TO THE MEMORY OF

IRVING STRINGHAM

THE MATHEMATICIAN

WE OF THE UNIVERSITY
OWE MORE TO HIM THAN EITHER WE COULD REPAY OR WHOLLY
COMPREHEND. TO HIS LIVING MEMORY THIS VOLUME IS
DEDICATED; A SLIGHT GIFT, MADE RICH ONLY BY
THE LOVING AND GRATEFUL THOUGHT OF
HIM, WHICH WENT TO ITS MAKING

The year sees many a birth and death
Of little folks like you and me:
His like has never yet drawn breath;
No future age his like will see.
—From the Sanskrit

Introduction

IN SHORT VERSES the Hindus excel. Their mastery of form, their play of fancy, their depth and tenderness of feeling, are all exquisite.

Of the many who wrote such verses, the greatest is Bhartrihari. He lived some fifteen hundred years ago as king of Ujjain, and lived most royally, tasting the sweets of life without thought of the morrow.

At last he was roused from his carefree existence by an event which surprised and shocked him. He gave a magic fruit to a girl whom he loved. She loved another, and passed the gift on to him. He presented it to his lady-love, who in her turn loved the king. When Bhartrihari received the magic fruit from her and learned of its travels, he was disgusted with the fleeting joys of the world, gave up his kingdom, and spent the rest of his life in a cave, writing poetry. The circumstance which led to his retirement is commemorated in the following verse:*

> The maid my true heart loves would not my true love be;
> She seeks another man; another maid loves he;
> And me another maid her own true love would see:
> Oh, fie on her and him and Love and HER and me!

Bhartrihari wrote three hundred verses: a hundred on the conduct of life, a hundred on love, a hundred on renunciation.

In the present collection, no less than eighty-five of the verses are taken from this master of Indian verse-writing. The remaining fifteen are from various sources. The arrangement of the verses is my own, as are also the titles prefixed to them.

I have striven faithfully for a literal rendering. Though a rendering into verse cannot be quite as close as a prose version, nothing has been willfully added or subtracted. One matter de-

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serves notice here; I have occasionally translated Indian god-names, Shiva or Brahma, by the word God. This is not wholly accurate, yet not, I think, unfaithful in spirit.

The present volume does not encroach unduly upon the excellent work of P. E. More: *A Century of Indian Epigrams*. Only a few of the verses chosen by him are translated here, and even these in a manner quite different.

I am under obligations to the *University of California Chronicle* for permission to reprint certain verses which first appeared in its pages.

ARTHUR W. RYDER

Berkeley, California,
February 19, 1910.

WOMEN'S EYES

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The world is full of women's eyes,
Defiant, filled with shy surprise,
Demure, a little overfree,
Or simply sparkling roguishly;
It seems a gorgeous lily-bed,
Whichever way I turn my head.

IF ONLY WE MIGHT DRESS IN AIR

If only we might dress in air,
And eat what begging brings,
And sleep outdoors, we should not care
For all the money-kings.

LOVE IS YOUNG

The wrinkles on my face are all untold;
My hair is gray and thin;
My limbs are sadly feeble grown, and old:
But love is young, and sin.

LOVE GROWS BY WHAT IT FEEDS ON

When she is far, I only want to see her;
When she is seen, I only want to kiss her;
When she is kissed, I never want to flee her;
I know that I could never bear to miss her.

GENTLE EYES

Candle, and fire, and star,
  Sun, moon, to give me light;
But her dear, gentle eyes are far—
  This world is night.

THE STUBBORN FOOL—I

A diamond you may draw
From an alligator's jaw;
You may cross the raging ocean like a pool;
A cobra you may wear
Like a blossom in your hair;
But you never can convince a stubborn fool.

THE STUBBORN FOOL—II

With sufficient toil and travail
You may gather oil from gravel;
The mirage perhaps your thirsty lips may cool;
If you seek it night and morn,
You may find a rabbit's horn;
But you never can convince a stubborn fool.

SEVEN ARROWS

Seven arrows pierce my heart:
The moonbeams that by day depart;
The maid whose youthful beauty flies;
The pool wherein the lotus dies;
The handsome man whose lips are dumb;
The rich man, miserly and glum;
The good man sunk in suffering;
The rogue in favor with the king.

SUBSTITUTES

What need of armor to the patient soul?
What need of foes, if temper spurns control?
If rogues are near, what need of snakes to harm
  you?
If relatives, what need of fire to warm you?
If friends, what need of magic draughts for
  health?
If blameless scholarship, what need of wealth?
If modesty, what need of gems and flowers?
If poetry, what need of kingly powers?

SWEET AND BITTER

Sweet are the moonbeams, sweet the grass-grown
  wood,
Sweet is the peaceful converse of the good,
The poet's song is sweet, the maiden's face
When angry tear-drops lend a sudden grace:
All would be sweet if human fate were fitter;
The thought of death turns all the sweet to
  bitter.

WHEN I KNEW A LITTLE BIT

When I knew a little bit,
Then my silly, blinded wit,
Mad as elephants in rut,
Thought it was omniscient; but
When I learned a little more
From the scholar's hoarded store,
Madness' fever soon grew cool,
And I knew I was a fool.

WHOM DOES SHE LOVE?

With one she gossips full of art;
  Her glances with a second flirt;
She holds another in her heart:
  Whom does she love enough to hurt?

ARROWS OF LOVE

Where are you going, winsome maid,
Through deepest, darkest night? (he said.)
I go to him whom love has made
Dearer to me than life (she said).
Ah, girl, and are you not afraid,
For you are all alone? (he said.)
The god of love shall be mine aid,
Arrows of love fly true (she said).

THE DANGER OF DELAY

In giving, and receiving too,
In every deed you have to do,
Act quickly; if you wait a bit,
Then time will suck the juice of it.

BETTER TO DWELL IN MOUNTAINS WILD

Better to dwell in mountains wild
  With beasts of prey
Than in the palaces of gods
  With fools to stay.

THE APRIL WIND

The wind of April is a lover bold:
He makes the women shiver hot and cold;
He shuts their eyes, he rumples up their hair,
And catches rudely at the gowns they wear;
Time after time he presses pretty lips
From which a cry indignant-joyful slips.

MY FOLLY'S DONE

Why should that girl still use her keen,
Coquettish eyes that steal the sheen
From lotus-flowers. What can she mean?

My folly's done. The fever-sting
Of love's soft arrow does not cling;
And yet she doesn't stop, poor thing!

DOES SHE LOVE ME?

Although she does not speak to me,
  She listens while I speak;
Her eyes turn not, my face to see,
  But nothing else they seek.

