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**Title:** The Birth of the War-God: A Poem by Kálidása

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**Release Date:** April 12, 2010 [EBook #31968]

**Language:** English

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KÁLIDÁSA \*\*\*

**THE  
BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD.**

*A POEM BY KÁLIDÁSA.*

**Translated from the Sanskrit into English Verse**

BY

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**Second Edition.**

**LONDON:  
TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL.  
1879.**

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TRÜBNER'S

ORIENTAL SERIES.  
V.

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**PREFACE.**

[Pg vii]

Of the history of KÁLIDÁSA, to whom by general assent the KUMÁRA SAMBHAVA, OR BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD, is attributed, we know but little with any certainty; we can only gather from a memorial-verse which enumerates their names, that he was one of the 'Nine Precious Stones' that shone at the Court of VIKRAMÁDITYA, King of OUJEIN, in the half century immediately preceding the Christian era.<sup>[A]</sup> As the examination of arguments for and against the correctness of this date is not likely to interest general readers, I must request them to rest satisfied with the belief that about the

time when VIRGIL and HORACE were shedding an undying lustre upon the reign of AUGUSTUS, our poet KĀLIDĀSA lived, loved, and sang, giving and taking honour, at the polished court of the no less munificent patron of Sanskrit literature, at the period of its highest perfection.

Little as we know of Indian poetry, here and there an English reader may be found, who is not entirely unacquainted with the name or works of the author of the beautiful dramas of SAKONTALĀ and THE HERO AND THE NYMPH, the former of which has long enjoyed an European celebrity in the translation of SIR WILLIAM JONES, and the latter is one of the most charming of PROFESSOR WILSON'S specimens of the Hindú Theatre; here and there even in England may be found a lover of the graceful, tender, picturesque, and fanciful, who knows something, and would gladly know more, of the sweet poet of the CLOUD MESSENGER, and THE SEASONS; whilst in Germany he has been deeply studied in the original, and enthusiastically admired in translation,—not the Orientalist merely, but the poet, the critic, the natural philosopher,—a GOETHE, a SCHLEGEL, a HUMBOLDT, having agreed, on account of his tenderness of feeling and his rich creative imagination, to set KĀLIDĀSA very high among the glorious company of the Sons of Song.<sup>[B]</sup> [Pg viii]

That the poem which is now for the first time offered to the general reader, in an English dress, will not diminish this reputation is the translator's earnest hope, yet my admiration of the grace and beauty that pervade so much of the work must not allow me to deny that occasionally, even in the noble Sanskrit, if we judge him by an European standard, KĀLIDĀSA is bald and prosaic. Nor is this a defence of the translator at the expense of the poet. Fully am I conscious how far I am from being able adequately to reproduce the fanciful creation of the sweet singer of OUJEIN; that numerous beauties of thought and expression I may have passed by, mistaken, marred; that in many of the more elaborate descriptions my own versification is 'harsh as the jarring of a tuneless chord' compared with the melody of KĀLIDĀSA'S rhythm, to rival whose sweetness and purity of language, so admirably adapted to the soft repose and celestial rosy hue of his pictures, would have tried all the fertility of resource, the artistic skill, and the exquisite ear of the author of LALLA ROOKH himself. I do not think this poem deserves, and I am sure it will not obtain, that admiration which the author's masterpieces already made known at once commanded; at all events, if the work itself is not inferior, it has not enjoyed the good fortune of having a JONES or a WILSON for translator. [Pg ix]

It may be as well to inform the reader, before he wonder at the misnomer, that the BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD was either left unfinished by its author, or time has robbed us of the conclusion; the latter is the more probable supposition, tradition informing us that the poem originally consisted of twenty-two cantos, of which only seven now remain.<sup>[C]</sup> [Pg x]

I have derived great assistance in the work of translation from the Calcutta printed edition of the poem in the Library of the East-India House; but although the Sanskrit commentaries accompanying the text are sometimes of the greatest use in unravelling the author's meaning, they can scarcely claim infallibility; and, not unfrequently, are so matter-of-fact and prosaic, that I have not scrupled to think, or rather to feel, for myself. It is, however, PROFESSOR STENZLER'S edition,<sup>[D]</sup> published under the auspices of the Oriental Translation Fund (a society that has liberally encouraged my own undertaking), that I have chiefly used. Valuable as this work is (and I will not disown my great obligations to it), it is much to be regretted that the extracts from the native commentators are so scanty, and the annotations so few and brief.

And now one word as to the manner in which I have endeavoured to perform my task. Though there is much, I think, that might be struck out, to the advantage of the poem, this I have in no instance ventured to do, my aim having been to give the English reader as faithful a cast of the original as my own power and the nature of things would permit, and, without attempting to give word for word or line for line, to produce upon the imagination impressions similar to those which one who studies the work in Sanskrit would experience. [Pg xi]

I will not seek to anticipate the critics, nor to deprecate their animadversions, by pointing out the beauties of the poet, or particularising the defects of him and his translator. That the former will be appreciated, and the latter kindly dealt with, late experience makes me confident; so that now, in the words of the Manager in the Prelude to the HERO AND THE NYMPH, "I have only to request the audience that they will listen to this work of KĀLIDĀSA with attention and kindness, in consideration of its subject and respect for the Author."

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*April, 1853.*

A [This date is much too early. It has been shown by H. Jacobi from the astrological data contained in the poem that the date of its composition cannot be placed earlier than about the middle of the fourth century A.D.]

B Goethe says:

Willst du die Blüthe des frühen, die Früchte des späteren Jahres,  
Willst du was reizt and entzückt, willst du was sättigt and nährt,  
Willst du den Himmel, die Erde, mit einem Namen begreifen;  
Nenn' ich Sakontalá, Dich, und so ist Alles gesagt.

See also Schlegel's Dramatic Literature, Lect. II., and Humboldt's Kosmos, Vol. II. p. 40, and note.

C [Ten more cantos, of very inferior merit, have been published since this was written.]

## PRELIMINARY NOTE.

[Pg xii]

### PRONUNCIATION.

As a general rule, the Sanskrit vowels are to be sounded like those of the Italian alphabet, except the short or unaccented *a*, which has the sound of that letter in the word *America*: "*pandit*," a learned man, being pronounced *pundit*.

<i>á</i> , long or accented	like <i>a</i> in <i>father</i> .
<i>e</i>	like <i>e</i> in <i>they</i> .
<i>i</i> , short or unaccented,	like <i>i</i> in <i>pick</i> .
<i>í</i> , long or accented	like <i>i</i> in <i>pique</i> .
<i>o</i>	like <i>o</i> in <i>go</i> .
<i>u</i> , short or unaccented,	like <i>u</i> in <i>full</i> .
<i>ú</i> , long or accented	like <i>u</i> in <i>rule</i> .

The diphthongs *ai* and *au* are pronounced severally like *i* in *rise* and *ou* in *our*.

The consonants are sounded as in English. In the aspirates, however, the sound of *h* is kept distinct; *dh*, *th*, *ph*, *bh*, &c., being pronounced as in *red-hot*, *pent-house*, *up-hill*, *abhor*, &c. *G* is always hard, whatever vowel follows.

In HIMÁLAYA the accent is on the *second* syllable.

## THE BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD.

[Pg 1]

### Canto First.

#### UMÁ'S NATIVITY.

Far in the north [HIMÁLAYA](#), lifting high  
 His towery summits till they cleave the sky,  
 Spans the wide land from east to western sea,  
 Lord of the hills, instinct with deity.  
 For him, when [PRITHU](#) ruled in days of old  
 The rich earth, teeming with her gems and gold,  
 The vassal hills and MERU drained her breast,  
 To deck HIMÁLAYA, for they loved him best;  
 And earth, the mother, gave her store to fill  
 With herbs and sparkling ores the royal hill.  
 Proud mountain-king! his diadem of snow  
 Dims not the beauty of his gems below.  
 For who can gaze upon the moon, and dare  
 To mark one spot less brightly glorious there?  
 Who, 'mid a thousand virtues, dares to blame  
 One shade of weakness in a hero's fame?  
 Oft, when the gleamings of his mountain brass  
 Flash through the clouds and tint them as they pass,  
 Those glories mock the hues of closing day,  
 And heaven's bright wantons hail their hour of play;  
 Try, ere the time, the magic of their glance,  
 And deck their beauty for the twilight dance.  
 Dear to the sylphs are the cool shadows thrown  
 By dark clouds wandering round the mountain's zone,  
 Till frightened by the storm and rain they seek  
 Eternal sunshine on each loftier peak.  
 Far spread the wilds where eager hunters roam,  
 Tracking the lion to his dreary home.  
 For though the melting snow has washed away  
 The crimson blood-drops of the wounded prey,  
[Still the fair pearls](#) that graced his forehead tell  
 Where the strong elephant, o'ermastered, fell,  
 And clinging to the lion's claws, betray,  
 Falling at every step, the mighty conqueror's way.

[Pg 2]

There birch-trees wave, that lend their friendly aid  
To tell the passion of the love-lorn maid,  
So quick to learn in metal tints to mark  
Her hopes and fears upon the tender bark.

List! breathing from each cave, HIMĀLAYA leads  
The glorious hymn with all his whispering reeds,  
[Till heavenly minstrels](#) raise their voice in song,  
And swell his music as it floats along.  
There the fierce elephant wounds the scented bough  
To ease the torment of his burning brow;  
And bleeding pines their odorous gum distil  
To breathe rare fragrance o'er the sacred hill.  
[There magic herbs](#) pour forth their streaming light  
From mossy caverns through the darksome night,  
And lend a torch to guide the trembling maid  
Where waits her lover in the leafy shade.  
Yet hath he caves within whose inmost cells  
In tranquil rest the murky darkness dwells,  
And, like the night-bird, spreads the brooding wing  
Safe in the shelter of the mountain-king,  
Unscorned, uninjured; for the good and great  
Spurn not the suppliant for his lowly state.

[Pg 3]

Why lingers yet the heavenly minstrel's bride  
On the wild path that skirts HIMĀLAYA'S side?  
Cold to her tender feet—oh, cold—the snow,  
Why should her steps—her homeward steps—be slow?  
'Tis that her slender ankles scarce can bear  
The weight of beauty that impedes her there;  
Each rounded limb, and all her peerless charms,  
That broad full bosom, those voluptuous arms.

[E'en the wild kine](#) that roam his forests bring  
The royal symbols to the mountain-king.  
With tails outspread, their bushy streaming hair  
Flashes like moonlight through the parted air.  
What monarch's fan more glorious might there be,  
More meet to grace a king as proud as he?

[Pg 4]

There, when the nymphs, within the cave's recess,  
In modest fear their gentle limbs undress,  
Thick clouds descending yield a friendly screen,  
And blushing beauty bares her breast unseen.

With pearly dewdrops GANGĀ loads the gale  
That waves the dark pines towering o'er the vale,  
And breathes in welcome freshness o'er the face  
Of wearied hunters when they quit the chase.

So far aloft, amid Himālayan steeps,  
Crouched on the tranquil pool the lotus sleeps,  
[That the bright SEVEN](#) who star the northern sky  
Cull the fair blossoms from their seats on high;  
And when the sun pours forth his morning glow  
In streams of glory from his path below,  
They gain new beauty as his kisses break  
His darlings' slumber on the mountain lake.

Well might that ancient hill by merit claim  
The power and glory of a monarch's name;  
Nurse of pure herbs that grace each holy rite,  
Earth's meetest bearer of unyielding might.  
The Lord of Life for this ordained him king,  
And bade him share the sacred offering.

[Pg 5]

Gladly obedient to the law divine,  
He chose a consort to prolong his line.  
No child of earth, born of the Sage's will,  
The fair nymph MENĀ pleased the sovran hill.  
To her he sued, nor was his prayer denied,  
The Saints' beloved was the mountain's bride.  
Crowned with all bliss and beauty were the pair,  
He passing glorious, she was heavenly fair.  
Swiftly the seasons, winged with love, flew on,  
And made her mother of a noble son,  
The great MAINĀKA, who in triumph led  
His Serpent beauties to the bridal bed;  
[And once when INDRA'S might](#) those pinions rent  
That bare the swift hills through the firmament,

(So fierce his rage, no mountain could withstand  
The wild bolt flashing from his red right hand,)  
He fled to Ocean, powerful to save,  
And hid his glory 'neath the friendly wave.

A gentle daughter came at length to bless  
The royal mother with her loveliness;  
[Born once again](#), for in an earlier life  
High fame was hers, as ŚIVA'S faithful wife.  
But her proud sire had dared the God to scorn;  
Then was her tender soul with anguish torn,  
And jealous for the lord she loved so well,  
Her angered spirit left its mortal cell.  
Now deigned the maid, a lovely boon, to spring  
From that pure lady and the mountain-king.  
When Industry and Virtue meet and kiss,  
Holy their union, and the fruit is bliss.

[Pg 6]

Blest was that hour, and all the world was gay,  
When MENÁ'S daughter saw the light of day.  
A rosy glow suffused the brightening sky;  
An odorous breeze came sweeping softly by.  
Breathed round the hill a sweet unearthly strain,  
And the glad heavens poured down their flowery rain.

That fair young maiden diademmed with light  
Made her dear mother's fame more sparkling bright.  
[As the blue offspring of the Turquoise Hills](#)  
The parent mount with richer glory fills,  
When the cloud's voice has caused the gem to spring,  
Responsive to its gentle thundering.

Then was it sweet, as days flew by, to trace  
The dawning charm of every infant grace,  
Even as the crescent moons their glory pour  
More full, more lovely than the eve before.

As yet the maiden was unknown to fame;  
Child of the Mountain was her only name.  
But when her mother, filled with anxious care  
[At her stern penance](#), cried Forbear! Forbear!  
To a new title was the warning turned,  
And UMÁ was the name the maiden earned.

[Pg 7]

Loveliest was she of all his lovely race,  
And dearest to her father. On her face  
Looking with love he ne'er could satisfy  
The thirsty glances of a parent's eye.  
When spring-tide bids a thousand flowerets bloom  
Loading the breezes with their rich perfume,  
Though here and there the wandering bee may rest,  
He loves his own—his darling mango—best.  
[The Gods' bright river](#) bathes with gold the skies,  
And pure sweet eloquence adorns the wise.  
The flambeau's glory is the shining fire;  
She was the pride, the glory of her sire,  
Shedding new lustre on his old descent,  
His loveliest child, his richest ornament.

The sparkling GANGÁ laved her heavenly home,  
And o'er her islets would the maiden roam  
Amid the dear companions of her play  
With ball and doll to while the hours away.

As swans in autumn in assembling bands  
Fly back to GANGÁ'S well-remembered sands:  
As herbs beneath the darksome shades of night  
Collect again their scattered rays of light:  
So dawned upon the maiden's waking mind  
The far-off memory of her life resigned,  
And all her former learning in its train,  
Feelings, and thoughts, and knowledge came again.

[Pg 8]

Now beauty's prime, that craves no artful aid,  
Ripened the loveliness of that young maid:  
That needs no wine to fire the captive heart,—  
The bow of Love without his flowery dart.  
There was a glory beaming from her face,  
With love's own light, and every youthful grace:  
Ne'er had the painter's skilful hand portrayed  
A lovelier picture than that gentle maid;  
Ne'er sun-kissed lily more divinely fair

Unclosed her beauty to the morning air.

Bright as a lotus, springing where she trod,  
Her glowing feet shed radiance o'er the sod.  
That arching neck, the step, the glance aside,  
The proud swans taught her as they stemmed the tide,  
Whilst of the maiden they would fondly learn  
Her anklets' pleasant music in return.

