

CANTO VII.

The Birth of the Sons of Draupadī.

The Birds explain the fourth question—King Hariś-c'andra incurred Viśvámitra's anger, and to appease him gives up to him his kingdom and all his wealth—Viśvámitra ill-treats the queen, and five Viśve Devas censure him for his brutality—He curses them to be born as men, but exempts them from marriage—They were born as the five sons of Draupadī, and died young.

The righteous birds spoke.

- 1 There lived formerly in the Tretá Age a most exalted Rájarshi named Hariś-c'andra, virtuous in soul, a ruler of the earth,
 2 brilliant in fame. No famine, nor sickness, nor untimely death occurred among men, nor did the citizens delight in evil, while
 3 he ruled as king; nor, further, did the people become uproarious through wealth, valour, austerities or spirituous liquors; nor were any females born who failed to reach womanhood.*
 4 And he, of mighty arm, when once chasing a deer in the
 5 forest, heard women repeatedly crying, "save us"! The king, giving over the deer, called out "fear not! who is this perverse being that, under my rule, behaves with injustice?" At
 6 this interval also the Raudra Vighna-ráj, the opponent of every
 7 undertaking, who was following that cry, deliberated:—"This Viśvámitra, full of heroism, undertaking incomparable austerities, keeping a vow, is mastering the sciences of Śiva and
 8 others, which have not been perfected before. Those sciences being mastered by this man, who governs his mind in patience and silence, are verily lamenting, afflicted with dread. How
 9 can I manage this? Glorious is *this* noblest of the Kausika family; I am much weaker than he: these terrified sciences are thus bewailing: it appears to me difficult to be accomplished. Now this king has come in my way, calling out
 10 repeatedly 'fear not!'; into him indeed entering, I will speedily accomplish my desire."
 11 Then the king possessed by that Raudra Vighna-rája, who had thus taken counsel with himself, uttered this speech in anger:—

* An allusion to infanticide?

12 " Who is this wicked man that binds fire in the corner of his
 garment, when I the lord am present, gleaming with the
 13 glowing splendour of my power? He to-day, pierced in every
 limb by my arrows, which in their flight from my bow illumine
 the other regions of the sky, shall enter upon a long sleep."

14 Thereupon Viśvámitra having heard the king's speech was
 enraged: and, when that great Rishi was enraged, those
 15 sciences perished in a moment. The king moreover, seeing
 Viśvámitra, rich in austerities, being terrified, suddenly trem-
 16 bled exceedingly like the leaf of the peepul tree.* When the
 Muni exclaimed, " wretch!" and " stand!"; then the king fall-
 17 ing prostrate in reverence addressed him:—" O adorable lord!
 this is my duty! I have committed no fault! Deign not O
 Muni! to be angry with me, who am engaged in my duty.
 18 A king, conversant with his duties, must give gifts, and
 must afford protection, and lifting his bow must wage war,
 according to the Dharma-śástras."

Viśvámitra spoke.

19 " To whom, O king, must thou give gifts, whom must thou
 protect, and with whom must thou wage war? Speedily
 declare this, if thou fearest unrighteousness."

Hariś-c'andra spoke.

20 " I must always give gifts to brahmans principally, and to
 others who are straitened in their means; I must protect those
 in fear; I must make war with enemies."

Viśvámitra spoke.

21 " If your highness, a king, duly regards the duties of kings—I
 am a brahman desirous of a reward, let the desired fee be
 given me."

* *Ficus religiosa*. The leaf, which varies from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length
 and almost the same in breadth, is ovate-cordate, and has a long slender apex
 (acumen) 1 to 2 inches long. It has a round flexible stalk 2 to 3 inches long,
 which is twisted so as to make the inner surface of the leaf face outwards
 from the branch. The leaf hangs downwards by the long stalk, with its
 inner surface, which is slightly concave, facing outwards, and thus catches
 the lightest breeze.

The birds spoke.

22 The Raja, having heard this speech with gladdened soul,
deemed himself as it were born anew, and addressed the sage
23 of the Kauśika race: "Be it declared, adorable sir! what, free
from doubt, I must give thee; consider it as already given,
24 albeit most difficult to be obtained, whether gold or money,
son, wife, body, life, kingdom, city, good fortune—whatever is
the desire of my own soul."

Viśvámitra spoke.

25 "O king! this present has been accepted, which thou hast
given: first, however, bestow the fee appertaining to the
Rája-súya sacrifice."

The Raja spoke.

26 "O brahman! I will indeed give your honour that fee. Choose,
O chief of the dvijas, whatever present thou desirest."

Viśvámitra spoke.

27 "Give me this earth, with its ocean, and with its mountains,
villages and towns; and thy entire kingdom, O warrior, with
28 its multitude of chariots, horses, and elephants; also thy trea-
sury and treasure; and whatever else thou possessest, excepting
29 thy wife, and son and body, O sinless one! and *excepting* thy
virtue, which, O thou that knowest all the virtues, follows its
possessor when he moves. What need for me to say more?
Let all this be granted me."

The birds spoke.

30 With gladdened mind the king, unperturbed in countenance,
having heard the Rishi's speech, joining his hands respectfully
replied, "So be it!"

Viśvámitra spoke.

31 "If all thy property is given me, thy kingdom, the earth, thy
army, thy wealth,—whose is the lordship, O Rájarshi! when I
the ascetic am seated in the kingdom?"

Hariś-c'andra spoke.

