticide, supposed by some to be a kind of fire-arms or rocket, but described by a commentator on the Mahábhárata as a stone or cylindrical piece of wood studded with iron spikes.

2 The chariots of Rávan's present army are said to have been one hundred and fifty million in number with three hundred million elephants, and twelve hundred million horses and asses. The footmen are merely said to have been 'unnumbered.'
With gold and rich inlay was brought.  
Mid tinkling bells and weapons' clang  
The monarch on the chariot sprang,  
Which, decked with gems of every hue,  
Eight steeds of noble lineage drew.  
Mid roars of drum and shell rang out  
From countless throats a joyful shout,  
As, girt with hosts in warlike pride,  
Through Lanká's streets the tyrant hied.  
Still, louder than the roar of drums,  
Went up the cry 'He comes, he comes,  
Our ever-conquering lord who trod  
Beneath his feet both fiend and God.'  
On to the gate the warriors swept  
Where Rághu's sons their station kept.  
When Rávan's car the portal passed  
The sun in heaven was overcast.  
Earth rocked and reeled from side to side,  
And birds with boding voices cried.  
Against the standard of the king  
A vulture flapped his horrid wing.  
Big gouts of blood before him dropped,  
His trembling steeds in terror stopped.  
The hue of death was on his cheek,  
And scarce his falttering tongue could speak,  
When, terrible with flash and flame,  
Through murky air a meteor came.  
Still by the hand of Death impelled  
His onward way the giant held.  
The Vánars in the field afar  
Heard the loud thunder of his car,  
And turned with warriors' fierce delight  
To meet the giant in the fight.  
He came: his clanging bow he drew
And myriads of the Vānars slew.
Some through the side and heart he cleft,
Some headless on the plain were left.
Some struggling groaned with mangled thighs,•
Or broken arms or blinded eyes.

I omit Cantos XCVII., XCVIII., and XCIX., which describe in the usual way three single combats between Sugrīva and Angad on the Vānar side and Virūpāksha, Mahodar, and Mahāpārśva on the side of the giants. The weapons of the Vānars are trees and rocks: the giants fight with swords, axes, and bows and arrows. The details are generally the same as those of preceding duels. The giants fall, one in each Canto.
CANTO C.

RĀVAN IN THE FIELD.

The plain with bleeding limbs was spread,
And heaps of dying and of dead.
His mighty bow still Rāma strained,
And shafts upon the giants rained.
Still Angad and Sugrīva, wrought
To fury, for the Vānars fought.
Crushed with huge rocks through chest and side
Mahodar, Mahāpārśva'died.
And Virúpáksha stained with gore
Dropped on the plain to rise no more.
When Rāvana saw the three o'erthrown
He cried aloud in furious tone:
'Urge, urge the car, my charioteer,
The haughty Vānars' death is near.
This very day shall end our griefs
For leaguered town and slaughtered chiefs.
Rāma the tree whose lovely fruit
Is Sítá, shall this arm uproot,—
Whose branches with protecting shade
Are Vānar lords who lend him aid.'

Thus cried the king: the welkin rang
As for the eager coursers sprang,
And earth beneath the chariot shook
With flowery grove and hill and brook.
Fast rained his shafts: where'er he sped
The conquered Vānars fell or fled.
On rolled the car in swift career
Till Raghu's noble sons were near,
Then Rama looked upon the foe
And strained and tried his sounding bow
Till earth and all the region rang
Re-echoing to the awful clang.
His bow the younger chieftain bent,
And shaft on shaft at Ravana sent.
He shot: but Ravana little recked;
Each arrow with his own he checked,
And headless, baffled of its aim,
To earth the harmless missile came;
And Lakshman stayed his arm o'erpowered
By the thick darts the giant showered.
Fierce waxed the fight and fiercer yet,
For Ravana now and Rama met,
And each on other poured amain
The tempest of his arrowy rain.
While all the sky above was dark
With missiles speeding to their mark
Like clouds, with flashing lightning twined
About them, hurried by the wind.
Not fiercer was the wondrous fight
When Vritra fell by Indra's might.
All arts of war each foeman knew,
And, trained alike, his bowstring drew.
Red-eyed with fury Lanka's king
Pressed his huge fingers on the string,
And fixed in Rama's brows a flight
Of arrows winged with matchless might.
Still Raghu's son endured, and bore
That crown of shafts though wounded sore.
O'er a dire dart a spell he spoke
With mystic power to aid the stroke.
In vain upon the foe it smote
Rebounding from the steelproof coat.
The giant armed his bow anew,
And wondrous weapons hissed and flew,
Terrific, deadly, swift of flight,
Beaked like the vulture and the kite,
Or bearing heads of fearful make,
Of lion, tiger, wolf and snake.¹
Then Rāma, troubled by the storm
Of flying darts in every form
Shot by an arm that naught could tire,
Launched at the foe his dart of fire,
Which, sacred to the Lord of Flame,
Burnt and consumed where'er it came.
And many a blazing shaft beside
The hero to his string applied.
With fiery course of dazzling hue
Swift to the mark each missile flew,
Some flashing like a shooting star,
Some as the tongues of lightning are;
One like a brilliant plant, one
In splendour like the morning sun.
Where'er the shafts of Rāma burned
The giant's darts were foiled and turned.
Far into space his weapons fled,
But as they flew struck thousands dead.

¹ It is not very easy to see the advantage of having arrows headed in the way mentioned. Fanciful names for war-engines and weapons derived from their resemblance to various animals are not confined to India. The "War-wolf" was used by Edward I. at the siege of Brechin, the "Cat-house" and the "Sow" were used by Edward III. at the siege of Dunbar.