

The Mahabharata
of
Krishna-Dwaipayana Vyasa
BOOK 15
ASRAMAVASIKA PARVA

Translated into English Prose from the Original Sanskrit Text

by

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ASRAMAVASIKA PARVA

SECTION I (Asramavasa Parva)

OM! After having bowed down to Narayana, and Nara, the foremost of men, and unto the goddess Saraswati also, must the word Jaya be uttered.

Janamejaya said 'After having acquired their kingdom, how did my grandsires, the high-souled Pandavas, conduct themselves towards the high-souled king Dhritarashtra? How, indeed, did that king who had all his counsellors and sons slain, who was without a refuge, and whose affluence had disappeared, behave? How also did Gandhari of great fame conduct herself? For how many years did my high-souled grandsires rule the kingdom? It behoveth thee to tell me all this.'

Vaisampayana said, 'Having got back their kingdom, the high-souled Pandavas, their foes all slain, ruled the Earth, placing Dhritarashtra at their head. Vidura, and Sanjaya and Yuyutsu of great intelligence, who was Dhritarashtra's son by his Vaisya wife, used to wait upon Dhritarashtra. The Pandavas used to take the opinion of that king in all matters. Indeed, for ten and five years, they did all things under the advice of the old king. Those heroes used very often to go to that monarch and sit beside him, after having worshipped his feet, agreeably to the wishes of king Yudhishtira the just. They did all things under the command of Dhritarashtra who smelt their heads in affection. The daughter of king Kuntibhoja also obeyed Gandhari in everything. Draupadi and Subhadra and the other ladies of the Pandavas behaved towards the old king and the queen as if they were their own father-in-law and mother-in-law. Costly beds and robes and ornaments, and food and drink and other enjoyable articles, in profusion and of such superior kinds as were worthy of royal use, were presented by king Yudhishtira unto Dhritarashtra. Similarly Kunti behaved towards Gandhari as towards a senior. Vidura, and Sanjaya, and Yuyutsu, O thou of Karu's race, used to always wait upon the old king whose sons had all been slain. The dear brother-in-law of Drona, viz., the very Superior Brahmana, Kripa, that mighty bowman, also attended upon the king. The holy Vyasa also used to often meet with the old monarch and recite to him the histories of old Rishis and celestial ascetics and Pitris and Rakshasas. Vidura, under the orders of Dhritarashtra, superintended the discharge of all acts of religious merit and all that related to the administration of the law. Through the excellent policy of Vidura, by the expenditure of even a small wealth, the Pandavas obtained numerous agreeable services from their feudatories and followers. King Dhritarashtra liberated prisoners and pardoned those that were condemned to death. King Yudhishtira the just never said anything to this. On those occasions when the son of Amvika went on pleasure excursions, the Kuru king Yudhishtira of great energy used to give him every article of enjoyment. Aralikas, and juicemakers, and makers of Ragakhandavas waited on king Dhritarashtra as before.[1] Pandu's son, collected costly robes and garlands of diverse kinds and duly offered them to Dhritarashtra. Maireya wines, fish of various kinds, and sherbets and honey, and many delightful kinds of food prepared by modifications (of diverse articles), were caused to be made for the old king as in his days of prosperity. Those kings of Earth who came there one after another, all used to wait upon the old Kuru monarch as before. Kunti, and Draupadi, and she of the Sattwata race, possessed of great fame, and Ulupi, the daughter of the snake chief, and queen Chitrangada, and the sister of Dhrishtaketu, and the daughter of Jarasandha, – these and many other ladies, O chief of men, used to wait upon the daughter of Suvala like maids of all work. That Dhritarashtra, who was deprived of all his children, might not feel unhappy in any matter, was what Yudhishtira often said unto his brothers to see. They also, on their part, listening to these commands of grave import from king Yudhishtira, showed particular obedience to the old king. There was one exception, however. It embraced Bhimasena. All that had followed from that match at dice which had been brought about by the wicked understanding of Dhritarashtra, did not disappear from the heart of that hero. (He remembered those incidents still)."

