

# THE RAMAYAN

## SUNDARA KANDAM

### CHAPTER I

#### HANUMAN'S LEAP

Hanuman then resolved to travel through the air in quest of Janaki. In order to perform that arduous task he raised his head and stiffened his neck quite erect, for which he looked like a bull. He then walked over the earth, green with grass, with irresistible steps. At that time, he brushed aside all animals like a lion and crushed down good many trees, and thereby scared away the feathered denizens of the forest. There were various minerals on the Mahendra hill shining in their pristine lustre. Hanuman standing at its foot looked like an elephant immersed in a lake!

After this, he bowed down to the sun, Indra, Svayambhu, wind-god, and all beings with joined palms and then facing the west he saluted his father and then began to increase in dimension like the sea. The Vanaras at this stared at him with their eyes wide open in deep amazement. The mighty hero got ready for crossing the ocean. He caught hold tightly of the mountain with his hands and feet. The hill

at once shook and flowers began to drop down from the trees. Hanuman began to press the mountain more and more and it began to spurt forth water like an elephant shedding its temporal sweat, and the golden, silvery and collyrium hues of the different minerals were all destroyed by that torrent of water. Heavy boulders rolled down with large blocks of red-arsenic; then the hill looked like the smoke of a burning flame. Beasts and birds shrieked in fear and ran in every direction and the snakes raising their spacious hoods began to bite at the rocks, as if they vomited fire in anger. Big rocks bit by those snakes crumbled into pieces and those fragments began to burn with fire-like venom. Although there were many medical herbs, but they could not neutralise that poison.

At this sudden convulsion, the hermits thought that they were being riven by the Rakshasas. The Vidyadharas with their women ran away from their drinking haunts, leaving their golden seats, goblets, bowls, delicious articles for chewing, various kinds of meat, oxen hides and swords with golden hilts; fair damsels, wearing necklaces, bracelets, anklets and Carnation garlands, besmeared with red, sandal paste and with their eyes red with wine dallying in amorous sports being startled by this strange occurrence they, with their lovers, rose in the sky and watched the thing with delightful curiosity from above. The hermits thought about the great feat of Hanuman, undertaken for the benefit of Ram and Vanaras in

general and that he would be able to cross the ocean easily.

Hearing this from the hermits the Vidyadharas were struck with wonder and they repeatedly looked at Hanuman. Meanwhile the fire-like mighty hero trembled in his limbs and his hairs stood on their ends, and he roared like the rumbling of a cloud. He lashed his roundish tail covered with down again and again on his back just to get ready for the spring. It seemed as if Garuda the king of the birds, was flying off with a huge snake.

He then firmly planted his arms like bolts on the mountain, then contracting his legs, neck and abdomen mustered his strength. He looked up and suspended his breath and then contracting his ears in order to spring, addressing other Vanaras said, "I shall reach Lanka with the velocity of wind, just like an arrow shot by Ram and if I do not find Janaki there I shall, at the same speed, go to the region of the gods. If I do not meet with success even there then I shall uproot Lanka and bring Ravan in bondage."

With these words Hanuman sprang at ease like Garuda. As he flew up trees were uprooted from all sides. Hanuman coursed through the sky along with those trees, borne up by the violence of his flight. The Sala and palm trees went after him for a short time as people follow their friend bound for a distant land, or as the troops follow their king. Hanuman thus being covered with buds, and blossoms looked

like a hill lit up with glow-worms. Then the heavy trees being deprived of their flowers by the velocity of the flight began to drop down into the sea like mountains in fear of their wings being clipped by Indra<sup>1</sup> and the flowers on account of their lightness gradually reached the sea. Then the surface of the sea being covered with those fragrant flowers looked like the star-spangled sky or like a cloud flashing with lightning. Hanuman with outstretched hands under the sky looked like a penta-hooded snake from a mountain crevice. It seemed, as if, the hero was going to devour both the ocean and the sky. His brown eyes, flashing like lightning, looked like two fires burning on the hill, and they resembled the sun and the moon fixed in a vast yellow aureola. His ruddy face with red nose looked like the crimson sun of the evening. The uplifted tail of Hanuman looked beautiful like the upraised standard of Indra. Being encircled by his own tail he appeared like the sun placed in the midst of the Zodiac. His red waist looked like the middle of a hill tinged with red minerals. The wind shut up within his arm-pits rumbled like clouds. Hanuman with his long tail looked like a comet<sup>2</sup> that issuing from the north shines like a luminous line in the sky. His shadow fell on the sea and he steered through the

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1 It is said that formerly the mountains had wings and they could move wherever they wished. In Milton's *Paradise Lost* also we find that mountains at first possessed power of locomotion.

2 In the original it is meteor, but the description tallies only with a comet.

air like a ship. Huge billows rose over that part of the sea over which he passed, and he steered through with great speed breasting the mighty waves with his wide breast hard as a rock.<sup>1</sup> The wind, raised by his breath and by the clouds, agitated the rolling deep greatly. Hanuman pushed forward by dividing the high waves raised by his velocity as if separating the earth from heaven. At that time it seemed as if he was engaged in courting the mountainous waves like the Meru and the Mandara and the waves lashed up by his speed reached the sky where they looked overspreading the sky like the autumnal clouds.

Then all aquatic animals became visible like the body of a person when the cloth is taken off. The snakes were afraid seeing Hanuman going along the sky, like Gadura, and they were seized with fear. The shadow of this hero was ten yoyanas wide and thirty yoyanas long. The shadow followed him and it spread over the sea like a mass of cloud. He steered in the void like a winged mountain. The clouds began to rain in torrents over the sea being disturbed by his motion. The mighty hero flew sometimes like

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<sup>1</sup> Please mark this line, it means Hanuman swam across to Lanka. Swimming across the English Channel has become a possible feat. Now, if Ceylon be Lanka, its distance from the mainland of India at that time might have been even less than that between Calais and Dover. There is a confusion of metaphors and similes, here it seems two distinct facts, flying and swimming, have been interwoven; of course we should make allowance for poetical hyperboles.

the Gadura and sometimes like the wind through banks of variegated clouds. In the course of his journey sometimes he became concealed behind a mass of clouds and then immediately emerged from them like the full moon.

The gods and the Gandharvas then began to shower flowers on him for his astonishing feat. The sun lessened its heat and the wind began to blow gently. The Nagas, Yakshas and the Rakshasas began to sing his praise seeing him thus unexhausted.

In the meantime the Ocean out of honour to the Ikshwaku line, thought, "If I do not help Hanuman, the chief of the Kapis, people will speak ill of me. Sagar, the Ikshwaku king, has widened my expanse. This hero is a great friend to that Ikshwaku family. It is my duty to devise some means so that this hero may take some rest and traverse the rest of the journey at ease."

Arguing thus, addressing the golden Mainaka, the Ocean said, "Indra has placed you as a bat to prevent the ingress and egress of the Asuras from the nether region. You are endowed with wonderful powers and you can expand yourself at will. Rise up at once from the sea. Look, Hanuman for Ram's work is nearing you along the sky. He is fatigued. So get up soon."

Instantly, the Mainaka hill rose from beneath, it seemed as if the sun rose bursting asunder the veil

of clouds. At that time the sky and the steel-like sea turned into golden hue with its lustre.

Hanúman thus finding the Mainaka rising suddenly from the saltish sea considered it as an impediment in his path. He brushed it aside by his breast as the wind disperses the clouds. At this the Mainaka was immensely pleased and assuming the form of a man came to his peak and said, "O chief of the Kapis! You are engaged in a very difficult task. So please take a little rest on my cliff. Descendants of Raghu have contributed to the increase of the Ocean and you are bent upon Ram's good so the Ocean-god shows you hospitality. It is the time-honoured custom to do good in return to the benefit one receives. He has told me that you are to cover hundred Yoyanas so he has asked me to rise up for your rest. There is plenty of palatable fruits and roots, partake them at your will. You are the chief of the Kapis and I have some connection with you, but not to speak of you it is one's duty to entertain even an humble guest. Your speed is like that of your father, the Wind-god. Now listen to me why you are an object of my honour."

"In the golden age, the mountains had their wings. They flew about in great speed, and the gods and the Maharshis became afraid of them lest they might fall on them. Then Indra began to clip their wings in anger, and he appeared before me in rage. At that time, your father carried me along the sky and then dropped me in to the sea. My wings were saved for

him. This is why I am honouring you. Time has come to requite that good service. I have been immensely pleased at your sight. So accept my offerings and take a little rest."

Then Hanuman replied, "Mainaka. enough hospitality has been shown by these words. Don't be sorry, pressing duties wait upon me and the day too is about to decline. Moreover, it is my solemn determination not to take any rest within hundred Yoyanas, so let me go."

Saying this, Hanuman went on with unabated speed, only after touching the Mainaka. Both the hill and the sea stared in wonder at him.

Hanuman then rose into the sky and proceeded along his journey. All admired his heroic feat. In the meantime, Indra was pleased at the conduct of Mainaka and addressing him said, "This hero is going for Ram's work and since you have honoured him I have been pleased with your action, go wherever you like."

Mainaka was delighted seeing Indra thus pleased, so sank back under the water after getting the boon from Indra.

Then the Suras, Siddhas, Maharshis and the Gandharvas addressing Surasa, the spirited mother of the Nagas, said, "O Goddess! Look there auspicious Hanuman is crossing the sea. Just assume the form of a dreadful Rakshasasi and put some obstacles in his path. We want to test his valour. We shall

We want to test his valour. We shall see whether he can conquer you or becomes paralysed with fear."

Thereupon, Surasa assuming the hideous form of a Rakshasa, obstructing Hanuman's passage said, "Gods have ordained you as my fare, so I shall devour you to-day. So enter into the cavity of my mouth."

With these words she stood up before Hanuman with her mouth gaping wide.

Then Hanuman said "Ram, the son of Dasaratha, has come to the Dandaka forest with his brother and wife. There he incurred great hostility with the Rakshasas. When he was absent Ravana stole his wife. I have been sent as an envoy to honourable Janaki. The earth belongs to Ram and you live within it, so it is your duty to help him. However, I swear to come back to you after giving information of Janaki to Ram."

Then Surasa, eager to test his valour, said, "Formerly Prajapati Brahma<sup>1</sup> granted me this boon that

1 Almost all the Rakshasas got their boons, which were often injurious to the people at large, mostly from the Aryan god Brahma. It is really perplexing. It proves at least one thing that both the Rakshasas (Non-Aryans) and men (the Aryans) had one religion and they worshipped the same gods and goddesses and the gods themselves made no distinction between the two. There are Sudra Rishis (composers of hymns) in the Rig Veda. This shows that the Ramayan was composed after the fusion of the Aryan and non-Aryan. In my preface to the translation. I have said that Ravan worshipped Siva, though he received boon from Brahma, because this is the prevalent belief amongst

whoever shall come near me I shall devour him. Now, if you have power you may come out of my jaws." At this Hanuman was highly enraged and said, "O Rakshasi, then open your mouth in proportion to my size." Saying this Hanuman expanded his body to ten yoyanas, Surasa gaped her mouth twenty yoyanas. That hideous mouth looked like the abyss of hell. Hanuman then extended his body to thirty yoyanas and Surasa her mouth to forty yoyanas, then Hanuman to fifty yoyanas and Surasa to sixty, then Hanuman to seventy and Surasa to eighty, thereupon Hanuman to ninety and Surasa to hundred.

Then Hanuman suddenly contracting his body like a cloud and entered into Surasa's mouth and instantly came out of it and rising into the sky said, "Dakshayani! I have come out of your mouth, I bow down to you, now I go for Janaki."

Then Naga-mother Surasa seeing Hanuman coming out of her mouth like the moon from the jaws of Rahu, assumed her own form and contentedly said, "Go wherever you like and endeavour to find out Janaki."

At this the rangers of the sky praised Hanuman greatly. Hanuman proceeded along the sky. The

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the majority of the Hindus in Bengal. Besides, it makes no difference at all, the great Hindu Trinity after all are the personification of the three aspects of Brahma as the creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the Universe. Only different names have been given on account of different functions.

limitless sky spread to limitless distance. It was tempered by clouds. Birds were flying in it. The rainbow adorned it. And Gandharvas the masters of music and dancing, were roving about. Wonderful chariots drawn by lions and tigers were plying through it. It was the abode of the pious. There sacred fire carrying clarified butter (in the sacrifice) was always burning. There the sun and the moon and other heavenly bodies shone. Maharshis, Nagas and Yakshas resided there. It is the support of the universe, and is like a canopy of the living world.

In the meantime, a Rakshasi, named Sinhi ka, seeing Hanuman thought of him as her destined morsel. She then followed the shadow of Hanuman. At this Hanuman started and thought, "As the course of a sea-going vessel is stopped by the wind blowing in opposite direction so my journey has been thwarted."

Thus thinking he looked around and found a hideous Rakshasi rising from the saltish sea. At that sight, he understood that it was the creature spoken of by Sugriva who captures living beings by their shadows.

Then Sinhika opening her mouth, as wide as the space from the nether region to the heaven, pursued Hanuman. Hanuman then tried to find out her vital spot. Hanuman at once reduced his size, entered her mouth and tore her heart into pieces with his sharp nails. Thus after cleverly destroying the Pakshasi, he emerged from her mouth like the wind. Thereupon, the denizens of the sky praised him

saying, "You have destroyed the Rakshasi by your valour. May you achieve your object! He who has patience, intelligence, keen sight and skill, like you, never loses his heart in any thing."

Thus Hanuman proceeded in great speed. The other shore of the sea was near. In the course of his journey, he saw islands covered with trees, the Malaya hill, junctions of the rivers with the sea. His vast size overcast the sky as if with a cloud. He then thought that his vast size and speed might rouse the curiosity of the Rakshasas. So he diminished his body, huge as a mountain, and resumed his former self like a yogi freed from all worldly delusions. It seemed then as if God Vishnu after covering the three worlds by his three steps resumed his former self.

There was a long range of hills along the margin of the sea, abounding in Ketakas, Uddalakas and cocoanut trees. Hanuman after crossing the ocean by his valour alighted on a rocky brow of an inclined cliff. Beasts and birds were startled by it. On arriving there, he saw the city of Lanka, like the heavenly city of Amaravati.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE CITY OF LANKA

The hero endowed with great strength did not feel fatigued even after crossing hundred yoyanas—sea. He was not breathing hard even after such a

hard labour. He stood with an unshaken body. Not to speak of hundred yoyanas, it was possible for this hero to travel even more. Then the trees began to shower flowers on his head. Being covered with flowers he stood like a tree in blossoms. Another name for the Lanka hill was Trikuta, and the city of the Rakshasas stood on it. Hanuman in slow paces proceeded towards it. There the tableland was covered with green grass and fragrant shrubs and the trees stood there in beautiful rows.<sup>1</sup> Hanuman took a middle road to Lanka. Various trees grew in the Trikuta. There were Deodarus, Karnikas, Dates, Piyalas, Kutujas, Ketaka, fragrant priyangu, Kovidaras, Kadamvas, Saptachhadas, Asanas, and Karviras. Of them many were in blossoms. Some were even bent down with the weight of flowers and their leaves were gently shaking in the breeze. And birds were singing sweetly on their boughs. There were many crystal lakes and tanks full of white and red lotuses; swans and cranes were sporting amongst them. Here and there stood sporting haunts on hills with beautiful gardens attached to them. Hanuman seeing all these on his way, at last, arrived at Lanka protected by Ravan. The great city was surrounded by a moat, full of lilies, and since the abduction of Sita, the rovers of night at the command of Ravan were guarding it on all sides with bows and arrows.

It was a highly beautiful city, girt by a golden

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<sup>1</sup> Beautiful avenues are still to be found in Ceylon.

wall, with lofty white mansions and yellow<sup>1</sup> high ways. Its gates were covered with creepers and adorned with streaming banners. The heavenly architect Viswakarma, had built that city with great care. As a mountain cave is infested with snakes so dreadful Rakshasas lived there. The city was situated on the summit of a hill, and it seemed as if it was soaring in the sky. It looked like the creation of fancy! Arms, like Sataghnis and Shulas, were kept in different parts. Hanuman, in amazement, stared at it, as Indra looked upon Amaravati with admiration.

The hero gradually came to the northern gate of of the city. It was high, as if kissing the sky, and it looked like the gate of Alaka—the city of Kuvera. The houses there were so high that it seemed, as if, they were supporting the sky! Hanuman considering the strong defence and the prowess of the formidable enemy, Ravan and also of the sea intervening, thought, "Even if the Vanares succeed to reach Lanka, they won't be able to conquer. It is impossible even for the gods to occupy the city without war. This city is quite impregnable. I know not what Ram will do arriving here. Treaty with the Rakshasas is out of the question, nor do I see any favourable circumstance in winning them over by gifts, or by sowing dissensions amongst them in the war. Perhaps, it will be difficult even for Sugriva, Angada, Neela and other Vanaras to reach the place, However, let me now find out

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1 Perhaps due to sands of that hue.

whether Janaki is alive or not. I shall decide the course of action after I meet her."

Hanuman then sat upon the hill and thought of the means for meeting Sita. He thought, "Lanka was surrounded by the Rakshasa soldiers, how can I enter there with my present self. The Rakshasas are quite formidable and so it is necessary to delude them for finding out Janaki. I shall, therefore, enter the city by night in invisible form."

Hanuman heaved deep sighs, finding Lanka thus inaccessible to the gods and the Asuras. He again thought, "How shall I meet Janaki in absence of wicked Ravan? It is not proper to neglect Ram's mission, but how shall I meet her? Acts about to be crowned with success are often marred by thoughtlessness of the agents employed for them. Even a course of action having been decided after due deliberations, becomes frustrated for the fault of the envoys. Emissaries proud of their education or intelligence often become the cause of failure. It is now my duty to be careful about the means by which we can achieve our object and succeed in crossing the ocean. Ram desires to punish Ravan, but if the Rakshasas can detect me that end will be frustrated. It is not possible to enter the city even in the guise of a Rakshasa. Not to speak of anything else, even the wind cannot blow here without being noticed. It is not possible to do anything in Lanka without the knowledge of the Rakshasas. If I appear in my native form I shall surely lose my life and great

obstacles will crop up for the realisation of my master's object. So I shall enter the city in a dwarfish form during the night, and I shall find out Janaki after a thorough search of every house." Thus thinking Hanuman waited for the sunset.

At last, the sun went down and the night set in. Then Hanuman diminished his body to the dimension of a cat and became wonderful to behold. He then quickly entered beautiful Lanka in the evening. Its highways were broad and lined with palaces with golden pillars and windows with golden net works. At one place stood seven-storied houses, at another, eight-storied ones with courtyards, decorated with gold and crystal and provided here and there with golden gates of wonderful workmanship. Hanuman felt sad at the sight of the rich city ; but his eagerness to find out Janaki cheered him up for the quest.

In the meantime, the moon drew a canopy of light over the world. The moon rose as if to render help to Hanuman. She was shining in her lily-white purity amongst the stars, and Hanuman saw the moon rising in the sky like a swan swimming in the blue waters of a lake.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE VIEW OF LANKA

Then the intelligent hero relying on his courage entered the city at night. Lanka was situate on the high summit of the Lanka hill. There the woods

were beautiful, waters were crystal clear, and the palaces white as the autumnal clouds. The sea-breeze was blowing there day and night. Big tuskers and formidable Rakshasas were roving about hither and thither. It seemed to be the capital of the nether world, guarded by the formidable Uragas or snakes, rather like Amarvati, the heavenly city, dotted with clouds charged with lightning and illumined with stars and other heavenly planets. Here and there streamers were streaming in the wind with a gentle murmuring noise. Its gates were made of gold and their thresholds were inlaid with rubies, gems and other precious stones. Its flights of stairs were wrought with gems. Everything was highly neat and clean. There stood the assembly-room with its high roof<sup>1</sup>. It was resonant with the flourish of trumpets and the jingling sound of ornaments. Peacocks, swans and Kraunchas were roaming about in flocks. Hanuman was mightily pleased at the sight of the city. He thought, "the Rakshasas are ever guarding it with arms ready to strike! Nobody can enter it by force But perhaps Kumud, Angada, Sushena and other

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1 Hanuman entered Ravana's inner apartment girt with a wall made of flaming gold and Jamvanada (a kind of gold having sixteen diverse colours) and (perfumed) with excellent Aguru and Sandal."

This description in this place does not at all fit in with the subsequent description of the outskirts of the city. The description of the inner apartment must be, in sequence, after that of the city in general, its gates, highways, suburbs, etc.—Translator.

heroes like them may enter it." Then thinking of the prowess of Ram and Lakshman, he felt elated in his mind.

Lanka was lighted all through and there was no darkness at all. Hanuman thus proceeded seeing everything in his way.

In the meantime, the guardian deity of Lanka seeing Hanuman at the gate with a hideous face and fearful eyes appeared before the Vanara and with a thundering voice asked, "Who art thou? Why have you come here? Tell the truth or I shall destroy you immediately, the city is guarded on all sides by the rovers of night. You own't be able to enter it in any way."

Hanuman replied, "Ah ruthless creature! I shall certainly tell you what you ask. But tell me first who art thou? Why are you standing at the gate and abusing me thus?"

Then the witch—Lanka harshly replied, "You despicable Vanara! I am a servant of Ravan, the Rakshasa chief, and is guarding the city. You will never succeed in entering the city by setting me at naught. I am myself the guardian deity of Lanka and, to speak the truth, you will measure the ground being killed by my hand."

Then Hanuman stood firm as a rock and said, "O worshipful lady! I shall see this Lanka surrounded by a moat, and shall with my own eyes see its buildings, gardens and forests. I have come here out of this curiosity."

Thereupon, Lanka again harshly replied, "You fool! Mighty Ravan protects this Lanka, so you won't be able to see it without conquering me."

Then Hanuman humbly replied, "O gentle lady! I shall go to my own place after seeing the city of Lanka."

Seeing such importunity of Hanuman, Lanka was greatly enraged, and slapped him with great force. Thereupon, Hanuman roared in anger and struck her with his left fist. Lanka was a woman; he therefore did not give full vent to his wrath. Then the Rakshasi with a hideous grimace reeled on the ground. Hanuman was greatly pained at that sight.

Then Lanka said with submissive voice, "Be pleased, O mighty hero! Heroes never violate the Sastra. I am the the guardian deity of Lanka, and you have vanquished me by your prowess. Now I shall tell you an old story, just listen to me. Once, God Sayambhu said to me, "Rakshasi, when you will meet with defeat at the hands of a Vanara then you should know that evil days for the Rakshasas have come. With your advent that time has arrived. Nothing can avert the decree of the Almighty Creator. Now, for wicked Ravana the downfall of the Rakshasas is come. Curse has fallen upon the city. You may now freely enter the city and search for Sita everywhere."

## CHAPTER IV

### INSIDE THE CITY

Then Hanuman, by night, leaped over the city-wall, where there was no door, and from his daring feat it appeared than as if he planted his left foot on the crown of Ravan.

The highways of Lanka were broad and strewn with flowers and Hanuman proceeded along them. The city was crowded with the lofty mansions of the Rakshasas. Somewhere, he heard noise of laughter and somewhere blasts of trumpets. Those houses were spotlessly white, decorated with floral wreathes and built in the Padma and Swastika styles of architecture. Devices of thunder-bolts and goads were painted on them, and there spread a sheen of jewels from the windows. Hanuman proceeded for the work of Ram. He was greatly delighted by those sights. There, beautiful damsels, stricken with amour, were singing sweetly in three octaves, low and soft. Somewhere the jingling sounds of the anklets or of the golden zones, or the sound of foot-falls on the stairs were heard. Some were clapping their hands and some were roaring in joy. In some houses, the Vedas<sup>1</sup> were being read, or their Mantras were chanted. At different places the Rakshasas were singing Ravan's praise. Hanuman saw all these during his journey. He saw

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<sup>1</sup> Yet we are asked to believe that the Rakshasas were cannibal monsters!

spies lying hidden in the groves. Some of them had their crowns shaved, while others wore matted locks on their heads. Many were clad in calf-skin, some in cotton fabrics, while others had no clothing on them. All those Rakshasas were variously armed. All were protected with armours. They were of various colours and of various looks. They were neither very tall nor very dwarfish, neither very stout, nor very lean, neither very fair nor very dark. They were beautiful and hideous! They were dressed in various styles. Some had staffs or flags in their hands. They never shrank from anything for moral scruples. They were guards of Ravan.

At last, the hero came near the gate, and he heard neighings of the horses. Well-decorated white elephants were stationed at different quarters. There were various kinds of chariots, carriages, and vehicles. The gate was set with precious jewels, and strongly guarded by the Rakshasa soldiers. It was girt by a golden wall and out of it rose the scented fume of black Aguru and Sandal.

At that time, the moon was pouring her silvery light in the sky. It was white as the lotus and the conch, and was surrounded by a galaxy of stars. At that time, all forgot their sufferings and woes, the sea heaved and the earth was tinged with light. The moon looked like the Goddess of beauty when she walks over the Mandara hill, or bathes in the evening sea, or sports amongst the lotuses by day! The moon looked like a swan in a silvery cage. The

moon with her black stain looked like a bull with sharp horns. She began to rain her influence under the sky ; with the advance of these twilight-beauties the sullenness of the proud damsels was removed. Sweet sounds of lyre began to rise and the beauties slept by embracing their husbands. Ravenous beasts were out for their prey.

Hanuman saw some places rendered noisy by a drinking party. At some place people were abusing each other. At some place a warrior was swinging his arm, or thumping his breast with his fist. Somewhere, a lover was caressing his lady-love by gentle strokes of his palm. Somewhere huge elephants were trumpeting. At some spots the pious people were assembled. Hanuman was mightily pleased at these sights. He found the Nishacharas<sup>1</sup> sweet speched and theistic. Their names were sweet sounding and pleasing to the ear. They were the foremost people of the earth. They were differently dressed and even those who were ugly among them, appeared beautiful on account of their dress. They were accomplished and pursued deeds after their qualities. Their wedded wives were pure, generous, devoted to their husbands and fond of drink. All those women were attired in excellent apparel and in their effulgence shone like stars. They were highly bashful. Some of them were seated on the terrace, and some on the laps of their

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<sup>1</sup> Nishacharas literally means rovers of the night, another name for the Rakshasas. Please mark the high civilisation of the Rakshasas (vide intro.).

lovers. They were after the minds of their husbands, and were engaged in ministering to their needs. Some were of golden hue and some were white as the moon. Some of them were without their clothes. Some were sad for the absence of their lovers and some were glad for their union. The lotus-like faces of those women were beautiful as the moon, with side-long looks of love in their eyes, shaded with lovely lashes. They wore garlands of flowers, and their ornaments glittered like lightning. Hanuman was greatly pleased at their sight, but amongst them, he did not find Sita, beautiful as a flowery creeper,—virtuous Sita created from the mind of the Creator in the royal line. She was devoted to her husband and was ever thinking of Ram. That enchantress of Ram's mind used to talk in the notes of a wild peacock.<sup>1</sup>

She was lovely like an indistinct lunar disc, like a streak of gold covered with dust, like a golden reed broken by the wind, like a scar left by an arrow !

## CHAPTER V

### RAVAN'S PALACE

At last, walking on the roof of a seven-storied house Hanuman saw at a short distance the palace of Ravan. It was girt by a red, glittering wall. Formidable Rakshasas were guarding the palace as the lion keeps

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<sup>1</sup> The cry of a pea-cock is naturally shrill and harsh, but Kalidas in his Raghuvansam speaks of the musical notes of the peacock.

watch over a forest. The palace was furnished at different points with doors worked with silver and ornamented with gold and had spacious rooms in it. Cars decorated with images of gold, silver and ivory, were plying with a deep rumbling noise. The palace was full of jewels furnished with costly furniture. It was peopled by veteran warriors and surrounded by beautiful sights. There the damsels were ever dallying in amorous sports, and the jingling sounds of their ornaments resounded the palace. All the articles of royal use were heaped in the palace. Its halls were echoing like the deep rounding sea. They were stuffed with excellent apparel and precious jewels. There the Rakshasas, on festive occasions, prepared Soma drink for sacrifice,<sup>1</sup> and gods were ever worshipped there. Hanuman considered the spot as the ornament of Lanka.