When the Almighty Maker first began  
The marvellous beauty of that child to plan,  
In full fair symmetry each rounded limb  
Grew neatly fashioned and approved by Him:  
The rest was faultless, for the Artist's care  
Formed each young charm most excellently fair,  
As if his moulding hand would fain express  
The visible type of perfect loveliness.

[Pg 9]

What thing of beauty may the poet dare  
With the smooth wonder of those limbs compare?  
The young tree springing by the brooklet's side?  
The rounded trunk, the forest-monarch's pride?  
Too rough that trunk, too cold that young tree's stem;  
A softer, warmer thing must vie with them.

Her hidden beauties though no tongue may tell,  
Yet ŚIVA's love will aid the fancy well:

No other maid could deem her boasted charms  
Worthy the clasp of such a husband's arms.  
Between the partings of fair UMA's vest  
Came hasty glimpses of a lovely breast:  
So closely there the sweet twin hillocks rose,  
Scarce could the lotus in the vale repose.  
And if her loosened zone e'er slipped below,  
All was so bright beneath the mantle's flow,  
So dazzling bright, as if the maid had braced  
A band of gems to sparkle round her waist;  
And the dear dimples of her downy skin  
Seemed fitting couch for Love to revel in.

Her arms were softer than the flowery dart,  
[Young KAMA's arrow](#), that subdues the heart;  
For vain his strife with ŚIVA, till at last

He chose those chains to bind his conqueror fast.

E'en the new moon poured down a paler beam  
When her long fingers flashed their rosy gleam,

[And brighter than Aśoka's blossom](#) threw  
A glory round, like summer's evening hue.

[The strings of pearl](#) across her bosom thrown  
Increased its beauty, and enhanced their own,—  
Her breast, her jewels seeming to agree,  
The adorning now, and now the adorned to be.

When BEAUTY gazes on the fair full moon,  
No lotus charms her, for it blooms at noon:  
If on that flower she feed her raptured eye,  
No moon is shining from the mid-day sky;  
She looked on UMA's face, more heavenly fair,  
And found their glories both united there.  
The loveliest flower that ever opened yet  
Laid in the fairest branch: a fair pearl set  
In richest coral, with her smile might vie  
Flashing through lips bright with their rosy dye.

And when she spoke, upon the maiden's tongue,  
Distilling nectar, such rare accents hung,  
[The sweetest note that e'er the Koil poured](#)  
Seemed harsh and tuneless as a jarring chord.

The melting glance of that soft liquid eye,  
Tremulous like lilies when the breezes sigh,  
Which learnt it first—so winning and so mild—  
The gentle fawn, or MENA's gentler child?

And oh, the arching of her brow! so fine  
Was the rare beauty of its pencilled line,  
LOVE gazed upon her forehead in despair  
And spurned the bow he once esteemed so fair:  
Her long bright tresses too might shame the pride  
Of envious yaks who roamed the mountain-side.  
Surely the Maker's care had been to bring  
From Nature's store each sweetest, loveliest thing,  
As if the world's Creator would behold  
All beauty centred in a single mould.

[Pg 10]

[Pg 11]

[When holy NĀRAD](#)—Saint who roams at will—  
First saw the daughter of the royal hill,  
He hailed the bride whom ŚIVA's love should own  
Half of himself, and partner of his throne.  
HIMĀLAYA listened, and the father's pride  
Would yield the maiden for no other's bride:  
To Fire alone of all bright things we raise  
The holy hymn, the sacrifice of praise.  
But still the monarch durst not, could not bring  
His child, unsought, to Heaven's supremest King;  
But as a good man fears his earnest prayer  
Should rise unheeded, and with thoughtful care  
Seeks for some friend his eager suit to aid,  
Thus great HIMĀLAYA in his awe delayed.

Since the sad moment when his gentle bride  
In the full glory of her beauty died,  
The mournful ŚIVA in the holy grove  
Had dwelt in solitude, and known not love.  
High on that hill where musky breezes throw  
Their balmy odours o'er eternal snow;  
Where heavenly minstrels pour their notes divine,  
And rippling GANGĀ laves the mountain pine,  
Clad in a coat of skin all rudely wrought  
He lived for prayer and solitary thought.  
The faithful band that served the hermit's will  
Lay in the hollows of the rocky hill,  
Where from the clefts the dark bitumen flowed.  
Tinted with mineral dyes their bodies glowed;  
Clad in rude mantles of the birch-tree's rind,  
With bright red garlands was their hair entwined.  
[The holy bull](#) before his master's feet  
Shook the hard-frozen earth with echoing feet,  
And as he heard the lion's roaring swell  
In distant thunder from the rocky dell,  
In angry pride he raised his voice of fear  
And from the mountain drove the startled deer.

Bright fire—a shape the God would sometimes wear  
[Who takes eight various forms](#)—was glowing there.  
Then the great deity who gives the prize  
Of penance, prayer, and holy exercise,  
As though to earn the meed he grants to man,  
Himself the penance and the pain began.

Now to that holy lord, to whom is given  
Honour and glory by the Gods in heaven,  
The worship of a gift HIMĀLAYA paid,  
And towards his dwelling sent the lovely maid;  
Her task, attended by her youthful train,  
To woo his widowed heart to love again.

The hermit welcomed with a courteous brow  
That gentle enemy of hermit vow.  
The still pure breast where Contemplation dwells  
Defies the charmer and the charmer's spells.  
Calm and unmoved he viewed the wondrous maid,  
And bade her all his pious duties aid.  
She culled fresh blossoms at the God's command,  
Sweeping the altar with a careful hand;  
The holy grass for sacred rites she sought,  
And day by day the fairest water brought.  
And if the unwonted labour caused a sigh,  
The fair-haired lady turned her languid eye  
[Where the pale moon on ŚIVA's forehead](#) gleamed,  
And swift through all her frame returning vigour streamed.

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## ***CANTO SECOND.***

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## **Canto Second.**

## THE ADDRESS TO BRAHMÁ.

[While impious TÁRAK](#) in resistless might  
Was troubling heaven and earth with wild affright,  
To BRAHMÁ's high abode, by INDRA led,  
The mournful deities for refuge fled.  
As when the Day-God's loving beams awake  
The lotus slumbering on the silver lake,  
So BRAHMÁ deigned his glorious face to show,  
And poured sweet comfort on their looks of woe.

Then nearer came the suppliant Gods to pay  
Honour to him [whose face turns every way](#).  
They bowed them low before the Lord of Speech,  
And sought with truthful words his heart to reach:  
"Glory to Thee! before the world was made,  
One single form thy Majesty displayed.  
Next Thou, to body forth [the mystic Three](#),  
Didst fill three Persons: Glory, Lord, to Thee!  
Unborn and unbegotten! from thy hand  
The fruitful seed rained down; at thy command  
From that small germ o'er quickening waters thrown  
All things that move not, all that move have grown.  
Before thy triple form in awe they bow:  
Maker, preserver, and destroyer, Thou!  
[Thou, when a longing](#) urged thee to create,  
Thy single form in twain didst separate.  
The Sire, the Mother that made all things be  
By their first union were but parts of Thee.  
From them the life that fills this earthly frame,  
And fruitful Nature, self-renewing, came.  
Thou countest not thy time by mortals' light;  
With Thee there is but one vast day and night.  
When BRAHMÁ slumbers fainting Nature dies,  
When BRAHMÁ wakens all again arise.  
Creator of the world, and uncreate!  
Endless! all things from Thee their end await.  
Before the world wast Thou! each Lord shall fall  
Before Thee, mightiest, highest, Lord of all.  
Thy self-taught soul thine own deep spirit knows;  
Made by thyself thy mighty form arose;  
Into the same, when all things have their end,  
Shall thy great self, absorbed in Thee, descend.  
Lord, who may hope thy essence to declare?  
Firm, yet as subtile as the yielding air:  
Fixt, all-pervading; ponderous, yet light,  
Patent to all, yet hidden from the sight.  
Thine are [the sacred hymns](#) which mortals raise,  
Commencing ever with [the word of praise](#),  
With three-toned chant the sacrifice to grace,  
And win at last in heaven a blissful place.  
[They hail Thee Nature](#) labouring to free  
The Immortal Soul from low humanity;  
[Hail Thee the stranger Spirit](#), unimpressed,  
Gazing on Nature from thy lofty rest.  
Father of fathers, God of gods art thou,  
Creator, highest, hearer of the vow!  
Thou art the sacrifice, and Thou the priest,  
Thou, he that eateth; Thou, the holy feast.  
Thou art the knowledge which by Thee is taught,  
The mighty thinker, and the highest thought!"

[Pg 18]

[Pg 19]

Pleased with their truthful praise, his favouring eye  
He turned upon the dwellers in the sky,  
While from four mouths his words in gentle flow  
Come welling softly to assuage their woe:  
"Welcome! glad welcome, Princes! ye who hold  
Your lofty sovereignties ordained of old.  
But why so mournful? what has dimmed your light?  
Why shine your faces less divinely bright?  
Like stars that pour forth weaker, paler gleams,  
When the fair moon with brighter radiance beams.  
O say, in vain doth mighty INDRA bear  
The thunderbolt of heaven, unused to spare?  
VRITRA, the furious fiend, 'twas strong to slay:  
Why dull and blunted is that might to-day?"

[Pg 20]



[See, VARUN'S noose](#) hangs idly on his arm,  
 Like some fell serpent quelled by magic charm.  
[Weak is KUVERA'S hand](#), his arm no more  
 Wields the dread mace it once so proudly bore;  
 But like a tree whose boughs are lopped away,  
 It tells of piercing woe, and dire dismay.  
 In days of yore how [YAMA'S sceptre](#) shone!  
 Fled are its glories, all its terrors gone;  
 Despised and useless as a quenched brand,  
 All idly now it marks the yielding sand.  
 Fallen are [the Lords of Light](#), ere now the gaze  
 Shrank from the coming of their fearful blaze;  
 So changed are they, the undazzled eye may see  
 Like pictured forms, each rayless deity.  
 Some baffling power has curbed the breezes' swell:  
 Vainly they chafe against the secret spell.  
 We know some barrier checks their wonted course,  
 When reflux waters seek again their source.  
[The RUDRAS](#) too—fierce demigods who bear  
 The curved moon hanging from their twisted hair—  
 Tell by their looks of fear, and shame, and woe,  
 Of threats now silenced, of a mightier foe.  
 Glory and power, ye Gods, were yours of right:  
 Have ye now yielded to some stronger might,  
[Even as on earth](#) a general law may be  
 Made powerless by a special text's decree?  
 Then say, my sons, why seek ye BRAHMÁ'S throne?  
 'Tis mine to frame the worlds, and yours to guard your own."

[Pg 21]

Then INDRA turned his thousand glorious eyes,  
 Glancing like lilies when the soft wind sighs,  
 And in the Gods' behalf, their mighty chief  
 Urged the Most Eloquent to tell their grief.  
 Then rose [the heavenly Teacher](#), by whose side  
 Dim seemed the glories of the Thousand-eyed,  
 And with his hands outspread, to BRAHMÁ spake,  
 Couched on [his own dear flower](#), the daughter of the lake:

"O mighty Being! surely thou dost know  
 The unceasing fury of our ruthless foe;  
 For thou canst see the secret thoughts that lie  
 Deep in the heart, yet open to thine eye.  
 The vengeful TARAK, in resistless might,  
 Like some dire Comet, gleaming wild affright,  
 O'er all the worlds an evil influence sheds,  
 And, in thy favour strong, destruction spreads.  
 All bow before him: on his palace wall  
 The sun's first ray and parting splendour fall;  
 Ne'er could he waken with a lovelier glance  
 His own dear lotus from her nightly trance.  
 For him, proud fiend, the moon no waning knows,  
 But with unminished full-orbed lustre glows.  
 Too faint for him the crescent glory set  
 Amid the blaze of ŚIVA'S coronet.  
 How fair his garden, where the obedient breeze  
 Dares steal no blossom from the slumbering trees!  
 The wild wind checks his blustering pinions there,  
 And gently whispering fans the balmy air;  
 While through the inverted year the seasons pour,  
 To win the demon's grace, their flowery store.  
 For him, the River-god beneath the stream,  
 Marks the young pearl increase its silver gleam,  
 Until, its beauty and its growth complete,  
 He bears the offering to his master's feet.  
 The Serpents, led by VÁSUKI, their king,  
 Across his nightly path their lustre fling;  
 Bright as a torch [their flashing jewels](#) blaze,  
 Nor wind, nor rain, can dim their dazzling rays.  
 E'en INDRA, sovereign of the blissful skies,  
 To gain his love by flattering homage tries,  
 And sends him oft those flowers of wondrous hue  
 That on the heavenly tree in beauty grew.  
 Yet all these offerings brought from day to day,  
 This flattery, fail his ruthless hand to stay.  
 Earth, hell, and heaven, beneath his rage must groan,  
 Till force can hurl him from his evil throne.

[Pg 22]

[Pg 23]

Alas! where glowed the bright celestial bowers,  
 And gentle fair ones nursed the opening flowers,  
 Where heavenly trees a heavenly odour shed,  
 O'er a sad desert ruin reigns instead.  
 He roots up MERU'S sacred peaks, where stray  
 The fiery coursers of the God of Day,  
 To form bright slopes, and glittering mounds of ease,  
 In the broad gardens of his palaces.  
 There, on his couch, the mighty lord is fanned  
 To sweetest slumber by a heavenly band;  
 Poor captive nymphs, who stand in anguish by,  
 Drop the big tear, and heave the ceaseless sigh.  
 And now have INDRA'S elephants defiled  
 The sparkling stream where heavenly GANGÁ smiled,  
 And her gold lotuses the fiend has taken  
 To deck his pools, and left her all forsaken.  
 The Gods of heaven no more delight to roam  
 O'er all the world, far from their glorious home.  
 They dread the demon's impious might, nor dare  
 Speed their bright chariots through the fields of air.  
 And when our worshippers in duty bring  
 The appointed victims for the offering,  
 He tears them from the flame with magic art,  
 While we all powerless watch with drooping heart.  
 He too has stolen from his master's side  
 The steed of heavenly race, great INDRA'S pride.  
 No more our hosts, so glorious once, withstand  
 The fierce dominion of the demon's hand,  
 As herbs of healing virtue fail to tame  
 The sickness raging through the infected frame.  
 Idly the [discus](#) hangs on VISHNU'S neck,  
 And our last hope is vain, that it would check  
 The haughty TARAK'S might, and flash afar  
 Ruin and death—the thunderbolt of war.  
 E'en INDRA'S elephant has felt the might  
 Of his fierce monsters in the deadly fight,  
 Which spurn the dust in fury, and defy  
 The threatening clouds that sail along the sky.  
 Therefore, O Lord, we seek a chief, that he  
 May lead the hosts of heaven to victory,  
 Even as holy men who long to sever  
 The immortal spirit from its shell for ever,  
 Seek lovely Virtue's aid to free the soul  
 From earthly ties and action's base control.  
 Thus shall he save us: proudly will we go  
 Under his escort 'gainst the furious foe;  
 And INDRA, conqueror in turn, shall bring  
 FORTUNE, dear captive, home with joy and triumphing."