32 "At what time I have yielded up the earth to thee, O brah-
man! at that time thou, Sir, art the owner; how much ^{more}
now the king."

Viśvámitra spoke.

- 33 “If O king! the whole earth has been given me by thee,
thou must deign to depart from the realm where I hold sway,
34 unfastening all thy ornaments, such as thy waist-band and
every thing else, and clothing thyself with the bark of trees,
together with thy wife and son.”

The birds spoke.

- 35 Having said “So be it!” and having so done, the king started
to go, in company with his wife Śaivyá and his young son.
36 Then he addressed the king, having obstructed the road as
he was moving—“Where wilt thou go, without giving me the
fee appertaining to the Rájá-súya sacrifice?”

Hariś-c'andra spoke.

- 37 “Adorable Sir! this kingdom has been given thee free from
adversaries: these *our* three bodies, O Brahman! are all that
remain to me this day.”

Viśvámitra spoke.

- 38 “Nevertheless thou must assuredly give me the sacrificial fee;
a promise unfulfilled, especially to brahmans, proves injurious.
39 As long as brahmans delight, O king! in the Rájá-súya sacri-
fice, so long indeed must the fee for the Rájá-súya sacrifice be
40 given. After making a promise, one must bestow the gift;
and one must fight against assailants; so too the afflicted must
be protected; thus hast thou already agreed.”

Hariś-c'andra spoke.

- 41 “Adorable Sir, I have nought at present; I will give thee
the fee after a while: and show me favour, O Brahmarshi!
bearing in mind noble behaviour.”

Viśvámitra spoke.

- 42 “What length of time must I wait for thee, O guardian of
men! Tell me speedily, or the fire of my curse shall con-
sume thee.”

Hariś-c'andra spoke.

- 43 “In a month will I give thee the fee-money, O Brahmarshi! At
present I have no means; deign to grant me *this* permission.”

Viśvámitra spoke.

44 “Go, go, O noble king; observe thy duty; and may thy way
be auspicious! May there be no enemies!”

The birds spoke.

45 Permitted to go, the king departed; his queen, who was
46 unused to walk afoot,* followed him. Seeing that most noble
king departing from the city with his wife and son, the citizens
raised a cry and followed the king, *exclaiming*—

47 “Alas, O master! why leavest thou us, who are afflicted
with continual sufferings? Thou, O king, art devoted to
righteousness, and thou art the benefactor of the citizens.
48 Lead us also, O Rájarshi! if thou regardest righteousness.
Stay a moment, O king of monarchs! Our eyes as bees drink†
49 thy lotus-like mouth. When again shall we behold thee, who,
when thou goest forth, art preceded and followed by kings?
50 Here is thy wife, holding her young son in her hand, following
thee, before whom, when thou goest forth, go thy servants seated
51 on elephants! Here goes to-day walking afoot the king
of monarchs, Hariś-c’andra! Alas, O king, what will thy
52 very youthful, beautiful-browed, soft-skinned, fine-nosed face
become, when injured by the dust on the road? Stay, stay,
53 O best of kings, observe thy own duty. Mildness is a very
noble virtue, especially among kshatriyas; what need have we
of wife, what need of children, or of wealth, or of grain,
54 O master? Abandoning all this, we have become mere
shadows of thee. Alas master! alas Mahárájá! alas, O lord!
55 why dost thou abandon us? Where thou art, there indeed
will we be. That is joy, where thou indeed art. That is our
city where thou art. That is Svarga where thou, our king,
art.”

56 Having thus heard the citizens’ address the king, overwhelmed
with grief, stood then in the road through very compassion for
57 them. Still Viśvámitra, seeing him distressed by the citi-
zens’ exclamations, approaching him, with eyes rolling in anger

* Road *padbhyám* for *pradbhyám*.

† Better *piváma* for *pibámo*, let us drink?

58 and impatience, spoke: "Fie on thee, vile in thy conduct,
false, crooked in thy speech! who also, after giving me thy
59 kingdom, wishest again to withdraw it." The king thus roughly
accosted by him replied thus trembling, "I am going," and de-
60 parted hastily drawing his wife in his hand. Thereupon the
sage of the Kauśika family suddenly belaboured with a wooden
staff the very youthful toil-wearied wife, as *the king was*
61 drawing her along. Seeing her thus beaten, the king Hariś-
c'andra, oppressed with pain, exclaimed "I am going;" nor did
he utter aught else.

62 But then spoke five Viśve Devas full of pity, "This Viśvá-
mitra is very wicked; what worlds will he obtain, who has
63 uprooted this best of sacrificers from his throne? By whose
funeral ceremony further shall the soma juice expressed at
the great sacrifice be purified, by drinking which we shall
reach the exhilaration that is preceded by incantations?"

The birds spoke.

64 Having heard this their remark, the sage of the Kauśika race,
exceedingly enraged, cursed them—"Ye shall all assume human
65 form!" And propitiated by them, the great Muni added, "Al-
66 though in human form, ye shall have no offspring. There
shall be neither marriage of wives for you, nor hostility: freed
67 from love and anger ye shall become gods again." Thereupon
those gods descended to the mansion of the Kurus with their
own portions; they were born of the womb of Draupadī as the
68 five grandchildren of Páñḍu. Hence the five heroic Páñḍa-
veyas did not take to themselves wives, through the curse of
that great Muni.

69 All this has been declared to thee with reference to the tale
of the Páñḍaveyas. Thy four questions have been answered
in song. What else dost thou wish to hear?