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SAKUNTALA



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TORONTO

SAKUNTALA

BY *KALIDASA*. PREPARED
FOR THE ENGLISH STAGE BY
KEDAR NATH DAS GUPTA IN
A NEW VERSION WRITTEN BY
LAURENCE BINYON

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
BY
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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1920

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TO
BHUPENDRANATH BASU

THE PRESENT VERSION

THIS version of *Sakuntala* was made solely for the purpose of presenting the play on the stage to an English audience. This necessitated considerable abridgment. The original play is in seven acts, and the work of adaptation for our theatre has been done by Mr. Kedar Nath Das Gupta.

The original, as is well known, is in prose, frequently varied by stanzas of verse, written in different metres. Here, blank verse has for the most part been employed, as adherence to the sudden transitions of the original makes it difficult for European actors to preserve due continuity of mood

and atmosphere; the audience also being unprepared for this convention of literary tradition. Fidelity to what is universal in Kalidasa has been sought for, rather than the reproduction of exotic beauties.

L. B.

KALIDASA

KALIDASA, the greatest of Indian poets, belonged to the post-Vedic period of Sanskrit literature. Owing to the absence of chronology in the history of the Ancient Hindus it was not possible, until recently, to fix his dates with any exactness. According to tradition he was one of the nine illustrious men of genius ("the nine gems") who adorned the court of Vikramaditya in 56 B.C. Another legend represents him as Matri Gupta, King of Kashmir. Scholars have differed widely in the dates to which they have assigned his activity. Professors Lassen and

Weber place him in the second century after Christ. According to Professor Max Müller and Dr. Bhandarkar he lived in the early part of the sixth century A.D. However, the date of Kalidasa has recently been conclusively settled by Dr. T. Bloch and Pandit Ramavatara Sharma. Working independently of each other in Europe and in India, they arrived at the same result. They have succeeded in proving from evidence, internal and external, that he flourished during the reign of Chandra Gupta II.—Vikramaditya—and of his son Kumara Gupta in the fourth century A.D. These dates have been officially accepted in India.

Kalidasa has written three plays: *Sakuntala*, *Vikramorvasi*, and *Malavikagnimitra*; two epics, *Raghuvamsa* and *Kumara Sambhava*; one lyrical poem, *Meghaduta*; and one descrip-

tive poem, *Ritusamhara*. Many other works, including an astronomical treatise, are said to have been written by him, but it is possible that later writers, more concerned for their poetry than for their own personal fame, assimilated their work to his.

There is no authentic life-history of Kalidasa, but there are many legends to which no historical value can be attached. Not much information can be gathered from his writing, as he rarely made personal allusions.

But what matters when Kalidasa was born or where he lived? He is of all countries and of all ages, and his work is the inheritance of mankind.

K. N. D. G.

SAKUNTALA

ITS INNER MEANING

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Would'st thou the young year's blossoms
and the fruits of its decline,
And all by which the soul is charmed,
enraptured, feasted, fed,
Would'st thou the Earth and Heaven itself
in one sole name combine ?
I name thee, O Sakuntala ! and all at
once is said.

GOETHE.

GOETHE, the master-poet of Europe, has summed up his criticism of *Sakuntala* in a single quatrain ; he has not taken the poem to pieces. This quatrain seems to be a small thing like the flame of a candle, but it lights up the whole drama in an instant, and reveals its inner nature. In Goethe's

words, *Sakuntala* blends together the young year's blossoms and the fruits of maturity; it combines heaven and earth in one.

We are apt to pass over this eulogy lightly as a mere poetical outburst. We are apt to consider that it only means in effect that Goethe regarded *Sakuntala* as fine poetry. But it is not really so. His stanza breathes not the exaggeration of rapture, but the deliberate judgment of a true critic. There is a special point in his words. Goethe says expressly that *Sakuntala* contains the history of a development—the development of flower into fruit, of earth into heaven, of matter into spirit.

In truth there are two unions in *Sakuntala*; and the *motif* of the play is the progress from the earlier union of the first Act, with its earthly unstable beauty and romance, to the higher union in the heavenly hermitage of eternal bliss described in the last Act. This drama was meant not for dealing with a particular passion, not for developing a particular character, but for

translating the whole subject from one world to another—to elevate love from the sphere of physical beauty to the eternal heaven of moral beauty.

With the greatest ease Kalidas has effected this junction of earth with heaven. His earth so naturally passes into heaven that we do not mark the boundary-line between the two. In the First Act the poet has not concealed the gross earthiness of the fall of Sakuntala ; he has clearly shown, in the conduct of the hero and heroine alike, how much desire contributed to that fall. He has fully painted all the blandishments, playfulness, and fluttering of the intoxicating sense of youth, the struggle between deep bashfulness and strong self-expression. This is a proof of the simplicity of Sakuntala ; she was not prepared beforehand for the outburst of passion which the occasion of Dushyanta's visit called forth. Hence she had not learned how to restrain herself, how to hide her feelings. Sakuntala had not known Cupid before ; hence her heart was bare of armour, and she could not distrust

either the sentiment of love or the character of the lover. The daughter of the hermitage was off her guard, just as the deer there knew not fear.

Dushyanta's conquest of Sakuntala has been very naturally drawn. With equal ease has the poet shown the deeper purity of her character in spite of her fall—her unimpaired innate chastity. This is another proof of her simplicity.

The flower of the forest needs no servant to brush the dust off her petals. She stands bare ; dust settles on her ; but in spite of it she easily retains her own beautiful cleanliness. Dust did settle on Sakuntala, but she was not even conscious of it. Like the simple wild deer, like the mountain spring, she stood forth pure in spite of mud.

Kalidas has let his hermitage-bred youthful heroine follow the unsuspecting path of Nature ; nowhere has he restrained her. And yet he has developed her into the model of a devoted wife, with her reserve, endurance of sorrow, and life of rigid spiritual discipline. At the beginning, we see her self-forgetful and obedient to

Nature's impulses like the plants and flowers; at the end we see her deeper feminine soul—sober, patient under ill, intent on austerities, strictly regulated by the sacred laws of piety. With matchless art Kalidas has placed his heroine at the meeting-point of action and calmness, of Nature and Law, of river and ocean, as it were. Her father was a hermit, but her mother was a nymph. Her birth was the outcome of interrupted austerities, but her nurture was in a hermitage, which is just the spot where nature and austerities, beauty and restraint are harmonised. There is none of the conventional bonds of society there, yet we have the harder regulations of religion. Her *gandharva* marriage, too, was of the same type; it had the wildness of nature joined to the social tie of wedlock. The drama *Sakuntala* stands alone and unrivalled in all literature, because it depicts how Restraint can be harmonised with Freedom. All its joys and sorrows, unions and partings, proceed from the conflict of these two forces.

Sakuntala's simplicity is natural, that of

Miranda is unnatural. The different circumstances under which the two were brought up account for this difference. Sakuntala's simplicity was not girt round with ignorance, as was the case with Miranda. We see in the First Act that Sakuntala's two companions did not let her remain unaware of the fact that she was in the first bloom of youth. She had learnt to be bashful. But all these things are external. Her simplicity, on the other hand, is more deeply seated, and so also is her purity. To the very end the poet shows that she had no experience of the outside world. Her simplicity is innate. True, she knew something of the world, because the hermitage did not stand altogether outside society; the rules of home life were observed here too. She was inexperienced though not ignorant of the outside world; but trustfulness was firmly enthroned in her heart. The simplicity which springs from such trustfulness had for a moment caused her fall, but it also redeemed her for ever. This trustfulness kept her constant to patience, forgive-

ness, and loving kindness, in spite of the cruellest breach of her confidence. Miranda's simplicity was never subjected to such a fiery ordeal; it never clashed with knowledge of the world.

Our rebellious passions raise storms. In this drama Kalidas has extinguished the volcanic fire of tumultuous passion by means of the tears of the penitent heart. But he has not dwelt too long on the disease—he has just given a glimpse of it and then dropped the veil. The desertion of Sakuntala by the amorous Dushyanta, which in real life would have happened as the natural consequence of his character, is here brought about by the curse of Durvasa. Otherwise, the desertion would have been so extremely cruel and pathetic as to destroy the peace and harmony of the whole play. But the poet has left a small rent in the veil through which we can get an idea of the royal sin. It is in the Fifth Act. Just before Sakuntala arrives at court and is repudiated by her husband, the poet momentarily draws aside the curtain from the King's love affairs. A

woman's voice is heard singing behind the scene :

O honey-bee ! having sucked the mango-blossoms in your search for new honey, you have forgotten the recent loving welcome by the lotus !

This tear-stained song of a stricken heart in the royal household gives us a rude shock, especially as our heart was hitherto filled with Dushyanta's love-passages with Sakuntala. Only in the preceding Act we saw Sakuntala setting out for her husband's home in a very holy, sweet, and tender mood, carrying with herself the blessings of the hoary sage Kanwa and the good wishes of the whole forest world. And now a stain falls on the picture we had so hopefully formed of the home of love to which she was going.

When the jester asked, "What means this song ?" Dushyanta smiled and said, "We desert our loves after a short spell of love-making, and therefore I have deserved this strong rebuke from Queen Hansapadika." This indication of the fickleness

of royal love is not purposeless at the beginning of the Fifth Act. With masterly skill the poet here shows that what Durvasa's curse had brought about had its seeds in human nature.

In passing from the Fourth Act to the Fifth we suddenly enter a new atmosphere ; from the ideal world of the hermitage we go forth to the royal court with its hard hearts, crooked ways of love-making, difficulties of union. The beauteous dream of the hermitage is about to be broken. The two young hermits who are escorting Sakuntala, at once feel that they have entered an altogether different world, " a house encircled by fire ! " By such touches at the beginning of the Fifth Act, the poet prepares us for the repudiation of Sakuntala at its end, lest the blow should be too severe for us.

Then comes the repudiation. Sakuntala feels as if she had been suddenly struck with a thunderbolt. Like a deer stricken by a trusted hand, this daughter of the forest looks on in blank surprise, terror, and anguish. At one blow she is hurled

away from the hermitage, both literal and metaphorical, in which she has so long lived. She loses her connection with the loving friends, the birds, beasts, and plants, and the beauty, peace, and purity of her former life. She now stands alone, shelterless. In one moment the music of the first four Acts is stilled !

O the deep silence and loneliness that then surround her ! She whose tender heart has made the whole world of the hermitage her own folk, to-day stands absolutely alone. She fills this vast vacuity with her mighty sorrow. With rare poetic insight Kalidas has declined to restore Sakuntala to Kanwa's hermitage. After the renunciation by Dushyanta it was impossible for her to live in harmony with that hermitage in the way she had done before. . . . She was no longer her former self ; her relation with the universe had changed. Had she been placed again amidst her old surroundings, it would only have cruelly exhibited the utter inconsistency of the whole situation. A mighty silence was now needed, worthy of

the mighty grief of the mourner. But the poet has not shown us the picture of Sakuntala in the new hermitage—parted from the friends of her girlhood, and nursing the grief of separation from her lover. The silence of the poet only deepens our sense of the silence and vacancy which here reigned round Sakuntala. Had the repudiated wife been taken back to Kanwa's home, that hermitage would have spoken. To our imagination its trees and creepers would have wept, the two girl friends would have mourned for Sakuntala, even if the poet had not said a word about it. But in the unfamiliar hermitage of Marichi, all is still and silent to us; only we have before our mind's eye a picture of the world-abandoned Sakuntala's infinite sorrow, disciplined by penance, sedate, and resigned—seated like a recluse rapt in meditation.

Dushyanta is now consumed by remorse. This remorse is *tapaysa*. So long as Sakuntala was not won by means of this repentance, there was no glory in winning her. . . . One sudden gust of youthful impulse had

in a moment given her up to Dushyanta, but that was not the true, the full winning of her. The best means of winning is by devotion, by *tapaysa*. What is easily gained is as easily lost. Therefore, the poet has made the two lovers undergo a long and austere *tapaysa* that they may gain each other truly eternally. If Dushyanta had accepted Sakuntala when she was first brought to his court, she would have only occupied a corner of the royal household, and passed the rest of her life in neglect, gloom, and uselessness.

It was a blessing in disguise for Sakuntala that Dushyanta abjured her with cruel sternness. When afterwards this cruelty reacted on himself, it prevented him from remaining indifferent to Sakuntala. His unceasing and intense grief fused his heart and welded Sakuntala with it. Never before had the King met with such an experience. Never before had he had the occasion and means of truly loving. Kings are unlucky in this respect; their desires are so easily satisfied that they never get what is to be gained by devotion alone.

Fate now plunged Dushyanta into deep grief and thus made him worthy of true love—made him renounce the rôle of a rake.

Thus has Kalidas burnt away vice in the eternal fire of the sinner's heart; he has not tried to conceal it from the outside. When the curtain drops in the last Act, we feel that all the evil has been destroyed as on a funeral pyre, and the peace born of a perfect and satisfactory fruition reigns in our hearts. Kalidas has internally cut right away the roots of the poison tree, which a sudden force from the outside had planted. He has made the physical union of Dushyanta and Sakuntala tread the path of sorrow, and thereby chastened and sublimated it into a moral union. Hence did Goethe rightly say that *Sakuntala* combines the blossoms of Spring with the fruits of Autumn, it combines Heaven and Earth. Truly in *Sakuntala* there is one Paradise Lost and another Paradise Regained.