[Pg 24]

Sweet as the rains—the fresh'ning rains—that pour  
 On the parched earth when thunders cease to roar,  
 Were BRAHMÁ'S words: "Gods, I have heard your grief;  
 Wait ye in patience: time will bring relief.  
 'Tis not for me, my children, to create  
 A chief to save you from your mournful fate.  
 Not by my hand the fiend must be destroyed,  
 For my kind favour has he once enjoyed;  
 And well ye know that e'en a poisonous tree  
 By him who planted it unharmed should be.  
 He sought it eagerly, and long ago  
 I gave my favour to your demon-foe,  
 And stayed his awful penance, that had hurled  
 Flames, death, and ruin o'er the subject world.  
 When that great warrior battles for his life,  
 O, who may conquer in the deadly strife,  
 Save one of ŚIVA'S seed? He is the light,  
 Reigning supreme beyond the depths of night.  
 Nor I, nor VISHNU, his full power may share,  
 Lo, where he dwells in solitude and prayer!  
 Go, seek the Hermit in the grove alone,  
 And to the God be UMA'S beauty shown.  
 Perchance, the Mountain-child, with magnet's force,  
 May turn the iron from its steadfast course,  
 Bride of the mighty God; for only she  
 Can bear to Him [as water bears to me](#).

[Pg 25]

Then from their love a mighty Child shall rise,  
And lead to war the armies of the skies.  
Freed by his hand, no more the heavenly maids  
Shall twine their glittering hair in [mournful braids](#)."

[Pg 26]

He spake, and vanished from their wondering sight;  
And they sped homeward to their world of light.  
But INDRA, still on BRAHMÁ'S words intent,  
To KÁMA'S dwelling-place his footsteps bent.  
Swiftly he came: the yearning of his will  
Made INDRA'S lightning course more speedy still.  
The LOVE-GOD, armed with flowers divinely sweet,  
In lowly homage bowed before his feet.  
Around his neck, where bright love-tokens clung,  
Arched like a maiden's brow, his bow was hung,  
And blooming SPRING, his constant follower, bore  
[The mango twig](#), his weapon famed of yore.

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## ***CANTO THIRD.***

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[Pg 27]

[Pg 28]

### **Canto Third.**

[Pg 29]

#### ***THE DEATH OF LOVE.***

Is eager gaze the sovereign of the skies  
looked full on *Káma* with his thousand eyes:  
E'en such a gaze as trembling suppliants bend,  
When danger threatens, on a mighty friend.

Close by his side, where INDRA bade him rest,  
The LOVE-GOD sate, and thus his lord addressed:  
"All-knowing INDRA, deign, my Prince, to tell  
Thy heart's desire in earth, or heaven, or hell:  
Double the favour, mighty sovereign, thou  
Hast thought on KÁMA, O, command him now:  
[Who angers thee](#) by toiling for the prize,  
By penance, prayer, or holy sacrifice?  
What mortal being dost thou count thy foe?  
Speak, I will tame him with my darts and bow.  
Has some one feared the endless change of birth,  
And sought the path that leads the soul from earth?  
Slave to a glancing eye thy foe shall bow,  
And own the witchery of a woman's brow;  
E'en though the object of thine envious rage  
Were taught high wisdom by the immortal sage,  
With billowy passions will I whelm his soul,  
Like rushing waves that spurn the bank's control.  
Or has the ripe full beauty of a spouse,  
Too fondly faithful to her bridal vows,  
Ravished thy spirit from thee? Thine, all thine  
Around thy neck her loving arms shall twine.  
Has thy love, jealous of another's charms,  
Spurned thee in wrath when flying to her arms?  
I'll rack her yielding bosom with such pain,  
Soon shall she be all love and warmth again,  
And wildly fly in fevered haste to rest  
Her aching heart close, close to thy dear breast.  
Lay, INDRA, lay thy threatening bolt aside:  
My gentle darts shall tame the haughtiest pride,  
And all that war with heaven and thee shall know  
The magic influence of thy KÁMA'S bow;  
For woman's curling lip shall bow them down,  
Fainting in terror at her threatening frown.  
Flowers are my arms, mine only warrior SPRING,  
Yet in thy favour am I strong, great King.  
What can their strength who draw the bow avail  
Against my matchless power when I assail?  
Strong is the Trident-bearing God, yet he,  
The mighty ŚIVA, e'en, must yield to me."

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Then INDRA answered with a dawning smile,  
 Resting his foot upon a stool the while:  
 "Dear God of Love, thou truly hast displayed  
 The power unrivalled of thy promised aid.  
 My hope is all in thee: my weapons are  
 The thunderbolt and thou, more mighty far.  
 But vain, all vain the bolt of heaven to fright  
 Those holy Saints whom penance arms aright.  
 Thy power exceeds all bound: thou, only thou,  
 All-conquering Deity, canst help me now!  
 Full well I know thy nature, and assign  
 This toil to thee, which needs a strength like thine:  
[As on that snake](#) alone will KRISHNA rest,  
 That bears the earth upon his haughty crest.  
 Our task is well-nigh done: thy boasted dart  
 Has power to conquer even ŚIVA's heart.  
 Hear what the Gods, oppressed with woe, would fain  
 From mighty ŚIVA through thine aid obtain.  
 He may beget—and none in heaven but he—A  
 chief to lead our hosts to victory.  
 But all his mind with holiest lore is fraught,  
 Bent on the Godhead is his every thought.  
 Thy darts, O LOVE, alone can reach him now,  
 And lure his spirit from the hermit vow.  
 Go, seek HIMĀLAYA'S Mountain-child, and aid  
 With all thy loveliest charms the lovely maid,  
 So may she please his fancy: only she  
 May wed with ŚIVA: such the fixt decree.  
 E'en now my hands of heavenly maids have spied  
 Fair UMĀ dwelling by the Hermit's side.  
 There by her father's bidding rests she still,  
 Sweet minister, upon the cold bleak hill.  
 Go, KĀMA, go! perform this great emprise,  
 And free from fear the Rulers of the Skies;  
 We need thy favour, as the new-sown grain  
 Calls for the influence of the gentle rain.  
 Go, KĀMA, go! thy flowery darts shall be  
 Crowned with success o'er this great deity.  
 Yea, and thy task is e'en already done,  
 For praise and glory are that instant won  
 When a bold heart dares manfully essay  
 The deed which others shrink from in dismay.  
 Gods are thy suppliants, KĀMA, and on thee  
 Depends [the triple world's](#) security.  
 No cruel deed will stain thy flowery bow:  
 With all thy gentlest, mightiest valour, go!  
 And now, Disturber of the spirit, see  
 SPRING, thy beloved, will thy comrade be,  
 And gladly aid thee ŚIVA's heart to tame:  
 None bids the whispering Wind, and yet he fans the flame."

He spake, and KĀMA bowed his bright head down,  
 And took his bidding like a flowery crown.  
 Above his wavy curls great INDRA bent,  
 And fondly touched his soldier ere he went,  
 With that hard hand—but, O, how gentle now—  
 That fell so heavy on his elephant's brow.  
 Then for that snow-crowned hill he turned away,  
 Where all alone the heavenly Hermit lay.  
[His fearful RATI](#) and his comrade SPRING  
 Followed the guidance of Love's mighty king.  
 There will he battle in unwonted strife,  
 Return a conqueror or be reft of life.

How fair was SPRING! To fill the heart with love,  
 And lure the Hermit from his thoughts above,  
 In that pure grove he grew so heavenly bright  
 That KĀMA'S envy awakened at the sight.  
 Now the bright Day-God turned his burning ray  
[To where KUVĒRA](#) holds his royal sway,  
 While the sad South in whispering breezes sighed  
 And mourned his absence like a tearful bride.  
 Then from its stem the red Aśoka threw  
 Full buds and flowerets of celestial hue,  
[Nor waited for the maiden's touch](#), the sweet

beloved pressure of her tinkling feet.  
There grew LOVE's arrow, his dear mango spray,  
Winged with young leaves to speed its airy way,  
And at the call of SPRING the wild bees came,  
[Grouping the syllables](#) of KĀMA's name.  
How sighed the spirit o'er [that loveliest flower](#)  
That boasts no fragrance to enrich its dower!  
For Nature, wisest mother, oft prefers  
To part more fairly those good gifts of hers.  
There from the tree Palāsa blossoms spread,  
Curved like the crescent moon, their rosiest red,  
With opening buds that looked as if young SPRING  
Had pressed his nails there in his dallying:  
Sweet wanton SPRING, to whose enchanting face  
[His flowery Tilaka](#) gave fairer grace:  
Who loves to tint his lip, the mango spray,  
With the fresh colours of the early day,  
And powder its fine red with many a bee  
That sips the oozing nectar rapturously.  
The cool gale speeding o'er the shady lawns  
Shook down the sounding leaves, while startled fawns  
Ran wildly at the viewless foe, all blind  
With pollen wafted by the fragrant wind.  
Sweet was the Kōil's voice, his neck still red  
With mango buds on which he late had fed:  
Twas as the voice of LOVE to bid the dame  
Spurn her cold pride, nor quench the gentle flame.  
What though the heat has stained the tints that dyed  
With marvellous bloom the heavenly minstrel's bride?  
Neither her smile nor sunny glances fail:  
Bright is her lip, although her cheek be pale  
E'en the pure hermits owned the secret power  
Of warm SPRING coming in unwonted hour,  
While LOVE's delightful witchery gently stole  
With strong sweet influence o'er the saintly soul.

[Pg 34]

On came the Archer-God, and at his side  
The timid RATI, his own darling bride,  
While breathing nature showed how deep it felt,  
At passion's glowing touch, the senses melt.  
For there in eager love the wild bee dipp'd  
In the dark flower-cup where his partner sipp'd.  
Here in the shade the hart his horn declined,  
And, while joy closed her eyes, caressed the hind.  
There from her trunk the elephant had poured  
A lily-scented stream to cool her lord,  
While the fond love-bird by the silver flood  
Gave to his mate the tasted lotus bud.  
Full in his song the minstrel stayed to sip  
The heavenlier nectar of his darling's lip.  
Pure pearls of heat had late distained the dye,  
But flowery wine was sparkling in her eye.  
How the young creeper's beauty charmed the view,  
Fair as the fairest maid, as playful too!  
Here some bright blossoms, lovelier than the rest,  
In full round beauty matched her swelling breast.  
Here in a thin bright line, some delicate spray,  
Red as her lip, ravished the soul away.  
And then how loving, and how close they clung  
To the tall trees that fondly o'er them hung!  
Bright, heavenly wantons poured the witching strain,  
Quiring for ŚIVA's ear, but all in vain.  
No charmer's spell may check the firm control  
Won by the holy o'er the impassioned soul.

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[Pg 36]

[The Hermit's servant](#) hastened to the door:  
In his left hand a branch of gold he bore.  
He touched his lip for silence: "Peace! be still!  
Nor mar the quiet of this holy hill."  
He spake: no dweller of the forest stirred,  
No wild bee murmured, hushed was every bird.  
Still and unmoved, as in a picture stood  
All life that breathed within the waving wood.  
As some great monarch when he goes to war  
Shuns the fierce aspect of a baleful star,

So KĀMA hid him from the Hermit's eye,  
 And sought a path that led unnoticed by,  
 Where tangled flowers and clustering trailers spread  
 Their grateful canopy o'er ŚIVA's head.  
 Bent on his hardy enterprise, with awe  
 The Three-eyed Lord—great Penitent—he saw.  
 There sate the God beneath a pine-tree's shade,  
 Where on a mound a tiger's skin was laid.  
 Absorbed in holiest thought, erect and still,  
 The Hermit rested on the gentle hill.  
 His shoulders drooping down, each foot was bent  
 Beneath the body of the Penitent.  
 With open palms the hands were firmly pressed,  
 As though a lotus lay upon his breast.  
 A double rosary in each ear, behind  
 With wreathing serpents were his locks entwined.  
 His coat of hide shone blacker to the view  
 Against [his neck of brightly beaming blue](#).  
 How wild the look, how terrible the frown  
 Of his dark eyebrows bending sternly down!  
 How fiercely glared his eyes' unmoving blaze  
 Fixed in devotion's meditating gaze:  
 Calm as a full cloud resting on a hill,  
 A waveless lake when every breeze is still,  
 Like a torch burning in a sheltered spot,  
 So still was he, unmoving, breathing not.  
 So full the stream of marvellous glory poured  
 from the bright forehead of that mighty Lord,  
 Pale seemed the crescent moon upon his head,  
 And slenderer than a slender lotus thread.  
 At all the body's nine-fold [gates of sense](#)  
 He had barred in the pure Intelligence,  
 To ponder on the Soul which sages call  
 Eternal Spirit, highest, over all.

[Pg 37]

[Pg 38]

How sad was KĀMA at the awful sight,  
 How failed his courage in a swoon of fright!  
 As near and nearer to the God he came  
 Whom wildest thought could never hope to tame,  
 Unconsciously his hands, in fear and woe,  
 Dropped the sweet arrows and his flowery bow.  
 But UMĀ came with all her maiden throng,  
 And KĀMA's fainting heart again was strong;  
 Bright flowers of spring, in every lovely hue,  
 Around the lady's form rare beauty threw.  
 Some clasped her neck like strings of purest pearls,  
 Some shot their glory through her wavy curls.  
 Bending her graceful head as half-oppressed  
 With swelling charms even too richly blest,  
 Fancy might deem that beautiful young maiden  
 Some slender tree with its sweet flowers o'erladen.  
 From time to time her gentle hand replaced  
 The flowery girdle slipping from her waist:  
 It seemed that LOVE could find no place more fair,  
 So hung his newest, dearest bowstring there.  
 A greedy bee kept hovering round to sip  
 The fragrant nectar of her blooming lip.  
 She closed her eyes in terror of the thief,  
 And beat him from her with a lotus leaf.  
 The angry curl of RATI's lip confessed  
 The shade of envy that stole o'er her breast.  
 Through KĀMA's soul fresh hope and courage flew,  
 As that sweet vision blessed his eager view.  
 So bright, so fair, so winning soft was she,  
 Who could not conquer in such company?

[Pg 39]

Now UMĀ came, fair maid, his destined bride,  
 With timid steps approaching ŚIVA's side.  
 In contemplation will he brood no more,  
 He sees the Godhead, and his task is o'er.  
 He breathes, he moves, the earth begins to rock,  
 The Snake, her bearer, trembling at the shock.  
 Due homage then his own dear servant paid,  
 And told him of the coming of the maid.  
 He learnt his Master's pleasure by the nod,

And led HIMALAYA'S daughter to the God.  
Before his feet her young companions spread  
Fresh leaves and blossoms as they bowed the head,  
While UMA stooped so low, that from her hair  
Dropped the bright flower that starred the midnight there.  
To him whose ensign bears the bull she bent,  
Till each spray fell, her ear's rich ornament.  
"Sweet maid," cried ŚIVA, "surely thou shalt be  
Blessed with a husband who loves none but thee!"  
Her fear was banished, and her hope was high:  
A God had spoken, and Gods cannot lie.

[Pg 40]

Rash as some giddy moth that woos the flame,  
LOVE seized the moment, and prepared to aim.  
Close by the daughter of the Mountain-King,  
He looked on ŚIVA, and he eyed his string.

While with her radiant hand fair UMA gave  
A rosary, of the lotuses that lave  
Their beauties in the heavenly GANGÁ'S wave,  
And the great Three-Eyed God was fain to take  
The offering for the well-loved suppliant's sake,  
On his bright bow LOVE placed the unerring dart,  
The soft beguiler of the stricken heart.

Like the Moon's influence on the sea at rest,  
Came passion stealing o'er the Hermit's breast,  
While on the maiden's lip that mocked the dye  
Of ripe red fruit, he bent his melting eye.  
And oh! how showed the lady's love for him,  
The heaving bosom, and each quivering limb!  
Like young Kadambas, when the leaf-buds swell,  
At the warm touch of Spring they love so well.  
But still, with downcast eyes, she sought the ground,  
And durst not turn their burning glances round.

