

SIMLA
A TALE OF LOVE

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"THE REAL TURK,"

"AYESHA OF THE BOSPHORUS,"

"THE ESSENTIAL MYSTICISM "



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Ms. T. D.
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DEDICATED TO
MY FATHER,
ARTIST AND SEER,
WHOSE FAITH HAS BEEN
TO THOUSANDS
A FOUNT OF INSPIRATION

FOREWORD

What is love? how moves its force
Upon the human frame? What course
Does it pursue? how does it spend
Its power? For what end
Is it bestowed on man?
All that our human wisdom can
Discover as the cause of love,
Whether it is a gift above
All others by the gods bestowed;
Or whether a mere madness owed
To our mortality,— all this
Has failed to analyse the bliss
Of love, or love's deep tragedy.

If of this theme again, I try
To sound the depths, I pardon sue
For claiming to present the clue
To love where many others failed.
Yet on that ocean where there sailed
Full many ships, one was the first
Upon the western land to burst:
One man, discoverer, unfurled
His flag upon an unknown world
And made it known. So there may be
Of success some possibility
To all who try.

FOREWORD

We do but seek
Of earthly and of heavenly love to speak.
It is a theme as old as human life,
Since first man sought in wife
That comradeship which nothing else
Can give. But the antiquity repels
Me not of such a theme. It is old —
It is young too. For there have rolled
New cycles o'er the world since then,—
New thoughts, new love, as men
Are new and different. And ever new
The centuries will evolve; and few
Of mortal things but suffer change,
And from the lesser to the higher range
Of beauty grow.

So there is still a place
In Fortune's niche for books of love.
What my words and thoughts may prove
As to love's essence, I know not.
I only know that keen and hot
My eager heart within me burns,
My poet's wings the low air spurns,
To try this flight into the realm
Of love. If disaster overwhelm
Me, as of old one who did dare
Too high to soar, no one need share
Misfortune with me. But if I can show
What love is, if my rhymes bestow

FOREWORD

A glimpse of truth, then well content
To serve the world my skill is spent.
Here is the story, mark it well,
As Brahmin legend doth it tell.

PREFACE

Some will read Simla for its story of love and devotion. But those will not err who see in it a presaging of the harmonizing of Oriental asceticism with the New World love of action and love of life.

Simla represents the highest that Hindu thought achieved; Sita, the New Truth that reconciles flesh and spirit, love and life, the world and the soul. The analyzing of life is from the East, but the practice of living from the West — and the two wedded yield an ideal and perfect civilization.

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SIMLA

PART ONE

THE BIRTH OF LOVE

Simla sat in the forest tall,
Buttressed in like some great hall
With walls of living green. Here peace
Reigned all the year; and ne'er did cease
The spell of nature on the heart
Of forest lover. It was Simla's part
To tend the sacred fires, and sweep each day
The little hut which wisdom's sway
Proclaimed as Yogi hermitage.
Here Chelu, revered as sage,
Taught the Vedas to his son,
And what of truth his prayers had won
As special gifts from God.

Today
Simla had dropped his boyish play
And sat absorbed with puckered brow,
All rapt in thought. So fast can grow
The mind of child to mind of man

That the most anxious parents can
With difficulty mark the day
When childish thoughts have passed away ;
And when the deeper truths of life
Commence in the youth's soul a strife
Of longing the unknown to know —
New manly powers of thought to show —
Seeking a comradeship with age.

So Simla turning to the sage
Chelu, his sire, for the first time pled
For knowledge. Puzzled and slow he said :
“ Father, tell me of life's mystery.
Whence do we come? Why do we die?
Who has created this great world
About which all the stars are whirled
In nightly splendor? And what gives man
The power that great gulf to span
Of dark and dreadful stellar space,
So that he fears not heaven's face
To gaze upon ; and dares pray Brahm
To shield and save him from all harm? ”

Chelu gazed in Simla's eye,
Glad that his youthful son should try
To pierce the mystery of life ; glad
For this awakening,— yet sad
Somewhat at the inevitable thought,
These years which Simla wisdom brought
Must also take away his son

Soon from him, his own course to run.
A few more lessons — a few runes
Of occult teaching — a few moons
Swift passing — and the youth he cherished
here

Would leave him, marching without fear
Into life's battles. So the stars declared.
They told the time when Simla fared
On his own destiny as near at hand,
Like one who at the sea's curved strand
Waits eagerly to embark.

And the sire,
Knowing that even loving sons will tire
Some day of sitting at the feet of age
And learning theory from lips of sage; —
Knowing how life goes and how each youth
When his time comes, must leave the Truth
Of the pure forest-teaching for the life
Of action, and there take his part in strife
And ardor of achievement,— knowing this,
He saddened at the breaking of the bliss
Of forest harmony and silence. And yet
As a wise parent he would set
No bars to freedom when that day approached,
Lest he by destiny should be reproached
For claiming his son's life as his own,—
When Brahm had simply deigned to loan
Chelu for two decades' joy
This sweet and eager-learning boy.

Should he be jailer to his son
 And hold him, when the Fates now spun
 Adventures new and hopes faint hid?
 Such parental selfishness the gods forbid!

So Chelu, smiling on that face
 So lit with love and wisdom's grace,
 Said,—“ Simla, sit here by my side
 And ere the evening shadows hide
 The forest spaces, I will try, well
 As my wisdom aids, to tell
 The cause of life,— the birth of world
 On world in nightly splendor whirled —
 The nature of existence — how to meet
 Life's mazes with unerring feet —
 And how in each thing to discriminate
 Between false Maya and the truths of Fate.”
 Then Chelu, praying to the gods for aid,
 These words of wisdom to his pupil said: —

CHELU'S DISCOURSE ON LIFE

“ Life springs from life —
 Nor can we find a time
 When life upon this earth existed not.
 And back of life the Cause,—
 And back of that
 Naught is. For the Cause

Is causeless,
Not to be divided further.

Inexplicable, Brahm sits upon his throne
As First in time and First in power.
No partner shares his tasks,
Nor equals that Divinest Lord,
That pure Essence,—
Simplicity of manifold,
Infinite in variety yet changeless,
One and Only Substance,
Cosmic Light.

Now Being changeless lay,—
Until a stir of longing, sacrifice-desire,
Flaming within its central core —
Tapas, the fire of Love —
Awoke the germ of New Becoming,
That there might be created others
To share existence and to thank
Brahm for being; to enjoy the Light
That, streaming in undimmed brilliance,
Is older than the ancient gods,
More lasting than eternity.

So Brahm,
One quarter of Him manifesting,
Created space,
Filled it with suns and constellations,
Breathed upon planets,

Set in motion that great play
Of life, which dazzles sight
And the brain bewilders.

So began that game, Existence,
Whose stakes are infinite,
Whose gains and losses overwhelm
Man's imagination.

Here, the intricate labyrinth, Life:—
The turmoil and confusion of the world,
Joys, sorrows, victories, despair;
Contendings, struggles,
Hatred and destruction;
Love, service, godliness and peace,—
From all emerging progress toward perfection,
That far goal,
At once the cause and end
Of Life.

There, the immutable Brahm,
Causeless and uncausing,
Undescending into all strife
Of mortals:
Supreme, unknowable, of whom
Neither existence
Nor non-existence
Can be predicated.

Simla, make it thy aim
To leave the *Here*,
And in the *There* to make thy home,—
There above clouds of darkness;
There where changeless Light
Floods over all its quenchless rays.

Learn to know *This* as Maya,
That as Bliss;
To see through obscure veils the form beneath,
Transcending space, cleaving to the Soul
Of Matter and regarding not the husks.

Learn to behold the senses' Dance
With the true insight.
Fair and dazzling though it be,
Let not thy Self grow dizzy
From its mazy whirls.
Join in the dance —
For such is fate to every mortal —
That in its ecstasy some hint may be
Of greater glory and of bliss superb."

Thus Chelu taught his son of truth,
Unfolding life, showing forth proof
Of Brahm's existence, of the soul,
And telling of that distant goal
Toward which evolves the human race.
And yearly Simla grew in grace

And from his father wisdom learned;
And for all the grief that burned
The heart of mortal, sought to get
Solution. But of love, naught
To the fair youth his father taught,
Knowing Life teaches in a day
More than all theory can say.
Until the heart has tasted of its bliss
No man can know what thing love is.

So they two lived, day after day,
And time passed joyously away
Beneath the forest's checquered shade.
The game of life was wisely played,
As sages play to win the stake
That can at last the spirit take
From darkness, from Avidya,— free
It from flesh and let it see
The Light of Knowledge and attain
To spirit's heaven, Devachan.

So Simla grew — until the trace
Of a soft down upon his face
Proclaims him man. His brow is high,
His glance now resolute, now shy;
His mouth as tender as a girl's;
And on his temples the dark curls
Framing an oval cheek, are such as fire
The heart of maiden. Sure his sire
Simla prized above all being;

And his eye rejoiced in seeing
Simla changed from boy to man;
Oft his face and form he'd scan,
And his each new and virile art
Brought joy to a fond father's heart.

Now one day Simla, at the flush
Of sunset, burst his way through bush
And bramble to the holy place
Where Chelu sat, rapt in the grace
Of Yogi meditation; there
Where he was wont to fill the air
With incense,— a blessed spot
Shielded by banyan shade from hot
Fire-rays of the tropic sun.

The offering done,
The sage turned fondly to his son
Who flung himself at Chelu's side.
“Father, what thinkest thou,” he cried,
“Within the forest's leafy maze
Met this day my startled gaze?
A creature new and strangely clad!
No man! for dainty limbs it had,
And a fair stream of living gold
Down its head and shoulders flowed.
I saw it run through bush and tree,
Until it went as suddenly
As it had come.

I could not tell
Why a shudder on me fell,
As if some mighty force there lay
Within that dainty fleeting play
Of limbs, and hair adown the breeze
Floating like mosses from the trees.
I chased as I've not chased before,
And yet my strength availed no more; —
For suddenly a weakness came
Over my limbs and through my frame;
So fiercely beat my heart, its stroke
Began to strangle and to choke
The breath within me, and I lay
Exhausted — while it dashed away.

Father, what is it? Dost thou know,
Thou, whom wisdom favors so?
Surely no form unknown to thee
Ranges through flower, shrub and tree.
Tell me of it — make it clear —
And resolve this strange new fear
That changes my once joy of life,
Into a fierce, ungoverned strife!”

Chelu heaved a heavy sigh,
For once avoided his son's eye,—
And uttered, looking at the ground:
“I can't explain what you have found.
Go! Watch the forest day and night,
Tell me when next it meets thy sight,

And then perhaps I will make plain
The problem to thy puzzled brain.”
He said no more but walked away
Musing within himself all day,
Seeing the time at last arrive
When Simla with the world must strive,—
Alone, unaided, face to face,
Smitten by beauty’s powering grace.

Three days had passed, and through them all
Simla heard not the glad bird’s call,
Watched not the sunlight creep its way
To brighten flower and fountain’s spray,
Nor heeded his four-footed friends,
Whose dumb needs he daily tends.
He ever walked as in a dream
Or sat beside the fountain’s gleam,
Recalling with a rapt delight
The strange being that had met his sight.

Until upon the fourth day’s noon
He came home smiling, and once more in tune
With nature’s beauty and her grace,—
A new mystery in his face
Which his tongue would fain disclose
To Chelu, who already knows
His son has seen that strange unknown
Which Simla into such distress had thrown.

“ Father, sit thee down a while —
For I your ear would fain beguile
With the news of what I’ve seen.
Deep within the forest screen,
As I wandered toward the lake
Where the deer their thirst must slake —
Again between the trees so green
I saw that fair form in a sheen
Of white, dancing its way
To where the lake all sparkling lay.
I hastened, but when I reached the shore
That fair sight was seen no more ;
But I saw the garments’ gleam
And a ripple in the stream,
Which as I watched revealed the form
Of the creature I had known.

It sported in the water’s lea ;
Its limbs shone white ; and gracefully,
More agile than the deer that swim,
Or squirrel’s leap from limb to limb,
At last it swam ashore. And then
A glorious vision reached my ken ; —
For as it waded from the deep
To where the shore inclined less steep,
I saw its satin gleam of flesh,
Softer than cobwebs that enmesh
The dew-drops for the morning sun.

And now its water-gambols done,
It stood all bathed in sunlight ray
Proudly as peacock and as gay.
Its tresses rippled in the breeze
Almost to its dimpled knees.
So like a man, yet different, too,
The form presented to my view:
Less vigor and less brawn of frame,
All rounded softness like the tame
Roe-deer that eats from out my hands.
And like the deer it trembling stands
As if about to start and run
At my least noise or motion.

I longed to rush upon the strand,
To stroke it with my ardent hand,
To feel its softness and its grace
And nearer look into its face.
But I feared to fright it. So,
Hidden I staid there, kneeling low
Behind the leafy ambushade
That my happy refuge made.
I watched it preening in the heat,
Lifting lightly now its feet,
Turning now to face the sun;—
And constantly new glimpses won
Of dainty limbs, and swelling breast
Like the billow's curving crest
Before it breaks up into spray

And dashes gloriously its way
Shoreward.

And as the foam
Subsides and turns back home
To the great ocean, no more seen —
So vanished through the leafy screen
Of forest-gloaming this fair sight,
That on my senses such a might
Of drawing lay, as draws the bee
To flower, or the moaning sea
Moonward at full of tide.

For as I watched, it seemed to glide
Gradually away and disappear;
No slightest rustle could I hear
From its soft motion; warm and still
The hot air lay upon the lake.
Was it a dream and did I wake
To find it false? Or had my eyes
Again obtained the happy prize
Of vision, such as turned before
My heart to fire and brought it store
Of anguish these three days to dwell
Within me? Father, Guru, tell
Me now this mystery; and rid
My heart of all that's hid
Within it, like some poison slow
That doth to greater power grow
Each day. What is it? Say, dear Sire!"

Chelu near wept to see the fire
Of anguish lighting his son's eye;
And yet it was not time to try
Such mystery to explain. No word
He said, but silently transferred
His gaze to heaven; sent a prayer
Upon the holy listening air
Of Atamon, where sage's thought
Is nearer to the devas brought
Than elsewhere in the Brahmin land.
Then Chelu turned and took the hand
Of Simla, lovingly and long,
Within his grasp:

“Go, dearest child;
Bear with you still this tumult wild
For seven days. The devas tell
My anxious heart all will be well
By then. I promise to explain
The puzzle that your soul would fain
Resolve. For now, it cannot be.
Once again it is thy fate to see
The forest Beauty. Then the whole
Deep mystery will be clear,—
The meaning you at last shall hear
Of this strange tumult in thy breast,
And thy troubled soul shall rest
At last in peace.”

So Chelu spoke
For so the favoring gods awoke

His intention to respond.
He did not know what lay beyond
The present, but he safely felt
That all the future outcome dwelt
With heaven; and no worry need
Afflict him — did he ever heed
The voice of heaven as he daily strived
To do.

At last the time arrived
The gods had promised. Without fail
Simla the third time brings his tale
To Chelu — his cheeks all fire,
His hot hands hinting to his sire
Of love's fever. Fast and hot
The words burst from him, halting not:
“This morning as I gladly ran
Within the forest's leafy span
Again this glad sight met my eyes,
Of patience the reward and prize —
Though tardy,— for full seven days
Have I sought a thousand ways
This Being, woven of pure light,
As glad as sunshine to my sight.
But since I saw it by the lake,
No matter how my course I take,
Along the vales and murmuring streams;
In dusky dells where sunlight streams
Like rays from Brahma through the blue;
Up mountain sides, where eaglets mew,

Up to the topmost pinnacle I strove
But naught I found save murmuring grove,
And streamlets dashing down the course
Beaten to spray in their mad force.