The poet has shown how the union of Dushyanta and Sakuntala in the First

Act as mere lovers is futile, while their union in the last Act as the parents of Bharata is a true union. The First Act is full of brilliancy and movement. We have there a hermit's daughter in the exuberance of youth, her two companions running over with playfulness, the newly flowering forest creeper, the bee intoxicated with perfume, the fascinated King peeping from behind the trees. From this Eden of bliss Sakuntala, the mere sweetheart of Dushyanta, is exiled in disgrace. But far different was the aspect of the other hermitage where Sakuntala, the mother of Bharata and the incarnation of goodness took refuge. There no hermit girls water the trees, nor bedew the creepers with their loving sister-like looks, nor feed the young fawn with handfuls of paddy. There a single boy fills the loving bosom of the entire forest-world; he absorbs all the liveliness of the trees, creepers, flowers, and foliage. The matrons of the hermitage, in their loving anxiety, are fully taken up with the unruly boy. When Sakuntala appears, we see her clad in a dusty robe, face pale with austerities,

doing the penance of a lorn wife, pure-souled. Her long penances have purged her of the evil of her first union with Dushyanta ; she is now invested with the dignity of a matron, she is the image of motherhood, tender and good. Who can repudiate her now ?

The poet has shown here, as in *Kumara Sambhava*, that the Beauty that goes hand in hand with Moral Law is eternal, that the calm, controlled, and beneficent form of Love is its best form, that beauty is truly charming under restraint and decays quickly when it gets wild and unfettered. This ancient poet of India refuses to recognise Love as its own highest glory ; he proclaims that Goodness is the final goal of Love. He teaches us that the Love of man and woman is not beautiful, not lasting, not fruitful, so long as it is self-centred, so long as it does not beget Goodness, so long as it does not diffuse itself into society over son and daughter, guests and neighbours.

The two peculiar principles of India are the beneficent *tie of home life* on the one

hand, and the *liberty of the soul* abstracted from the world on the other. In the world India is variously connected with many races and many creeds ; she cannot reject any of them. But on the altar of devotion (*tapasya*) India sits alone. Kalidas has shown, both in *Sakuntala* and *Kumara Sambhava*, that there is a harmony between these two principles, an easy transition from the one to the other. In his hermitage a human boy plays with lion cubs, and the hermit spirit is reconciled with the spirit of the householder.

On the foundation of the hermitage of recluses Kalidas has built the home of the householder. He has rescued the relation of the sexes from the sway of lust and enthroned it on the holy and pure seat of asceticism. In the sacred books of the Hindus the ordered relation of the sexes has been defined by strict injunctions and Laws. Kalidas has demonstrated *that* relation by means of the elements of Beauty. The Beauty that he adores is lit up by grace, modesty, and goodness ; in its

intensity it is true to one for ever ; in its range it embraces the whole universe. It is fulfilled by renunciation, gratified by sorrow, and rendered eternal by religion. In the midst of this beauty, the impetuous unruly love of man and woman has restrained itself and attained to a profound peace, like a wild torrent merged in the ocean of goodness. Therefore is such love higher and more wonderful than wild and untrained Passion.¹

¹ This article was originally written by the author in Bengali and was translated into English by Professor Jadunath Sarkar.

SAKUNTALA

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DUSHYANTA . . .	King of India.
SARNGARAVA }	Hermits.
SARADVATA }	
SAKUNTALA . . .	Foster-child of Kanwa.
HARITA }	Pupils.
NARADA }	
ANASUYA }	{ Companions of Sakun-
PRIYAMVADA }	
MATHAVYA . . .	Jester and Companion of the King.
KARABHAKA . . .	Messenger.
GAUTAMI . . .	Matron of the Hermit- age.
DURVASA . . .	A great Sage.
KANWA . . .	Chief of the Hermits.
CHAPLAIN.	
JANUKA . . .	1st Policeman.
SUCHAKA . . .	2nd Policeman.
FISHERMAN.	
CHIEF OF POLICE.	
MADHURIKA }	Maidens.
TARALIKA }	
CHAMBERLAIN.	
VETRAVATI . . .	Female Attendant.
MATALI . . .	Celestial Charioteer.
SUVRATA . . .	First Nurse.
SURAMA . . .	Second Nurse.
BHARATA . . .	Son of Dushyanta,

PROLOGUE

(Discovers the STAGE MANAGER)

STAGE *(Looking towards the Tiring-room)* Lady,
MAN. when your tiring is complete, will it
 please you to come this way.

(Enter ACTRESS)

ACTRESS. I am here, sir; what is your command?

MAN. We are before the eyes of a discerning
 audience, and have to present before
 them a new drama by Kalidasa called
 Sakuntala, or *The Ring of Recognition*.
 Let each actor endeavour to do his best.

ACTRESS. You, sir, have so wisely assigned
 the cast, that nothing will go amiss.

MAN. Call not the actor perfect in his art

Till the true judge approves him ;
failing this

Though he be never so severely
schooled,

His skill will be distrustful of itself.

ACTRESS. How shall I begin ?

MAN. First charm the ears of this assembly.

ACTRESS. For the theme of my song, what
season shall I choose ?

MAN. Why not sing about the pleasant
summer coming on ?—

Now is the season when pools are
sweet to the bather, now

The wind thro' the forest flows

Fragrant from trumpet-flowers that
hang from the leafy bough,

And the hush of the shadow grows,
Luring the heart in quiet to dream
the hours away,

And luring the limbs to repose,
Happy at noon, but happiest when
the long burning day
Sinks to its heavenly close.

ACTRESS.

(*Sings*)

In the dusk, as it falls
On the last golden hour,
The enamoured maiden
Takes a honeyed flower.

She holds it before her
In the dim room,
Before the mirror, burning
With her cheeks' bloom.

A flower the bees kiss,
Part and kiss, hovering near ;
Its tendrils light as finger-tips
She twines about her ear.

MAN.

Excellent ! Your song holds the
audience spell-bound in pleasure, and
they sit motionless as in a picture.
What shall we do to keep their
good-will ?

ACTRESS.

Shall we not present the play that
you announced but now—*Sakuntala* ?

MAN. Well reminded !
Your song bewitched my thoughts, as
 in our play
The fawn that lured the ardent King
 astray.

ACT I

SCENE I

A Forest

(KING DUSHYANTA *armed with a bow and arrow
follows an antelope and takes aim*)

VOICE Hold, O King, kill it not, kill it not !
BEHIND
SCENES.

(Enter a HERMIT with two others)

HERMIT. (*Raising his hand*)

This deer, O King, is from our hermit-
age.

Ah, never let that cruel arrow pounce
Upon the tender body of a fawn !
What has bright steel to do with the
frail life

Of deer ? As well might you fling
flame on flowers.

The steel should seek some kindred
adamant.

Withhold that aim ! Your weapon's
office is

To champion the distressed, not maim
the innocent.

KING. (*Replaces the arrow in its quiver*)
The shaft is in its quiver.

HERMIT. Noble act !
Worthy of a Prince, the glory of
Puru's race.

HERMITS. (*Raising their hands*)
Heaven bless you with a son, whose
happy realm
Shall be all earth between the border-
ing seas.

KING. (*Bowing*)
I thank you for that blessing.

HERMIT. We, great prince,
Go forth to gather sacrificial wood

In the forest. Yonder, on Malini's
banks,

Close by, Sage Kanwa has his hermit-
age.

If other duty calls you not away,
Accept our hospitality, and enter.

KING. Is the great Saint within the hermit-
age ?

HERMIT. He has gone on pilgrimage ; for
Destiny

Threatens with some obscurity of ill
Sakuntala, his daughter ; and he
seeks

By meet propitiation to avert it.
But he has laid the charge on her,
meanwhile,

Duly to entertain all coming guests.

KING. She will acquaint me with the Sage's
acts

Of penance and devotion.

HERMIT. We then go
Upon our errand, King.

(Exeunt HERMITS)

KING.

In such a spot,
To breathe is to be purer. All be-
speaks
The precinct of a grove that's sacred.
None
Should rudely break into this hermit-
age.
Modest should be his clothing and his
mien.

(He lays aside his bow and his jewels)

How exquisite a peace is in this place !
What does it mean, this throbbing in
my arm,
As if it felt, near to the troubled
heart
Beauty that takes all peace away !
How idle,
In such a place, so fond an omen !
And yet
Destiny has doors open everywhere.

VOICE

BEHIND

SCENES.

This way, dear companions, this way.

KING. Voices ! Upon the right of yonder
trees !

I'll walk toward where the sound is.
Ah, they come !

It is the maidens of the Hermitage
Coming to water the young trees of
the grove.

What grace is in their motion ! Never
such

Is seen in pillared courts of palaces ;
The wild-wood bloom outglows the
garden flower.

I'll hide myself among the trees, and
watch them.

(Enter SAKUNTALA with her two companions)

SAKUN. Anasuya ! Priyamvada ! Come this
way !

ANAS. One would imagine, dear Sakuntala,
That Father Kanwa had more care for
the trees
Of the hermitage than for you. You
are delicate

As a jasmin blossom, yet on you he
lays

The duty and the task of watering
them.

SAKUN. This duty is my delight. These are
my sisters,

My silent leafy sisters. They speak not,
And yet I vow they feel me near to
them.

PRIYAM. Sakuntala, we have watered all the
trees

That blossom in the summer. Now
let's sprinkle

Those that are past their flowering;
better deed

Is this, because it looks not for reward.

SAKUN. Priyamvada, you have drawn my
dress too tight;

Loosen it a little, will you?

PRIYAM. (*Smiling*) It is not I

That you should blame; youth, it is
budding youth!

Girls blossom into women.

SAKUN. Look, friends, look,
The Kesara tree is beckoning with his
boughs
Like fingers in the wind ; he wants to
speak,
To tell me something. I must go to
him.

PRIYAM. Sakuntala, stand still a moment.

SAKUN. Why ?

PRIYAM. While you are bending so about its
stem,
The Kesara seems embracing you,
as if
He took to him some lovely vine for
bride.

SAKUN. Priyamvada, Priyamvada, well they
named you.
Your name means flatterer, and you
act the name.

KING. Flattery is mere truth,
Her lips are a young bud
In colour, and her arm

Slim as a flower-stem. Youth
With all its magic charm
Blossoms within her blood.

ANAS. Sakuntala, see, here is the young
jasmine
You called The Moonlight of the
Forest ; see,
She has chosen the Mango for her own
bridegroom.
Have you forgotten her ?

SAKUN. Forgotten ? I ?
How lovely a season for their union
this !
The Moonlight of the Forest is all
flowers,
All youth ; and like a bridegroom
newly-drest,
The Mango takes and holds her to his
breast.

PRIYAM. Anasuya, why do you think Sakuntala
Looks upon Forest-Moonlight so in-
tently ?

ANAS. Why ?

PRIYAM. She is wishing, as the jasmine's
wedded

To her own tree, so may she also find
A husband worthy of her dreams of
him.

SAKUN. (*Pouring water*)

You are speaking your own wish.

ANAS. Sakuntala,

Here is the wild vine that your Father
tended

With his own hands, just as he tended
you.

SAKUN. Wonderful ! Wonderful !

PRIYAM. What is it ?

SAKUN. Look,

It's not the season, yet the wild vine's
full

Of little buds, down to the very root.

PRIYAM. } Can it be ?
ANAS. }

PRIYAM. Joy ! There's blessing in such news,
For Father Kanwa said that when
this vine

Flowered, it should mean your bridal
was at hand.

ANAS. Priyamvada, that is why Sakuntala
Waters her tender vine so lovingly.

SAKUN. She is my sister ; how should I not
love her ?

(She continues her watering)

A bee ! A bee has flown from the
young jasmine,
And it is trying to settle on my face.

ANAS. Fancying it to be a lotus-bloom.

SAKUN. Help !

PRIYAM. What can *we* do ? Call on Dushyanta.
It is the King protects this sacred
grove.

KING. My cue is aptly given to me.

(Advancing hastily) Fear not !
Who dares molest the gentle maids
that keep
This hermitage—the more, since he
who rules

The earth is of the moon-descended
race,
Swift to chastise the wanton tres-
passer ?

*(All look at the KING and all are em-
barrassed)*

ANAS. Sir, it is nothing more terrible than a
bee
That teased our friend and half-
affrighted her.

KING. *(Turning to SAKUNTALA)*
I trust the dwellers in this hermitage
Have suffered no disturbance in the
rites
They dedicate their days to in this
grove ?
Is all well with you ?

(SAKUNTALA stands confused and silent)

PRIYAM. Well, indeed, all well,
Now that so noble a guest has
honoured us.

Go, dear Sakuntala; bring from the
cell

An offering of flowers, and rice, and
fruit.

This water we have brought with us
will serve

To wash the feet of this most honoured
guest.