Then with strong effort, ŚIVA lulled to rest,  
The storm of passion in his troubled breast,  
And seeks, with angry eyes that round him roll,  
Whence came the tempest o'er his tranquil soul.  
He looked, and saw the bold young archer stand,  
His bow bent ready in his skilful hand,  
Drawn towards the eye; his shoulder well depressed,  
And the left foot thrown forward as a rest.

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Then was the Hermit-God to madness lashed,  
Then from his eye red flames of fury flashed.  
So changed the beauty of that glorious brow,  
Scarce could the gaze support its terror now.

Hark! heavenly voices sighing through the air:  
"Be calm, great ŚIVA, O be calm and spare!"  
Alas! that angry eye's resistless flashes  
Have scorched the gentle King of Love to ashes!

But RATI saw not, for she swooned away;  
Senseless and breathless on the earth she lay;  
Sleep while thou mayst, unconscious lady, sleep!  
Soon wilt thou rise to sigh and wake to weep.

E'en as the red bolt rives the leafy bough,  
So ŚIVA smote the hinderer of his vow;  
Then fled with all his train to some lone place  
Far from the witchery of a female face.

Sad was HIMALAYA'S daughter: grief and shame  
O'er the young spirit of the maiden came:  
Grief—for she loved, and all her love was vain;  
Shame—she was spurned before her youthful train.  
She turned away, with fear and woe oppressed,  
To hide her sorrow on her father's breast;  
Then, in the fond arms of her pitying sire,  
Closed her sad eyes for fear of ŚIVA'S ire.  
Still in his grasp the weary maiden lay,  
While he sped swiftly on his homeward way.

[Pg 42]

Thus have I seen the elephant stoop to drink,  
And lift a lily from the fountain's brink.  
Thus, when he rears his mighty head on high,  
Across his tusks I've seen that lily lie.

**Canto Fourth.**

**RATI'S LAMENT.**

Sad, solitary, helpless, faint, forlorn,  
Woke KĀMA's darling from her swoon to mourn.  
Too soon her gentle soul returned to know  
The pangs of widowhood—that word of woe.  
Scarce could she raise her, trembling, from the ground,  
Scarce dared to bend her anxious gaze around,  
Unconscious yet those greedy eyes should never  
Feed on his beauty more—gone, gone for ever.

"Speak to me, KĀMA! why so silent? give  
One word in answer—doth my KĀMA live?"  
There on the turf his dumb cold ashes lay,  
Whose soul that fiery flash had scorched away.  
She clasped the dank earth in her wild despair,  
Her bosom stained, and rent her long bright hair,  
Till hill and valley caught the mourner's cry,  
And pitying breezes echoed sigh for sigh.  
"Oh thou wast beautiful: fond lovers sware  
Their own bright darlings were like KĀMA, fair.  
Sure woman's heart is stony: can it be  
That I still live while this is all of thee?  
Where art thou, KĀMA? Could my dearest leave  
His own fond RATI here alone to grieve?  
So must the sad forsaken lotus die  
When her bright river leaves his channel dry.  
KĀMA, dear KĀMA, call again to mind  
How thou wast ever gentle, I was kind.  
Let not my prayer, thy RATI's prayer, be vain;  
Come as of old, and bless these eyes again!  
Wilt thou not hear me? Think of those sweet hours  
When I would bind thee with my zone of flowers,  
Those soft gay fetters o'er thee fondly wreathing,  
Thine only punishment when gently breathing  
In tones of love thy heedless sigh betrayed  
The name, dear traitor! of some rival maid.  
Then would I pluck a floweret from my tress  
And beat thee till I forced thee to confess,  
While in my play the falling leaves would cover  
The eyes—the bright eyes—of my captive lover.  
And then those words that made me, oh, so blest—  
"Dear love, thy home is in my faithful breast!"  
Alas, sweet words, too blissful to be true,  
Or how couldst thou have died, nor RATI perish too?

Yes, I will fly to thee, of thee bereft,  
And leave this world which thou, my life, hast left.  
Cold, gloomy, now this wretched world must be,  
For all its pleasures came from only thee.  
When night has veiled the city in its shade,  
Thou, only thou, canst soothe the wandering maid,  
And guide her trembling at the thunder's roar  
Safe through the darkness to her lover's door.  
In vain the wine-cup, as it circles by,  
Lips in her tongue and sparkles in her eye.  
Long locks are streaming, and the cheek glows red:  
But all is mockery, LOVE—dear LOVE—is dead.  
The MOON, sweet spirit, shall lament for thee,  
[Late, dim, and joyless shall his rising be.](#)  
Days shall fly on, and he forget to take  
His full bright glory, mourning for thy sake.  
Say, KĀMA, say, whose arrow now shall be  
The soft green shoot of thy dear mango tree,  
The favourite spray which Kōils love so well,  
And praise in sweetest strain its wondrous spell?  
[This line of bees](#) which strings thy useless bow



Hums mournful echo to my cries of woe.  
Come in thy lovely shape and teach again  
The Kōil's mate, that knows the tender strain,  
Her gentle task to waft to longing ears  
The lover's hope, the distant lover's fears.  
Come, bring once more that ecstasy of bliss,  
The fond dear look, the smile, and ah! that kiss!  
Fainting with woe, my soul refuses rest  
When memory pictures how I have been blest.  
See, thou didst weave a garland, love, to deck  
With all spring's fairest buds thy RATI's neck.  
Sweet are those flowers as they were culled to-day,  
And is my KĀMA's form more frail than they?  
His pleasant task my lover had begun,  
But stern Gods took him ere the work was done;  
Return, my KĀMA, at thy RATI's cry,  
[And stain this foot](#) which waits the rosy dye.

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Now will I hie me to the fatal pile,  
And ere heaven's maids have hailed thee with a smile,  
Or on my love their winning glances thrown,  
I will be there, and claim thee for mine own.  
Yet though I come, my lasting shame will be  
That I have lived one moment after thee.  
Ah, how shall I thy funeral rites prepare,  
Gone soul and body to the viewless air?  
"With thy dear SPRING I've seen thee talk and smile,  
Shaping an arrow for thy bow the while.  
Where is he now, thy darling friend, the giver  
Of many a bright sweet arrow for thy quiver?  
Is he too sent upon death's dreary path,  
Scorched by the cruel God's inexorable wrath?"

[Pg 49]

Stricken in spirit by her cries of woe,  
Like venomed arrows from a mighty bow,  
A moment fled, and gentle SPRING was there,  
To ask her grief, to soothe her wild despair.  
She beat her breast more wildly than before,  
With greater floods her weeping eyes ran o'er.  
When friends are nigh the spirit finds relief  
In the full gushing torrent of its grief.

"Turn, gentle friend, thy weeping eyes, and see  
That dear companion who was all to me.  
His crumbling dust with which the breezes play,  
Bearing it idly in their course away,  
White as the silver feathers of a dove,  
Is all that's left me of my murdered love.

Now come, my KĀMA. SPRING, who was so dear,  
Longs to behold thee. Oh, appear, appear!  
Fickle to women LOVE perchance may bend  
His ear to listen to a faithful friend.  
Remember, he walked ever at thy side  
O'er bloomy meadows in the warm spring-tide,  
That Gods above, and men, and fiends below  
Should own the empire of thy mighty bow,  
That ruthless bow, which pierces to the heart,  
Strung with a lotus-thread, a flower its dart.  
As dies a torch when winds sweep roughly by,  
So is my light for ever fled, and I,  
The lamp his cheering rays no more illumine,  
Am wrapt in darkness, misery and gloom.  
Fate took my love, and spared the widow's breath,  
Yet fate is guilty of a double death.  
When the wild monster tramples on the ground  
The tree some creeper garlands closely round,  
Reft of the guardian which it thought so true,  
Forlorn and withered, it must perish too.  
Then come, dear friend, the true one's pile prepare,  
And send me quickly to my husband there.  
Call it not vain: the mourning lotus dies  
When the bright MOON, her lover, quits the skies.  
When sinks the red cloud in the purple west,  
Still clings his bride, the lightning, to his breast.  
All nature keeps the eternal high decree:  
Shall woman fail? I come, my love, to thee!

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Now on the pile my faint limbs will I throw,  
Clasping his ashes, lovely even so,—  
As if beneath my weary frame were spread  
Soft leaves and blossoms for a flowery bed.  
And oh, dear comrade (for in happier hours  
Oft have I heaped a pleasant bed of flowers  
For thee and him beneath the spreading tree),  
Now quickly raise the pile for LOVE and me.  
And in thy mercy gentle breezes send  
To fan the flame that wafts away thy friend,  
And shorten the sad moments that divide  
Impatient KÁMA from his RATI's side;  
Set water near us in a single urn,  
We'll sip in heaven from the same in turn;  
And let thine offering to his spirit be  
Sprays fresh and lovely from the mango tree,  
Culled when the round young buds begin to swell,  
For KÁMA loved those fragrant blossoms well."

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As RATI thus complained in faithful love,  
A heavenly voice breathed round her from above,  
Falling in pity like the gentle rain  
That brings the dying herbs to life again:  
"Bride of the flower-armed God, thy lord shall be  
Not ever distant, ever deaf to thee.  
Give me thine ear, sad lady, I will tell  
Why perished KÁMA, whom thou lovedst well.  
The Lord of Life in every troubled sense  
Too warmly felt his fair child's influence.  
He quenched the fire, but mighty vengeance came  
On KÁMA, fanner of the unholy flame.  
When SIVA by her penance won has led  
HIMALAYA'S daughter to her bridal bed,  
His bliss to KÁMA shall the God repay,  
And give again the form he snatched away.  
Thus did the gracious God, at JUSTICE' prayer,  
The term of LOVE'S sad punishment declare.  
The Gods, like clouds, are fierce and gentle too,  
Now hurl the bolt, now drop sweet heavenly dew.  
Live, widowed lady, for thy lover's arms  
Shall clasp again—oh, fondly clasp—thy charms.  
In summer-heat the streamlet dies away  
Beneath the fury of the God of Day:  
Then, in due season, comes the pleasant rain,  
And all is fresh, and fair, and full again."

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Thus breathed the spirit from the viewless air,  
And stilled the raging of her wild despair;  
While SPRING consoled with every soothing art,  
Cheered by that voice from heaven, the mourner's heart,  
Who watched away the hours, so sad and slow,  
That brought the limit of her weary woe,  
As the pale moon, quenched by the conquering light  
Of garish day, longs for its own dear night.

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## ***CANTO FIFTH.***

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### **Canto Fifth.**

[Pg 54]

#### ***UMÁ'S REWARD.***

[Pg 55]

Now woe to UMÁ, for young Love is slain,  
Her Lord hath left her, and her hope is vain.  
Woe, woe to UMÁ! how the Mountain-Maid  
Cursed her bright beauty for its feeble aid!  
'Tis Beauty's guerdon which she loves the best,  
To bless her lover, and in turn be blest.

Penance must aid her now—or how can she  
Win the cold heart of that stern deity?

Penance, long penance: for that power alone  
Can make such love, so high a Lord, her own.

But, ah! how troubled was her mother's brow  
At the sad tidings of the mourner's vow!  
She threw her arms around her own dear maid,  
Kissed, fondly kissed her, sighed, and wept, and prayed:  
"Are there no Gods, my child, to love thee here?  
Frail is thy body, yet thy vow severe.  
The lily, by the wild bee scarcely stirred,  
Bends, breaks, and dies beneath the weary bird."

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Fast fell her tears, her prayer was strong, but still  
That prayer was weaker than her daughter's will.  
Who can recall the torrent's headlong force,  
Or the bold spirit in its destined course?

She sent a maiden to her sire, and prayed  
He for her sake would grant some bosky shade,  
That she might dwell in solitude, and there  
Give all her soul to penance and to prayer.  
In gracious love the great HIMALAYA smiled,  
And did the bidding of his darling child.  
Then to that hill which peacocks love she came,  
Known to all ages by the lady's name.

Still to her purpose resolutely true,  
Her string of noble pearls aside she threw,  
Which, slipping here and there, had rubbed away  
The sandal dust that on her bosom lay,  
And clad her in a hermit coat of bark,  
Rough to her gentle limbs, and gloomy dark,  
Pressing too tightly, till her swelling breast  
Broke into freedom through the unwonted vest.  
Her matted hair was full as lovely now  
As when 'twas braided o'er her polished brow.  
Thus the sweet beauties of the lotus shine  
When bees festoon it in a graceful line;  
And, though the tangled weeds that crown the rill  
Cling o'er it closely, it is lovely still.  
With zone of grass the votaress was bound,  
Which reddened the fair form it girdled round:  
Never before the lady's waist had felt  
The ceaseless torment of so rough a belt.

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Alas! her weary vow has caused to fade  
The lovely colours that adorned the maid.  
Pale is her hand, and her long finger-tips  
Steal no more splendour from her paler lips,  
Or, from the ball which in her play would rest,  
Made bright and fragrant, on her perfumed breast.  
Rough with the sacred grass those hands must be,  
[And worn with resting on her rosary.](#)  
Cold earth her couch, her canopy the skies,  
Pillowed upon her arm the lady lies:  
She who before was wont to rest her head  
In the soft luxury of a sumptuous bed,  
Vext by no troubles as she slumbered there,  
But sweet flowers slipping from her loosened hair.  
The maid put off, but only for awhile,  
Her passioned glances and her witching smile.  
She lent the fawn her moving, melting gaze,  
And the fond creeper all her winning ways.  
The trees that blossomed on that lonely mount  
She watered daily from the neighbouring fount:  
If she had been their nursing mother, she  
Could not have tended them more carefully.  
[Not e'en her boy](#)—her own bright boy—shall stay  
Her love for them: her first dear children they.  
Her gentleness had made the fawns so tame,  
To her kind hand for fresh sweet grain they came,  
And let the maid before her friends compare  
Her own with eyes that shone as softly there.

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Then came the hermits of the holy wood  
To see the votaress in her solitude;  
Grey elders came; though young the maid might seem,  
Her perfect virtue must command esteem.

They found her resting in that lonely spot,  
The fire was kindled, and no rite forgot.  
In hermit's mantle was she clad; her look  
Fixt in deep thought upon the Holy Book.  
So pure that grove: all war was made to cease,  
And savage monsters lived in love and peace.  
Pure was that grove: each newly built abode  
Had leafy shrines where fires of worship glowed.

But far too mild her penance, UMA thought,  
To win from heaven the lordly meed she sought.  
She would not spare her form, so fair and frail,  
If sterner penance could perchance prevail.  
Oft had sweet pastime wearied her, and yet  
Fain would she match in toil the anchoret.  
Sure the soft lotus at her birth had lent  
Dear UMA's form its gentle element;  
But gold, commingled with her being, gave  
That will so strong, so beautifully brave.

Full in the centre of four blazing piles  
Sate the fair lady of the winning smiles,  
While on her head the mighty God of Day  
Shot all the fury of his summer ray;  
Yet her fixt gaze she turned upon the skies,  
And quenched his splendour with her brighter eyes.  
To that sweet face, though scorched by rays from heaven,  
Still was the beauty of the lotus given,  
Yet, worn by watching, round those orbs of light  
A blackness gathered like the shades of night.  
She cooled her dry lips in the bubbling stream,  
And lived on Amrit from the pale moon-beam,  
Sometimes in hunger culling from the tree  
The rich ripe fruit that hung so temptingly.