SECTION II

Vaisampayana said, 'Thus worshipped by the Pandavas, the royal son of Amvika passed his time happily as before, waited upon and honoured by the Rishis. That perpetuator of Kuru's race used to make those foremost of offerings which should be given to the Brahmanas. The royal son of Kunti always placed those articles under Dhritarashtra's control. Destitute of malice as king Yudhishtira was, he was always affectionate towards his uncle. Addressing his brothers and councillors, the king said, 'King Dhritarashtra should be honoured both by myself and you all. He, indeed, is a well-wisher of mine who is obedient to the commands of Dhritarashtra. He, on the other hand, who behaves otherwise towards him, is my enemy. Such a man should certainly be punished by me. On days of performing the rites ordained for the Pitris, as also in the Sraddhas performed for his sons and all well-wishers, the high-souled Kuru king Dhritarashtra, gave away unto Brahmanas, as each deserved, as profuse measures of wealth as he liked. King Yudhishtira the just, and Bhima, and Arjuna, and the twins, desirous of doing what was agreeable to the old king, used to execute all his orders. They always took care that the old king who was afflicted with the slaughter of his sons and grandsons, – with, that is, grief caused by the Pandavas themselves, – might not die of his grief. Indeed, the Pandavas bore themselves towards him in such a way that that Kuru hero might not be deprived of that happiness and all those articles of enjoyment which had been his while his sons lived. The five brothers, viz., the sons of Pandu, behaved themselves even thus towards Dhritarashtra, living under his command. Dhritarashtra also, seeing them so humble and obedient to his commands and acting towards him as disciples towards preceptors, adopted the affectionate behaviour of a preceptor towards them in return. Gandhari, by performing the diverse rites of the Sraddha and making gifts unto Brahmanas of diverse objects of enjoyment, became freed from the debt she owed to her slain children. Thus did that foremost of righteous men, viz., king Yudhishtira the just, possessed of great intelligence, along with his brothers, worship king Dhritarashtra.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Possessed of great energy, that perpetuator of Kuru's race, viz., the old king Dhritarashtra, could not notice any ill-will in Yudhishtira. Seeing that the high-souled Pandavas were in the observance of a wise and righteous conduct, king Dhritarashtra, the son of Amvika, became gratified with them. Suvala's daughter, Gandhari, casting off all sorrow for her (slain) children, began to show great affection for the Pandavas as if they were her own children. Endued with great energy, the Kuru king Yudhishtira, never did anything that was disagreeable to the royal son of Vichitravirya. On the other hand, he always behaved towards him in a highly agreeable way. Whatever acts, grave or light, were directed by king Dhritarashtra, or the helpless Gandhari to be done, were all accomplished with reverence, O monarch, by that slayer of hostile heroes, viz., the Pandava king. The old king became highly gratified with such conduct of Yudhishtira. Indeed, he was grieved at the remembrance of his own wicked son. Rising every day at early dawn, he purified himself and went through his recitations, and then blessed the Pandavas by wishing them victory in battle. Making the usual gifts unto the Brahmanas and causing them to utter benedictions, and Pouring libations on the sacred fire, the old king prayed for long life to the Pandavas. Indeed, the king had never derived that great happiness from his own sons which he always derived from the sons of Pandu. King Yudhishtira at that time became as agreeable to the Brahmanas as to the Kshatriyas, and the diverse bands of Vaisyas and Sudras of his realm. Whatever wrongs were done to him by the sons of Dhritarashtra, king Yudhishtira, forgot them all, and revered his uncle. If any man did anything that was not agreeable to the son of Amvika, he became thereby an object of hatred to the intelligent son of Kunti. Indeed, through fear of Yudhishtira, nobody could talk of the evil deeds of either Duryodhana or Dhritarashtra. Both Gandhari and Vidura also wore well pleased with the capacity the king Ajatasatru showed for bearing wrongs. They were, however, not so pleased, O slayer of foes, with Bhima. Dharma's son, Yudhishtira, was truly obedient to his uncle. Bhima, however, at the sight of Dhritarashtra, became very cheerless. That slayer of foes, seeing Dharma's son reverencing the old king, revered him outwardly with a very unwilling heart.'"

SECTION III

Vaisampayana said, 'The people who lived in the Kuru kingdom failed to notice any variance in the cordiality that subsisted between king Yudhishtira and the father of Duryodhana. When the Kuru king recollected his wicked son, he then could not but feel unfriendly, in his heart, towards Bhima. Bhimasena also, O king, impelled by a heart that seemed to be wicked, was unable to put up with king Dhritarashtra. Vrikodara secretly did many acts that were disagreeable to the old king. Through deceitful servitors he caused the commands of his uncle to be disobeyed. Recollecting the evil counsels of the old king and some acts of his, Bhima, one day, in the midst of his friends, slapped his armpits, in the hearing of Dhritarashtra and of Gandhari. The wrathful Vrikodara, recollecting his foes Duryodhana and Karna and Dussasana, gave way to a transport of passion, and said these harsh words: 'The sons of the blind king, capable of fighting with diverse kinds of weapons, have all been despatched by me to the other world with these arms of mine that resemble a pair of iron clubs. Verily, these are those two arms of mine, looking like maces of iron, and invincible by foes, coming within whose clasp the sons of Dhritarashtra have all met with destruction. These are those two well-developed and round arms of mine, resembling a pair of elephantine trunks. Coming within their clasp, the foolish sons of Dhritarashtra have all met with destruction. Smearred with sandal-paste and deserving of that adornment are those two arms of mine by which Duryodhana has been despatched to the other world along with all his sons and kinsmen.' Hearing these and many other words, O king, of Vrikodara, that were veritable darts, king Dhritarashtra gave way to cheerlessness and sorrow. Queen Gandhari, however, who was conversant with every duty and possessed of great intelligence, and who knew what Time brings on its course, regarded them as untrue. After five and ten years had passed away, O monarch, king Dhritarashtra afflicted (constantly) by the wordy darts of Bhima, became penetrated with despair and grief. King Yudhishtira the son of Kunti, however, knew it not; nor Arjuna of white steeds, nor Kunti; nor Draupadi possessed of great fame; nor the twin sons of Madri, conversant with every duty and who were always engaged in acting after the wishes of Dhritarashtra. Employed in doing the behests of the king, the twins never said anything that was disagreeable to the old king. Then Dhritarashtra one day honoured his friends by his confidence. Addressing 'them with tearful eyes, He said these words.'

Dhritarashtra said, 'How the destruction of the Kurus has happened is well known to you. All that was brought about by my fault though the Kauravas approved of all my counsels. Fool that I was, I installed the wicked minded Duryodhana, that enhancer of the terrors of kinsmen, to rule over the Kurus. Vasudeva had said unto me, 'Let this sinful wretch of wicked understanding be killed along with all his friends and counsellors.' I did not listen to those words of grave import. All wisemen gave me the same beneficial advice. Vidura, and Bhishma, and Drona, and Kripa, said the same thing. The holy and high-souled Vyasa repeatedly said the same, as also Sanjaya and Gandhari. Overwhelmed, however, by filial affection, I could not follow that advice. Bitter repentance is now my lot for my neglect. I also repent for not having bestowed that blazing prosperity, derived from sires and grand sires, on the high-souled Pandavas possessed of every accomplishment. The eldest brother of Gada foresaw the destruction of all the kings; Janarddana, however, regarded that destruction as highly beneficial.[2] So many Anikas of troops, belonging to me, have been destroyed. Alas, my heart is pierced with thousands of darts in consequence of all these results. Of wicked understanding as I am, now after the lapse of five and ten years, I am seeking to expiate my sins. Now at the fourth division of the day or sometimes at the eighth division, with the regularity of a vow, I eat a little food for simply conquering my thirst. Gandhari knows this. All my attendants are under the impression that I eat as usual. Through fear of Yudhishtira alone I concealed my acts, for if the eldest son of Pandu came to know of my vow, he would feel great pain. Clad in deer-skin, I lie down on the Earth, spreading a small quantity of Kusa grass, and pass the time in silent recitations. Gandhari of great fame passes her time in the observance of similar vows. Even thus do we both behave, we that have lost a century of gong none of whom even retreated from battle. I do not, however, grieve for those children of mine. They have all died in the observance of Kshatriya du-