He then walked over the wall and surveyed room after room, garden after garden. He then entered the residence of Prahasta, thence that of Mahaparshwa, and after that he espied into the abodes of mighty Kumbhakarna, Vibhishan, Mahodara, Virupaksha, Vidyutjibha, Vidyunmali, Vahudranstha, Shuka, Sarana, Indrajit, Jamvumali, Sumali, Rashmiketu, Suryya Shatm, Dhumraksha, Sampati, Vidyudrup, Bhima, Ghana, Vighana, Shukanabha, Chakra, Shatha, Kapata, Hrashwakarna, Dranstha, Lomasha, Yodhyonmatta, Matta, Dhajagriva, Sadi, Doijibha, Hastinuikha, Karala, Vishala, Raktaksha and of others. These Nishacharas

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<sup>1</sup> An absolutely Aryan custom of Vedic time.

were immensely rich and Hanuman saw their wealth. At a little distance from those was the residence of Ravan. It was ever guarded by many odd-looking Rakshasis and gigantic Rakshasas with lances, clubs, Shaktis and Bhomras in their turn. There were beautiful steeds swift as the wind, and mighty elephants with temporal sweats running down their cheeks, who looked like mountain-peaks, with drizzling clouds and fountains running on them; they were formidable as the heavenly elephant Airavata and scattered the enemy's rank by their deep rumbling sound. Troops were stationed at points of that beautiful place. At some place various tents with golden nets were pitched, glittering like the morning sun; there were beautiful grottoes and sporting enclosures. Somewhere he saw excellent groves, places of assignment and amorous dalliance by day and by night. He saw picture-galleries and artificial hillocks. The beautiful palace of Ravan looked like a peak thronged with pinions and flagstuffs, with stands for peacocks to perch upon, and full of gems and riches, and intrepid persons were engaged in protecting that vast treasure. The palace, like that of Kuvera, the lord of wealth, was resplendent with the sheen of jewels and the effulgence of Ravan's energy. There were dishes beset with gems from which food was partaken and bedsteads and seats were made of gold. There wine flowed in stream,<sup>1</sup> and a sweet jingling noise was heard from the tinkling zones and anklets of women and from

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<sup>1</sup> In the original the expression means rendered muddy with wine.

tambours. Big mansions with spacious halls crowded upon one another.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### INSIDE THE PALACE.

Hanuman saw Ravan's palace with golden casements studded with gems like banks of clouds glistening with lightning. He saw large conches,<sup>1</sup> bright arms, and above all stood a beautiful tower. This faultless structure was the admiration of the Gods and the Asuras. Ravan occupied it by his own prowess. It was built with great care, as if the Danab architect Moy constructed it by his magic. There was not a more splendid mansion than this on earth. In that beautiful palace there was a spot of incomparable beauty, as if the heaven had descended on earth! It was spacious like a cloud, and lovely like a chariot drawn by the horses. It was resplendent with the shine of jewels and was in perfect keeping with the royal prowess. There the trees bent down with bunches of flowers and their pollens, were being blown about by the wind. There were drazzling beauties like lightning and there stood the famous Puspaka Ratha of Ravan, that chariot looked like a hill tinged with mineral dyes like the star-bespangled sky, like a cloud shining with diverse colours. There in the open

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1 In ancient times on the field of battle conches used to be blown like blasts of trumpets.

space, designed for accomodating seats for many, stood golden hills adorned with flowery trees, and there in that chariot white halls tanks with lotuses, and beautiful woods were seen. There were birds of games, golden reptiles, life-like horses, and birds with their wings a little bent and contracted, and flowers of jewels were engraved in that, there the elephants seemed to be restive,<sup>1</sup> their bodies crimsoned with lotus pollens and holding lotus leaves in their trunks; and somewhere Goddess of wealth, Kamala stood upon a lotus with her lotus-like hands. Thus Ravan's palace was furnished with various furniture. It was extremely beautiful like a summer tree with a lovely hollow, or a hill with a beautiful cave. Hanuman was simply struck with wonder at its sight. He began to range about the palace, but became extremely sad for not seeing worshipful Sita devoted to accomplished (but modest) Ram.

Standing there Hanuman began to gaze upon the Puspaka Ratha<sup>2</sup> repeatedly. It was furnished with golden windows set with gems and adorned with beautiful images. Divine artizan Viswakarma praised it as the most beautiful object in the whole creation. This Ratha soared up in the sky and reached even the orbit of the sun. Its every part was made with care, and everything in it was most costly, and the skill of

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1 Please mark the workmanship of engraving and painting of that time.

2 Henceforth I have preferred to retain the original expression Ratha, for from its very description, it seems it would be wrong to translate it as a chariot.

workmanship manifested in that car was not to be found even in the heavenly Rathas.

Each one of its parts had a particular virtue. It could go unobstructed wherever its riders listed to proceed. Ravan obtained it by virtue of his spiritual attainments (Tapasya). Puspaka was swift as the wind and was inaccessible to those who had no virtuous merit, and carried only those who were famous, happy and rich. By regulating its motion it could reach any part of the sky. It was high as a cliff and had several apartments. It was borne by the spirits with their revolving and winkless eyes the rangers of the sky that roved by night, wore earrings and were fond of heavy meals.

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## CHAPTER VII

### RAVAN'S CHAMBER.

Hanuman then saw Ravan's abode in that big mansion. That was divided into several chambers. It was half-a-yoyana in breadth and one yoyana in length. Hanuman ranged about that palace in search of large eyed-Sita. He saw the spacious abode of Ravan guarded by three-tusked elephants and mastodons with four tusks, and by the Rakshasas with up-raised weapons. In some of the chambers, he saw the Rakshasa wives of Ravan and princesses procured by force. The hall seemed as calm and deep as the sea with sharks, crocodiles and whales! Steadfast splendour of the moon was for ever there! His prosperity

seemed to exceed that of Kuvera, Yama and Varuna. Within the palace stood Puspaka built by Viswakarma for Brahma. Kuvera got it from Brahma for his religious merit, Ravan procured it after vanquishing Kuvera by his might. That Ratha had golden flights of stair, crystal windows and daises of Sapphire set with precious rubies and pearls; its beautiful terrace, painted with perfumed red sandal paste, was radiant like the newly-risen sun. Hanuman then got upon the Puspaka, and being seated upon it he began to sniff delicious smell of rich viands and drinks. Hanuman's body became scented with that fragrance, and from that he inferred it to be Ravan's residence.

Hanuman then got down from the Puspaka and entered into the bed-chamber of Ravan. It was a superbly beautiful hall. Its flights of stairs were wrought with gems, windows were made of gold, terraces of crystal, and images of ivory stood here and there. On all sides rose stately pillars inlaid with gems; it seemed as if the hall was like a bird with its wings spread! Under the terrace hung a four-cornered painted canopy. It was white as a swan, but cloudy with the smoke of Aguru. It was decorated with diverse leaves and flowers, like Vasistha's cow of variegated hues. Every one was delighted by its sight. One would grow healthy by its radiant shine, and it delighted the senses of Hanuman, as a mother does her child with objects of beauty, taste, etc. At the sight of that hall Hanuman was puzzled. Was it an illusion, was it heaven, or the region of Varuna?

He saw lamps burning upon the golden pillars, but robbed of their effulgence, (the glitter of gold,) like gamblers worsted in the game of dice by their cunning opponents, hence gloomy and plunged in thought. At that time, the hall was exceedingly luminous by the effulgence of Ravan and by the sheen of jewels.

There, a number of beautiful damsels, adorned with excellent garlands and attired in superb apparel and ornaments were lying on painted woolen sheets. It was past midnight, they had then ceased from their amorous sports and were buried in deep sleep under the influence of drink. The jingling sounds of their ornaments were no more to be heard, so it appeared like a field of lotuses devoid of the hissing noise of snakes. The eyes of those damsels were closed, and sweet lotus-like smell was coming out of their mouth, those faces bloomed like lotuses (when awake) at day, and at night they appeared like lotus buds (being gathered in sleep). And at their sight Hanuman thought that the bees would ever wish for those lotus-like faces. In fact, for their beauty he then thought their countenances to be veritable lotuses.

Ravan's bed-chamber was full of these beautiful damsels, hence the place looked like the clear blue autumnal sky strewn with stars! Ravan, the Rakshasa chief, was always surrounded by those faultless beauties, for which he appeared like the beautiful moon encircled by a galaxy of stars. Then Hanuman seeing those royal dames thought, that those stars that for the loss of their virtues had dropped from

the heaven were lying in that chamber! In short, their beauty, grace and radiance were like that of the stars.<sup>1</sup> From drink and dalliance their hair was dishevelled and the jewelleries lay scattered about them. Each one was buried in deep sleep. Some of the beauties had their paints off, anklets fell from some one's feet, and bracelets from the wrists of some; some one's gold chain hung on one sides; some one's pearl necklace was torn; some one's zone had slipped; some one's cloth had fallen off from her. They were under the influence of wine and were fatigued like pack-horses from carrying burden. Some one's earring was broken, while another's garland was torn. Each one looked pretty like a tender flowery creeper trampled by an elephant! Some beauty's pearl necklace, white as the moonbeam, gathered into a heap between her two breasts, appeared like a sleeping swan! Some one's chain of lapislazuli looked like a water-fowl; while another's golden necklace looked like a Chakravaka. Those beauties looked like so many rivulets, their hips for banks, zones for ripples, and faces for golden lotuses! Of those damsels, some bore marks of amorous dalliance on their breast and some on their tender flesh. Some one's scarf gently shaken by her breath was repeatedly screening her face, as if a pinion of gold-thread was gently waving in the breeze; another's ear-ring was being gently tossed by her scented breath. Some one under the

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<sup>1</sup> Burke in speaking of the French Queen Marie Antoinette compares her with a glittering morning star.

influence of sleep was repeatedly kissing her rival's face thinking it to be that of Ravan. Every one was deeply attached to Ravan, so her rival too kissed her co-wife's lips in return under the influence of liquor, thinking it as that of Ravan. Some one converted her arm adorned with jewels into her pillow ; some one rested her head on another's breast, while a third lay upon the latter's head ; one was lying on another's lap, while a third one slept over the former's bosom. Thus all slept together leaning against one another, and with their interlocked arms they looked like a threaded garland, and it seemed as if the creepers, blossomed at the advent of the spring, being shaken by the wind got interlaced with one another with their clusters of flowers touching each other. Being gathered in sleep, hardly any difference was perceptible amongst them. Ravan was then buried in sleep, so the glare of the golden lamp fell full upon those sleeping beauties without fear—as if gazing on them with winkless eyes ! The daughters of royal saints, Brahmanas, Daityas, Gandharvas, and of the Rakshshasas being smitten with Cupid, had come of their own accord, being enamoured of Ravan's beauty and splendour. Amongst them excepting Janaki none was addicted to any other person. All were highborn queens and by their beauty and attainments were great favourites of Ravan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In spite of poetical hyperboles, the question about the civilisation of the Rakshshasas and the greatness of Ravan becomes more paramount. In the next chapter, there is allusion to artificial figures with mechanical contrivances that fanned Ravan with long white hairs of the tail of the cow of Tartary.

Then Hanuman thought, "Had Ram's wife been, like these royal dames, a queen of Ravan it would have been better for Ravan, but she is greatly devoted to Ram, and Ravan with great difficulty has carried her off by assuming a magic form."

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## CHAPTER VIII

### RAVAN

Hanuman when looking round the bed-chamber, his eyes fell upon a crystal dais. It was wrought with jewels and was exceedingly beautiful, in fact, there was none like it in the whole world. Upon it stood a bedstead of Sapphire, the stands (legs) of which were made of ivory inlaid with gold, and over it spread the most costly coverlet. The bedstead was decorated with wreathes of Asoka and on one end stood an umbrella white as the moon. Everywhere artificial figure with mechanical contrivances were weaving their fans and Chowris. It was fragrant with diverse perfumes and with the incense of Aguru, and over it spread highly delicate, soft kid skins.

Upon that bed King Ravan was asleep. His body was besmeared with sweet-scented red sandal. His colour was dark like that of a deep blue cloud. He wore bright ear-rings, cloth of gold, and had various ornaments on his person. He looked like a cloud tinged with the evening rays and fraught with lightning; it seemed as if the Mandara hill covered with flowery

creepers fell upon the surface of the earth ! He was beautiful and could assume any form at his will. After ceasing from the revelries of drink he was breathing heavily like an elephant in sleep.

Seeing Ravan, the chief of Lanka. Hanuman fell back with fear. Then gently ascending the stairs Hanuman repeatedly gazed at the mighty hero numbed with wine.

Powerful Ravan was sleeping and his bed seemed to be a grand cascade, and his arms outspread like the flagstuffs of Indra. They were adorned with ornaments and were strong and firm like bolts and the trunk of an elephant. His thumbs had beautiful nails and his fingers being adorned with rings looked like a penta-headed snake. And his arms bore the marks of wounds caused by the tusks of Airavata, by the thunderbolt of Indra and by the discus of Vishnu, They were smeared with sweet-scented sandal. Those mighty arms had vanquished the Gods and the Asuras in the field of battle. Great Ravan looked highly beautiful with those arms. His perfumed breath carrying the fragrance of Punnaga and Vakula flowers, and of wine filled the rooms. His countenance was beautiful with resplendent ear-rings ; and his jewelled diadem of gold slipped on one side, his mighty chest was smeared with sandal paste, and was radiant with jewel-necklace and he wore a white<sup>1</sup> silken cloth. At that time he appeared like an elephant immersed in the bed of the Ganges !

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1 In some reading it is of yellow colour.

At that time, four golden lamps burnt in the four corners of the room, and like lightning in a mass of clouds, it rendered the dark figure of Ravan distinctly visible. His wives were lying under his feet. Their countenances were beautiful as the moon, and they wore sapphire ear-rings, diamond bracelets, and garlands of unfaded lustre. By their beauty the bed appeared like a star-bespangled sky. They were highly skilled in music and dancing; and being overcome with fatigue they were then enjoying rest in sleep. One beauty skilled in dancing slept embracing the lyre (Vina) betraying a graceful posture of dancing, as if a full-blown lotus drifted by the current was resting by the side of a craft! Some one slept with Mudduka musical instrument on her lap—like the mother sleeping with her baby; one lay with tambour, another with Panava, while a third one slept having the Dindimas both in front of her and at her back—like a woman sleeping with her husband and child. One lotus eyed\* beauty lay embracing her Vina like an amorous girl hugging her lover to her breast. Some one slept crossing her fair arms on her lovely breast, like two golden pitchers. Amongst those beauties, Hanuman saw Mandadari, the beloved queen of Ravan. She was sleeping on a separate bed, adorned with ornaments and illumined the hall by the radiance of her beauty. Her colour was that of flaming gold and she was the queen of the harem. Seeing the beauty and youth of Mondodari, Hanuman took her to be Janaki. At this Hanuman's face brightened with joy, and true

to the mercurial temperament of his race<sup>1</sup> he danced and sang in delight, kissed his tail and swung his arms.

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## CHAPTER IX

### HANUMAN'S REFLECTIONS.

Hanuman then renouncing his apish thoughts, meditated coolly: "Janaki is extremely devoted to Ram and it is not at all likely that being separated from Ram she would indulge in food or drink or in any sort of luxury even in sleep. Luxury in dress or ornaments must be out of question in her case. Not to speak of others, she will not even crave for Indra. Ram is the best of all, there is no second to him even amongst the gods. So the lady I am now beholding must be some other woman."

Thus thinking, Hanuman for some time paced up and down over the place of dancing. The beautiful damsels slept round about the place, some tired with singing, some with dancing, and some intoxicated with drink. Some one was explaining skilfully a piece of music; some one in dream was praising another's beauty. Different venisons, meat of deer, buffaloes and boars were there in heaps in spacious golden dishes were kept untouched meat of cocks, peacocks, roasted deer, bacon seasoned with curd, patridges, kid flesh, well-cooked fish, and lean hare. At another place were to be found delicious drinks, salted soup with a

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<sup>1</sup> In the original according to the Kapi narure.

little acid taste, at another place were heaps of fruits and roots. The place of drinking was perfumed with fragrant wreaths, all round, there were seats and beds, the whole place seemed to be ablaze even without fire. At one place garlands were heaped together, there were golden jars, crystal goblets and vases inlaid with gems. All those were full of wine distilled from sugar, honey, flowers and fruits and flavoured with aromatic powder. There were goblets whose contents had been drained to the dregs, some with their quantity left behind, some full of wine quite untouched. All those were arranged according to some custom. There were many beds left vacant. The women were sleeping, clasping each other; one was asleep covering herself with another's cloth. Gentle breeze was blowing by carrying the scent of sandal flowers and of sweet wines.

Hanuman ranged about the whole place, but could not find Janaki there. Hanuman became afraid of incurring sin for seeing those queens of Ravan. "It is surely unrighteous," thought he, "to see another's wife under the influence of sleep. I have never cast my eyes since my birth on another's wife, surely I shall be guilty of iniquity for seeing Ravan addicted to others' wives. I have just now seen Ravan's wives dishevelled in sleep, but my mind has not been least stirred by it. It is mind that induces the senses either to virtue or to vice. Besides it was necessary to search for her amongst the women so I shall not lose my righteousness. I have entered the place with a pure mind. I have seen every corner of the harem, but could not find Janaki anywhere."

Hanuman saw the daughters of the Gods and of the Nagas, but Janaki was not amongst them. Hanuman then left the place.

Then Hanuman thought, 'I have searched different places of Lanka, but nowhere could find beautiful Janaki. It now appears that devoted Sita has given up her life. She had been ever jealous for the preservation of her chastity and wicked Ravan being disappointed for it, has put her to death. Ravan's wives are tall, hideous, have spacious mouths, perhaps Janaki has died of fear at their sight. Alas! There is no means of getting her sight now. In vain I have crossed the ocean. The time for search is over, it will now be difficult for me to go back to irritable Sugriva, all my labours have been in vain,<sup>1</sup> What will old Jamvuvan and Angada say? The allotted time is over, it is better to fast to death. It is not proper to destroy one's self. But perseverance is the root of success, there is pleasure in endeavouring, so I should gather up my energy again. I have searched the drinking hall, picture gallery, flower groves, play ground, rooms in the seven storied buildings, under-ground cellars, religious edifices, garden and the passages within the palace. It is now necessary for me to search those places what I have not as yet seen.'

Resolving this Hanuman began to range about Lanka. Sometimes he climbed up, sometimes he got

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<sup>1</sup> It is idle to look for consistency. These lines contradict the foregoing descriptions about their beauty. Which of them are true? This short distach seems to me to be an interpolation.

down, at times he stood, at another time he advanced only a few steps, at one time he shut one door, at another time he uplifted the latchet. Thus he did not leave any spot unvisited. He searched every nook and corner. He saw hideous Rakshasis, exquisite Vidyadhari girls of faultless beauty and the daughters of the Nagas with moon-like countenances, but nowhere Sita was to be seen. Then his mind was plunged in grief, and he became anxious, thinking of the Vanaras and of crossing the sea.

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## CHAPTER X

### HANUMAN THINKS AGAIN

Then Hanuman coming out of Ravan's palace proceeded along the city wall with great speed,

Then he mused in his mind: "I have searched every possible place, but couldn't find Janaki, yet Sampati assured me that she must be here. Could that be false? Ravan has brought her by force and she is now under his power, still it is not likely she has yielded to Ravan. It might be that when out of the fear of Ram's sharp arrows, Ravan in great haste darted towards the sky, at that moment Sita slipped from his grasp; or seeing the ocean from the sky she became paralysed with fear and dropped from above as she lay dangling from the car; or probably she has breathed her last being strangled by the arms of Ravan, or Ravan has made away with her, finding her, firm

for the preservation of her chastity; or the wicked wives of Ravan have devoured that black-eyed beauty.. Alas! Janaki is no more. Surely, that lotus-eyed dame-being unable to bear the pangs of Ram's separation has given up her life brooding over the moon-like countenance of Ram. She has put an end to herself with cries on her lips, "Alack, Ram! Alas, Lakshman, Alas, Ayodhya." But if she is alive at all, she is like a caged bird weeping incessantly. It is not likely Janaka's daughter, wife of Ram, will at all submit to Ravan. Now what shall I say to Ram whose very being seems to depend on his wife? I shall not be able to tell him either that I have not found Janaki, or that I have seen her, or that she is dead. It will be wrong if I say anything like this, and it will be equally unjust if I hold my speech. Alas! Into what a fix I have fallen due to my ill luck!"

Hanuman again thought' "If I return to Kiskindhya without any information about Janaki what credit is there? Crossing this hundred leagues of the ocean is now useless, so also is fruitless this entrance into Lanka, as well as the search among the rovers of night. I know not what Sugriva will say when I return to Kiskindhya nor what will Ram, Lakshman and other Vanaras will speak. If I tell Ram that I could not find Janaki anywhere then he will die at that very moment. These are highly cruel words, surely he won't survive their shock. Lakshman is devoted to his elder brother and he too will surely die. Then Bharat on hearing this sad news will give up his life

and Satrughna will follow his steps. Then worshipful Kausalaya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra being overwhelmed with grief for the death of their sons will give up their lives. Then Ruma will die in her grief for her husband. Tara is already sad on account of Vali and on happening this painful separation with Sugriva she will die and prince Angada on account of the death of his mother and Sugriva will put an end to his existence. Then the Vanaras being overwhelmed with grief for their master will break their heads with their fists and blows, Sugriva ruled over them with magnanimity, equity and honour. now they will no more dwell in caves, forests and hills, but will die with their wives and children on the plains. Some will starve themselves to death. some will enter into flames, some by hanging, some by poison, and some by weapons. It seems a huge cry will be raised as soon as I shall enter Kiskindhya, so it is not at all proper for me to go now to Kiskindhya. I shall not at any cost return to Sugriva without gathering any information about Sita, rather if I do not return to Kiskindhya then virtuous Ram, Lakshman and the Vanaras will sustain their lives in hope, so let me reside here under the tree adopting the ascetic tenure of forest-life, feeding upon the fruits that will of their own accord fall upon my heads and mouth. Or what is the utility of this life? I shall burn myself to ashes by kindling funeral pyre on the seashore or shall fast myself to death for deliverance out of this difficulty and after my death, jackals, dogs and ravens will feed upon my flesh, or shall drown myself in water. Being unable to find Sita, the reputa-

tion of crossing the sea is vanished for good. Suicide is a great sin. One can enjoy many good things if he preserves his life, so I shall keep my life and surely I shall benefit for it.'

Then Hanuman again thought, "I shall destroy mighty Ravan, that villain has abducted Sita and thus shall avenge upon the enemy, or I shall drag him over the sea and offer him to Ram as one presents an animal (for slaughter) to Pashupati. I shall search Lanka again and again till I find out Janaki. If depending on Sampati's words I bring here Ram and if he does not find Janaki then he will search us with the flame of his anger. So it is better to live here on frugal diet and by restraining my senses. It is not at all proper to neglect that which may ultimately cost the lives of men and the Vanaras. There, at a short distance, I see the Asoka woods, extensive and dense with trees. I have not yet searched that place, I shall now go to it. After bowing down to Vasu, Rudra, Aditya, Vayu and the Aswinies I shall enter the forest. I shall surely return Janaki to Ram, like the spiritual bliss of the saints."

Having thus resolved in his mind, Hanuman stood up and bowed down in his mind to Ram, Lakshman and Sugriva. He then proceeded towards the Asoka forest surveying all sides carefully. He then thought: "This forest is dense, yet clean. It is full of the Rakshasas, and is ever guarded by them. Even the wind can not blow hard through that forest. Thus in order to avoid detection by Ravan and for the good of Ram I shall contract my size. May Gods and

the Rishis crown me with success. Now self-born Brahma, Agni, Vayu, Indra, Varuna, Chandra, Surjya and the Aswini twin bless me with success. Let all beings and the Lord of the beings and other unspecified<sup>1</sup> Gods bless me with success. Alas ! When I shall see that moon-like countenance of Janaki without any stain, with fine nose, white teeth, large eyes and sweet smiles ? Mean, cruel and deceitful Ravan has stealthily carried off that damsel, How shall I find her out ?

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE ASOKA FOREST.

Then Hanuman after a moment's meditation and thinking of Janaki jumped over the wall of the Asoka forest. He saw various trees laden with the fruits and flowers of summer. He saw there Sala, Asoka, Champaka, Uddalaka, Nagkeshara, and Mango trees, covered with diverse flowery creepers. Hanuman then leaped into the grove like a discharged arrow.

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<sup>1</sup> Such sentiments ate often the signs of a timid mind afraid of offending an unknown God whom he might omit through his ignorance. Polytheism is apt to breed such a fear even amongst a strong and civilised people, and this reminds us of the famous passage of St. Paul (Chap. 17, v. 23. The Acts) ; 'For as I passed by and beheld your devotions I found an altar with this inscription. TO THE UNKNOWN GOD whom therefore ye ignorantly worship him I declare unto you.' Hanuman was educated, so the Greeks were, but sentiment is quite alike, begotten of superstition and fear.

The place was beautiful to see and the trees were bent down with fruits and flowers. It was resonant with the sweet notes of birds, the cries of cuckoos. Everything seemed there to be happy and gay. Hanuman in order to find out Janaki began to rouse the sleeping birds in their nests. By the fluttering of their wings they shook the branches of the trees and flowers of variegated hues began to drop. At that time Hanuman being covered with flowers looked like a hill covered with blossoms. At that sight every one took him to be God of Spring personified. And the whole forest being strewn with flowers, that fell from the trees, appeared beautiful like a well-decorated beauty. Hanuman then began to break down the trees and committed all sorts of violence thereto. Thus the woods came to be divested of fruits and flowers and looked like young beauties with their hair dishevelled, their ornamental paste wiped off, their scarlet lips showing their pearly teeth sucked of their moisture with their tender bodies scratched with nails and teeth! Hanuman in great vehemence scattered leaves and flowers as does the wind in a cloudy weather. Hanuman found there beautiful pavements worked with gold and silver and beset with gems. He saw there tanks and ponds filled with crystal water and with golden flights of steps into water.

There the sands were made of pearl-ruby-dusts and the yard was of crystal! Golden trees stood on all sides. Lotuses were in bloom and swans were sporting amongst them. Clear streams were

flowing there and flowery groves and grottoes covered with creepers stood here and there. At a little distance there stood a tall cliff full of trees. There were marble-houses in different parts, and there a stream falling down from the hill looked like a damsel slipped from her lover's lap ! Its current being interrupted by the bending branches of the trees appeared like an angry woman held by her relations. At a short distance from it there was a tank and deer strayed on its beautiful banks. Beautiful gardens laden with fruits and flowers provided with golden seats and palatial buildings—all built by Viswakarma adorned the place. At a short distance stood Sinsapa tree of golden hue. It was full of leaves and was covered with creepers and a golden dais stood at its root. At places stood fine trees of golden hue and they looked like columns of fire, and in their lustre Hanuman thought himself made of gold like the Sumeru hill. The golden tree shaken by the breeze producing a murmuring noise like the tinkling of divine ornaments. It was covered with tender sprouts, buds and blossoms. Hanuman was greatly surprised at the sight.

Hanuman then climbed upon the Sinsapa tree and mused thus : "Perhaps, Janaki with a sad heart is roaming about hither and thither in order to get a sight of Ram."

"I shall see that poor helpless woman from this tree. This is the beautiful Asoka forest of wicked Ravan, the queen of Ram must be here. She is an

adept in roaming through forest and this tract is also well-known to her and surely she will soon come here. That chaste damsel is devoted to Ram and is passing her days in sorrow. She will soon arrive here. The denizens of the forest are dear to her, and the time of vespers has also come. Surely she will come to this stream. This forest is worthy of place for her strolling. If she is alive surely she will come to bathe in this cool stream." Thinking this Hanuman waited for Sita and being concealed within the leaves of the tree began to survey around.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### SITA IN THE ASOKA FOREST

Being hidden in the Sinsapa tree Hanuman began to cast glances all around. The Asoka forest was adorned with the Kalpa tree, excellent fragrance and Juice were ever being emitted from there. That forest was beautified with various things, and it appeared like the Nandana garden. It was interspersed with Palaces and was resounded with the sweet notes of the Cuckoos and with the shrill cries of the peacocks. The tanks were filled with golden lotuses, and the whole forest shone with a ruddy glow of the Asoka flowers. All sorts of fruits and flowers were available there and beautiful seats erected on various places and fine blankets were spread over them. The branches of the trees are covered with the birds that lived there. They were continually flying from one branch to another

branch of the tree, and thus being covered with blossoms they appeared quite charming. The branches of the Asoka were covered with blossoms and the Karnikares were kissing under the weight of flowers. The whole forest seemed to be ablaze with their red tint. There were Punnaga, Saptaparna, champaka and Uddalaka trees. There were numerous Asoka trees in the forest, some were of golden hue, some were flaming like fire, and some were of deep collyrium hue. That Asoka forest was more beautiful than Nandana garden and the Chaitraratha woods of Kuvera. It may be compared with a second sky, and the flowers there shone like planets and stars, or it might be said to be the fifth ocean with its flowers for the gems! various kinds of sweet smell were there as in the Himalayas, or in the Gandhamadan. At a short distance, there stood a coral palace white as the Kailasha mountain, and resting on a thousand pillars. Its stairs were made of coral, and its daises of gold. There was ever bright sheen and its height reached the sky.

Heroic Hanuman all on a sudden espied a woman lean with fasting and surrounded by the Rakshasis on all sides. and she was continually heaving heavy sighs. She could be recognised with very great difficulty and by inference only; she was spotless like the newly risen moon, like unto a flame enveloped in smoke; she was devoid of all ornaments, she wore a single piece of dirty yellow cloth. She looked like the Goddess Lakshmi without the lotus. Racked with grief the chaste lady looked like the star Rohini under

the grip of Ketu. It seemed she was brooding over something, even thinking some person in her mind. Tears were flowing down her cheeks. There was not a single affectionate soul near about her, but the Rakshasis all round. At that time she appeared like a stray hind surrounded by the dogs. Her hair gathered in a single braid was draughting on her back like a huge snake. She looked pretty like the earth spotted with green vegetation after the rains!