Scorched by the fury of the noon-tide rays,  
And fires that round her burned with ceaseless blaze,  
Summer passed o'er her: rains of Autumn came  
And thoroughly drenched the lady's tender frame.  
So steams the earth, when mighty torrents pour  
On thirsty fields all dry and parched before.  
The first clear rain-drops falling on her brow,  
Gem it one moment with their light, and now  
Kissing her sweet lip find a welcome rest  
In the deep valley of the lady's breast;  
Then wander broken by the fall within  
The mazy channels of her dimpled skin.  
There as she lay upon her rocky bed,  
No sumptuous roof above her gentle head,  
Dark Night, her only witness, turned her eyes,  
Red lightnings flashing from the angry skies,  
And gazed upon her voluntary pain,  
In wind, in sleet, in thunder, and in rain.  
Still lay the maiden on the cold damp ground,  
Though blasts of winter hurled their snows around,  
Still pitying in her heart the mournful fate  
[Of those poor birds](#), so fond, so desolate,—  
Doomed, hapless pair, to list each other's moan  
Through the long hours of night, sad and alone.

Chilled by the rain, the tender lotus sank:  
She filled its place upon the streamlet's bank.  
Sweet was her breath as when that lovely flower  
Sheds its best odour in still evening's hour.  
Red as its leaves her lips of coral hue:  
Red as those quivering leaves they quivered too.

Of all stern penance it is called the chief  
To nourish life upon the fallen leaf.  
But even this the ascetic maiden spurned,  
And for all time a glorious title earned.  
APARNÁ—Lady of the unbroken fast—  
Have sages called her, saints who knew the past.  
Fair as the lotus fibres, soft as they,  
In these stern vows she passed her night and day.  
No mighty anchoret had e'er essayed  
The ceaseless penance of this gentle maid.

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There came a hermit: reverend was he  
As Bráhmahood's embodied sanctity.  
With coat of skin, with staff and matted hair,  
His face was radiant, and he spake her fair.  
Up rose the maid the holy man to greet,  
And humbly bowed before the hermit's feet.  
Though meditation fill the pious breast,  
It finds a welcome for a glorious guest:

The sage received the honour duly paid,  
And fixed his earnest gaze upon the maid.  
While through her frame unwonted vigour ran,  
Thus, in his silver speech, the blameless saint began:

"How can thy tender frame, sweet lady, bear  
In thy firm spirit's task its fearful share?  
Canst thou the grass and fuel duly bring,  
And still unwearied seek the freshening spring?  
Say, do the creeper's slender shoots expand,  
Seeking each day fresh water from thy hand,  
Till like thy lip each ruddy tendril glows,  
That lip which, faded, still outreds the rose?  
With loving glance the timid fawns draw nigh:  
Say dost thou still with joy their wants supply?  
For thee, O lotus-eyed, their glances shine,  
Mocking the brightness of each look of thine.  
O Mountain-Lady, it is truly said  
That heavenly charms to sin have never led,  
For even penitents may learn of thee  
How pure, how gentle Beauty's self may be.  
Bright GANGÁ falling with her heavenly waves,  
HIMÁLAYA'S head with sacred water laves,  
Bearing the flowers the seven great Sages fling  
To crown the forehead of the Mountain-King.  
Yet do thy deeds, O bright-haired maiden, shed  
A richer glory round his awful head.

Purest of motives, Duty leads thy heart:  
Pleasure and gain therein may claim no part.  
O noble maid, the wise have truly said  
[That friendship soon in gentle heart is bred.](#)  
Seven steps together bind the lasting tie:  
Then bend on me, dear Saint, a gracious eye.  
Fain, lovely UMA, would a Bráhman learn  
What noble guerdon would thy penance earn.  
Say, art thou toiling for a second birth,  
Where dwells the great Creator? O'er the earth  
Resistless sway? Or fair as Beauty's Queen,  
Peerless, immortal, shall thy form be seen?

The lonely soul bowed down by grief and pain,  
By penance' aid some gracious boon may gain.  
But what, O faultless one, can move thy heart  
To dwell in solitude and prayer apart?  
Why should the cloud of grief obscure thy brow,  
'Mid all thy kindred, who so loved as thou?  
Foes hast thou none: for what rash hand would dare  
From serpent's head the magic gem to tear?  
Why dost thou seek the hermit's garb to try,  
Thy silken raiment and thy gems thrown by?  
As though the sun his glorious state should leave,  
Rayless to harbour 'mid the shades of eve.  
Wouldst thou win heaven by thy holy spells?  
Already with the Gods thy father dwells.  
A husband, lady? O forbear the thought,  
A priceless jewel seeks not, but is sought.  
Maiden, thy deep sighs tell me it is so;  
Yet, doubtful still, my spirit seeks to know  
Couldst thou e'er love in vain? What heart so cold  
That hath not eagerly its worship told?  
Ah! could the cruel loved one, thou fair maid,  
Look with cold glances on that bright hair's braid?  
Thy locks are hanging loosely o'er thy brow,  
Thine ear is shaded by no lotus now.  
See, where the sun hath scorched that tender neck  
Which precious jewels once were proud to deck.  
Still gleams the line where they were wont to cling,  
As faintly shows the moon's o'ershadowed ring.  
Now sure thy loved one, vain in beauty's pride,

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Dreamed of himself when wandering at thy side,  
Or he would count him blest to be the mark  
Of that dear eye, so soft, so lustrous dark.  
But, gentle U<sup>M</sup>Ā, let thy labour cease;  
Turn to thy home, fair Saint, and rest in peace.  
By many a year of penance duly done  
Rich store of merit has my labour won.  
Take then the half, thy secret purpose name;  
Nor in stern hardships wear thy tender frame."

The holy Bráhma<sup>n</sup> ceased: but U<sup>M</sup>Ā's breast  
In silence heaved, by love and fear opprest.  
In mute appeal she turned her languid eye,  
Darkened with weeping, not with softening dye,  
To bid her maiden's friendly tongue declare  
The cherished secret of her deep despair:  
"Hear, holy Father, if thou still wouldst know,  
Why her frail form endures this pain and woe,  
As the soft lotus makes a screen to stay  
The noontide fury of the God of Day.  
Proudly disdain<sup>ing</sup> all the blest above,  
With heart and soul she seeks for Ś<sup>I</sup>VĀ's love.  
For him alone, the Trident-wielding God,  
The thorny paths of penance hath she trod.  
But since that mighty one hath KĀ<sup>M</sup>A slain,  
Vain every hope, and every effort vain.  
E'en as life fled, a keen but flowery dart  
Young LOVE, the Archer, aimed at Ś<sup>I</sup>VĀ's heart.  
The God in anger hurled the shaft away,  
But deep in U<sup>M</sup>Ā's tender soul it lay;  
Alas, poor maid! she knows no comfort now,  
Her soul's on fire, her wild locks hide her brow.  
She quits her father's halls, and frenzied roves  
The icy mountain and the lonely groves.  
Oft as the maidens of the minstrel throng  
To hymn great Ś<sup>I</sup>VĀ's praises raised the song,  
The lovelorn lady's sobs and deep-drawn sighs  
Drew tears of pity from their gentle eyes.  
Wakeful and fevered in the dreary night  
Scarce closed her eyes, and then in wild affright  
Rang through the halls her very bitter cry,  
"God of the azure neck, why dost thou fly?"  
While their soft bands her loving arms would cast  
Hound the dear vision fading all too fast.  
Her skilful hand, with true love-guided art,  
Had traced the image graven on her heart.  
"Art thou all present? Dost thou fail to see  
Poor U<sup>M</sup>Ā's anguish and her love for thee?"  
Thus oft in frenzied grief her voice was heard,  
Chiding the portrait with reproachful word.  
Long thus in vain for Ś<sup>I</sup>VĀ's love she strove,  
Then turned in sorrow to this holy grove.  
Since the sad maid hath sought these forest glades  
To hide her grief amid the dreary shades,  
The fruit hath ripened on the spreading bough;  
But ah! no fruit hath crowned her holy vow.  
Her faithful friends alone must ever mourn  
To see that beauteous form by penance worn,  
But oh! that Ś<sup>I</sup>VĀ would some favour deign,  
As INDRA pitieth the parching plain!"

The maiden ceased: his secret joy dissembling,  
The Bráhma<sup>n</sup> turned to U<sup>M</sup>Ā pale and trembling:  
"And is it thus, or doth the maiden jest?  
Is this the darling secret of thy breast?"

Scarce could the maid her choking voice command,  
Or clasp her rosary with quivering hand:  
"O holy Sage, learned in the Vedas' lore,  
'Tis even thus. Great Ś<sup>I</sup>VĀ I adore.  
Thus would my steadfast heart his love obtain,  
For this I gladly bear the toil and pain.  
Surely the strong desire, the earnest will,  
May win some favour from his mercy still."

"Lady," cried he, "that mighty Lord I know;

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Ever his presence bringeth care and woe.  
 And wouldst thou still a second time prepare  
 The sorrows of his fearful life to share?  
 Deluded maid, how shall thy tender hand,  
 Decked with the nuptial bracelet's jewelled band,  
 Be clasped in his, when fearful serpents twine  
 In scaly horror round that arm divine?  
 How shall thy robe, with gay flamingoes gleaming,  
 Suit with his coat of hide with blood-drops streaming?  
 Of old thy pathway led where flowerets sweet  
 Made pleasant carpets for thy gentle feet.  
 And e'en thy foes would turn in grief away  
 To see these vermeil-tinted limbs essay,  
 Where scattered tresses strew the mournful place,  
 Their gloomy path amid the tombs to trace.  
 On ŚIVA's heart the funeral ashes rest,  
 Say, gentle lady, shall they stain thy breast,  
 Where the rich tribute of the Sandal trees  
 Sheds a pure odour on the amorous breeze?  
 A royal bride returning in thy state,  
 The king of elephants should bear thy weight.  
 How wilt thou brook the mockery and the scorn  
 When thou on ŚIVA's bull art meanly borne?  
 Sad that the crescent moon his crest should be:  
 And shall that mournful fate be shared by thee?  
 His crest, the glory of the evening skies,  
 His bride, the moonlight of our wondering eyes!  
 Deformed is he, his ancestry unknown;  
 By vilest garb his poverty is shown.  
 O fawn-eyed lady, how should ŚIVA gain  
 That heart for which the glorious strive in vain  
 No charms hath he to win a maiden's eye:  
 Cease from thy penance, hush the fruitless sigh!  
 Unmeet is he thy faithful heart to share,  
 Child of the Mountain, maid of beauty rare!  
 Not 'mid the gloomy tombs do sages raise  
 The holy altar of their prayer and praise."

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Impatient UMA listened: the quick blood  
 Rushed to her temples in an angry flood.  
 Her quivering lip, her darkly-flashing eye  
 Told that the tempest of her wrath was nigh.  
 Proudly she spoke: "How couldst thou tell aright  
 Of one like ŚIVA, perfect, infinite?  
 'Tis ever thus, the mighty and the just  
 Are scorned by souls that grovel in the dust.  
 Their lofty goodness and their motives wise  
 Shine all in vain before such blinded eyes.  
 Say who is greater, he who strives for power,  
 Or he who succours in misfortune's hour?  
 Refuge of worlds, O how should ŚIVA deign  
 To look on men enslaved to paltry gain?  
 The spring of wealth himself, he careth naught  
 For the vile treasures that mankind have sought.  
 His dwelling-place amid the tombs may be,  
 Yet Monarch of the three great worlds is he.  
 What though no love his outward form may claim,  
 The stout heart trembles at his awful name.  
 Who can declare the wonders of his might?  
 The Trident-wielding God, who knows aright?  
 Whether around him deadly serpents twine,  
 Or if his jewelled wreaths more brightly shine;  
 Whether in rough and wrinkled hide arrayed,  
 Or silken robe, in glittering folds displayed;  
 If on his brow the crescent moon he bear,  
 Or if a shrunken skull be withering there;  
 The funeral ashes touched by him acquire  
 The glowing lustre of eternal fire;  
 Falling in golden showers, the heavenly maids  
 Delight to pour them on their shining braids.  
 What though no treasures fill his storehouse full,  
 What though he ride upon his horned bull,  
 Not e'en may INDRA in his pride withhold  
 The lowly homage that is his of old,  
 But turns his raging elephant to meet

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His mighty Lord, and bows before his feet,  
Right proud to colour them rich rosy red  
With the bright flowers that deck his prostrate head.  
Thy slanderous tongue proclaims thy evil mind,  
Yet in thy speech one word of truth we find.  
Unknown thou call'st him: how should mortal man  
Count when the days of BRAHMA'S Lord began?  
But cease these idle words: though all be true,  
His failings many and his virtues few,  
Still clings my heart to him, its chosen lord,  
Nor fails nor falters at thy treacherous word.  
Dear maiden, bid yon eager boy depart:  
Why should the slanderous tale defile his heart?  
Most guilty who the faithless speech begins,  
But he who stays to listen also sins."

She turned away: with wrath her bosom swelling,  
Its vest of bark in angry pride repelling:  
But sudden, lo, before her wondering eyes  
In altered form she sees the sage arise;  
'Tis ŚIVA'S self before the astonished maid,  
In all his gentlest majesty displayed.  
She saw, she trembled, like a river's course,  
Checked for a moment in its onward force,  
By some huge rock amid the torrent hurled  
Where erst the foaming waters madly curled.  
One foot uplifted, shall she turn away?  
Unmoved the other, shall the maiden stay?  
The silver moon on ŚIVA'S forehead shone,  
While softly spake the God in gracious tone:  
"O gentle maiden, wise and true of soul,  
Lo, now I bend beneath thy sweet control.  
Won by thy penance, and thy holy vows,  
Thy willing slave ŚIVA before thee bows."

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He spake, and rushing through her languid frame,  
At his dear words returning vigour came.  
She knew but this, that all her cares were o'er,  
Her sorrows ended, she should weep no more!

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## ***CANTO SIXTH.***

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### **Canto Sixth.**

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#### ***UMÁ'S ESPOUSALS.***

Now gentle UMÁ bade a damsel bear  
To ŚIVA, Soul of All, her maiden prayer:  
"Wait the high sanction of HIMÁLAYA'S will,  
And ask his daughter from the royal hill."  
Then ere the God, her own dear Lord, replied,  
In blushing loveliness she sought his side.  
Thus the young mango hails the approaching spring  
By its own tuneful bird's sweet welcoming.

In UMÁ'S ear he softly whispered, yea,  
Then scarce could tear him from her arms away.  
Swift with a thought he summoned from above  
The Seven bright Saints to bear his tale of love.  
They came, and She, [the Heavenly Dame](#), was there,  
Lighting with glories all the radiant air;  
Just freshly bathed in sacred GANGÁ'S tide,  
Gemmed with the dancing flowers that deck her side,  
And richly scented with the nectarous rill  
That heavenly elephants from their brows distil.  
Fair strings of pearl their radiant fingers hold,  
Clothed are their limbs in hermit-coats of gold;  
Their rosaries, large gems of countless price,  
Shone like the fruit that glows in Paradise,  
As though the glorious trees that blossom there

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Had sought the forest for a life of prayer.  
 With all his thousand beams the God of Day,  
 Urging his coursers down the sloping way,  
 His banner furled at the approach of night,  
 Looks up in reverence on those lords of light.  
 Ancient creators: thus the wise, who know,  
 Gave them a name in ages long ago:  
 With BRAHMÁ joining in creation's plan,  
 And perfecting the work His will began;  
 Still firm in penance, though the hermit-vow  
 Bears a ripe harvest for the sages now.  
 Brightest in glory 'mid that glorious band  
 See the fair Queen, the Heavenly Lady, stand.  
 Fixing her loving eyes upon her spouse,  
 She seemed sent forth to crown the sage's vows  
 With sweet immortal joy, the dearest prize  
 Strong prayer could merit from the envious skies.  
 With equal honour on the Queen and all  
 Did the kind glance of ŚIVA's welcome fall.  
 No partial favour by the good is shown:  
 They count not station, but the deed alone.  
 So fair she shone upon his raptured view,  
 He longed for wedlock's heavenly pleasures too.  
 What hath such power to lead the soul above  
 By virtue's pleasant path as wedded love!  
 Scarce had the holy motive lent its aid  
 To knit great ŚIVA to the Mountain-Maid,  
 When KÁMA'S spirit that had swooned in fear  
 Breathed once again and deemed forgiveness near.