ties.' Having said these words, the old king then addressed Yudhishtira in particular and said, 'Blessed be thou, O son of the princess of Yadu's race. Listen now to what I say. Cherished by thee, O son, I have lived these years very happily. I have (with thy help) made large gifts and performed Sraddhas repeatedly.[3] I have, O son, to the best of my power, achieved merit largely. This Gandhari, though destitute of sons, has lived with great fortitude, looking all the while at me. They whom inflicted great wrongs on Draupadi and robbed thee of thy affluence, – those cruel wights – have all left the world, slain in battle agreeably to the practice of their order.

I have nothing to do for them, O delighter of the Kurus. Stain with their faces towards battle, they have attained to those regions which are for wielders of weapons.[4] I should now accomplish what is beneficial and meritorious for me as also for Gandhari. It behoveth thee, O great king, to grant me permission. Thou art the foremost of all righteous persons. Thou art always devoted to righteousness. The king is the preceptor of all creatures. It is for this that I say so. With thy permission, O hero, I shall retire into the woods, clad in rags and barks. O king, alone with this Gandhari, I shall live in the woods, always blessing thee. It is meet, O son, for the members of our race, to make over sovereignty, when old age comes, to children and lead the forest mode of life. Subsisting there on air alone, or abstaining from all food, I shall, with this wife of mine, O hero, practise severe austerities. Thou shalt be a sharer of these penances, O son, for thou art the king. Kings are sharers of both auspicious and inauspicious acts done in their kingdom.[5]

Yudhishtira said, 'When thou, O king, art thus subject to grief, sovereignty does not please me at all. Fie on me that am of wicked understanding, devoted to the pleasures of rule, and utterly heedless of my true concerns. Alas, I, with all my brothers, was ignorant of thyself having so long been afflicted with grief, emaciated with fasts, abstaining from food, and lying on the bare ground. Alas, foolish that I am, I have been deceived by thee that hast deep intelligence, inasmuch as, having inspired me with confidence at first thou hast latterly undergone such grief. What need have I of kingdom or of articles of enjoyment, what need of sacrifices or of happiness, when thou, O king, hast undergone so much affliction? I regard my kingdom as a disease, and myself also as afflicted. Plunged though I am in sorrow, what, however, is the use of these words that I am addressing thee? Thou art our father, thou art our mother; thou art our foremost of superiors. Deprived of thy presence, how shall we live? O best of king, let Yuyutsu, the son of thy loins, be made king, or, indeed, anybody else whom thou mayst wish. I shall go into the woods. Do thou rule the kingdom. It behoveth thee not to burn me that am already burned by infamy. I am not the king. Thou art the king. I am dependent on thy will. How can I dare grant permission to thee that art my preceptor? O sinless one, I harbour no resentment in my heart on account of the wrongs done to us by Suyodhana. It was ordained that it should be so. Both ourselves and others were stupefied (by fate). We are thy children as Duryodhana and others were. My conviction is that Gandhari is as much my mother as Kunti. If thou, O king of kings, goest to the woods leaving me, I shall thee, follow thee. I swear by my soul. This Earth, with her belt of seas, so full of wealth, will not be a source of joy to me when I am deprived of thy presence. All this belongs to thee. I gratify thee, bending my head. We are all dependent on thee, O king of kings. Let the fever of thy heart be dispelled. I think, O lord of Earth, that all this that has come upon thee is due to destiny. By good luck, I had thought, that waiting upon thee and executing thy commands obediently, I would rescue thee from the fever of thy heart.'

Dhritarashtra said, 'O delighter of the Kurus, my mind is fixed, O son, on penances. O puissant one, it is meet for our race that I should retire into the woods. I have lived long under thy protection, O son, I have for many years been served by thee with reverence. I am now old. It behoveth thee, O king, to grant me permission (to take up my abode in the woods).'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Having said these words unto king Yudhishtira, the just, king Dhritarashtra, the son of Amvika, trembling the while and with hands joined together, further said unto the high-souled Sanjaya and the great car-warrior Kripa, these words, 'I wish to solicit the king through you. My mind has become cheerless, my mouth has become dry, through the weakness of age and the exertion of speaking.' Having said so, that perpetuator of Kuru's race, viz., the, righteous-souled

old king, blessed with prosperity, leaned on Gandhari and suddenly looked like one deprived of life. Beholding him thus seated like one deprived of consciousness, that slayer of hostile heroes, viz., the royal son of Kunti, became penetrated by a poignant grief.

Yudhishtira said, 'Alas, he whose strength was equal to that of a hundred thousand elephants, alas, that king sitteth today, leaning on a woman. Alas! he by whom the iron image of Bhima on a former occasion was reduced to fragments, leaneth today on a weak woman. Fie on me that am exceedingly unrighteous! Fie on my understanding! Fie on my knowledge of the scripture! Fie on me for whom this lord of Earth lieth today in a manner that is not becoming of him! I also shall fast even as my preceptor. Verily, I shall fast if this king and Gandhari of great fame abstain from food.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'The Pandava king, conversant with every duty, using his own hand, then softly rubbed with cold water the breast and the face of the old monarch. At the touch of the king's hand which was auspicious and fragrant, and on which were jewels and medicinal herbs, Dhritarashtra regained his senses.[6]

Dhritarashtra said, 'Do thou again touch me, O son of Pandu, with thy hand, and do thou embrace me. O thou of eyes like lotus petals, I am restored to my senses through the auspicious touch of thy hand. O ruler of men, I desire to smell thy head. The clasp of thy arms is highly gratifying to me. This is the eighth division of the day and, therefore, the hour of taking my food. For not having taken my food, O child of Kuru's race, I am so weak as to be unable to move. In addressing my solicitations to thee, great has been my exertion. Rendered cheerless by it, O son, I had fainted. O perpetuator of Kuru's race, I think that receiving the touch of thy hand, which resembles nectar in its vivifying effects I have been restored to my senses.'