REMEDIES

A fire with water we defeat,
With parasols the midday heat,
Mad elephants with goads that prick,
Oxen and asses with a stick,
Sickness with draughts that banish harm,
Poison with many a spell and charm:
Science has cures for every ill
Except the fool; he prospers still.

THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE GOOD

You are a teacher of the youth
Who master philosophic truth;
I seek in the poetic art
What charms and ravishes the heart.
Yet we are honest and we see
The only good is charity;
And nothing charms us, fools or wise,
Except a maid with lotus-eyes.

THE POWER OF MONEY

His powers are still the same, his actions too,
His mind is quite as keen, his speech as true;
Yet he has undergone a wondrous change—
He lost his money. Do you think it strange?

DESIRE IS YOUNG

Not time, but we, have passed away;
Not virtue, we ourselves grow cold;
Not joys, but we, no longer stay:
Desire is young, but we are old.

THOU ART A FLOWER

Thou art a flower whose fragrance none has tasted,
A gem uncut by workman's tool,
A branch no desecrating hands have wasted,
A virgin forest, sweetly cool.

No man on earth deserves to taste thy beauty,
Thy blameless loveliness and worth,
Unless he has fulfilled man's perfect duty—
And is there such a one on earth?

THE DIVINE DECREE

Thy wise creator wrote upon thy brow,
When thou wast born, what wealth should once be thine;
The sum was great perhaps, or small; yet now
Thy fate is fixed, and sure the law divine.

For if thou dwell within the desert's bound,
Thou shalt have nothing less than his decree;
Nor shall a single penny more be found,
Although the golden mount thy dwelling be.

Ah, then be brave and play the manly part,
Nor be so fond to humble thy proud heart
And fawn before the rich with cringing art.

For see! A jar that in the ocean fell
Holds no more water in its little shell
Than when you lowered it in the meanest well.

TWO KINGS

Flee from the palace where they say:
The king is sleeping; go away—
He has no time for you today—
Or—he will see you if you stay—
He will be angry anyway.

Flee to another, greater king,
My soul, who rules each mortal thing,
Whose palace knows no bolt, no ring,
No porter's harsh, sarcastic fling,
No pain, no human suffering.

ABSENCE AND UNION

Absence is union dear,
  When hearts are one;
Union is absence drear,
  When love is done.

THE SERPENT-WOMAN

Avoid the poison-glance, my friends;
  The serpent-woman flee;
Her crooked path has crooked ends;
  Her hood is coquetry.

If you are stung by common snakes,
  Perhaps you will not die;
If poison from a woman takes,
  The doctors say good-bye.

CAN SHE BE DEAR?

The thought of her is saddening,
  The sight of her is fear,
The touch of her is maddening—
  Can she be really dear?

THE DECLINE OF TRUE LEARNING

Once, learning slew the living woe
Of wise men. That was long ago.
She then disdained such service rare,
Became a practical affair.
But nowadays she sees that kings
Despise all intellectual things,
And sinking lower day by day,
She seems to vanish quite away.

THE LAST DAY

When the celestial mount shall totter, burning
  In all-devouring flame,
When seas go dry, where crocodiles are turning
  And sharks no man may tame,
When the compact earth itself shall tumble sheer,
  Great mountains madly dance,
What of our bodies, quivering like the ear
  Of baby elephants?

LOGIC

How long may subtle logic play its part
In science and theology and art?
  So long as no young fawn-eyed maiden's glance
Shall find its way to the logician's heart.

THE ANGER OF THE KING

None from the anger of the king
  May be released;
The fire consumes the offering
  And burns the priest.

THE RAINS

And when the rainy days are come,
Your lady-love must stay at home;
She clings to you, a little bold
Because she shivers with the cold;
The breeze is fresh with heaven's spray
And drives her lassitude away:
When happy lovers are together,
The rainy time is fairest weather.

THE LOVERS' ALLY

Ye maids, exhaust your haughty scorn
  On lovers bending low;
For soon the breeze in southland born,
  With sandal sweet, will blow.

WHY?

The deer, the fish, the good man hunger
  For grass, for water, for content;
Yet hunter, fisher, scandalmonger
  Pursue each harmless innocent.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

Child for an hour, and lovesick youth an hour,
  Beggar an hour, then fanned by riches' breath,
The wrinkled actor, Man, bereft of power,
  Creeps tottering behind the curtain, Death.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

In daily journeys of the sun
Our little life is quickly done;
In anxious duties of the day
The hours unnoticed slip away;
Though birth and age are ever near,
And grief, and death, we do not fear:
The world forgets its sore distress,
Goes mad with wine of heedlessness.

SHE ONLY LOOKED

She did not redden nor deny
  My entrance to her room;
She did not speak an angry word;
  She did not fret and fume;
She did not frown upon poor me,
  Her lover now as then;
She only looked at me the way
  She looks at other men.

WHO UNDERSTANDS A MAN?

Once he would follow at my feet,
  Obey my slightest word;
And black was black, if black to me,
  Or white, if I preferred;
And he began to walk or sit
  The moment I began;
But he is different now. Oh, dear!
  Who understands a man?

UNTRUSTWORTHY THINGS

The things that can claw, and the things that can gore,
  Are very untrustworthy things;
And a man with a sword in his hand, furthermore,
  And rivers and women and kings.

TWO VIEWS OF LIFE

When ignorance my life entwined,
Love's ointment made me strangely blind—
I thought the world was made of womankind.

But clearer judgment than of yore
The veil before my vision tore—
I knew that God is all the world and more.

PROCRASTINATION

By and by—
Never fret—
I shall try
By and by.

By and by—
Don't forget—
You must die
By and by.

SHOULD FANCY CEASE

The lover's patient fancy brings him peace,
Paints her he loves before his inward eye,
And gives him comfort; but should fancy cease,
The world would be a forest dead and dry,
And hearts that shrivel in the burning chaff, must die.

WHAT THEN?—I

What if my life is fed
With all that seems most sweet?
What if my foeman's head
Is ground beneath my feet?
What if my wealth makes friends
Again and yet again?
What if my soul ascends
Through countless lives? What then?

WHAT THEN?—II

Old rags, or fine, white silk that flows and clings—
Why should I care?
Poor wife, or horses, elephants, and things—
What difference there?
Sweet rice, or wretched food when day is o'er—
Why care again?
God's light, or groping in the dark once more—
What then? What then?

THE QUEEN OF LOVE

Surely the love-god is the slave
Of her sweet eyes;
For when they give a hint, the knave
Obedient flies.

JOYOUS TREASURES

How hard a thing it is that they achieve
  Whose hearts the thought of God keeps pure and bright,
Who for His sake earth's joyous treasures leave
  Without a pang at losing such delight!