KING. Such gracious speech already has per-
formed

Whatever hospitable rites enjoin.

PRIYAM. Sit then, kind Sir, in the cool shade
of this tree.

KING. You, too, must all be wearied with
your tasks.

(All sit down together)

SAKUN. *(Aside)*

Why does my heart begin to beat so
fast

Beholding him? What am I guilty
of?

It was not so within the hermitage.

KING. (*Gazing at them all by turns*)

What charm is in a friendship of one
age,
And all young ; it is like a chime rung
true.

ANAS. Noble Sir, words so gracious hearten
me

To ask what royal lineage our guest
Adorns, what country mourns his
absence now,

And what leads one so delicately
nurtured

So weary a journey to this grove of
penance ?

KING. The great King, Puru's long-descended
heir,

Charges me with the care and main-
tenance

Of justice and religion ; I am come
To be assured the hermits of this
grove

Suffer no hindrance of their holy
rites.

ANAS. We and our grove then have a guardian now !

(SAKUNTALA gazes bashfully at the KING)

(Perceiving the state of her feelings and of the KING'S. *Aside to SAKUNTALA*)

Sakuntala, if but our Father Kanwa
Were here to-day !

SAKUN. What if he were ?

PRIYAM. He would
Do honour to his guest and offer him
The one possession that he prizes most.

SAKUN. I will not listen to you.

KING. Is it permitted
For me to ask concerning this your
friend ?

ANAS. We are honoured, Sir.

KING. The sage, I have been told,
Has ever lived the unwedded hermit
life ;
How is it this your friend is called his
daughter ?

ANAS. Sir, I will tell you. Have you not
heard tell

Of a renowned Sage, Viswamitra, one
Sprung from a royal lineage ?

KING. I have.

ANAS. He is the real father of our friend ;
But when her mother had forsaken
her,
The venerable Kanwa took the child
And bred her as his own.

KING. But how—forsaken ?
And by her mother ? Tell me the
whole tale
From the beginning.

ANAS. Know then, on a time
When, by the shores of the Gautami's
stream,
The royal saint was strengthening his
soul
With penance of prolonged austerities,
The Devas, jealous of his spirit's
power,

It is from heaven the radiant lightning
comes.

She is then of like lineage with myself.
My wishes bud and blossom into hope.

PRIYAM. (*Looking with a smile at SAKUNTALA, and then
turning towards the KING*)

But, sir, you would ask further ?

(*SAKUNTALA makes a chiding gesture
with her finger*)

KING. Truly guessed.

So eager am I to hear all of this
Your world-sequestered life, that I
would ask
One thing more.

PRIYAM. Hesitate not. We who lead
The life of hermits have but to be
asked,
For all our ways are open.

KING. Is it but till she is wed that this your
friend
Must keep the hermitage's virgin vow ?
Or must she dwell for ever with the
fawns

That have eyes dark and innocent as
hers ?

PRIYAM. It is her foster-father's wish to give
her
In marriage to a husband worthy of
her.

SAKUN. Anasuya, I shall leave you.

ANAS. Why ?

SAKUN. To tell
The venerable Gautami what folly
Priyamvada's idle tongue betrays her
to. *(She rises)*

ANAS. Surely it were offence to leave a guest
Of so much note and honour without
dues
Of hermit hospitality fulfilled ?

*(SAKUNTALA without answering a word,
moves away)*

PRIYAM. *(Approaching SAKUNTALA)*

Dear girl, you must not go.

SAKUN. Why must I not ?

PRIYAM. There are two trees that must be watered yet.

You promised ; go when you have paid your debt—

Not before ! *(Forces her to turn back)*

KING. Spare her, gentle damsel, this.
She has already toiled enough, too much.

This debt of hers is paid, if I may pay it.

(He gives PRIYAMVADA a ring. She takes it, reads the name engraved on it, and they look at each other)

Mistake not. This was the King's gift.

PRIYAM. Then, Sir,
You should not part with such a gift.
Your word
Suffices ; the debt's paid.

ANAS. Sakuntala,
This noble stranger, nay, the King
himself

Discharges what you promised. Now
you are free.

(She gives back the ring)

PRIYAM. Why linger ?

SAKUN. What right have you, now to keep
And now dismiss me ?

KING. *(Looking at SAKUNTALA, to himself)*

Does she feel as I ?

Altho' she mingles no words with my
speech

Yet all her body listens to my voice.
And though her eyes look not into
my eyes

There's nothing else that they are
fastened on.

VOICE. *(Without)*

Hermits, defend the creatures of our
grove !

Make ready ! King Dushyanta, close
at hand,

Comes this way hunting ; and an
elephant,

Affrighted by the chariot of the
King,
Tramples into our hermitage.

KING.

Alas !

My retinue, hastening in search of
me,
Have broken, I fear, into this sacred
grove.

PRIYAM. Such alarms frighten us. O permit
it, Sire,
That we return !

KING.

Go, gentle damsels, fear not,
There shall no harm come ; it shall
be my care.

ANAS.

So poor a hospitality ashames,
Or we would plead that, better chance
befalling,
A second visit be vouchsafed to
us.

KING.

Your speech is all too modest. I am
honoured
Merely beholding you.

SAKUN.

O Anasuya,
I am trapped ; my dress is caught
upon a thorn ;
Wait for me while I loosen it.

*(She casts lingering glances at the KING
as she departs with her maidens)*

KING.

They are gone,
And I go also. To the city ? No !
I have no more desire now to return.
My men shall camp near by the grove.
My heart,
I cannot tear it from Sakuntala.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

A Plain on the Skirts of the Forest

(Enter MATHAVYA in melancholy mood)

MATH.

(Sighing) Ah ! what a miserable fate
is mine ! I am worn to a shadow by
waiting on this mad huntsman of a

King. “Here’s a deer”; “there’s a boar”; “Yonder’s a tiger”! That’s all we talk of. Nothing stops him; not even the heat of the noon. He must needs chase from jungle to jungle by paths that have scarce a strip of shade. For drink, nothing but warm, stinking water from the mountain brooks, bitter with rotten leaves. For food, nothing but the game we roast on spits, swallowed at any chance moment. Even at night there’s no rest; such an uproar of horses and elephants! And who could sleep with his bones all out of joint from the endless galloping? I doze, and then at peep of dawn I am wakened by the hubbub of the beaters—rascally slaves!—surrounding the wood before sunrise; a deafening clatter and chatter! And even that’s not the end of the story. There’s a new boil growing on the old one.

Yesterday in his headlong hunting he left us all behind, and in a hermitage whom should he discover, as ill-luck contrived it, but a beautiful hermit-girl, called Sakuntala ! From that moment there's never a thought of going back to the city ! He slept not a wink all night for thinking of this damsel. What's to be done ? I must be on the watch for my friend. Ah ! here he comes, with a girl hidden in his heart. Come, I'll pretend to be crippled. Perhaps I can wheedle a little rest out of him this way.

(He stands leaning on his staff)

(Enter the KING)

KING. *(To himself)*

My love's not easily to be won ; yet
still

Her glance, her gesture, make my
heart beat high.

Oh, though opposing mountains stand
between,

There's bliss in the deep longings they
divide.

There was a tenderness in her eyes,
although

They were averted ; and her steps
lingered ;

And sudden came her chiding word
when she

Made as to leave us, and her friend
detained her.

Because of me these things were.

(Smiling)

O how love

Spells out of every sign the sense he
craves !

MATH. *(Standing as before)* I can't salute you
with my hand, Sire. I have only a
voice to greet you with.

KING. Why, what has paralysed your
limbs ?

MATH. Do you hit me in the eye, and then
ask the cause of my tears ?

KING. I do not understand. Speak plainly !

MATH. When a reed is bent down like a briar, is it the reed's fault, or the river's ?

KING. Why, the river's.

MATH. Just so are you the cause of my crippled limbs.

KING. How so ?

MATH. Ever since you left the affairs of your Kingdom to take care of themselves, and live the life of a wild man in this savage region, I have no more control of my poor limbs : their joints are so horribly bruised by this eternal chasing of wild beasts. I beg of you this favour : Let me off for one day only to have some rest.
(Looking in the KING's face who remains silent)
I might cry out to the air, for any heed you pay to my petition. No doubt you have something else in your mind.

KING. *(Smiling)* What else should I have in my mind ? Am I one to be deaf to

the word of a friend ? I have something more to say to you.

MATH. Well, Sire ?

KING. When you are rested, you must help me in another task. It will not tire you.

MATH. In eating some savoury dish, I hope.

KING. Mathavya, your eyes have never yet been truly feasted ; for you have not seen the loveliest of all beings.

MATH. I see your Majesty before my eyes.

KING. Every one considers his own friend perfect—but I am speaking of the brightest jewel of these holy groves.

MATH. You cannot woo her. She is a hermit-girl. What is the use of thinking about her ?

KING. Fool ! Dushyanta's thoughts dwell on no forbidden thing.

MATH. (*Laughing*) You are like one who wearies of sweet dates and craves for the shrewd taste of a tamarind. In your mad longing for this girl,

you despise all the beauties of your palace.

KING. You, my friend, have not seen her.

MATH. She must indeed be enchanting to have taken the King's heart captive.

KING. Ah, my friend ! . . . She needs not many words.

Did God create some picture of perfection

And then breathe into it his breath of life ?

Or did the mind choose each rare element

Of beauty, and compound them in one form,

Sakuntala, the unsurpassable ?

God bettered all his best in moulding her.

She is a flower whose perfume none has smelt ;

A spring shoot on the branch, unbruised, unfingered ;

A jewel never chiselled, never pierced ;

Fresh honey, that no lip has tasted
of !

She is the uttermost reward of life
Perfected in the grace of its good
deeds.

But who knows what rare mortal
Destiny
Chose for the rapture of possessing
her ?

MATH. Well, then, make haste to her
rescue, before she falls into the hands
of some pious oily-headed peasant.

KING. She cannot dispose of herself ; and
her guardian is away on a pilgrimage.

MATH. And did she look graciously upon
you ?

KING. The hermit-maidens are by nature
timid ;

And yet—

When I was near, she drew her gaze
away.

She smiled as if she knew not why she
smiled.

Love, shy with modesty, shone clouded
out,

Then hid its secret radiance in a
veil.

MATH. Did you expect her to fly to your
arms the first time she saw you ?

KING. But when she went away with her
companions,

She in that moment almost showed
she loved me,

For hardly had she left me when she
turned

Her face, and, busy, feigned to free
her skirt,

Dissembling it was caught upon a
thorn ;

But there was no thorn on the bush
she stooped to.

MATH. The grove of penance, I perceive,
has become for you the grove of
pleasure. Our stay here is like
to be long. I hope there is food
enough.

KING. My friend, think of some pretext under which we may revisit the hermitage.

MATH. What pretext is wanted ? Are you not the King ?

KING. Well !

MATH. Say you have come for the sixth part of their rice, which they owe you for tribute.

KING. Foolish fellow ! These hermits, by the fruits of their penances, pay me a very different kind of tribute, which I value more than baskets of gold and jewels.

(Enter two HERMITS)

HERMITS. All Hail, O King !

KING. *(Rising from his seat)* I too salute you both.

1ST HER. Heaven bless your Majesty !

(They offer fruits)

KING. *(Respectfully receiving the offering)* Tell me, I pray you, your errand.

2ND HER. The dwellers in this hermitage, having heard of your Majesty's sojourn in our neighbourhood, make this petition.

KING. Say command, rather.

2ND HER. In the absence of the great Sage Kanwa, evil demons are troubling our sacrificial rites. Deign, therefore, to stay awhile within our hermitage.

KING. I am honoured by your request.

MATH. Could anything come more opportune ?

KING. (*Bowing to the HERMITS*) Revered Hermits, I will follow you immediately.

HERMITS. May victory attend you ! (*Exeunt*)

KING. My dear Mathavya, are not you full of longing to see this maiden ?

MATH. To tell you the truth, just now I was overflowing with desire to see her ; but since this news came about the demons, it has quite dried up.

KING. Do not fear. You will be with me.

MATH. I shall keep close to your chariot-wheel.

(*Enter KARABHAKA*)

KARA. Victory to your Majesty! The queen - mother sends her commands. . . .

KING. My mother—what are her commands?

KARA. The Queen bids me say that on the fourth day from this a solemn ceremony will be held for her son's welfare. On that day it is meet that we be honoured by his illustrious presence.

KING. Here is perplexity. On the one hand, the commission of these holy men to be performed; and on the other, the command of my revered mother to be obeyed. Both duties too sacred to be neglected. How can they be reconciled?

MATH. You will have to poise yourself between them like King Trisanku,

who was suspended between Heaven and Earth because the Sage Viswamitra commanded him to mount up to Heaven, and the gods ordered him down again.

KING. Truly my mind is divided. (*He reflects*) The queen - mother has ever received you as a son. Do you return, tell her what duty to the hermits detains me, and perform the ceremonies in my place.

MATH. With the greatest pleasure in the world ; but you don't for a moment suppose that I am afraid of those demons ?

KING. (*Smiling*) A great Brahmin like you ! It is inconceivable.