Vaisampayana said, 'Thus addressed, O Bharata, by the eldest brother of his father, the son of Kunti, from affection, gently touched every part of his body. Regaining his life-breaths, king Dhritarashtra embraced the son of Pandu with his arms and smelled his head. Vidura and others wept aloud in great grief. In consequence, however, of the poignancy of their sorrow, they said nothing to either the old king or the son of Pandu. Gandhari, conversant with every duty, bore her sorrow with fortitude, and loaded as her heart was, O king, said nothing. The other ladies, Kunti among them, became greatly afflicted. They wept, shedding copious tears, and sat surrounding the old king. Then 'Dhritarashtra, once more addressing Yudhishtira, said these words, Do thou, O king, grant me permission to practise penances. By speaking repeatedly, O son, my mind becomes weakened. It behoveth thee not, O son, to afflict me after this.' When that foremost one of Kuru's race was saying go unto Yudhishtira, a loud sound of wailing arose from all the warriors there present. Beholding his royal father of great splendour, emaciated and pale, reduced to a state unbecoming of him, worn out with fasts, and looking like a skeleton covered with skin, Dharma's son Yudhishtira shed tears of grief and once more said these words. 'O foremost of men, I do not desire life and the Earth. O scorcher of foes, I shall employ myself in doing what is agreeable to thee. If I deserve thy favour, if I am dear to thee, do thou eat something. I shall then know what to do.' Endued with great energy, Dhritarashtra then said to Yudhishtira, – 'I wish, O son, to take some food, with thy permission.' When Dhritarashtra said these words to Yudhishtira, Satyawati's son Vyasa came there and said as follows.'

SECTION IV

Vyasa said, 'O mighty-armed Yudhishtira, do without any scruple what Dhritarashtra of Kuru's race has said. This king is old. He has, again, been made sonless. I think he will not be able to bear his grief long. The highly blessed Gandhari, possessed of great wisdom and endued with kindly speech, bears with fortitude her excessive grief owing to the logs of her song. I also tell thee (what the old king says). Do thou obey my words. Let the old king have thy permission. Let him not die an inglorious death at home. Let this king follow the path of all royal sages of old. Verily, for all royal sages, retirement into the woods comes at last.'

Vaisampayana said, 'Thus addressed at that time by Vyasa of wonderful deeds, king Yudhishtira the just, possessed of mighty energy, said unto the great ascetic these words, 'Thy holy self is held by us in great reverence. Thou alone art our preceptor. Thou alone art the refuge of this our kingdom as also of our race. I am thy son. Thou, O holy one, art my father. Thou art our king, and thou art our preceptor. The son should, agreeably to every duty, be obedient to the commands of his sire.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Thus addressed by the king. Vyasa, that foremost of poets, foremost of all persons conversant with the Vedas, endued with great energy once more said unto Yudhishtira these words, 'It is even so, O mighty-armed one. It is even as thou sayest, O Bharata. This king has reached old age. He is now in the last stage of life. Permitted both by me and thee, let this lord of Earth do what he proposes. Do not stand as an impediment in his way. Even this is the highest duty, O Yudhishtira, of royal sages. They should die either in battle or in the woods agreeably to the scriptures. Thy royal sire, Pandu, O king of kings, revered this old king as a disciple reverences his preceptor. (At that time) he adored the gods in many great sacrifices with profuse gifts consisting of hills of wealth and jewels, and ruled the Earth and protected his subjects wisely and well. Having obtained a large progeny and a swelling kingdom, he enjoyed great influence for thirteen years while you were in exile, and gave away much wealth. Thyself also, O chief of men, with thy servants, O sinless one, hast adored this king and the famous Gandhari with that ready obedience which a disciple pays to his preceptor. Do thou grant permission to thy father. The time has come for him to attend to the practice of penances. He does not harbour, O Yudhishtira, even the slightest anger against any of you.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Having said these words, Vyasa soothed the old king. Yudhishtira then answered him, saying, 'So be it.' The great ascetic then left the palace for proceeding to the woods. After the holy Vyasa had gone away, the royal son of Pandu softly said these words unto his old father, bending himself in humility, – What the holy Vyasa has said, what is thy own purpose, what the great bowman Kripa has said, what Vidura has expressed, and what has been asked for by Yuyutsu and Sanjaya, I shall accomplish with speed. All these are worthy of my respect, for all of them are well-wishers of our race. This, however, O king, I beg of thee by bending my head. Do thou first eat and afterwards go to thy forest retreat.'"

SECTION V

Vaisampayana said, 'Having received the king's permission, king Dhritarashtra of great energy then proceeded to his own palace, followed by Gandhari. With weakened strength and slow motion, that king of great intelligence walked with difficulty, like the leader, worn out with age, of an elephantine herd. He was followed by Vidura of great learning, and his charioteer Sanjaya, as also that mighty bowman Kripa, the son of Saradwata. Entering his mansion, O king, he went through the morning rites and after gratifying many foremost of Brahmanas he took some food. Gandhari conversant with every duty, as also Kunti of great intelligence, worshipped with offers of various articles by their daughters-in-law, then took some food, O Bharata. After Dhritarashtra had eaten, and Vidura also and others had done the same, the Pandavas, having finished their meals, approached and sat around the old king. Then the son of Amvika, O monarch, addressing Kunti's son who was seated near him and touching his back with his hand, said, 'Thou shouldst always, O delighter of the Kurus, act without heedlessness as regards everything connected with thy kingdom consisting of eight limbs, O foremost of rulers, and in which the claims of righteousness should ever be kept foremost.[7] Thou art possessed, O son of Kunti, of intelligence and learning. Listen to me, O king, as I tell thee what the means are by which, O son of Pandu, the kingdom is capable of being righteously protected. Thou shouldst always, O Yudhishtira, honour those persons that are old in learning. Thou shouldst listen to what they would say, and act accordingly without any scruple. Rising at dawn, O king, worship them with due rites, and when the time comes for action, thou shouldst consult them about thy (intended) acts. When, led by the desire of knowing what would be beneficial to thee in respect of thy measures, thou honourest them; they will, O son, always declare what is for