[Pg 77]

The ancient Sages reverently adored  
 The world's great Father and its Sovran Lord,  
 And while a soft ecstatic thrilling ran  
 O'er their celestial frames, they thus began:  
 "Glorious the fruit our holy studies bear,  
 Our constant penance, sacrifice and prayer.  
 For that high place within thy thoughts we gain  
 Which fancy strives to reach, but longs in vain.  
 How blest is he, the glory of the wise,  
 Deep in whose thoughtful breast thy Godhead lies!  
 But who may tell his joy who rests enshrined,  
 O BRAHMÁ'S great Creator, in thy mind!  
 We dwell on high above the cold moon's ray;  
 Beneath our mansion glows the God of Day,  
 But now thy favour lends us brighter beams,  
 Blest with thy love our star unchanging gleams.  
 How should we tell what soul-entrancing bliss  
 Enthral's our spirit at an hour like this?  
 Great Lord of All, thou Soul of Life indwelling,  
 We crave one word thy wondrous nature telling.  
 Though to our eyes thy outward form be shown,  
 How can we know thee as thou shouldst be known?  
 In this thy present shape, we pray thee, say  
 Dost thou create? dost thou preserve or slay?  
 But speak thy wish; called from our starry rest  
 We wait, O ŚIVA, for our Lord's behest"

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Then answered thus the Lord of glory, while  
 Flashed from his dazzling teeth so white a smile,  
 The moon that crowned him poured a larger stream  
 Of living splendour from that pearly gleam:  
 "Ye know, great Sages of a race divine,  
 No selfish want e'er prompts a deed of mine.  
 Do not the forms—eight varied forms—I wear,  
 The truth of this to all the world declare?  
 Now, as [that thirsty bird](#) that drinks the rain  
 Prays the kind clouds of heaven to soothe its pain,  
 So the Gods pray me, trembling 'neath their foe,  
 To send a child of mine and end their woe.  
 I seek the Mountain-Maiden as my bride:  
 Our hero son shall tame the demon's pride.  
 Thus the priest bids the holy fire arise,  
 Struck from the wood to aid the sacrifice.  
 Go, ask HIMÁLAYA for the lovely maid:  
 Blest are those bridals which the holy aid.

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So shall more glorious honours gild my name,  
And win the father yet a prouder fame.  
Nor, O ye heavenly Sages, need I teach  
What for the maiden's hand shall be your speech,  
For still the wise in worthiest honour hold  
The rules and precepts ye ordained of old.  
This Lady too shall aid your mission there:  
Best for such task a skilful matron's care.  
And now, my heralds, to your task away,  
Where proud HIMÁLAYA holds his royal sway;  
Then meet me where this mighty torrent raves  
Down the steep channel with its headlong waves."

Thus while that holiest One his love confessed,  
The hermits listened: from each saintly breast  
Fled the false shame that yet had lingered there,  
And love and wedlock showed divinely fair.

On through the heaven, o'er tracts of swordlike blue,  
Towards the gay city, swift as thought, they flew,  
Bright with high domes and palaces most fair,  
As if [proud ALAKÁ](#) were planted there,  
Or PARADISE poured forth, in showers that bless,  
The rich o'erflowings of its loveliness. [Pg 80]  
Round lofty towers adorned with gems and gold  
Her guardian stream the holy GANGÁ rolled.  
On every side, the rampart's glowing crown,  
Bright wreaths of fragrant flowers hung waving down,—  
Flowers that might tempt the maids of heavenly birth  
To linger fondly o'er that pride of earth.  
Its noble elephants, unmoved by fear,  
The distant roaring of the lions hear.  
In beauty peerless, and unmatched in speed,  
Its thousand coursers of celestial breed.  
Through the broad streets bright sylphs and minstrels rove:  
Its dames are Goddesses of stream and grove.

Hark! the drum echoes louder and more loud  
From glittering halls whose spires are wrapt in cloud.  
It were the thunder, but that voice of fear  
Falls not in measured time upon the ear.  
'Tis balmy cool, for many a heavenly tree,  
With quivering leaves and branches waving free,  
Sheds a delightful freshness through the air,—  
Fans which no toil of man has stationed there.  
The crystal chambers where they feast at night  
Flash back the beamings of the starry light.  
So brightly pure that silver gleam is shed,  
Playing so fondly round each beauteous head,  
That all seem gifted from those lights above [Pg 81]  
With richest tokens of superior love.  
How blest its maidens! cloudless is their day,  
And radiant herbs illumine their nightly way.  
No term of days, but endless youth they know;  
No Death save him who bears the Flowery Bow:  
Their direst swoon, their only frenzy this—  
The trance of love, the ecstasy of bliss!  
Ne'er can their lovers for one hour withstand  
The frown, the quivering lip, the scornful hand;  
But seek forgiveness of the angry fair,  
And woo her smile with many an earnest prayer.  
Around, wide gardens spread their pleasant bowers,  
Where [the bright Champac](#) opens her fragrant flowers:  
Dear shades, beloved by the sylphs that roam  
In dewy evening from their mountain home.

Ah! why should mortals fondly strive to gain  
Heaven and its joys by ceaseless toil and pain?  
E'en the Saints envied as their steps drew near,  
And owned a brighter heaven was opened here.  
They lighted down; braided was each long tress,  
Bright as the pictured flame, as motionless.  
HIMÁLAYA'S palace-warders in amaze  
On the Seven Sages turned their eager gaze,—  
A noble company of celestial race [Pg 82]  
Where each in order of his years had place,—

Glorious, as when the sun, his head inclining,  
 Sees his own image 'mid the waters shining.  
 To greet them with a gift HIMÁLAYA sped,  
 Earth to her centre shaking at his tread.  
 By his dark lips with mountain metals dyed,  
 His arms like pines that clothe his lofty side:  
 By his proud stature, by his stony breast,  
 Lord of the Snowy Hills he stood confest.  
 On to his Council-hall he led the way,  
 Nor failed due honour to the Saints to pay.  
 On couch of reed the Monarch bade them rest,  
 And thus with uplift hands those Heavenly Lords addressed:  
 "Like soft rain falling from a cloudless sky,  
 Or fruit, when bloom has failed to glad the eye,  
 So are ye welcome, Sages; thus I feel  
 Ecstatic thrilling o'er my spirit steal,  
 Changed, like dull senseless iron to burning gold,  
 Or some rapt creature, when the heavens unfold  
 To eyes yet dim with tears of earthly care,  
 The rest, the pleasures, and the glory there.  
 Long pilgrim bands from this auspicious day  
 To my pure hill shall bend their constant way.  
 Famed shall it be o'er all the lands around,  
 For where the good have been is holy ground.  
 Now am I doubly pure, for GANGÁ's tide  
 Falls on my head from heaven and laves my side.  
 Henceforth I boast a second stream as sweet,  
 The water, Sages, that has touched your feet.  
 Twice by your favour is HIMÁLAYA blest,—  
 This towery mountain that your feet have prest,  
 And this my moving form is happier still  
 To wait your bidding, to perform your will.  
 These mighty limbs that fill the heaven's expanse  
 Sink down, o'erpowered, in a blissful trance.  
 So bright your presence, at the glorious sight  
 My brooding shades of darkness turn to light.  
 The gloom that haunts my mountain caverns flies,  
 And cloudy passion in the spirit dies.  
 O say, if here your arrowy course ye sped  
 To throw fresh glory round my towering head.  
 Surely your wish, ye Mighty Ones, can crave  
 No aid, no service from your willing slave.  
 Yet deem me worthy of some high behest:  
 The lord commandeth, and the slave is blest.  
 Declare your pleasure, then, bright heavenly band:  
 We crave no guerdon but your sole command.  
 Yours are we all, HIMÁLAYA and his bride,  
 And this dear maiden child our hope and pride."

[Pg 83]

Not once he spake: his cavern mouths around  
 In hollow echoings gave again the sound.  
 Of all who speak beyond compare the best,  
[ANGIRAS](#) answered at the Saints' request:  
 "This power hast thou, great King, and mightier far,  
 Thy mind is lofty as thy summits are.  
 Sages say truly, VISHŪ is thy name:  
 His spirit breatheth in thy mountain frame.  
 Within the caverns of thy boundless breast  
 All things that move and all that move not rest.  
 How on his head so soft, so delicate,  
 Could the great Snake uphold the huge earth's weight,  
 Did not thy roots, far-reaching down to hell,  
 Bear up the burden and assist him well?  
 Thy streams of praise, thy pure rills' ceaseless flow  
 Make glad the nations wheresoe'er they go,  
 Till, shedding purity on every side,  
 They sink at length in boundless Ocean's tide.  
 Blest is fair GANGÁ, for her heavenly stream  
 Flows from the feet of him that sits supreme;  
 And blest once more, O mighty Hill, is she  
 That her bright waters spring anew from thee.  
[Vast grew his body](#) when the avenging God  
 In three huge strides o'er all creation trod.  
 Above, below, his form increased, but thou  
 Wast ever glorious and as vast as now.

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By thee is famed SUMERU forced to hide  
 His flashing rays and pinnacles of pride,  
 For thou hast won thy station in the skies  
 'Mid the great Gods who claim the sacrifice.  
 Firm and unmoved remains thy lofty hill,  
 Yet thou canst bow before the holy still.  
 Now—for the glorious work will fall on thee,—  
 Hear thou the cause of this our embassy.  
 We also, Mountain Monarch, since we bear  
 To thee the message, in the labour share.  
 The Highest, Mightiest, Noblest One, adored  
 By the proud title of our Sovran Lord:  
 The crescent moon upon his brow bears he,  
 And wields the wondrous powers of Deity.  
 He in this earth and varied forms displayed,  
 Bound each to other by exchange of aid,  
 Guides the great world and all the things that are,  
 As flying coursers whirl the glittering car.  
 Him good men seek with holy thought and prayer,  
 Who fills their breast and makes his dwelling there.  
 When saints, we read, his lofty sphere attain,  
 They ne'er may fall to this base earth again:  
 His messengers, great King, we crave the hand  
 Of thy fair daughter at the God's command.  
 At such blest union, as of TRUTH and VOICE,  
 A father's heart should grieve not, but rejoice.  
 Her Lord is Father of the world, and she  
 Of all that liveth shall the mother be.  
 Gods that adore him with the Neck of Blue  
 In homage bent shall hail the Lady too,  
 And give a glory to her feet with gems  
 That sparkle in their priceless diadems.  
 Hear what a roll shall blazon forth thy line,—  
 Maid, Father, Suitor, Messengers divine!  
 Give him the chosen lady, and aspire  
 To call thy son the Universe's Sire,  
 Who laudeth none, but all mankind shall raise  
 To Him through endless time the songs of praise."

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Thus while he spake the lady bent her head  
 To hide her cheek, now blushing rosy red,  
 And numbered o'er with seeming care the while  
 Her lotus' petals in sweet maiden guile.  
 With pride and joy HIMĀLAYA'S heart beat high,  
 Yet ere he spake he looked to MENĀ'S eye:  
 Full well he knew a mother's gentle care  
 Learns her child's heart and love's deep secret there,  
 And this the hour, he felt, when fathers seek  
 Her eye for answer or her changing cheek.  
 His eager look HIMĀLAYA scarce had bent  
 When MENĀ'S eye beamed back her glad assent.  
 O gentle wives! your fondest wish is still  
 To have with him you love one heart, one will.

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He threw his arms around the blushing maid  
 In queenly garment and in gems arrayed,  
 Awhile was silent, then in rapture cried,  
 "Come, O my daughter! Come, thou destined bride  
 Of ŚIVA, Lord of All: this glorious band  
 Of Saints have sought thee at the God's command;  
 And I thy sire this happy day obtain  
 The best reward a father's wish would gain."

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Then to the Saints he cried: "Pure Hermits, see  
 The spouse of ŚIVA greets your company."  
 They looked in rapture on the maid, and poured  
 Their fullest blessing on her heavenly lord.  
 So low she bowed, the gems that decked her hair  
 And sparkled in her ear fell loosened there;  
 Then with sweet modesty and joy opprest  
 She hid her blushes on the Lady's breast,  
 Who cheered the mother weeping for her child,  
 Her own dear UMĀ, till again she smiled:  
 Such bliss and glory should be hers above,  
 Yea, mighty ŚIVA'S undivided love.

They named the fourth for UMA's nuptial day;  
Then sped the Sages on their homeward way;  
And thanked by SIVA with a gracious eye  
Sought their bright rest amid the stars on high.  
Through all those weary days the lover sighed  
To wind his fond arms round his gentle bride.  
Oh, if the Lord of Heaven could find no rest,  
Think, think how Love, strong Love, can tear a mortal's breast!

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## ***CANTO SEVENTH.***

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### **Canto Seventh.**

[Pg 91]

#### ***UMÁ'S BRIDAL.***

In light and glory dawned the expected day  
Blest with a kindly star's auspicious ray,  
When gaily gathered at HIMÁLAYA'S call  
His kinsmen to the solemn festival.  
Through the broad city every dame's awake  
To grace the bridal for her monarch's sake;  
So great their love for him, this single care  
Makes one vast household of the thousands there.  
Heaven is not brighter than the royal street  
Where flowers lie scattered 'neath the nobles' feet,  
And banners waving to the breeze unfold  
Their silken broidery over gates of gold.  
And she, their child, upon her bridal day  
Bears her dear parents' every thought away.  
So, when from distant shores a friend returns,  
With deeper love each inmost spirit burns.  
So, when grim Death restores his prey again  
Joy brighter shines from memory of pain.  
Each noble matron of HIMÁLAYA'S race  
Folds his dear UMA in a long embrace,  
Pours blessings on her head, and prays her take  
Some priceless jewel for her friendship's sake.  
With sweetest influence a star of power  
Had joined the spotted moon: at that blest hour  
To deck fair UMA many a noble dame  
And many a gentle maid assiduous came.  
And well she graced their toil, more brightly fair  
With feathery grass and wild flowers in her hair.  
A silken robe flowed free below her waist;  
Her sumptuous head a glittering arrow graced.  
So shines the young unclouded moon at last,  
Greeting the sun, its darksome season past.  
Sweet-scented Lodhra dust and Sandal dyed  
The delicate beauties of the fair young bride,  
Veiled with a soft light robe. Her tiring-girls  
Then led her to a chamber decked with pearls  
And paved with sapphires, where the lulling sound  
Of choicest music breathed divinely round.  
There o'er the lady's limbs they poured by turns  
Streams of pure water from their golden urns.  
Fresh from the cooling bath the lovely maid  
In fairest white her tender form arrayed.  
So opens the Kása all her shining flowers  
Lured from their buds by softly falling showers.  
Then to a court with canopies o'erhead  
A crowd of noble dames the maiden led—  
A court for solemn rites, where gems and gold  
Adorn the pillars that the roof uphold.  
There on a couch they set her with her face  
Turned toward the east. So lovely then the grace  
Of that dear maid, so ravishing her smile,  
E'en her attendants turned to gaze awhile;  
For though the brightest gems around her lay,

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Her brighter beauty stole their eyes away.  
 Through her long tresses one a chaplet wound,  
 And one with fragrant grass her temples crowned,  
 While o'er her head sweet clouds of incense rolled  
 To try and perfume every shining fold.  
 Bright dyes of saffron and the scented wood  
 Adorned her beauty, till the maiden stood  
 Fairer than GANGÁ when the Love-birds play  
 O'er sandy islets in her silvery bay.  
 To what rare beauty shall her maids compare  
 Her clear brow shaded by her glossy hair?  
 Less dazzling pure the lovely lotus shines  
 Flecked by the thronging bees in dusky lines.  
 Less bright the moon, when a dark band of cloud  
 Enhances beauties which it cannot shroud.  
 Behind her ear a head of barley drew  
 The eye to gaze upon its golden hue.  
 But then her cheek, with glowing saffron dyed,  
 To richer beauty called the glance aside.  
 Though from those lips, where Beauty's guerdon lay,  
 The vermeil tints were newly washed away,  
 Yet o'er them, as she smiled, a ray was thrown  
 Of quivering brightness that was all their own.