MATH. I must travel in a manner befitting the younger brother of a King.

KING. Yes, I shall send my retinue with you,
' That this pure grove may be disturbed
no more.

Now let the plunging buffalo wallow
at ease,
And shake the water from his heavy
horns,
And the shy deer, clustered beneath
the shade
In gentle troops, unstartled chew the
cud.
The wild boar with his tusks may
wrench the reed
Among the oozy marshes at his will.
For this my bow bends to my hand
no more,
And the slack string sleeps idle on the
bow.

MATH. (*Strutting about*) Aha ! Haven't I the
air of a young prince ?

KING. (*To himself*) This giddypate is too
talkative. He might betray me. (*He
takes MATHAVYA's hand. Aloud*) Friend Ma-
thavya, think not that anything but
my reverence for the hermits attracts
me to the hermitage.

A girl bred by a hermit with the
fawns—

What can she be to an enthroned
king ?

If for a whim I feigned a moment's
passion,

Think it a jest, a bubble blown to air.

MATH. Oh, I understand. (Exit)

CURTAIN

SCENE III

The Hermitage

(Enter SAKUNTALA with her two friends)

PRIYAM. Let us rest here awhile. The tree's
cool shade

Invites us.

ANAS. Tell me, dear Sakuntala,
Are you not better when we fan you so
With the lotus leaves ?

SAKUN. Why do you trouble to fan me ?

(PRIYAMVADA and ANASUYA look sorrow-
fully at one another)

(Enter KING)

KING. My eyes have found their heaven. I
 will hear
 What they are saying so soft to one
 another.

PRIYAM. (*Aside to ANASUYA*)
 Anasuya, it is ever since that hour
 When first the good king met us in the
 wood
 Sakuntala has been pining. May not he
 Be that which makes her ail ?

ANAS. I have thought it too.
 Sakuntala, I want to ask you some-
 thing.
 Your sickness has gone deep, deep to
 the heart.

SAKUN. (*Half rising*)
 What is the thing that you were
 going to ask ?

ANAS. You have not told us what is in your
mind,
But I have heard old stories of
romance,
And it comes to me that perhaps your
state
Is that of those in love. Tell us what
ails you ?
Who can devise the remedy, unless
He understand the way of the dis-
ease ?

KING. They speak my own thoughts.

PRIYAM. Why do you hide your illness ?
Anasuya says well. Every day you
pine
And waste away. You are nothing
but a shadow,
A beautiful shadow.

SAKUN. (*Sighing*) To whom else but you
Should I confide what ails me, my
dear friends ?
And yet it would but weary you to
hear.

ANAS. Nay, know we must. A sorrow shared
with friends,
Loving friends, loses half its bitter-
ness.

SAKUN. Ever since my eyes beheld him—the
good king
Who guards our grove and watches
over us—

(She stops embarrassed)

ANAS. Speak on !

SAKUN. I love him. It is this that ails me.

PRIYAM. You have found a lover worthy of
yourself.

So run the mighty rivers to the sea.

KING. *(Joyfully)*

I have heard the thing that I most
longed to hear.

SAKUN. Then you must cause the King to
have pity on me,
Or, ere long, these your arms will
carry me
Dead on my bier.

PRIYAM. Love has smitten her very hard.
How should we blame her, that her
heart is fixed
Upon a hope so high, upon a king
Of Puru's race, and the glory of that
race ?

ANAS. Our hearts are with you, wishing you
all joy,
Dearest Sakuntala. The frail wild-
vine
Clings to the Mango, for that royal
tree
Alone has strength to stay and comfort
it.
But how to accomplish quick and
secretly
The heart's desire of our Sakuntala ?

PRIYAM. " Quick " is not hard, but " secretly " is hard.
That knot needs thought for its un-
tying.

ANAS.

How so ?

PRIYAM. Have you not seen the King's eyes ?
Love in them
Betrayed itself all burning. These
last days
Have not his features wasted, as if
sleep
Had quite forsaken him ?

KING. It is most true.

PRIYAM. (*Thoughtfully*) I have a thought, Anasuya.

ANAS. Tell me.

PRIYAM. This.

Sakuntala shall write a love-letter
Hidden in a flower. I will contrive
to drop it
In the King's path. He will mistake
it surely
For the relic of some offering, and
pick up
The fallen flower.

ANAS. A pretty plan ! The thought
Pleases me. But what says Sakuntala ?

SAKUN. I must consider before saying yes.

PRIYAM. Could you not make some song, and
in the verse

Breathe something of the pain that
fills your heart ?

SAKUN. I will try. But my heart, my heart
trembles !

If he were to know all and to despise
me !

PRIYAM. You fear scorn from a heart that
pines for you.

ANAS. You are too modest, and too fearful.
Who,

When fever racks him, shuns the
blessed moon

Whose beams alone can heal him ?

SAKUN. (*Smiling*)

It seems I must obey ; but how to
write

When I have nothing I can write upon ?

PRIYAM. Here is a lotus-leaf, feel, it is smooth
As the deep down upon a parrot's
breast.

Write a verse on it with your finger-nail.

KING. I would not rob my vision by one blink

Of what it feeds on, as she writes absorbed

With the one eyebrow lifted, and her cheek

Thrilling, as her heart pours into her hand.

SAKUN. I have thought out a verse, a little song.

Listen !

PRIYAM. }
ANAS. } We are all ears, to drink it in.

SAKUN. (*Reads*)

Your heart to me is dark ; yet day
and night,

Cruel one, Love enfevers me anew

With yearning and unending thought
of you,

In whom is closed all hope and all
delight.

KING. (*Advancing*)

Lovely one, you Love with his fever
fills,

But not, as me, consumes, destroys,
devours.

Day glares upon the parching lotus-
flowers,

But the wan moon he withers and he
kills.

Nay, rise not, move not ! Rest you
yet awhile

There in the fragrance that those
limbs have crushed

From the sweet lotus ; see the languid
flowers !

The fever that is in you burns them
pale.

PRIYAM. { (*Looking at him joyfully and rising to salute
him*)

ANAS. { Will not your Highness sit ?

KING. Priyamvada,

I hope there's nothing that imperils life
In your friend's sickness,

PRIYAM. (*Smiling*) It is medicined, sir,
And runs a milder course.
Is it not in the King's especial office
To assuage his lieges' suffering ?

KING. Oh, it is
Assuredly my office.

PRIYAM. Out of love
For you, our friend is brought into
this pass.
Will you not pity and save her ?

KING. If it be so,
Sweet maid, our hearts are mutually
moved,
And it is I who am honoured, I who
am blest.

SAKUN. (*With a jealous smile*)
Why do you tax the great King's
courtesy ?
Not in this simple grove, but where
fair eyes
Await him in his palace, would he be.

KING. O you that are so near my heart ! If
you,

Whose eyes are like wine poured into
my veins
When they regard me—if you dream
my heart
Is aught but filled and brimmed with
naught but you,
Why, Love has slain me once, but
you again
With jealous doubts, and I am doubly
slain.

ANAS. But we have heard, your Majesty,
that kings
Are prodigal to many of their love.
Forget not then how easily our
friend
May bring her kindred sorrow and
sharp tears.

KING. Tho' many a wife be in the palace
courts,
Henceforth there is no glory for my
throne
But these—the realm that shines from
sea to sea

And this most lovely bride, outshining
all.

ANAS. Your gracious word contents us.

PRIYAM. Anasuya,

See, there's our little fawn distress-
fully

Seeking its mother. Let us help her
find it.

SAKUN. Friends, my dear friends, leave me not
all alone ;

Why must you both be gone ?

PRIYAM. Alone, afraid ?

Now, when the world's protector's at
your side ?

(Exeunt)

SAKUN. Are they gone ? Both, and left me ?

KING. Be not troubled,

Lovely Sakuntala ! Have a heart of
peace ;

He who adores you seeks your service
only.

Here am I, that in place of those your
friends

Will make a fan of the broad lotus-
leaves,
And with their waving woo the wind
to kiss
Delicious freshness on your brow,
your bosom.

SAKUN. Touch me not !
I will not bring about me the re-
proaches
Of them whom most I honour.

(Rises and attempts to go)

KING. The still heat
Of heavy day is not yet past, and you,
Sakuntala, have fever in your veins.

SAKUN. Hurt not our cherished customs, nor
offend
The laws they lay on maidens, O
great heir
Of mighty Puru. Though I love you,
yet
I have no power nor authority
To give myself.

KING.

So fearful of offence !
Your kin shall not be wronged, and
Father Kanwa
Knows well the sacred law ; he will
rejoice.
How often daughters of a royal saint
Have wedded in that rite which knows
no rite
But perfect dedication of pure hearts,
And yet have found their father
blessing them !

SAKUN. Let me go, I beseech you ; let me take
Counsel of friends.

KING. Yes, I will let you.

SAKUN. When ?

KING. When, like the bee on the just-opened
bud,
I have tasted that untasted sweet,
your lips,
And for one heavenly moment have
assuaged
The thirst that parches me, Sakun-
tala !

VOICE. The loving birds, whom Fate compels
To nightly separation now
Must make the last of their farewells :
The shadow lengthens from the bough.

SAKUN. (*Listening excitedly*)
Hide yourself, Sire. Mother Gautami
comes
To seek me. (*The King withdraws*)

(*Enter GAUTAMI with a vase in her hand*)

GAUTAMI. (*Approaching SAKUNTALA*)
My child, is the fretting fever in your
body
Allayed ?

SAKUN. Most honoured Mother, truly I think
The burden of it passes.

GAUTAMI. Suffer me
To sprinkle you with this pure hal-
lowed water,
And all the pains of sickness shall
depart.

(*Sprinkling SAKUNTALA on the head*)

So ailing, and all alone here with the
gods ?

SAKUN. 'Tis but a moment gone that Priyam-
vada
And Anasuya went down to the
river.

GAUTAMI. Many be the days, child, of your
happiness !
The sun is setting ; come, let us go
home.

(Exit GAUTAMI)

SAKUN. O my heart, you delayed when your
desire
Came of itself to you. O happy
bower
That took away my pain, farewell,
farewell,
Till such another hour. O come,
come soon
And bring me among these trees to
Paradise !

(Exit SAKUNTALA)

KING. (*Advancing with a sigh*)

Alas, how many a hindrance lies
between

Desire and its fulfilment. Whither now
Must I betake me ? Let me a moment
linger

Here where my love was, where all
breathes of her.

Here in the flowery bed whereon she
sat

Is the faint pressure of her shape, and
here

The fading love-letter her finger-nail
Wrote on the lotus-leaf. Her image
stands,

Moves, rises, breathes before me. She
is gone,

But the very air is sweet with her ;
it wounds,

It stabs with divine sweetness. I
must wrench

My heart out of this place, yet how to
bear it ?

VOICE. The Vesper rites begin, but ghosts
Swarm, like clouds of night and murk,
Demon shapes ! In threatening hosts
Round the altar flame they lurk.

KING. Fear not. I come to the rescue, I
come. (*Exit*)

CURTAIN

SCENE IV

The Garden of the Hermitage

(The two friends gathering flowers)

ANAS. Priyamvada !

PRIYAM. Yes ?

ANAS. There's something troubles me.
Sakuntala, by voluntary rite,
Duly is wedded and has won a husband,
Royal in rank and nature, worthy of
her.
And yet . . .

PRIYAM.

What is it ?

ANAS.

The sacrifice is over,
The King is gone back to his Capital.
But in his palace where bright ladies
move
Always around him with their courtly
ways,
Will he remember our Sakuntala,
And this poor simple hermitage ?

PRIYAM.

Have no fear !
Natures so noble are not changeable.
It troubles me to know what Father
Kanwa
Shall say, when he is told.

ANAS.

He will approve
Surely !

PRIYAM. Now we have gathered flowers enough
For the hallowed offering.

ANAS.

We must gather more,
For we must offer flowers to the gods
that watch
Over Sakuntala married.

VOICE. Ho there !

ANAS. (*Listening*) Hark !

That seems as if some guest announced himself.

PRIYAM. Sakuntala, surely, must be in the
cottage.

But O, to-day her heart is far from
here.

ANAS. Then we must go, we have gathered
flowers enough.

(They move away)

DURVASA. (*Entering*)

Woe to you! Without welcome for
a guest,

And such a guest ! Unhonoured, un-
respected !

Woe ! Do you think to escape this
negligence

And not to rue it? Fond girl, fill
your thoughts

Full of this lover who engrosses you,

So that you have no sense of the
approach

Of one that is as rich in penances,
As stored and treasured with sanctity,
As you are poor in grace to under-
stand ;

But you shall rue it ! Hear my curse,
and fear !

He that now occupies your inmost
heart

Shall utterly forget you. You shall be
Razed from his memory, as a drunken
man's

When morning comes ; a dream ; less
than a dream,

A story told and stared at. You
shall strive

To pierce him with remembrance,
and in vain.

He shall disown you, girl, and you be
lost

To him, as a sail sinking down the
sea.

My curse is spoken. It shall come to
pass.