Those joyous treasures I could never get;
  I cannot get them now; I am not sure
That I shall ever win to them; and yet
  I cannot flout the thought, the hope, the lure.

VEXATIONS—I

The scholarship that grasps at straws,
  The woman's love that must be bought,
The life that hangs on tyrants' laws—
  These things are with vexation fraught.

VEXATIONS—II

The fear of dying vexes birth;
  Age vexes flashing youth;
The carper vexes honest worth;
  Irresolution, truth.

To vex our peace the women love;
  Our joy, ambition's sting;
Rogues vex the court, and snakes the grove;
  And something, everything.

LOVE, THE FISHER

Love, the fisher, casts his woman-hook
  Into the sea of lust and fond desire,
And just as soon as greedy men-fish look
  And snap the red bait, lips so sweet, so dire,
Then he is quick to catch them and to cook
  The hungry wretches over passion's fire.

EPHEMERAL POTIONS

If mouths are dry with thirst,
Men think of water first;
If hungry, bolt their rice
With many a toothsome spice;
If love flames bright and brighter,
They clasp the women tighter:
They have the strangest notions;
They think ephemeral potions
Will heal the soul's commotions.

ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED

What though she have a bosom sweet,
  A form to beauty wed,
A face in which the graces meet—
  She must not turn your head.

Nay, if her charm your fancy haunts,
  Then live on virtue's food;
One cannot have the things he wants
  Except by being good.

THE BLIND FOREST

The lady's body is a forest blind,
  With dangerous hills, her bosom fair;
Think not to wander there, my mind;
  The robber, Love, is lurking there.

THE LITTLENESS OF THE WORLD

Why should the truly wise man wish
  To hold the world in fee?
'T is but the leaping of a baby fish
  Upon the boundless sea.

FRIENDSHIP'S END

Yes, you were I, and I was you,
So fond the love that linked us two;
Alas, my friend, for friendship's end!
Now I am I, and you are you.

A WASTED LIFE—I

No stainless wisdom have I learned;
No honest money have I earned;
No fond obedience have I brought
To parents, with a heart well-taught;
I never dreamed of sweet embraces,
Of sparkling eyes and roguish faces:
My life was wasted like the crow's;
I lived on strangers' bread and blows.

A WASTED LIFE—II

I never learned to vanquish other men
  In conference, with the just and fitting word;
I never made high heaven ring again,
  Praising the elephant-hunter's sturdy sword;
I never tasted honey from the kind,
  Soft lips of maids when moonlight scatters gloom:
My youth is gone and left no good behind,
  A candle burning in an empty room.

A WASTED LIFE—III

The paths of thought I never trod
Which lead to unity in God;
Nor were my days to virtue given
Which opens wide the gates of heaven;
Delights of love that men esteem
Were mine not even in a dream:
I was a sorry axe in sooth
To cut the tree, my mother's youth.

FLAMING BANNERS

Learning and dignity,
  Wisdom and manners
Last till the god of love
  Plants flaming banners.

THE THIEF OF HEARTS

You practice theft by strangest arts
  Once and again;
In broad daylight you steal the hearts
  Of waking men.

TWO KINDS OF FRIENDSHIP

The friendship of the rogue or saint,
  Like shade at dawn or shade at noon,
Starts large and slowly grows more faint,
  Or starting faint, grows larger soon.

CHOOSING A VOCATION

What shall I do in these few hours of life?
Live humbly with a sweet, religious wife?
Renounce the world, the ties of kindred sever,
And spend my days beside the sacred river?
Drink deep of honeyed poems' nectar-flow?
Or learn philosophy? I hardly know.

THE GOOD ARE RARE

Through thoughts and words and deeds their virtues flow;
  To all the world their kindness brings delight;
They make a mote of good in others show
  Like a great mountain; for their hearts are bright,
And brighten all they touch with their own worth:
How many such are to be found on earth?

THERE WAS A NOBLE CITY

There was a noble city old,
A mighty king, and vassals bold;
And there were gathered scholars true,
And moon-faced ladies not a few;
And there were princes proud and free,
And stories told, and minstrelsy:
A memory now; we mourn their fall
And honor Time, who levels all.

WHERE EDUCATION FAILS

Though many youths a training get
In law, religion, etiquette,
Why are there few whose actions would,
Interpreted, seem wholly good?

Some arching brow is sure to be
As cunning as a master-key,
That serves its purpose passing well
In flinging wide the gates of hell.

ON GIVING A DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE

A girl is held in trust, another's treasure;
  To arms of love my child today is given;
And now I feel a calm and sacred pleasure;
  I have restored the pledge that came from heaven.

STRUGGLING FANCIES

It is my body leaves my love, not I;
  My body moves away, but not my mind;
For back to her my struggling fancies fly
  Like silken banners borne against the wind.

OH, MIGHT I END THE QUEST!

I dug beneath the earth most greedily
  In search of hidden treasure;
I smelted ore; I crossed the mighty sea,
  Forgetting every pleasure;
I cringed to kings; and muddling all my brains
  With magic, lost my rest:
But never got a penny for my pains;
  Oh, might I end the quest!

WHAT DELIGHTS AND HURTS

It is the truth sans prejudice I speak;
  Ye people, heed this truth forever true;
All that delights in women you must seek,
  And all that hurts, you find in women too.

THE SWEETEST THINGS

The sweetest sight a man may see
  Is a maiden's loving face;
The sweetest thing to touch should be
  Her body's close embrace;

Her voice should be the sweetest sound;
  Her breath, the sweetest scent;
The sweetest taste, the honey found
  On lips to kisses lent;

The thought of her is fervent prayer,
  Religion's sweetest part;
The charm of her is everywhere
  Unto the pure in heart.

THE UNLUCKY MAN

A bald man once, whose hairless pate
  Felt inconveniently hot,
Fled to a cocoa-tree at noon—
  He hoped to find a shady spot.
And then a big nut fell, and crack!
  The poor, bald head was split in two.
Misfortunes almost always find
  The man whom evil fates pursue.

A REASON FOR RENUNCIATION

Possessions leave us at the end,
  However long they stay;
Then why not cast aside, my friend,
  What leaves us anyway?

And if they leave against our will,
  The heart takes time in mending;
If given willingly, they fill
  That heart with joy unending.

RENUNCIATION

What does renunciation mean?
It means a lonely woodland scene
Remote from men and human sin,
From woes of love, from love of kin,
Free from the world, a life apart
That slays the tortures of the heart
As fear of death and fear of birth:
It means the best of heaven and earth.

THE BETTER PART

Is there no splendid Himalayan height
  Cooled by the spray from Ganges' holy springs,
With rocks where fairies now and then alight,
  That men should fawn upon contemptuous kings?