Father, so desolate I felt
Sadly did I yearn to melt
Like spray, to lose myself up there
So near to heaven,— there where Brahm
Seems to close in and shield from harm
The listening soul of life. Alas,
That all my gladness thus should pass
To sorrow and to yearning pain,
Which naught could conquer save again
To see my Golden Glory burst
Upon me, as it did that first
And gladsome day,— day to recall
With musing, on memory's breast to fall.

So, father, have I passed twice four
Sad days, dreaming that I never more
Should see my vision beautiful.
So I was sad until this morn,
Trailing sadly and forlorn
The forest road, I reached the place
Where two waters interlace
Their dew-drops in one glistening spray,
Reflecting the white light of day
Into a dazzling rainbow sheen
Of colors, like jewels in the forest green.

Beneath the water-fall there lies
A glade all hallowed from strange eyes
By range of firs that close around
The soft moss-carpeted ground
Like fairy circle; made for joy,
Made to shut out all annoy,
And to soothe a sorrowing mind
That nowhere else could comfort find.
This I discovered but a few days ago
As I wandered to and fro
With sadness haunted, through the glow
Of forest stillness.

But this morning, lo!

As I approached the magic spot
The blood beat at my temples hot,—
For there upon the mossy brim
My eye caught through the distance dim
That fairy form, that burst of gold
That seemed all heaven's light to hold.
There my Golden Glory lay
Upon the turf; in sportive play
She garlands wove for her pet hind.
Where gracefully her limbs reclined
I envied moss; and water, too,
That felt her impress or had view
Of that fair form than gods more blest,
Yet hostile to my soul's pure rest.
What should I do? If I advanced
To where upon the green she danced

Around her hind all garlanded,
I knew full well she would have sped
Again, as erstwhile, through the glade;
Again my golden dream would fade,
And like to bubbles full of light,
Now sparkle, now dissolve from sight.

But heaven to my assistance came.
For as I viewed her graceful frame,
And poured my sighs upon the air
The more the zephyrs kissed her hair,—
There, mute and waiting as I stood
A sense of danger changed my mood.
Immediate then I heard her cries,
Shrilling of danger and surprise.
I looked up and saw a serpent coiled
About her hind, and in its fold
Smothering the beloved pet
In close embrace and closer yet,
Until his eyes stood from its head,
And in a moment it were dead.
But leaping over cliffs, past trees,
I pushed through brambles, and there on my
 knees
I spoke the Mantra,— sacred spell
You gave me, that had served so well
In danger. It now availed me naught!
Then about the neck I caught
The monster, strangling it so
That at last it must let go

Its mighty folds, and helpless lay
A bruised and quivering mass of clay.

The hind, now panting on the ground,
A new art in its mistress found
Of pity and of beauteous grace.
A divine radiance lit her face,
As clasping in her arms the pet
Tears of joy and weakness met.
And from excitement all so soon
Resolved, she fell into a swoon,
Her arms still clasped about the hind,
Her hair dishevelled in the wind,
Her face as marble white and pure.
Her form so full of sweet allure
Lay still and quiet on the ground;
And from her parted lips no sound
Or breathing spoke of life. Dismayed,
I there a dreadful moment stayed,
Chafing her brow and shaking her;
Yet still she lay and did not stir.

Then methought of water's charm
To revive and free from harm
The body worn out with fatigue,
Or where death with life would league.
And so I dashed off to the brook
And a brimming handful took
Of the water pure and cold,
As much as my two hands would hold;

And careful, stepped o'er stone and stick
And forged my way through brier thick
Again to her and in her face
The water dashed. Once more the grace
Of color lit her cheeks. Her eyes
Looked forth again in wild surprise
Upon the world, and her sweet breast
Heaved as with bitter weight oppressed.
But soon she smiled, a smile
That seemed in heaven to bide awhile
Before it dawned on earth.

I stroked her forehead as she lay
Smiling in her glad sweet way;
And to show her gratitude,
Dimples her dear features wooed.
And all her grief and danger quelled
Her fear of me seemed now dispelled
And she no longer tried to run,
But lay beneath the golden sun,
Her hair more golden, and her ways
Past the poets' mead or praise.
Presently she sat up and gazed
At me until, my senses dazed,
I could do naught but gasp and smile.
Then, finding courage all the while,
My hand her velvet cheek caressed,
Softer than the eagle's breast.

Her head she gently let to rest
Upon my shoulder. Her dear eyes,

Full of the warmth of summer skies,
Dwelt on me — till I could but gasp
At the joy that lay within our grasp.
Father, it melted all my being quite,—
And in my veins the old sullen fight
Yielded to flow of golden bliss.
Then slow her soft lips drew to kiss
My own.

As roses blown

By summer breezes dizzily sway
This way or that — so my heart lay
A helpless moment, buoyed and filled
By ecstasies that through it thrilled.

I seemed to know not what I did
When her lips' perfume gently slid
Upon my lips. Our souls close grew,
One mighty impulse through us drew,—
Till my dazed spirit scarcely knew
Whether it were I who lay
Upon her breast and felt the play
Of heart-beat quickened there,
Or whether I had melted into air,—
A zephyr-joy, a breath of glee.
Was I I, and was she she?
Or was I she, and had her soul in me
Crept softly in and dispossessed
At that strange moment when we kissed!

O father, I would gladly give
The sorrows which I had to live

These many days, if I but knew
This joy I felt was true and sure
From the gods sent, and would endure!
But if it's but a moment's joy,—
While all the mediate days annoy
My heart, as now has been
Since first my treasure I have seen,
Father, I know not what to do!
Must this be so my whole life through?

Already I have lost the glow
Of ecstasy — which so little while ago
Upbuoyed me. And I can hardly wait
Until the hours revolve their fate
Once more a weary se'nnight,—
For then I meet my dear delight
Again by her command. Though I pled
Bitter for earlier day, she gainsaid
My plea, and homeward turned her way.
And when I sought to follow, 'Nay!'
She said, 'It must not be'— smiled
And was gone, leaving me this tumult wild.

Now, father, you must tell me all.
Explain this fever, list the call
My helpless spirit makes to you —
To you, my father, guide, Guru."
Chelu smiled deep upon his son —
"How powerful has now begun
The hold of love upon you! I knew

The time for love and marriage drew
 Towards its fulfillment — for love it is
 That thrills you with this subtle bliss,
 And it is woman who has shown
 To you the magic men have known
 Since Eve first smiled on Adam.

But first,

Before I can explain this thirst
 Of fever in your veins, I must
 Make clear how man differs from the dust
 Of earth which constitutes his frame.
 Think you Man had sent his fame
 Through earth and heaven, if his rôle
 Were to obey the body, not the soul?
 And so to thee I must unfold
 The mystery of spirit, and the hold
 Earth makes upon it.
 Come! While the dusk lasts, sit
 Beside me here and let me pour
 Heaven's wisdom for you in this twilight hour."
 So Chelu favoringly spoke —
 And into Being these great truths awoke.

CHELU'S DISCOURSE ON THE SOUL

"Learn now of the spark
 Within thee.
 God-Man is it called,

Purusha, image of Deity;
Smaller than a mustard seed,
Larger than the universe,
Great in small,
Atman, Self, Hiranyagarbha,
Golden glow of life, and spark
From Brahm.

Learn, oh Son, the nature of thy soul
And thou art freed from all the bonds
Of earth's enchantment.
Look around thee: below, above,
All that the eye discerns,
All that the senses catch,
The trees, the brooks,
Earth, air, and seas,
And living forms that they do hold;
Atmospheres,
Sun and moon,
And stars,
And the infinite glorious distances beyond,—
All This thou art;
All This doth lie concealed
Within thee, if thou but knew.
For the Self is all, and This is less than all.
The Self is Brahm,—
And This, the phenomenal existence,
Is but the exudation of His thought.

To see thyself as creature and as part
Of the Around-world,—

This is Maya,
This is the Veil,
This is the senses' dazzle;
Earth's illusion,
Desire-source,
Path that leads in Mazes
Ever back upon itself;
Cause of pain and sorrow
Chaining existence to existence,—
Moksha never thus attained.

Behold the masses
Flinging themselves into the sea of life;
Drunken, reckless,
Grasping for possessions,
Bent on gain,
Heedless of Brahm and Self.
See them store up in dreadful ignorance
An evil Karma, recking
Themselves as free who are but slaves
To hot and mad desire;
Recking themselves as slaves
Who, if they knew, were free
To rule and govern gloriously
All the Around-world.

Such is the life
Of them who know not the Within-world.
Spiritual eyes they have, and see not;
Ears they have for inner guidance, and hear
not;

Senses clairvoyant for the scent and touch
Of faery forms
Grown in garden glades of spirit.
Yet so dense a veil
Of Maya all-infolds them,
That they live as one
Born deaf and dumb and blind
From out his mother's womb.

But be thou
A citizen of two worlds.
Live in the world about thee;
Descend into the shocks of life;
Fight the good fight, but not
As men fight who forget their God.
Learn to know men, see
Their passions,
Read their motives.
Learn to play upon the mighty organ pipes
Of life. Learn to lead
And rule the human world.

But live also in the world
Of dreams.
Be as a bird that soars
From earth to sky,
To lose itself in airy regions
Where the gods live.
Above the world of time and space
Atman ever dwells —

As in spaces measureless,
As in eternal day.

Yet mystery of mysteries
I tell thee,
Who can list my words
But understand their import
Not until thy spiritual rebirth
Hear thou what I say
And mark it down upon thy memory-soul; —
That man may live in these two worlds
At one and the same time.
God-man and world-man,
One-in-twain,
Shall live upon this earth
Harmoniously, joyously, immortally,
When all do learn of Truth.

Now do I impart to thee
The way to Moksha, to Deliverance;
The means by which
Thou art to learn of Self
And learn of Brahm
As union and identity.

It is through sense-control
And sense awakening.
Bind the senses, shut them in;
And also free the senses,
Gratify their every whim.

But here a mystery lies.
He who would this puzzle read
Must know of senses
Other than the senses known.
Must as discoverer
Explore new lands,
And find within himself
New powers, new riches, and new opportunities.

Earth-senses bind,
Heaven-senses loose;
Close eyes and ears,
Forget the world;
Open eyes and ears
Where dawns the super-world,—
Super-man to be,
Super-senses to develop,
Super-destiny to find.

DISCOURSE ON THE THREE AGES OF MAN

Now will I teach thee
Of man's three ages,
According to the plan of Manu —
Law-giver unto mortals.

First, the forest claims thee
As Chela, blest disciple

Of some Guru, spiritual master,
Who shall teach thee of the ways of truth.
Here thou dost dwell,
Here spend thy days
In service to thy lord,—
Building his fires,
Sweeping his hearth,
Cooking his simple meals ;
And at dawn and dusk
Paying sacrifice unto the gods.

As thou dost consecrate thy body
In material service to thy lord,
So must thou consecrate thy mind and soul
Unto his guidance,
Listening to his wise words,
Learning from his lips the Vedas,
Sacred books ;
Learning from him the Vedanta knowledge,
Too great for common mortals
But revealed to Brahmans.

So he plays upon thy soul,
Thy Guru,
As on an instrument in delicate attune
With the divine ;
Opens thy stops, sets all thy being
In vibration to the Cosmic rhythm,—
The same to which the stars move in their
course,

And to which the planets circle in mysterious
love
Around their Sun —
Inner law, outer law
Both one.

Here thou dost learn, too,
How freedom lies in strict obedience
Unto the law.
For when thy wish
Is Brahm's wish,
Then is it free as yonder bird,
That spurns the ground
And cleaves the air against the claims of
gravity.

But when thy wish is for non-good, for self,
Then is it shackled.
Then the mighty force
Of all creation —
That force which upholds the constellations in
their places —
Dost crush thee,—
First gently persuading thee to yield
Thyself unto its current;
Then, if thou yieldest not,
Dashing thee in a mad torrent
The speed of which man vainly deems his own
will-force,
Until he learns too late

His course is not his own.
No will, no power to resist
The mighty karmic force
That bears him on
To final ruin.

Not so the course of him
Who follows Dharma,
Duty's call.
To him the Law is guide and comrade,
Master and Lover,
Transcendental Power,
Perfect Mate.
For him the planets bend their course,
The stars conspire to serve,
And Destiny awaits him in far harbors of the
soul,—
Magnificent, cosmic, kind
Unto her servant,
Accepting his soul's consecration,
And aiding him to work his cherished part
In universal life.

Son, obey the Law,
Seek for its counsel,
Listen to its voice,
And follow every guidance.
This the truth that I,
Thy Guru,
Have strived to teach thee.

Peace, peace be unto thee;
Peace in Brahm.

When twenty summer suns have filled their
course,

And youth to manhood turns,
Begins for him the second stage
Of life.

Then waits for him
A wife, glorious mate
To soothe his cares,
To share his sorrows,
To create for him, in return for love,
Fair radiant beings
To bear his name and power
To posterity.

Here lies a mystery,
Greatest mystery the body knows,—
That woman may create
Even as Brahm doth;
May enfold, within-form,
And then manifest to light of day,
New beings with immortal souls.

To such a mystery
Fitting it is that love should be
The great Initiator.
This it is that in thy frame

Has wakened such a tumult,
Stirred thy blood to madness,
Stolen all thy peace of life;
And shown thee such a spectacle
Of Maya beauty,
That thy soul, dazzled,
Would fain rush in
And join the whirling mazes
Of the dance.

Love, the great Illusioner,
Take it now for guide,
And let it lead thee through the Maya-world.
Fear not! It is destiny
For thee.
Full well I knew when twenty years ago
I entered these domains,
That the time would come
When Love would make thee prisoner —
Love would steal thee from me —
Love would bind thee close
To woman
And lead thee back into the world.

Go, fulfill thy second stage
As house-holder,
And leave me free to forest meditation,
Alone with Brahm,
Alone with my Divinest Lord,
Even as one day

Thou too shalt claim
Thy Brahmin right
To meditate alone upon the ways of God.

House-holder now thou art,
Parent to become,
Propagator of the race.
Free thou hast been within these forest ranges,
Free to seek silence,
Free to think on Brahm ;
Free of sex, as seraph souls
That sing before the sacred throne.

Now thou art no longer free.
The mantras that I gave thee
Avail thee not,
As thou didst find when serpent power
Defied thy might.
Then thou wert forced
From spirit-power toward earthly power to
descend.

Such is love.
It awakens latent forces of the Maya-Self.
It develops to the highest point
The self that is to lose itself in God.
Fear not, it is the path to Moksha.
Even though it seems to turn away
And wander amid pleasure fields
Low-lying, far from spirit's mountain-peaks,

Love of man leads ultimately
Into love of God.

Go, bring forth children,
Learn unselfishness,
Devotion, loyalty,
Tender sympathy and care.
Learn to find freedom in bondage unto Dharma.
For truly as the stars sing in their destined
course,
So thou shalt find a joy
Within the prison of the flesh
Which love makes,—
Love, the gaoler,
Love,
Keeper of the soul for God.

Third stage, as forest hermit
To retire from the world
In God-like meditation.
Here are wrought out all those truths,
That inner essence of religion,
The Aranyakas.
Here, above Maya dwelling,
Freed from bonds of sense,—
Man beholds nature as unveiled,
Penetrating unillusioned to the core of Being,
Learning all the mysteries of life.
Full maturity of mind and spirit,

Calmness and peace of age,
Unquenchable thirst for truth,—
Make this a period rich with thought,
Pregnant with priceless jewels
Of the spirit.