Hanuman knew her to be Sita from the instructions he formerly received. He thought, "She looks exactly like her whom I saw being carried off by Ravan."

Janaki's face was beautiful like the full moon. her bust lovely and round. She illumined the darkness of the place by the radiance of her beauty. Her throat was of lustrous cream colour, her lips scarlet like the ripe Bimba, her waist lean, and her features superbly graceful. She was pleasing to the world like the full moon. She was seated on the ground like an ascetic woman devoted to penance and was occasionally heaving heavy sighs. Emaciated with grief her beauty waned and she looked wretched like Smriti<sup>1</sup> clouded with doubts, like reduced wealth, lost respect, like success attended with failures, like hope without any object of desire, like sullied intelligence or fame spoiled with false rumours. She was sad for absence of Ram and was oppressed by the tyranny of the Rakshasis. She was casting restless glances all around. Her face

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<sup>1</sup> Consists Sastric rules for rituals and also for social and political conduct.

was dark with sorrow and bathed in tears and her black eyes and lashes were wet. She looked like the moon enveloped in deep blue clouds.

Hanuman was greatly perplexed with her sight. Then Janaki was difficult to his comprehension like a forgotten piece of knowledge, or like words having different meanings yet not governed by any grammar. Hanuman seeing that faultless daughter of the king thus debated in his mind :

"The ornaments mentioned by Ram are on her person. I find on her ears excellent ear-rings and Trikarnas, and ornaments of coral on her arms, stained by the constant contact of her body. However these are the ornaments spoken to by Ram, and I see them all except that which she threw down on the Rishyamukha mountain. This woman formerly threw down her ornaments with jingling sound and the Vanaras found a yellow scarf fallen from this lady attached to a tree. Janaki has been wearing this single piece of yellow cloth from a long time ; it has become stained with dirt, but it is beautiful as that scarf was made of golden texture. This golden beauty is darling of Ram, though now far off, yet she is still living in his mind. On account of her separation grief, liberality and passion have alternately taken possession of Ram's mind. He felt pity for being unable to protect his wife in critical moment, liberality from the thought that proper treatment has not been accorded to those who have asked for his protection, and grief for the separation of his wife, and passion for his darling being distant from him. This lady is as

beautiful as Ram so she must be his spouse. There can't be any doubt about it. Her mind is fixed upon Ram so is that of Ram upon her that is why Ram is still alive otherwise he would not have survived a moment. It is indeed a great thing that he has not been completely swept away by grief for this lady, but somehow he has managed to maintain his mortal frame. It is indeed arduous."

Hanuman was greatly delighted at the sight of Sita and praised Ram again and again in his mind, and after a minute's thought he began to lament with tearful eyes. "None can override destiny. Janaki is the wife of the elder brother of cultured Lakshman and is an object of his respect, but she too has been smitten with sorrow. Janaki is fully aware of the prowess of Ram and Lakshman, it is therefore she is calmly waiting without restlessness like the full current of the Ganges at the advent of the rains. Her pedigree, her rank, her age is worthy of Ram, so it is only meet that they should thus be attached towards each other. For this large-eyed Janaki Vali and Kavandha have died and Ram killed Viradha. For her Khara, Dushana, Trishira, have died with fourteen thousand Rakshasas in Janasthan. For her famous Sugriva has obtained the Vanara kingdom from Vali and it is for her that I have crossed the sea<sup>1</sup> and have visited this city of

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<sup>1</sup> This conveys the idea of solemn calm as there is less agitation when the river is full.

These words naturally remind me of the famous lines of Marlowe!

"Was this the face that launched a thousand ships  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?"

Lanka. Now it seems to be that won't be improper for Ram if he destroys not only the earth but the whole universe for her.<sup>1</sup> On one hand the world and on the other hand Janaki, but the whole world is not worth a hundredth part of Janaki. The damsel is the daughter of the royal saint Janak, and she rose out of the earth at the time covered with ruby like dusts of ploughing the ground for sacrifice. She is the daughter-in-law of mighty Dasarath, devoted wife of virtuous Ram, and she has renounced all enjoyment and endured the hardships of a forest-life out of her devotion to her husband. Alas ! She who for her devotion towards her husband sustained her life on fruits and roots and treated the forest as her own house is undergoing such sufferings now ! As a man sorely oppressed with thirst desires for tank so Ram has been eager for her sight. And as a king deprived of his throne becomes delighted at the restoration of his kingdom so he will be mightily pleased after getting her. This Janaki is now devoid of friends, deprived of enjoyment is sustaining her life only in the hope of getting back Ram. She is not looking to the Rakshasis, nor to these, flowers and fruits, but she is ever thinking of Ram in her heart. Husband enhances the beauty of a woman more than her ornaments, and now in his absence she appears lustreless. Seeing this

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<sup>1</sup> It is common to compare the Iliad with the Ramayan though the characters are widely divergent, but one line from Homer may be quoted here when the Trojan Senate resolved to continue the war exclaiming for Helen's beauty. "O she is worth the trouble" Sita was not less fair than the famous daughters of Zeus.

black-haired beauty smitten with grief myself too have been greatly mortified at heart. She, who in forgiveness is like the earth, and who was protected by Ram and Lakshman, alas, is now surrounded by the Rakshasis under the tree. Janaki is smitten with grief and she appears wretched like a lotus destroyed by frost. She is miserable like a Chakravaki bird being separated from her mate. These Asokas with their abundance of flowers are scorching her heart with grief like the rays of the blazing sun.<sup>1</sup>"

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### SITA IN ASOKA FOREST

Thus passed one day, and again came the night and the white moon ascended the sky, like a swan floating in the blue waters and it cast its beams as if to help Hanuman. The moon delighted Hanuman with its gentle and soothing rays. At that Janaki of moon-like countenance was immersed in grief like a craft sunk with heavy load. At a short distance from her there were a number of hideous-looking Rakshasis, some of them had only one eye, some one ear, some with large ears, some with upturned nose, some with long and thin necks, some one's hair was dishevelled; some one was all covered with hair, as if was wrapped in a blanket; some had spacious foreheads, some had long faces and protruding bellies, some were tall, some were dwarfish, and some were hump-backed, some had yellow eyes, some had hideous grimaces, some were

1. Red flowers compared to the rays.

brown, some were black ; some were angry and some were quarrelsome. Some had lances, some were armed with clubs, and others had subtle weapons ; some of their faces bore resemblances to those of tigers, jackals, deer and buffaloes. Some one had her mouth set on her breast. Some one's feet were like that of a cow, some one's like the elephants, some one's like horse's hoofs, while another had that of a camel. Some had one leg ; some had one arm : some one's ears were like ass's ears, some had dog's ears, some like that of an elephant, some like that of a bull and some one like that of lion. Some Rakshasi's nose was long and crooked ; some one's like the trunk of an elephant while some was without a nose.<sup>1</sup> Some Rakshasi's hair was kissing her feet, some one's hair was iron grey and rough, some one had a long protruding tongue. They always drank wine. They were extremely fond of wine, meat and blood.

Hanuman saw these formidable Rakshasis. They stood surrounding the Sinsupa tree. At the bottom of the tree sat Janaki, wane with sorrow and her dusty hair were scattered round her. She looked like a star dropped on earth on the wane of its virtue. The sight of her husband was beyond her reach, but by her devotion she had gained world reputation. Her whole body was devoid of ornaments yet she shone in the lustre of her love for her husband. There was no

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<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to reconcile these descriptions with the former account of Ravan's palace. It is evident that there is an element of malicious perversion about their description.

friend or relation by her ; she was confined by Ravan in the Asoka forest and she appeared like a young elephant, astray from the herd, surrounded by the lionesses. She looked like the crescent of the autumnal sky covered with clouds ; she was tainted with dirt like the lotus soiled with mud. She looked miserable and sad, but spirited sustained, rather undaunted by the memory of her husband. Her chastity was protecting her all through. She casted furtive glances around her like a frightened deer, her sighs seemed to scorch the trees with their leaves and flowers. She looked like Sorrows' self, like a wave in the ocean of grief. She looked extremely beautiful even without any decoration. Her features were developed, but lean with grief. She looked like a flowery, creeper divested of the wealth of flowers. Hanuman could not restrain his tears for finding her out (at last). He again and again bowed to Ram and Lakshman in his thought and remained concealed behind the leafy screen of the Sinsupa tree.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### RAVAN APPROACHES SITA

Small hours of the night were then remaining and at the end of the night Brahmins versed in the Vedas and sacrifices and conversant with the six<sup>1</sup> branches of the Vedas began to chant the Vedas. Sweet and

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<sup>1</sup> Six branches are :—Grammar, Prosody, astronomy, pronunciation, interpretation of uncommon terms and of the rituals.

auspicious music rose, and mighty Ravan awoke from sleep. His garland was torn and his cloth was loose. After rising from the bed Ravan began to think of Janaki. His mind was fixed upon Janaki, and then it was difficult for him to control surging his amorous passion.

Then Ravan proceeded towards the Asoka forest surveying the rows of trees. There the trees were bent down with fruits and flowers and birds were singing sweetly over them. The bottom of the trees were covered with flowers dropped from the trees, and deers were straying amongst them. Rakshasa King Ravan was smitten with cupid. As the nymphs and daughters of the Gods and the Gandharvas follow Indra, so number of beauties followed Ravan's traces. Some of them held golden lamps in their hands, some held chowris, palmyra-fans, some carried pitchers filled with sweet perfumed water, some jewelled vessels filled with wine, some white umbrella with golden staff and some circular of gold. As lightnings follow the cloud so a number of Ravan's queens followed him out of deep attachment and love. Their necklaces and garlands were a bit and their cosmetics gone, their hair was dishevelled, their eyes were sleepy and revolving under the influence of liquor. Beads of perspiration stood on their lotus-like faces, and their glances were quite infatuating. Passionate Ravan was slowly advancing thinking of Janaki.

Hanuman then heard the jingling sounds of the anklets and bracelets, and so Ravan of unthinkable prowess standing at the gate of the Asoka woods.

A number of bright lamps fed by scented oil were before him. He was almost overwhelmed with pride, passion and wine. His eyes were red and was looking at askance. He looked like cupid himself, (though) he had no bow and arrow in his hand. A milk white scented scarf, perfumed with the fragrance of flowers, was slipping off from his shoulders from time to time down to his waist. and Ravan adjusted it to its proper place. Hanuman then leaning against a branch of the Sinsapa tree saw Ravan slowly coming near. He became anxious to study the person. Ravan had a retinue of youthful beauties, and with them he entered the Asoka garden, a fit place for women. There was a female-warder named Sankukarna, intoxicated with liquor and adorned with ornaments. Hanuman saw Ravan surrounded by the beauties like the moon encircled by a galaxy of stars. So long Hanuman could not recognise him. Now, he could know him to be Ravan. "He is the hero", thought he, "whom I saw sleeping in the beautiful hall." He climbed on the top of the tree, for he could then hardly bear the effulgence of Ravan. Hanuman remained concealed behind the leaves and branches of the Sinsapa tree. In the meantime, Ravan desirous of seeing Sita, came near her.

Thereupon, Janaki at the sight of Ravan began to tremble with fear, like a plantain-leaf shaken by the breeze. Sita then sat silent, covering her belly with her thighs, and her breasts with her hands. She was overwhelmed with sufferings and grief.

On approaching, Ravan found her like a broken

raft overwhelmed in the sea. She was seated on the ground, like a branch felled down by an axe. Being stained with dusts she looked like a lotus tainted with mud. She was wane with grief, and was continually shedding tears. She only wished for Ravan's death and her mind, in her thoughts, flew to Ram, as if, riding on the wings of her resolution.<sup>1</sup> She was devoted to Ram and she saw no limits to her sufferings. At that time she looked like a snake writhing in the dust under the influence of charm.

She was miserable like the star Rohini oppressed by comet. She was born of a highly respectable family, but from her dress she seemed to be a low-born one. Then, the princess appeared like a dying fame, like slighted respect, like disappointed hope, like disobeyed mandate, like weak intellect, like the horizon blazing up with sudden irruption, like worship interrupted by accidents, like a faded lotus, like an army without a leader, like the sun covered in darkness, like an altar-trampled upon, and like an extinguished flame. She was dark with sorrow and looked like the full moon under the jaws of Rahu, she was like a torn leaf, and wretched like a lotus without the bees. She appeared like a stream diverted and dried up having met with obstruction in its course. She was in extreme distress on account of her husband's absence and looked gloomy like a dark night. She was tender and graceful and was accustomed to live in jewelled rooms. She was

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<sup>1</sup>The original passage translated literally means "in her mind's chariot drawn by the horses of her resolution."

pale like a recently plucked lotus scorched by heat. She was like a young elephant captured and tied up to a post. A long braid of hair hung on her back, like the dark blue skirt of an autumnal forest, she was greatly emaciated in grief. But her beauty shone though thus neglected. Her heart was full of misgivings and anxieties, she was in extreme distress and was praying with folded palms for Ravan's death. Her eyes were slightly red with anger and their ends were white, and she was repeatedly looking round with tearful eyes.

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## CHAPTER XV,

### RAVAN'S SPEECH.

Then Ravan began to seduce Janaki with sweet words, "O, my beauty, with thighs like the trunk of an elephant, you have concealed your breasts and belly at my sight, out of fear. O my large-eyed beauty ! I am yearning for your love, please respect my love. In this Asoka forest there is no man or Rakhaasa, so remove all fear about any other male person, It is Rakshasa's nature to ravish another's wife and to carry away another's wife by force, but since you are unwilling I have not touched your person, However much, may I now be smitten by the God of love, I shall not behave otherwise. O worshipful lady, depend on me, don't be afraid, you should have regard for me and don't be overwhelmed with grief. To wear a single braid of lock, to lie on the ground, to fast, and to put on a dirty piece of linen are not worthy of you

Enjoy yourself by showing your attachment for me  
 Put on beautiful garland, excellent apparel, fine  
 jewelleryes and decorate yourself. Pass your time  
 pleasantly in dancing, singing and drinking. You are  
 a gem of women. Don't give up all desire for decoration,  
 decorate yourself up to your taste, and ask for my love,  
 You must not remain unadorned in any way. The  
 beauty of your youth is imperceptibly passing away  
 and once it is gone like the onward current of a river,  
 it will never return. It seems that, the Creator of  
 beauty after creating thee has ceased from his work  
 so I do not find anything like your beauty on earth  
 You are young and beautiful, even the mind of Brahma,  
 the grandsire of creation is stirred up by your beauty,  
 To tell you the truth. I cannot draw away my eyes,  
 from whatever limbs of yours they might light upon.  
 Shake off your perverseness. There are many beauties  
 in my place, be queen over all. I confer on you all the  
 wealth I have secured by my prowess and my vast  
 Kingdom on earth live as my wife. You see there  
 is no match for me in the three worlds. O, my  
 Goddess, just listen to the account of my prowess.  
 At one time, all Gods and Asuras combined could not  
 withstand my prowess on the field of battle, I cut down  
 their flag-staffs repeatedly. O, my beauty ! Be attached  
 to me and decorate your person. Let me once see you  
 well-dressed. Just condescend, out of pity towards  
 me, to things of luxury, to food and drink. There is  
 immense wealth and vast kingdoms under me, please  
 distribute them as you wish. Be attached to me without  
 any fear, and command this impertinent self, My

darling ! You see with your own eyes my riches, what will you do with poor Ram clad in rags ? He has lost his beauty and is now meandering in the forest. Victory in war is out of question in his case. He sleeps on the ground and is devoted to observances of rites, I am afraid whether he is still alive or not. Even if he be living, not to speak of union, he will not have even the opportunity of seeing you. How a crane will ever have a glimpse of the moon-beam hidden behind the clouds ? Hiranyakoshipu got his wife from Indra, but Ram will never get you back from my hands. O my beauty ! Thou hast stolen my mind. I have no more attachment for my wives seeing you even clad in dirty silk, devoid of ornaments and lean with fasting. Be queen over the accomplished beauties that are in my palace. As the nymphs attend upon the Goddess of beauty, so these world-renowned beauties will wait upon your pleasure. O my beauty, with charming brows and well-developed hips, do thou enjoy all the wealth of Kuvera, the lord of the Yakshas, and the seven worlds along with me O my Goddess, in prowess, wealth, and fame Ram is not equal to me. Be then merry and help yourself with food and drink. I shall confer on you the whole world. Do thou gratify my wishes, and your friend will be satisfied with you. O my timid lady ! Adorned with golden necklace range with me in the beautiful forest skirting the shore of the sea.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### SITA'S REPLY.

Hearing these words of haughty Ravan, Sita trembled in fear and began to shed incessant tears. Ram was uppermost in her thoughts; by placing a blade of grass between her and Ravan she piteously began, "Dont hanker after me. Be attached to your own wives. I am as inaccessible to you, as salvation to a sinner. Touch of a third person is highly reprehensible for a devoted wife. I am born of a high family and have been married to a respectable man. How can I agree to this (proposal)?"

Janaki then turning her back against Ravan, resumed,

"You see, I am another person's wife and am chaste, don't take me for a common woman. Have regard for virtue and be upright, O Rakshasa! Another's wife should be protected like one's own wife; and being mindful of your life be attached to your own wives. The man who is not content with his own wife, he is a slave of his senses and meets with insult from another's wife, and his friends and relations too condemn his conduct. When your intelligence is so perverse, it seems there is no good man in Lanka. Or if there were any, you never cared to mix with them; or whatever good advice they might have given you, you have neglected them thinking them to be useless for the destruction of the Rakshasa clan. Royal splendour soon vanishes at the hands of a vicious and foolish king. For your own fault the rich city of Lanka will soon be reduced to ruins. Even one feels

glad when a wicked person meets with his end, so many will exclaim in your distress, 'Happily dissolution has overtaken the wicked.'

"Ravan! As light is to the sun so I belong to Ram, so do not attempt to tempt by display of pomp and riches. Having once made the arm of that lord of men as my pillow, how can I rest my head on another's arm? Like unto the knowledge of Brahma of a devout Brahmin, I belong to that royal saint, cognisant of the higher truths of the world. It behoves you to take me to Ram. If you are anxious for the splendour of Lanka, if you wish to live with your family and dependents, then make friendship with Ram, ever kind to them who seek his protection. If you return me to him, then and then alone it will be good for you or great disaster is sure to follow. Thou might not be destroyed by the thunderbolt; Death might have spared you for good, but there is no escape from the hands of that prince of men. You will soon hear the deep rumbling sound of the twanging of the dreadful bow of Ram, like that of the thunderbolt. Soon, Ram's arrows engraved with his name will with great speed, fall upon Lanka. Those shafts adorned with Kanka feathers will cover this place and destroy the Rakshasas. As Vamana rescued the glory of the Gods from the grip of the Asuras so Ram will soon rescue me from your hands. You see Janasthan has been made desolate, Rakshasas have been destroyed. What you have committed is already too bad. That hero went for hunting and with that prince of men went his brother to capture deer in the forest and thou hast stolen me

away from the empty hermitage. You have committed a nefarious act. And like unto a dog incapable of facing a tiger you would have surely run away at their sight. You will share the same fate as Vritra Asura did, who fought with one hand against Indra with two hands, and was defeated. Your wealth and resources will be of no avail when thou hast contracted enmity with Ram. As it is easy for the sun to dry up a bubble of water, so it is easy for my husband to take away your life. Whether you repair to the Kailasha, or enter the nether region, there is no escape from Ram's hand, like a tree singed by the thunder-bolt.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### RAVAN'S REPLY.

Ravan then replied to Janaki's harsh words "Janaki ! A man becomes dear to a woman in proportion he courts her, but you have insulted me as much as I courted you. As a cunning driver controls the wayward horse, so amour, for you has checked my wrath. In fact, Love is hostile, for whatever woman it craves it creates pity and affection for her. O my beauty, you have grown unkind to me just for nothing. You are fit to be insulted, nay even to be punished with death, but love has dissuaded me from all that, though you deserve death-sentence immediately for all the harsh words you have just now spoken."

Ravan again resumed with anger, "You see, I shall wait for another two months according to the pledge, after which you will have to share my bed. If in the

meantime you do not change your mind my cooks will curve you into pieces for my breakfast."

At this, the wives of the Gods and the Gandarbhas were greatly sorry and they consoled her with their silent gestures by their eyes and lips.

Then Janaki collecting herself a little began to speak, being inspired by the spirit of her devotion and by the heroism of her husband. "O, thou mean fellow! Perhaps there is none in this city who wishes you good, or he would have certainly dissuaded you from such a vile deed. Like Sachi to Indra. I belong to pious Ram, and none but you in the three worlds ever ventured to indulge about me even in thoughts. How will you be saved for the sinful words just uttered by you? Ram is like a proud tusker, and you are like a hare, so you will certainly be vanquished in battle. Don't you feel ashamed to rail against Ram in his absence? You are staring at me with lustful eyes, and these fell eyes of yours will surely fall to the ground. I am Ram's wife and daughter-in-law of Dasarath, strange that your tongue has not yet been scorched in uttering these words to me. By the fire of my chastity I can even now reduce you into ashes, but for ascetic observances and for Ram's permission, I have not done it yet. You will never succeed in keeping me secretly, or the act of abduction secret; what thou hast done is enough for your death. Thou art Kuvera's brother and a warrior, why didst then first remove Ram by the magic of Marich and then stole away his wife?"

Then Ravan rolling his cruel eyes, looked at Sita. His body was like a mass of dark clouds, his arms

were mighty, high was his neck, tongue flaming, and eyes grim. His strength and courage were like that of a lion, and gait slow. He was adorned with a red garland and clad in a red cloth. He had gold bracelets in his arms, trembling diadem on his head, and a golden zone round his waist with that he appeared like the Mandara Hill girdled by snakes at the time of the churning the ocean. With his jewelled ear-rings he looked like a flaming hill adorned with the red Asokas ! He was like the Kalpa tree, or like the spring incarnate. He looked terrible, albeit adorned like a chaitya<sup>1</sup> in the cremation-ground. His eyes were red with anger and he was breathing like a snake. There were angry frowns on his brow and he said casting his eyes on Janaki.

"Thou art wicked, thou hast no sense of good or evil. I shall immediately destroy you, as the sun does with darkness."

Saying this, Ravan cast his glance towards the hideous Rakshasis. There stood many of them. Ravan addressing them said, "O Rakshasis, just devise means either jointly or separately so that Janaki may soon be addicted to me. Do it by good, or bad conduct, by conciliation or repression, by threat or by blandishment."

Ravan repeatedly gave them these directions, and thundered at Janaki with anger and amour.

In the meantime, a Rakshasi named Dhanyamalini approached Ravan and embracing him said. "Do thou

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1. A cenatop is a monument raised on the site of funeral pyre.

sport with me. What will you do with that wretched and pale woman? You see, Gods have not ordained enjoyment to her luck. This woman is foolish. I am burning with desire seeing you courting her. Highest pleasure ensues from receiving a willing woman."

Thus Dhanyamalini took away Ravan by the amorous force. Ravan too refrained at once with smiles, and being surrounded by women he left the place shaking the earth by his firm treads.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### PERSUASIONS

After Ravan entered the palace, the Rakshasis came near Sita and began to speak harsh words in anger. "Janaki, through your stupidity you do not realise the glory of being the wife of the great Ravan-born of the Pulasta line." Then a Rakshasi named Ekjata angrily said, "You see, Pulastha was the fourth of the six Prajapatis, the mind-born sons of Brahma. Sage Visasrava is the mind-born son of that saint Pulastha and mighty Ravan is born of that Visasrava. Be now the wife of Ravan. Why do you disbelieve my words?"

Then a Rakshasi called Harijata rolling her cat-like brown eyes angrily, said, "Ask for the love of Ravan who has conquered Indra by his might. Why hast thou no love for that mighty hero, skilled in battle? Emperor Ravan will attend on you, renouncing his dearest queen, Mandodari. He will come to you. By discarding his jewelled chamber full of beauties."

Then another Rakshasi named Vikata said, "Look, he was by your side, who has repeatedly conquered the Nagas, Gandharvas and the Danavas, Ah fool! why dont you wish to be Ravan's wife?"

Then Durmukhi said, "Why do you not wish to be the wife of Ravan, the king of kings, in whose fear the sun withholds his heat, the wind does not venture

to blow, and the trees shower flowers, and at whose desire even the clouds rain, Janaki! It is for your good that I am saying this. Listen to my words, or you shall die."

Then those terrible Rakshasis began to pester Sita again with unpleasant words, "O Sita, why dost thou not like to live in the beautiful palace of Ravan abounding in costly beds? You are a human being and consider it as something great to be the wife of a man. Do thou turn from Ram or your desire will never be fulfilled. Ram has lost his kingdom, he is wretched and disappointed, so turn thy mind from Ram. Ravan is enjoying all the riches of the world, do thou spend thy time happily with him, and enjoy yourself to your heart's desire."

Then, Janaki with tearful eyes replied, "you have persuaded me to give myself up to another person, this sinful proposal will never find any place in my heart. How can a woman be the wife of a Rakshasa? Rather devour me, I shall never be able to accede to your requests. My husband is Ram, whether he be poor, or devoid of kingdom, is worshipful to me. I am ever attached to Ram, as Subarchala<sup>1</sup> to the sun. Like unto Sachi to Indra, Arundhati to Vasistha, Rohini to the Moon, Lopamudra to Agastya, Sukanya to Chyava, Sabitti to Satyavana, Sreemati to Kapila, Dayamanti to Nala, I am ever devoted to Ram."

Hearing these words of Janaki, all the Rakshasis were beside themselves in rage and covered her with

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1 Sun's wife,

cruel reproaches. All along, Hanuman sat speechless on the Sinsapa tree, and he heard all their words. Janaki was trembling with fear and the Rakshasis surrounding her reproached her severely, and begun to lick their lips with their fiery tongues. "Fetch the axe quickly. She is not worthy of Royal Ravan." These words they uttered repeatedly.

Janaki then wiping her eyes with the end of her cloth sat at the foot of the Sinsapa tree. Then the Rakshasis surrounded her again. Amongst them there was a grim looking Rakshasi, who said to Janaki, "You have shown sufficient proofs of your love for your husband. It is more than enough. Too much of it will be the cause of your miseries. I have been greatly pleased with you. May you be happy. You have done the duty of a human being. But now listen to my words. The Rakshasa-chief, Ravan, is liberal, sweet-speeched, kind and mighty, give up your love for a puny man and be devoted to him. Put on excellent apparel and fine jewelleries<sup>1</sup> be the queen over all, like Sachi and Swaha.<sup>1</sup> What will you gain by getting poor and weak Ram? But if you do not follow my words, I will devour you immediately."

Then Vikata with hanging breasts raising her fist in anger said, "Janaki! It is out of compassion and courtesy that we have endured all your harsh words, but it will do you no good if you do not act up to our words. Thou hast been brought here on the other side.

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<sup>1</sup> Wife of Fire, Goddess presiding over the sacrificial offerings of a vedic deity.

of the sea, difficult of being approached by others. Thou art, O Maithili! within the abode of Ravan and imprisoned in the Asoka forest and guarded by us all. Even Indra can not rescue you. Do thou, therefore, hear my well meaning words. Why do you shed tears? Abandon your useless grief. Be happy and cheerful renouncing your persistent melancholy. Do thou enjoy yourself at your pleasure with Ravan. O my timid damsel! Thou knowest how transient is the beauty of a woman. And so long thy youth does not wither, pass your time happily. O fair damsel! roam in this fair garden over the hill, and other picturesque places happily with Ravan. Wish for Ravan, and a troop of women will wait upon you. If you do not pay heed to my words I will pluck out your heart."

Then Chandadari of hedious look brandished a formidable lance and said that she would devour her by tearing her into pieces. Then Proghasa said, "why are you sitting idle? Let us strangle this cruel woman to death. Then report the king about her death. He will, thereupon, surely ask us to devour her."

Then Ajamukhi said, "let us kill the woman and divide meat equally. I dont like to bandy useless words. Just fetch water and garlands." Then Surpanakha said, 'What Ajamukhi has said is right. This is also my own view. Fetch wine, the balm of all sorrows—We shall dance before queen Nikumbhila after pertaking of human flesh."

Then nymph-like Sita began to weep hearing these cruel words.

## CHAPTER XIX

### LAMENTATIONS OF SITA

Then Sita being greatly frightened, choked with tears, said, "You see, I am a woman, how can I be the wife of a Rakshasa? Rather you eat me up, there will be no harm then, but I won't be able to accede to your word."