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"Lay this dear foot upon thy lover's head  
 Crowned with the moon," the laughing maiden said,  
 Who dyed her lady's feet—no word spake she,  
 But beat her with her wreath in playful glee.

Then tiring-women took the jetty dye  
 To guard, not deck, the beauty of her eye,  
 Whose languid half-shut glances might compare  
 With lotus leaves just opening to the air;  
 And as fresh gems adorned her neck and arms,  
 So quickly changing grew the maiden's charms,  
 Like some fair plant where bud succeeding bud  
 Unfolds new beauty; or a silver flood  
 Where gay birds follow quickly; or like night,  
 When crowding stars come forth in all their light.  
 Oft as the mirror would her glance beguile  
 She longed to meet her Lord's approving smile.  
 Her tasteful skill the timid maid essays  
 To win one smile of love, one word of praise.

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The happy mother took the golden dye  
 And raised to hers young UMA's beaming eye.  
 Then swelled her bosom with maternal pride  
 As thus she decked her darling for a bride.  
 Oh, she had longed to trace on that fair brow  
 The nuptial line, yet scarce could mark it now.

On UMA's rounded arm the woollen band  
 Was fixt securely by the nurse's hand.  
 Blind with the tears that filled her swimming eye,  
 In vain the mother strove that band to tie.  
 Spotless as curling foam-flakes stood she there,  
 As yielding soft, as graceful and as fair:  
 Or like the glory of an autumn night  
 Robed by the full moon in a veil of light.

Then at her mother's hest, the maid adored  
 The spirit of each high ancestral lord,  
 Nor failed she next the noble dames to greet,  
 And give due honour to their reverend feet.  
 They raised the maiden as she bowed her head:  
 "Thine be the fulness of his love!" they said.  
 Half of his being, blessing high as this  
 Can add no rapture to her perfect bliss.  
 Well-pleased HIMÁLAYA viewed the pomp and pride  
 Meet for his daughter, meet for ŚIVA's bride;  
 Then sought the hall with all his friends to wait  
 The bridegroom's coming with a monarch's state.

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Meanwhile by heavenly matrons' care displayed  
 Upon KUVĒRA's lofty mount were laid  
 The ornaments of ŚIVA, which of yore  
 At his first nuptials the bridegroom wore.  
 He laid his hand upon the dress, but how

Shall robes so sad, so holy, grace him now?  
 His own dire vesture took a shape as fair  
 As gentle bridegroom's heart could wish to wear.  
 The withering skull that glazed the eye with dread,  
 Shone a bright coronal to grace his head.  
 That elephant's hide the God had worn of old  
 Was now a silken robe inwrought with gold.  
 Ere this his body was with dust besprent:  
 With unguent now it shed delightful scent;  
 And that mid-eye which glittering like a star  
 Shot the wild terror of its glance afar—  
 So softly now its golden radiance beamed—  
 A mark of glory on his forehead seemed.  
 His twining serpents, destined still to be  
 The pride and honour of the deity,  
 Changed but their bodies: in each sparkling crest  
 The blazing gems still shone their loveliest.  
 What need of jewels on the brow of Him  
 Who wears the crescent moon? No spot may dim  
 Its youthful beauty, e'en in light of day  
 Shedding the glory of its quenchless ray.  
 Well-pleased the God in all his pride arrayed  
 Saw his bright image mirrored in the blade  
 Of the huge sword they brought; then calmly leant  
 On NANDI's arm, and toward his bull he went,  
 Whose broad back covered with a tiger's hide  
 Was steep to climb as Mount [KAILĀSA's side](#).  
 Yet the dread monster humbly shrank for fear,  
 And bowed in reverence as his Lord drew near.  
 The matrons followed him, a saintly throng,  
 Their ear-rings waving as they dashed along:  
 Sweet faces, with such glories round them shed  
 As made the air one lovely lotus bed.  
 On flew those bright ones: [KĀLI came behind](#),  
 The skulls that decked her rattling in the wind:  
 Like the dark rack that scuds across the sky,  
 With herald lightning and the crane's shrill cry.

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Hark! from the glorious bands that lead the way,  
 Harp, drum, and pipe, and shrilling trumpet's bray,  
 Burst through the sky upon the startled ear  
 And tell the Gods the hour of worship's near.

They came; the SUN presents a silken shade  
 Which heaven's own artist for the God had made,  
 Gilding his brows, as though bright GANGĀ rolled  
 Adown his holy head her waves of gold.  
 She in her Goddess-shape divinely fair,  
 And YAMUNĀ, sweet river-Nymph, were there,  
 Fanning their Lord, that fancy still might deem  
 Swans waved their pinions round each Lady of the Stream.  
 E'en BRAHMĀ came, Creator, Lord of Might,  
 And VISHṆU glowing from the realms of light.  
 "Ride on," they cried, "thine, thine for ever be  
 The strength, the glory, and the victory."  
 To swell his triumph that high blessing came  
 Like holy oil upon the rising flame.  
 In those Three Persons the one God was shown,  
 Each first in place, each last,—not one alone;  
 Of ŚIVA, VISHṆU, BRAHMĀ, each may be  
 First, second, third, among the Blessed Three.  
 By INDRA led, each world-upholding Lord  
 With folded hands the mighty God adored.  
 In humble robes arrayed, the pomp and pride  
 Of glorious deity they laid aside.  
 They signed to NANDI, and the favourite's hand  
 Guided his eye upon the suppliant band.  
 He spake to VISHṆU, and on INDRA smiled,  
 To BRAHMĀ bowed—the lotus' mystic child.  
 On all the hosts of heaven his friendly eye  
 Beamed duly welcome as they crowded nigh.  
 The Seven Great Saints their blessings o'er him shed,  
 And thus in answer, with a smile, he said:  
 "Hail, mighty Sages! hail, ye Sons of Light!  
 My chosen priests to celebrate this rite."  
 Now in sweet tones the heavenly minstrels tell

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His praise, beneath whose might TRIPURA fell.  
He moves to go: from his moon-crest a ray  
Sheds quenchless light on his triumphant way.  
On through the air his swift bull bore him well,  
Decked with the gold of many a tinkling bell;  
Tossing from time to time his head on high,  
Enwreathed with clouds as he flew racing by,  
As though in furious charge he had uptorn  
A bank of clay upon his mighty horn.

Swiftly they came where in its beauty lay  
The city subject to HIMÁLAYA'S sway.  
No foeman's foot had ever trod those halls,  
No foreign bands encamped around the walls.  
Then SIVA'S glances fixed their eager hold  
On that fair city as with threads of gold.  
The God whose neck still gleams with cloudy blue  
Burst on the wondering people's upturned view,  
And on the earth descended, from the path  
His shafts once dented in avenging wrath.  
Forth from the gates a noble army poured  
To do meet honour to the mighty Lord.  
With all his friends on elephants of state  
The King of Mountains passed the city gate,  
So gaily decked, the princes all were seen  
Like moving hills inwrapt in bowery green.  
As the full rushing of two streams that pour  
Beneath one bridge with loud tumultuous roar,  
So through the city's open gate streamed in  
Mountains and Gods with tumult and with din.  
So glorious was the sight, wonder and shame,  
When SIVA bowed him, o'er the Monarch came;  
He knew not he had bent his lofty crest  
In reverent greeting to his heavenly guest  
HIMÁLAYA, joying in the festive day,  
Before the immortal bridegroom led the way  
Where heaps of gay flowers burying half the feet  
Lay breathing odours through the crowded street.

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Careless of all beside, each lady's eye  
Must gaze on SIVA as the troop sweeps by.  
One dark-eyed beauty will not stay to bind  
Her long black tresses, floating unconfined  
Save by her little hand; her flowery crown  
Hanging neglected and unfastened down.  
One from her maiden tore her foot away  
On which the dye, all wet and streaming, lay,  
And o'er the chamber rushing in her haste,  
Where'er she stepped, a crimson footprint traced.  
Another at the window takes her stand;  
One eye is dyed,—the pencil in her hand.  
Here runs an eager maid, and running, holds  
Loose and ungirt her flowing mantle's folds,  
Whilst, as she strives to close the parting vest,  
Its brightness gives new beauty to her breast.  
Oh! what a sight! the crowded windows there  
With eager faces excellently fair,  
Like sweetest lilies, for their dark eyes fling  
Quick glances quivering like the wild bee's wing.

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Onward in peerless glory SIVA passed;  
Gay banners o'er his way their shadows cast,  
Each palace dome, each pinnacle and height  
Catching new lustre from his crest of light.  
On swept the pageant: on the God alone  
The eager glances of the dames were thrown;  
On his bright form they fed the rapturous gaze,  
And only turned to marvel and to praise:  
"Oh, well and wisely, such a lord to gain  
The Mountain-Maid endured the toil and pain.  
To be his slave were joy; but Oh, how blest  
The wife—the loved one—lying on his breast!  
Surely in vain, had not the Lord of Life  
Matched this fond bridegroom and this loving wife,  
Had been his wish to give the worlds a mould  
Of perfect beauty! Falsely have they told

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How the young flower-armed God was burnt by fire  
At the red flash of ŚIVA's vengeful ire.  
No: jealous LOVE a fairer form confessed,  
And cast away his own, no more the loveliest.  
How glorious is the Mountain King, how proud  
Earth's stately pillar, girt about with cloud!  
Now will he lift his lofty head more high,  
Knit close to ŚIVA by this holy tie."

Such words of praise from many a bright-eyed dame  
On ŚIVA's ear with soothing witchery came.  
Through the broad streets 'mid loud acclaim he rode,  
And reached the palace where the King abode.  
There he descended from his monster's side,  
As the sun leaves a cloud at eventide.

Leaning on VISHṆU'S arm he passed the door  
Where mighty BRAHMĀ entered in before.  
Next INDRA came, and all the host of heaven,  
The noble Saints and those great Sages seven.  
Then led they ŚIVA to a royal seat;  
Fair gifts they brought, for such a bridegroom meet:  
With all due rites, the honey and the milk,  
Rich gems were offered and two robes of silk.

At length by skilful chamberlains arrayed  
They led the lover to the royal maid.  
Thus the fond Moon disturbs the tranquil rest  
Of Ocean glittering with his foamy crest,  
And leads him on, his proud waves swelling o'er,  
To leap with kisses on the clasping shore.  
He gazed on UMA. From his lotus eyes  
Flashed out the rapture of his proud surprise.  
Then calm the current of his spirit lay  
Like the world basking in an autumn day.

They met; and true love's momentary shame  
O'er the blest bridegroom and his darling came.  
Eye looked to eye, but, quivering as they met,  
Scarce dared to trust the rapturous gazing yet.

In the God's hand the priest has duly laid  
The radiant fingers of the Mountain-Maid,  
Bright, as if LOVE with his dear sprays of red  
Had sought that refuge in his hour of dread.  
From hand to hand the soft infection stole,  
Till each confessed it in the inmost soul.  
Fire filled his veins, with joy she trembled; such  
The magic influence of that thrilling touch.

How grows their beauty, when two lovers stand  
Eye fixt on eye, hand fondly linkt in hand!  
Then how, unblamed, may mortal minstrel dare  
To paint in words the beauty of that pair!

Around the fire in solemn rite they trod,  
The lovely lady and the glorious God;  
Like day and starry midnight when they meet  
In the broad plains at lofty MERU'S feet.  
Thrice at the bidding of the priest they came  
With swimming eyes around the holy flame.  
Then at his word the bride in order due  
Into the blazing fire the parched grain threw,  
And toward her face the scented smoke she drew,  
Which softly wreathing o'er her fair cheek hung,  
And round her ears in flower-like beauty clung.  
As o'er the incense the sweet lady stooped,  
The ear of barley from her tresses drooped,  
And rested on her cheek, beneath the eye  
Still brightly beaming with the jetty dye.

"This flame be witness of your wedded life:  
Be just, thou husband, and be true, thou wife!"  
Such was the priestly blessing on the bride.  
Eager she listened, as the earth when dried  
By parching summer suns drinks deeply in  
The first soft droppings when the rains begin.

"Look, gentle UMA," cried her Lord, "afar

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[Pg 104]

Seest thou the brightness of yon polar star?  
Like that unchanging ray thy faith must shine."  
Sobbing, she whispered, "Yes, for ever thine."

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The rite is o'er. Her joyful parents now  
At BRAHMÁ'S feet in duteous reverence bow.  
Then to fair UMÁ spake the gracious Power  
Who sits enthroned upon the lotus flower:  
"O beautiful lady, happy shalt thou be,  
And hero children shall be born of thee;"  
Then looked in silence: vain the hope to bless  
The bridegroom, ŚIVA, with more happiness.

Then from the altar, as prescribed of old,  
They turned, and rested upon seats of gold;  
And, as the holy books for men ordain,  
Were sprinkled duly with the moistened grain.  
High o'er their heads sweet Beauty's Queen displayed  
Upon a stem of reed a cool green shade,  
While the young lotus-leaves of which 'twas made  
Seemed, as they glistened to the wondering view,  
All richly pearly with drops of beady dew.  
[In twofold language](#) on each glorious head  
The Queen of Speech her richest blessings shed;  
In strong, pure, godlike utterance for his ear,  
To her in liquid tones, soft, beautifully clear.

Now for awhile they gaze where maids divine  
In graceful play the expressive dance entwine;  
Whose eloquent motions, with an actor's art,  
Show to the life the passions of the heart.

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The rite was ended; then the heavenly band  
Prayed ŚIVA, raising high the suppliant hand:  
"Now, for the dear sake of thy lovely bride,  
Have pity on the gentle God," they cried,  
"Whose tender body thy fierce wrath has slain:  
Give all his honour, all his might again."  
Well pleased, he smiled, and gracious answer gave:  
ŚIVA himself now yields him KĀMA'S slave.  
When duly given, the great will ne'er despise  
The gentle pleading of the good and wise.

Now have they left the wedded pair alone;  
And ŚIVA takes her hand within his own  
To lead his darling to the bridal bower,  
Decked with bright gold and all her sumptuous dower.  
She blushes sweetly as her maidens there  
Look with arch smiles and glances on the pair;  
And for one moment, while the damsels stay,  
From him she loves turns her dear face away.

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## NOTES.