In the forest-closures,
Shut off from life,
Freed from sex,
Peace at last comes ;
Sensing of the super-world,
Knowledge of Atman as the soul
Of universal life.
There to seek the way
Nearer each day to God ;
Each setting sun brings peace,
Each dawn initiates new joys.

Then of the truth explored
To share with others —
Chelas new-beginning life with search for truth ;
And older men
Who, hearing perchance
Some special fame of forest-dweller,
Travel from cities far
To silent glades,
That they may sit at wisdom's feet :
Plying their busy questions
And receiving answer, as to what
Is manifest,

What unmanifest ;
What the Self that dwells within ;
What the purpose of the senses and of life ;
And how Moksha is attained.

This I count as the most glorious stage
Of life,
This the nearest to immortal bliss,—
Tasting beforehand of that celestial wine
Which the gods sip ;
Reaching the within-world
Where all is fair,
Where space and time adhere not,
And the hold of earth
Breaks, and releases man
For his immortal journey
God-ward.

This stage is now my privilege to claim,—
Earth-duty done,
Dharma toward wife and children finished.
You to the city,
You to married bliss
And household arts.
But for me,—
The forest-wisdom,
Skies of pure serenity,
Joy, and the peace of Brahm.”

So Chelu spoke, and his words brought
New wisdom to the youth he taught.
Now Simla, enlightened, realized well
The meaning of this magic spell
Love had cast on him. Now he saw
How all must come within Love's law,
Or soon or late; and he accepts the voice
Of Destiny. His heart and soul rejoice
At thought of home, and sacred fire,
And wife and bairns to call him sire.
He sees of Love full clear man's need,
And joyous waits Love's promised meed.

And so Time draws her sluggish way
Till the seventh sun illumes that day
When destined blisses Simla greet,
That he should soon with Sita meet.
As he set forth upon Love's quest
His father told him it were best
The maiden fair, could he persuade
Her heart, to bring back when he made
His journey homeward. She should tell
Her life and home — and if the Fates thought
well,
Their troth should plighted be.
For to Chelu, it was Destiny
That called his son, and it was right
The planets should at last unite
These souls to join, and send them forth
To found their own familiar hearth.

And so when reddening sun low dipped
And mountain-trees grew fire-tipped,
Chelu heard afar the strain
Of happy voices — and soon they twain,
Maiden and youth, from out the wood
Emerged in heaven-ecstatic mood.
Around them seemed a golden flame
Of love to play, as slow they came
The path adown. Or was it but the fiery glow
Of sunset, transfiguring the low
Glad arc of heaven which lay back of them?

Now quick the maiden ran, the yellow hem
Of Chelu's gown to raise and press
To her sweet lips — while Chelu gave caress
As to a daughter whom he joyed
To greet. And Simla stood there, buoyed
With great content.
He knew this tender greeting meant
The girl's submission — that her life
Was henceforth pledged to be his wife.

And now as Chelu, 'neath the arm
Of a great tree sat her of radiant charm,
“ Be welcome here — who love to roam.
Content thee here to make thy home
And rest with us a pleasant while.
The night is young. Will you beguile
Our ears with story of your maiden life?
How comes it you are not ere now a wife? ”

“If you wish,” she said, “I will tell the tale
Of my life as the old priest Sael
Told me ere he died. One year
Ago, just from today, he bade me near
His bedside sit and learn my past,—
I who had called him father. ‘Fast
Comes the time,’ he said, ‘when my soul
Is to leave this plane and one step toward the
Goal
Nearer its journey make. Ere I go
I would that you, my child, should know
All that I know about you.’

At this word
A strangeness in my bosom stirred.
What did he mean? Was he not my sire?
‘It is a strange tale,’ he said, ‘if I tire
Not, that I shall unfold this day.
Long you have called me father — my sway
Obeyed, but naught else. All gay and wild
As a young roe-deer you have been, my child,—
Knowing no law but mine. And I, as you see,
Have let you run wild, I have made you free
Of all the world save Brahm and me.
To my wish you have given due heed,
At my call you would ever speed
Home from the lonely forest-shade;
But no other claim on you was made
Than to heed my voice.
Elsewise, yours was the youthful choice

To keep yourself sheltered in our home,
Or freely through the great woods to roam
As your heart bid.

The reason for this I hid
From you, from all. Yet many wondered
Why I from the Manu laws thus sundered
Your budding life; why you thus played
Free, unrestrained, as no Hindu maid
E'er did. They knew not you had the special
care
Of Brahm; that your guidance was my daily
prayer;
And that in visions all my plans were given
To train you by the will of Heaven.

For you are not a common thing.
It was the gods that caused to bring
You to me, in this wise: — It chanced one day
At dawn, as I began to pray
It seemed as some one called my name,
A spiritual voice. Then soon there came
A faint rap on my door. I opened it.
Only an owl, soft-pinioned, flit
Before me up the mountain path. The air
Was biting cold. I returned to prayer.

Again methought I heard my name
Called out by some one, but the claim
Of prayer upon me I would not forego.

Then came again a rapping, slow
And ominous. And as I ope'd the door
A black crow stood there pecking from the
floor

Some grains of meal. Alarmed he flew
Slowly away, up the dark path where grew
The light of day above the trees.

Again I turned back on my knees
In prayer and meditation. But no peace
The gods allowed — for a moan
Soon came from out my door. Where shone
Through it the morning light I saw
A monkey lifting up its paw
As if to call me. His gibbering squeak
Seemed almost humanly to speak
And bid me come. He turned to run
Upon the mountain path. The sun,
Still hid, tipped the far trees.

No more dared I upon my knees
Seek Brahm, when plainly there were sent
His messengers three at dawn. What meant
This summons it was hard to know.
At least I felt that I must go
Boldly up the mountain road
Until some evident meaning showed
The purpose of my call.

So out

I strode into the morning, wrapped about
With robe of wool. The air was keen.
Coldly the morning smoke was seen
From peasants' huts, low-wreathed around
The ridge-poles, hugging the frozen ground.
Up the mountain as I climbed
The bells from distant temples chimed.
My soul in prayer to Brahm addressed
Sought for his guidance, and professed
Its only aim to seek His will.
And so my aged footsteps still
Mounted the path, still forged a way
Toward where the night gave place to day
Within the mountain pass.

'At length,

When faint and feeble grew my strength,
I saw ahead a dark form lie
Where the black mountain touched the sky.
One last effort and I stood
Beside it. By growing light I could
Discern the figure of a prostrate man
Wrapped in soft fleece of Astrakan.
I called him — touched him. No response
He made. His limbs all rigid lay. For a
nonce
I gazed upon his face, o'er spread
With suffering, taut and gaunt; all red

His hair and frosted beard; his length
Surpassing that of Indus man.

Silent I stood a moment's span,
Thinking him dead. Then as I moved
His limbs, a rustling motion proved
Some life within him. To my amaze
His fur robe parted and I gazed
Upon as fair a sight as life can show.—
There, haloed with a radiant glow
Of golden curly locks, a child
I saw — so young, scarcely a year
It seemed. One glance it gave. Then fear
And cold and hunger made it burst
Into a flood of crying.

At first

I could but look in wonder there
At its fine skin and golden hair
So strange to Indus-land. Then I took
The child within my arms, and shook
The prostrate figure. All still
And cold it lay, like breath of the chill
Grave! No doubt but life had passed
From that gaunt frame! Those eyes their last
Long look had had of earth and sky.
Its lonely fate had been to die
High on the mountain-pass, just when
An hour more had reached our glen-

Fast hamlet, and new strength and life
Had found.

Now neither passion's strife
Nor hostile foes, nor battling will,
Would e'er engage that form so still
Upon the mountain-path. I let
It lie there, while with the babe I set
Upon the homeward way. So strong
I felt with that dear load, the long
And toilsome mountain-road, now down-
Ward going, brought me to the town
In a short time. Upon my couch
The babe I laid. Then quickly got
From the nearest mountain-hut
A nurse to aid my awkward skill.
Her first task was at the fire to fill
A pot with milk and let it brew,
While from the child its clothes she drew
And chafed its limbs all red with cold.
Then gave it the hot milk, and fold
On fold of blanket wrapped around
The child. Then on the couch in sound
And happy slumber soon it lay,
And peaceful slept throughout the day.

Meanwhile a problem filled my mind; —
Though the gods had aided me to find
This child, could I an aged Brahman, keep
Within my home that which did sleep

So sweetly on my bed? Again I prayed
My human reason should be swayed
By higher Reason, my poor sense
Be guided by the power immense
Of God-Head. And so a vision grew
Upon me, and showed me clear and true
My duty.

“Keep the child,”— a voice
Echoed within me. “And rejoice
Our Will to do. Thou art not defiled
To nurse and feed the foundling child
That We have sent. It must be known
As Brahmin child. When it is grown,
Great blessing it will bring to Brahmin land.
Care for it, train it, with thine own wise hand.”

And so began, my child, your Brahmin life,—
Sheltered from struggle, sheltered from the
 strife
That fetters common mortals. In peace,
Where I had made my shelter 'neath the trees,
I taught you daily of the Brahmin lore;
I watched your wisdom more and more
Increase; saw your fast ripening soul
Its journey hasten toward that goal
Which every Brahman seeks.

Dear child
Your manners were so sweet and mild,

Who could help but love you? Not I,
Surely, to whom as a gift from the far sky
You had descended. Every day
You grew more dear to me, and filled
My lack of children,— else my heart had chilled
With aging years. But you kept it ever fresh.
You rendered sunlight to me from your tress
Of golden hair. You mirrored Beauty
In your features rare. And Duty
Daily so claimed in you its share
Of Goodness, that Goodness grew more fair.

You were given by the gods new joy
To bring my fading years. Both boy
And girl in one you proved to be —
Chela in a double sense to me,
Your Guru, who sought to give
You all the Light by which men live,
And women, too. No Indus child
Of your frail sex had ever reconciled,
As you, the scholar's learned part
With the deep-loving, ardent heart
Of womanhood. It was a destiny
God-given,— to you, to me:
To me, in teaching such a soul;
To you, in thus transcending woman's goal
Of life.

All happily, you spent your days
On tender care for me; in praise

To Brahm; in Veda study deep.
Till that time came when powers which sleep
In childhood wake to life — an age
When that innocent and dreaming sage,
The child, embarks on rougher seas,
Battles with storms where tempests please
The soul, so long encalmed; and fast
And furious, straining at its mast,
The soul's ship speeds its destined way
To where unknown and great adventures lay.

Now changed was all your life.— No more
Content to serve me, patient as of yore
Within my hut, your youthful restless feet
Urged you the forest-joys to greet.
Daily you roamed the jungle; fought
Your way to strange new scenes; brought
Me back some souvenir of wildwood
Such as catch the eye of childhood,
Some new emblem daily of your fearlessness:
Nuts from the tree-tops; water-cress
For which you braved the oozy mud
Of morass-brook; or else a lotus-bud,
Gathered from the center of a lake
Where dauntless limbs had dared to take
Your dainty body, floating on the tide
Of waters desolate and wide.

At first I pondered, ' Let her have her way,
As long as dissonance of sex holds sway

Upon her. Soon this wild strain will cease
And once again she will find peace
In domesticity.' But when a year
Had passed and you were wilder still, a fear
Came on me that I had done wrong.
I should have checked you e'er thus strong
Upon you grew this wildness. And so
Full strictly bade I that you cease to go
Into the jungle; that you stay at home
And tend your duties there and roam
No more.

Sweetly, as lay in you, you obeyed
My orders. There at home you stayed,
Sweeping the hearth, cooking my food,
Studying the Vedas; — but I saw you brood
Daily, like an eagle caged:
And a slow sickness waged
To thin you, so that from your cheeks
The glow of health no longer speaks
Of happiness. Each day I saw you pine
The more, until the blue, fine
Veins showed in your forehead. Then I began
to pray
In fear to Brahm to guide my sway
Upon you by His wisdom; for I feared
That silently, though dutiful, you neared
The grave.

And soon in answer came
The god's direction —“ Do not forbid her game
Of wildness. She is our daughter. Leave her
free

To follow her own sense of liberty.
Fear not that she may thus transgress
The Brahmin laws. Over her I rule.
My wisdom is her sway and school.
And in the jungles or the deserts wide
I am her guardian, ever at her side.”

So came the voice to me, and I obeyed,
For all my life has ever stayed
Upon His wishes. So, my child,
These last years you were free and wild
Of all restraints. Your erstwhile home,
My hut, you leave and daily roam
The forest-close,— and to the care of Brahm
I trust to guard you from all harm.

But soon my days on earth must end,
And where then will my darling spend
Her hours? Would that you were wed!
So fast the golden years have sped
That you are grown a woman, and should be
By now a wife. Yet as your choice is free,
Through Brahm's command, I do not try
To find a husband for you — you who cry
Still for more freedom. Live as you will
And may the high gods guard you still.’

So spoke my dear and aged sire,
 Telling of my life. Since then the fire
 Has died down in his frame. Two years
 Have gently passed, and now his fears
 Of age and death have been realized.
 At home he lay all paralysed,
 And by him daily I would sit
 And care for him as should befit
 My love and duty toward him.

And then

One day he passed beyond my ken
 Into the Other Land; left me to dwell
 Sad and alone within our mountain-hut.
 But I could not, thus, long stay shut
 From nature and my forest friends.
 And so I roam again the fens
 And leave the home in tender care
 Of our old nurse. But ever goes my prayer
 To heaven for Sael's soul. Thus in the forest
 range
 You found me, Simla.

Now all my strange

And mystic story I have told.
 You know my life, you hold
 My past. And will you also take
 My future, dearest? Does love awake
 At last my heart? And is my soul
 Destined to travel toward the Goal
 Of being at your side?"

She stopped, and smiled away the tears
That tale of the declining years
And death of her dear sire had caused.
And for a moment they all paused
In breathless silence. The moon rode high
And flooded all the tropic sky
With mystic sheen. Chelu first broke
The raptured quiet, and he spoke
These words with earnest, loving voice.

“ Will you deign to make your choice,
Daughter — for such I would thee call —
Here now of a protector, all
The turns of life to share with thee;
And build a happy home, where he
Will call thee wife, thou call him husband?
Will you fulfill love’s budding hope —
That thy chaste womb may duly ope
Its destined treasures?

Here is one
Whom I am proud to call my son —
Simla, brave, blameless youth —
Who has worshipped at my shrine of truth
These twenty years. Now the stars show
The time has come for him to go
Forth from me and build him a home,
Householder to become. He loves you.
His fond heart would bid him strew
Your future path with roses. Joy

Would he bring you — this fair boy,
 Beloved of devas. He will ne'er abuse
 Your woman's heart of love.

Say, will you choose

Him now for mate? You are alone
 In life. It seems the gods have shown
 This union as the destined thing;
 Not otherwise could a father bring
 Reconcilement to his aching heart
 When from his fond child he must part.
 Believe me, to none else than to you
 Would Chelu gladly, humbly sue
 As mate for his son's hand.
 Will you have him now for husband?
 You have no home — you have no guide
 But your own heart. Should you decide
 To accept Simla, here and now
 Will I perform the marriage vow,
 And you shall both be duly wed
 Ere yonder moon hies him to bed.”