Janaki was surrounded by the Rakshasis on all sides and was trembling with fear as if she was sinking within herself. She was overwhelmed like a strayed fawn pursued by a tiger. Her mind was restless at their oppression. Supporting herself with the help of a flowery bough of a Sinsapa tree she began to think of

Ram. Her tears bathed her breasts. How could she find consolation? She did not find any end to her miseries. Her face was darkened with grief, and was ever trembling like a plantain-leaf. A long braid of hair hung on her back and due to her trembling it swang like a snake. She was almost senseless with grief, and was breathing heavily. And she began to cry saying, "Alas, Ram! Alack, Lakshman! Ah, Kausalya! Ah. Sumitra! Now I find the adage to be true that death never visits a man or woman before the appointed time, or how could I survive these oppressions of the Rakshasis in absence of Ram. I am most unfortunate and being overwhelmed in ruin, like a laden cargo sunk by storm in the sea. Now I am under the sway of the Rakshasis and I cannot see Ram, so sorrow is consuming me up like the bank of a river eaten off by the current. Blessed and the virtuous people are having sight of lotus-eyed Ram. In absence of Ram it seems I am being consumed by a virulent poison. I know not what a heinous sin I did commit in my previous birth, that I am undergoing such terrible sufferings now. Woe unto this human existence, woe unto subjection, I shall give up my life."

Janaki seemed to be crazed with grief. She threw the dust like a tired mare. Her eyes were

full of tears and she cried incessantly with a downcast face. "Alas! Ram was bewitched by Maricha's magic and Ravan carried me off by force in that opportune moment. I am now suffering immensely at the hands of the Rakshasis from their taunts and threats. What is the good of this life to suffer so much in absence of Ram? What is the use of wealth or ornaments? It seems my heart is made of adamant and it is indestructible, hence it has not been broken yet in absence of Ram. I am non-Aryan low-born and unchaste. Shame to me that I am still alive even for a moment in absence of Ram. What to speak of desiring Ravan, I shall not touch him even by my mean foot. This villain seems to be quite unconscious of the dignity of his birth and is quite indifferent about my refusal. He is of cruel nature and he is now courting me through others. You may tear me from limb to limb and burn me in fire. I shall never yield to Ravan. Ram is kind-hearted, gentle and wise, and it is due to my bad luck that he has grown unkind. Why doesn't he, who has slain fourteen thousand Rakshasas in Janasthana come to me? Powerless Ravan has confined me here, Ram can easily destroy him in battle. Why does he not set me free who slew Viradha in the Dandaka forest? This city of Lanka is girt by the sea on all sides, it is inaccessible to others, but Ram's shafts can penetrate everywhere, surely they will never be thwarted here. I am Ram's beloved wife—dear as his life, Ravan has carried me off by force. I know not why Ram is

sitting idle without making any search for me? Perhaps he is not aware that I am here. Had he any knowledge of it I would not brook this insult. Alas, who could have informed him about this abduction is dead—Ravan has killed him.<sup>1</sup> Jatayu was old yet he bravely fought for me. If he could know that I am imprisoned here he would have certainly destroyed all the Rakshasas of the three worlds, would have reduced Lanka into ruins and would have dried up the sea and demolished all the glories of Ravan. As I am crying now, in every home husbandless Rakshasis would have wept like me. Then heroic Ram with Lakshman would have so chastised the Rakshasas that none would have survived if one came before their eyes. The streets of Lanka will soon be dark with the smoke of the funeral pyres and will be infested with vultures, the city will be turned into a vast cremation-ground and my wishes will be fulfilled. Dont think that my words are unfounded, but disaster will visit you due to your bad luck. Various evil omens are now to be seen in Lanka and it will soon lose its splendour. After the destruction of Ravan, the city of Lanka will wither away like a widow. Various festivities are now being held in the city, but it will soon grew desolate, and I shall hear the bitter cries of the Rakshasis from every house. If Ram can anyhow come to know that I

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1 The recital of these previous events are evidently calculated to enable Hanuman to recognise her beyond doubt of Sita.

am here, his arrows will tear it into pieces and envelop it in darkness, and none of the Rakshasa family will survive. The time allotted to cruel Ravan is about to expire, and my end is near. The Rakshasas are vicious and have no conscience and I shall have surely to meet death at their hands. The wicked people feeding on flesh do not care for virtue, but they will court great disaster by their vices. I am now a meal for their breakfast, but alas! I shall not meet Ram at the time of death. And how shall I give up my life without seeing Ram? Perhaps Ram does not know that I am still alive, or he would have searched the whole world for me, or it might be that he has renounced his life in my sorrow. Blessed are they who have seen Ram. Virtue is the goal of intelligent and ascetic Ram, so there is no need of a wife, so he is not looking for me. There is an adage that out of sight is out of mind, but this applies to the ungrateful wretches and not to Ram. Since I have lost his love it is possible that I have committed some wrong, or my luck is quite adverse. Whatever it might be there is no more any use for life. Perhaps those two brothers by renouncing their arms, are now roaming through the forest sustaining on fruits and roots, or wicked Ravan has by his wiles put them to death. Death is now desirable to me, but death wont befall me even in such miseries. Blessed are the devotees and saints who are never agitated with sorrows or joys. I have lost love of Ram, and have come under the grip of Ravan it is therefore better for me to die."

## CHAPTER XX

### DREAMS OF RAKSHASI TRIJATA

Then the Rakshasis were greatly enraged at these words of Janaki and some of them left the place in order to inform Ravan of those things, while others approaching Janaki said in a rude tone, "Ah, Non-Aryan! Wait for a month and we shall tear you into pieces in great delight."

In the meantime, an old Rakshasi named Trijata being roused from sleep came there and threatening them said, "You see Janaki is daughter of Janak and daughter-in-law of Dasarath, instead of tearing her into pieces do ye devour one another. At the end of this night I had a dreadful dream. I think, Rakshasaking Ravan will be destroyed with all his family."

Thereupon, the Rakshasis were greatly frightened hearing of Trijata's fearful dream, and they asked, "Tell us what kind of dream thou didst dream this night?"

Trijata replied, "I dreamed as if Ram wearing a piece of white cloth and putting on a white garland, had ascended with Lakshman, the Bimana chariot, made of ivory that plied through the sky. Thousands of steeds were carrying him away. At that time, Janaki clad in a white robe, was seated on a cliff surrounded by the sea, and as light merges into the sun so she was united with Ram. I saw again Ram along with Lakshman was riding on a terrible tusker. They were glowing with their energy like the effulgent

sun, and they came near Janaki, clad in white apparel. I saw Ram taking an elephant from that hill and Janaki from his lap ascended upon it. She was about to reach the sun and the moon with her own hands, and Ram and Lakshman were seated on an elephant high over Lanka. Ram arrived with Lakshman in a fine chariot drawn by eight white bulls, and went towards the north with Sita riding upon the exceedingly bright Puspakaratha. I saw Ravan with his head shaved and besmeared with oil and he was drinking wine in mad excitement. He had a red cloth on his person, and a garland of Karavi on his neck, being ejected from the Puspakaratha he was roaming on the forest. I saw him again, he was then robed in black, he had a red garland on his neck, red sandal-paste on his person and a woman was dragging him by force. He was seated upon a chariot drawn by asses and his mind was unhinged. At times he was laughing, at times he was dancing, and at times he was drinking oil. Riding upon the ass he was proceeding towards the south.<sup>1</sup> At one place, I saw him tumbled headlong from the ass on the ground and then again got upon it with care. He had no cloth on his loins, and his tongue was full of foul words, and he soon fell into a dark, filthy and highly stinking pit and thence proceeding towards the south entered into a white lake. I further saw a dark woman clad in red and stained with mud appeared before him and she was

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<sup>1</sup> South is the region of death.

dragging him towards the north by a piece of rope tied round his neck. Saw I further Kumbhukarna, Indrajit and other heroes had their heads shaved and were quaffing oil.<sup>1</sup> I saw Ravan proceeding towards the south on the back of a boar, Indrajit on the back of a porpoise and Kumbhukarna on a camel's back. But I saw Vibhishan alone with a white umbrella and four ministers with him. A well decorated assembly-hall stood open before him and music swelled from there. I saw again the gate of Lanka broken and the city sunk under the sea. The Rakshasis were laughing, making great noise and drinking oil. Everything of Lanka was reduced into ashes and Kumbhukarna and other heroes being dressed in red were entering into pools of cow-dung. Hear me, Rakshasis, fly from this place, heroic Ram will surely get back his Janaki. If you oppress over Sita, Ram will never forgive that. He will surely destroy you all. Janaki is dear to him as his life and she has followed him in exile, and Ram will never excuse your threats to her. So give up your rude expressions, rather console her with sweet words, let us pray to her for our good. This is what seems to be right to me. Janaki is overwhelmed with grief; I dreamt what forbodes good unto her. Let her be happy at the union with her lover being free from all afflictions. Great danger awaits the Rakshasas from Ram due to their ill-luck, and though you have

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<sup>1</sup> Premonitions of death.

behaved rudely with her, let us pray for her forgiveness. She will be pleased with our homage and bows and will deliver us from great fear. You see I do not find any inauspicious sign on her person, being devoid of all ornaments she only looks sad. To tell the truth, her desire will be soon fulfilled. Ravan will meet with his death and Ram will achieve the glory of victory. We shall soon hear of good news about Janaki; these dreams are there "Look, how her lotus-eyes grow suddenly expanded, how her left hand is throbbing all on a sudden with all its hair standing on their ends. The sudden throbbing of her left thigh roundish like the trunk of an elephant forebodes the advent of Ram. These birds on the boughs of the trees with their notes, as if, are repeatedly announcing the advent of Ram."

Then bashful Janaki being delighted hearing of Trijata's dreams delightfully said, "Trijata! If what you say turns to be true surely I will save you all."

## CHAPTER XXI

### SITA'S SORROWS.

Then, Sita hearing of the evil news about Ravan was greatly frightened just like a doe in fear of a lion and she began to cry like a girl left in wilderness. She lamented thus: "What the sages say is true, surely death never happens to one before the appointed time, otherwise this sinful soul could not have survived

these sorrows. Alas, my heart now rends with grief as a rock is riven by the thunder. Unwelcome-Ravan will kill me after a month then why shall I be guilty of sin if I give up my life? I can't give myself up to him, as a Brahmin cannot initiate a non-Brahmin. Now if Ram does not come up here, this villain will cut me into pieces with sharp arrows, as a physician cuts with his instrument the foetus in the mother's womb<sup>1</sup> I am miserable and without my husband and I shall have to bear the torments of death. Only two months remain. As a thief condemned to death by royal command, bound in fetters awaits his death and as his agonies grow intense at the end of night before the morning of execution so I do suffer. After the

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1 In my Introduction to the translation I have remarked that all over the land there are relics of a perished civilisation, but they are nowhere to be so abundantly met with as in our Epics and Purans which deal mostly with concrete historical facts though in good many places interwoven with allegories and fables, and sometimes even overdone by poetical hyperboles; but there are indelible evidence of stern historical truths and this is one of them. Surgical operation on the foetus in the mother's womb in order to save the life of the mother is a highly advanced branch of modern surgery. Its reference in such an old book as the Ramayan speaks a volume. The Ramayan contains ample proofs of the material civilisation and prosperity which the early Hindus attained. In this connection it won't be out of place to refer to Sir Edward Keith's (the eminent Scientist) observations on the relics of Mohenjo. Daro describing India as the cradle-land of civilisation The Hindus knew therapeutic use of metals long, long before the modern medical science was born and made a considerable progress in surgery.—Translator.

expiry of the appointed time my fate will be similar. Alas, Ram! Alack, Lakshman! Alas, Kausalya! Alas, mothers! I am overwhelmed like a craft in the stormy sea. Alas! It is for me that Ram and Lakshman lost their lives at the hands of the magic-deer. It was I who was bewitched by the magic spell of the wicked Rakshasa and sent Ram and Lakshman deep into the woods. O, Ram! You are benign and truthful, don't you know that I am here condemned death by the Rakshasa? Alas! My chastity, devotion, forgiveness and asceticism in lying on the ground have come to naught. Like good services to an ungrateful wretch, here virtues are of no avail. I have become emaciated, weak and dark in grief, so there is not the least hope of re-union with my husband. Oh, Ram! Perhaps after carrying out the behest of your father duly, you have, by this time, returned and there being happy and safe, you are now passing your time in the company of good many large-eyed damsels. But I am extremely devoted to you and I am ready to give up my life. In vain, I have performed all religious rites, now I shall give up my life. Woe unto me, I am most unfortunate. I shall commit suicide either by poison or by sword; but there is none in this city of the Rakshasas to help me in that."

Janaki thus lamented thinking of Ram. Her face was dry, and she was trembling in all her limbs. She drew near the Sinshapa tree. Intense fire of grief was smouldering in her breast. She was long buried in thoughts and then taking the braid of hair that

hung on her back said, "I shall soon give up my life by twisting the hair round my neck." Then holding a branch of the Sinshapa tree, she began to cry thinking Ram, Lakshman and other members of her family.

## CHAPTER XXII

### HANUMAN THINKS

Janaki was extremely sad and wretched and she stood holding a branch of the Sinsapa tree. In the meantime various auspicious signs appeared on her person. The large left eye of the dame, having graceful lashes, having dark pupil, white ends, red margin began to quiver like a lotus shaken by a fish. Her lovely, plump and round left arm, scented with Sandal and Agura, and which so long served Ram as a pillow began to throb quite all on a sudden, and her fleshy left thigh, roundish like an elephant's trunk, by repeated throbbings indicated as if Ram had appeared before her, and her amber coloured cloth stained with dusts also slipped a little.

Then, the damsel having beautiful teeth like pomegranate seeds, became enlivened with joy at these omens, as a seed withered by the sun and the wind

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1 In R. Browning's *Prophiry's Lover*, the poor lover in mad ecstasy strangles his love to death by twisting her hair round her neck by way of caressing, lest he would lose her in future.—Translator.

is revived by rain. Her face became bright like the moon released from the eclipse. She was free from grief, and her exhaustion was gone. Then her beautiful countenance was augmented in brightness, as the beauty of the night is enhanced by the moon.

Hanuman being concealed in the Sinshapa tree, heard everything, Janaki's lamentations, Trijata's dream, and the threats of the Rakshasis.

Then, that great hero, beholding Janaki like heavenly damsel in the garden of Nandana, thus began to think, "For whom thousands of Vanaras are searching different regions, I see her before me. For whom, as a spy of Sugriva I was estimating the strength of the enemy in secret, I behold her today before me. I have witnessed the pomp and power of Ravan after crossing the ocean. I shall now console that devoted wife of Ram. This moon-like beauty did never suffer any sorrow in life, but she is now groaning under it. I shall soothe her now. If I go away without consoling her I shall be guilty of a grave dereliction of duty, and this princess too will renounce her life without finding any means of her release. As it is necessary to console Ram who is anxious for her sight, so it is expedient to encourage her with hopes. But I see the Rakshasis all round her, it is not judicious to talk to her in their presence. Now, what shall I do? I am in a fix. If I go away without consoling her at the end of the night, surely she will die. If I go away without talking to her how shall I stand before him when he will ask, 'what did Sita say about me?'

Surely, for this fault he will reduce me to ashes with angry eyes. If I ask Sugriva to make preparations for war without telling him everything then his arrival here with his troops will be vain. However, I shall be careful and when the Rakshasis will be unmindful, I shall console her with gentle words. I am a petty Vanara, still I shall speak Sanskrit like a common man. But if I speak in Sanskrit like a Brahmin, then Sita may be greatly frightened thinking me to be Ravan. It is, therefore, proper to speak in the ordinary dialect of a common man<sup>1</sup>, otherwise it won't be possible to console her in any way. Janaki is already overwhelmed with fear of the Rakshasas, so she will be surely alarmed at my sight and speech. Then she will burst into cries considering me to be Ravan who can assume any form at his will. At her cries the grim Rakshasis will gather and search the place, and they will try to bind me and put me to death. Then I shall jump from tree to tree assuming my own form. At that sight the Rakshasis will be greatly frightened and will call the warders. Then the sentries will speedily arrive with their arrows and lances. I shall then be at once secured, and the Rakshasas will easily take me away, so Janaki won't know anything about it. The Rakshasas

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<sup>1</sup> This passage shows that Sanskrit was not the ordinary dialect even of the people of the upper class, but, of course, could be understood by them, and Sanskrit was spoken only by learned men among whom Ravan was surely one and by those who belonged to the priestly class.

(Vide also Muir's Sanskrit Texts),

are cruel and they will not even shrink to put her to death in the meantime. Janaki lives in secrecy in this place girt by the sea, and guarded by the Rakshasas on all sides, and I see there is no entry to Lanka, and if I yeild to my capture, Ram will lose one who can help him in his enterprise, and I see none who will be able to cross hundred Yoyanas of the sea in my absence. Further, it is not known what party will win in the war. So I donot like to meddle in an uncertain matter. If I talk to her just now all these troubles are likely to follow, whereas if I donot, Sita will die. Works almost completed is often foiled by the foolishness of an incompetent emissary. Sometimes, a policy is frustrated by the indiscretion of an envoy. It is now my duty to be careful so that all the labours of crossing the sea be not in vain. I should devise some means so that Janaki may listen to my words without any fear."

After debating thus in his mind Hanuman decided. "She is now thinking of Ram, if I now utter the name of that hero she won't be frightened. I shall now communicate to her in a sweet and subdued voice what I have to say, after recounting the pious deeds of Ram, the foremost of the Ikshwaku line. I shall employ only those words so that she can believe me.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### HANUMAN'S SPEECH

After deciding thus, Hanuman came near Janaki and in gentle words began, "There was a noble king by the name of Dasarath. He was well accomplished, beautiful and gifted with royal marks. He was born of the Ikshwaku line and had his sway all over the world. Ram is the eldest son of that Dasarath. He is the foremost of those who are skilled in bows and arrows. He is gentle and the protector of his own people. He is wise and virtuous. That noble hero, at the command of his father, came into forest with his wife and brother and while he roamed in the forest for hunting he killed many Rakshasa warriors and Khara and Dushana with the troops of Janasthan. The Rakshasa king, Ravan, was greatly enraged at this news and deluded him by the magic of Marich who tempted Ram by transforming himself into a deer and then Ravan abducted Sita. After that, he made freindship with Sugriva in the course of his search for Sita, slew Vali and conferred the rule of Vanara kingdom on Sugriva. Then Vanaras at the command of Sugriva went out in all directions in search of Janaki, and I have crossed hundred Yoyanas of the sea at the words of Sampati. From what I have heard from Ram, and Lakshman about the beauty, colour and signs, you seem to be Sita."

Thus saying, heroic Hanuman became silent. Janaki was extremely delighted and raising her face screened

by her locks of hair, cast her glance towards the Sinshapa tree. She was extremely delighted at the news of Ram. Then she looked upwards and downwards and cast stealthy glances around her; in the meantime, Hanuman fell upon her eyes like the rising sun.

Hanuman was clad in white, and lay concealed within the branches of the Sinshapa tree, Janaki was startled at his sight. Hanuman was modest, and sweet-speeched; his appearance was red like the Asoka flowers and his eyes were of tawny brown colour. Janaki was deeply amazed and took the Vanara to be a formidable being. She was overwhelmed with fear finding him incapable of being stared upon. Her mind was filled with various misgivings and she uttered in an inaudible voice the names of Ram and Lakshman in grief and began to weep. She again looked at the Vanara, and thought that perhaps she was dreaming. She was more dead than alive at the sight of the Vanara and was about to faint. After a long time she recovered her senses and thought: A Vanara of forbidden sight fell on my eyes. However, let prosperity attend on Ram, Lakshman and king Janak. It is not a dream for sleep has left me for my sorrows; there is no happiness in my mind since the absence of Ram. I think of Ram always and utter his name and whatever I see or hear is after my thoughts about him. Now, what I have seen just now is not my fancy, for understanding<sup>1</sup> has

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1. Psychologically speaking it means apperception.

nothing to do with imagination, nor an imaginary object can be perceived. I am seeing the Vanara clearly before my eyes and I am hearing his voice distinctly. Now, I bow down to Vrihaspati, Indra, Brahma and Agni. Let what the Vanara has just now said prove to be true."

## CHAPTER XXIV

### HANUMAN'S MESSAGE

Thereupon, Hanuman, the effulgent son of the Wind-god humbly approached Janaki and greeted her. Then joining his two palms over his head respectfully began. "Who art thou, O lotus-eyed beauty, that wearing a soiled silken cloth art standing, holding a branch of the tree? Why tears of sorrow fall from your eyes like drops of water from the petals of a lotus? To which class amongst the gods, Asuras, Nagas, Yakshas, Rakshasas and the Kinnars do you belong? Art thou in any way related to Rudra, Marut or the Vasus? Perhaps, thou art Rohini, the best of the stars that has fallen from the heavenly region being deprived of the affection of the Moon! Art thou worshipful Arundhati, Oh, auspicious beauty? Have you offended sage Vasistha either through ignorance or anger? Who is your son, who is your brother, who is your father and who is your husband? From your tears, from your sighs, from your touching the ground you seem to be a worshipful

lady and not a celestial.<sup>1</sup> From the auspicious marks on your person, it appears that thou art either the consort or the daughter of a king. Art thou Sita whom Ravan has stolen away from Janasthan? May good betide thee. From thy miserable plight, ascetic dress and unearthly beauty it seems to me that thou art the queen of Ram.'

Thereupon, Janaki on hearing Ram's name cheerfully said, "I am the daughter-in-law of mighty Dasaratha, the foremost of the kings, daughter of saintly Janak and am wife of virtuous Ram, my name is Sita, I passed twelve happy years in my father-in-law's house after marriage. Then on the thirteenth year, king Dasaratha desired to invest the crown on Ram. On seeing the preparations for the coronation ceremony queen Kaikeyi told Dasarath that she would abstain from food and drink and that she would put an end to her life if he would confer the crown on Ram, so she asked him to send Ram to the forest and fulfil his pledge to her. The king Dasarath was stupefied by these cruel words, thinking of his pledge of granting boons to her. But he was firmly devoted to truth and with tearful eyes he asked Ram to retire to the forest after conferring the kingdom on Bharat. At that time, his sire's command pleased Ram more than his prospect of installation, and he cheerfully agreed to it. Ram never takes back what he gives; he is devoted to truth and never utters any lie. Glorious

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<sup>1</sup> It is believed that the celestials do not touch the ground.

Ram putting aside his rich apparel, renounced his desire for the kingdom and made over me to his mother. But I did not agree to that arrangement and soon followed him in his exile to the forest. To speak the truth, I do not even covet for heaven without Ram. Friendly Lakshman, in order to accompany Ram, first of all dressed himself in Kusha grass and bark. Thus abiding by the behest of the king we entered the deep forest, never seen before. For sometime, we lived in the Dandaka forest. In the meantime wicked Ravan has stolen me away from there. He has allowed me two months' time. After which I shall surely give up my life."

Then Hanuman consoling Sita, overwhelmed with sorrow, said, "O worshipful lady, by Ram's command I have come as a messenger to you. He is quite well and has enquired of your welfare. He who is the master of heavenly arms and of the Vedas hath enquired after your well-being. And he who is the constant attendant of Ram, that heroic Lakshman too has conveyed his salutations and greetings to your feet."

Thereupon, Janaki became extremely glad at the good news of Ram and Lakshman. She said, "The saying that a man can enjoy happiness even once in hundred years in this world seems to be true." In fact, Sita was delighted at Hanuman's words, as she would have been at the actual sight of Ram and Lakshman. In the meantime, Hanuman gradually drew near. As he advanced one or two steps, Sita was filled with

apprehensions, and her suspicion that Ravan had come to deceive with a ruse became more and more confirmed in her mind. With a distressed heart she mused, "Woe unto me! Alas, why did I talk to him? It is Ravan I find, who has come in a different guise by virtue of magic."

Then Janaki leaving the branch of the Sinshapa tree sat upon the ground. Hanuman, after advancing a little, greeted her. But she was greatly frightened at that time and could not cast her eyes on him, and heaving a deep sigh, said in a sweet voice, "Perhaps thou art Ravan and hast come to distress me again changing your form by virtue of magic, but this is not worthy of you. Thou art surely Ravan whom I saw in the mendicant's garb at Janasthana. You are, no doubt, Ravan. But it does not behove you to distress me thus who is poorly and famished with fasts. Or perhaps my apprehensions are unfounded for there is a feeling of joy ever since I have seen you for the first time. Now, if you be a messenger of Ram, please tell me what I ask; everything connected with Ram is dear to me. May good betide thee! Do thou relate the glories of Ram. You are shaking off my firmness, as a mighty current of water sweeps away the bank and renders it unfirm. Ah, what a pleasant dream! I have been long carried off in dream, but now I see Ram's messenger. If I could once see dear Ram and Lakshman, then I would not have sunk like this. But due to my ill-luck even dreams are inimical to me.

Perhaps it is not a dream, for such joy<sup>1</sup> is not possible after seeing a Vanara in dream. Perhaps it is an illusion. Or is it insanity? Perhaps it is a mirage! I can not fully understand myself nor the Vanara.”

After thus debating in her mind, Janaki took the Vanara for wily Ravan, and then ceased to talk to him. Hanuman then fully realising her thoughts, began to speak in words pleasant to the ear, causing immense delight to Janaki: 'Great Ram is spirited like the sun and beautiful like the moon. Every one is warmly devoted to him. He is prosperous like Kuvera and heroic like famous Vishnu. He is sweet tongued and devoted to truth like Vrihaspati. He is exceedingly beautiful, he is Cupid incarnate. His royal sceptre is raised in proper places.<sup>2</sup> He is the best of men and the world enjoys happiness under the shadow of his arms.<sup>3</sup> And you will witness that the wicked Villain that lured away that great hero by the guise of a deer and carried you away from the empty hermitage, will soon reap the consequences of his act. He will soon destroy Ravan with fiery arrows discharged in wrath. I have come to you at his command. Being greatly afflicted by your separation he enquires about your welfare. Ram's friend Sugriva has enquired about your well-being, they always think of you. It is by chance that you are always surrounded by the Rakshasis.

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1 In the original it is prosperity.

2 That is, he punishes justly.

3 Under his protection.

You will soon meet Ram and Lakshman, and the Kapi-chief, Sugriva, amongst the Vanaras. At his command, I have crossed the ocean and entered into Lanka, defying the prowess of Ravan. I am not wily Ravan, banish your apprehension and fear and depend upon my words."

## CHAPTER XXV.

### HANUMAN'S SPEECH.

Then Janaki hearing about Ram from Hanuman, sweetly replied, "O Vanara ! How are you connected with Ram ? How there has been friendship between men and the monkeys ? Do thou relate the regal signs that adorn Ram then I shall be free from sorrow."

Thereupon, Hanuman replied, "It is my good luck that you have put such questions to me, I shall presently relate unto you all the auspicious marks that I have observed upon the persons of Ram and Lakshman. O daughter of Janak ! Ram has eyes like lotus petals and a countenance like the full-moon. He is beautiful from his very birth, and is sincere. He is effulgent like the sun, in forgiveness like the earth, in intelligence like Vrihaspati and in fame like Vasava. He always follows the right path in every walk of his life, and never swerves from his royal duties. He is the upholder of the four castes, he confers honour upon people and preserves them. Like the sun he is worshipped by all. He observes ascetic vows, he honours saints and proclaims their good services. He

is well versed in polity and is greatly devoted to the Brahmans. He has mastery over Yayurveda, Dhanurveda<sup>1</sup> and the Vedangas.<sup>2</sup> He is honoured by the scholars of the Vedas. He is broad-shouldered, his arms are long and beautiful, he has a conch-like neck and a beautiful countenance. His throat is plump and his eyes are red. And he is known all over the world in the name of Ram. He has a deep voice like that of a trumpet. His colour is of glossy green. He has equally proportioned limbs. His thighs, and wrists are hard ; and brows, arms and scrotum are long and he has even knees. His navel is deep and his abdomen and breast are covered with downy streaks of hair. Angles of the eyes, nails and palms are copper-coloured. His gait is slow and majestic. His belly and throat have threefolds of skin. There are lines in soles of his feet. His back is short. He has three locks of hair on his head. He has four lines on his thumb indicating his proficiency in the four Vedas. His body is four cubits tall ; his arms, thighs and cheeks are even and plump ; eyebrows, the hollows of the nose, lips, nipples, wrists, knee-joints, hips, arms, and feet are evenly proportionate. He is gifted with auspicious marks of the Sastras. His gait is like that of a lion, tiger, elephant, and of a bull. His lips and

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1 The Veda which deals with the art of warfare and use of arms, e.g. arrows.