(DURVASA *passes out*)

(*The girls re-enter*)

PRIYAM. I am afraid ; I fear some terrible thing
Threatens us. In her mere forgetful-
ness,
Because her heart was far from where
she is,
Sakuntala has angered a great Saint,
Ah yes, no less a sage than the great
Durvasa,
Whose anger is so easily provoked.
It is he who has just cursed her. See,
he goes,
Shaken with passion, as if none could
turn him
From his red wrath that's like an
eating fire.

ANAS. See how he strides off. After him,
run quick.

Throw yourself at his feet ; beseech
him back

While I prepare an offering for him.

*(Exit PRIYAMVADA. ANASUYA drops basket
of flowers)*

Ah,

That comes of haste. Ill-luck !

(Starts to gather them up)

PRIYAM. *(Re-entering)* I have done my best,
But who that lives could soothe or
satisfy
Such ill-grained, stiff-necked, proud
and churlish stuff ?
'Tis something to have stroked him
down a little.

ANAS. Even a little, that is much for him.

PRIYAM. He stood refusing to turn back again.
I supplicated pardon. " O great Sage,
Pardon," I said, " this innocent of-
fence
Of a young girl, an uninstructed girl,

Ignorant what respect your sainted
head

And antique lineage claimed as was
most due.

Remember her devotion and forgive ! ”

ANAS. And then ? And then ?

PRIYAM. “ It must be, what I spoke
Must come to pass.” So he said.

“ But the ring,
At the sight of that, the ring of recog-
nition,
The spell shall break.”

ANAS. Then we may breathe again,
For when the good King went away,
he set

His signet ring upon Sakuntala’s
finger,
In token of remembrance. That will
save her.

PRIYAM. Look, Anasuya, there sits our dear
friend,
Still as a statue, propping her small
chin

On her left hand. So deep in thought
is she,
So drowned in memories of her lord
and love,
That she is unaware even of herself :
How much more of a stranger passing
by !

ANAS. Priyamvada, let this be between us
two
And known to no one other. Her
heart's young,
Tender and delicate, and to bear too
much
Would break it. She shall not be
troubled. Who,
Sprinkling a tender jasmine flower,
would scald it ?

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE I

The Hermitage

(Time : Early Dawn)

ANAS. *(Entering hurriedly. To herself)*
I should be about and busy, but my
 hands
Refuse their work, though I awoke so
 early,
And hardly is dawn breaking, even
 now.
Ignorant though I am of the world's
 ways,
I cannot think but that Sakuntala
Is shamefully entreated. Love has
 won ;

Love, Love alone, persuaded that
sweet soul

In the innocence of her heart to
entrust her faith

To one so false and fickle.—Is it the
curse ?

Durvasa's curse ? How else could
such a king,

Esteemed so virtuous, after rites so
solemn,

Suffer this long time to run silent by
With never word or message ? What's
to do ?

I cannot think ; unless it be to send
The ring, his token. Yet by whom to
send it ?

The austere hermits ? Such a thing
to them

Would be a despised toy ; *they* never
suffered !

And I, how shall I stiffen up my
courage

To tell our father that Sakuntala

Is married, and nears her time to be a
mother.

What shall I do ?

(Enter PRIYAMVADA)

PRIYAM. Quick, Anasuya, quick !
Sakuntala departs for her new home,
Her husband's palace. Come, help us
to make
Her joyful preparation.

ANAS. What do you mean ?

PRIYAM. Listen. I went but now to Sakuntala
To ask her how she slept. . . .

ANAS. And then ?

PRIYAM. I found her
With her head bowed in the arms of
Father Kanwa,
Who stroked her head, comforting her,
and saying,
“ My child, I wish you joy, I give you
joy !
We are blest with happy omens. In
the fire

The offering fell down straight, and
the smoke rose

Auspiciously toward him that sacrificed.

This very day I send you, and I give
you

Escort of hermits for your company
To take you to your husband." So
he spoke.

ANAS. But who told Father Kanwa ?

PRIYAM. A voice from Heaven,
As he was entering the sanctuary.

ANAS. A voice ? What did it say ?

PRIYAM. You shall hear. Listen.

" Into thy daughter has the glory
flown

Of King Dushyanta, as that
famous tree

Grew fiery from the goddess ;
gods alone

Shall vie in glory with the child
to be."

ANAS. Oh happy news ! It glows into my
heart—

And yet, we are to lose Sakuntala ;
And joy is half a sorrow.

PRIYAM. We must hide
Sorrow as best we may. Let her be
glad.

ANAS. We must prepare the apparel of the
bride.

My heart had this day ever in mind ;
against it

On yonder tree I hung a chaplet made
Of Keshari flowers. *(Takes it down)*

VOICE OF Gautami, Gautami,

KANWA. Bid Sarngarava and the other men
Make ready to escort Sakuntala.

PRIYAM. Haste, Anasuya, see, they call the
hermits

Who take Sakuntala to Hastinapur.

(Enter GAUTAMI followed by SAKUNTALA)

ANAS. Sakuntala comes,—according to the
rite,
Fresh-bathed.

GAUT. My child, may you become the joy
of the new house you go to!

SAKUN. Sainted mother,
I take the blessing that you give me.

ANAS. Dear,
May we not dress you for your
 journey, and bless
The raiment that you go in ?

SAKUN. O dear friends,
Welcome, welcome. . . . Perhaps
I never shall be dressed by you again.

ANAS. Weep not, beloved. It is no hour for
 tears.

Alas !

These simple flowers and the rude
 ornaments

Our hermitage abounds in, poorly set
The jewel of your beauty.

*(Two hermits, HARITA and NARADA enter
with costly presents)*

HARITA. Ornaments
Are here, befitting for a queen to wear.

GAUT. My son, whence came these things ?

HARITA. From Father Kanwa's
Magical art of power.

GAUT. His mind's creation ?

HARITA. Not wholly. Listen. Father Kanwa
bade us

Gather the blossoms for Sakuntala.

Lo, there was hanging from a certain
tree

A robe of finest linen, as if those

Who wove it had assured the wearer
bliss ;—

Never was moon so white. Another
stem

Oozed from its bark droppings of rosy
juice

For the staining of her feet ; and
from another

Wood-nymphs were stretching out
their little hands,

Far as the wrist, slender as shoots of
spring,

To offer her bright ornaments, all gold.

GAUT. The nymphs of the wood do honour
you indeed.

So fair a favour auguries the bliss
A queen has in her husband's royal
house.

NARADA. Harita, come ! for Father Kanwa
now

Has ended his ablution. Let us go
And tell him of this homage of the
grove.

ANAS. Alas, we are strange to adornments
such as these.

PRIYAM. We can paint pictures ; here is form
and colour.

Instinct will guide us.

SAKUN. Yes, I know your skill.

(Enter KANWA followed by HARITA and NARADA)

KANWA. This very day Sakuntala departs.
At thought of it my heart is pierced
with loss,
My voice breaks with suppression of
its tears,

My very sight is numbed with trouble.

If I,

Even I, a hermit, schooled in the
austere way,

Can suffer this thro' love, O, how
much more

Must pangs of separation bitter be
To those that dwell in the kind
household life !

GAUT. Child, here your father comes, in
tears, with joy
Ready to fold you in his arms. Revere
him.

SAKUN. My father, all my duty and reverence
to you.

KANWA. Be like Yayati's Sharmista. For she
Won favour and honour equal to her
worth.

And may the son you bear as kingly be
As Puru, and reign over all the earth.

GAUT. Venerable Father, she accepts your
blessing,
As if already all it invokes were hers.

KANWA. Hither, Sakuntala, come hither ; pace
With pure feet round the sacrificial
fire.

Now let the fire upon the altar
From the sacred hearth that's taken
And fed with logs of hallowed wood
And with grass all round it shaken,
Let the fire assoiling
With its holy glow
Of burnt offerings' piercing odour
Purify thee now !

(He looks round)

Where are Sarngarava and Saradvata ?

SARN. We are here, Father.

KANWA. Lead the way for your sister.
Hearken, you neighbour trees of the
 holy grove.
She who would never seek to quench
 her thirst
Before she had refreshed your thirsty
 roots,

Who, tho' she loved adornments, never
plucked

One flower of yours, because of love
for you,

Whose time of joy was your young
burst of bloom,

She, even she, Sakuntala, departs.

With kindness, all of you, and tender
breathings

Out of your branches comfort her
farewell.

(A Kokil sings)

SARN. Father, the trees are answering your
prayer

In bird notes, cooing comfort and
sweet boon,

Singing their farewell to Sakuntala,
Their sister, nurtured in their own
green grove.

(Invisible being sings)

May many a pool about her path
refresh her wandering eye

Vivid with lazy lotus-leaves ; may
happy trees on high
Temper the noon, and sultry light a
breezy shadow sift,
The dust beneath her feet be soft as
lotus-pollen drift ;
Her path be cheered with favouring
airs and resting-places find
At evening laid in pleasantness and
altogether kind.

(All stand listening in wonder)

GAUT. My daughter, hark, nymphs of the
grove that love you
As their own kind, sing blessings on
your journey.
Make your obeisance to these holy
nymphs.

(SAKUNTALA makes obeisance)

SAKUN. Priyamvada, my heart aches.—It has
such longing
To see the face of my dear lord again.

And yet my feet are heavy, they will
not move.

It is hard, hard to leave our hermitage.

PRIYAM. The bitterness of parting is not
hard

To your dear bosom only. As the
hour draws

To the last moment, all—to the very
trees

Of the kind grove—are sharing in
those pangs.

The deer let fall the grass they browsed
upon ;

The dancing peacock stops ;

The creepers cast their sad leaves one
by one

Trembling as pale tear-drops.

SAKUN. My father, suffer me before I go

Bid farewell to the jasmine, my beloved,

My sister—O you Moonlight of the
Grove,

Though you be bride to the tall Mango
tree,

Embrace me, let me feel your twining
arms.

From this day forth I must live far
from you.

Care for her, Father, as you cared for
me.

Dear friends, I give her into your
charge too.

PRIYAM. (*Weeping*) And into whose charge do
you give your friends ?

And who will care for us when you are
gone ?

KANWA. For shame. Nay, dry those tears.
Is it with tears

You'd comfort your companion, when
she most

Needs consolation and the help of
cheer.

SAKUN. Oh, who is it keeps pulling at my
dress,

As if to hinder me ?

KANWA.

Beloved daughter,
It is the fawn, your own adopted
child.

Tenderly did you rear it, gave it rice
In dainty handfuls ; when its mouth
was pricked

By the sharp-bladed grass, you healed
the sore

With ointment from the juice of
Ingudi.

And now this same fawn seeks to
follow you.

SAKUN.

Poor little fawn, poor fawn ! Left
motherless

So soon after your birth ; and it was I
Who filled your mother's place. I
mothered you

And reared you with my own hand.

Now that mother,

That second mother, leaves you, and
who will care

For my poor fawn ? Oh, Father,
mother her.

KANWA. Weep not, my daughter ; tears that
swell and prick
Under the eyelid, let them not flow
forth

To weaken resolution ; but be firm,
True to yourself and me. The path
begins

Before you, and leads upward, down-
ward, on

Over the rough and smooth, the same
for all.

SARN. Reverend Father, the hour comes to
depart.

Instruct us, if you will, what we must
do

In the King's palace, at our journey's
end.

KANWA. When you present Sakuntala to the
King,

Sarnagarava, give him from me this
message :

“ Remember, King, both your exalted
race

And our devoted life. This maiden's
love

None prompted her to give ; she gave
herself

Out of the fulness of her own young
heart.

Honour her, then, as equal, in all
dues

Of custom and observance. More
than this

Is destiny's appointing, nor befits

The kindred of a bride to ask for
more."

SARN. An honourable and fit message,
Father.

KANWA. And now to you a word, my child.
We hermits,

Although we dwell sequestered from
the world,

Are not all ignorant of the world's
ways.

GAUT. The truly wise have wisdom in all
things.

KANWA. Give honour to your elders ; never
jealous ;

But to your rivals be as a dear friend.
Even tho' your husband wrong you
with harsh usage,

Let not the anger in you act the rebel.
Have ever courtesy for those that
serve you,

Not arrogant in prosperity ; for so
Do young wives grow to matron's
dignity,

A blessing on their home, and not a
bane.

But what says Gautami ?

GAUT. Woman could not better
Such counsel. Daughter, take it well
to mind.

KANWA. One last embrace, child. Then we all
must part.

SAKUN. Oh, Father, must then even Priyam-
vada

And Anasuya leave me, here, and
now ?

KANWA. Daughter, they also one day must be
given

In marriage. Therefore they go not
to court.

Gautami will go with you.

SAKUN. (*Throwing her arms round KANWA*)

My dear Father,
I cannot bear the parting. I am torn,
Torn like a tendril of the sandal tree
That some one breaks in its own home,
breaks off

And carries with him from the western
hills.

It breaks me to be torn so from your
breast.

How can I bear life on a foreign soil ?

KANWA. The blessing of my old age on you,
child,

My child. May all my prayers for
you come true.

SAKUN. Put your arms round me, both of
you, dear friends,
Dear, dear companions.

ANAS.