A flush on Sita's fair face stood.
 She spoke no word — while through the wood
 A nightingale with notes of gold
 Strove plaintively its mate to hold.
 So deep the studied silence grew
 That on the leaves the sound of dew
 Slow trickling, was discerned.
 Then slow the bashful maiden turned

A glowing face to Simla there,
Who stood with outstretched arms. Fair,
Delicate vision of a loveliness
The Apsaras could not surpass,
Stood Sita. And now faint smiles appear
And heaven's glory seems to near
The earth, when her fond eyes shine on his
And promise him immortal bliss.

He clasped her ardent to his breast
And there she let her fair head rest,
A burst of gold against his midnight curls.
And still no words disturbed the whirls
Of vast harmonic silence. Sound
Is but froth, when love is found.
For words in learning's halls have place,
But they are lost in Love's still-throbbing space.

“Sit thee both down, then, and ere the stars do
fade,”

The sage broke silence, “thy history, Simla,
shall be made

Manifest, which as yet, I have not told.
From the beginning I will thy life unfold —
Of thy mother and her dying prayer.

To the tale give a still ear!
Nay, I will return at last
To far memories of my past —
To the day when I first loved,
And the same wild spirit moved

My heart as now moves thine."
With this Chelu gave his son the sign
Of the father's blessing and fair hope;
And seated where the heavens seemed to ope
A canopy of glory overhead
Simla drank in what his fond parent said.

"At just your age, long years ago,
I met with lover's pangs also;
And that same mysterious fire —
Be it from earth or be it higher —
That courses madly through thy veins,
Brought me the mingled joy and pains
That lovers know. She whom I wooed
Was all earth held of fair and good;
A blessing sent from Heaven in disguise,
An angel new-descended from the skies.

Love, my son, is the most sweet illusion
That flesh is heir to in this world's confusion.
Glory of the sunrise hues,
Shimmer of the morning dews,
Scent of flowers on the breeze,
Whispering of soft-leaved trees,
Laughter, and the glad surprise
Of strange joy sparkling in girls' eyes,
Mystery of flesh and soul,
Path that leads to spirit's goal,—
Love is all of this, and more;
For Brahm, through love, one of His four

Great measures poured into the mould
Of the material Maya world.
Love is creation, love is bliss.
All else in life the self may miss,
Yet missing this it misses God,
And spirit-breath that stirs each Sod.

As you love now, so once loved I,
With ecstasy that mounted high
In lover's expectations. That sweet girl,
Kalra, thy mother, of whom thy curl
Of midnight hair reminds me, how with her
Thrilled me the love which I see stir
Within thy heart for Sita! When we were wed
Seemed it that Heaven all its glory shed
Around us, as it now transfigures you.
And then three years we lived, of true
Sweet comradeship in wedded bliss —
And you were born.

Did the gods miss
Her ethereal beauty? Did they yearn
To have her spirit's grace adorn
The walks of heaven, that they took her from
me?

Hardly allowed they to give life to thee
Ere they withdrew her, grudgingly; stole
Her away to Kama, where her soul
Than here more fittingly resides.

Alas, how many brides
 Leave thus love's silken canopy
 To walk the large spaces of the sky ;
 Leave thus their husbands grieving sore,
 To whom, as bitter they implore
 For sight of the beloved one,
 Destiny replies, ' Behold a son
 We give thee, to recall thy love.
 He stays with thee, while she awaits above.'

So, Simla, was I then bereft —
 And only you, dear child, were left
 For consolation.
 There in Jumru I remained
 Till you sufficient strength attained
 To join me on the forest road.
 Then Heaven me this vision showed
 Of Atamon — this holy place,
 Where trees their branches interlace
 And make a canopy for thought.
 To this woods then I brought
 The only token Fate had left
 Of Kalra.— That token, son, you were !
 And I have trained you here, to stir
 The soup-pot, tend the fire,
 Fetch water, sweep out hut — nor did you ever
 tire
 Of this humble service which all Chelas owe
 Their Guru.

Fondly I watched you grow
 To youth's estate, where Truth's appeal
 Could finally your training seal
 With Brahm's approval. Now you learned
 The holy Vedas. How your mind burned
 All mysteries to know! Eager-heart,
 I called you. For you drank at wisdom's fount
 Full deeply, and your spirit fain would mount
 The highest peaks of thought. Nor did I com-
 pel

Attention from you. It were as if a spell
 Of magic held your dazzled mind,
 Some new knowledge ceaselessly to find.
 And but to guide you was my part.
 Never to drive you, Simla, Eager-heart!

Now to manhood you have grown.
 All too quickly the glad years have flown,
 And you must leave me. You must go
 Back now to Jumru; there with Sita sow
 The seeds of industry; play in life
 The husband's part, your future wife
 To house and feed and cherish. Ere you go,
 While the dawn-star still hangs low
 Its glory in the eastern sky,
 I will with the Manu laws comply,—
 And ere I wed thee, make it known
 How love's seed should be wisely sown
 Within the marriage garden. Those great
 laws

Descended from the past, without flaws
 They are, sacred truths! Never fail
 To follow them, and happiness shall prevail
 Upon thy lives."

So Chelu spoke,
 Wearing the night away. His words awoke
 The hearts of those fond lovers. Rapt
 They listened to his truths that shaped
 For them the duties of the married life,—
 Truths that should be known ere maid becomes
 a wife;
 A delicate teaching which was fitly given
 Under the soft canopy of heaven
 Upon this tropic night.

And now the first flush of the morning light
 Silvered the east. And soon the streamers red
 Of dawn awoke the squirrels from their bed
 Of sleep; and birds all joyous sang,
 And far and wide the forest rang
 With stir of wakening life. This was the hour
 In which the hermit was to use his power
 As Brahmin priest, to join that happy twain
 In bonds of holy wedlock. Fain
 They were for union — rapt in each other's es-
 sence,
 So that it seemed this night one presence
 Only was made by those two bodies there,
 Two souls united, as in the heavens air

Penetrates in air so that no cyst
 Or barrier divides. In such a golden mist
 They floated. And they were already one
 At heart, when in the light of rising sun
 The priest them outwardly unites
 By those sweet, ancient, holy rites
 Which symbol union.

For marriage is a sign
 Of union between mortal and divine;
 And wedlock is that state on earth
 In which the holier passions find their birth,—
 Love of the weak, willingness to bear
 Suffering of others, gladness to endure
 The hardships of the world because a joy
 Of inner union daily serves to buoy
 The heart. And so a perfect married love
 Is counterpart of the glorious life above
 This vale of tears. And love's first kiss
 In marriage, is a symbol of the bliss
 With which the soul first meets its Divine
 Lord —
 No greater bliss our earthly days afford.

And now the holy rites are done.
 And lo! within the East the sun —
 That glorious symbol of new life —
 Rises to bless the new-made man and wife.
 Its golden, tremulous, happy rays
 Awake the hearts of all to praise;

And Chelu, Simla, Sita, three,
Offer their thanks beneath the banyan-tree
For life and health, and for this new great joy
Of happy marriage. And Sita, no more coy,
Looks joyous into Simla's eyes,
And each finds in the other such a prize
Exceeding all their hope that Destiny would
send.

Silent their prayers at first; but now they blend
Their voices in a glad, sweet, morning song.
And all the birds that in the branches throng
Choir to human song a sweet refrain —
And sing their gladdest, and then sing again.
And so the rites are done, and those glad two
Are married. And Simla no longer has to woo
The heart of Sita, it is pledged
Forever to him. And he is privileged
To enjoy the love of husband to a wife,
And she is his, and he is hers, through life.

And now where will they spend their honeymoon,
That golden moment which escapes too soon
The grasp of mortals, joy too pure to keep
For long upon a planet where so many weep.
This thought is theirs, to travel first
To Sita's village where there dwell
A few dear friends whom she would bid fare-
well.

Then they would wander through the forests,
 free

As squirrels racing swift from tree to tree;
 Free as eagles that soar round mountain-peaks;
 Free as the mighty wave that breaks
 Upon some headland, welling slow and sure
 From ocean depths. So they would take the
 lure

Of Nature for their daily guide.
 And where their paces loitered, there the bride
 At close of day on cushioned moss would rest;
 And there the bridegroom know himself as blest
 Above all mortals, holding through the night
 His golden-gloried treasure of delight.

And so they travelled toward the ancestral
 home

Of Simla. Shall we tell you how they roam
 So joyously the forest through?
 And how in hours of forest silence, true
 And absolute union of each loving heart
 Was forged, so that words were not needed on
 the part

Of either? And how love daily grew
 Apace,—until if it had but a few
 More grades of heavenly wonder passed,
 The devas would have surely been harassed
 With envy of such mortal joy; and would have
 set

Around the bride that strange invisible net

Which draws to an untimely death
Full many a heart rejoicing in the breath
Of love and youth?

Fortunate it was
That Sita's prayers left her no worthy cause
For mishap. So humbly did she pray,
So gratefully thank the gods by day
And night, and unselfishly implore
That they would send to her no more
Of ecstasy than was a mortal right,—
That she was spared that too high delight
Which her great soul was heir to, but which
Had surely racked her body; and too rich
A store of joy, had called her heavenward.
No cause for jealousy do her joys the gods af-
ford.

More poised, more wonderful each day she grew.
It seemed as if her nature drew
Daily from Simla strength and calm, while he
Derived from her some measure of her ecstasy.

PART TWO

LOVE GROWN FAMILIAR

And so to Jumru Simla came
And gave his days to love's own claim,—
Happy in the ancestral home,
Content, these years, no more to roam
The forest jungle as of old;
No more to hear the monkeys scold
From the far tree-tops, or to scan
The tropic night-sky's wide flung span;
No more the birds and beasts to turn
Tame to his hands; no more discern
Those glorious mountain-peaks of old,
Raising their pinnacles of gold
Against the morning sun.

Only a gleam,

A panoramic jungle dream,
At times coursed through his busy brain
As in the midst of civic strain
His tasks he plied, to meet the need
Of wife and children he must feed.
So Simla, no more Chela, works
From day to day. No task he shirks
To build his fortune's house as wide
As fitting for so dear a bride,

So fair and sweet, so loved a wife,
As now had joined to him her life.

For Sita grew more fair each day,
As maiden's charms to matron's sway
Yielded their all.

That delicate, ethereal grace
Which moved her limbs and lit her face
Changed to a greater glory e'en,
As moonlight yields to golden sheen
Of sunrise and the lord of day.
Now o'er her happy life held sway
Domestic arts and children's care.
Her heart each morning raised in prayer
For those she loved, brought her so near
The gods, their glory seemed to clear
The bonds of flesh and shine serene
Within her eyes, upon her skin
As soft as velvet. And that smile,
Once full of all a maiden's wile,
Now seemed from heaven to draw its spell
As o'er her babes her beads she'd tell.

If Simla loved her as a maid,
Now all his soul upon her stayed,—
That sweet, that kind, and wifely way,
That mingled seriousness and play.
Deep within her heart and mind
Each day new riches he would find.
Each day she strove the more to show

The love that every wife should owe
Her husband, in whom she sees
The fulfillment of heaven's decrees.

Children five did grace their board ;
Three sons did the gods afford,
Surety that on that distant day
When Simla's soul should make its way
To Devachan, his grave would still
The waiting gods with incense fill,
And satisfy the claims of fate
To keep his name immaculate.

Now thirty wedded years have passed,
And Simla finds his heart at last
Longing from home-ties to be free
And in the forest's sanctity
To meditation yield his soul,
Searching for union with the whole ;
To still each sense of separate life,
Forget the tumult and the strife
Which Maya brings to each new day
Until the self owns Atman's sway.
He longed the bonds to fling aside
Of pain and pleasure ; on the tide
Of spirit to at last set sail,
To breast that Ocean where no gale
Disturbs its calm ; where sleeps each wave
In a peace deeper than the grave.

Each night he heard anew the Call.
Each morn he heard that soft Footfall
Of Spirit, urging him to go
Where sheltering forests dulled the glow
Of midday sun; where cloistering shade
A home for meditation made
More fit than noisy city streets
And open sunshine's dazzling sweets;
Where the light, filtering all serene
Through its soft and leafy screen,
More gentle invitation made to thought
Than where the dazzled eye was caught
By all the Maya-gleaming plays
Of life's kaliedoscopic maze.

His children now had left their nest,—
Young eaglets glorying to breast
Life's struggles. His beloved girls
Long had outgrown their childhood curls,
And happy in their wedded bliss
No more the father's care would miss.
From Household Dharma all absolved,
His children grown, he now resolved
To leave his home, to leave his wife,
To renounce the town's sheltered life,—
And as forest-hermit dwell
In that self-same bosky dell
Wherein his father long years past
Was wont for days to pray and fast;
Where his own boyhood years were spent,

And nature all her kindness lent
To foster thought, to bring repose,
And shut out all the soul's sly foes,
Hot passion, envy, pride and greed,—
Of sorrow and rebirth the seed.

This purpose forming in his heart
He was reluctant to impart
To his dear wife; she who had shared
His life, though good or ill they fared;
She who, steadfast, with him had trod
The Path that leads through life to God,—
Until it seemed their souls were one,
And only they beneath the sun
Had found what love and union was.
And now, to leave her without cause,
Save that the Spirit bade him go —
How could he plunge her in such woe,
Who ne'er a grief had brought to him?
Who ne'er had seen his eye's light dim
With tears, but she had kissed them all away
And filled instead with joy his day?

Should he leave Sita thus behind
Simply to free his soul and mind
From care?
In order to retreat from life
Must he abandon e'en his wife,
Dearest beloved of all save Brahm
And Duty and the Atman's call?

Yet such demands the Spirit made,—
And no Brahman yet had stayed
In loving dalliance by his hearth
When Forest Dharma called him forth.
He had no choice, he needs must brim
The cup of sacrifice to its rim.
Not only things he'd ceased to love
Offer, but her he prized above
All earthly joys, all heavenly bliss,—
Yes, he must offer even this.

And still, in doubt, each day that passed
Found Simla sadder, more harassed
With doubt. Twixt love and duty torn,
His heart and face grew so forlorn
That Sita noticed it, and pled —
That as no thought since they were wed
Had undivided been — he'd share
With her this new and self-kept care;
That she might help these clouds dispel,
Bring back the light she loved so well
In Simla's eyes, his joy restore,
And banish grief forevermore.

“ Alas! ” her dear loved spouse replied,
As fondly they sat side by side
And watched the sunset hues depart;
“ No mortal can relieve my heart
Of its distress — not even you
Whose love like sunshine on the dew

Is wont to brighten all my woe
With a translucent heaven glow.
Not even you, dear wife, can mend
My grief. Nor can you hope to bend
The will of Fate, which now demands
I flee from these caressing hands,
Leave those glowing love-lit eyes,
And those warm lips where wifehood lies
Ready to comfort in distress
Or the achieving deed to bless.”

Sita raised quick her fond blue eyes
Lit with a spark of dread surmise;
“What mean you, Simla? Is it now
The need of forest hermit’s vow
You speak of? Is the time at hand
To fulfill Dharma’s third demand,—
Chela, Householder, and then
To pass beyond the wifely ken,
And all alone in forest state
To pray and fast and meditate?
Ah me! How cruel seems now Brahm
To steal you from my loving arm,
And set you there beyond my love
In forest solitude to rove.

Alas! I felt, I knew your time
Of life had reached its household prime.
How oft of late I’ve seen you scan
The mountain’s rugged horizon.

Like eagles brooding in slow rage
 And pining in their prison-cage,
 Over your eyes I have seen the glaze
 Of infinite distance and amaze,—
 That Search no mate can satisfy;
 That Quest which ends in Deity.

