

# SIMLA

## A TALE OF LOVE

BY  
STANWOOD COBB

Author of

"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 illumines 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 fulfilment 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 loneli-  
ness.

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