2 The branches and episodes of the Vedas, generally the Upanishads.

jaws are fleshy. His nose is pointed. His words are sweet and his skin is smooth. His two arms, two little fingers, two thighs and two legs are long. His breast, forehead, neck, arms, navel, feet and back are spacious. He is gifted with grace, fame and effulgence. Both his paternal and maternal lines are pure. His breasts, nose, shoulders and forehead are high. His fingers, hairs, down, nails, skin, beard, eye-sight and intellect are sharp. Raghava with a due division of his time is engaged in acquiring virtue, wealth, emancipation and desire. He is truthful and graceful. He amasses wealth and thereby protects all. He has proper knowledge of time and place for everything and he is dear unto all. His step-brother Saumitra is gifted with incomparable prowess and is equal in attachment, beauty and accomplishment. The body of that beautiful one is of gold hue, whereas that of the glorious Ram is green. And these two lions of men have no other delight but seeing thee and while they ransacked the world in search of you they met us in the forest and ranging the earth for you they found Sugriva, the lord of the Vanaras, at the foot of the Rishyamukha mountain covered with trees, banished by his elder brother, Vali, and resorting there in his fear and we were serving that truthful Sugriva, the lord of the Vanaras, driven from the kingdom by his elder brother. And beholding those two best of men clad in bark and with bows in their hands, that foremost of the Vanaras stricken with fear, leaped up and stationed himself on the summit of the hill. He then sent me

to them, and thereupon by Sugriva's decree I approached with joined palms those two foremost of men, endowed with beauty and royal signs. They were pleased with me. Being informed of the real facts and placing those two princss on my back, I arrived at the top the hill and communicated the truth unto the high-souled Sugriva. Then conversing with each other, those two lords of men and Vanaras attained great delight, and they consoled each other narrating their respective tales of misfortune. Ram then consoled Sugriva turned out by his formidable brother Vali on account of his wife. Thereupon, Lakshman related to Sugriva, the Lord of the Kapis, the sorrow of Ram in consequence of your being carried off by Ravan, and hearing Lakshman's words, the Lord of the Vanaras grew pale, like the bright sun under the jaws of Rahu. And collecting all those ornaments which were thrown off by thee on the ground when thou wert borne off, the leader of the Vanara-hosts brought them before Ram, but they could not make out your whereabouts, and all those ornaments which were handed over to Ram, were collected by me when they fell tingling on the ground. Ram was beside himself with grief and placed them on his lap. The God-like Ram bewailed in various accents. Those accentuated his grief more. And being overwhelmed with it, that high-souled one laid himself low on the ground. And I raised him up with various words. And looking again and again with Saumitri at those precious ornaments, Raghava handed them over to Sugriva. O worshipful lady! Raghava is being

consumed with grief in thy absence, like unto a volcano smouldering with a perpetual fire. Grief, anxiety and sleeplessness are distressing Ram for thee like unto three fires<sup>1</sup> burning down the fire-temple. Raghava has been moved by the separation like a huge mountain shaken by a terrible earthquake. O daughter of king ! He is roaming through forests, rivers and fountains but he finds delight nowhere. O Janaki ! Raghava will soon regain thee bringing about the destruction of Ravan with all his kith and kin. Ram, the foremost of men, and Sugriva entered into a friendly alliance to encompass Vali's destruction and to search for thee. Thereupon, those two princes came to Kishkindhya and killed Vali, the lord of the Vanaras, in battle. And destroying Vali by his prowess, Ram made Sugriva king over all the Vanaras and the Bhallukas. And in this way, O dame, the alliance between Ram and Sugriva was made. I am their emissary and my name is Hanuman. The Kapi-chief, Sugriva, after obtaining the Kingdom has sent the Vanaras in different directions in search of you. They are now ranging over the whole world. Prince Angada has set out with one third of the whole army. I have come with that Angada. In our journey we met with many difficulties in the Vindhya hill and many days were unfortunately spent in that region. We then passed our days in

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<sup>1</sup> Three fires maintained by the Brahman householder taken together.

despair of accomplishing our task and we were getting ourselves ready for death in fear of Sugriva. I searched mountains, hills, fountains, rills and forests and getting no clue about you, we began to observe fast in order to give up our life by starvation. At this, Angada began to lament, talked again and again about your absence, destruction of Vali and about our fast unto death. At that very time, a huge, formidable bird arrived there, his name was Sampati. He was the brother of Jatayu. Having heard from Angad about his brother's death, he angrily enquired about the slayer of Jatayu. In reply to his query Angada said that wicked Ravan had carried you away from Janasthan and he had killed Jatayu. At this Sampati was greatly overwhelmed with sorrow, and we had the information from him that you were in Lanka."

"Being encouraged by these words of the Bihanga-chief we emerged from the Vindhya hill and arrived at the sea-shore. Then we became highly anxious. The Vanara hosts grew sad finding no means of getting at Lanka. Then I crossed hundred Yoyanas of the sea and entered the city of the Rakshasas by night and saw you and Ravan."

"O worshipful lady! I have narrated everything from the beginning to the end, now condescend to speak to me. I am Ram's messenger and it is for Ram that I have done this daring act. I have come here for your whereabouts. Wind-God is my father and I am a minister of Sugriva. Now, Ram is quite well so is auspicious Lakshman devoted to the services of

his elder brother. I have come here at the command of Sugriva. It is for you that I have come towards the south. The Vanara hosts are greatly anxious for your absence. Now, I shall cheer them up by your news. All the labours of my crossing the sea, to my good luck, have been crowned with success. O worshipful lady! Now I shall win the glory of finding you out and heroic Ram will soon recover you by destroying Ravan with his brood. I am Hanuman, son of Keshari, the Kapi-chief, This Keshari, lived in a beautiful hill called Malyavan; thence he repaired to the Gokarna hill. There, at the holy watering place, he at the requests of the saints killed an Asura named Sadan. I am that Keshari's son, born of his wife from the seed of the Wind-God, and by my prowess I am known as Hanuman. I cited all these things previously to create confidence of Ram in me. Be now assured he will soon rescue you from this place."

Then Sita from these unimpeachable proofs believed Hanuman to be an emissary of Ram. Her mind was filled with delight and tears came to her eyes, and her face shone like the moon just released from the shadow of eclipse. She took Hanuman to be a Vanara. And all her doubts and apprehensions were removed. After that Hanuman said to the beautiful damsel, pleasant to the sight, "Be now comforted. I have told you everything. Now, tell what I am to do and what is your own desire. Just tell me, I won't stop here long. I am born of the seed of the Wind-God and I

am like him. I shall accomplish by my prowess whatever you may ask me to do."<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE RING.

Then Hanuman in order to create confidence in Sita's mind, said "O worshipful dame ! I am the messenger of intelligent Ram and a Vanara by race. Behold this ring with Ram's name engraven on it. Ram has made it over to me and I have brought it for your confidence. Be comforted, your sorrows will soon be over."

Thereupon Janaki taking the ring that used to adorn her lord's finger, gazed at it with thirsty eyes. And she was delighted with it as she would have been by the actual presence of Ram. Her beautiful face brightened with joy, just like the moon emerged from the eclipse, and she welcoming Hanuman with affection, cheerfully said, "O Vanara ! Since you have succeeded in coming alone to this city of the Rakshasas you are

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<sup>1</sup> The Ramayan and the Mahabharat are the two perennial springs of Indian inspiration. Poetry, drama and art of the later period up till now are some way or other indebted to these two colossal epics. These and the following chapters are said to have suggested to Kalidas, so says Mallinath, his immortal commentator, about the magnificent poem, Meghduta or the cloud messenger through whom the poet conveys his deathless message to his forlorn love.

undoubtedly clever, bold and heroic. Great is thy prowess since you have crossed hundred Yoyanas of the sea full of crocodiles and sharks, thinking it as mere a pool, and your heroism is indeed praiseworthy. O hero ! I can't take you for an ordinary person ; you are neither afraid at the sight of the ocean, nor of Ravan. If you have come here at the behest of Ram then talk to me. Ram wouldn't have sent an ordinary unknown man to me. It is to my good luck, that I have learnt about the welfare of Ram and Lakshman. Tell me, thou messenger, nothing untoward has happened to Ram why does he not reduce the earth, encircled by the oceans, into ashes by the fire of his wrath, like the Doomsday-fire ? Neither it is difficult for him to vanquish the Gods, but it seems to me that due to my ill luck the period of sorrow is not over. O hero ! Is Ram now overwhelmed with grief ? Is he not trying to rescue me ? Has he been overwhelmed with miseries and fear ? Does he lose his intelligence at the time of work ? Has he the desire of displaying his manliness ? Does he not wish to acquire victory by winning friends by equality and fraternity, and by punishing his enemies, or sowing dissensions amongst them ? Has he got true friends ? Does he show them respect and love ? Is he idle to invoke the blessings of the Gods ? Has he grown indifferent to me on account of being at a distant from me ? That prince never suffered before, but always lived in happiness, has he been overwhelmed by a succession of misfortunes ? Is he always informed about the welfare of worshipful

Kausalya, Sumitra and Bharat? Has Ram been quite overwhelmed with grief in absence of me? Is he always unmindful? Will not Bharat, devoted to his brother, spare his army, under the command of his ministers, for my rescue? Will not Sugriva, the Kapi-king, come here surrounded by his sharp Vanara army? Will not heroic Lakshman destroy the Rakshasas with his sharp arrows? Shall I not see Ravan soon destroyed with his family by Ram's shafts? Has the lotus-scented countenance of Ram been withered, as a lotus is dried up by the intense heat of the sun! Is he now free from all fears and sorrows, as he was when he renounced kingdom for piety and entered the forest with me on foot? O messenger! There is no dearer person, father or mother, to Ram than myself. So long as I do not receive any information of Ram I shall manage to live." Saying this Janaki lapsed into silence to listen to the sweet words concerning Ram.

Then Hanuman raising his hands over his head and with joined palms began, "O worshipful lady! Lotus-eyed Ram does not know that you are now living in Lanka, or he would have surely rescued you by this time. Now, after receiving your information from me he will soon arrive here with the Vanara hosts, and will agitate the undisturbable deep by his arrows, and denude the city of Lanka of all the Rakshasas. Even if Death himself interferes, or the Gods stand against him, he will surely destroy them all. O lady! Ram being stricken with grief for your absence has become restless like an elephant harassed by a lion. I swear

by the names of the Malaya, the Mandara, the Vindhya, the Sumeru and the Dardura mountains<sup>1</sup> and by touching these fruits and roots, that you will soon behold the face of Ram, beautiful as the rising full-moon, and adorned with ear-rings. O worshipful dame, you will soon witness Ram seated on the Prpravana hill like Indra seated on Airavata. In your absence he does not touch meat and wine, but subsists on fruits and roots and that prince passes the whole night in your thought and is never conscious of mosquitoes insects, or reptiles. He is always morose and pensive and in your absence, no other thoughts but yours ever arise in his mind. He ever suffers from sleeplessness, and if he at all falls asleep, he suddenly wakes up with the gentle cry of "Sita" on his lips. He heaves deep sigh whenever he sees any fruit, flower or anything dear to a woman, and shed tears uttering, 'alack, my love !' O lady, that hero is thus being tormented now, and he is ever trying to get you back."

Thereupon, Janaki of moon-like face replied, "O Vanara ! Your words are like honey mixed with gall ! That Ram is always thinking of me is sweet as nectar, but that he is overwhelmed with grief is bitter as poison. Whether a man be in great prosperity, or extreme

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<sup>1</sup> Swearing is a primitive habit of man. How it came into existence must be interesting to speculate. Perhaps it has its origin to some superstitious fear of supernatural agencies. Here, Hanuman swears not by name of any diety but by hills and mountains by fruits and roots !

difficulty, fate as if by a rope, draws every one to his destiny. In fact, none can over-ride fate, and it is due to this fate that we have fallen into such distress. Now with great efforts and care will see the end of these sorrows, as one with great difficulty swims to the shore, when the boat gets foundered on the sea. I know not when that great hero will come to me, destroying Ravan with his broad sword and levelling Lanka to the ground? Request him to accomplish the task quickly; I shall keep my life till this year does not expire. According to the period of time appointed by cruel Ravan, this is the tenth month, and two months remain. Bibhishan entreated Ravan much to restore me to Ram, but that villain paid no heed. He is in the grip of death and Death himself is goading him to battle. Vibhishan's eldest daughter, named Kala, once came to me at the behest of her mother and she has related all this to me. There is an old, wise and educated Rakshasa named Avindhya, and Ravan holds him in great esteem, he once told Ravan that if he did not return me to Ram, then the Rakshasa race would be extinct, but this villain did not pay any heed to his words."

"O Vanara! Now, it seems to me that Ram will soon recover me. There is no doubt about it. Whenever I think of his prowess, my rescue does not seem to be at all difficult. Energy, manliness and prowess are present in him. Which enemy of Ram won't shrink from him who has slain fourteen thousand Rakshasas alone in Janasthan without the help of Lakshman?

Though the Rakshasas have put him into trouble, but they can never be compared with him. I am aware of his prowess, as Sachi of Indra's. He is like the glowing sun, his arrows are his rays, now he will surely dry up the Rakshasas like water."

Then Hanuman said, "O worshipful lady! After hearing thy news from me, Ram will soon arrive here with the Vanaras and the Bhallukas, or you get upon my back I shall to-day rescue you from the sufferings at the hands of the Rakshas, as I shall be able to cross the ocean easily taking you on my back, I shall even carry Lanka<sup>1</sup> with Ravan. I shall present you to Ram as fire conveys sacrificial offerings to Indra. To-day, you will surely see Ram and Lakshman mighty as Vishnu. O lady! Ram is greatly anxious for your sight and he is waiting on the hill, so get upon my back. Don't neglect, or be indifferent to this proposal. You will be united with Ram like the star Rohini with the moon. Seeing all auspicious marks on you, it appears to me that you will be soon united with Ram. Now get upon my back, I shall cross the sea through the air. None of the Rakshasas will be able to follow me. O worshipful lady! In the manner I have come here, I shall return by the same way taking you on my back."

Janaki was both delighted and astonished at these words. She said, "O hero! How will you carry me

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1 A physical impossibility, but this spirit of bragging is due to poetical Hyperboles, perhaps the underlying meaning is that Hanuman could carry off Sita without any risk whatsoever.

through such a long distance? To tell you the truth, these words prove your apish nature.<sup>1</sup> You are quite puny in size, how will you take me to Ram?"

"This", Hanuman thought, "is my first and new defeat from Janaki's words. She is quite ignorant of my strength and prowess. Let her now witness what shape and size I may assume at my will." Thus thinking Hanuman resolved to reveal his own form to Janaki and coming down from the Sinshapa tree, he began to expand in bulk to inspire confidence in Sita. He was flaming in effulgence like the Mandara hill. His body was formidable, face red and his teeth and nails are hard as the thunderbolt. Thus assuming his original form standing before Janaki said, "O worshipful lady! I shall easily carry away this city of Lanka with its forests, hill, palaces, gates and even with Ravan.

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1 It is difficult to ascertain the date of the Ramayan. certainly it was composed at a period when Sanskrit was not the dialect of the common people, but an elegant court-language. Therefore Hanuman decides not to address Sita in Sanskrit like a Brahmin scholar; from these words it is also clear that the people of the Dekkan (Southern India) were at first derisively called monkeys, perhaps in distinction from the civilised Aryans, but when Ramayan was composed, they were fairly an advanced people, but the former stigma to their names still remained, and the poet's imagination and popular fancy, still played with their names and loved to depict them with all the tricks and absurdities of apish nature. These words verily testify to this fact. The Ramayan was most probably composed before 500 B. C. The popular tradition that it was composed sixty thousand years before the birth of Ram only confirms its antiquity.\*

Believe me, and entertain no doubts about it. Remove Ram's and Lakshman's grief by going along with me."

Then lotus-eyed Jānaki seeing the formidable form of Hanuman said, "O hero! I now realise your prowess and strength. Your speed is like the wind, energy like Fire. In truth, how could an ordinary man ever come here? However, I have not the slightest doubt that you will be able to cross the ocean taking me with you. But you are to act after careful consideration. You see, when you will carry me on your back I may be paralysed with fear at thy great speed. I shall remain on the air over the ocean, at that time I may even slip down from your back. The sea is full of aquatic animals and if I fall into it I shall surely be devoured by sharks and crocodiles. O hero! I am a woman, if you take me with you, the Rakshasas seeing me thus abducted, will inform Ravan and will chase you at his command. Then those Rakshasa warriors will surround thee and your life will be in danger. They are armed, whereas, you are single, in these circumstances how will you avoid them? Perhaps there will come a fight between you and them, then I may fall from your back quite trembling with fear. The Rakshasas are most formidable, they may even partly win victory over you, or if you be victorious at all, then at the time of the fight you may be unmindful about my protection I shall then fall down from your back and the Rakshasas will carry me away. At that time they may even kill me from thy hands. Again victory and defeat are uncertain in battle. At

the field of battle the Rakshasas will set up terrible yells, and I shall surely be stricken with fear, then all your efforts will be fruitless. O hero! Though you can easily destroy the Rakshasas, but by your act you will rob Ram of his glory, or the Rakshasas wresting me from your hands may keep me concealed in such a secret place that neither Ram, nor the Vanaras will know anything about it. So all your labours for me, as crossing the ocean and other efforts, will be in vain."

"But, if on the other hand, you come here with Ram it will bear great fruits. The lives of heroic Ram, Lakshman, of yours, of Sugriva and of other Vanaras are at my disposal, but if you despair about my rescue I shall surely give up my life. O hero, on account of my devotion towards my husband, I do not wish to touch the body of a third person. Wicked Ravan forcibly touched my person, but what could I do? Then I was quite helpless and overwhelmed with grief and fear.<sup>1</sup> It is now Ram's duty to come personally and rescue me from this place. I have myself witnessed the prowess of that great hero, there is no match for him amongst the Gods, the Gandharvas, the Uragas

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1 In course of time India forgot these salutary words of Sita, and quite sad and disastrous result ensued in society. Women or girls that were ravished by force or fraud against their will, were turned out as so many outcastes from the folds of society and they had to pay for the lust and vice of others all their life! There is hardly any tale of more harrowing nature than that of their miseries and social oppression over them. It requires a Peggotty to save

who can face him when he is seen burning like a flame taking up arrows in his hand in the field of battle. When in the field of battle he, along with Lakshman, roams like an infuriated elephant, bright effulgence comes from him like the rays from the Doomsday sun. O messenger ! Bring him soon here with Sugriva. I have been greatly afflicted with sorrow in absence of Ram. Make me happy by bringing him here."

## CHAPTER XXVII

### SITA'S MESSAGE.

Then, Hanuman, being mightily pleased with Janaki's words, began to speak, "you have said what is just and is consistent with feminine nature, modesty and devotion to the husband. You are a woman, so it is impossible for you to cross hundred Joyanas of the sea sitting on my back. O Janaki, you have just now mentioned, that it is not proper for you to touch any body besides Ram ; these words are worthy of Ram's consort. Who else could have spoken like that ? Now, Ram will hear from me all that you have just now

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a Martha or an Emily (David Copperfield). Who can forget the noble lines of Shakespeare ?

"No man inveigh against  
                                   The withered flower,  
 But chide rough winter that  
                                   The flower hath killed;  
 Not that devour'd, but that  
                                   which doth devour "

stated to me. I have told you all these for my affectionate solicitations for Ram's welfare. This city of Lanka is highly impregnable, and the sea too is very difficult to cross, but my strength too is extra-ordinary, I have therefore told you all these. It is my desire to get you re-united even this day with Ram. In fact, it is my love for him and my respect for you that have induced me, to propose like this. Don't think I have any other motive behind it. Now, if you are not prepared to go with me give me some token to create Raghava's confidence.'

Thereupon, Janaki, hoarse with tears, said, "O envoy, please mention to Ram about this excellent remembrancer. There is a hill to the north east of the Chitrakuta mountain. It abounds with fruits and flowers and are inhabited by pious saints. The Mandakini flows at a short distance from it. What I am speaking to you occurred at that place. Go and report my words to Ram. Tell him, that after sporting in water in the fragrant wood-land of the Chitrakuta once he sat on my lap with clothes wet with water. At that time, a crow being desirous to feed on my flesh tore my breasts with its beak, and I threatened it with a stone, but it continued to tear my breasts and did not fly off. Being annoyed and angry with that bird as I tried to tighten the cloth round my waist, it slipped a little I drew my zone again and again, and thou looked at me in that situation and laughed over it. And I was greatly enraged and ashamed by your laughter and being wounded by the crow, I drew near

you. Thereupon, tired as I was I was pacified by your caress and laugh. Tears were on my face and I was wiping off my eyes with my cloth. I was greatly angry with the bird, then I slept for a long time from fatigue on your lap, and you too in turn slept over mine."

"After that, I awoke and stood up. The crow too again came near me and tore my breast with his beak. On your rising from sleep you were greatly enraged seeing me thus bruised and torn, and said, with a thundering voice, 'Tell me who hast torn thy breast; who has wished to play with a pentahooded, angry snake?' Saying this you cast your eyes round and suddenly saw that crow with bloody claws before me. He was the son of Indra, in speed he was like the wind and was living in a sub-terrestrial cave. On seeing it, your eyes revolved in anger and resolving to kill him at once, you took up a blade of grass from the greasy seat and fixed it to your bow with Brahma mantra. Thereupon, the blade of grass aimed at the bird glowed with fire that would destroy the world. You then hurled that flaming blade at the crow and it chased the crow high over the sky. Being thus chased, the crow to save himself traversed various regions and being renounced by his father, Indra and the great sages, he after ranging the three worlds at last resorted to Ram's shelter. You are protector of those who seek shelter under you, seeing him lying at your feet, weak and pale you took pity on him and said, 'O crow! It is impossible to render this Brahma-weapon futile, therefore,

O bird, speak what is to be done.' He then offered his right eye for life, and you destroyed his right eye. Then bowing to you and to king Dasarath the crow took his leave."

"O Lord! When you discharged dreadful Brahma weapon against a crow for me, why are you then sparing that villain who has stolen me away from you? Whose husband thou art she is now like a husbandless woman, have pity on her. I have heard from your own lips that, kindness is the highest virtue. You are energetic and heroic, and your gravity is like that of the sea, you are foremost of the heroes and mighty. Why do you not destroy the Rakshasas? There is none amongst the Gods and the Gandharvas who can resist Ram in battle. Now, if that hero has the slightest pity for me why does he not slay the Rakshasas with his sharp arrows? Why does not Lakshman rescue me at his command? The prowess of these two princes are rare even amongst the Gods, why they are indifferent now? When they are indifferent towards things that they can accomplish, it seems, I am somehow guilty."

Then Hanuman said to tearful Janaki. "I tell you the truth, and that Ram has grown indifferent to all things in grief for your absence, and heroic Lakshman is extremely sad at this plight of Ram. I have now found you out after great trouble, so don't despair any more. To tell you the truth, your sorrows will soon be over. Ram and Lakshman will reduce the three worlds into ashes for your sight. Heroic Ram

will carry you back to Ayodhya after slaying Ravan with his brood. Now tell me, if you have anything to tell to Sugriva and to other Vanaras."

Thereupon, Janaki replied, "O, Messenger ! Do thou on my behalf enquire after the welfare of him who renouncing vast wealth and gems of all kinds, and beloved wife of transcendent beauty, and bowing down at the feet of his parents followed his elder to the forest ; he who looked upon me as his mother and honoured his elder as his father, who could not understand anything about my abduction before, and who is dearer to Ram than myself, who is, in all respects, like my worshipful father-in-law, who is not afraid of any arduous feat, who is sweet-speeched and exceedingly beautiful, for whom Ram has forgotten the grief for his father, enquire after his welfare on my behalf. May he remove all my sufferings. O Messenger ! Thou art at the root of success, and Ram will look upon you with affection and love for your endeavours. Tell him again and again that I shall live only for a month. I tell you the truth, that after the expiry of one month, I wont keep up my life. Vicious Ravan has imprisoned me with insult, and as Vishnu rescued the earth from the nether region, so let him rescue me from here."

Then Sita taking an excellent jewel from her head and making it over to Hanuman said, "O hero ! After your return, hand over this ornament of head to Ram"

Then Hanuman taking that token in his hand tried to fix it on his finger,<sup>1</sup> but was afraid of discovery on account of the brilliance of the jewel. After that Hanuman bowing unto Janaki and going round her, stood by her side. He was exceedingly delighted at the sight of Sita and ever thought of Ram and Lakshman in his mind. He was glad as one becomes delighted in breathing bracing air high up on the hill, and he was about to start with the gem.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### SITA'S WORDS.

Thereupon, Janaki said, "O Messenger ! This token is not unknown to Ram. He will at once remember me, my mother and king Dasarath at its sight. O hero ! It seems Ram will engage you in future for my rescue. If you are commissioned for it, listen to me how the task can be accomplished, how the sufferings can be over, how my troubles may be ended, think of it and decide the course of action."

Agreeing to these words of Janaki, Hanuman was about to start after greeting her duly. At this, Janaki burst forth choked with tears, "O hero after your return enquire after the welfare of Ram and Lakshman, and of Sugriva with his counsellors and of other aged Vanaras. Let Ram do that, so that my sufferings may

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1. Another reading has

But it did not enter into it.

end and that I may get over this sea of trouble while I am still alive. O hero! Do thou reap righteousness by helping him with mere words. Ram is highly energetic, he will surely display his heroism to rescue me if he hears everything." Then Hanuman folding his hands over his head said, "O worshipful lady! Ram will soon arrive here surrounded by the vanaras and the Bhallukas, and remove all the pangs of grief by destroying the enemies in battle. When he discharges his shafts none can stand before him. He will challenge Surjya,<sup>1</sup> Indra and Death for you and will conquer the whole of the world surrounded by the oceans." Janaki heard with respect all what Hanuman had said, and finding him ready to start, looked at him repeatedly.

Then, out of her love for Ram, she again addressing Hanuman said, "If you wish, you may keep yourself in hiding in some secret place at least for a day and remove the fatigue of your journey and start to-morrow. To tell you the truth, my sorrows are assuaged at your sight. Various kinds of misgivings now disturb my

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1 Surjya literally means the sun, but here a distinction has been made between what we call the sun and the presiding deity of the sun, which is a flaming mass of matter. Such a distinction is common in Sanskrit, and the reader may compare Kalidas's *Kumar-sambhavam* where the poet distinguishes Himalaya as a person from his hilly dominions called the Himalayas, the presiding deities of the sun and the moon whom the Hindus worshipped should not be translated literally as the sun or the moon. The presiding deity is like the soul that inhabits the body.

mind. I have grave suspicion about your coming back to this place, passage to which is so arduous and difficult. But it will be difficult to sustain my life unless you come back again. I am suffering untold misery now your absence will pain me more. O hero ! I don't know how the two princes, the vanaras and the Bhallukas will cross this sea so hard to cross. In the three worlds only you and Vinata's son, Garura, have the power of crossing the sea. You are intelligent and mighty, I admit that you can alone accomplish the deed, and can win arduous fame, but it will be proper for Ram to come with army and destroy the enemies. If he rescues me by over-running Lanka with the Vanara host then it will be worthy of him<sup>1</sup> O messenger ! Now you should devise such means so that the great hero may display his valour."

Hanuman then replied to Janaki's reasonable words, "O worshipful lady ! Sugriva is devoted to truth and he has taken vow for your rescue. The Vanaras are all warlike and obedient to him. They are of quick pace like the flight of thought ! They never lag behind in daring deeds. They have travelled over the earth various times with wind like speed. Under the Kápi-chief there are Vanaras superior to me and others like myself, but there is none inferior to me. Not to speak of those Vanaras, you find only a weak and humble Vanara like myself before you. The best men

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<sup>1</sup> Sita appears to be more anxious for the heroic reputation of Ram than for her own rescue. Ram must not brook such an insult silently.

are not engaged in such works, only persons of inferior merits are despatched on such duties. So give up your sorrows, the best of the Kapis will cross the ocean by leaping and arrive at Lanka. Ram and Lakshman on my back, like the sun and the moon risen at the same time will arrive here. They will reduce Lanka to ruins, destroy Ravan with his brood and take you back to Ayodhya. Be comforted and count your days. And I assure you that you will soon behold Ram blazing like fire."

Hanuman then to start again observed, "O worshipful lady! You will soon witness Ram and Lakshman at the gate of Lanka and the Vanaras, whose sharp nails and teeth are like weapons and who can defeat even the tiger and the lion by their strength and valour will soon be here, and the Vanara army will set up heroic roars in evidence of their eagerness for fight. O lady! Ram is grief-stricken for your absence and there is no peace in his mind. Don't shed tears, let no fear find any place in thy heart on any occasion. You will be re-united with Ram, like Sachi with Indra. Where is a greater hero than Ram or Lakshman. They are like fire in their energy and in agility like the wind. Those two heroes are your protectors, and you wont have to remain long in this dreary region of the Rakshasas. Ram will soon arrive and wait so long I do not return to him."

Thereupon, Janaki said for her own good, "O messenger! You are sweet-speched and I have been as much delighted by your sight as the thirsty, sun-

burnt earth at the advent of rains. Devise some ways and means that, with this body emaciated in grief, I may get a touch of Ram's person. Show this water—born gem to Ram and mention to him the fact as how he destroyed one eye of Indra's son—the crow by Brahma Astra in anger. Besides these two remembrancers, tell him on my behalf and in my words, 'My lord ; My Tilaka having been wiped off, you painted another one beside my cheek with red Arsenic. Why being mighty as Indra or Varuna, dost thou now disregard ravished Sita fallen into the midst of the Rakshasas ? This jewel of my crown I have preserved with care, in my misfortune I sustain myself by its sight, as I used to cheer up myself in my sorrowful moments by your sight. Now I send it as my token to it, but if you do not come here soon I will put an end to my life. O lord ! It is for you, that I have been suffering all these sorrows, these harsh words and company of the Rakshasas I shall preserve my life for one month more, and if I do not find within that time I shall surely renounce my life. Wicked Ravan is cruel, he looks upon me with lustful eyes, and if there be delay on your part I shall then surely put an end to myself.'