Simla, through life and death my Fate,
 My love would err to hesitate
 And plead with you to sacrifice
 The call of Dharma. There is no vice
 So low as love which seeks to bind,
 Through passion of the heart or mind,
 The loved one fast in selfish thrall
 And turn it from the Dharma-call.
 The Gods must ever be obeyed; —
 Nor shall it be that Sita stayed
 Her spouse from Duty's pilgrimage
 Or turned him from his Yogi-pledge.

But Simla, though my heart in tune
 With yours agrees to Fate, a boon
 I humbly ask, a boon full strange,—
 That with you in the forest range
 Your wife may end her happy days,
 Joining with you her morning praise,
 Chanting at even-fall the psalm
 Of love and gratitude to Brahm.
 Can you not union find with me
 Beside you searching too? Nor see

The Path because my woman's feet
In pace with yours may be less fleet?
Why has Brahm made souls with sex?
Must separateness always vex
The heart of mortal? Does love disturb
The Atman? Does mortal union curb
The soul from running its true course
Toward that which is of Love the Source?

Take me, O Simla, with you there,—
Take me your forest life to share
As I have shared your household tasks.
Take me, O Husband! Sita asks
No trivial boon. She knows her plea
Is strange and bold. But Destiny
Is on the side of those who pray.
They receive naught who dare not say
Their heart's desire. My prayers are meant
To bend the will of Heaven. Relent,
As Brahm relents, and whispers you
To unite Love and Duty too."

"Sweetheart and wife," then Simla said,
While on her hands his own were laid
In loving clasp: "It may not be!
The gods would envy you and me
That happiness. No, hearts must free
Themselves from other hearts, to find
The Hidden Friend. Even the mind
Must free itself from worldly things

To get the Peace, that calmness brings
And absence of all thought. To grant
Your boon, though I should acquiesce,
Would be to sin against Heaven's face.

For never in the Brahmin age,
Since the laws given by the Mage
Manu, has such a thing in life
Been known, as that a hermit with his wife
Should seek the forest-silence. No!
Though my heart bleeds it should be so,
You may not share with me these years.
Come, dearest, dry those bitter tears
That in your eyes' depths seem to well!
And calm your bosom's anxious swell!
It is Dharma, it is Fate.
Do not the holy Vedas state,
That the God-seeker must from sex
His spirit wean? Come, do not vex
My leaving with a wife's complaint,
Nor my heart already faint
Oppress with thy dear sighs and grief.

Does not the Spirit bring relief
To every mortal pain?
Look in my eyes, and see again
The love I gave you as a youth.
Not less of love, in very truth,
Impels me sadly to depart.
Here! feel the beating of my heart,

And know that Simla grieves no less
Than Sita at this sore distress
The gods force on us. But be brave!
Our love shall pass beyond the grave,
And there in heaven's purest light
Endure. No power can break love's might.
When two souls join in union true,
That union lasts the ages through.

This parting breaks not love's delight.
It is at worst a brief respite,—
That body, like the mind and soul,
May be prepared for the far goal
Of Death.

All that sweet and dear allure
Of sex must banished be, and pure
And holy must the Brahman rise
With wings to cleave the very skies.
In that Ascent where many faint,
Sex is a burden to the Saint."

Simla thus his lesson drew
To Sita, and his words pierced through
Her mind and soul. No answer made
She, but her burning hands conveyed
To Simla an intuitive sense
Of submission and obedience.
No more the tears coursed down her face,
No outward sorrow marred her grace.
Still deeply grieving, even so

She would not add to Simla's woe;
Nor make more bitter that sad task
Which Dharma of her spouse did ask.

And so she wiped her tears away
And smiled, as on an April day
When clouds dissolve and show the blue
Clear sky, with sunlight shining through,—
So Simla beamed upon her lord
All that her rich heart did afford
Of love and sympathy.

But if her tears could nothing move
The heart of Simla, now her love
Came near to changing all his plan.
For ever does the heart of man
Soften and melt beneath the power
Of love which is a woman's dower.
And so, what Sita with her pleas
Could not accomplish, innocent
Now, and free from all intent
To hinder Simla, the very charm
Of her devotion then the Brahm
Almost did win from his fixed course.

His heart was wrung with deep remorse
At thought of leaving such a wife,—
Whose love had nothing known of strife,
Whose only wish was but to do
The wish of Simla all life through.

He clasped her ardent to his breast,
Upon his cheek her cheek he pressed,
He kissed her thrice, and in her eyes
Read a love that never dies.
Thrice he kissed her, thrice he paused
And a deep sigh uttered,— caused
By inner conflict between love
And urging of the gods above.
But now he lets her from his grasp,
Slowly his hands from hers unclasp,
And turning, silent walks away.
The gods, all powerful, win the day!

And so for seven sacred days
Simla his last devotion pays
To Sita.
By every look he tries to prove
How deep and steadfast is the love
He bears his wife. Yet at the last,
Worn by his vigils and his fast,
He walks as in a trance. She knows
The finite love now lesser grows;
That to the gods his heart is given
And all his thoughts are now on heaven.

But through those seven days forlorn
Sita did not weep or mourn,
Knowing her duty was to please
The will of Heaven, and to ease
Her husband's grief. Silent she was,

Nor spoke out unless the cause
Was needful; but at Simla's side
Knelt much in prayer. If she cried,
She did not let her husband see
Her tears; but ever cheerily
Faced him as though they but prepared
A happy journey which both shared.

At length the parting morning came —
For Time leaves never slack its claim
On mortals. As the glowing ball
Of fire shed its light on all
The earth, and many a tuneful bird
Sang to the morning breeze that stirred
The leaves and flowers, forth he strode,—
Bare-foot, scant-clad, upon the road
To Destiny; that Staff in hand
Which, Yogi emblem through the land
Of Brahm, brings proffered food and bed
Where'er he deigns to rest his head
And bless a household by his stay.

Thus Simla set forth, and passed away
From Sita's sight. More dim it grew
The farther off his footsteps drew,—
For now the tears she long had checked
Burst forth, as if her joy were wrecked
Upon a shore all desolate
And barren, since it lacked her mate.
Sobbing she watched him down the road.

Burning within her breast there glowed
A fire of love no words could quench,
And grief that seemed her cheeks to blanch
Until all statuesque her face
Shone with a fixed and clear-cut grace.
And yet it was not grief alone
That showed her face to marble grown,
For in her mind a sudden thought
New peace and resolution brought.
A sun-ray pierced the apparent gloom —
An outlet from the Dharma-doom
Of separation. Now her tears
She dried, threw to the winds her fears,
And fixed her soul in great resolve
That promised all her grief to solve.

PART THREE

LOVE'S GREATER QUEST

Simla, meanwhile, on his way
Was travelling many a lonely day,
Begging his meal in Yogi bowl,
Blessing with grateful prayer each soul
Who aided him with food or bed.
And where'er he laid his head
A blessing fell, a peace and joy
Such as the gods above convey,
To those who harbor holy saints.

And Simla, now with no restraints
Of wife or bairns, loved to sojourn
And watch the family incense burn
In homes where happy love held sway;
Loved to see the happy children play
In unity and harmonious love.
And ever then his thoughts would move
To Sita and his children five,
When they in friendly romp would strive
For seats upon his knee; or throng
About him, with their childish wrong
For him to judge, and justice mete
As they sat reverent at his feet.

Each home where infant life was shown
Brought back a reminiscent frown ;
And all his heart in love went out
To children, who ever thronged about
Him, feeling with true childish sense
His love for their sweet innocence.

And if the children in each home
Made somewhat sad his fate to roam,
Centerless, childless, now through life,—
How much more vivid came his wife
Before his eyes, as he would sit
Before some family altar lit,
And see the sacred incense rise
To Brahm upon the evening skies ;
While the husband would officiate
As priest, and side of him his mate,
Reverent, his offering shares,
As Sita had done these thirty years.

And so at night no home did fail
To bring before him Sita ; yet the Trail
Called him again at morn. And true
To Yogi pledge, he did renew
Each day his journey,—travelling on
Toward the forest Atamon,
Where his father's soul
Waited to bless him at the goal
Of Yogi pilgrimage. Never twice
Did the same bed his limbs entice ;

Never the same town could lay claim
More than one day to Simla's fame.
And so, like Vishnu, homeless, lone,
The sacrifice which must atone
For sin he paid. Each step endured,
More certain Moksha him assured.
For toil and suffering can purge
The Atman of its Maya-urge;
Can leave it, of all passion free,
To find its Godward destiny.

At times his aged limbs rebel;
At times he tottered, almost fell
From weariness, save that the staff he keeps,
Duty-emblem, propped his steps.
At times at wayside shrines he'd rest
A moment, hugging to his breast
The beads his wife so long had used,
The only gift he'd not refused
In parting. Now each bead he'd tell,
Thinking of her who loved so well
Her husband.

At last at Atamon he arrived,
Where first his heart with young love strived;
Where his father's word had made them one,
Simla and Sita. Where Chelu had his son
Instruction given on Brahm, on life.
The soul, and love. And then had blessed the
wife.

The Fates had chosen, and dismissed
Them townward, while he kept his tryst
With Brahm as forest sage,— alone,
Companionless, seeking to atone
In prayer and offering for the sins of men.

Now Simla stood in that same wood again,
Atamon, beloved of gods, where rose
The Ganges; — whose sacred water flows,
The length of Indus land and purifies
The soul of every one who dies
Bathed in it. At this holy spot
Simla made habitation, and his thought
Was focused all on Brahm and Death.
And concentrating with his every breath
On hope of Moksha, of deliverance
From illusion, from the Maya-dance
Of life,— he spent his aging days
In seeking Truth, and teaching of its ways
To others who as Chelas sought his hut.
And so a winter passed and shut
Were Simla's thoughts from worldly things.

But now the new-born verdure springs
From soil and shrub, from bush and tree,—
And all the birds and insects glee
At spring's return. The sun dries up
The moisture from each flower's cup,
Filling the air with fragrance sweet.
And everywhere the eye doth meet

Exuberant life, exuberant joy ;
And Nature's forces all deploy
To arouse in man new-life desire,
New love, new yearning, blazing fire
Of mystic longing. The Maya show
Of life is at its full. All bright
And glorious, pranked in shining light
Of April sun, Nature seductive seems.

And to the heart of Simla dreams
Come of early love. In spite of all
His power of will, his hourly call
On Brahm, to take love from his life,—
His heart yearns ever for that wife,
That comrade, who had shared his days
Of joy and gloom. All her sweet ways
Rose up and smote his memory ;
And spite of all that he can try
Of Yogi practice, to cast out
The spell of love, it winds about
His heart its clinging tendrils close.
For every one he breaks a new one grows.

Then Simla knew, though he had cut
Love from his life, its primal root
Still lived within his Being's core,
Still grew as freshly as before,—
When Spring, the time of flowers came.
And though he daily sought to tame
Its power, yet it daily with him dwelt ;

Each hour his heart new longing felt
For Sita. His eyes would fain rejoice
At sight of her; his ears, her voice
So silvery sweet to hear; and his hands
Grieve to follow love's commands
And give caress as husbands know.
His thoughts upon her to bestow —
His new-won truths — he often yearns;
For true love its candle ever burns
At wisdom's altar, thence to bear
Its gifts to the Beloved,— so to share
Its spiritual wealth, its wage
Of wisdom, that the giver, sage,
Makes his Beloved sage also.

So Simla, mazing, sees love grow
Where he had thought it dead. But at last,
With summer sun and autumn past,
He reached again a spiritual peace;
From earthly love found that release
Which prayer and fasting bring. And joy
Filled now his soul,— to be without annoy
Of love, to be the sage again, all pure
And free from Maya's dread allure.
Little he recked of Nature's subtlety,
Who plays as gamblers play,
Letting her victims sometimes win,
Then suddenly gathering in
Their utmost store of spirit wealth.
For with return of each new spring,

Lo, love again her lure would bring
 To life, and dazzle all his sense.
 And then with autumn would commence
 Again his mastery of love, only to lose
 His gain, when Nature did but choose
 Her Maya stakes to play.

And more,

As years went by, this agony! Full sore
 He reasoned with himself. Was he
 Different from others who could free
 Their souls from life and reach the peace
 Of Brahm? Why found he not release
 From love? Was his suffering heart
 Not made like other's? His Yogi part
 In life could he not play as well
 As other hermits who in forest dwell?
 So he grew ruthless toward himself;
 Took down the thongs from off the shelf —
 Mortification which he seldom used —
 And his poor body so abused
 With beating, that he helpless lay
 And sleepless, many a night and day
 With Yogi thought absorbed in Brahm.

Yet all this harshness only could do harm
 Unto his body, for his soul still longed
 For Sita; and no matter how he wronged
 His sense's mansion, still abode
 With him love's heavy tragic load.

Year after year passed by,
And year after year would Simla try
New mortifying for his flesh,
New ways to rend from him the mesh
Of love's fine filaments. Yet e'er
Its net he must about him wear,
Its prick of longing be renewed,
When spring her glorious beauty showed.

At last a desperate way he sought
To free, in spring, his wandering thought
From sense life. If his eyes rebelled
And they could be as reason held
For his illusionment, better 'twere
Those glowing orbs with fire to sear
And sight-less live in forest dim,
Then that those eyes should hinder him
From Moksha. Better far to smite
His eyes with blindness and escape the sight
Of Maya world, than to be yearly stirred
To madness by each leaf, each bird
That danced or sang of love.
And fiery ardor so did move
His longing soul, that with a grim
And steadfast purpose he did dim
His heaven-granted vision, blind
Himself, smite those eyes that find
The world too beautiful. And gloom
Of darkness settling around, the doom

Of sightlessness he chose, and lived therein,
Hoping at last to find release from sin.

And what are Sita's thoughts and plans
While Simla seeks to conquer man's
Infirmity of sex? Has woman, too,
No struggle of the heart to rue
When her dear mate is lost? While he
With hardship sought serenity
Within his forest glade, his wife
Was also wrestling with life,—
Seeking in patience to forget her grief
And in spiritual vision find relief
From agonies of love. But still
His memory would daily fill
Her aching heart. The sight
Of his dear face, once her delight
To dwell upon with kindling eyes,
Now hovered, as clouds roam the skies,
Before her vision. Now he seems
To visit her entranced dreams
As living flesh; now fades away
Impalpable as light of day,
There, yet not there, to seize or grasp,
To comfort her with ardent clasp
Of loving arms.

At times her very being aches
From this drear void which Dharma makes

Of her necessity. No more
His voice comes through the open door
To greet her on return from town.
No more for him a dainty gown
She chooses, to adorn her form,
And cheer him when harassing storm
Of duties leave his brow all black.
His very frown she grieves to lack,—
When he was used to mildly chide,
And then, all loving, her confusion hide
In his strong arms, and wipe the tears
And gently soothe away her fears
Of his displeasure.

But who can know
How sad a woman's heart can grow
At loss of her beloved, save one
Who, Sita-like, from sun to sun
Waits all in vain for the foot-fall
Of him who was to her all, all
That life may hold of bliss?
She only knows, who craves to kiss
Each relic of her absent mate;
His garments, books, his gown of state,
For gala days a noble guise
Attracting to him passing eyes
Of pilgrims, who his wisdom saw
As one well versed in Vedic Law.

So Sita grieved. And yet a prayer
Rose daily on the quiet air

Of twilight, and again at dawn,—
That Brahm would guide her, all forlorn,
To wisdom, severance, and faith;
Would still her heart, as Veda saith
The Spirit can; and lead her days
Into a final hymn of praise
And holy Brahmin peace.
And yet prayer brought her no release
From love; failed to quell love!