thy good, O Bharata. Thou shouldst always keep thy senses, as thou keepest thy horses. They will then prove beneficial to thee, like wealth that is not wasted. Thou shouldst employ only such ministers as have passed the tests of honesty, (i.e., as are possessed of loyalty, disinterestedness, continence, and courage), as are hereditary officers of state, possessed of pure conduct, self-restrained, clever in the discharge of business, and endued with righteous conduct. Thou shouldst always collect information through spies in diverse disguises, whose faithfulness have been tasted, who are natives of thy kingdom, and who should not be known to thy foes. Thy citadel should be properly protected with strong walls and arched gates. On every side the walls, with watch-towers on them standing close to one another, should be such as to admit of six persons walking side by side on their top.[8] The gates should all be large and sufficiently strong. Kept in proper places those gates should be carefully guarded. Let thy purposes be accomplished through men whose families and conduct are well known. Thou shouldst always protect thy person also with care, in matters connected with thy food, O Bharata, as also in the hours of sport and eating and in matters connected with the garlands thou wearest and the beds thou liest upon. The ladies of thy household should be properly protected, looked over by aged and trusted servitors, of good behaviour, well-born, and possessed of learning, O Yudhishtira. Thou shouldst make ministers of Brahmanas possessed of learning, endued with humility, well-born, conversant with religion and wealth, and adorned with simplicity of behaviour. Thou shouldst hold consultations with them. Thou shouldst not, however, admit many persons into thy consultations. On particular occasions thou mayst consult with the whole of thy council or with a portion of it. Entering a chamber or spot that is well protected (from intruders) thou shouldst hold thy consultation. Thou mayst hold thy consultation in a forest that is divested of grass. Thou shouldst never consult at night time.[9] Apes and birds and other animals that can imitate human beings should all be excluded from the council chamber, as also idiots and lame and palsied individuals. I think that the evils that flow from the divulgence of the counsels of kings are such that they cannot be remedied. Thou shouldst repeatedly refer, in the midst of thy counsellors, to the evils that arise from the divulgence of counsels, O chastiser of foes, and to the merits that flow from counsels properly kept. Thou shouldst, O Yudhishtira, act in such a manner as to ascertain the merits and faults of the inhabitants of thy city and the provinces. Let thy laws, O king, be always administered by trusted judges placed in charge thereof, who should also be contented and of good behaviour. Their acts should also be ascertained by thee through spies. Let thy judicial officers, O Yudhishtira, inflict punishments, according to the law, on offenders after careful ascertainment of the gravity of the offences. They that are disposed to take bribes, they that are the violators of the chastity of other people's wives, they that inflict heavy punishments, they that are utterers of false speeches, they that are revilers, they that are stained by cupidity, they that are murderers, they that are doers of rash deeds, they that are disturbers of assemblies and the sports of others, and they that bring about a confusion of castes, should, agreeably to considerations of time and place, be punished with either fines or death.[10] In the morning thou shouldst see those that are employed in making thy disbursements. After that thou shouldst look to thy toilet and then to thy food. Thou shouldst next supervise thy forces, gladdening them on every occasion. Thy evenings should be set apart for envoys and spies. The latter end of the night should be devoted by thee to settle what acts should be done by thee in the day. Mid-nights and mid-days should be devoted to thy amusements and sports. At all times, however thou shouldst think of the means for accomplishing thy purposes. At the proper time, adorning thy person, thou shouldst sit prepared to make gifts in profusion. The turns for different acts, O son, ceaselessly revolve like wheels. Thou shouldst always exert thyself to fill thy treasuries of various kinds by lawful means. Thou shouldst avoid all unlawful means towards that end. Ascertaining through thy spies who thy foes are that are bent on finding out thy laches, thou shouldst, through trusted agents, cause them to be destroyed from a distance. Examining their conduct, thou shouldst O perpetuator of Kuru's race, appoint thy servants. Thou shouldst cause all thy acts to be accomplished through thy servitors: whether they are appointed for those acts or not. The commandant of thy forces should be of firm conduct, courageous, capable of bearing hardships, loyal, and devoted to thy good. Artisans and mechanics, O son of Pandu, dwelling in thy provinces, should always do thy acts like kine and asses.[11] Thou shouldst

always, O Yudhishtira, be careful to ascertain thy own laches as also those of thy foes. The laches also of thy own men as also of the men of thy foes should equally be ascertained. Those men of thy kingdom, that are well skilled in their respective vocations, and are devoted to thy good, should be favoured by thee with adequate means of support. A wise king, O ruler of men, should always see that the accomplishments of his accomplished subjects might be kept up. They would then be firmly devoted to thee, seeing that they did not fall away from their skill."

