SECTION 43

तत्रोपविष्टं राजानमुपासन्ते विचक्षणाः।
कथानां बहुरूपाणां हास्यकाराः समन्ततः॥१॥

Rāma having taken his seat there, the experienced councillors encircling him began to dwell upon many amusing stories.

विजयो मधुमत्तश्च काश्यपो मङ्गलः कुलः।
सुराजिः कालियो भद्रो दन्तवक्रः सुमागधः॥२॥

एते कथा बहुविधाः परिहाससमन्विताः।
कथयन्ति स्म संहृष्टा राघवस्य महात्मनः॥३॥

Vijaya, Madhumatta, Kasyapa, Mangala, Kula, Surājin, Kāliya, Bhadra Dantavaktra, Sumāgadha— all delightedly began to introduce many amusing talks before the high-souled Rāma.

ततः कथायां कस्यांचिद्राघवः समभाषत।
काः कथा नगरे भद्र वर्तन्ते विषयेषु च॥४॥
मामाश्रितानि कान्याहुः पौरजानपदा जनाः।
किं च सीतां समाश्रित्य भरतं किं च लक्ष्मणम्॥५
किं नु शत्रुघ्नमुद्दिश्य कैकेयीं किं नु मातरम्।
वक्तव्यतां च राजानो वने राज्ये व्रजन्ति च॥६॥

Thereupon Rāma incidentally addressed them saying— "O Bhadra, how do the inhabitants of the city and provinces talk about Sītā, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, Śatrughna and the mother Kaikeyī? The kings, when they deviate from the paths of justice, become objects of censure in the houses of men and even in the forests as well."

एवमुक्ते तु रामेण भद्रः प्राञ्जलिरब्रवीत्।
स्थिताः शुभाः कथा राजन्वर्तन्ते पुरवासिनाम्॥७॥
अयं तु विजयं सौम्य दशग्रीववधार्जितम्।
भूयिष्ठं स्वपुरे पौरैः कथ्यन्ते पुरुषर्षभ॥८॥

Rāma having said this, Bhadra with folded hands replied:— "O king, the citizens speak many good things about you; besides they dilate upon many things in their own houses regarding your conquest acquired by the destruction of the Ten-necked demon."

एवमुक्तस्तु भद्रेण राघवो वाक्यमब्रवीत्।
कथयस्व यथातत्त्वं सर्वं निरवशेषतः॥९॥
शुभाशुभानि वाक्यानि कान्याहुः पुरवासिनः।
श्रुत्वेदानीं शुभं कुर्यां नकुर्यामशुभानि च॥१०॥

Hearing the words of Bhadra, Rāma said:— "Without hiding anything, do you relate every thing from the beginning vent to by the citizens. Hearing the good and bad opinions of the citizens I shall desist from bad actions and engage in good ones.

कथयस्व च विस्रब्धो निर्भयं विगतज्वरः।
कथयन्ति यथा पौराः पापा जनपदेषु च॥११॥

Whatever citizens say the vicious actions of mine in the city, relate to me confidently and fearlessly.

राघवेणैवमुक्तस्तु भद्रः सुरुचिरं वचः।
प्रत्युवाच महाबाहुं प्राञ्जलिः सुसमाहितः॥१२॥

Hearing the sweet accents of Rāma, Bhadra, with a quiescent mind and folded palms, said.

शृणु राजन्यथा पौराः कथयन्ति शुभाशुभम्।
चत्वरापणरथ्यासु वनेषूपवनेषु च॥१३॥

Hear, O king, I shall relate to you all those unpleasant things frequently dwelt upon by people in court-yards, markets, public roads, forests and gardens.

दुष्करं कृतवान्रामः समुद्रे सेतुबन्धनम्।
अश्रुतं पूर्वकैः केश्चिद्देवैरपि सदानवैः॥१४॥

Indeed Rāma has accomplished a wonderfully hard work; our ancestors, the celestials, the Dānavas— none heard of constructing a bridge over the ocean?

रावणश्च दुराधर्षो हतः सबलवाहनः।
वानराश्च वशं नीता ऋक्षाश्च सह राक्षसैः॥१५॥

Rāma has slain the irrepressible Rāvaṇa with his army and brought over the monkeys, bears and Rākṣasas to his own side.

हत्वा च रावणं संख्ये सीतामाहृत्य राघवः।
अमर्षं पृष्ठतः कृत्वा स्ववेश्म पुनरानयत्॥१६॥

Having discomfitted Rāvaṇa, in the encounter Rāma has released Sītā, but not being the least enraged on account of her being touched by Rāvaṇa he has brought to her his own city.

कीदृशं हृदये तस्य सीतासंभोगजं सुखम्।
अङ्कमारोप्य तु पुरा रावणेन बलाद्धृताम्॥१७॥
लङ्कामपि पुरा नीतामशोकवनिकां गताम्।
रक्षसां वशमापन्नां कथं रामो न कुत्स्यति॥१८॥
अस्माकमपि दारेषु सहनीयं भविष्यति।
यथा हि कुरुते राजा प्रजास्तमनुवर्तते॥१९॥

Rāvaṇa did forcibly place Sītā on her lap; how can then Rāma enjoy delight in her company? Having taken her to the city of Laṅkā, Rāvaṇa did keep her in the Aśoka forest and Sītā was brought under the control of Rākṣasas. Still Rāma has not been worked up with hatred by Sītā. From now we shall also broke the bad

conduct of our wives—for the subjects always tread the footsteps of their King.

एवं बहुविधा वाचो वदन्ति पुरवासिनः।
नगरेषु च सर्वेषु राजञ्जनपदेषु च॥२०॥

O King, the citizens thus talk of many types in every corner of cities and provinces.

तस्यैवं भाषितं श्रुत्वा राघवः परमार्तवत्।
उवाच सुहृदः सर्वान्कथमेतद्वदन्तु माम्॥२१॥

Hearings those words of Bhadra, Rāghava was greatly sorry and asked his friends "Do the subjects thus talk about me?"

सर्वे तु शिरसा भूमावभिवाद्य प्रणम्य च।
प्रत्यूचू राघवं दीनमेवमेतन्न संशयः॥२२॥
श्रुत्वा तु वाक्यं काकुत्स्थः सर्वेषां समुदीरितम्।
विसर्जयामास तदा वयस्याञ्छत्रुसूदनः॥२३॥

Thereupon lowering their heads and saluting him they all said to Rāghava, of a depressed mind— "For sooth, the subjects thus talk about." Thereupon Kākutstha, the slayer of enemies, bearing all those words, dismissed his friends.