And so in a new way she strove
At length; and a dim thought,
That first at Simla's parting wrought
A certain comfort to her soul,
Now on her holds a strong control
As something not to dream of only
Within her home, all sad, all lonely,—
But to cast upon the wind
As ripened project of a mind
Resolved to venture all her gain
Of Karma to attempt a vain —
It might be — but a chance
Of breaking the power of sorrow's trance
Upon her and her lord; of solving now,
The problem which on human brow
Has had more power a gloom to move
Than aught else has,— the power of love.

This was her plan: to venture now
Herself upon the Yogi vow

Of forest meditation, leave
The home so powerless to retrieve
A lost love, and within the forest dim
Give up her heart to thoughts of him
Her love was stayed on; there to pray,
By starry night, by tropic day,
For solving of this restless hold
Of love upon her; either to mould
Her human heart to heavenly will
And thus its earthly beatings still
In Yogi peace; or else to find
Some inspiration for her mind
And soul to dwell on, which might give
A new solution, and let live
The glowing spark of earthly love
That in her bosom, far above
The warmth of her devotion's vows,
Still daily burns. Still daily grows
More like the sacred Tapas flame,
Which, so the holy Vedas claim,
Burst forth from out the heart of Brahm
And formed the universe, all warm.

And this thought gives her heart delight:
That it might chance some morning's light,
Some tropic evening's softened glow,
Might see her hermit-husband go
Past her own hut in quest for truth.
Thus she might see him without ruth,—
Not breaking Dharma's sacred claim,

Not calling even on his name
To win him, but content to cast
Her glances on him as he past;
Merely to sate her loving eyes
With sight of Simla ere she dies,
Merely to know that as of old
He still subsists within this mould
Of human flesh.
Not to enmesh
His heart again
Would she attempt. No! not again!

And so at last her pilgrimage
Sita began. And as a forest sage
Of her frail tender sex was rare,
The more of honor did she share —
Winning from every home and sect
A gentle care, a high respect.
Each town for the great honor strove
That she should in its sacred grove
Of banyan settle, and from there
Send forth her teachings and her prayer
In their behalf; and for a while
She blessed with prayer and sweet sad smile
Full many a hamlet thus. But anon
Her heart would prompt her to be gone
Upon her quest. She could not find
At any place that peace of mind
Which she so craved. The holiest spot,
Suited for sages, pleased her not.

A constant prick, a restlessness,
Urged her to travel,— until less
Than twenty leagues from Simla's home
Her feet, o'er weary, chanced to roam,
And there a grove all filled with peace
Gave to her anxious soul release
From wanderlust. No strength she had
For further travel. All sore and sad
Her aged limbs refused to mount
The path of sacrifice to its fount.
From very weakness she must stop
E'er she had reached the mountain-top
Of spirit.

Yet she was reconciled
To cease her quest; nay, even smiled
As she breathed deeply of the mild
And pregnant mountain air, all warm
With fragrances of pine and balm
Which the noon sun called forth. Above,
Far crags with heaven majestic strove,—
And over all the soft clouds blew
Across a sky of opal hue.
Far down below, the landscape filled
With rustic huts and fields well tilled,
Whose simple folk rejoiced in life
Of home and hearth; where ne'er a wife
Wept for a husband vowed to God,
As Sita had wept each day she trod
The path of yearning.

Perhaps this
 Was what distilled a subtle bliss
 Within her heart, the happiness of others
 All about her — fathers, mothers,
 Children, wooers and wooed — all
 Living in their ancestral hall
 Life's drama with contentedness.
 Or did another reason bless
 The patient Sita? Was it because
 Only a five days' nightly pause
 Of foot-faring lay between her lord and her?
 This nearness Sita knew not. But the stir
 Of heart-throbs on the silent air,
 May it not have sent a message there
 Where Simla dwelt in utter lack
 Of love? Sent, and its message back
 Received of husband's greeting, of love
 Returned, as flies the homing dove?

It may have been. We can not tell
 Life's hidden ways. Full well at least
 This mountain fastness Sita pleased.
 Here she relaxed her restless ways;
 Here she resolved to spend her days
 In prayer to Brahm, in search of truth.
 She might become, who knows, a proof
That woman's gifts and woman's mind
Can also paths of wisdom find;
That woman's heart and woman's soul,
As well as man's, can reach the goal

Of seership. Not that she aspired
To boldly climb, where men's feet tired,
The steep ascent to heaven. Another way
Perhaps by smiling rivers lay,
And valleys basking in the sun,—
Whose waters their far course should run
By fallow fields, by hamlets small,
To the great Ocean, mother of all.

One sage might dauntless mount the sky.
Another sage might peaceful lie,
A shining dewdrop in that Whole
Whose tidal movements ceaseless roll
Their absolution to all flesh.
By climbing, one escapes the mesh
Of Karma; by sinking, too,
Can one not gain illumined view
Of that Ancestral Peace, that Calm
With which the Ocean gives the dew-drop balm?

So Sita lived as hermit-wife
From hermit-husband her severed life.
And now, as Vida, the name and look
Of Yogi nun the fond wife took.
No longer Sita, to the world
Her gathered wisdom she unfurled
In spirit humble and devout,
To all who sought her mountain-hut: —
The ways of Brahm, the ways of man,
And how the Spirit's bridge may span

The gulf between them; how the soul
Is at once both part and whole,
Atman and Purusha, spark divine;
Of cosmic Love the mystic sign
She traced in nature: or she discerns
In Maya's many illusive turns
Reality behind the false mirage.

And soon word went that a new sage,
A woman sage, with truths that bless,
Lived ever ready fear, distress,
Or sin, to banish from the soul
Of all who sought her mountain goal;
And strangers from the near and far
Gathered her sacred truths to share,
And the nun Vida famous grew.

But Sita counted her truths too few,
Though all were added to her list
As teacher, if but one she missed;
One truth, of all the magic key,
She sought in that great mystery
Of sex. If this she could but solve
All about it would revolve.
If this impenetrable remained,
Man's whitest wisdom lay bestained
With error. This was the clue she sought,—
To this her deepest prayers she brought
By night and day. In prayer and fast
Full many a weary hour she passed;

In fast and prayer she agonized
For that one gift above all prized,
The mastery of sex.

And now to June
Her ninth year brought its golden moon.
And as one night she sleepless lay
And all her heart and soul did pray
For revelation, lo! it came,
As gentle as the roe-deer tame
That once fed from her hand. No storm
Of evil spirits battle form
About her, as had often been.
Only a quiet lake was seen,
No ripple on it; and no sigh
Disturbed the white light that did lie
Upon its surface,— when there burst
From its fair waters what at first
A giant lotus seemed.
And then she saw, or else she dreamed,
The great God-head unfolded quite
From out the flower its glorious light,
And moved to her across the flood
While music sang within her blood,
Reaching her very center's core.

Of such a sight she dared no more
Receive, but knelt and bowed her head,
Fearing that further vision led
Toward madness. For mortal sight

Can not endure the Cosmic Light
Too long. And as she trembling knelt
A hand upon her head she felt,
Whose touch was softer than the love
Of mother to her babe. It did not move
A single hair, one delicate hair
Of Sita's. Yet it lingered there
In such a sweet, divine caress
That all her lingering heart's distress
Melted as lead in fire; and a glow
As Soma can on gods bestow
Thrilled all her being. She awoke.
Only the lake she saw, nor broke
A single ripple on its tide.
And now into the mountain side
It vanished. Only moonlight lay
All bright around her, clear as day;
And silver shone the mountain mist.

Her once grief-burdened beads she kissed
In joy a hundred times. She raised
Her face to heaven and grateful praised
The Being who had come to her.
And soon a power began to stir
Within her new-illumined mind
And gave the clue she sought to find,
All suddenly to sex. What was concealed
Lay clear before her, all revealed,—
Clear as the moonlight on the grass,
Clear as the sharp-cut mountain pass,

Simple as dawn. Yet such a light,
Denied to man in man's soul-night,
Only the Dawn could give.

Now Sita, joyous, prayed to live
This truth to share with all.
Now on her face there seemed to fall,
And stay henceforth, a partial gleam
Of the Cosmic Light that in her dream
Illumination brought. Her delicate skin
Translucent grew, as is a thin
And lovely shell held to the sun.
And lo! her seership had begun.

Vida, the Yogi nun, from this time on
As seer was hailed. Her face so shone
That all, the vision which she claimed,
Believed. Each day she grew more famed,
And Brahmins from both near and far
Journeyed to see the new bright star
Mounting the zenith of seership;
Journeyed to hear from Vida's lip
The truth that she alone could teach.
Each year renown did farther preach
Her wisdom. Till cities of the sacred stream
Ganges, even those that teem
With sages; cities of Indus too,
From source to mouth, sent to renew
Their Vidya store. All Brahmin land
Paid reverence to the mighty hand

Of Brahm, that laid on Vida's head
Had to illumination led
And blessed the race with truth.

But one

Brahmin who lived sad and lone
As forest-hermit, only away
From Sita five days' journey,
Heard not at first her growing power,—
So shut out was his lonely bower
From human intercourse. And when
At last, upon the minds of men
He heard of Vida's growing sway,
The thought of seeking her he put away
As childish; as too easily
Chasing a mere crude novelty
From sacrilegious whim.
And others' pilgrimage seemed to him
A desecration of the Yogi plan,—
Confession of weakness, that a man
Should go to woman for his spiritual light.
And yet he knew the high gods might
Choose any vessel for their gifts.
He knew that sometimes Brahma lifts
The veil from woman, and gives her place
Within the circle of Yogi grace.
There had been women seers before,
There might be women sages more.

And as now for the first time people past
His hut, seeking on foot, or slow or fast,

As youth or aging limbs permit,
The hut of Vida,— desire lit
His heart and burned within him strong
To break his hermit life, so long
In one place settled, and start out
Upon the very self same route
That led to Vida past his door.
This plan he cherished all the more,
That years to him no peace had brought
Nor the wisdom that he sought,
Illuminating life. He wandered still
Restless though valley and o'er hill
Of spirit,— though his mortal frame
Paid the dues of hermit-claim
And never stirred from home.

And now desire to further roam
Came hot upon him,— his quiet vale to leave,
Five days to travel, and receive
From Vida if the gods allow
The blessing of peace upon his vow
Of forest hermit. After all,
Perhaps from woman's lips might fall,
Perhaps from woman's mind might stream,
Illuminated words, illuminated beam
Of Brahmin ray his declining years
To bless, and to remove the tears
Which often blurred his spiritual sight.
He would seek humbly for the Light
He craved, and asking o'er and o'er,

Knock even at a woman's door,—
If so by God's grace there might be
Solution of life's mystery.

Sita one evening sat alone,
Into a mood of revery thrown
By trembling shadows on the ground
Of full moon cast; there was no sound
Of bird or beast to break her dream.
Her many years of marriage seem
To pass before her, back to that night
When Simla chose his faith to plight
Beneath the banyan tree. Hallowed night
Of love's sweet tryst, when golden moon
Even as now moved all too soon
From east to west;
Until the day, all newly dressed
In veils of pink and robes of rose,
Had brought their wedding to a close
And led them forth to life,—
He manful, she the trusting wife.

Sweet love had blessed their thirty years
Of domesticity; — and now,
She wondered beneath what bough
He sat in meditation; where he spent
The years that Karma to him lent
Ere life be done. And was he well or ill?
Needed he a woman's care?

Had the years not failed to wear
Deep wrinkles on his brow? Were all
His faculties obedient to his call?
Or had some mishap injured him,
Taken his strength, or maimed a limb
So that he needed help?

For such
Is woman's greatest joy,— a crutch
To be to the infirm, sight to the blind,
Faith to a feeble heart, hope to a mind
Despairing. She would wipe all grief
With love away; relief
For every mortal ill she'd bring;
And at the cruellest task she'd sing
Her chant of joy,— did she but serve
One who could all her love deserve.

As Sita pondered thus, she heard
A rustling louder than any bird
Would make; and now she could discern
Emerge from the last hidden turn
Her hut-path makes, a slender youth
Approaching. Did he come her Truth
To learn, or had he message to impart?
Full soon she knew. For from his heart
A leaf he drew, bowed deeply, held
It moonward while he spelled
Her name. "Is this the holy forest nun,
Vida?" he humbly said,

“Who daily offers spiritual bread
 To hungry seekers? My master, too,
 Is one who wishes to renew
 His faith and wisdom at your fount.”
 “What is his name?” Till one could count
 Twenty, it seemed, his answer took,
 While a strange emotion shook
 Her heart. It might be —

“Simla,” he said!

The blood rushed hot to her head.
 Her heart beat fast; and then so still
 It came, such numbness seemed to fill
 Her veins, she scarce could move.
 Almost she fainted. But she held
 One thought before her which repelled
 Her woman's weakness,— shame that a seer
 Should yield so to emotion, should so be seen
 By him who had the herald been
 Of her good fortune. So at length,
 By sheer will gathering up her strength,
 She answered, “Simla shall welcome be,
 Thy master, to share here with me
 My spiritual store. So tell him. But where
 Bides he? When will he come? I would
 proffer
 Him hospitality.”

“He dwells
 But five days' march from here, where wells

The holy Ganges' crystal source
Ere it takes its sacred course
Through Brahmin land. And if you will,
He comes as soon as I fulfill
My mission and return to him.
Ten days, a fortnight, then the hymn
Of greeting will he chant to you.
And here before your spreading view
Would he the Chela's incense burn,
And quietly would here sojourn
To learn from you of truth."

His answer, how it seemed to soothe
All her vague fears, all her distress.
The gods, all kind, at last did bless
Her with this meeting, with love's goal —
When wife and husband soul to soul
Could hold sweet converse, union find
Of heart, and soul, and ripened mind.
So her faint hope would be fulfilled,
Her anxious longing at last stilled!
And he, whom above all the prize
Of sainthood, treasured in her eyes
Had been, now as the devas' boon
Would come within her vision soon
And bless her love with peace! No more
In anxious speculations o'er
His age, his happiness, his health,
Her mind would turn. For all the wealth
Of Indus, she would not this meeting miss!

Already thrilled her lips to kiss
His aging cheeks, his noble brow,
And show him that his Yogi vow
Had never slain her love.— But quick
A thought came to her, that all sick
Her glad heart turned. Would it be right
For her as Sita to meet his sight,
When Vida was the one he sought,
Not wife, but nun? This question wrought
A turmoil in her heart and brain,
On her white light of joy a stain
Of darkness cast. She must not appear
As Sita to him! She must wear
A heavy veil before her eyes
And her usual voice disguise,
That he might know her as he thought
To know, might find her as he sought
To find, Vida the forest nun.

Rebellion could not help but run
Its course against this plan. Her heart
Burned, all its wealth to him t' impart
Of love. What is a keener grief
Than to be shut off from all relief
Of pent-up love, that doth aspire
Freely to pour its hidden fire
Upon the loved one, with caress
Love's joy to show, love's wish to bless
The dear beloved? Is not this
The meaning of the tender kiss

That lovers' lips do press?
Quintessence of that tenderness
That would with equal ardor pour
Its life's blood, till the blood no more
Could flow, or one's own soul as pledge
To the beloved give, and count it privilege
To sacrifice one's very Self for love?

So Sita with this longing strove —
And yet she knew she must oppose
Restraint to ardor, fight the foes
To Dharma that beset her sore,
Again at Renunciation's door
Her offering lay; knew she must miss
Again the ancient-longed-for bliss
Of union; still as Yogi nun
Remain, still be the banished wife
Who may not share her husband's life.