THE FIVE ROBBERS

"Here are banquets, and singing sweet,
Perfumes, and glimpse of dancing feet,
And bosoms that on mine may beat."

Five rascal senses whisper this,
Lead me from virtue much amiss,
And cheat me of my highest bliss.

WHEN WOMAN WILLS

When loving woman wants her way,
God hesitates to say her nay.

A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE

A fool's opinion easily is bent;
More easy 'tis to win the wise and great;
But God himself could never make content
The man who feels himself elate
With one small grain of knowledge in his pate.

THE WEAKER SEX

The classic poets make a great mistake;
Forever of the weaker sex they speak;
When gods are subjugated for the sake
Of starry glances, are the women weak?

YOUNG WOMANHOOD

Half-smiles that brighten on her face,
Innocent, roving glances,
The wealth of budding charms that show
In little steps and dances,
The flow of words that shyly prove
The sweet, new woman-feeling:
Yes, all the fawn-eyed maiden does
Is wondrously appealing.

THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE

A few brave men pursue
Rogue elephants to death;
There are a braver few
Who stop the lion's breath;
The bravest of the brave—
And fewer yet they prove—
Are they who can enslave
The haughty god of love.

DIGNITY

The dog will roll, and wag his tail, and fawn,
Show mouth and belly, just to get some meat;
The majestic elephant gazes gravely on;
Till coaxed a hundred times, he will not eat.

IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH

While life is vigorous and bright,
  While sickness comes not, nor decay,
While all your powers are at their height,
  While yet old age is far away,
Then, wise man, let your thoughts be turning
  To heaven's hopes and fears of hell;
For when the house is fired and burning,
  It is too late to dig a well.

THEY WANT THE EARTH

'Tis but a little ball of mud
  With a streak of water round;
Yet kings for it will shed their blood,
  As for a treasure found.

They cannot, will not leave the thing,
  So poor are they, so mean;
And men will fawn on such a king!
  Oh, shame upon the scene!

THE BEASTS THAT DON'T EAT GRASS

Unschooled in music, poetry, and art,
  Man is a beast, a hornless, tailless beast;
  He doesn't eat the grass; for this at least
The other beasts may well be glad at heart.

WHY MEN BEG

Is there a man of spirit who would beg
  In broken words that stumble with his sobbing,
Harsh sobs of him who fears a surly "No!"
  And all to ease his belly's empty throbbing?

None but the man who sees his wretched wife
  Sad always, sees her worn and ragged skirts,
Sees sad-faced babies tugging at their folds
  With screams that tell how fiercely hunger hurts.

THE WISE MISOGYNIST

The wise misogynist, poor soul,
  To self-deceit is given;
For heaven rewards his self-control,
  And women swarm in heaven.

NECTAR AND POISON

All nectar and all poison lives
  In woman's changing states;
For she is nectar when she loves,
  And poison when she hates.

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL

Why should I study scripture, sacred lore,
Or any good, big book? Why get a store
  Of pious actions, anxiously performed—
And win a humble tent in heaven, no more?

The knowledge of myself is all I need
To give me lasting joy, to burn the seed
  Of the interminable pain of life—
Let pious peddlers show their wares and plead.

THE TWO THINGS THAT MATTER

Why all this talk and foolish chatter?
There are just two things that really matter:
A buxom, young, and frisky wife;
Or else a lonely forest-life.

UNINTELLIGIBLE VIRTUE

Are palace-joys so incomplete?
  Is song a despicable pleasure?
And is there anything so sweet
  As clasping her you love and treasure?

Yet pious men account these things
  As vain as flickering candlelight
'Neath dancing moths on troubled wings;
  And to the woods they take their flight.

THE LINES OF FATE

If thorn-plants in the desert leafless be,
  The spring is not to blame.
If owls in broadest daylight cannot see,
  The sun should feel no shame.
If in the plover's bill no raindrops fall,
  'Twere wrong to blame the cloud.
The lines that fate has written once for all,
  Are never disallowed.

POVERTY

The moon by night, the sun by day
Continue in their heavenly way;
One rag they have, one ragged cloud
To serve them both as robe and shroud.
Poor things!

HOW HARD FATE GRIPS

The snake and elephant are caged;
  The moon and sun must meet eclipse;
The prudent are in strife engaged
  With poverty. How hard fate grips!

WHEN MY LOVE DRAWS NIGH

When my love draws nigh,
  When his voice I hear,
Why am I all eye?
  Why am I all ear?

THE HERMIT

I seem to see a hermit good:
He has no pride, he begs his food;
From man-made laws his acts are free;
He seeks no man's society;
He has no care for common ways
Of giving, getting all his days;
He stitches up his garment ragged
With wayside tatters, torn and jagged;
No false conceit his fancy haunts—
Eternal peace is all he wants.

WHY GO TO COURT?

I am not fashion's changing sport,
  I never acted, sang, nor hated;
What figure should I cut at court?
  I am no lady languid-gaited.

IMPOSSIBLE!

The consecrated saints of eld
  Who lived on water, leaves, and air,
Went mad with love when they beheld
  A face that showed how maids are fair.

And if the common men who eat
  Their rice and milk and curds and ghee,
Should curb the wish for things so sweet,
  The mountains would fly oversea.

HINDRANCES

'Twould not be hard, through life's gray sea
  To find the track;
But fawn-eyed women hinder me,
  And hold me back.

DIVINE VISION

My love is in a distant land,
And yet I see her where I stand.
The gods have vision less divine,
Because the eye of love is mine.

WHY MY POEMS DIED

The critics all were jealous,
  The patrons full of pride,
The public had no judgment;
  And so my poems died.

RELATIVES

BEING FURTHER VERSES TRANSLATED FROM THE SANSKRIT

For a self-conceited modish life, made up of trifles, clinging to a corporeal civilization, hating ideas, there is no remedy like the Oriental largeness.

—Emerson

TO MY FRIEND

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Six things are done by friends:
To take, and give again;
To listen, and to talk;
To dine, to entertain.

—*From the* PANCHATANTRA

Introduction

THIS VOLUME is in some sense a sequel to the poems from the Sanskrit presented under the title *Women's Eyes*.

The present collection has less unity. Almost all of the verses of *Women's Eyes* were translated from Bhartrihari, the greatest Indian writer of epigrams. The verses here presented are from many sources, and the selections are of very different length and date. The only bond of union is this—that these poems are all taken from the ancient Sanskrit language, and all seemed to the translator worthy of an English rendering.