Then Hanuman, hearing the speech of tearful Janaki, resumed, "O worshipful lady ! I swear that Ram is indifferent about everything. Heroic Lakshman too is sorrowfully passing his days seeing this change in Ram. Now, with great difficulty I have found thee out. Don't despair, Ram will soon remove your sorrows.

Ram and Lakshman, eager to see you, will reduce the three worlds into ashes. The great hero, Ram, will carry thee to Ayodhya after destroying Ravan with his followers. O worshipful lady ! Give me some other token that Ram may instantly recognise, and that will be greatly delightful to him."

Thereupon, Janaki said, "O Messenger, I have given you the best token, Ram will fondly look at it and believe your words." Then Hanuman prepared to start after greeting Janaki. At this, Janaki said with tearful eyes, "O messenger, ask on my behalf about the welfare of Ram Lakshman and Sugriva with his counsellors. Ask Ram kindly to rescue me without delay. Tell him about my sorrows and the harsh reproaches of the Rakshasis. What shall I say more ? May you now safely return."

After taking leave from Janaki, Hanuman thought, "I have found out Janaki, I have hardly any other object for coming here. The only thing that remains, is to ascertain the power of the enemy, but that must not be done by gifts etc. but by punishment. Treaty with Rakshasas will be of no use ; gifts will not prevail over wealth ; nor it is easy to sow dissensions amongst the Rakshasas proud of their prowess. So it is expedient to resort to might. Without this I do not see any other way of ascertaining their strength. Besides, if the Rakshasas meet with defeat at my hand, Ravan's ardour in the future fight will surely be damped. Though king Sugriva has not given me any direction about it, but no guilt attaches to the envoy who after

accomplishing his main object does something else. I have found out Janaki now, and if I can gather something important concerning our own strength and that of the enemy in battle then his mission will be complete in every respect. How my arrival be a precursor of good? How their real strength can be ascertained? This day, I shall see Ravan with his ministers and followers and then shall easily be able to ascertain his real motive and strength. After this I shall return from this place."

"This Asoka garden is full of trees and creepers and is pleasant to the eyes like the celestial garden of Nandan". I shall destroy this garden as fire reduces dry logs into ashes. Certainly, Ravan will be greatly enraged at this and will appear on the scene with his army. Then I shall fight against the formidable Rakshasas and after destroying them shall return to Sugriva." After deciding this, Hanuman began to break down the Asoka woods in anger, and felled down trees with great violence, as if uprooted by the force of the wind. Then the birds began to cry in fear, the coppery leaves of the forest became tarnished, summits of the sporting hills were crushed, waters of the tanks and pools were agitated, and trees were levelled to the ground. Grottos, art-galleries began to run to and fro in all directions. And the Asoka forest was divested of its beauty like that of a burnt down forest, and it then appeared like an intoxicated damsel whose cloth had slipped from her body. In fact, Asoka garden was in a wretched plight at the hand of

Hanuman. Hanuman then climbed the gate of the garden to fight single-handed with odds.<sup>1</sup>

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## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE FIRST CLASH

The Rakshasis of Lanka got frightened at the sound of breaking of the trees and cries of birds. Beasts and birds were running in every direction, and there were evil portents everywhere. Many of the Rakshasis were asleep, on awaking they found Hanuman seated upon the arch of the garden gate after the destruction of the Asoka forest.

At that time, Hanuman grew quite formidable and fearful at the sight of the Rakshasis. Thereupon the panick-stricken Rakshasis questioned Janaki about it, "O Janaki! Who is this Vanara? Whose spy is he? Whence and why has he come? Why were you talking with him? O large-eyed beauty, do not be afraid, please tell us what the Vanara has told you?"

Then Janaki replied, "you see, how is it possible for me to read the motives of the Rakshasas, capable of assuming different forms at will. You know best who is that Vanara and what is his object. Some Rakshasa has come here assuming this guise. This is all that I

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<sup>1</sup> Ram and Sita are now worshipped as two divinities, which might have its origin first as a form of hero-worship. The following Chapter (canto) will conclusively prove human weakness and timid feminine nature of Sita and we should remember that Poetry suffers more than gains from supernatural elements.

have understood and I have been greatly frightened by it."<sup>1</sup>

Then the Rakshasis hurriedly ran away from that place. Some of them appeared before Ravan and said, "O Rakshasa king! A dreadful Vanara is seated upon the gate. We earnestly asked Janaki, but she did not wish to disclose the identity of the Vanara. The Vanara has destroyed your Asoka garden. He is a spy of either Indra or Kuvera, or Ram has sent him to know the whereabouts of Sita. However, that strange Vanara has destroyed your Asoka woods. He has destroyed everything, but has not touched even the shadow of the tree under which Janaki is seated. The object of sparing that tree might be either the safety of Janaki, or fatigue of the Vanara. But there is no question of his fatigue. He has certainly spared Janaki. The only tree he has spared, is the great leafy Sinshapa tree under which Janaki sits. Just punish him severely, he has destroyed your pleasure-garden. Sita has capti-

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<sup>1</sup> This is a lie but exigency justifies Sita to throw them off their guard. The story of the Ramayan that is based upon unflinching devotion to truth, presents here evidently an inconsistent picture. This logically leads to the question can there be any absolute right or wrong, or any absolute truth or falsehood? Morality depends upon the totality of conditions under which an agent acts, in ethical language, upon intention. Now, taking Sita's intention into consideration along with circumstances under which Sita spoke, it will appear like a piece of "white lie" by which she attempted to save herself from further persecution that might even lead to her death. Who would blame Desdimona for her lies to save her dear Othello?—Translator.

vated your heart and who else except he who has no love for his life dares to talk to her ?”

At this news Ravan was inflamed with rage. as a funeral pyre leaps into flame. Tears rolled down his eyes as drops of oil fall from a burning wick. Then he at once sent his warlike servants to secure Hanuman. At his command eighty thousand servants set out equipped with maces and mallets. They eagerly proceeded to capture Hanuman:

At that time Hanuman was waiting at the gate, determined for the fight. The Rakshasas came before him as moths drawn by the glare of a flame. Some of them were armed with club, some with lance, some with Pattish, some with shafts, some with Argala, some with Prosa and some with Taunara. At their sight Hanuman, huge as a mountain, began to lash his tail repeatedly on the ground and roared like a lion. He began to beat his tail on the ground filling the city of Lanka with its noise. The birds fell down from the sky at its clapping sound, Hanuman became quite restive with the ardour for fight. He proclaimed from the top of his voice, “Victory to Ram, to Lakshman and to Sugriva. I am the son of the Wind-god. I am servant of Ram, king of Ayodhya, and my name is Hanuman. When I shall hurl down stones thousands of Ravanas will not be my match. All the Rakshasas will witness today that I shall go away after destroying Lanka and greeting Janaki afterwards.”

Then the Rakshasas were greatly frightened at the terrible roar of Hanuman. They saw him above hanging like an evening cloud. He was ever uttering

Ram's name so they became fully convinced that he was an emissary of Ram. Then they surrounded him with dreadful weapons. Being thus besieged by the enemies on all sides Hanuman took off a huge bolt from the gate and attacked them with that, and like Indra engaged in the destruction of the Asuras he began to slay them by that bolt. Sometimes with the bolt in his hand, he appeared like Garuda ranging in the sky. After the death of those servants Hanuman again sat upon the gate for further fight.

Then the survivors beat a hasty retreat and informed Ravan about the destruction of his servants at the hand of the Vanara. At this Ravan burned with rage and addressing Jamvumali, son of Prahasta, said, "O hero! Get yourself ready to set out for battle without further delay."

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## CHAPTER XXX.

### JAMVUMALI'S FLIGHT.

After the destruction of the servants<sup>1</sup> Hanuman thought within himself, "I have destroyed the pleasure-garden now, I shall demolish that high temple<sup>2</sup> like the cliff of the Sumeru mountain." Thus resolving in his mind he stood up with a bound. At that time he shone like the Sun in effulgence. He broke down the temple by his strength and after expanding his body he began

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<sup>1</sup> Retinue of Ravan.

<sup>2</sup> Chaityaprasad means a building designed for deities.

to strike his arms.<sup>1</sup> Its sounds filled Lanka with thundering echoes and the sentries of the temple fainted in fear. In the meantime Hanuman declared in the top of his voice, "Victory to Ram, Lakshman and to Sugriva, protected by Ram. I am a servant of Ram and my name is Hanuman. The Rakshasas will witness me this day to return after the destruction of Lanka."

Hanuman thus set up terrible roars and the keepers of the temple rushed towards him with various weapons from all sides. And as they began to strike from all sides they resembled like a whirlpool of the Ganges. Thereupon Hanuman broke down a huge pillar, ornamented with gold and hundred borders, and began to whirl it in great speed. Fire was produced by the friction of the pillar and the whole palace was set ablaze by that fire. In the meantime Hanuman slew a number of Rakshasas by hurling down stones and trees. Seeing the palace burning, Hanuman addressing them from above said, "You see, there are many like me in the service of Sugriva. They are ranging over the earth at Sugriva's command. Of them, some have the strength of ten elephants and some possess the strength of thousand elephants. Some have the speed of the wind and some are quite irresistible. For your destruction the king of the Kapis will soon come here followed by a vast number of followers like me. When you have incurred enmity with Ram none of the Rakshasas and nothing of Lanka will survive."

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<sup>1</sup> By way of challenge as wrestlers do when they challenge their rivals in the wrestling ground.

Here at the command of Ravan Jamvumali set out for battle. He had a red cloth in his wearing and a red garland on his neck and he wore decent ear-rings. His eyes were ever revolving. He was unconquerable and haughty and he bent a vast bow like that of Indra, filling all quarters with thundering sound by the twang of his bow.

Hanuman was then seated on the arch of the gate. Seeing Jamvumali coming in a chariot driven by the asses, Hanuman began to roar in delight. Then a fierce fight ensued between the two. Jamvumali aimed hundred sharp arrows at Hanuman, and he hit Hanuman's face with two crescents; head with one Karni, and two arms with ten Narachas. Hanuman's face was by nature red and being smitten with arrows it grew crimsoned like a big red lotus bloomed by the rays of the autumnal sun. He was extremely enraged at this and he took up a huge stone that lay by him and hurled it with great violence. Thereupon Jamvumali pierced him with ten shafts in great anger. Hanuman finding that huge stone thrown in vain, uprooted a mighty Sal tree and began to whirl it in great speed. Thereupon, Jamvumali showered arrows upon him. He cut down the Sal tree with four arrows, and struck his arms with five shafts and pierced his chest and nipple with ten arrows. Then Hanuman greatly expanded his body, and being exceedingly enraged took up that bolt and hurled it in great violence against his his enemy's breast. Jamvumali's head and thighs were crushed by that bolt; his bows, arrows, horses and chariot and all came to an end.

Then, the Rakshasa King, Ravan, was beside himself in rage at the news of Jamvumali's death. His red eyes began to revolve in rage and he immediately asked the sons of his Counsellors to meet Hanuman in fight.

Thereupon, the fiery sons of the counsellors got themselves ready for battle. They were skilled in arms and were foremost of the warriors. Every one of them was burnt with the desire for victory. Then they set out in their chariots adorned with golden networks, decorated with pinions and flag-staffs and drawn by horses, proceeding with a deep rumbling noise. A good number of soldiers followed. In delight of battle they began to draw their bows plated with gold. Their mothers hearing about the destruction of the retinues became extremely anxious for their lives.

Then the sons of the Counsellors adorned with ornaments hurriedly appeared before the gate and showering arrows like rain roared like deep rumbling clouds of the rainy season. Then the heroic Hanuman being covered with their arrows became invisible like the Himalayas at the fall of the Rakshasas, he ranged in the clear sky with great speed. As the wind plays with clouds adorned with the rainbow so Hanuman began to sport with those heroes armed with bows. Then he suddenly displayed his powers against them by startling them with his deep roar. He slapped some of them, fisted some of them, and some of them he tore with his sharp nails and teeth. He slew some of them by striking against their breasts and some by

crushing their thighs ; some of them fell on the ground being unable to stand his thundering roars'

At this, the soldiers were stricken with panic and ran away in different directions. The elephants roared in fright and horses fell down on the ground, and the field of battle was covered with parts of crushed chariots, broken flag staffs, torn umbrellas and blood flowed in torrents. Hanuman again ascended the gate ready for further fight.

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## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE THIRD CLASH.

Hearing about the death of the sons of the Counsellors with great patience, Ravana restored the equanimity of mind. Then addressing five captains of his army, Virupaksha, Yupaksha, Durdharsha, Praghosa, and Bhasakarna said, "Captains ! Soon set out with army for battle and punish that Vanara properly ; being engaged in fight with that Vanara be always on your alert and act with a due sense of time and place, i. e., with a knowledge of the situation. All that I could gather from his conduct that he is not an ordinary Vanara ! he must be some other mighty being. I can never believe him to be a Vanara. Perhaps Indra has created him in order to do mischief to me. Many a time I have scored victory over the Gods, Asuras, Nagas, Yakshas and the Maharshis. Now they may do us mischief. I have no more doubts about it. Now go and capture the Vanara by force. Start immediately with troops and subdue him ; it is not proper to slight a mighty warrior. Before this I have seen many

Vanaras, Vali, Sugriva, Jamvuvan, Neela, Dvidida and others, but none so irresistible; nor in intelligence, energy and strength are like him, nor they can assume such a tall and formidable shape at will. Certainly, some other creature has come assuming the shape of a Vanar. Exert yourself utmost to chastise him properly. Though the Gods, the Asuras and the human beings cannot stand before you in battle, still defend yourself carefully. You see there is no certainty which side will win in war, so be always on guard."

Then the leaders of the army issued forth with fiery energy. A number of chariots, elephants, and horses followed them,

Here, Hanuman was seated upon the gate like the glaring sun. He was highly intelligent and huge in bulk and was eagerly waiting for the fight. The sons of the councillors at his sight surrounded him on all sides and attacked him with dreadful weapons. The great hero, Durdhara discharged five sharp shafts with golden blades like the leaves of a lotus. Being pierced by those arrows Hanuman filled the sky with his terrific roars. Then Durdhara approached him, by showering arrows upon him. Hanuman stopped him by his roar and being smitten by his arrows, Hanuman began to increase in dimension. Then he leaped up to a great height and then fell, like lightning, in violent speed on Durdhara's chariot. Thereupon eight steeds, wheels and poles of the chariot were broken, and Durdhara was crushed to death.

Hanuman again rose in the sky. Then Virupaksha and Yupaksha angrily approached him and bit his chest

with two clubs, Hanuman resisting that blow again descended on the ground and crushed their heads uprooting a huge Sal tree from the ground.

Then heroic Praghasa approached with a cheerful countenance. Bhasakarna too angrily came forward with a lance, Praghasa threw a Pattisha and Bhasakarna a lance at him. Being wounded by that dart and Pattisha Hanuman began to bleed from all his body, and then he looked red like the newly risen sun. Then he took up mountain cliff<sup>1</sup> in anger and struck them with it and crushed them into atoms.

Then Hanuman became busy in attacking and destroying the surviving. He slew horse by horse and elephant by elephant. The field of battle became covered with the dead bodies of the Rakshasas, horses, elephants and broken parts of the chariot, Hanuman again ascended the gate like Death himself ready to strike.

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## CHAPTER XXXII

### PRINCE AKSHYA

Then, Ravana hearing of the destruction of the Counsellor's sons with their carriers, cast his eyes upon prince Akshya happened to be before him. Akshya

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<sup>1</sup> It is now beyond our power of comprehension to follow the details of the fight intelligently. Many things appear to us quite unintelligible. Literal interpretation does not help us in these things. To them who believe in miracles it affords no perplexity, but to a simple reader they are simply dark oracles. If we eliminate the supernatural elements it appears something like a guerilla warfare,—Translator.

was very eager for it. Having got the slightest hint from Ravan, he stood up like a tongue of flame fed by clarified butter. He got upon a chariot radiant as the rising sun and embellished with a golden net-work and set out with bow plated with gold. His chariot was adorned with flags (obtained by penance) and jewelled flag-staffs. Eight steeds were carrying it and it was equipped with sky-ranging arms. Eight sharp swords were suspended from golden ropes from eight points of the chariot, and arrows, Saktis and Tomagas. frightful as the sun and the moon, were kept in their proper places. It was unassailable by the Gods and was bright as the lightning. Prince Akshya, mighty as a God, set out in that for fight. The heaven and the earth were filled with the echoes of the neighing of the horses, trumpets of the elephants and of the rumbling noise of the chariot. He came with his army before Hanuman. At that Hanuman shone like Doomsdayfire ready to consume everything. He saw Akshya and he gazed at him with admiration and surprise. At that time prince Akshya too looked at him with the cruel stare of a lion. Considering Hanuman's impetuosity and his own prowess he glowed in valour like the sun on the expiration of a Cycle of creation. Hanuman was formidable and his prowess was an worthy object of sight and he signalled him to fight by throwing three shafts at him. Hanuman was proud of fight and langour could touch him. He was skilled in victory and prince Aksha looked at him with winkless eyes.

Then that highly-spirited hero approached Hanu-

man for battle. The meeting of these two worthy rivals filled the Gods and the Assuras with fear. Seeing them ready to put their prowess to proof the sun grew dim, the wind ceased to blow, the rocks became restive, the creatures began to shriek in fear, and the sky and the sea were deeply disturbed by their fearful echoes. Prince Akshya was versed and highly skilful in fixing and discharging his arrows in battle and a sure aim, and his rage increased he pierced Hanuman's head with golden shafts. Blood then flowed from Hanuman's head and his eyes began to roll. He looked like the newly-risen sun.

Hanuman was glad to meet Aksha in fight and began to increase in bulk. In anger he became incapable of being stared upon like the meridian Sun, and it seemed as if he would burn Akshya by the fire of his eyes, and heroic Akshya looked like a cloud of the rainy season, his bow was shooting incessant arrows like rains upon Hanuman. At his sight Hanuman roared in battle with delight, Prince Akshya was young and his nature was child-like; he was proud of his strength, his eyes grew red with rage and he approached Hanuman hitting incessantly with arrows, as an elephant approaches a well concealed in grass. Being smitten by the arrows Hanuman set up a terrible roar, flinging out his arms and his legs and darted into the sky with fierce energy. Prince Akshya the Rakshasa hero, ran after him, and as the clouds rain hail-stones upon the mountain so Akshya showered incessant arrows on him. Exceedingly strong Hanuman was swift like the flight of mind, and began to

range the sky behind the screen of arrows. Akshya's arrows were thus rendered futile.

Hanuman respectfully gazed at Akshya and thought of the ways of displaying his valour. In the meantime Akshya's arrow in great velocity pierced his side. Hanuman thus being smitten, set up a fiercer roar. He was skilled in battle and thought. "This hero is a boy like the newly risen Sun, but he is displaying prowess and valour like a mature man. He is highly skilled in battle, but yet I have no mind to slay him. He is strong, cautious, and possesses great power of endurance. The saints, Nagas and Yakshas will be surprised by his valour. He is extremely quick and he is now casting repeated glances at me at close quarters without any fear. To speak the truth, even the Gods and the Asuras get frightened by his prowess. If I slight him any way, surely I shall be defeated then. Besides the prowess of this hero is ever increasing so it is better to kill him, it is no way proper to disregard a growing flame."

Thus after discussing about the prowess of the enemy and thinking of the course of his actions Hanuman decided to slay Akshya. Hanuman smote down eight steeds of Akshya trained in various kinds of movements and capable of carrying heavy loads, and crushed the chariot with its pole and axles by one fist blow.

Thereupon Akshya jumped upon the ground and then immediately sprang into the sky holding a sword in his hand, it seemed as if a saint was bound for the heaven after casting off the body.

Then Hanuman firmly caught hold of the two legs of the hero and whirling him round and round like a snake held by the bird Garuda, dashed him on the ground with violent force. The arms, thighs, waist and chest of Akshya were at once crushed into atoms, No trace of eyes was visible. Blood flowed in stream and prince Akshya was at once destroyed.

At this Indra and other Gods, Yakshas, Uragas, and the sages gazed upon Hanuman with admiration and astonishment. Hanuman again climbed upon the gate like Death, himself ready for destruction.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII

### THE FOURTH CLASH

The Rakshasa king Ravan was greatly alarmed at the news of Akshas's death. After containing himself with difficulty he spoke to Indrajit, mighty as God'.

"My son! You are the foremost of the heroes, the Gods and the Asuras are afflicted by your prowess in battle; the God have witnessed your valour and being even under protection of Indra they could not bear thy onslaught: you have secured divine arms by the grace of Brahma, the lord of the creation; only you never become fatigued in battle; you are intelligent, you never miss any opportunity, you never neglect time and place; you are protected by your own valour and ascetic merit. There is no impossible feat for you in the field of battle. Who is there in the three worlds that is not aware of your prowess and skill in arms? Your valour, your spiritual powers and strength, are quite worthy of you, and my mind is never down with anxiety for you thinking that you will be victorious even in arduous fight. My boy! Thy retinue have been destroyed; Jamvumali, five captains and the sons of the Counsellors have been slain. A number of chariots, elephants and horses have been destroyed, heroic Mahadara and prince Akshya have also fallen. But I did not depend on them as I do upon you. Now act, taking into consideration the destruction of troops, prowess of the Vanara and your own strength. Do what you think

best after considering the strength of your own side and that of the foe, so that the enemy may be chastised. I further forbid you not to take any troops with you, they are dying by numbers at the hand of the Vanara nor use thunderbolt like arms; that fire-like Vanara is invulnerable to such weapons; his strength is unimpairable. Now think over what I have said to you and be earnest about victory in battle. You have command over several celestial arms; think of them and be careful about your self-protection. It is not proper for me to send you to such a dangerous situation, but it is sanctioned by the conduct of the Kshatriya as well as by royal polity. It is proper for a warrior to enquire in what things' the enemy is proficient and his efficiency in battle and it is his duty to endeavour for victory."

Then Indrajit, mighty as a God to set out in order for battle wheeled round his father. Friends and relations present praised him repeatedly and Indrajit became eager for fight. And that effulgent son of Ravan having expansive eyes like the petals of a lotus issued forth like unto the rising of the sea during a Parva<sup>2</sup> Then Indrajit of irresistible might got upon a car drawn by four horses of tremendous speed and endowed with strong, sharp teeth. That master of chariot, the foremost of bowmen, the best of the fencers and conversant with the use of all arms, soon proceeded in his car

<sup>1</sup> In what branches of learning Sastras.

<sup>2</sup> The 8th and 14th day of each lunar month.

where Hanuman was. And hearing the deep rumbling noise of the car and the twang of his bow, Hanuman felt delighted at his heart. Indrajit rushed towards him in great speed. He sat in battle-delight, all the quarters became dark and jackals began to cry. The Nagas, Yakshas, Maharshis, the Sidhas, the heavenly bodies and the birds gathered under the sky began to make a great noise.

Hanuman began to emit heroic roars and became dilated in rage seeing Indrajit's car, having a flag like that of Indra approaching quickly. Indrajit held a wonderful bow, bright as lightning, and he began to flourish and stretch it, producing a deep rumbling sound like the thunder. Then closed in conflict between two formidable rivals, both were strong, fearless and quick. It seemed as if the lord of the Devas and the lord of the Asuras met each other in fight.

Then the great hero, Indrajit began to shoot his arrows against Hanuman and Hanuman after baffling them got into the sky and began to tread in the passage of his father, the wind God. Thereupon Indrajit discharged sharp, feathered arrows painted in gold, with the velocity of lightning. The field

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1 It may not be irrelevant to remind our readers that according to historical interpretation of some of the old Vedic legends Suras and Asuras represented two rival branches of the Aryan people and there was continual hostility between the two sections, and victory was some times on this side and sometimes on the other.

of battle was filled with the rattling sound of the chariot and with the sounds of bugles, drums and twangs of the bow. Hanuman again got into the sky, and he would at first stand before the arrows and then as soon as they were discharged he would soar in the sky and would move beyond the range of those arrows. Both were quick, both were heroic and one became unbearable to the other. Seeing thus unhurt though aimed at with infallible arrows Indrajit began to think. He found that Hanuman could not be slain, so he began to think of some means by which he could be bound. He then discharged the weapon given to him by Brahma not to kill Hanuman but to bind him down. Thus Hanuman's hands and feet being bound, he became motionless and fell on the ground. Though bound up by the weapon of Brahma still he depended upon the grace of Brahma and thought of the former's blessings towards him. He thought it was impossible to free himself from the bondage of that weapon of Brahma, the lord of the creation, so he must endure it for sometime. Hanuman then recollected Brahma's boons towards him and realised that he would be soon set free. Thinking all this, he respectfully submitted to the chastisement of Brahma. He further recollected, "Brahma, Indra and the Wind-God are ever protecting me, therefore I am lying here in bondage without any fear. Now it will be of great advantage to me if the Rakshasas now take me in, for I shall then be able to talk to Ravan. So Let the enemies take me now without any further delay."

Then the Rakshasas secured him by force and used various abusive expressions towards him. Hanuman gave up all efforts and began to groan. Then the Rakshasas began to bind him firmly with ropes spun from jute and the bark of trees. Hanuman thought "If Ravan would like to see me out of curiosity then my object will be attained." Thus thinking he bore the pain of bondage and the abuses.

In the meantime, he was suddenly released from the bondage by the blessings of Brahma. Then Hanuman was beaten by the dreadfully strong fisted Rakshasas.

Ravan was seated in the Assemblyhall surrounded by the ministers and the courtiers, when Indrajit appeared before him taking Hanuman with him, Hanuman looked like an infuriated elephant tied in chains. At his sight, the Rakshasas repeatedly asked, "Who is this Vanara ? Whose son is he ? Whence and why has he come ? At whose assurance he has become so fearless ?"

Many angrily remarked. "Kill this Villain instantly", "Burn him." Devour him " cried out some, Then the grim-visaged Rakshasas began to drag Hanuman to and fro. Spirited Hanuman then beheld Ravan <sup>1</sup> seated in a jewelled room with old

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<sup>1</sup> Through so many pages of description uptill now only in two instances in P. 459 and in the next chapter we get description of Ravan as with ten heads. Ofcourse, none

counsellors at his feet. His eyes were rolling in anger and at the sight of Hanuman he beckoned his counsellors—well-behaved and born of highly respectable families to ascertain his identity and they interrogated Hanuman at whose instance he had come and his object of coming to Lanka. Hanuman replied "I am an emissary of Sugriva the lord of the Kapis, and have come here at his command.'

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

##### IN THE PRESENCE OF RAVAN.

Ravan, the Rakshasa lord, was seated in the royal assembly hall. His golden diadem was studded with pearls and his person was adorned with diamonds and precious gems. He was smeared with red sandal paste and he wore a very costly piece of silk. His eyes were red and dreadful, his teeth were firm and white and his lips were hanging. As the Mandar shines with its summits, so he appeared exceedingly beautiful with his ten heads. His hue was of collyrium-blue, and had a gold chain on his breast. He looked like a mass of clouds tinged by the rays of the sun. His arms were smeared with sandal paste and adorned with Angada, that looked

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should be too much critical about these poetical hyperboles. Hydraheaded monsters were common tricks of poetical fancy to strike terror into the minds of the people.

(Vide foot note on page.459)

like a penta-headed snake. His seat was made of crystal, wrought with gems, and covered with a sheet. A number of beautiful damsels were fanning him with chowris.

Durdhara, Prahasta, Mahaparsha and Nikumba—these four counsellors—were seated at a short distance from him, while other counsellors of beautiful appearance were consoling him with their assurances.

Hanuman smarting under the bondage, in great astonishment gazed at him with red-hot eyes. Being dazed by Ravan's effulgence, Hanuman mused within his mind, "O, how beautiful is this hero! What patience, what strength, what beauty and what auspicious marks does he possess! If he were not vicious then he could have been the protector of heaven, nay even of Indra. But his acts are cruel and ugly, this is why even the Gods and the Asuras are frightened by his sight. This hero being angry can reduce the earth into sea."

Seeing spirited Hanuman before him, Ravan grew restive, there were many misgivings in his mind and he thought, "Is he worshipful Nandi<sup>1</sup> who being angry at my jeering at him cursed me in the Kailasha, has come here in the form of a Vanara, or he is Vana himself, the King of the Asuras?"

Thus debating in mind, Ravan with red-hot eyes, said to Prahasta, "Ask that villain whence and

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1 An attendant of Siva, whom Ravan formerly laughed at for his monkey-like-face.

why has he come here? What is the reason of his breaking the trees? My city is quite inaccessible, why has he entered it? What is the cause of his fight with the Rakshasas?"