This she decided; this with grief
Resolved upon. Yet one relief
A comfort brought to her sad soul:
Her eyes at least could take their toll
Of Simla. She at least could see his face.
If she could not share embrace
Of love, she could have him at her side —
He would holily abide
There, learning of her lore. At least
This was a fragment of the feast
Of love she sought. In prayer she turned

To Brahm, to still the fire that burned
Within her — give her strength to meet
Her Simla with the happy, sweet
Humility of forest saint,
And grant their meeting bring no taint
Upon her love.

So anxious days there passed
Twice seven, till at last
When love's impatient longing hath
Almost itself exhausted, on the path
There came the sound of distant voices;
And wildly Sita's heart rejoices
As she sees around the turn emerge
Two forms, which slow their progress urge
Toward her.— Now Sita recognized her lord!

And all her being's anguish stored
Through many years — her yearning love —
Against her will within her strove;
And she ran forth with joy to greet
Her husband, toiling with slow feet
The upward climb. But suddenly
She stopped, almost about to cast
Her veil aside, and hold him in her fast
Embrace. Her arms outstretched
Fell helpless, and a sigh she fetched
From inmost bosom. Nay, a tear
Silently began to wear its way
Adown her cheek; a faintness lay

Its heavy swoon upon her limbs,—
And all the world about her swims.
Her soul was stayed by the sad thought
It was not Simla's love that brought
Him to her. She must remain unknown,
Wrap close the veil about her blown;
He must not see her as the fair
Sweet wife who ceased his days to share,
But meet her only as a sage
Goes forth to meet his own peerage
Of mystic life and thought.

“I come Vida the Yogi nun
To seek, whose far renown
Has spread through forest and through town.
Humble, as Chela now I turn
To one whose light doth brighter burn
Than mine,—
Humble, as searcher for divine
And lofty truth must ever be.
Pride never leads to immortality.
Many have I taught of truth,
Yet now I kneel, and nothing ruth,
Before thee, who have never knelt before,
Begging but to share thy lore.”

And as he fumbled with his staff
Feeling his way to walk, a shaft
Of sunset-light fell on his eyes;
And Sita noticed with surprise

They did not flicker, nor the lid
Its tender orb safe-guarding hid.
She noticed how he felt his step
Slowly, as to avoid mishap.
And when, reaching a fumbling hand
To his young Chela, he gave command:
“Lead now me on,” a sudden numb-
Ness seized her heart; her lips grew dumb;
And slowly over her puzzled mind
The truth stole home, that he was blind!

Now was she tempted sore
To rush and cast herself before
His weakness. Pity moved her heart
With burning impulse to impart
The truth to Simla; to make known
The forest nun's identity,
And test her Simla suddenly
As to his love, whether it were dead
Or no. But soberer thought now spread
Its checking influence o'er her soul.
She wanted, not his love, but the whole
Sanction of his spiritual reach.
He had come to hear her preach,
Not to seek love. It were not just
Upon him now her love to thrust.

Though she had longed for such a day
Of Love's return, she put away
All influence of such desire,

Quelled the violence of her heart's fire ;
And as for Dharma she had let him go,
So now for Dharma she forbore to know
The joy of meeting. And as he sought
In her a Guru only, naught
Further would she seem to him,
Though mists of tears her eyes must dim
At every fumbling step he took,—
Yearning with all the tenderness of wife
Henceforth to guide his weary life.
All, even all a woman's joy
Of service, would she not allow
To break the purpose of her will.
Simla was forest hermit still,
She was a forest nun ; and he
Sought in her only spirituality !

“ Welcome,” she said with faltering lips ;
“ You who would seek, as bee that sips
From every flower, wisdom's store.
To the high gods I now implore
For guidance, that truth may flow
Into my soul,— such truth to know
As led you to my humble cot.
I am no miracle, God wot !
But only, like yourself, a sage
To whom, seeking ever, age
Has brought some measure of content
To solve this life's bewilderment.

What would your highness hear?
Discourse to others I daily bear
On life; on destiny; the soul
And God; the microcosm; the Whole
Of Being, in which life subsists;
Creation's agonies; the mists
Of Chaos, out of which evolve
Great Suns and planets that revolve
In strict obedience to the law.
Or would you learn the vision that I saw
Of Vishnu as fast-devouring Time,
Into whose maw from every clime
And stage of being, cruelly there flowed
A stream of men and beasts, all blood?
Or of the vision of the One
Forth-shining as the Cosmic Sun
In dazzling light apparelled?

Or would a humbler subject suit
Your fancy? Shall I to the root
And quality of earthly love
My learned thought affect to move,
And all the secrets trace of sex,—
That mystery which doth so vex
The mind, the heart, the life of man? ”
Simla cried eager, “ Tell, if you can,
The mystery of sex, its place in life;
Our duty toward it; why its strife
Must stay the soul's desired peace
With agonies that never cease! ”

Now Sita, happy wife, rejoiced
That Simla, all unknowing, voiced
His love for her; and by his fret
Against love's claims, proved how as yet
Love had not left him, but remains
A fire of longings in his veins.
This was the very theme she craved
To discourse on. For this she'd braved
The tropic jungle's lonely fear,
Long day's desires year by year,—
Until the Fates should lead her lord
Thus to her, and this chance afford
To teach him of the mystic light
The gods had sent her in love's night.
To show him forth the better way,
Not darkness, but the light of day;
Not deprivation, bitterness,
But how a love all pure could bless
The earthly years' descending sun;
And how through love, not spite it, won
Could Moksha be, and heavenly joy
Which kindly Fate would ne'er destroy.

This was the wisdom years had brought
To Sita. This truth Brahm had taught
Her loving heart, her woman's mind.
Should not truth be of feminine kind
As well as male? Distorted view
Of life might not the masculine be,
That recked nought of the divinity

Which dwells within the woman's soul?
 Two halves are needed for a whole;
 Two sexes only create life.
 And Simla, turning from his wife
 To isolation and neglect
 Of love, perhaps in this respect
 Had missed of truth the hidden way,
 And had in error gone astray.
 While Sita, serving only love's behest,
 Had further gone in the far quest
 For truth, than any man.

Perhaps!

The gods alone can safely guide
 The spirit through those deserts wide
 Of mixed illusions and mirage,
 Where oft it puzzles wisest sage
 To judge which is of earth or sky.
 And Sita did not claim an eye
 Clearer for truth than others were.
 Humility still fitted her
 As garments modest veiled her frame.
 And not for all her new-won fame
 Would she usurp, in Yogi pride,
 To be a leader or a guide
 To Simla.

If she had wisdom to impart
 Which moved him, all her heart
 Swelled in a joyous gratitude.

If she could offer spiritual food
To him as she had erstwhile done
To others, and his mind was won
To her analysis of life,—
Then for all agony of wife
Torn from her husband, sad, alone,
Such victory would now atone,
And her dim plan of years ago
Would its blessing now bestow
On both; and both as lovers sweet
Could in a heavenly love now meet,
And share together all life's joys
Within the forest's leafy close.
The hour of test at last had come!
And with glad heart, and yet fearsome,
Did Sita take her unwitting lord
Before her hut, a seat afford
His aged limbs, and reverent,
As sage to sage her manner meant,
Unfold to him now the invited words
On sex and love.

The evening birds
Who late had choristed the sun
Were quiet now. Upon the horizon
A faint moon glowed; its soft sweet light
Dispersed the shadows of the night;
And all in silver sheen the trees
Whispered together in the breeze.
Under such auspices began the speech

Of Sita to her lord. Within reach
Of her fond hand he sat! She longed
To touch those eyes that Time had wronged,
To stroke his silver hair and lay
Her cheek against his where a ray
Of moonlight showed the wrinkles deep,
Or in her hand his hand to keep
During this discourse; but forbade
To break the veil which Fortune had
So strangely laid between them. No!
Their reconciliation must not so
Be brought about. Quite calm and still
She therefore sat. What dumb emotions fill
Her heart and soul, stay unexplored.
And so, she gave this discourse to her lord.

SITA'S DISCOURSE ON LOVE

“ Sex is the lord of life;
For from sex, love springs
And love rules all.
How dull the stagnant pools of Being
Until love came,
Love, glowing like a golden flame
That sundered its dark waters!
Then life arose
And trembled on the brink of Being.
Then out of formlessness came form,
From dark Chaos fair new worlds,

From bitter homogeneity issued forth
A sweet diversity.

Now separateness divides the Cosmos,
Individuality of being;
Myriad monads splitting from the central
core,—
And in them all some pang of union,
Some nescience of primeval harmony,
Some reminiscent yearning for identity:
And this is Sex.

Lives not an atom but is charged with sex.
Sexless is matter not,
But sexed in all its minuscules.
For sex is life,—
And when sex dies then life subsides
Into a cosmic night.

From sex, love springs in all its radiant forms,—
Love, the awakener;
Love, the exalter and divinest lord.
Without it life were stagnant, still, and foul.
Love is the running water,
Dash of spray through ozone-air,
Dazzling sunshine purifying self.
Love is force electrical,
Impelling ever to new life,
Evolving ever fairer forms,—

Until the archetypal ancient Beauty
Stand revealed in flesh.

Yet love is life's illusion,
Binding close the powers of the soul
To Nature's sweet behest.
For Nature must have new and ever new of
 myriad forms.
And so, the mating-thirst
Is strongest thirst of man,—
That from his loins the endless chain of life
 proceed.

When love usurps its sway,
All else seems valueless and stale and flat.
Such power of illusion love hath,
Such power of gilding life,
Such golden glory bursting over every hori-
 zon,—
That under its deep spell the earth seems para-
 dise,
And earth's frail day
Takes to itself a portion of divinity.

But when Nature has its will of us,
Love's glory fadeth;
Heaven becomes earth again;
Immortal godhood fades to manhood,
And all the tribe of human limitations
Assert their force.

And life is bound and prisoned
And the soul, straitened there,
Rebels at love,
And seeks to burst its way
Out from form into life's formlessness.

So came the search for forest-freedom,
The ascetic's quest,—
Who denies allegiance to love, Lord of Life,
And seeks to transcend sex.
Toward Union he would other ways than union
take;
Toward Brahm the Ancient,
Ancient roads would find
Of sexlessness, of soul's quiescence, life's nega-
tion —
In a word, Nirvana to attain in flesh.

And yet flesh ever mocks the search,
Thrusting its question on the austere soul,
Of whether there be any fairer goal
To life than that which Love bestows.

The hermit seeks for Union,
Seeks to lose himself in that Abstract De-
light,—
While all about him life is gay and bright,
Birds singing, blossoms sweet with scent,
Flowers vivid-hued, enticing insects

To a feast of love.
 Shall he, the forest hermit,
 Find in the forest peace from love,
 When every year love reigns triumphant round
 him?

It is an idle quest!
 So long as life beats in him
 And his heart floods each vein
 With pulsates of rich blood,—
 So long must love remain
 Lord of his being.

To deny love is to deny life.
 To renounce it is to cease to live.
 What Nirvana offers of such lovelessness
 I know not,—
 But loveless, life can never here find paradise.

This, hermits' features show,—
 Poor faces —
 Deep seamed,
 And ridged,
 And sterile
 From lava flows of love
 Through vents volcanic!
 For love will have its way from within out-
 ward,—
 Softly and gently,
 Or with scoriac force.

Sex is master
Because life *is*.
All things exist by contrast,—
Darkness and dawn,
Heat and cold,
Mountain peaks and valleys low.
Even the ocean and the sun-lit sky
Contend in loving dalliance,
That the heaven, mirrored in perfect beauty,
Should on the water's bosom lie.

Thus in the realm of opposites
Union alone brings peace.
All things exist in pairs,
Save there where Brahm dwells
In heights accessible to none,—
Above all blame or praise,
Freed from the realm of contraries,
Clothed in a wholeness perfect.
He only is pure Being.

But all else obeys the laws of relativity,
Divided into contraries.
And in its struggle after harmony
Love joins the contraries and produces peace.
Only thus can peace be found —
For in the heart of disparateness lies unceasing
yearning.

In all the realm of Contraries
 The greatest pair is Giver and Receiver;
 Initiator and Conserver;
 Sower and Fructifier.
 So symbols Sex.

The tiniest atom, charged with spark electrical,
 Flies to its eager goal,
 Gives of its life-force to some waiting mate.
 One gives, the other takes,
 And peace is born as fruit of union,—
 Peace, and equilibrium, and joy of still new
 forms of life.
 From minuscule to mayorscule,
 From monad up to man,
 One is the giver and the other
 Blesses by receiving burning gifts of love.

Such is man and woman.
 Masculine and feminine
 Brahm made,
 To move as power.
 For wherever they unite
 Force issues,
 A new thing is born,—
 And following swift on throes of ecstasy crea-
 tive,
 Peace dawns.
 So peace and power,

Irreconcilables,
Are joined by only Love.

And even in the realm of thought
Sex dwells.
For here too, one is giver
And the second is recipient.
One mind sows a fair thought,
And the second cherishes it to blossom.
One is the wielder ;
The other, tender, soft, and mild,
Fallow-lying till the germ is brought,
Furnishes a fruitful soil to thought.

So all of life is relative,
Absolute alone is Brahm.
Here in the finite world
Nothing is, but in relation to its mate.
Bright is only bright
When measured with the lack of light.
Energy and force
Require mass to work upon ;
Moving power is nought
Save as matched with that which resists motion.
Teacher is not teacher
Save as one is taught.
What poet is there
That craves not an audience?
So infinite craves the finite ;

And even God were poor,
Had He not beings mortal on whom to spend
His Love.

So Love is seen as at the root
Of relativity,
And sex is seen as life.
What, shall God himself be bound in Love,
And thou seek to escape it?
Shall the whole Cosmos move
In waves of Sex,
And thou seek to deny it?
Vain effort!
Sooner pluck the stars from heaven,
Bid the sun be dark,
And dim the lustre of the fulling moon,
Than to cut sex from life;
Than to take Love from Being.

And yet how master Love?
For love must mastered be
Ere the soul reach
Nirvana and the goal of peace.
For love brings peace,
But love destroys it, too.
Love raises man to height of god;
But love wounds him there where he soars
aloft,—
And brings him, struggling, earthward.

While sex is master,
 No Moksha is attained.
 Should then the sage cut sex from life?
 That, as I show, is an impossible solution,
 Since life is phased in sex.
 How then find harmony,
 How attain freedom,
 How become Lord of Being?
 For this clue mankind has ever striven,—
 And if the gods have favored me with truth,
 It is not for my sake only
 But to bless all men.
 Hear thou my plan!

In every problem
 Solution is found within that problem,
 Not by fleeing it.
 To retire from life is not to solve life;
 To flee from love is not to master love; —
 For where'er man goes he carries with him sex.

Then love must yield its own solution.
 Love must be studied patiently
 Until perception comes.
 Love must be cultivated where its seeds are
 sown;
 Must be raised from the dark soil
 Into the sunshine and the breath of God,
 That it may yield its perfect flower.

Sex is the seed,
And pure love the flower.
Sex sends its roots deep earthward,
That love may draw its sustenance
To rise skyward.
Cut the roots and the fair blossoms die.
Starve sex and love is also starved.

But the careful gardener is he
Who trains the plant of love
By science,
And waters it with tears
Of spiritual devotion.
Ever his task it is
To please the Master of the Vineyard.
And from Him he learns his art
Of mastery over nature's wildness.
Under his skilful touch
The tawdry scarlet blossoms
Turn to pink petals rare;
The bitter, pungent odor
Yields to a perfume sweet as deva's breath.
For lo!
From the same roots
Spring wild excessive sprouts,
Or roses heavenly fair.