The oldest is the satirical "Hymn to Faith," which is found in the *Rigveda*, and may have been composed more than a thousand years before the beginning of the Christian era. The latest is "The Thief's Song," written in Kashmir in the eleventh century A.D. There are selections from *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, the two great epics whose beginnings precede by centuries the birth of Christ. There are poems by Bhartrihari and Kalidasa, poets for whom the date 500 A.D. is convenient, though probably only approximate. There are bits from the two fable books, *Hitopadesha* and *Panchatantra*, whose material is much more ancient than their present form.

I have striven faithfully for a literal rendering. Though a rendering into verse cannot be quite as close as a prose version, there are, in the shorter pieces and in "The Thief's Song," no willful additions or subtractions. In the longer narrative selections some condensation seemed desirable; here, too, nothing is added.

I am under obligations to the *University of California Chronicle* for permission to reprint certain verses which first appeared in its pages.

ARTHUR W. RYDER

Berkeley, California,
September 20, 1919.

RELATIVES

RELATIVES

I saw some great, wild elephants who
  Were gathered in a ring;
They saw some men with a lassoo,
  And they began to sing:

"We fear no fire nor goad nor sling,
  Nor any man that lives;
We do not fear a single thing
  Except our relatives.

"For relatives are selfish, mean,
  And always setting traps:
We understand what we have seen;
  Perhaps we know—PERHAPS.

"Girls give us hopes, too often vain;
  Cows give us tallow grease;
Our relatives give us a pain;
  The clergy give us peace.

"A thirsty bee will kiss a flower,
  And then extract the honey;
A relative will praise your power,
  And carry off your money.

"An elephant will bathe his skin,
  Then dust it till it's black;
A relative will praise his kin,
  And stab them in the back.

"We fear no fire nor goad nor sling,
Nor any man that lives;
We do not fear a single thing
Except our relatives."

—From the *Ramayana*

A RULE OF LIFE

To wealth and wisdom give your days,
Like one whom age and death would spare;
Yet hourly walk in righteous ways,
As if Death had you by the hair.

—From the *Hitopadesha*

THE SLAVE TO HER MASTER

My love is all in vain;
Bid hope depart,
My heart!

Yet thrills in me again
What will not bear
Despair.

Belovèd, give to me
The joy unknown
Alone;

For slavery keeps from thee,
Lord of my life!
Thy wife.

—From KALIDASA's *Malavika*

A FAITHFUL FRIEND

To bring hard matters to an end,
One needs to have a faithful friend:
To see an object in the night,
Even eyes must have a candle's light.

—From KALIDASA's *Malavika*

A FAITHLESS FRIEND

Whoever trusts a faithless friend
And twice in him believes,
Lays hold on death as willingly
As when a mule conceives.

—From the *Panchatantra*

FRIENDSHIP'S BROTHERS

To give us birth we need a mother,
For second birth we need another:
And friendship's brothers seem by far
More dear than natural brothers are.

—From the *Panchatantra*

THE PERVERSITY OF FATE

I see a dog, but not a stone;
I find a stone, the dog is flown;
If dog and stone at once I view,
The king's dog! Damn! What can I do?

—From the *Anthology*

HEEDLESSNESS

Old age, an awful tigress, growls:
And shafts of sickness pierce the bowels;
Life's water trickles from its jar—
'Tis strange how thoughtless people are.

—From Bhartrihari

OLD AGE

Gone long ago are they who gave us birth;
Old friends are memories upon this earth;
Our lives are undermined and daily sink,
Like trees upon the river's sandy brink.

—From Bhartrihari

THE CHESS-GAME

Where there were scattered pieces on the board,
There now is one;
Next, many slaughtered pieces are restored,
Then all are gone:
The dice are day and night; the board is life;
Time and again
Death plays a fearful chess-game with his wife—
The pawns are men.

—From Bhartrihari

MANU AND THE FISH

I

There was a gentle, holy sage
Named Manu, in a former age.
The woes of life he would not blink;
For many years he did not wink.

With ragged clothes and frowsy hair
He lived beside a stream. And there
He saw a fish who thus began
To speak to him. "O holy man,

"I am a little fish, you see;
And bigger fishes frighten me.
For bigger fishes eat the small;
It is their nature, once for all.

"So dreadful terror weighs me down;
Besides, I fear that I shall drown.
Then save me. Some day I will do
An equal favor, sir, to you."

II

So Manu, when he heard his wish,
Stretched forth a hand, and took the fish,
And dropped him in a water-jar
That was as bright as moonbeams are.

And in the jar the little fish
Had everything his heart could wish.
He grew and thrived on food and fun,
For Manu loved him like a son.

At last he grew too big by far
To live within the water-jar.
He said: "Good Manu, I would thank
You very kindly for a tank."

So Manu took him to a tank
Eight miles in breadth from bank to bank,
And twice as long. There, free from fears,
He lived and grew for many years.

III

And when he grew too big to play
There in a comfortable way,
He said to Manu: "Pray deliver,
And put me in the Ganges River.

"And I will never show you spite,
But some day help you, as is right.
My growth has not been selfish; it
Has happened for your benefit."

Kind Manu, anxious to deliver
His friend, went to the Ganges River,
And left him happy. As before
He grew in time a little more.

And then he said to Manu: "Dear,
I can no longer wiggle here.
My holy friend, be good to me,
And take me quickly to the sea."

So Manu took him tenderly
And traveled quickly to the sea.
The fish tried not to weigh too much,
And to be nice to smell and touch.

IV

The fish, when he had reached the ocean,
Smiled at his holy friend's devotion,
And said: "O kind and holy man,
You do as much as fathers can.

"And now 'tis time for me to do
A little something, dear, for you.
For you must know, my holy friend,
The world is hastening to its end.

"A dreadful time is near at hand
For all the things that move or stand;
There comes a flood that has no bound,
And everybody will be drowned.

"So build a ship and build it strong:
Put ropes on board both stout and long.
And one thing further you will need,
Neat packages of every seed.

"Embark then with the seven seers,
And wait, good Manu, free from fears,
Until I come. And you will see
A horn upon the head of me.

"Till then, farewell. Do not delay.
The danger grows from day to day."

V

Then Manu packed most carefully
The seeds, and straightway put to sea.
His good ship gently rose and fell
Upon the ocean's mighty swell.

He longed to see the friendly fish,
Who came in answer to the wish.
He seemed a floating mountain dread;
A horn was growing on his head.

So Manu, feeling less forlorn,
Fastened a rope about the horn,
And felt the ship glide speedily
Over the dancing, salty sea.

But when the wind began to roar
And ocean thundered more and more,
The tossing, shaken ship began
To stagger like a drunken man.

No land remained to cheer them there,
But only water, sky, and air;
No life through all those many years
Save Manu, fish, and seven seers.