### *CANTO FIRST.*

The Hindú Deity of War, the leader of the celestial armies, is known by the names Kártikeya and Skanda. He is represented with six faces and corresponding arms, and is mounted upon a peacock.

[Himálaya.](#)] Mansion of Snow; from *hima*, snow, and *álaya*, mansion. The accent is on the *second* syllable.

[Prithu.](#)] It is said that in the reign of this fabulous monarch, gods, saints, demons, and other supernatural beings, drained or *milked* from the earth various treasures, appointing severally one of their own class as the recipient, or *Calf*, to use the word of the legend. Himálaya was thus highly favoured by the sacred Mount Meru, and the other hills. The story is found in the sixth chapter of the *Harivansa*, which forms a supplement to the *Mahabhárat*.

[Still the fair pearls, &c.](#)] It was the belief of the Hindús that elephants wore these precious jewels in their heads.

[Till heavenly minstrels, &c.](#)] A class of demi-gods, the songsters of the Hindú Paradise, or Indra's heaven.

[There magic herbs, &c.](#)] Frequent allusion is made by Kálidás and other Sanskrit poets to a phosphoric light emitted by plants at night.

[E'en the wild kine, &c.](#)] The *Chouri*, or long brush, used to whisk off insects and flies, was with the Hindús what the sceptre is with us. It was usually made of the tail-hairs of the *Yak*, or *Bos Grunniens*. Thus the poet represents these animals as doing honour to the Monarch of Mountains with these emblems of sovereignty.

[That the bright Seven.](#)] The Hindús call the constellation *Ursa Major* the seven Rishis, or Saints. [Pg 108] They will appear as actors in the course of the poem.

[And once when Indra's might.](#)] We learn from the *Rámáyana* that the mountains were originally furnished with wings, and that they flew through the air with the speed of the wind. For fear lest they should suddenly fall in their flight, Indra, King of the Gods, struck off their pinions with his thunderbolt; but Maináka was preserved from a similar fate by the friendship of Ocean, to whom he fled for refuge.

[Born once again, &c.](#)] The reader will remember the Hindú belief in the Transmigration of Souls. The story alluded to by the poet is this:—"Daksha was the son of *Brahmá* and father of *Satí*, whom, at the recommendation of the *Rishis*, or Sages, he espoused to *Śiva*, but he was never wholly reconciled to the uncouth figure and practices of his son-in-law. Having undertaken to celebrate a solemn sacrifice, he invited all the Gods except *Śiva*, which so incensed *Satí*, that she threw herself into the sacrificial fire."—(Wilson, Specimens of Hindú Theatre, Vol. II. p. 263.) The name of *Satí*, meaning good, true, chaste woman, is the modern *Suttee*, as it is corruptly written.

[As the blue offspring of the Turquois Hills.](#)] These hills are placed in Ceylon. The precious stone grows, it is said, at the sound of thunder in the rainy season.

[At her stern penance.](#)] This is described in the fifth canto. The meaning of the name *Umá* is "Oh, do not."

[The Gods' bright river.](#)] The celestial Ganges, which falls from heaven upon *Himálaya*'s head, and continues its course on earth.

[Young Káma's arrow.](#)] *Káma*, the Hindú Cupid, is armed with a bow, the arrows of which are made of flowers.

[And brighter than Aśoka's rich leaves.](#)] Nothing, we are told, can exceed the beauty of this tree when in full bloom. It is, of course, a general favourite with the poets of India.

[The strings of pearl.](#)]

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"Then, too, the pearl from out its shell  
Unsightly, in the sunless sea  
(As 'twere a spirit, forced to dwell  
In form unlovely) *was set free*,  
And round the neck of woman threw  
*A light it lent and borrowed too.*"

MOORE—*Loves of the Angels.*

Moore is frequently the best interpreter, unconsciously, of an Indian poet's thought. It is worth remarking, that the Sanskrit word *muktá*, pearl (literally *freed*), signifies also the *spirit* released from mundane existence, and re-integrated with its divine original.

[The sweetest note that e'er the Kōil poured.](#)] The *Kokila*, or *Kōil*, the black or Indian cuckoo, is the bulbul or nightingale of Hindústán. It is also the herald of spring, like its European namesake, and the female bird is the especial messenger of Love.

[When holy Nárada.](#)] A divine sage, son of *Brahmá*.

[The holy bull.](#)] The animal on which the God *Śiva* rides, as *Indra* on the elephant.

[Who takes eight various forms.](#)] *Śiva* is called Wearer of the Eight Forms, as being identical with the Five Elements, Mind, Individuality, and Crude Matter.

[Where the pale moon on Śiva's forehead.](#)] *Śiva*'s crest is the new moon, which is sometimes described as forming a third eye in his forehead. We shall find frequent allusions to this in the course of the poem.

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## CANTO SECOND.

[While impious Tárak.](#)] A demon who, by a long course of austerities, had acquired power even over the Gods. This Hindú notion is familiar to most of us from Southey's "Curse of *Keháma*."

[Whose face turns every way.](#)] *Brahmá* is represented with four faces, one towards each point of the compass. [Pg 110]

[The mystic Three.](#)] "The triad of qualities," a philosophical term familiar to all the systems of

Hindú speculation. They are thus explained in the *Tattwa Samása*, a text-book of the Sánkya school:—"Now it is asked, What is the 'triad of qualities'? It is replied, The triad of qualities consists of 'Goodness,' 'Foulness,' and 'Darkness.' By the 'triad of qualities' is meant the 'three qualities.' Goodness is endlessly diversified, accordingly as it is exemplified in calmness, lightness, complacency, attainment of wishes, kindness, contentment, patience, joy, and the like; summarily, it consists of happiness. 'Foulness' is endlessly diversified, accordingly as it is exemplified in grief, distress, separation, excitement, anxiety, fault-finding, and the like; summarily, it consists of pain. 'Darkness' is endlessly diversified, accordingly as it is exemplified in envelopment, ignorance, disgust, abjectness, heaviness, sloth, drowsiness, intoxication, and the like; summarily, it consists of delusion."

*Thou, when a longing. &c.* "Having divided his own substance, the mighty power became half male, half female, or *nature active and passive.*"—*Manu*, Ch. I.

So also in the old Orphic hymn it is said,

[Greek: Zeus arsên geneto, Zeus ambrotos epleto numphê.]  
"Zeus was a male; Zeus was a deathless damsel."

*The sacred hymns.*] Contained in the Vedas, or Holy Scriptures of the Hindús.

*The word of praise.*] The mystic syllable OM, prefacing all the prayers and most of the writings of the Hindús. It implies the Indian triad, and expresses the Three in One.

*They hail thee, Nature.*] The object of Nature's activity, according to the Sánkya system, is "the final liberation of individual soul." "The incompetency of nature, an irrational principle, to institute a course of action for a definite purpose, and the unfitness of rational soul to regulate the acts of an agent whose character it imperfectly apprehends, constitute a principal argument with the theistical Sánkhyas for the necessity of a Providence, to whom the ends of existence are known, and by whom Nature is guided.... The atheistical Sánkhyas, on the other hand, contend that there is no occasion for a guiding Providence, but that the activity of nature, for the purpose of accomplishing soul's object, is an intuitive necessity, as illustrated in the following passage:—As it is a function of milk, an unintelligent (substance), to nourish the calf, so it is the office of the chief principle (nature) to liberate the soul."—Prof. Wilson's *Sánkya Káriká*.

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*Hail Thee the stranger Spirit. &c.*] "Soul is witness, solitary, bystander, spectator, passive."—*Sánkh. Kár.* verse xix.

*See, Varun's noose.*] The God of Water.

*Weak is Kuvera's hand.*] The God of Wealth.

*Yama's sceptre.*] The God and Judge of the Dead.

*The Lords of Light.*] The Ádityas, twelve in number, are forms of the sun, and appear to represent him as distinct in each month of the year.

*The Rudras.*] A class of demi-gods, eleven in number, said to be inferior manifestations of Śiva, who also bears this name.

*E'en as on earth. &c.*] Thus the commandment,—Thou shalt not kill, is abrogated by the injunction to kill animals for sacrifice.

*The heavenly Teacher.*] Vrihaspati, the son of Angiras.

*His own dear flower.*] The lotus, on which Brahmá is represented reclining.

*Their flashing jewels.*] According to the Hindú belief, serpents wear precious jewels in their heads.

*Chakra.*] A discus, or quoit, the weapon of Vishṇu.

*As water bears to me.*] "HE, having willed to produce various beings from his own divine substance, first with a thought created the waters, and placed in them a productive seed."—*Manu*, Ch. I.

*Mournful braids.*] As a sign of mourning, especially for the loss of their husbands, the Hindústáni women collect their long hair into a braid, called in Sanskrit *veṇí*.

[Pg 112]

*The mango twig.*] We shall meet with several allusions to this tree as the favourite of Love and the darling of the bees.

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### CANTO THIRD.

*Who angers thee, &c.*] To understand properly this speech of Káma, it is necessary to be acquainted with some of the Hindú notions regarding a future state. "The highest kind of happiness is absorption into the divine essence, or the return of that portion of spirit which is combined with the attributes of humanity to its original source. This happiness, according to the philosopher, is to be obtained only by the most perfect abstraction from the world and freedom

from passion, even while in a state of terrestrial existence.... Besides this ultimate felicity, the Hindús have several minor degrees of happiness, amongst which is the enjoyment of Indra's Swarga, or, in fact, of a Muhammadan Paradise. The degree and duration of the pleasures of this paradise are proportioned to the merits of those admitted to it; and they who have enjoyed this lofty region of Swarga, but whose virtue is exhausted, revisit the habitation of mortals."—Prof. Wilson's *Megha Dúta*. Compare also "The Lord's Song."—*Specimens of Old Indian Poetry*, pp. 67, 68.

Indra, therefore, may be supposed to feel jealous whenever a human being aspires to something higher than that heaven of which he is the Lord.

The "chain of birth" alluded to is of course the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls, a belief which is not to be looked upon (says Prof. Wilson in the preface to his edition of the *Sánkhya Káriká*) as a mere popular superstition. It is the main principle of all Hindú metaphysics; it is the foundation of all Hindú philosophy. The great object of their philosophical research in every system, Brahminical or Buddhist, is the discovery of the means of putting a stop to further transmigration; the discontinuance of corporeal being; the liberation of soul from body.

[Pg 113]

*As on that Snake.*] Sessa, the Serpent King, is in the Hindú mythology the supporter of the earth, as, in one of the fictions of the Edda,—

"That sea-snake, tremendous curled,  
Whose monstrous circle girds the world."

He is also the couch and canopy of the God Vishnu, or, as he is here called, Krishṇa,—that hero being one of his incarnations, and considered identical with the deity himself.

*The threefold world.*] Earth, heaven, and hell.

*His fearful Rati.*] The wife of Káma, or Love.

*To where Kuvera &c.*] The demi-god Kuvera was regent of the north.

*Nor waited for the maiden's touch.*] Referring to the Hindú notion that the Aśoka blossoms at the touch of a woman's foot. So Shelley says,

"I doubt not, the flowers of that garden sweet  
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet."

*Sensitive Plant.*

*Grouping the syllables.*] This comparison seems forced rather too far to suit a European taste. Kálidás is not satisfied with calling the mango-spray the Arrow of Love; he must tell us that its leaves are the feathers, and that the bees have marked it with the owner's name.

*That loveliest flower.*] The Karnikára.

*His flowery Tilaka.*] The name of a tree; it also means a mark made with coloured earths or unguents upon the forehead and between the eyebrows, either as an ornament or a sectarial distinction; the poet intends the word to convey both ideas at once here. In this passage is another comparison of the mango-spray: it is called the *lip* of Love; its *rouge* is the blush of morning, and its darker beautifying powder the clustering bees. From the universal custom of dyeing the lips, the Sanskrit poets are constantly speaking of their "vermeil tints," &c., as will be sufficiently evident in the course of this work.

[Pg 114]

*The Hermit's servant.*] By name Nandi.

*His neck of brightly-beaming blue.*] An ancient legend tells us that after the deluge the ocean was churned by Gods and demons, in order to recover the Amrit and other treasures that had been lost in it:—

"Then loud and long a joyous sound  
Rang through the startled sky:  
'Hail to the Amrit, lost and found!'  
A thousand voices cry.  
But from the wondrous churning streamed  
A poison fierce and dread,  
Burning like fire: where'er it streamed  
Thick noisome mists were spread.  
The wanting venom onwards went,  
And filled the Worlds with fear,  
Till Brahmá to their misery bent  
His gracious pitying ear;  
And Śiva those destroying streams  
Drank up at Brahmá's beck.  
Still in thy throat the dark flood gleams,  
God of the azure neck!"

[Gates of sense.](#)] The eyes, ears, &c.

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### CANTO FOURTH.

[Late, dim, and joyless shall his rising be.](#)] The Moon, in Hindú mythology, is a male deity.

[This line of bees.](#)] Káma's bow is sometimes represented as strung in this extraordinary manner.

[And stain this foot.](#)] "Staining the soles of the feet with a red colour, derived from the Mehndee, the Lac, &c., is a favourite practice of the Hindú toilet."—WILSON.

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### CANTO FIFTH.

[Pg 115]

[And worn with resting on her rosary.](#)] The Hindús use their rosaries much as we do, carrying them in their hands or on their wrists. As they turn them over, they repeat an inaudible prayer, or the name of the particular deity they worship, as Vishṇu or S'iva. The *Rudrákshá málá* (which we may suppose Umá to have used) is a string of the seeds or berries of the Eleocarpus, and especially dedicated to S'iva. It should contain 108 berries or beads, each of which is fingered with the mental repetition of one of S'iva's 108 appellations.

[Not e'en her boy.](#)] Kártikeya, the God of War.

[Of those poor birds.](#)] The Chakraváki. These birds are always observed to fly in pairs during the day, but are supposed to remain separate during the night.

[That friendship soon in gentle heart is bred.](#)]

"Amor in cor gentil ratto s'apprende."

DANTE.

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### CANTO SIXTH.

[The Heavenly Dame.](#)] Arundhatí, wife of one of the Seven Saints.

[The Boar.](#)] An Avatár, or incarnation of Vishṇu. In this form he preserved the world at the deluge.

[That thirsty bird.](#)] The Chátaka, supposed to drink nothing but rain-water.

[Proud Alaká.](#)] The capital of Kuvera, the God of Wealth.

[The bright Champac.](#)]

"The maid of India blest again to hold  
In her broad lap the Champac's leaves of gold."

Lalla Rookh.

[Angiras.](#)] One of the Seven Saints; the father of Vrihaspati, the teacher of the gods.

[Vast grew his body.](#)] Alluding to the Vámana, or Dwarf Avatár of Vishṇu, wrought to restrain the pride of the giant Bali, who had expelled the Gods from heaven. In that form he presented himself before the giant, and asked him for three paces of land to build a hut. Bali ridiculed and granted the request. The dwarf immediately grew to a prodigious size, so that he measured the earth with one pace, and the heavens with another.

[Sumeru.](#)] Another name of the sacred Mount Meru; or rather the same word, with su, good, prefixed.

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### CANTO SEVENTH.

[Kailása's side.](#)] A mountain, the fabulous residence of Kuvera, and favourite haunt of S'iva, placed by the Hindús among the Himálayas.

[Kálí came behind.](#)] The name of one of the divine matrons. The word also signifies in Sanskrit a row or succession of clouds, suggesting the comparison which follows.

[In twofold language.](#)] In Sanskrit and Prakrit. The latter is a softened modification of the former, to which it bears the same relation as Italian to Latin; it is spoken by the female characters of the Hindú drama.

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