What folly
Then
To cut the roots of love

And leave life's garden bare!
Rather
Train the flower by that science rare
Which the kind gods bestow.

Move in the world,
Shun not your fellow-men,
Meet them rather with that great heart of love
Which Krishna, Lord of Being, taught.
Do not abuse sex,
Do not scold it,—
For lo, it will have its revenge!
But know sex as power,
Use it as motive-force,
Turn to it, as friend to friend.

In the life of men,
In the manifold complexities of human ties,
Sex is the greatest friend man has.
It is the generative force
From which love springs,
And winning charm,
And glad self-sacrifice.
He who loves most
Lives most.
He whose heart burns with the clearest Tapas
flame
Is nearest to the gods

And yet, since sex is force,
It is as dangerous

As it is powerful.

Only he who masters sex

Is worthy of the Yogi name,—

Not he whom sex doth master.

For this purpose you and countless thousands

Flee to the forest wilds,

Seeking to master sex.

The aim is worthy

But the means are false.

He never masters love

Who flees from it.

He is not lord of life

Who lets life besiege him at the gates of loneliness.

How is he master who fears love?

How is he conqueror,

Who retires from the fray?

There where love is,

Is the place to conquer love.

There where life is most triumphant

Is the place to triumph over life.

Stay in the town,

Stay in the home,

Fight without fear the sex-battle

Where sex throws the challenge.

Is it necessary to retreat to win the victory?

Is that how a warrior fights?

You ask for clearer counsel?

It is this.

You who would in forest silence
Seek chastity in your declining years,
Can you not find chastity at home?
You who would purer purpose find for sex,
Can you not find it in the midst of men?
Weakling, fight where the fight is thickest;
Meet the full odds, and with God's help
Be Victor!
Can you not master sex
While those you love still dwell around you?
Can you not guide sex-forces where the tides
flow full?

This, then, is my counsel.
When man reaches forest-hermit age,
Let him renounce love of the body
And seek love of soul.
Let him cease to pour out sex,
When sex no longer needed is
To fertilize new lives.
And all of sex conserved
Shall then fertilize his mind and soul,
Strengthen him with added power,
And recreate, where once it but created.

This I know ye strive to do.
But it is harder thousand-fold to do
Alone in forest-silence —
Than with aid of one,
Wife love-mate,

Who aims with you at the self-same goal;
And who gives love to you daily
From the deepest sources of her heart and so

Love one must have,
Love one must give,
In order that one may truly live.
It is how one gives and takes of love
That proves one master,
Not how one seeks to flee from love.
For love cannot be fled from,
But love can be transformed by daily miracle
From the plane of body
To the plane of soul.

This seek thou:—
Transmute love
As lead is turned to gold;
Transmute it
As nature lends the grubbing worm its fairy-
wings;
Transmute it
As dark turns to dawn!
Put away passion
And clothe thyself with spirit.
Put away lust
And clothe thyself with infinite compassion.
Be a lover of humanity,
Be one who finds his joy in service;
And with a heart that beats as tidely

As beats the infinite sea,
 Find thy soul's companion
 In the great Lover,
 In the Cosmic Friend.

Yet another mystery I disclose to thee,
 Greatest mystery of sex.
 Within thy body
 Are powers little dreamed of; —
 Masculine and feminine,
 Married by the holy sacrament of priests,
 Symbol those elements joined in mystic union
 Within each individual.

All is in each.

Make perfect that solar circle lying in thyself,
 Join its two halves to one-twain,
 And thou art freed from sex-need of another.

In most these currents languish,
 And stagnation calls for junction with an outer
 force

To cause to circulate that electricity of sex
 On which all health, all happiness, all power de-
 pends.

But the master-soul

Is he who learns to make this circle —

Dormant within him —

A living current, electrical,

Slow-turning in vibrant whirls harmonic.

Such are the masters,
Great Leaders of the race.
They have achieved electrical concurrence,
And they move majestic among men,—
Vibrant with sex,
Vibrant with power,
And needing no one to surcharge them
But the Most High.

Yet such a destiny for common mortals
Is more a goal than a possession.
It is the ideal, achieved as aeons roll
Their vast time-currents toward Eternity.
And to achieve this goal with harmony,
Patiently and as Brahm wills,
Man must mate with woman
And woman mate with man.

Not alone, forest-dwelling,
Should one seek to perfect sex.
The awakening of Kundalini
Comes best with the polarity of two.
Masculine and feminine currents,
Intermingling,
Aid to awaken each in each.
Not by avoiding charm of woman
But by accepting and subduing it,
Grows man perfect.

Then wakens bit by bit
The forces of the opposite arc in him,
Arc Marioltic.
So wakes in woman,
Through union with man's strength,
The slow currents of the Christic arc.
Thus man, through woman, finds him twain,
And woman so through man;
And richly whirling currents
Of each sex in each
Bring unity of sex in each,
One-twain in each,
And each is lost in each.

Then is perfection reached,
And love reciprocal becomes a ray
Whereby man reaches heavenward,
And woman reaches heavenward —
And both grow perfect through their love of
each
And not through isolation.
This is my teaching;
This the vision that Brahm sent.
Aum! Aum! Aum!
Peace be with thee!"

She finished, and in wonder deep
Simla sat dazed, as if in sleep.
He moved not for a minute's space,

Then a happy smile began his face
To brighten which had been so sad;
And speaking reverently and glad,
“Vida,” he said, “your words to me
Solve simply and well the mystery
Of sex. You have convinced me quite,
That love in hearth and home hath right
To dwell; need not abandon life;
Need not be severed from the wife
The devas have assigned! The heart
Doth rightly play its proper part
In life. For the wedded it were well
Saintlily at home to dwell
In spiritual love. Asceticism,
Brahmin-way, may be as a prism
Distorting the white light of truth,—

I know not! am not sure! but ruth
Falls on me that I ever left
My wife — left Sita all bereft
Of husband’s love. If I have lonely been
Grieving for her, her days have seen
Perhaps still greater grief, her mate
Deprived of by an unkind Fate.
Truly, as well you say, no need
There is to sever love from life,
To tear the husband from the wife,
And try to starve out sex. Better ’twere
Their daily life in service share;
Replacing sex with kindness,

For passion giving tenderness,
Transmuting physical to spiritual love.
So live the devas in the heavens above—
So may we live on earth!

To Sita I would go," he sighed —
And all that spiritual grace
That had transfigured his sad face
Departed, leaving him in gloom —
“I would go back, but doom
Of blindness is upon me! How can I
Take home to Sita an unseeing eye,
A faltering foot, a helpless mouth to feed,
My every hour her care to need?
How can I burden so her life?
No! better she remain a wife
Severed still from matehood, lone
And sad,— than I should try atone
For sorrows past by making her a slave
To my blind need.

Too late I have
Perceived the truths of sex, too late
Regretted leaving that dear mate
Who blessed my days. May she exist
As happy as the dew-drops kissed
By morning sun — I cannot wish her less.
But I who crave her tenderness,
Who fain at last would go back home,
I am destined still to roam,

Unblessed, life's pathways. Mayhap again
In other lives we may retain
Our matehood, living side by side
As lovers resolute to tide
The storms of life together. Heaven grant
This prayer! And heaven plant
Within my heart a steadfastness,
That may eternal union bless
Of Sita and myself!

And now,
Kind nun, again I take my vow
Of forest silence. I must now depart
For Atamon, and my weary heart
In prayer and yearning keep.
The stars announce the hour of sleep.
I would not longer hold you here,
And your aging strength by discourse wear.
Good night! Tomorrow I set forth.
How much to me your words are worth
I cannot tell. My gratitude
In speech could only falter rude
Its heartfelt depth. My hand to yours
As sage to sage, belief implores
To witness what I feel. Than this
I can no truer speak. I kiss
Your hand. And so, good night!"

Strange how one's sorrow can delight
Another's heart! Simla's sad word

Had such a bliss in Sita stirred
That she could scarce be still. And when
Her hand he kissed, for ten
Full seconds she was near to faint.
Unto that happy hand a kiss she lent,
Unseen. Then new speech began to move
Her eager lips.

“ If I can prove
To you, dear friend, how woman yearns
To serve the helpless; how deep burns
The heart within her, all her power
To use in making glad each hour
Of one she loves,— if I prove this,
Would you to Sita take your kiss
Of husband’s love again? Would you
Renounce your fears, if I can show
That for true woman greater joy
Exists not, than to help remould
Our lead of suffering into gold
Of service, for the man she loves?
Come, will you promise, if approves
Your reason of my words, that you will go,
Even with your blind footsteps slow,
To Sita, your beloved? And with her dwell,
There where her early love served well
Your days to bless? ”

Simla a sign
Of faint approval made. “ I resign

Myself," he said, "as erstwhile,
To your wisdom. Speak. May Brahm smile
Upon your words, and help you prove
The steadfast power of woman's love."

Then Sita seized his hand in hers
And all her ardent longing stirs
Her finger-tips with love. Intuition
Brought Simla recognition
Dim before a word she spoke.
And then the golden silence broke
With, "I am Sita!" She caressed
His thin wan hands. "Just now you guessed
The truth. I am your loved one!
And I crave only this happy boon,
To serve your aging years. Believe
Me, and these words receive
As truth. My days no greater joy expect,
Than to serve you. Do not reject
My love. Do not prevent
That it should be in service spent.

Would you refuse to let love rise,
Passion-free, to the far skies
Where angels serve the heavenly throne?
Such love, and such a love alone,
I ask to give you.
Say that you will let Sita live
Beside you, share your failing life,
And be to you both nurse and wife."

Simla started as if to peer
Within the face of Sita, and sheer
Wonder stamped his features. Glad
His face showed at her words. Only sad
He seemed, his eyes could not behold
Her whom he hastened now to fold
Close to his heart. His fingers all the while,
Tracing her features, found a smile,—
That smile that used of old to light
Her sweet face, making it a sight
For men and gods to dwell on. It was the first
Glad moment since they parted, it had burst
The veil of sadness o'er her features cast.
“Tell me,” he stammered, “what thou hast
Of love retained for me, my Life,
Since I set forth, abandoning the wife
The gods had sent me. Can there stay
Within thy soul the slightest ray
Of love-light for thy parted lord?”

“What love my heart and soul afford
You,” Sita cried, “these arms can prove.
These kisses tell you that my love
Has greater grown, not less. And all
Its joy, its gladness, now would fall
Shattered and worthless, if you dare refuse
Its service and devotion to so use
As shall employ it greatly, and to bless
Your last years with its wifely tenderness.
Say! Oh say, Simla! do you grant

My ardent plea? May I supplant,
As Sita wife, Vida the seer?
May I in true light now appear
As your dear mate, your life to share,
Your name and pledge again to bear?
Tell me your verdict, oh be quick
To speak! My heart is weary, sick
With longing only your words can heal."

Now Simla's seeing fingers steal
Again their way on Sita's face.
"Of manly love, such a disgrace
As helpless brings me now to use
You as a servant, I should refuse,—
Did I not feel your features speak
True joy in service. Such a strong
And earnest plea I should do wrong
To hinder. I know you speak the truth
In telling of your love. The proof
Lies in your eager voice, your lips
So warm, your smile that slips
As of old its way upon your features.
Yes, I accept your offer. Dear,
Dear Sita! you shall dwell as near
As flesh to flesh may dwell, the whole
Of life remaining. Soul to soul
With me to live, breast to breast,
Till we on Brahm's great bosom rest.
And you can daily to me prove

In what respect a woman's love
Surpasses man's.

For I begin to see
That woman has more capacity,
More power of service, than a man.
For her 'tis easier to span
The gulf 'twixt flesh and soul. Her heart
Aches always tenderness to impart
And to receive. Her very breast
On which the new born babe can rest
And find its food, is nature's sign
How woman willingly can resign
Her love to service. Her heart at first
Does not so impetuously burst
Its barriers as a man's, but each new day
It reaches nearer on its way
To love Divine. To bring some joy
To husband, children, friends; to employ
Daily its powers suffering to relieve,—
Such is true woman's love, I well perceive.

I would not such a love reject,
My Sita. Live with me. Teach me to respect
The home in love, the flesh in love.
Your greater wisdom to me prove —
That you can prove it I trust well —
How man and wife can spiritually dwell
In pure chaste love, until that day
When Death asserts resistless sway

Upon our bodies. Teach me still
My soul with your sweet love to fill
In Devachan."

He finished and a silence stilled
The woodland. Sita's heart was filled
With gladness; too glad to move,
Too glad to even show her love
By any action. Only her prayer went up
To heaven, that had brimmed her cup
Of life with joy surpassing all she hoped.
Then silently her fingers groped
Their way to Simla's, stroked his hands,
His face, his hair. And all of love's demands
Were satisfied; all her affection stored
For years without relief, was poured
Upon him. Simla blindly felt
Her bosom on his bosom melt,
Her kisses poured upon his cheek,
Her tears that would not let her speak.

Sita to display her joy
These dumb caresses only could employ,
Until her heart had poured its all
Upon her lord. Then on the gods to call
In grateful praise Sita began,
Thinking how wonderfully her plan
Of years ago had been fulfilled —
More than she dared hope. For so is held
Dear ever to the gods that soul

Who lives intent upon a goal
Of high endeavor; who constant keeps
Such goal before him, daily seeks
The help of heaven, and allows no force
To move him from the chosen course.

If one's aim is worthy, all the power
Of heaven gives protection; every hour
Brings one nearer to success.
Nothing can hold him back who seeks to bless
Mankind with kindly word and deed.
For him Fate is as an iron steed,
Rushing resistless to the destined goal.
Disaster does not seek a severed soul.
The child of destiny need never fear
The chance of failure,— and a seer
Is watched over by heaven. So Sita found
The clue to sex, the clue to life,
The happy service of a wife
Devoted to her lord.
Such success does heaven afford
To all who seek? No. It depends
Upon the aim; how one's will bends
Itself to heaven; whether one's plan
Fits with the destined march of man
And nature's striving to progress.
Such aims the gods do ever bless,
Such cosmic purpose ever brings success.

Now of these lovers need we say
How they lived happy day by day,

Again domestic incense burned, their life
Long parted, now as man and wife
Renewed? How Simla in that place
Where first he was smit with Sita's grace,
Ended his days? Still Sita taught
Her truths to men. Each new day brought
Some distant pilgrim to her gate.
And Simla gloried in his mate,
Nor envied her this godlike fame.
Thus they lived together and the same
Year paid their mortal dues to Death.

And an old tradition saith
That Simla, ere he died, found sight
By favor of the gods, and saw again
The face he loved; saw clear and plain
The charm of nature all around,
Beauty of sky, beauty of flower-strewn ground.
And back of this seen world, the great Unseen
He saw — the mystery of Being,
The essence of Nature, whose real seeing
Most eyes are blind to. What he saw
Was more than mortal words express.
This the gods granted him, to bless
Him for his patience in affliction,
His humility in life's contradiction,—
That, Sita, woman, had been the seer
From whom he was content Brahm's Truth to
hear.

So ends this tale. It is a theme
Much told in Brahmin-land; where deem
They that such steadfast love as this
Deserves to win its earthly bliss,
Yea, and a heavenly, too!
Can human love exist more true
Than Sita and Simla at last found?
And are their lives forever bound
Together? In some distant sphere
Of service, do they still dwell as dear
True help-mates whom the Gods unite?
Of this, let future ages write.

THE END