Dear Sakuntala,
Remember, if the King—it might so
chance—

Be slow at first in recognising you,
You have but to show this ring,
marked with his name.

SAKUN. The very thought of doubt makes my
heart beat.

PRIYAM. There's no real cause for fearing.

SARN.

Come, lady,
We must haste onward. The sun's
rising high.

SAKUN. When shall I see this happy grove
again ?

KANWA. You shall return. When for long
years you have been
Fellowed in majesty with that rich
realm

Whose boundaries are the boundaries
of the Earth,

The rising and the setting of the sun ;
When you have found your peerless
son a bride,

And he takes on the realm's care in
his turn,

Then shall you come, you and your
lord together,

And both re-enter this old place of
peace.

GAUT. The favourable time for travel passes,
We must be gone, child. Venerable
Father,

Lead home the others now, go your-
self first,

Or these last words will never end.

KANWA. My daughter,
Keep me no longer.

SAKUN. Oh, most loving of Fathers,
Too much of austere penance has
unthrewed

Your strength; but suffer not your-
self to grieve

Too much because of me. Be com-
forted.

KANWA. I shall see growing from the grains of
rice

Dropt from your hands, when you
made offering of it,

The green shoots. When I see them
springing up

How shall my grief ever be comforted ?

SAKUN. Farewell, Father ; Farewell, sisters.

(Exit)

PRIYAM. Oh, she is gone, gone, and the trees
have hidden

Our darling from our sight.

KANWA. Control your tears.

Let us go home.

ANAS. The grove is all a desert
Without Sakuntala. How can we go
home ?

KANWA. It is meet and natural that it should
seem so,

Because of the affection in your hearts.

But come. Now that Sakuntala is
gone,

A kind of calm begins to steal on me
And solaces the sad thoughts of my
mind.

Verily a girl is nothing of one's own.
Now that I have delivered up this
child
To her lord's keeping, I am reconciled ;
It is as if I had restored a loan.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

The Palace Garden

SONG. (*Off stage*)

Bee, O Bee, that eagerly
Roamest after honey new,
Thee the mango blossom drew,
Thee it held with honey-kiss—
Now it is the lotus holds thee
Lost in bliss.
Is the mango all forgot
For that new flower that enfolds thee,
Quite forgot ?

KING. (*Aside*)

Strange ! but that song moves me, I
know not how ;

A melancholy steals into my soul
As if it sought something it could not
find,

Some long forgotten shadow dear to it.
When in some idle careless hour the
heart

Feels on a sudden a longing like sweet
pain

Because of beauty seen in face or
flower,

Or, in a voice, music that breathes
and falls,

Doubtless it is the shadow of some-
thing dear

Loved in a former and forgotten
birth,

But so deep rooted in the heart, that
tho'

It knows not, it remembers what it
loved.

CHAMBERLAIN. (*Approaching*)

Hail to the King and victory ! Here
are hermits

Come from Himalya valleys where
they dwell,

And bringing with them women. And
they bear

A message also for the King, from
Kanwa,

The ancient sage that is their chief.

KING. Hermits !

And women in their company ?

CHAMB. Even so,

Majesty.

KING. Bid my household priest receive
The hermits with due honour. After-
ward

They may attend me here.

CHAMB. It shall be done. (*Exit*)

KING. (*Walking on, with the air of one oppressed with
the cares of Government*)

When they have compassed their
desires, all men

Are happy and content ; but not a
king.

For him to attain, breeds but another
care.

Attainment eases but the racked de-
sire.

For that which is attained must still
be guarded

With ever - anxious thought. This
royal state

Is like a king's sun-shading canopy,
Heavy in the hand that holds it ;
tho' its office

Is to refresh the weary and to shield
From the weight of the noon, what
is it but a weight

And weariness to him that bears it up ?

(HERALD *sings* KING'S *praise*)

(*Enter* CHAPLAIN *with* HERMITS)

CHAP. There stands the King, most honoured
 sir, the world's

Protector ; from the judgment seat
he comes,
And now awaits you.

ARN. The King, it may be, noble of nature,
swerves

No whit from the right path ; it may
be none,

Not even the lowest here, is willed to
evil ;

And yet this palace with its idle
throngs

That come and go, loiter and pass
and smile,

To me is like a house devoured by fire.

SARAD. It is natural in a palace to feel so.

I look upon this folk, lost in their
pleasures,

As a man, clean from his ablution,
looks

On one that's smeared with dirt ; as
one that's free

Looks on a manacled and fettered
slave.

HERMITS. Hail to the King and victory !

KING. Greeting to you !

SARN. May all your vows be compassed and
fulfilled !

KING. I trust no molestation has disturbed
Your hermitage's holy observances.

SARAD. Who could molest the rites of pious
men
Where the King rules ? Can dark-
ness enter day ?

KING. I hope the venerable Kanwa keeps
Good health in his old age.

SARN. For holy men
Health and prosperity are things of
course,
For they have power upon them.
Father Kanwa
Bade greet your majesty and give
this message.

KING. I listen to his commands.

SARN. He bade us say
That he rejoices to confirm and bless

The marriage which the King lately
contracted
With Sakuntala his daughter. There-
fore since
She is in hope soon to bear you a
child,
Receive Sakuntala into your palace
That both, as due prescription has
ordained
For such occasion, may perform to-
gether
The holy ceremonies binding you.

(GAUTAMI *enters with* SAKUNTALA)

KING. What strange requirement's this you
make of me ?

SAKUN. His words go to my heart like flames
of fire.

SARN. What do I hear ? Do you then
hesitate
To take her to your wife ?

KING. Can it be true
That you assert that I wedded this
lady ?

SAKUN. You feared this, O my heart, and it
comes true.

SARN. Does it become a King to be unjust
Because his heart repents what he has
done ?

KING. What means this accusation ?

SARN. It is well
The world sees seldom such incon-
stancy
Except in such as power intoxicates.

KING. Is it I that word is aimed at ?

GAUT. Be not abashed,
My daughter ; let me but undo your
veil.

Your husband then will know you.

KING. Who is this fair one, whose veiled
beauty shines
As from a cloud, half-hidden ? I
misdoubt me

Whether or no this bright unblemished
shape

Who shows among these hermits that
attend her

Like a fresh bloom among dried yellow
leaves

Was once, in some far season, wed to
me.

My heart goes hovering, like the bee
at dawn

Over the jasmine-blossom that's dew-
drenched,

And I can neither yield me to my
joy

Nor, stronger than my heart, relin-
quish it.

SARN. Great King, what will you say now ?

KING. Holy men,

The more this matter's pondered in
my mind

The less does memory discover aught
Of this strange thing you affirm so
vehemently,

That I ever was wedded to this
lady.

What can I answer, being so well
assured

That I am not her husband ?

SAKUN.

Oh, my heart !

He denies even that we were ever
wedded.

Ah, now I know how high my hope
had climbed,

Now when it's fallen like a vine
unpropt,

And there is nothing left ; all my
dreams darkened,

And the sweet vision of happiness
that I had,

Counting the days to it, gone, gone
for ever !

SARN.

What ? Is the Sage to be insulted, he
So generous, who when you had
secretly

Wedded his daughter, gave his good
consent,

And by permitting him who stole to
keep,

Forgave and justified the ravisher ?

SARAD. Sarngarava, use no more words to him.
Our part is done, Sakuntala. What
we had

To say is spoken ; what the King has
answered

You have heard. Now it is for you to
speak.

And give him proof, past doubting, of
your marriage.

SAKUN. My revered husband—no, I dare not
use

That name, since you deny me. Royal
son

Of Puru's blood, it is not worthy you
To deal so with an innocent girl.

How brief

A time it is since in the hermitage
You made affiance solemnly with vows
And plighted faith to her whom now,
cruel !

You without cause disown.

KING.

I'll hear no more.

Why do you seek to shame me, shame
the race

Of kings that I am sprung from, and
drag down

Me with you, as a river drags its
banks

Down into the clear water, clouding it
With mud and wreckage and the
uprooted tree ?

SAKUN. If it be so, then, if it be the truth
That you believe me to be another's
wife,

And some cloud lies dark on your
memory,

I have that with me that shall melt
the cloud

And put the false suspicion from your
heart.

This token. (*Feeling for the ring*) Ah !
the ring ! I have lost the ring !
It is not on my finger !

GAUT. When you knelt
In reverence at Sachi's holy pool
It must have slipt and fallen.

KING. Now indeed
The old saying is come true :
Womankind and ready mind.

SAKUN. Say rather
Destiny has dominion over all.
I will bring one thing further to your
mind
Which may persuade you yet !

KING. Well, let me hear.

SAKUN. Do you not remember in the jasmine-
bower,
One day how you had poured the
rain-water
That a lotus had collected in its cup
Into the hollow of your hand.

KING. Tell on,
I am listening.

SAKUN. Just then my adopted child,
The little fawn, ran up with long soft
 eyes,

And you, before you quenched your
own thirst, gave
To the little creature, saying, “ Drink
you first,
Gentle fawn ! ” But she would not
from strange hands.
And yet, immediately after, when
I took some water in my hand, she
drank,
Absolute in her trust. Then with a
smile
You said, “ Each creature has faith in
its own kind.
You are children both of the same
wild wood, and each
Confides in the other, knowing where
its trust is.”

KING. Sweet, fair—and false ! Such women
entice fools.

GAUT. Speak not such words, illustrious
prince. For she,
Reared in a hermitage, knows not
deceit.

KING. The female gift of cunning may be
marked

In creatures of all kinds ; in woman
most.

The cuckoo leaves her eggs for dupes
to hatch,

Then flies away secure and triumphing.

SAKUN. Ignoble ! By your own corrupted
heart

You read the hearts of others.
Treachorous

Beyond all tales of treachery, you
robe

Yourself in righteousness, but you are
false

As a well hidden with flowers, a deep
dark well

The unhappy stumble in, a pit of
darkness.

KING. Good lady, Dushyanta's deeds are
known

To all—open as day. But not this
marriage.

SAKUN. Well did my fond heart earn this
bitterness,
Since in the innocence of my heart I
gave
My honour to a man whose mouth
drops honey,
Whose heart is filled with poison.

SARN.

Thus do those.
That never checked their licence hurt,
unheeding.
O with what sure knot should the
marriage bonds
Be tied, and bonds of secret marriage
most !
When the one heart knows not the
other well,
Love's heaven changes often to hate's
hell.

KING. Why do you trust this girl's tale and
accuse me
Of an imagined crime ?

SARN. True, that were foolish !
How monstrous, out of reason, to
believe
A girl without art and unused to
guile !
Put your trust rather in the schooled
and smooth
Dissembler, for whom simpleness is
folly.

KING. Brahmin, suppose this tale true.
Where's the gain
In such betrayal of a girl ?

SARN. Ruin !

KING. A Prince of Puru's race, to seek his
own
Or other's ruin ? Who'd invent such
madness ?

SARAD. Sarngarava, this is but waste of
words.

We have done all that was enjoined on
us.

Let us return. Take or reject her,
Sire,

As you will, she is your wife. Gautami,
Lead the way ; come !

SAKUN. Will you desert me so
In this day anguish ?

GAUT. Son Sarngarava,
Sakuntala beseeches us with tears
Not to abandon her. Poor child,
alas !

What will she do here with a lord so
cruel ?

SARN. (*Angrily*)
What, wilful wayward woman, do you
seek
To be independent of your lord and
king ?
If you be such as the king calls you,
how
Can Kanwa take you for his child
again ?
But you are pure in heart, innocent
in act,
And, being thus, can in your hus-
band's house

Be patient and bear all things, even
bondage.

Remain ! We must return.

KING. Why thus delude her,
Hermit ?

SARN. Suppose that heart-distracting
 pleasures,
O King, have drowned memory of
 former deeds,
Should you, who fear to fail in virtue,
 now
Desert your wife ?

KING. Which is the heavier sin ?
 Either I am mad, or she false. Must
 I wed
 One that's another's, or forsake my
 own ?

CHAP. Now if . . .

KING. What would you say, my soul's
 instructor?

CHAP. Let it be thus. The lady shall remain
 Within my house until her child is
 born.

KING. Why this ?

CHAP. The astrologers, have not they
told you
That your first child shall be an
emperor ?
If it should be, this hermit's daughter's
son
Bears the imperial birthmarks, then
receive her
Into the palace as your queen. If
not,
She goes back to her father.

KING. Be it so.
I bow to wisdom.

CHAP. Daughter, follow me.

SAKUN. O divine earth, open and take me in.

(CHAPLAIN goes out with SAKUNTALA.

KING remains brooding. CHAPLAIN
returns)

CHAP. A miracle ! A miracle !

KING. What has happened ?

CHAP. Great prince, we have beheld a prodigy
Beyond conception.

KING. What is it you have seen ?

CHAP. Kanwa's disciples were scarce gone,
when lo,
Sakuntala, her arms stretched out,
all tears,
Cried out upon her lamentable lot.

KING. And then ?

CHAP. Before our eyes, out of the air
A light came, and a heavenly form
shone toward us
Apparelled in the light—a woman's
form.

Sakuntala was taken in her arms,
And both upon the instant disap-
peared.