SECTION VI

Dhritarashtra said, Thou shouldst always ascertain the Mandalas that belong to thee, to thy foes, to neutrals, and to those that are disposed equally towards thee and thy foes, O Bharata.[12] The Mandalas also of the four kinds of foes, of these called Atayins, and of allies, and the allies of foes, should be distinguished by thee, O crusher of foes.[13] The ministers of state, the people of the provinces, the garrisons of forts, and the forces, O foremost one of Kuru's race, may or may not be tampered with. (Thou shouldst, therefore, behave in such a manner that these may not be tampered with by thy foes). The twelve (enumerated above), O son of Kunti, constitute the principal concerns of kings. These twelve, as also sixty, having Ministers for their foremost, should be looked after by the king.[14] Professors conversant with the science of politics call these by the name of Mandala. Understand, O Yudhishtira, that the six incidents (of peace, war, march, halt, sowing dissensions, and conciliation) depend upon these. Growth and diminution should also be understood, as also the condition of being stationary. The attributes of the sixfold incidents, O thou of mighty arms, as resting on the two and seventy (already enumerated), should also be carefully understood. When one's own side has become strong and the side of the foe his become weak, it is then, O son of Kunti, that the king should war against the foe and strive to will victory. When the enemy is strong and one's own side is weak, then the weak king, if possessed of intelligence, should seek to make peace with the enemy. The king should collect a large store of articles (for his commissariat). When able to march out, he should on no account make a delay, O Bharata. Besides, he should on that occasion set his men to offices for which they are fit, without being moved by any other consideration. (When obliged to yield a portion of his territories) he should give his foe only such land as does not produce crops in abundance. (When obliged to give wealth), he should give gold containing much base metal. (When obliged to give a portion of his forces), he should give such men as are not noted for strength. One that is skilled in treaties should, when taking land or gold or men from the foe, take what is possessed of attributes the reverse of this.[15] In making treaties of peace, the son of the (defeated) king, should be demanded as a hostage, O chief of the Bharatas. A contrary course of conduct would not be beneficial, O son. If a calamity comes over the king, he should, with knowledge of means-and counsels, strive to emancipate himself from it.[16] The king, O foremost of monarchs, should maintain the cheerless and the destitute (such as the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the diseased) among his people. Himself protecting his own kingdom, the king, possessed of great might, should direct all his efforts, either one after another or simultaneously, against his foes. He should afflict and obstruct them and seek to drain their treasury. The king that desires his own growth should never injure the subordinate chieftains that are under his sway. O son of Kunti, thou shouldst never seek to war with that king who desires to conquer the whole Earth. Thou shouldst seek to gain advantages by producing, with the aid of thy ministers, dissensions among his aristocracy and subordinate chieftains. A powerful king should never seek to exterminate weak kings, for these do good to the world by cherishing the good and punishing the wicked. O foremost of kings, thou shouldst live, adopting the behaviour of the cane.[17] If a strong king advances against a weak one, the latter should make him desist, by adopting conciliation and other modes. If unable to stop the invader in this way, then he, as also those that are disposed to do him good, should fall upon the foe for battling with him. Indeed, with his ministers and treasury and citizens, he should thus adopt force against the invader. If battling with the foe becomes hopeless, then he should fall, sacrificing his resources one after another. Casting off his life in this way, he will attain to liberation from all sorrow."

SECTION VII

Dhritarashtra said, 'O best of kings, thou shouldst also reflect properly on war and peace. Each is of two kinds. The means are various, and the circumstances also, under which war or peace may be made, are various, O Yudhishtira.[18] O thou of Kuru's race, thou shouldst, with coolness, reflect on the two (viz., thy strength and weakness) with regard to thyself. Thou shouldst not suddenly march against a foe that is possessed of contented and healthy soldiers, and that is endued with intelligence. On the other hand, thou shouldst think carefully of the means of vanquishing him.[19] Thou shouldst march against a foe that is not provided with contented and healthy combatants. When everything is favourable, the foe may be beaten. After that, however, the victor should retire (and stay in a strong position). He should next cause the foe to be plunged into various calamities, and sow dissensions among his allies. He should afflict the foe and inspire terror in his heart, and attacking him weaken his forces. The king, conversant with the scriptures that marches against a foe, should think of the three kinds of strength, and, indeed, reflect on his own strength and of his foe.[20] Only that king, O Bharata, who is endued with alacrity, discipline, and strength of counsels, should march against a foe. When his position is otherwise, he should avoid defensive operations.[21] The king should provide himself with power of wealth, power of allies, power of foresters, power of paid soldiery, and power of the mechanical and trading classes, O puissant one.[22] Among all these, power of allies and power of wealth are superior to the rest. The power of classes and that of the standing army are equal. The power of spies is regarded by the king as equal in efficacy to either of the above, on many occasions, when the time comes for applying each. Calamity, O king, as it overtakes rulers should be regarded as of many forms. Listen, O thou of Kuru's race, as to what those diverge forms are. Verily of various kinds are calamities, O son of Pandu. Thou shouldst always count them, distinguishing their forms, O king, and strive to meet them by applying the well-known ways of conciliation and the rest (without concealing them through idleness). The king should, when equipt with a good force, march (out against a foe), O scorcher of enemies. He should attend also to the considerations of time and place, while preparing to march, as also to the forces he has collected and his own merits (in other respects). That king who is attentive to his own growth and advancement should not march unless equipt with cheerful and healthy warriors. When strong, O son of Pandu, he may march in even an unfavourable season. The king should make a river having quivers for its stones, steeds and cars for its current, and standards for the trees that cover its banks, and which is miry with foot-soldiers and elephants. Even such a river should the king apply for the destruction of his foe. Agreeably to the science known to Usanas, arrays called Sakata, Padma, and Vijra, should be formed, O Bharata, for fighting the enemy.[23] Knowing everything about the enemy's strength through spies, and examining his own strength himself the king should commence war either within his own territories or within those of his foe.[24] The king should always gratify his army, and hurl all his strongest warriors (against the enemy). First ascertaining the state of his kingdom, he should apply conciliation or the other well-known means. By all means, O king, should the body be protected. One should do that which is highly beneficial for one both here and hereafter. The king, O monarch, by behaving duly according to these ways, attains to Heaven hereafter, after ruling his subjects righteously in this world. O foremost one of Kuru's race, it is even thus that thou shouldst always seek the good of thy subjects for attaining to both the worlds.[25] Thou hast been instructed in all duties by Bhishma, by Krishna, and by Vidura, I should also, O best of kings, from the affection I bear thee, give thee these instructions. O giver of profuse presents in sacrifices, thou shouldst do all this duly. Thou shalt, by conducting thyself in this way, become dear to thy subjects and attain to felicity in Heaven. That king who adores the deities in a hundred horse-sacrifices, and he who rules his subjects righteously, acquire merit that is equal."