But Manu, all those many years,
Went sailing with the seven seers;
The fish pulled on with might and main
And did not weary nor complain.

At last he did, however, stop
Beside the highest mountain-top,
And bade them tie the ship; and they
Call it Ship Mountain to this day.

VI

And then, with wide, unwinking eyes,
The fish, to Manu's great surprise,
Declared: "I saved the seven seers
From death and agonizing fears;

"For I am Brahma. And my friend,
Kind Manu, who has seen the end
Of all the world, shall make again
Gods, devils, animals, and men."

And so he disappeared. But they,
Amazed, departed on their way,
While kindly Manu made again
Gods, devils, animals, and men.

Now all have heard who had the wish
The tale of Manu and the fish.
And everyone who takes it in,
Shall be forever free from sin.

—From the *Mahabharata*

THOUGHTS ON HAVING ONE'S WIFE STOLEN BY A GIANT

From the *Ramayana*. This is the lament of the hero Rama, when his wife Sita is carried away by Ravan, the giant king of Ceylon.

They say that as the seasons move,
  Our sorrow gently fades away;
But I am far from her I love
  And sorrow deepens every day.

That she is gone, is not my woe;
  That she was reft, is not my pain;
The thought that agonizes so
  Is this; her youth is spent in vain.

Blow, breezes, blow to her dear face;
  Blow back to me her kisses sweet:
Through you we taste a glad embrace,
  And in the moon our glances meet.

When she was torn away from me,
  "My lord! My love!" was all her cry,
Which tortures me incessantly;
  My heart is poisoned, and I die.

I burn upon an awful pyre;
  My body wastes by day and night;
Her loss is fuel to feed the fire
  That burns so pitilessly white.

If I could leave each loving friend,
  Could sink beneath the sea, and sleep,
Perhaps the fire of love would end,
  If I could slumber in the deep.

One thought consoles my worst distress;
  Through this I live: I cannot die
While she lies down in loveliness
  Upon the selfsame earth as I.

The sun-parched rice, no longer wet,
  Lives on, while earth her moisture gives;
The root of love supports me yet,
  For they have told me that she lives.

Though giants hem her round, yet soon
  She shall be freed, and shall arise
As radiantly as the moon
  From clouds that darken autumn skies.

When shall I pierce the giant's breast
  With shafts that suck his life away,
That give my tortured darling rest
  And all her absent griefs allay?

When shall I feel the close embrace
  Of my good goddess, as in dreams?
When kiss her smile, while on her face
  The water born of gladness gleams?

When shall I pluck from out my heart—
  A heart by woes of absence torn—
The pain of life from love apart,
  Forget it, like a garment worn?

THE FORTUNATE FOOL

God to the fool a way has shown,
A way unfailing, all his own,
  To hide his lack of sense;
For each, however great a fool,
Among the wise may wear the jewel
  Called Silence.

—From Bhartrihari

FORESIGHT

From loving girls, ye wise, refrain;
'Tis little pleasure, longer pain.
But love three females none the less,
Compassion, Wisdom, Friendliness.
For swelling breasts of lovely girls,
Trembling beneath their strings of pearls,
And hips with jingling girdles—well,
They do not help you much in hell.

—From Bhartrihari

PROXIES

When righteous acts must needs be done,
When time of service has begun,
  In caring for the servant crowd,
In the begetting of a son,
  No proxies are allowed.

—From the *Hitopadesha*

A PRAYER

O father wind, friend light, and earth my mother!
O kinsman water, heaven's space my brother!
I bow, I pray: with you in union blest
May I be good, in brightest wisdom smother
The dark, and sink at last in God to rest.

—From BHARTRIHARI

SIMPLE JUSTICE

If, maiden of the lotus eye,
Your anger hurts you so,
'Tis right you should not let it die,
You hardly could, you know.

But once I gave you an embrace,
To keep it would be pain;
And once I kissed your willing face,
Give me that kiss again.

—From AMARU

ONE FATE OF TWO

One fate of two for the jasmine flower,
The same for the wise and good;
To shine at the head of all the world,
Or to wither in the wood.

—From BHARTRIHARI

GENTLENESS

To gentleness the ruffians bend,
And gentlefolk no less;
It moves relentless to its end—
So fierce is gentleness.

—From the *Mahabharata*

POT-EAR'S AWAKENING

From the *Ramayana*. When the giant citadel in Ceylon was invested by Rama and his army, the giant king determined to call to his assistance his most redoubtable subject, Pot-ear. This giant was normally awake only one day every six months. He must therefore be awakened before he can employ his great strength and courage in the giant cause.

I

They started forth, the giant band
Obedient to their king's command,
With flesh and blood as tempting food,
With wreaths and perfumes, sweet and good.

And so they came to Pot-ear's door,
Where stretched the cave a league and more
On every side, where blossoms sweet
Poured fragrance forth, a guest to greet.

And all that mighty giant band
Before his snoring scarce could stand;
They tottered, but with spirit brave
They fought their way into the cave.

There Pot-ear stretched this way and that
Just like a mountain tumbled flat,
Hideous in his slumber deep,
For he was very sound asleep.

They saw him bristle, saw him shake;
They heard him hissing like a snake;
They felt his breathing like a storm
That blew them from his ugly form.

They saw his nostrils sink and swell,
His throat that yawned like gates of hell;
The dreadful, sprawling form they saw
That smelt of dinners eaten raw.

They made a mountain of the food
That they had brought, so sweet and good;
Beside his bed the mountain rose
Of deer and boars and buffaloes.

They grasped their trumpets glittering bright
As moonbeams shining in the night;
Impatiently they blew and blew,
And screamed and howled and shouted, too.

Through all the tumult loud and deep
Pot-ear lay snoring, fast asleep;
They saw he did not mind their clamor
And seized a stone, or club, or hammer.

They tumbled boulders on his chest,
To see if they could break his rest.
They beat a hundred rub-a-dubs
With fists and hammers, bars and clubs.

The only answer was a snore
A little deeper than before
That blew away the giant band;
Before his breath that could not stand.

More sternly yet the giants strove:
With sticks and whips and goads they drove
Horses and elephants abreast,
Asses and camels on his chest.

They clubbed and pounded without pity,
Until the tumult filled the city;
They made the woods and mountains shake,
But giant Pot-ear would not wake.

Then anger filled each giant breast;
They swore that they would break his rest.
One last attack they made at length
With all their might and wrath and strength.

And there were some to beat the drum,
While screamed and howled and shouted some;
Some bit his ears, while some would tear
Away great handfuls of his hair.

A hundred water-pots they poured
Into his ears, and still he snored;
They could not shake his slumber deep;
Pot-ear was very sound asleep.