KING. So, my good priest, there is the end
to it.

Never can man's conjecture disen-
twine

The riddle of this mystery. Come,
since nothing

Helps, let us unperplex our minds and
seek

To rest and to forget.

(*Exeunt*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE I

A Street

(Enter the King's brother-in-law as Superintendent of the City Police; and with him two Constables dragging in a poor Fisherman, who has his hands tied behind his back)

1ST *(Cuffing the Fisherman)* Now, thief, tell

POLICE. us where you found this ring. The King's own signet-ring! See, here is the name engraved on the setting of the splendid jewel.

FISHER. *(With a gesture of fear)* Mercy, your Honour. I did not steal the ring; indeed, I did not.

1ST
POLICE. No doubt the King took you for a famous Brahmin, and made you a present of it !

FISHER. Hear me, Sirs. I am a poor fisherman, and I live on the banks of the Ganges, close by Sachi's sacred pool.

POLICE. You rogue, who asked you where you lived or who your ancestors were ?

SUP. Let him tell his story forthright, Suchaka. Don't interrupt him.

BOTH. As you please, Sir. Go on, then, fellow, and say what you have to say.

FISHER. I am but a poor man, who supports his family by catching fish with nets, hooks, and such things.

SUP. (*Laughing*) Truly a noble occupation !

FISHER. Don't speak like that, master. A man can't give up the trade he was born to (as the saying is) even though it has a bad name. Even a butcher might have a tender heart.

SUP. Well, go on with your story.

FISHER. One day I was cutting open a big carp, and in its maw, all sparkling with the jewel, was that ring. Then, just when I was trying to sell it, your honours took me up. That is how I came by the ring. I tell you the simple truth. Now kill me or let me go.

SUP. (*Smelling the ring*) It's a queer story, Januka, but there is no doubt of the fellow's trade; he smells so fishy; and so does the ring. We must go further into this matter. We must take it to the King.

2ND Very good, Sir. (*To the FISHERMAN*)

POLICE. Rascal, move on.

SUP. Now, Suchaka; take good care your prisoner does not escape, while I go and lay the whole story of the finding of this ring before the King himself. I will soon return.

2ND Go, Sir, by all means ; and may
POLICE. the King be gracious to you.

(Exit SUPERINTENDENT)

1ST Suchaka, the Chief is a long time
POLICE. about his business.

2ND Aye, kings are not to be seen at any
POLICE. hour of the day.

1ST My fingers itch to strike the first
POLICE. blow at this royal victim here. We
 must kill him with all due honours.
 I long to begin binding the flowers
 round his head.

(Pretends to strike a blow at the FISHERMAN)

FISHER. Your honour will surely not put an
 innocent man to a cruel death.

2ND There's our Chief coming at last.
POLICE. See ! He has a paper in his hand.
 We shall soon know what the King
 has ordered ; so prepare, my fine
 fellow, either to become food for the
 vultures, or to make the acquaintance
 of some hungry jackal.

SUP. *(Entering)* Suchaka ! Set the fisherman free. His story about the ring is all true.

1ST As you please, Sir. There's a dead
POLICE. man revived for you. *(He releases the FISHERMAN)*

FISHER. *(Bowing low to the SUPERINTENDENT)*
What think you of my trade now,
Master ?

SUP. Here is a purse, my good man ; the
King desired me to present it to you.
It contains the full value of the ring.

(Gives him the money)

FISHER. *(Taking it and bowing)* His Majesty
does me too great honour.

1ST Indeed he does. It's as if he had
POLICE. snatched you from the gallows to
seat you on his royal elephant.

2ND Master, the King must set great
POLICE. value on that ring, or he would not
have sent such a present to a fellow
like this.

SUP. I don't think he prizes it for its costly jewel so much as because it reminds him of some one he loves. The moment it was shown to him, for all his habit of control, he could not contain his emotion.

1ST Then you have done him a great
POLICE. service.

2ND All to benefit this husband of a
POLICE. fish-wife.

(Looks enviously at the FISHERMAN)

FISHER. Here's half the money for you, gentlemen. It will serve to buy the flowers you spoke of.

SUP. My good fisherman, you are an excellent fellow, and I have quite a liking for you. Let us seal our new friendship over a glass of good wine. Let's to the next wineshop.

ALL. With all my heart.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

*In the Palace Garden**(Enter Ladies singing and dancing.**Enter CHAMBERLAIN)*

CHAMB. Stop, foolish girls. Know you not
that the King
Ordains there shall be no Spring
Festival ?

MAID. Forbids it ? Pardon us, Sir, we did
not know.
We have been away upon the King's
service
Tending his pleasure-gardens.

CHAMB. I accept
The excuse. But see that you avoid
the fault.

MAID. Noble Sir, may we be allowed to
know

Why the Spring celebration is forbidden ?

CHAMB. Have you lived out of gossip, and not heard
Of how the King disowned Sakuntala ?

MAID. Oh yes, we have heard the story, just so far
As the discovery of the ring.

CHAMB. There's little
Left then to tell you. As soon as
the King saw
The ring, his memory returned. He
cried
“ It is all true, and I remember all
My marriage with Sakuntala.” From
that hour
He is given up to anguishing remorse.
All that was once his pleasure he
abhors.
Courtier and counsellor wait no more
on him ;

He has no use for such ; by night he
tosses

On the bed's edge, never an eyelid
closed ;

And in the day-time, when to the
palace-women

From habit's courtesy he speaks a
word

He stumbles at their names.—*Sakun-
tala !*

That one name only slips out of his
heart,

And he stands tongue-betrayed, and
frowns and flushes.

So is it, the Spring Festival's for-
bidden.

CHAMB. He comes, a king in sorrow ; noble
nature

Wrought and in pain keeps its own
beauty still.

Now to your duties, maidens.

(ALL *exeunt*)

(Enter KING DUSHYANTA, dressed in deep mourning, attended by MATHAVYA and VETRAVATI)

KING. *(Walks slowly about, deep in thought)*
My Love, my fawn-eyed Love, would
have awaked
This heart of mine from its accursed
sleep
And could not. Now it is awake,
and now
Open-eyed stares upon its own re-
morse.

MATH. Another fit of the Sakuntala fever !
How shall we ever cure him ?

KING. Vetravati,
Go to my minister, Pishuna ; tell
him
I am too weary to sit on the judgment-
seat.
He is to do my office, and report.

(Exit VETRAVATI)

MATH. Wearisome people. We've got rid of
them ;

Now rest yourself among the garden
trees.

It is delicious with the Spring's first
kiss.

KING. Ah, friend, when sorrow has a mind
to enter

She finds somewhere a crevice. That
old saying's

Written on me.

No sooner has my spirit been delivered
From that dark vapour of forgetful-
ness

Which lost me my Sakuntala, than see,
An arrow of the love-god, O my friend,
Aims at my heart out of the mango-
flower.

MATH. Wait, my friend,
I will destroy Love's arrow with my
stick.

KING. I know a Brahmin's mighty power.
But now
My dear friend, what place shall I
find where I

Can sit and gaze upon the blossomed
vines

That put me in remembrance of my
love ?

MATH. Vetravati was commanded to bring
here

The sketch you painted of Sakuntala.
Sit on this seat.

KING. Well do I now remember
What passed between me and Sakun-
tala.

And I confided all to you, my friend !
Why did you never breathe her name
to me ?

Was your remembrance clouded like
my own ?

MATH. No, I had not forgotten. But you
told me

It was a pastime merely and feigned
passion.

And I was so dull-witted, I believed.
So Fate decreed, and there's no help
for it.

ING. O my friend, find me, find me some
way out.

LATH. Come, come. Why so abandon all to
grief ?

Such weakness is not worthy. A
wise man

Suffers not sorrow so to master
him.

Tho' the storms rage, stands not the
mountain fast ?

ING. When I recall Sakuntala's anguished
eyes,

A bride forsaken, how can I choose
but let

Grief have its way ?

ATH. A thought, a sudden thought !
Perhaps some goddess or some
heavenly nymph

Has carried her from earth.

ING. Well may that be !
Who else would dare lay finger upon
my bride ?

I have been told that the nymph
Menaka
Is her celestial mother. And I too
Sometimes have guessed that some
of her companions
Ravished her to their own abode in
heaven.

MATH. If that's so, you will surely meet ere
long.

KING. How ?

MATH. Can a mother endure to see her
daughter
Suffer such anguish, severed from her
husband ?
And then the ring ! Is not that
augury
That what's lost may, beyond all hope,
be found ?

KING. Pity the ring. It is fallen from a
heaven
Hard to earn. When I left the hal-
lowed grove,

My beloved wife said, " Oh, how
many days

Before my lord receives me as his
queen ? "

I put the ring upon her finger, and
said,

" Count on the ring each letter of my
name,

Day by day, till the syllables are
spelt

And all the name completed. On
that day

There shall a messenger appear to you
And guide you to my hidden dwelling-
place."

Then through my madness cruelly
all fell out.

MATH. How came the ring into the maw of a
carp

As if it were a fish-hook ?

KING. It slipped doubtless
From my Sakuntala's hand, slipped
off and fell

Into the stream of Ganges, while she
knelt

Doing reverence at Sachi's holy
pool.

Well, I can only chide the ring.

MATH.

And I

Can only chide my stick. Why are
you crooked

When I am straight ?

(Enter VETRAVATI with a tablet)

VETRA. My royal Lord, here is the Queen's
portrait.

KING. The drawing is brimmed over with
sweet meaning.

MATH. I see you are a painter deft of hand.

KING. My love came ; I repudiated her,
When she was pleading to my eyes,
all warm

And living. Now I feast upon her
picture,

My one sole prized possession in the
world.

I let the radiant full stream flow past
me

And in my desert thirst for the mirage.

YATH. There are three figures in the picture.

All

Are beautiful. Which is Sakuntala ?

SING. Which do you think ?

YATH. She who is leaning there,
A little tired, against that mango tree,
Whose fresh leaves sparkle with the
water she

Has poured on them. Her arms with
infinite grace

Stretch out, her face just flushing with
the heat,

And a few flowers fall straying from
her hair

That has become unknotted and hangs
down

Her neck. Yes, that must be Sakun-
tala,

And the others are the two maids that
attend her.

KING. You are good at guessing.

MATH. Look, a vagabond
Honey-thief bee has settled on her
mouth,
Fancying it a rose-bud.

KING. Drive it off.

MATH. That is your business. Your pre-
rogative
Empowers you to punish all offenders,
Even an impudent insect.

KING. Very true.
Listen, you wanton wanderer, you
bold bee !
Dare on those lips presumptuously to
taste
What once I tasted, sweeter than all
honey,
And I will cage you in this lotus
cup.

MATH. It seems he does not care much for
your threats
And terrors. Why, it is only a painted
bee.

KING. Painted ! Impossible ! Why, why do
you wake me ?

Leave me, now leave me alone with
my vision.

(KING sinks down overcome with grief)

MATH. Fate plays with him most strangely.

(Exit)

VOICE. Help ! help !

KING. *(Listening)*

A cry of distress ! Fear not, fear
not !

VOICE. Fear not ? Fear not ? How can I
help fearing

When a monster twists my neck.

KING. Ho there, my bow !

*(Enter an arms-carrier. The KING snatches
up bow and arrow)*

ANOTHER Here will I slay you, struggling, as a

VOICE. tiger

Slays the deer, thirsting for its throat's
fresh blood.

Pray to that king, that champion of
the oppressed,

That archer ! Let Dushyanta save
you now.

KING. What, he defies me too ? Monster,
avaunt !

My arrow is aimed and it shall find
you out.

*(Enter MATALI, holding MATHAVYA, whom
he releases)*

MATALI. Indra ordains the demons for your
mark.

Against the demons let your bow be
turned.

Upon a friend not arrows should be
aimed,

But soft looks and the favour of the
eyes.

KING. Matali ! Welcome, Charioteer of
Heaven.

MATH. Welcome ! And he came near to
murdering me.

MATALI. Great Prince, hear on what errand I
am come
From Indra, King of Heaven. There
is a race
Of Giants boasting them unconquer-
able,
Whom Devas, even, have failed to
vanquish. Now
Indra, the mighty, who deigns to call
you friend,
Appoints you their destroyer. The
dark night
No sun can enter, yet the moon
subdues it.

KING. Indra has honoured me past my
desert.
But why that sudden violence put
forth
Against Mathavya, my poor friend ?

MATALI. I saw
That the King's spirit was broken
and bowed down
By some affliction, so I chose the way

Of anger to arouse his lethargy.

To wake a flame, the embers must be
stirred.

The cobra must be angered ere he
strike,

And even in bravest men courage
will sleep

Until provoked it springs in its true
shape.

KING. Mathavya, the command of Heaven's
great king

Must be obeyed. Acquaint my
minister

Pishuna with what's passed and say
to him,

"Dushyanta to your care confides
his Kingdom.

Guard you his people, while his bow
is bent

Against the demon enemies of
heaven."

MATALI. Noble prince, come. My chariot is
at hand.