SECTION VIII

Yudhishtira said, 'O lord of Earth, I shall do as thou biddest me. O foremost of kings, I should be further instructed by thee. Bhishma has ascended to Heaven. The slayer of Madhu has departed (for

Dwaraka). Vidura and Sanjaya also will accompany thee to the forest. Who else, therefore, than thee will teach me? Those instructions which thou imparted today, desirous of doing good to me, I shall certainly follow, O lord of Earth. Be thou assured of this, O king.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Thus addressed by king Yudhishtira the just, of great intelligence, the royal sage, Dhritarashtra, O chief of the Bharatas, wished to obtain the king's permission (about his retirement to the forest). And he said, 'Cease, O son, great has been my toil.' Having said these words, the old king entered the apartments of Gandhari. Unto that husband of hers who resembled a second Lord of all creatures, while resting on a seat, Gandhari of righteous conduct, conversant with the opportuneness of everything, said these words, the hour being suited to them, – 'Thou hast obtained the permission of that great Rishi, viz., Vyasa himself. When, however, wilt thou go to the forest, with the permission of Yudhishtira?'

Dhritarashtra said, 'O Gandhari, I have received the permission of my high-souled sire. With the permission of Yudhishtira (next obtained), I shall soon retire into the woods. I desire, however, to give away some wealth capable of following the status of Preta, in respect of all those sons of mine who were addicted to calamitous dice. Verily, I desire to make those gifts, inviting all the people to my mansion.'[26]

Vaisampayana continued, 'Having said so (to Gandhari), Dhritarashtra sent for Yudhishtira. The latter, at his uncle's command, brought all the articles necessary. Many Brahmanas residing in Kuru-jangala, and many Kshatriyas, many Vaisyas, and many Sudras also, came to Dhritarashtra's mansion, with gratified hearts. The old king, coming out of the inner apartments, beheld them all, as also his subjects assembled together. Beholding all those assembled citizens and inhabitants of the provinces, and his well-wishers also thus gathered together, and the large number of Brahmanas arrived from diverge realms, king Dhritarashtra of great intelligence, O monarch, said these words, – 'Ye all and the Kurus have lived together for many long years, well-wishers of each other, and each employed in doing good to the other. What I shall now say in view of the opportunity that has come, should be accomplished by you all even as disciples accomplish the biddings of their preceptors. I have set my heart upon retiring into the woods, along with Gandhari as my companion. Vyasa has approved of this, as also the son of Kunti. Let me have your permission too. Do not hesitate in this. That goodwill, which has always existed between you and us, is not to be seen, I believe, in other realms between the rulers and the ruled. I am worn out with this load of years on my head. I am destitute of children. Ye sinless ones, I am emaciated with fasts, along with Gandhari. The kingdom having passed to Yudhishtira, I have enjoyed great happiness. Ye foremost of men, I think that happiness has been greater than what I could expect from Duryodhana's sovereignty. What other refuge can I have, old as I am and destitute of children, save the woods? Ye highly blessed ones, it behoves you to grant me the permission I seek. Hearing these words of his, all these residents of Kurujangala, uttered loud lamentations, O best of the Bharatas, with voices choked with tears. Desirous of telling those grief-stricken people something more, Dhritarashtra of great energy, once more addressed them and said as follows.'"

SECTION IX

Dhritarashtra said, 'Santanu duly ruled this Earth. Similarly, Vichitraviryya also, protected by Bhishma, ruled you. Without doubt, all this is known to you. It is also known to you how Pandu, my brother, was dear to me as also to you. He also ruled you duly. Ye sinless ones, I have also served you. Whether those services have come up to the mark or fallen short of it, it behoveth you to forgive me, for I have attended to my duties without heedlessness. Duryodhana also enjoyed this kingdom without a thorn in his side. Foolish as he was and endued with wicked understanding, he did not, however, do any wrong to you. Through the fault, however, of that prince of wicked understanding, and through his pride, as also through my own impolicy, a great carnage has taken place of persons of the royal order. Whether I have, in that matter, acted rightly or wrongly, I pray you

with joined hands to dispel all remembrance of it from your hearts. – This one is old; this one has lost all his children; this one is afflicted with grief; this one was our king; – this one is a descendant of former kings; – considerations like these should induce you to forgive me. This Gandhari also is cheerless and old. She too has lost her children and is helpless. Afflicted with grief for the loss of her sons, she solicits you with me. Knowing that both of us are old and afflicted and destitute of children, grant us the permission we seek. Blessed be you, we seek your protection. This Kuru king, Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, should be looked after by you all, in prosperity as well as in adversity. He will never fall into distress, he that has for his counsellors four such brothers of abundant prowess. All of them are conversant with both righteousness and wealth, and resemble the very guardians of the world. Like the illustrious Brahman himself, the Lord of the universe of creatures, this Yudhishtira of mighty energy will rule you. That which should certainly be said is now said by me. I make over to you it this Yudhishtira here as a deposit. I make you also a deposit in the hands of this hero. It behoves you all to forget and forgive whatever injury has been done to you by those sons of mine that are no longer alive, or, indeed, by any one else belonging to me. Ye never harboured any wrath against me on any previous occasion. I join my hands before you who are distinguished for loyalty. Here, I bow to you all. Ye sinless one, I, with Gandhari by my side, solicit your pardon now for anything done to you by those sons of mine, of restless understandings, stained by cupidity, and ever acting as their desires prompted.' Thus addressed by the old monarch, all those citizens and inhabitants of the provinces, filled with tears, said nothing but only looked at one another."