Some took a hammer or a club,
With all their might began to drub
Upon his chest and limbs and head
To wake him from his drowsy bed.

They tied great, spiky stones to ropes
And dragged them over him; their hopes
Were disappointed still; for he
Slept on with peaceful dignity.

But when a thousand elephants
Upon his chest began to dance,
Then Pot-ear, gently tickled, broke
From bonds of slumber, and awoke.

He did not heed the falling stones
Or clubs that rattled on his bones,
But yawned and raised himself to see
What breakfast might provided be.

The giants pointed to the food
That they had brought, so sweet and good;
Then Pot-ear in his might arose
And ate some boars and buffaloes.

II

Now when the meat, with wine afloat,
Had vanished down his mighty throat,
Dull Pot-ear shook his heavy head,
And rolled his sleepy eyes, and said:

"Great matters surely are at stake,
Or I should hardly be awake;
And for our giant king, I will
Cool fire or overturn a hill.

"But tell me why I am awake;
Surely great matters are at stake."
Then giant Post-eye bent him low
And humbly answered: "Pot-ear, know

"That neither gods nor devils can
Affright us—but we fear a man.
He leads his mountainous apes across
The strait, for grief at Sita's loss.

"One ape has burned our splendid town
And he has struck Prince Aksha down.
While Ravan, heaven's scourge and thorn,
Has been by Rama overborne

"In single fight, and has been spared—
A thing no god or devil dared."
Then Pot-ear rolled his eyes, and said:
"Well, I will strike the monkeys dead,

"With Lakshmana and Rama, and
Before our king as victor stand.
And monkey flesh and blood shall be
Your food—the blood of men for me."

But when he heard this boasting grim,
The giant Great-paunch answered him:

"Nay, first consider everything,
And listen humbly to the king:
And after that, it will be right
To meet your enemy, and fight."

So Pot-ear, rising, took a cup
And drank, to keep his courage up;
He drank two thousand jars of wine,
And washed his face, and made it shine.

Eager, excited, haughty, proud,
He towered above the giant crowd;
And as he strode his king to greet,
Earth trembled underneath his feet.

III

On, to his brother's proud abode,
Half-drunk with sleep and wine, he strode;
Red-eyed with wrath, he bowed him low,
And asked: "Why was I wakened so?

"What danger threatens, or what ill?
Whom would you like to have me kill?"
And Ravan, maddened by his wrong,
Said: "Brother, you have slept too long;

"So all the wickedness and woe
That Rama works, you do not know;
How he has built a bridge, and crossed
The channel with a monkey host.

"Behold their strangely hideous shapes!
See Lanka's groves, one sea of apes!
They kill our bravest when we fight;
For who can conquer monkey might?

"Ah, brother, save your stricken nation,
Your king reduced to supplication;
You know I love you and adore you;
I know how devils flee before you.

"For there is none on earth so strong
As you, to right my grievous wrong;
Scatter and tear the monkey crowds
Like wind among the autumn clouds."

IV

Then Pot-ear laughed aloud and said:
"Refusing, Ravan, to be led
By us and our united sense,
You suffer now the consequence.

"Whoever scorns a mighty foe,
Is certain to be stricken low;
Whoever fails to guard his own
High place, is quickly overthrown."

Then Ravan frowned, and in his grim,
Gigantic fashion, answered him:
"Enough of sermonizing! Hold,
Be silent; do as you are told.

"Although it might be true I had
Been headstrong, ill-advised, or mad,
You, as a younger brother, should
Forget, and turn the sin to good.

"So, if you have a warrior's might,
Or if you love your brother, fight!
Or if you would not, sulk apart
While trouble makes me sad at heart.

"He only is a friend indeed
Who aids his sinful friend in need,
Who indefatigably gives
A helping hand to relatives."

V

Then Pot-ear felt his brother's woe,
And answered softly, soothing, slow:
"Forget your sorrow, O my king;
Take heart at my encouraging.

"Grieve not. Am I not here, to kill
The wretched man that thwarts your will?
And what I said, I said to prove
My sympathy and brother's love.

"In battle's forefront I will slay
Rama, and chase his apes away;
His severed head shall bring relief
And joy to you; to Sita, grief.

"The giants mourning for their slain
Shall soon forget their grief again;
For I will wipe their tears away
As joyfully I slay and slay.

"Then grieve not, brother mine, but send
Me forth, your toils and wars to end;
For none can stand before my face
With spear or arrow, sword or mace.

"Soon Rama and his brother shall
Be dead, with all inimical,
O King, to you—god, ape, or man;
I wish to kill them, and I can.

"Yes, I would drink the sea, eat fire,
Slay Death himself, should you desire;
Would crush the mountains, pierce the earth,
Smite sun and stars, to bring you mirth,

"And food to me. I sleep so long
And grow so hungry and so strong
That earth and heaven and hell would be
A not too bounteous meal for me.

"Rejoice, and let your heart incline
To every pleasure rare and fine,
And murmur, as you sip your wine:
'Sita is mine, forever mine.'"

VI

But giant Great-paunch counseled so:
"He likes to talk, but does not know
The right and wrong, this vulgar whelp;
King Ravan is our only help.

"Recall the havoc in our clan
That Rama wrought in Janasthan;
The angry lion would you wake,
Or irritate the sleeping snake?"

To Ravan turning then, he said:
"Sita you seized and hither led
Her; now subdue her to your will,
If you desire her beauty still.

"And listen to my plan, wherethrough
She may be made to favor you—
Proclaim in every street today
That heroes five go forth to slay

"Prince Rama—Pot-ear, Cleaver, and
Fork-tongue, Roarer, I who stand
Before you. We will bravely fight,
Struggling with all our main and might.

"And if we conquer, well and good;
At worst, we shall be dripping blood
When we return and say that we
Devoured your bitter enemy.

"And then proclaim throughout the town
That Rama has been stricken down
With Lakshman and the monkey host;
And give to them you honor most

"Garlands and slaves and such rewards
As your rich treasury affords.
Then, when the rumor has been spread
Of Rama and his army dead,

"Go, comfort Sita, speak her fair,
And give her jewels to deck her hair.
Her grief, combined with your deceit,
Will lay her grateful at your feet.

"She is a woman, helpless, bred
To ease; and if her lord is dead,
Or dead to her, she can but wive
With you, a lord to her alive."

VII

Then Pot-ear answered: "I will slay
Rama, and wipe your fear away;
When heroes promise you a wonder,
Their boasting is no empty thunder.

"While cowards and flatterers like you
Make ill anticipation true,
I fight, to win revenge again
For treasure lost and giants slain."

Then Ravan laughed aloud and said:
"I fancy Great-paunch is afraid;
Go forth, brave Pot-ear, fight, and save
My honor: you alone are brave.