SCENE III

*Golden Peak—the Hermitage of
Kashyapa*

(Enter KING DUSHYANTA and MATALI, alighting from the chariot that has borne them through the air)

MATALI. We have come to earth, O King.

KING. Yet still I seem
Gliding along the wind, and glorying
In the heavenly chariot's motion.
Matali,
Rushing through air what wondrous
things I saw !
How from the mountains the earth
shelved away
As the great peaks emerged ; and
wrapt no more
In indistinguishable foliage, trees
Towered up and showed the stature
of their stems.

The rivers, that were narrowed into
threads

Of shining silver, broadened their
green banks ;

And momentarily grown nearer, all the
earth

Was by some unseen power flung up
to me.

MATALI. There is strange beauty in earth
revisited.

KING. I have fulfilled the task that Heaven's
King

Laid on me, all unworthy that I am
To be so singled. By his side he bade
me

In presence of the companies of
heaven

Be seated on a throne ; and on my head
He set a garland of immortal bloom.

MATALI. What lesser meed were worthy ? For
this day

Your arrows have driven down to
darkness all

The demon brood that harried Indra's
peace.

Glory is yours in Heaven.

KING.

Indra's the praise,
Who chose me for his instrument.
But see !

Yesterday, passing this way, all my
thought
Was on the demons and the hour of
battle.

I marked not then how marvellous
appears
The world of mortals from this moun-
tain top.

Matali, say, what aery peak is this
That like a cloud above the sunken
sun

Streams molten gold, and plunges
east and west

Into the dim far seas !

MATALI.

The Golden Peak
This is, where saints attain their
mightiest power,

And the renowned sage, Kashyapa,
dwells, —

Marichi's son, with Aditi, his wife, —
Sequestered in such purity of peace
As passes even the peace of Indra's
heaven.

KING. I marvel at this place, pilgrim-desired,
Which hermits in their far haunts
hope to win
Through pain of long austerities ; for
here
Sages are feasted by mere air, so fine
A faculty they use, so magical
The breath is of this paradise ; they
make
Happy ablution of their limbs in
water
Brown with the dust of golden
lotuses ;
They meditate on gem-veined marble
slabs,
And in bright presence of the nymphs
of heaven

Are ignorant of passion. Matali,
I must not move my feet from such
a place

Ere I do reverence to this holy
ground.

MATALI. Tarry awhile, then, King. The
chariot waits. (MATALI *retires*)

KING. There's no hope of attaining my
desire.

Why throb so vainly, arm of mine ?
The bliss

Once refused, turns to misery's bitter
taste.

VOICE. *Without*)

Be not so naughty. You are too
wilful.

KING. This is no place for petulant words.
Who is it

That's chidden by that voice ? A
child, but not

A child in weakness.

He drags a lion's cub from the
mother's dug

It sucks at ; drags it off—the touseled
mane

Tugging at his tight fist—to play with
him.

*(Enter BHARATA, with SUVRATA and
SURAMA)*

SUV. Naughtly child, why do you tease my
lion cub,
Opening his mouth ?

BHAR. I want to count his teeth.

SUV. Do you not know we care for the wild
creatures

Like our own children in this hermit-
age ?

No wonder the hermits call you the
All-Tamer.

KING. Strange, how my heart goes out to-
wards this boy

As if he were my own. Is it because
I have no child, that this one moves
me so ?

SUV. The lioness will spring at you, if
you tease her baby.

BHAR. Let her come. I do not fear her.

KING. What fire is in the child ! Blow but
the spark,
And power will glow and burst from
him like flame.

SUV. If you promise not to torment our
pet, I will give you something else to
play with.

BHAR. Where is it ? Give it me first.

(He stretches out his hand)

KING. He has the imperial birth-mark on his
hand !

SUV. Mere words will not content him.
Go to my cottage and get me that
coloured peacock, the Sakunta.

(ATTENDANT goes out)

BHAR. No, no, I will play with the young lion.

KING. My heart goes out to this rebellious boy.
Ah, happy father, happy mother, who
Carrying their little son, are soiled
with dust
Rubbed from his body ; it nestles
with fond faith

Into their lap, the refuge that he
craves—

The white buds of his teeth just
visible

When he breaks out into a causeless
smile,

And he attempts sweet wordless
sounds, and babbles

Things melting the heart more than
any word.

SUV. Kind sir, will you come hither a
moment and help me with this unruly
boy ?

KING. Listen, O little son of a great saint,
How is it your behaviour so affronts
The peace this grove inherits, and
your father's
Rule of unaltering mildness ? Why
offend

This peace with violence—like the
black snake's brood

That nest in the sweet-scented sandal
tree ?

SUV. Noble sir, he is not the son of a saint.

KING. His bearing and behaviour tell me
that.

SUV. Wonderful ! Wonderful !

KING. What makes the wonder ?

SUV. I am amazed at such a speaking
likeness

Between you and the child, and more
amazed

To see what trust he has in you, a
stranger.

KING. If he be not the son of the great sage,
Tell me, of what blood comes he ?

SUV. Puru's blood.

KING. What, have we both a single ancestor ?
It was by favour of the King of
Heaven

I was permitted entrance in this
place,

No mortal else could enter. How
then comes

This human child here ?

SUV. Cease to wonder, sir.

His mother had a heavenly nymph for
mother,

And in this hallowed wood she gave
him birth.

KING. Strange, how my hope pricks upward
once again.

Tell me, how was that prince named,
whom her hand

Honoured in marriage ?

SUV. Who would speak the name
Of one so heartless that he could
disown

His very wife ?

KING. Ah, such a word paints me.
Would that I dared to ask the mother's
name !

(Enter SURAMA with Peacock)

SURAMA. Look, All-Tamer ! Here is the bird,
the Sakunta.

Isn't the Sakunta lovely ?

BHAR. My mother ! Where is she ? Let me
go to her.

SUV. He mistook the word Sakunta for Sakuntala. The boy loves his mother fondly.

SURAMA. Nay, child; I said, "Is not the Sakunta lovely?" I meant this peacock.

KING. What! Is his mother's name Sakuntala? Yet among women the name's not so rare.

BHAR. I like this peacock. Can it fly?

SUV. Alas, alas! I do not see the amulet on his wrist.

KING. Be not distressed. Here it is.

(Stoops to pick it up)

SUV. Stop! Do not touch it!

SURAMA. How marvellous! How strange! I must go and tell his mother.

KING. Why did you seek to stop my touching it?

SUV. The divine son of Marichi gave the child

This amulet, called the Invincible;

It has strange virtue in it. If it fall,
None but his father or his mother can
Touch it, and not be hurt.

KING. If some one else
Touched it, what then ?

SUV. It changes to a serpent
And stings him.

KING. Have you seen such transformation
With your own eyes ?

SUV. O many, many times.

KING. Joy, joy. Is it my dearest hope come
true ?

BHAR. (*To KING*)
Don't hold me. I want to go to my
mother.

KING. My son, we'll go together to greet
your mother.

BHAR. Dushyanta is my father, and not you.

KING. His contradiction only assures me more.

BHAR. My mother comes. Mother !

KING. O, it is she.
She comes, all clouded in her weeds of
gray,

Her pale cheeks thinned with peni-
tential tears,

Her hair up-knotted in a single braid,
Chaste in her mien as in her mind.

Alas,

So she prolongs her vows of separation
From me, who without mercy turned
from her.

*(Enter SAKUNTALA from distance, with her
long hair twisted into a simple braid)*

SAKUN. Where is the stranger who could
touch with his hand the amulet of my
child and not be dead ?

BHAR. Mother, who is this man ? He
embraced me and called me his son.

SAKUN. O my heart ! Is it my lord indeed ?

KING. O my beloved !

SAKUN. Victory, Victory ! *(Her voice breaks)*

KING. Tears choke the words that you would
greet me with.

I have found you. I have found you.

All is won.

BHAR. Who is he, mother ?

SAKUN. Ask of Fate, my child.

KING. O ease your soul, Love, of its bitterness.

My mind was darkened, when I knew
you not.

SAKUN. Rise, husband, noble husband. Think
not blame

Of your heart. No, it was my own
ill deeds,

In some past life committed, that
brought down

That judgment on me. How else
could my husband,

He who was ever kind, have been so
cruel ?

Tell me how came it that the memory
Of that unhappy wife returned to
you ?

KING. When my heart's anguish is a little
eased

And its wounds closed, then will I
tell you all.

SAKUN. It is the ring, the ring of recognition.

KING. The moment I recovered it, I knew,
And memory rushed back. Take it
again,
As the tree takes its blossom once
afresh
In token of reunion with the Spring.

SAKUN. Nay, keep it. I can never trust it
more.

KING. Tell me, Beloved, how came you to
this place ?

SAKUN. Menaka, my celestial mother, knowing
Of my misfortune and unhappiness
Carried me hither, and confided me
To the holy Aditi.

(Enter MATALI)

MATALI. Hail, puissant prince,
Happy to find your queen, to see your
son !
Heaven's Regent, to whom all is
known, sends you,

Sakuntala, his blessing ; and he bids
you

Blame not the king. Durvasa's curse
it was -

That drowned his memory, and that
curse yourself

Brought, by neglect of honour to a
guest.

So in the spell of that strong curse
confined

Did he reject you. But the cloud has
passed

Like tarnish on a mirror from his
heart,

And there again you triumph and you
shine,

As in the glass your image.

KING. I am cleared then.

SAKUN. O then it was not of his own free will
That he disowned me !

KING. This is my own son,
He shall become the pillar of my
house.

He shall be called Bharata, and his
name

Shall be the name of all my land.

ATALI. Great King,
Come, and your wife and child with
you. Ascend
The car of Indra. To your royal city !

(Exeunt)

THE END

Under the Auspices of The Union of East and West.

THE INDIAN ART AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY

Presented for two Matinees on the 14th and 21st November 1919, at the
Winter Garden Theatre, London

Under the distinguished patronage of
His Royal Highness THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT

‘SAKUNTALA’

Written about 1600 years ago by KALIDASA.

English Version by LAURENCE BINYON.

The adaptation for the Stage by K. N. DAS GUPTA.

CAST—*In the order of their appearance.*

IN THE PROLOGUE—

<i>Benediction by</i>	MARTAND BHAGVAT.
<i>Stage Manager</i> . . .	LEWIS CASSON.
<i>Actress</i> . . .	SYBIL THORNDIKE.

IN THE PLAY—

<i>Dushyanta—King of India</i> . . .	ARTHUR WONTNER.
<i>Sarnagarava</i> } <i>Hermits</i> . . .	{ HOWARD ROSE.
<i>Saradvata</i> } . . .	{ FRANCIS ROBERTS.
<i>Sakuntala</i> } <i>Maidens of the</i> } . . .	{ SYBIL THORNDIKE.
<i>Anasuya</i> } <i>Hermitage</i> } . . .	{ COLETTE O'NIEL.
<i>Priyamvada</i> } . . .	{ MURIEL PRATT.
<i>Mathavya—The King's Jester</i> } . . .	BRUCE WINSTON.
<i>and Companion</i> } . . .	
<i>Karabhaka—A Messenger</i> . . .	JACK STUART.
<i>Gautami—Matron of the Hermitage</i> . . .	LILIAN MOWBRAY.
<i>Durvasa—A Great Sage and Hermit</i> . . .	CALEB PORTER.
<i>Kanva—The Father of the Hermitage.</i> . . .	GORDON BAILEY.
<i>A Singer</i> . . .	MONICA SCOTT.
<i>The King's Chaplain</i> . . .	BREMER WILLS.
<i>1st Policeman</i> . . .	HUGH BAYLY.
<i>2nd Policeman</i> . . .	JACK STUART.
<i>Fisherman</i> . . .	ARCHIBALD McLEAN.
<i>Superintendent of Police</i> . . .	FRANK SNELL.
<i>Vetravati—Attendant on the King</i> . . .	PATRICIA CLIVE.
<i>Two Dancers</i> } . . .	{ VICTORIA DRUMMOND.
<i>(Radha Krishna Spring Dance)</i> } . . .	{ BEATRICE RICHMOND.
<i>Madhurika</i> . . .	KITTY BAIRD.
<i>Matali—Charioteer of Heaven</i> . . .	GEORGE ZUCCO.
<i>Suvrata</i> } <i>Nurses</i> . . .	{ EVELYN GREY.
<i>Surama</i> } . . .	{ ROSAMUND CROUDACE.
<i>Bharata—Child of Dushyanta</i> . . .	CHRISTOPHER CASSON.

The Play produced by LEWIS CASSON.

The Scenery designed and made by BRUCE WINSTON.

The Music (with the exception of the Dance and the Song in Scene 2, Part 2) specially composed by JOHN H. FOULDS, and played under his direction.

Music of Song in Scene 2, Part 2, by the Rev. B. HALE WORTHAM.

Stage Manager—PHYLLIS HILLER.

Some of the Artists appear by permission of—Miss Marie Lohr, and Messrs. Henry Ainley, Arthur Bouchier, André Charlot, Arthur Collins, J. B. Fagan, Gilbert Miller.

The Society is grateful to Mr. W. LOFTUS HARE for help with the dresses.

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