Thereupon, Prahasta at the command of Ravan told Hanuman, "Take heart, O Vanara. Tell the truth, has not Indra sent you to this city of Lanka? Don't be afraid, you will be immediately set at liberty. Tell me whether you are an emissary of Kuvera, Yama or Varuna? Have you entered the City at their directions secretly by assuming the form of a Vanara? Or has Vishnu ever longing for victory sent you here? You only look like a Vanara, but in valour you are not like one of the race of the Vanaras, Tell the truth, and you will at once be set free. But if you tell lies, you will be put to death."

Then Hanuman said to Ravan, "I am not a secret spy of Indra. Yama or Varuna. I have no friendship with Kuvera, nor Lord Vishnu has sent me hither. I am a real Vanara and belong to the race of the Vanaras. I have come here just to have your sight, but finding it difficult to get access to you, I have destroyed the pleasure-garden. Then the Rakshasas came to fight with me and I fought against them for self-defence. On account of the boon from Brahma, even the Gods and the Asuras cannot bind me, but I have suffered myself thus to be tied down just for having a sight of you. And the Rakshasas have brought me in your presence. I am a

messenger of heroic Ram and listen what I say for your own good."

"O King ! I have come to you at the command of Sugriva. the lord of the Kapis. That Sugriva enquires after your welfare. Listen what he has communicated to you for your good in this world as well as in the next."

"In Ayodhya there was a King named Dasarath. He ruled over the subjects as their father. Ram is his eldest son, and he with his brother, Lakshman, and his wife, Janaki, came to the Dandaka forest at the command of his father. Pious Ram missed his wife in Janasthan. In the course of his search for Janaki, Ram with Lakshman arrived at the Rishyamukha hill and became acquainted with Sugriva. Sugriva promised to find out whereabouts of Janaki and Ram too promised to confer the Vanara Kingdom on him. Then slaying Vali with one shaft. Ram gave Sugriva the lordship over the Vanaras and the Bhallukas. O Rakshasa Chief, you know Vali very well, and Ram slew him with a single shaft."

"Then Sugriva eager for the search of Janaki, sent the Vanaras in various directions. Host of Vanaras are searching for Janaki on land and air. Of them, some are like Garura in speed and some are irresistible as the Wind. For Janaki, I have crossed hundred Yoyanas of the sea and have come here to see you. I am begotten of the Wind-God and my name is Hanuman. While wandering forth

hither and thither I beheld Janaki in your palace. You are cognisant of righteousness, you covet for wealth and have secured plenty through your ascetic powers, so it is not proper for you to confine another's wife. An intelligent person like you is never engaged in acts which are unjust and injurious. O King ! There is none in the three worlds who can be happy by incurring hostility with Ram. The Gods and the Asuras cannot stand before the arrows, shot by Ram and Lakshman in anger. So listen to my words conducive to good for all times and return Janaki to Ram. I have met here Janaki. It is difficult to have her sight. I have seen her and Ram will do the rest. Janaki is afflicted with sorrow, and you know not that she is residing in your palace like a penta-headed snake (for your destrutruction). You see as one cannot digest poison by his power of assimilating food, so it is not at all easy even for the Gods and the Asuras to hush up every thing by confining her in secrecy."

"By virtue of religious penance, you have acquired long life and divine prosperity, but you should not spoil that merit by marrying another's wife." It is for your virtue that you are incapable of being destroyed by the Gods and the Asuras. But Sugriva, the King of the Kapis, is not a God, a Yaksha or a Rakshasa ; by nationality he is a Vanara and Ram is a human being. Tell

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1 The word is Parigraha that means marriage ; in this sense it has been used in Sakuntala ; here of course it means adultery with another's wife.

me how will you protect yourself from them? Happiness is the reward of Virtue, it is seldom possible to enjoy happiness along with pain of the fruit of vice, nor can former virtue nullify subsequent vice. O king you have enjoyed sufficient happiness in the past, now you will have to suffer immensely. Good many Raksaasas have lost their lives in the Janasthan, the great hero Vali has fallen on the field of battle, and Ram has contracted friendship with Sugriva. Now just think what can be good for you. You see, I can alone destroy the city of Lanka with its elephants and horses, but Ram has not given me any direction for it. He would himself destroy the abductor of his wife, thus he swore before the Vanaras and the Bhallukas. King of the Rakshasas! You are only an ordinary person, even Indra himself can't be happy by incurring hostility with Ram. She, whom you know to be Janaki and who is confined in your abode, is the fatal Night that forbodes destruction to Lanka! Don't have that noose of Death in the form of Sita round your neck. Do thou rather think of thy welfare. You will soon find Lanka on flames fed by the wrath of Ram and consumed by the energy of Sita. Don't bring ruin for your own fault upon your sons, wives, counsellors and friends. Don't lose immense wealth. I am by nationality a Vanara, I am an emissary and servant of Ram; what I tell you is true, listen to my words. Heroic Ram can recreate the world after destroying it. His prowess is like that of Vishnu, none amongst the Gods, Asuras, Yakshas, Urugas Vidyadharas, Gandharvas,

Siddhas, Kinnaras or amongst beasts and birds can be his match. It will be extremely difficult for you to save your life after doing harm to him. the lord of the three worlds and the king of kings. There is none in the three worlds who can challenge him in battle ; neither Brahma himself, nor Rudra, the destroyer of Tripura, nor Indra, the king of Gods, can stand before his shaft,"

## CHAPTER XXXV

### RAVAN'S REPLY

Then Ravan, the king of the Rakshasas, became greatly enraged at these words of Hanuman. His red-hot eyes began to roll, and he at once ordered the executioners to put him to death. Hanumau was an envoy and Vibhishana could not approve of his death-sentence, but Ravan was beside himself in rage, and finding the death of an envoy almost imminent, he began to reflect what was to be done to pacify his worshipful elder brother. He then said, "O Lord ! Please stop, kindly listen to my words. Those kings who can judge about the gravity and levity of acts never intend to put envoys to death. This is against righteousness and custom, so it is not at all proper for you. You are virtuous, wise and well-versed in politics : if a man like you is swayed by anger, mastery over the Shastras, and all toil, in order to attain it, is in vain. Be pleased and consider what is right and wrong."

Then Ravan enraged with Vibhishana's words said, "O hero! there is no sin in putting a sinful person to death, so I shall immediately put him to death."

Hearing these unjust words of Ravan, Vibhishana with sound words began, "O King, be propitious, listen to my just and well-meaning words, My Lord! An envoy is not to be put to death at the time of discharging his duties. True, he is a formidable enemy and much mischief has been committed by him, yet none will approve of his death. Whipping, disfiguring the body, or shaving the head (by way of insult), all these punishments have been sanctioned towards the envoy but we have never heard sentence of death passed upon an envoy. Your goal is righteousness, you can fully judge what is good or bad, so anger is indeed reprehensible in a person like you. Those who are wise never indulge in angry passion. Neither in religious discussion, nor in social customs, nor in right interpretation of the Shastras there is any who can approach you. O hero! You are, in truth, the foremost amongst the Gods and the Asuras. You will reap the benefit by putting the Vanara to death, you should punish him who has sent him hither. You see, this Vanara has been sent by another person; he has come with another's words, he is not independent, hence it is not proper to put him to death. O King! If this one is slain no other sky-ranger would come<sup>1</sup> to Lanka, so you

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1 Another reading :—"I don't see any other who can arrive at this city of Lanka."

should not put him to death, rather slay Indra and other Gods that will immensely prove your prowess. Besides, those two human princes are haughty and hostile to you, and if this Vanara is put to death, who will incite them to battle? I don't find any one else. At this moment, the Rakshasas are impatient to display their valour, don't disappoint them by putting obstacles to it they are ever obedient servants, and always think of your welfare. They are devoted to you and are intent upon your well-being; born of high families, they are the foremost of the warriors. Surely, having these fiery heroes on your side the glory of victory will be yours. So let a section of the force march this day under your orders and bring those foolish princes here. It is desirable on all hands to show your valour to your enemy."

Thereupon, the lord of the Rakshasas, the potent enemy of the celestials, accepted the excellent words of his younger brother.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### LANKA IN FLAMES

Hearing these well-meaning words of Vibhishana Ravan said, "O hero ! You have said what is right; it is improper to kill an envoy, but it has become expedient to punish him somehow. You see the tail is dear to the Vanaras and it is their ornament, so burn it soon. When he will return with the burnt

tail<sup>1</sup> his friends and acquaintances will find him disfigured and crest-fallen." Thus awarding this sentence to Hanuman, addressing the Rakshasas Ravan said, "Soon set fire to the tail of this Vanara and when his tail will be on flames carry him on shoulders all over the city."

Thereupon, at the command of Ravan, the angry Rakshasas began to wrap his tail with torn cotton fabrics. In the meantime. Hanuman began, to be dilated, as fire grows in volume fed by dried woods of forest. The Rakshasas then sprinkled oil over his tail and set fire to it. Hanuman grew angry and began to strike the Rakshasas with his flaming tail. The Rakshasas began to bind Hanuman. Then, all the Rakshasas—old, young, males and females—became exceedingly glad at that sight. Then Hanuman thought, "Though I am in bondage now, yet the Rakshasas won't be able to stand my might. I shall tear off this bondage and kill all of them. They have bound me at the command of wicked Ravan, but they could not deal with me adequately for the wrong I have done for the benefit of Ram. To tell the truth, I can alone destroy all the

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<sup>1</sup> Evidently it refers to a monkey of *Simia Sinica* species, still my conviction is that Hanuman is not an ape or monkey. The expression even here may be taken in a figurative sense. Admiral Drake after burning down a Spanish ship jocosely remarked that he had singed the beard of the Spanish King. Of course, it is difficult to be positive, yet the probability is great that he was a man.

Rakshasas, but Ram will do it himself, so I should suffer this bondage for some time. Now let the Rakshasas range Lanka with me. At night, I could not see inaccessible places, and I shall see them in course of this. Let the Rakshasas bind me. I am suffering no doubt from the burning of my tail, but my mind is not in any way overcome."

Then, the Rakshasas in great delight took Hanuman in their custody and proclaimed about the punishment by blowing conch shells and trumpets. Hanuman carried on their backs saw with delight variegated cars, enclosed court yards, well-laid terraces, streets thronged with edifices, crossings' bye-ways and the interiors of dwellings. The Rakshasas proclaimed him as a spy all along the high-ways and public roads.

In the meantime, the ugly-looking Rakshasis went to Janaki and said, "The Rakshasas have set fire to the tail of the red-faced Vanara with whom you were talking and he is being dragged along through different streets."

Thereupon, Janaki grew extremely sad at this unpleasant news, and praying with devoutness the Fire that burnt close to her, she said, "If I have ever served my husband' if I am chaste, if I have any religious merit, if I have been the devoted wife of one alone, then prove yourself cool to Hanuman."

Thereupon that Fire began to burn in flames bending towards the right, and the fire burning in Hanuman's tail grew soothing and cool as snow. Then

Hanuman mused, "Fire is burning in my tail, but why it does not burn my body? Its flame is intensely glowing, yet why I do not feel any pain. Why contact of fire at the end of my tail feels cool as snow? I can easily discern that it is due to Ram's prowess. It is due to his prowess that I found the Mainaka in the midst of the sea when I crossed it. If the sea and the hill Mainaka could have behaved like that for Ram, there is no wonder that Fire will appear cool as snow. However, it is for Janaki's affection, Ram's valour' and for Fire's friendship with my father, that he is not burning me."

Hanuman again thought, "What! Low fellows like the Rakshasas would bind one like me at last? If I have any prowess at all I should teach them proper lesson." Thinking this, the great hero snapped his bonds and with one mighty spring got upon the high gate—lofty as a cliff. There was no crowd of the Rakshasas at that place. Getting there, he contracted his body within a moment, and the remaining of his bonds spontaneously slipped from him. He again grew tall eyeing and cast his glance around hither and thither, and round he saw a huge bolt standing against the gate. Taking that iron bolt in his hand he destroyed the sentries there. His tail was blazing at that time and he looked like the glaring sun quite incapable of being gazed at and he repeatedly cast his looks upon Lanka.

Hanuman then glowed with energy and thought, "What remains to be done? How shall I punish the Rakshasas more? I have broken the pleasure garden,

destroyed the Rakshasa-heroes and also a part of the army, now destruction of the forts remains and when it is done my labours will be crowned with success. By further slight efforts it will be accomplished. Fire is burning on my tail, and I shall propitiate it by burning the houses."

Thereupon the mighty Vanara with his burning tail, resembling a cloud with lightning, began to range with undaunted heart from house to house, from palace to palace, from garden to garden. Then the hero springing with the velocity of wind set fire to the house of Prahasta. At a short distance from it was Mahaparshas' dwelling and he jumped over it. The house began to burn as if with the Doomsday-fire. Then Hanuman, darting up, set fire to the dwellings of Vajradanstra, Shuka, Sarana, Indrajit, Jamvumali, Rashmikutu, Surya Shatru, Hraawskarma, Danstra, Ramasha, Yodhanmatta, Matta, Dhnajagrive, Viduytjibha, Ghora, Hastimukha, Karal, Vishala, Shonitaksha, Kumbhakarna, Makaraksha, Narantaka, Kumbha, Nikumbha, Yajna Shatru, Brahma Shatru. In succession he burnt all the houses leaving that of Vibhishan alone, the mansions of those Rakshasas were reared with great costs and they were reduced to ashes with their immense wealth. Gradually Hanuman approached the royal palace.

It was high as the Manadara hill and adorned with jewels and Hanuman having set fire to it by his flaming tail, began to roar like a cloud that might rise on the Day of Dissolution, And that fire

being fed by the wind began to spread on all sides, and at that time it seemed as if Doomsday-fire was going to reduce everything to ashes. Then big mansions wrought with pearls and gems and furnished with golden nets began to crumble down, as if the Siddhas were falling down from the heaven at the expiry of their religious reward, Groans and shrieks rose from all sides and the Rakshasas gave up in despair all attempts to save their wealth and properties and ran out of their dwellings. It seemed as if Agni or the God of fire came in the guise of a Vanara. Women, with sucking babies on their breasts, tumbled down into flame with tearful eyes some were surrounded on all sides by the tongues of fire, and hairs of some were dishevelled and those fair damsels when they fell looked like bright lightning darting from the sky !

Hanuman saw various kinds of metals mixed up with diamonds pearls, corals and lapis streaming down like liquid by the heat of that fire. As fire is never satiated by burning dry logs and grass, so Hanuman was not at all satisfied by the destruction of the Rakshasas, and Hanuman looked like God Rudra burning down Tripura. The flame of that terrific fire ascended to the summit of the Trikuta Mountain on which Lanka did rest. Its flames were sootless and kissed the sky, it covered Lanka, with the glare of million suns, and rent the earth with thundering sounds. The tongues of flame were exceedingly red like the Kinsuka blossoms, and

clouds of smoke rising out of extinguished flame resembled blue in hue. The Rakshasas were greatly frightened by this and began to talk amongst themselves. "Either he is the thunder-bolt-armed Indra, or Yama, or Varuna or the Wind-God, or fire generated by the third eye of Rudra, or Surjya (Sun) or Chandra (Moon) or Kuvera. This is no Vanara but Death himself, or this Rakshasa-destroying fire is Brahma himself, the great Sire of all and the Disposer of all destinies. Or is this Vishnu's energy, incomprehensible, unutterable, infinite that has assumed this form by virtue of Maya<sup>1</sup>? Seeing the City thus consumed with its residents, houses, horses, cars, beasts birds and trees, the Rakshasas began to lament, "O father, O son! O love! O friend! O my love! O my husband! alas! all virtue has come to an end." thus lamenting, the Rakshasas created a great row. And Lanka surrounded by flames, with her heroes fallen, looked like the world burning with the fire of Brahma, or like an object blighted by the imprecation of a curse.

Then Hanuman saw the panick-stricken Rakshasas and after burning Lanka he thought of Ram.

Then, the Gods praised Hanuman, and the Saints,

<sup>1</sup> Maya is neither illusion, nor magic as is often wrongly interpreted; it is the materialising energy of God, or philosophically speaking, when force materialises itself into something capable of being perceived by the senses; i. e. the physical basis of the visible world or the world of the senses.—Translator.

Gandharvas and the Vidyadhars were mightily pleased with his deed. Hanuman took his seat on the roof of a palace. He then glowed like the sun. After accomplishing his object, he extinguished the fire of his tail with the waters of the sea.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### HANUMAN'S ANXIETY

After the burning of Lanka, Hanuman began to reflect and grew highly apprehensive and thought what an iniquitous act I have committed by burning down Lanka. Blessed are those high-souled people who can control their angry passions by dint of their good sense, like fire quenched by water. What evil can not be effected by anger? An angry person can even kill the worshipful and vilify the pious with rude expressions. The angry can not decide what to speak and what not to speak. There is no sin that cannot be committed by them. He is a real man who can cast off his anger as the snakes cast off their sloughs. O, shame to me! I am vicious, shameless and the perpetrator of a great crime and the destroyer of my master. Without thinking of Janaki I have burnt down Lanka. If the whole of Lanka has been burnt down, certainly Janaki has been consumed with it, Alas! I have unwittingly spoilt my master's cause. I have defeated his object. By burning down Lanka I have not saved Janaki. Burning of Lanka is no doubt trifl-

ing, but in my anger I have lost my great object. Forsooth, Janaki has been consumed by fire, for I do not find any spot in the whole city that has not been devastated by fire. Due to my stupidity I have defeated my master's object. Now, I shall enter either into flames or into the Sea, full of sharks and crocodiles, and I shall offer my body to them. I have spoilt the whole thing. With what face shall I now appear before Sugriva, Ram and Lakshman? It is notorious in the three worlds that a Vanara is fickle and restless, and I have betrayed my national character through anger. Fie on activity born of impetuous passion, which is the cause of all rashness and incompetency! Alas! Though capable yet I did not protect Sita. I have through my culpable passion furnished an illustration of the reckless monkey-nature which is notorious over the three worlds. On Sita's destruction both (Ram and Lakshman) will cease to live and on their death Sugriva will die with his friends. And on receiving these news how will Bharat, devoted to his brother, and Satrughna live? Thus the Ikshwaku race being extinct, all the people will be overwhelmed with grief. I have, therefore, due to my bad luck, lost all virtue, and being under the baleful influence of passion have become the cause of the destruction of good many lives."

As he was musing thus, he thought of the auspicious omens which he had witnessed since, and thus said within, "Or it may be, that the lady of graceful limbs have been preserved by her own virtuous energy, for

fire does not burn fire, and fire will not touch the spouse of that virtuous one of immeasurable energy and strength, who is further protected by her own pious acts. The bearer of sacrificial offerings has not burnt me simply owing to Ram's prowess and virtue of Janaki. But why should she, who is a worshipful deity unto Bharat and other princes, and who is the consort of Ram after his own mind, be destroyed at all? Indestructible fire can reduce everything into ashes, but it has not burnt my tail, then why Sita will be consumed."

Then, Hanuman with wonder and awe thought of seeing the Moinaka in the midst of the sea, and he mused that Sita by her devotion, truthfulness and righteousness could even burn fire, but fire could not burn her.

Hanuman was thus thinking about Janaki's virtue ; in the meantime he heard the bards thus to converse : "What an awful thing has been committed by the conflagration of the houses of the Rakhshasas ! The old, young and women are crying. They have created a row in panic and are anxious and restless."

"It seems the splendour of Lanka has forsaken the city. But what a wonder ! The city has been burnt, but Janaki has escaped quite unscathed."

Hearing these words, sweet as nectar, Hanuman was mightily pleased ; and from the auspicious omens he saw and what he had heard from the saints, Hanuman concluded that undoubtedly Janaki was alive, thus thinking he again proceeded towards the Sinshapa tree.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### SIGHT OF JANAKI.

Thereafter, Hanuman on arriving at the Sinshapa tree found Jānaki seated under the tree. Then greeting her respectfully, he said, "O worshipful lady! It is due to my Good luck that I find you quite safe."

Then Janaki repeatedly looked at him and finding him about to go away, affectionately said, 'My child! If you wish you may stop here just for a day. After taking rest in some secret place you may start on the next day. Even your sight beguiles me of my sorrow for the time being. You are going now, surely to come back, but in the meantime my life may come to an end. My mind is exceedingly sad, and I am suffering untold misery, and your absence will grieve me more. O hero! I have grave doubts about one thing. Heroic Sugriva has no doubt vast Vanara and Bhalluka hosts to help, but how will he cross the sea with his army along with Ram and Lakshman? Excepting you, Garura and the Wind I do not find any body capable of doing this. You are skilled, in everything, but how this difficult task will be accomplished? All praise to your valour, you can yourself easily accomplish the deed, but it will be worthy of his heroism if Ram himself comes and rescues me. What shall I say more, my Child, encourage him about it.'

Then Hanuman hearing this reasonable speech

of Janaki said "O worshipful lady! That lord and foremost of Vanaras, Sugriva, gifted with strength is determined on thy behalf. And that master of Vanaras, Sugriva O Vaidehi, surrounded by thousands and millions of Vanaras, shall speedily come here (for the purpose) and those best of men, those heroes, Ram and Lakshmana coming together, shall afflict Lanka with their arrows. And slaughtering the Rakshasas by his own valour, Raghu's son, O exceedingly fair one, will take you back to his palace. O gentle damsel, do thou console thyself, expecting that hour. Soon shalt thou see Ravana slain in battle by Ram. On the lord of Rakshasas being slain along with his sons, councillors, and friends, thou shalt meet Ram as Rohini meeteth with the moon. At once shall Kakustha come, accompanied by the foremost of Vanaras—who conquering Ravana in conflict, shall remove thy grief" Having thus consoled Videha's daughter Hanuman, son of the Wind-God, setting his heart upon departure, saluted Vaidehi. And having soothed Vaidehi and having rendered the city disconsolate, displaying his surpassing strength and having baffled Ravan exhibiting his terrific might and saluting Vaidehi, Hanuman became bent upon returning, crossing the mid sea. Then that represser of foes, the powerful Vanara, eager to see his master ascended Aristha, the foremost of mountains (as if covered with a sheet), consisting of blue woods of tall Padmakas and clouds lying in the inter-

space between the peaks, discovered by the gay light of the sun ; abounding with minerals scattered about, serving for its eyes ; seemed as if reciting aloud in consequence of the solemn sound of waters, to be caroling through its many fountains, and to stay with uplifted arms by means of the Devdarus appearing to be weeping distractfully on account of cascades sounding all round ; and seemed to be trembling in consequence of verdant autumnal woods waving, and to be piping on account of Kichakas vocal through the breeze, noisy with poisonous serpents ; appearing to be buried in contemplation on account of caverns covered with snow and looking solemn in consequence ; seeming to yawn in the sky with peaks towering heavenwards, graced with marble caves ; surrounded with Sals, Palms, Tamalas, Kanas and bamboos ; adorned with spreading and flowing underwoods ; abounding in various beasts, and dissected with mineral streams, containing numerous hills, thronged with crags, frequented by Maharshi, and Yakshas and Gandharvas and Kinnaras, and Serpents, impassable in consequence of plants and trees with caves harbouring lions, it was filled with tigers and other ferocious beasts ; and furnished with trees having tasteful fruits and roots ascended that mountain. And on the lovely level of that mountain, the crags crushed with sounds under the tread of that one burning behold Ram and wrought up with excess of joy, were scattered all round. Ascending that lofty hill, Hanuman greatly dilated his body to cross from the Southern to the Northern shore of the Salt-sea.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### HANUMAN LEAVES LANKA

After getting at the top of the mountain, the son of the Wind-God cast his look upon the dreadful main inhabited by terrible snakes. Then, the hill being sore pressed by the foremost of the Vanaras began to groan in pain and with various creatures on it began to sink beneath the earth. Its peaks were tottering and trees began to topple down. Borne down by his violence the flowery trees fell on the ground as if destroyed by Indra's thunder-bolt, and dreadful yells of lions pierced the sky. The Nymphs with their apparel slipping from them and jewelleries in disorder at once rose from the hill into the sky, dreadful snakes of virulent poison with flaming tongues and expanded hoods began to roll in the dust. The Gandharvas, the Yakshasas and the Vidyadharas left the hill in pain, took shelter in the sky. And the hill ten yoyanas long and thirty in height became one with the ground. And Hanuman being desirous to cross the bellowy ocean in great speed rose to the sky.

The firmament looked like the deep sea, where the Gandharvas and the Rakshasas as it were like blooming lotuses, the moon-like lily, Lishya and Travana like the swans, the clouds like its ocean, the star Punarvasu like the fish, Bhauma like the crocodile, Airvata like its island, the breeze like its bellows and stars its Karandava, and the moonlight

like gentle transparent water. Hanuman easily crossed that sea like welkin by his speed, he seemed to swallow the planets and break the moon into pieces. He drew to him clouds of different hues by his velocity and at times he becomes concealed behind the clouds and at times came out of them. He resounded all quarters by his deep roars and reached the middle of the sea on his way, he simply touched the Mainaka hill and thence shot like an arrow discharged from the bow. From distance he beheld the mountain on the beach. In great delight he set up a roar and made his way quickly to the shore. He became delighted at the prospect of meeting his friends and brandished his tail in joy. His roars seemed to rend the sky with its dew and the moon.

At that time the Vanaras were anxiously waiting for Hanuman on the northern shore and from distance they heard his roars like the rumbling of clouds and felt the speed of his course. As soon as they heard that noise they all became anxious for his sight. In the meantime, Jamvuban addressing the Vanaras cheerfully said, "Surely" Hanuman has been crowned with success or such noise would not have been heard."

Then the Vanaras jumped in joy, and many of them in order to behold Hanuman moved from one peak to another peak, from one branch of the tree to another branch. Some of them ascended on the tree tops and began to wave<sup>1</sup> white cloth in delight.

<sup>1</sup> It is like the modern European custom of waving hand-

Here, Hanuman was advancing like roaring wind. The Vanaras joined their palms at his sight. And Hanuman with a great noise fell upon the peak like a mountain clipped of its wings.

The Vanaras were extremely glad at his sight and they surrounded him immediately. Every one's face was bright with joy. Many of them roared in delight. They began to chatter greatly. Some of them broke down branches of the trees to prepare his seat.

Then, Hanuman bowed down to Jamvuman and other superiors and to prince Angada. They welcomed him and gazed upon him in cheerful heart. Then Hanuman briefly narrated informations about Janaki and then taking Angada's hand he sat down in a beautiful spot in the woodland valley of the Mahendra hill and being questioned he gave a brief account of his deeds: "O Vanaras! I have seen worshipful Janaki in the Asoke forest. She is surrounded by dreadful Rakshasis. She is extremely weak and lean on account of fasting. She wears a single braid of hair, and has become highly anxious for the sight of Ram."

The Vanaras hearing these nectar-like sweet words became exceedingly glad. Some chattered, and some roared in delight. Some brandished his tail, some shook his long tail, and most of them jumped from the hill and touched Hanuman in joy.

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kerchief to friends—specially when a train leaves or enters the platform.

Then Angada said, "O hero! I do not find anybody equal to you in valour or bravery, since you have succeeded in coming back after crossing the vast sea. To speak the truth, you are the saviour of our lives. Now, being successful, with your help we shall appear before Ram. Wonderful is thy devotion to your master and wonderful is thy patience; owing to good luck you have gathered whereabouts of Janaki, and due to good luck Ram will be absolved from the pangs of Sita's separation."

Then the Vanaras in delightful heart surrounded prince Angada, Hanuman, and Jamvuman and sat on a spacious table-land, in order to hear everything in details with joined palms.

## CHAPTER XL

### RECITAL OF THE EXPLOITS.

Then Jamvuban in delightful mind asked, "O hero! How could you find worshopful Janaki in the Asoka forest? How she fares there and how does cruel Ravan behave with her? How could you get clue of Janaki? What did she say? Tell us everything in details. After hearing that we shall decide our course of action. And now tell us too what we shall conceal from Ram, what we shall report to him."

Thereupon, Hanuman bowing down to Janaki in his mind cheerfully began, "you see, in order to cross the sea I rose into the sky, in your presence.

from the Mahendra hill. There were great obstacles on my way. At one place, I found a golden mountain obstructing my way. I considered it to be formidable, afterwards nearing it I thought of forcing my way through it. Thinking this I struck it with my tail and it at once crumbled into pieces. Then that mountain assuming the form of a human being said, 'My boy! I am a friend of the Wind-God, so your uncle. I live in this ocean, my name is Mainaka. Formerly, the mountains had wings and they could travel wherever they wished. Afterwards Indra clipped their wings. My boy! At that time, my wings were saved through your father's help. He threw me down into the sea. Now, it is my duty to help Ram. Ram is virtuous and a great hero.' Then with the permission of the hill I proceeded to my destination and the Mainaka disappeared. Then Surasa, the Mother of the Nagas, rose from the sea and appeared before me.

She said, "Oh, Kapi-chief, the gods have ordained you as my food, so I shall devour you."