"And when they see your awful shape,
Terror will seize on every ape;
And Rama's heart and Lakshman's too
Will split with dread on seeing you."

So Ravan, knowing Pot-ear's might,
Rejoiced, and felt his heart grow light;
While Pot-ear grasped, his foe to strike,
His trusty, gold-bespangled pike—

The pike that gods and devils feared,
Made of black iron, in spots besmeared
With many a stain and blotch of red,
By foemen's blood contributed.

Then, maddened by the reek of blood,
To the great city wall he strode,
While flowers and prayers upon him fell,
And drums and trumpets wished him well.

And there he paused and spoke: "Today
Shall all the monkeys fade away
Like moths in flame. I would not care
To hunt them in their forest lair;

"Indeed, the species often proves
Quite ornamental in our groves;
But Rama is the cause of all
Our woe; so he and his must fall."

He spoke, nor heeded signs of ill
That waited on his footsteps still—
The sky as red as asses' skin,
The clouds with lightning mingled in,

The jackals spitting fire on high,
The throbbing arm, the twitching eye,
The vulture on his pikestaff croaking,
The thunderbolt before him smoking.

He heeded not, but leaped the wall,
Obeying thus the certain call
Of Death; and straight the monkey crowds
Scattered and fled like riven clouds.

But Angad called: "Why would you flee
Like apes of mean or no degree?
Return, and prove your valor; thus
He shall not prove a match for us."

Ashamed, they seized upon great boulders
Or lifted trees upon their shoulders;
The trees were splintered, striking him;
Rocks split upon his every limb.

While underneath his blows they bled
And swooned and died, or turned and fled;
Till Angad called them back to fight,
Reproving thus their shameless flight:

"Why save your lives? Why run away
Like cowards? What will the women say?
For high-born monkeys may not flee
Like vulgar apes of no degree.

"And if we fight our best and die,
We win a hero's home on high;
If victory should crown our worth,
We win a hero's name on earth."

"But life is dear to us," they said,
"And Pot-ear quickly strikes us dead."
Yet, rallying to their prince's name,
They fought once more for very shame.

VIII

They sought for courage in despair;
For wounds and death they did not care,
Nor for their scores and hundreds slain
And eaten on the battle-plain.

Then great Hanuman hurled a shower
Of boulders, using all his power;
But Pot-ear answered with a blow
From that fierce pike, that laid him low.

The mountain crag that Nila hurled
He caught, as through the air it whirled,
And powdered it, till sparks and flame
Forth from the tortured missile came.

Then monkeys by the thousand poured
Upon him, bit and tore and roared;
Even as they clawed and gashed and smote,
They vanished in their hell, his throat.

Even King Sugriva could not kill
His foe, nor Angad, struggling still;
Even Lakshman with an arrow-shower
Could not subdue his giant power.

"With Rama only will I fight,"
Cried Pot-ear: "then will put to flight,
When he is dead, your warriors all";
And Rama answered Pot-ear's call

With shafts that pierced his shaggy chest;
Then, spitting fire, with bleeding breast,
He charged, but from his weakened hand
The weapons dropped upon the sand.

Yet with bare, weakened hands he slew
Two hundred monkeys as they flew
Upon him; then, with tempest-shock
He hurled a craggy, ponderous rock

At Rama, who evaded it,
While Pot-ear, in a foaming fit,
Turned, licking bloody chops, and slew
Of monkey warriors not a few,

And hoarsely laughing, shouted so:
"Rama, I am no common foe
Like those that you have slain; this club
With which I have been wont to drub

"The gods and devils, you shall feel
As it prepares you for my meal."
An answering arrow cut away
The right arm and the club: they lay

Immense: a second arrow sped
And shore away his bleeding head,
Which tumbled, grinning horribly,
Among the fishes in the sea.

Then choirs of heaven praised the might
Of Rama in that dreadful fight;
And monkey faces blossomed bright
Like lilies in the glad sunlight.

IX

But in the city Ravan kept
A tortured vigil, moaned, and wept:

"Ah, Pot-ear! Source of all my hope and gladness!
Where are you flown,
Leaving unplucked your brother's thorn of sadness,
Dying alone?

"My right arm were you; you I trusted only,
Death's match! And can
The tamer of high gods be sleeping lonely,
Slain by a man?

"The gods rejoice, forgetting all their anguish;
Foes not a few
Soon will assail the fortress where I languish,
Grieving for you.

"I am no king, nor Sita's lover longer—
Till I shall give
Battle to Rama, prove myself the stronger,
Vainly I live.

"And should it be his lot to slay another,
Gladly I die;
Beside the headless form that was my brother,
There let me lie."

FORTITUDE

From the *Mahabharata*. This is the consolation offered to those who have lost kinsmen in the great epic war.

All gathering ends in dissipation;
All heaps, at last, must fall;
All friendships melt in separation;
And death at last ends all.

The coward dies, the hero lives
A space, but none pass by
The appointed days that heaven gives—
Then let us fighting die.

All lives begin from nothingness,
  Stir for a time, and then
(No cause for grief) sink into less
  Than nothingness again.

Death has no enemy nor friend;
  Each in his turn must pass,
Must helpless to that bidding bend
  As wind-blown blades of grass.

Our goal is—there. And every day
  The one long caravan
Moves on with death to point the way.
  Why should it grieve a man?

For all the saints and scholars old
  Since first the world began
Are gone, with every fighter bold.
  Why should it grieve a man?

The fighter slain attains to heaven;
  The other wins the fight;
To each is much advantage given;
  Fighting is good and right.

And God, who loves a fighting man,
  Hailing a welcome guest,
Prepares with all the care he can,
  A seat among the blest.

Oh, trust yourself, and spare your tears
  For those who fell in strife;
Not all your sorrow, pain, and fears
  Can bring the dead to life.

Hundreds of parents, sons, and wives
  Loved you with passion true;
Gone are the loves of former lives—
  What do they mean to you?

Time makes us win our strength, and keeps;
  Time tells us when to die;
Time is awake when others sleep;
  Time passes no man by.

Youth vanishes, and beauty, wealth,
  And love and friendship die
With life itself and living health;
  But wise men do not cry.

They do not cry, but fight; and then
  Forget their former woes;
For pain forgotten is not pain,
  But pain remembered, grows.

This wisdom heals the heart's dull woes
  As herbs the body's pain;
When palliating wisdom grows,
  We are not children then.

One thing remains of all our loves,
  Our wealth and honors won—
The character that onward moves,
  The deeds that we have done.

Man has no enemy nor friend
  Except himself; alone
He knows what deeds to virtue tend,
  What seeds of sin are sown.