At this, I grew pale with fear and entreated her with folded palms saying that I had been engaged by Ram as an envoy to search for Sita.<sup>1</sup>

But Surasa at first did not yield, she expanded her mouth and I contracted my body, and emerged out of her jaws by assuming the size of a thumb. Thereupon

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<sup>1</sup> I have omitted repetitions of the former details already mentioned.

the denizens of the sky eulogised me, and I left the place at the speed of an eagle. Again I was thwarted in my career, but I could not see anything whatsoever. On my eyes downward, I noted a dreadful Rakshasi rising out of the waves. She wanted to devour me and I at once agreed to her proposal; I expanded my body, and she her mouth. Instantly I contracted my body, entered into her mouth and came out by tearing her breast, and the formidable Rakshasi gave up her ghost stretching her arms on the sea. Then finding my way interrupted by various obstacles I doubled my speed, and within a short time got view of the rocky southern beach. There stood Lanka. I entered the city at night in disguise. On my way, I was accosted by a formidable dark woman with flaming hair. She wanted to kill me, but I overcame her with one blow of fist. Thereupon, she said that she was the guardian deity of the Rakshasas and since I could subdue her by my strength, the destruction of the Rakshasas was imminent, she prophesied.

Then, whole night I ranged through the palace of Ravan, but couldn't find Janaki. I was stricken with grief. At that time I noticed a wooded garden surrounded by a golden wall. There was a huge Shinsapa tree in its midst. On ascending the tree I saw plantain groves of golden hue. At a short distance from it was seated Janaki. She had only a piece of cloth in her wearing, her hair was stained with dust and gathered into a single braid. She was lean with fasting and looked like a lotus.

witherd in snow. <sup>1</sup> She was surrounded on all sides by grim Rakshasis just like a fawn surrounded by a pack of blood-thirsty wolves. She hates Ravan and has resolved to give up her life. In the meantime I heard jingling sounds of ornaments and anklets mixed up with the noise of several voices. I at once contracted my body and hid myself behind the leaves of the tree.

Then, the Rakshasa king, Ravan arrived there with his wives. At his sight, Janaki drew her thighs close together and covered her breasts with her hands. She trembled with fear and cast frightened looks hither and thither. Ravan then approached her and said, "O Janaki! I greet thee by bowing down my head, please have regard for me, but if you slight me through your pride, surely, I shall drink your blood after two months.

Thereupon, Janaki angrily replied, O Villain! I am the spouse of heroic Ram, and daughter-in-law of king Dasarath. I wonder why your tongue did not crumble into pieces for uttering those words? O sinful wretch! Shame to your prowess, since you took me in absence of Ram. In no respect thou art equal to Ram, you are not even worthy of being his valet. Ram is invincible and truthful."

Ravan, at these harsh words of Janaki, burned with rage like a funeral pyre, and by revolving his cruel eyes began to beat her with his right fist. His companions shrieked at this. Then Dhanya-

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1 I have changed winter into snow, and tigers into wolves.

malini came near and preventing him said, "What will you do with that Janaki? come, enjoy with myself; Janaki is in no way superior to me either in beauty or in accomplishments. Be content with the daughters of the Gods and Yakshasas. What will you do with Janaki?"

Then that woman led Ravan away. After that number of Rakshasis began to abuse her in harsh words. Janaki slighted their words like a piece of straw. Thus they were disappointed and soon after they fell asleep from exhaustion. In the mean time, a Rakshi named Trijata suddenly roused from sleep, addressing the Rakshasis said, "Don't devour chaste Janaki; be content with your own blood. I had an awful dream this night. Ravan will be soon destroyed with all the Rakshasas, only Sita can save us then, so let us throw ourselves at her feet. She is cast down with sorrow, but surely she will feel happy if she had such a dream like this. If she be pleased with our greetings, she can certainly save us from imminent disaster."

Thus being pleased with the dream about the victory of her husband, she bashfully replied, "If Trijatas' dream be not false I shall surely protect you then."

I grew sad and anxious seeing such miserable plight of Janaki with my own eyes, and thought of the means of carrying out conversation with her. Then, I hit upon a device and began to sing the praise of the royal line of

Iskhaku. As soon as Janaki heard my words she asked me with tearful eyes, "O Vanara! Who art thou? Why have you come here? And how could you contract friendship with Ram?"

Thereupon, I replied, "O worshipful lady! Sugriva, the king of the Kapis, is a friend of Ram, I am his servant named Hanuman. Ram has sent me to find out your whereabouts. He has himself given this ring as his token. Now tell me what I can do for you? Ram and Lakshman are waiting for you on the southern shore of the sea, if you wish I may take you there."

Then Janaki said, "It is my desire that heroic Ram should himself rescue me by destroying Ravan with his clan."

Then I asked for some happy remembrancer as her token to Ram. At this, she made over to me a jewel taking it off from the ornament of her head. Then, I went round in order to start. At the time of departure, she again said, "O envoy! Tell Ram everything about me, and do what might induce Ram Lakshman and Sugriva to come here soon. My lease of life is for two months more, and if Ram does not turn up within this period, I shall surely put an end to my life like a helpless woman."

"O vanaras! At these piteous words of Janaki, I was overwhelmed with anger and resolved to reduce Lanka into ruins. Then I dilated my body and being desirous of a fight I began to break down the Asoka forest. The hideous Rakshasis rose from sleep, beheld me and reported the thing to Ravan. Thereupon, Ravan sent the Kinkaras to fight against me. I destroyed

them with the bolt of a door. Then I destroyed a sacred edifice. Then Ravan sent Jamvumali, son of Prahastha. I slew him in fight. Ravan then despatched the sons of his counsellor with the foot-soldiers. I immediately destroyed them all. Ravan then sent prince Aksha and when he got into the sky to display his valour, I caught hold of his legs and dashed him against the ground and he breathed his last. Aksha was the son of Mandodari, and highly skilled in battle. Then Ravan sent his another son named Indrajit, he bound me by the help of a Brahma Astra and took me before Ravan by tying me with a rope. There, I had talk with Ravan. He asked me why I had gone there. I said it was for Janaki. I gave out my name and the nature of my mission. I said, that friendship had been contracted between Sugriva and Ram, that Ram had made him king after destroying Vali, and he had sent me as an envoy. I asked him to return Janaki without delay, or his army will be destroyed by the Vanara force. None as yet knows the prowess of the Vanaras who are even sought for by the gods."

"Thereupon, that wicked Ravan angrily looked at me and ordered my death. There upon Ravan's brother, Vibhishan, interceded on my behalf and pleaded for my life, saying that death of an envoy was not sanctioned by the shastras. Ravan then ordered to set fire to my tail. The Rakshasas then covered my tail with Jute<sup>1</sup> and cotton and after setting fire to it

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<sup>1</sup> Please mark that Jute was cultivated in India even in such distant past, up till now only Bengal produces this plant.

began to assault me with their fists hard as logs of dry wood. Fire was burning in my tail. My hands and feet were bound, and the Rovers of night proclaimed my offence in public streets. Thus I was gradually taken near the city gate, at once I contracted my body and freed myself from the bondage.

Then assuming my own form I took up the iron bolt and destroyed the Rakshasas. In the mean time, I burnt down Lanka. After that, I thought that since I have reduced the city into ashes perhaps Janaki too has been destroyed."

"O Vanaras! I was overwhelmed with grief at this thought. But in the mean time, I heard the Charans say that though Lanka had been burnt, but Janaki was unhurt. I was greatly delighted at this news and from some auspicious signs my belief was confirmed. I thought that though fire was burning in my tail, but I was not burnt, and the wind was blowing with the fragrance of flowers, and thinking of the prowess of Ram, Laksman and Janaki, I felt greatly encouraged.

"Then I again went to Janaki and after greeting her I got upon the Arati hill for crossing the sea. I was anxious to meet you since I did not see you for a long time. All these I have done for Sugriva's sake. you please accomplish what has been left unaccomplished by me.

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## CHAPTER XLI

### JAMBUVAN'S ADVICE.

After narrating everything in details, Hanuman again said to the Vanaras.

"O Vanaras! From Janaki's conduct it appeared to me that by Ram's endeavours and with Sugriva's help everything would be crowned with success. Janaki's character is like that of worshipful Arundhati. By her religious and yogic powers, she can protect the world and can also reduce it to ashes".

"Ravan too has great virtue, otherwise he would have been destroyed for touching Janaki's body. What Janaki can do, when angry, by the slight motion of her finger even fire can not do that. O Vanaras! You are intelligent, heroic, skilled in arms and desirous of victory, it is quite different with you, even I can alone destroy Lanka with all the Rakshasas. Though the Brahma, Raudra, Vayavya and Varun weapons of Indrajit are quite formidable yet I can render them futile by my prowess. I did not display my fullest prowess because I had no commission from you for that. The ocean may overflow its shores, the Mandara hill might move from its place, but enemy's host can never conquer Jambuvan in battle, and the heroic son of Vali is alone capable of destroying the Rakshasas. The mount Mandara is oppressed by the speed of the Rakshasas? What hero is there amongst the gods and the Asuras that can overcome Mainda or Dwivida in battle? I do not see any one who can oppose the mighty sons of Aswi? Lanka has been burnt, devastated by me alone. I openly declared in

public streets of Lanka, 'May victory crown mighty Ram and Lakshman and may Sugriva be prosperous being protected by Raghava. And I am the son of the wind-God and servant of the king of Koshala.'

I have anounced this everywhere."

"I saw vicious Ravan standing at the foot of a Sinshapa tree in the Asoka forest, and chaste Sita sitting meekly. She was worn out with grief and anxiety like the moon shorn of her brilliance being enveloped with clouds. She was surrounded by the Rakshasis, but being devoted to her husband, she did not care for Ravan, proud of his prowess. Like Poulami to Purandara, all her thoughts are centred on her husband. I saw her wearing a single piece of cloth soiled with dirt; and she wore a single braid of hair. She lying on the ground absorbed in the thoughts of her husband and she looked poor like a lotus at the advent of winter. She has not the least attachment for Ravan and is resolved to put an end to her life. After creating her confidence, I addressed the Gazell-eyed damsel and related to her the whole story of my mission. She was greatly delighted hearing of the friendship between Ram and Sugriva. She is well-behaved and devoted to her lord and blessed is Ravan that she has not destroyed him yet. Ram will be mere instrumental in bringing about Ravana's destruction. Like, on the first day of the lunar fortnight. owing to the separation of her lord she has become exceedingly emaciated in body. Thus lives Sita lean with grief. Do now perform what you think right."

Hearing these, Vali's son, Angada said, "These two sons of Aswi, endowed with great swiftness are exceedingly powerful and they are proud of the boon conferred on them by the Grand Sire of the creation. Formerly, to honour Aswi, the Grand Sire of creation rendered these two incapable of being slain by any. Then once defeating the hosts of the gods, these two heroes, exalted with victory, drank nectar, and these two if enraged, can destroy Lanka with all its horses, elephants and chariots. What to speak of others. I can destroy the city with all the Rakshasas and mighty Ravan, and there will be nothing to wonder if I am assisted by mighty heroes like you, well-armed and capable of winning victory. I have heard that Hanuman saw Janaki and why hasn't he brought her here? You are great heroes, how will you break this unpleasant news to Ram?"

"In heroism, there is none like you even amongst the gods, Let us now kill Ravan, conquer Lanka and bring back Janaki with delight. Hanuman has destroyed almost all the Rakshasas, then what also remains excepting the rescue of Janaki? There is no necessity of inflicting hardships upon those Vanaras that have come to Kishkindhya from different quarters. Come, let us first destroy the remaining Rakshasas and then meet Ram, Lakshman and Sugriva."

Thereupon, Jamvuvan cheerfully observed, "Prince! What you have said does not appear to be commendable. You see, Sugriva and noble Ram have asked to ascertain the whereabouts of Janaki, they have not given us any direction for her rescue."

“Even, if we can somehow conquer the Rakshasas that might not be quite agreeable to them. The king of kings, Ram, speaking of his heroic line, has sworn before all about Janaki’s rescue, so we must not stand in his way. What you wish to do will spoil everything, and Ram too will not be pleased with it. Let us now go to Ram and Lakshman and tell them everything.”

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## CHAPTER XLII

### RETURN TO KISHKINDHYA

The Vanaras approved of Jamvuvan’s proposal and then they descended from the Mahendra mountain and proceeded towards Kishkindhya. They covered the earth and sky in their Journey. Everyone looked at Hanuman and everyone was bent upon to serve Ram and his craving for reputation was greatly delighted at the news of Janaki, they desired for a fight with the Rakshasas.

Then the Vanaras, following the route through the sky, arrived at Madhuvan, the beautiful garden of Sugriva. This garden was full of trees and was in beauty like the celestial garden Nandana, Sugriva’s maternal uncle, Dadhimukh, the Kapi leader, guarded that Garden all along. It was quite inaccessible, but the Vanaras getting there became quite irresistible and they prayed to Angada for drinking honey. Thereupon, Angada with the consent of Jamvuvan and other elder Vanaras, immediately gave them permission. The Vanaras got upon trees covered with bees, and

with great delight began to eat sweet scented flowers and fruits.

Then, the Vanaras grew wild by the excessive drink of honey<sup>1</sup> some began to dance, some to sing, some to laugh, some to read and some to nod. Some began to walk, some to jump, some of them grew delirious and some began to quarrel with others. Some fell upon the tree and some on the ground in great violence. Some Vanara was indulging in music, while another approached him with an archsmile some one was weeping incessantly when another approached him shedding tears. Some one was striking another with nails, while the latter was striking the former in return. Thus the Vanara troops grew wild.

Then Dadhimukha, the keeper of the garden, finding the Vanaras thus destroying the fruits, flowers and leaves of the garden angrily asked them to desist, but the Vanaras setting his words at naught began to abuse him. Thereupon, Dadhimukha became more anxious for the preservice of the garden, and for the maintenance of order. He rebuked the fearless, slapped the weak ones, disputed with some, and tried to pacify some with gentle words. But the Vanaras were completely under the influence of honey, and seeing no other alternative he wished to subdue them by force.

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<sup>1</sup> Madhu means also wine as in the Chandi, "Garja Gerja kshanam Murah Jabat Madhum" pipamyaham. There the Goddess Chandi ( the supreme God conceived as the Eternal Mother ) says to her foe. Boast on, thou, fool so long I do not drink wine." Here the effect of honey has been described like that of excessive drink.

At that time, the Vanaras had no fear of royal punishment and they began to drag Dadhimukha with great violence. Some tore him with nails, some bit him with teeth.

Some slapped him and some kicked at him. Thus the Vanaras rendered Dadhimukha half dead.

Then Hanuman, encouraging the Vanaras said, "I shall prevent your adversary, drink in peace."

At this Angada delightfully said, "This hero has come back successful, there is nothing to be said upon what he has said, even if it be any misdeed, we shall do it. O vanaras! Get yourself composed and drink."

Thereupon, the Vanaras repeatedly praised Angada and entered the garden with the impetuosity on entering into a forest. They grew absolutely fearless on account of Hanuman's success and for drinking honey. They, after forcibly binding down the warders of the garden, began to drink honey and eat sweet fruits of the garden. Thereupon, a number of guards arrived there, but the Vanaras began to assault them. Some one took up in his hand honey measuring a Drona<sup>1</sup> some began to drink in joy, some threw off the remainder of his drink, some struck another with the remaining of his drink. Some sat at the bottom of the tree, holding a branch in his hand, some on account of fatigue lay down upon the grassy bed, some fell prostrate on the ground, some began to coo like a bird, some became talkative, some began to laugh, some to weep, some talked in a covert manner while another took it in its pite opposite meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> 32 Seers or 60lb, make one Drona.

In the meantime, the retinue of Dadhimukha began to run away being assaulted by the Vanaras. The Vanaras took each one of them and threw them up. Then Dadhimukha's men anxiously informed him that the Vanaras being encouraged by Hanuman's words were destroying Madhuvan by their violence, and they threw us down taking us by our legs.

Thereupon, Dadhimukha was greatly enraged and said "The Vanaras have grown exceedingly proud for their prowess, let us go and quell them by force."

They then again turned towards Madhuvan, and Dadhimukha rushed forth by uprooting a huge tree. He bit his lips in anger and his followers too took up stones and trees. Then Angada in anger siezed him with force and threw him down in great violence on the ground. His bones were smashed and he lay listless in blood-stained body. Then after some how being free from their hands, Dathimukha advised his followers to go to Sugriva, where the Kapi king was with Ram and Lakshman, and there they would narrate the misdeeds of Angada. Sugriva would then destroy the Vanaras. "This Madhuvan is the ancestral property of Sugriva," said Dadhimukha, "and if he can know that such mischief has been done to it, then he will destroy these Vanaras greedy for honey."

Saying this Dadhimukha proceeded towards Sugriva, and taking the route through the sky, he shortly appeared before Ram, Lakshman and Sugriva. His face was dark with sorrow, and with folded palms, he fell upon the feet of Sugriva.

Thereupon, Sugriva, in anxiety said, "Get up,

Dadhimukha, why do you throw yourself at my feet. I give you assurance. Why have you been struck? With fear? Is not every thing well with Madhuvan?" Then Dadhimuka stood up and said, "O King! Vali and yourself are the lords of the Vanaras, but you never allowed the Vanaras to enjoy Madhuvan to their will, but Angada and other Vanaras have destroyed that garden. With these guards I repeatedly tried to prevent them, but they were engaged in drinking and frowned at us. They have kicked at some, slapped some and threw up some of them. They have insulted us greatly. You are the king of the Vanaras, Ah! that such things would happen when you are here."

Then Lakshman enquired, "why this Kapi-chief has come, what is the cause of his grief?"

Thereupon, Sugriva replied, your worship, Angada and others have drunk honey in Madhuvan and Dadhimukha has come to inform me of that. It seems that those whom I sent towards the south have come back being successful, otherwise they would not have dared to do all these. Since they have arrived at Madhuvan, it seems there has not been any obstacle to their success. The guards of the forest tried to prevent them, but they angrily beat the warders. They have not even paid heed to Dadhimukha, the chief of the guards. It is clear that Hanuman has found out Janaki, I don't find any other capable of this. Intelligence, courage, valour and knowledge of the shastras and success are at his command. You see in whatever work Jamvuvan, Hanuman and Angada are leaders, the result can't be otherwise. Now, these

heroes after carrying out the orders' have entered into Madhuvan. These guards tried to stop their recklessness, but have come back being insulted. Dadhimukha has come to inform me. O hero! When the Vanaras have given themselves up to drinking surely they have gathered informations about Janaki. We have got this garden as a gift from the gods. Had they been unsuccessful they couldn't have been unruly."

Ram and Lakshman were greatly delighted at this pleasant news. Sugriva then said to Dadhimukha, "O Maternal uncle! I am exceedingly glad to hear from you that the Vanaras are partaking fruits and roots of Madhuvan. It is a matter to forbear. Go back to your post and send Hanuman and others soon to me. I am quite eager to know how he had gathered information about Janaki."

Then Dadhimukha bowed to Ram and Lakshman and went back with the Vanaras delighted, on entering the forest he found the Vanaras freed from the influence of honey.<sup>1</sup> with folded palms he approached Angada and said, "O, prince? The keepers of this forest unknowingly for-bade you to drink. Kindly forgive them. Thou art prince and the lord of this Madhuvan, drink honey to your fill. At first, I interfered through my foolishness, I have reported everything to Sugriva. He has not been at all angry, rather been pleased and has asked me to send you soon to him."

Then Angada said, "O Vanaras! Dadhimuka joyfully reported everything to Sugriva. It seems Ram

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<sup>1</sup>They passed honey through urine.

and Lakshman have heard everything. We have committed many misdeeds. Let us now go to Sugriva. I am at your command, I shall do what you will ask me to do. Though I am your prince, still I don't venture to command you."

Thereupon the Vanaras cheerfully returned. "O prince who can being himself the master say like this? Others proud of wealth try to pose as masters. but the case is different with you, your words are worthy of your modesty. In fact, this modesty indicates your future prosperity and greatness. Now let us go to Sugriva. We assure you, we cannot proceed even a step without your command."

Then the Vanaras covered the sky and went to Sugriva. They proceeded in great speed like stones hurled by machine ( tools ) and roared like clouds,

At that sight, Sugriva said to Ram. "O friend! information of Janaki, otherwise none would have ventured to come here after the expiry of the stipulated time. From Angada's delight I can clearly infer that had he been unsuccessful he wouldn't have come to me. Other vanaras even though unsuccessful might have been restive for their mercurial temper, but certainly prince Angada would have looked sad. Madhuvan is our ancestral garden, certainly Angada would not have entered there if he were unsuccessful. Ram be consoled, Hanuman, and nobody else has found out Janaki. Intelligence, success, strength, energy and knowledge of the Shastras are in his Possession. O friend! There is no more cause of anxiety from the devastation of Madhuvan, it is clear that the vanaras

have returned successful." The chattering of the vanaras was then gradually heard. The vanaras came to see Ram and bowed to him and Sugriva. Then Hanuman came near Ram and with folded palms said, "O hero! I have found out Janaki. she is well and is maintaining her chastity."

Ram and Laksbman were immensely delighted at this nectar like news, Heroic Lakkshman with great respect looked to Sugriva and Ram in joy repeatedly looked at Hanuman with affectionate regards.

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

### HANUMAN'S MESSAGE.

They all repaired to the Prasaravana hill. There the Vanaras began to narrate everything about Janaki in full, her confinement in the hare'm of Ravan, abuses by the Raksnasis, her devotion towards her husband and the time allotted to her by Ravan, etc.

Ram being delighted with Janaki's news, asked to tell him where was Janaki and what were her feelings towards him.

Thereupon, the Vanaras requested Hanuman to narrate everything about Janaki. Then Hanuman bowing down to Janaki in his mind, placed in Ram's hand the shining jewel as the souveniouir of Janaki and with folded palms began, 'O Lord! I crossed hundred yoyanas of the sea for Janaki. On its southern shore stands Lanka the city of wicked Ravan. I have found there Janaki she is imprisoned within the Seraglio of

Ravan. The Rakshasis are ever abusing her. She is kept under guard. She is suffering intensely from the pangs of your separation. She wears a single braid of hair on her back. She is sad and ever absorbed in your thoughts. The earth is her bed, She looks pale like an antelope at the advent of hunter. She has resolved to give up her life on account of her hatred for Ravan. I created her confidence, reciting the glories of the Ikshwaku race, then being, engaged in conversation with her I spoke about my mission. She has been glad learning of your friendship with Sugriva, she is ever devoted to you, and she does everything for you. I have seen that Janaki is devoted to penance.'

"O Ram ! She has narrated everything as how she was tyrained by a crow on the Chitrakuta hill. She has also requested me to tell you everything what I have witnessed with my own eyes in Lanka. I have brought this jewel of her head with great care, she has asked me to offer it in presence of Sugriva. She has repeatedly asked to remember the mark you used to put on her face with red arsenic. She has further said that she would keep her life for one month more. Thus has said worshipful Janaki. Now, devise means for crossing the sea,"

Then placing Janaki's jewel on his heart began to weep and looking repeatedly with tearful eyes at that jewel addressing Sugriva, the Kapi chief, said "My friend ! My heart melts at the sight of this jewel, as milk trickles down from the udders of a cow at the sight of her calf. This gem was presented to Sita by Yanak, the king of Vedaha, at the time of wedding.

This jewel obtained from the ocean and was presented to him by Sakra being pleased with sacrifice. The sight of this jewel repeatedly reminds the royal saint, Janak. Darling, Janaki, used to wear it on her head and it seems I have got her back actually. O gentle one, tell me again what Janaki has said. As sprinkling of water restores senses to the unconscious, so her words have revived me with life. O Lakshman! I see this jewel without Janaki! What can be more sad than this? If any how she can pass one month she will live long, O hero! I cannot bear the pangs of separation even for a moment. Now take me to that region where you met Janaki. Having got her information I cannot wait for a moment, Janaki is very timid by nature and I know not how she passes her days amongst the dreadful Rakshasas. As the bright autumnal moon becomes dark with clouds so her face has now become devoid of lusture, As medicine to the sick, so her words will be sufficient for keeping this life, Tell me what that sweet tongued damsel has said. Tell me how she has managed to live suffering misery after misery."

Then Hanuman said, "O Ram! Janaki has mentioned the incident of the crow in the Chitrakuta hill as a remembrancer. Once she was asleep. In the meantime, a crow suddenly appeared and tore her breast. At that time you were lying on Janaki's lap, so the crow, fearless, again tore her breast. Your body became drenched with blood and she in agony roused you from sleep. Seeing her distress with your own eyes, you panted like a serpent and asked. 'Tell me who has torn your breast with nails? Who wanted to dally

with an angry penta-hooded snake? Saying this, you cast your eyes round and saw a crow with bloody claws before Janaki. That was Indra's son, in speed like the wind. He lived in a terrestrial cave. As soon as you saw the crow your eyes rolled in anger and being resolved to kill it, you took up a weed from your grassy seat and aimed at it. It flamed like the Doomsday fire, and you then discharged it towards the crow. The burning Kusha-weed followed the bird. It ranged through the three worlds, but did not get any refuge any where. Thereupon, it again came back to you and begged for shelter. Seeing him lying low on the ground you took pity on him and saved him though he was worthy of being slain. But your Brahma-weapon was irresistible and it could never fail, for this you only injured his right eye. Then the crow repaired to his own place bowing down to Dasarath and to you."

"O hero! Janaki has further said! I know not why you are forgiving the Rakshasas? There is none who can match you amongst the Devas, Danavas and the Gandharvas? Now, if you have the slightest regard for me then soon slay wicked Ravan with sharp arrows. Why not heroic Lakshman is rescuing me at the direction of his brother? The valour of these two princes is incapable of being repressed even by the gods, then why are they neglecting me? When they are indifferent about a thing which is quite within their powers, it seems I am somehow at fault. O Ram! Hearing these piteous words of Janaki, I said, 'O worshipful lady! I can verily swear unto you that Ram is on your account indifferent

about everything, and heroic Lakshman seeing this change in him is passing his days in great sorrow. With great trouble I have gathered your whereabouts. Don't despair now. To tell the truth, your sorrows will soon be over. Ram and Lakshman in their eagerness to see you, will reduce Lanka to ashes. Heroic Ram after destroying villainous Ravan with his family will take you back to Ayodhya. O worshipful lady! Give me some present that can be recognised "

"Then Janaki once looked round and conferred this excellent ornament of head from her cloth. I took that jewel in folded palms for you, and was ready to start. At this, Janaki became extremely agitated and with tearful eyes broke forth again, "O Messenger! You are exceedingly fortunate since you can see lotus-eyed Ram and Lakshman." Then I replied, 'O worshipful lady! Soon get upon my back I shall take you to Ram and Lakshman even this day.' Thereupon, Janaki said, "O Messenger I shall, not of my own accord, touch your back. It will be against righteousness. Formerly, I had to touch the body of the Rakhasha but that was due to circumstance. How could I help it? Soon return to those two princes. Enquire after their welfare and that of friend Sugriva, Tell heroic Ram to rescue me soon from these miseries. What shall I add further? I wish you God-speed."

"O wershiful lord! Janaki, out of her love for you and on account of her friendliness towards me, said again, "O Messenger! May heroic Ram soon rescue me by destroying wicked Ravan, you see, at your sight the sorrows of this unfortnnate soul

has abated for the time being, now if you wish, you may remain in hiding in some secret place in Lanka, then after removing your fatigue start tomorrow. I shall eagerly wait for your return with wistful eyes, but it is doubtful whether I shall live so long. I have already been suffering from one misery after another, after this, your absence will overwhelm me more. O hero! I know not how the Vanaras, Bhallukas, the Kapi-chief Sugriva and those two princes will ever cross the impassable ocean? Excepting you, Garura and the wind I do not find any body else capable of crossing the ocean. You are intelligent, now tell me what means you devise for that. I admit that you alone can achieve all these, but it will be worthy of him if he comes with his army and destroys the enemy. It will be only proper for him if he invade the city of Lanka with Vanara troops and rescue me thereby. Now act in such a manner so that that great hero be eager to show his valour." Then I replied, O worshipful lady! Sugriva, the lord of the Kapis, has determined to rescue you, and he will soon arrive with the Vanara hosts to destroy the Rakshasa. The Vanaras are his obedient servants. They are mighty and irresistible. They are quick like the flight of thought and never any fatigue is observed in them in accomplishing arduous deeds. O lady There are Vanaras superior to me and my equals under the Kapi-King, but there is none inferior to me. Not to speak of those great heroes, even myself, humble and weak as I am, have arrived here. The best are never sent on any mission, the inferior ones are

employed in such work. So don't be dejected with sorrow. The Kapi-heroes will cross the ocean in one bound, and Ram and Lakshman will arrive on my back like the sun and the moon. You will soon witness that lion-like hero with brother Lakshman at the gate of Lanka. You will soon see the Vanaras formidable as lions and tigers, and soon hear their heroic roars on the top of that hill. O worshipful lady ! You will soon witness Ram will return with you to Ayodhya and will be invested with the crown. O Ram ! Janaki, though heavily cast down with sorrow for your absence has been greatly comforted by and consoled by these assurances of mine.

THE END OF THE SUNDARA KANDAM.