SECTION X

Vaisampayana said, 'Thus addressed, O thou of Kuru's race, by the old king, the citizens and the inhabitants of the provinces stood sometime like men deprived of consciousness. King Dhritarashtra, finding them silent, with their throats choked by grief, once more addressed them, saying, 'Ye best of men, old as I am, sonless, and indulging, through cheerlessness of heart, in diverse lamentations along with this my wedded wife, I have obtained the permission, in the matter of my retirement into the forest, of my sire, the Island-born Krishna himself, as also of king Yudhishtira, who is conversant with every duty, ye righteous denizens of this kingdom. Ye sinless ones, I, with Gandhari, repeatedly solicit you with bent heads. It behoves you all to grant us permission.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Hearing these pitiable words of the Kuru king, O monarch, the assembled denizens of Kurujangala all began to weep. Covering their faces with their hands and upper garments, all those men burning with grief, wept for a while as fathers and mothers would weep (at the prospect of a dear son about to leave them for ever). Bearing in their hearts, from which every other thought had been dispelled, the sorrow born of Dhritarashtra's desire to leave the world, they looked like men deprived of all consciousness. Checking that agitation of heart due to the announcement of Dhritarashtra's desire of going to the forest, they gradually were able to address one another, expressing their wishes. Settling their words in brief, O king, they charged a certain Brahmana with the task of replying unto the old monarch. That learned Brahmana, of good behaviour, chosen by unanimous consent, conversant with all topics, master of all the Richs, and named Samba, endeavoured to speak. Taking the permission of the whole assembly and with its full approbation, that learned Brahmana of great intelligence, conscious of his own abilities, said these words unto the king, – 'O monarch, the answer of this assembly has been committed to my care. I shall voice it, O hero. Do thou receive it, O king. What thou gayest, O king of kings, is all true, O puissant one. There is nothing in it that is even slightly untrue. Thou art our well-wisher, as, indeed, we are thine. Verily, in this race of kings, there never wag a king who coming to rule his subjects became unpopular with them. Ye have ruled us like fathers or brothers. King Duryodhana never did us any wrong. Do that, O king, which that righteous-souled ascetic, the son of Satyavati, has said. He is, verily, our foremost of instructors. Left by thee, O monarch, we shall have to pass our days in grief and sorrow, filled with remembrance of thy hundreds of virtues. We were well protected and

ruled by king Duryodhana even as we had been ruled by king Santanu, or by Chitrangada, or by thy father, O monarch, who was protected by the prowess of Bhishma, or by Pandu, that ruler of Earth, who was overlooked by thee in all his acts. Thy son, O monarch, never did us the slightest wrong. We lived, relying on that king as trustfully as on our own father. It is known to thee how we lived (under that ruler). After the same manner, we have enjoyed great happiness, O monarch, for thousands of years, under the rule of Kunti's son of great intelligence and wisdom[27]. This righteous-souled king who performs sacrifices with gifts in profusion, follows the conduct of the royal sages of old, belonging to thy race, of meritorious deeds, having Kuru and Samvara and others and Bharata of great intelligence among them. There is nothing, O monarch, that is even slightly censurable in the matter of this Yudhishtira's rule. Protected and ruled by thee, we have all lived in great happiness. The slightest demerit is incapable of being alleged against thee and thy son. Regarding what thou hast said about Duryodhana in the matter of this carnage of kinsmen, I beg thee, O delighter of the Kurus (to listen to me).'

The Brahmana continued, 'The destruction that has overtaken the Kurus was not brought about by Duryodhana. It was not brought about by thee. Nor was it brought about by Karna and Suvala's son. We know that it was brought about by destiny, and that it was incapable of being counteracted. Verily, destiny is not capable of being resisted by human exertion. Eight and ten Akshauhini of troops, O monarch, were brought together. In eight and ten days that host was destroyed by the foremost of Kuru warriors, viz., Bhishma and Drona and Kripa and others, and the high-souled Karna, and the heroic Yuyudhana, and Dhrishtadyumna, and by the four sons of Pandu, that is, Bhima and Arjuna and twins. This (tremendous) carnage, O king, could not happen without the influence of destiny. Without doubt, by Kshatriyas in particular, should foes be slain and death encountered in battle. By those foremost of men, endued with science and might of arms, the Earth has been exterminated with her steeds and cars and elephants. Thy son was not the cause of that carnage of high-souled kings. Thou wert not the cause, nor thy servants, nor Karna, nor Suvala's son. The destruction of those foremost ones of Kuru's race and of kings by thousands, know, was brought about by destiny. Who can say anything else in this? Thou art regarded as the Guru and the master of the whole world. We, therefore, in thy presence, absolve thy righteous-souled son. Let that king, with all his associates, obtain the regions reserved for heroes. Permitted by foremost of Brahmanas, let him sport blissfully in heaven. Thou also shalt attain to great merit, and unswerving steadiness in virtue. O thou of excellent vows, follow thou fully the duties indicated in the Vedas. It is not necessary for either thee or ourselves to look after the Pandavas. They are capable of ruling the very Heavens, what need then be said of the Earth? O thou of great intelligence, in prosperity as in adversity, the subjects of this kingdom, O foremost one of Kuru's race, will be obedient to the Pandavas who have conduct for their ornament. The son of Pandu makes those valuable gifts which are always to be made to foremost of regenerate persons in sacrifices and in obsequial rites, after the manner of all the great kings of antiquity. The high-minded son of Kunti is mild, and self-restrained, and is always disposed to spend as if he were a second Vaisravana. He has great ministers that attend on him. He is compassionate to even his foes. Indeed, that foremost one of Bharata's race is of pure conduct. Endued with great intelligence, he is perfectly straight-forward in his dealings and rules and protects us like a father protecting his children. From association with him who is the son of Dharma, O royal sage, Bhima and Arjuna and others will never do us the least wrong. They are mild, O thou of Kuru's race, unto them that are mild, and fierce like snakes of virulent poison unto them that are fierce. Possessed of great energy, those high-souled ones are always devoted to the good of the people. Neither Kunti, nor thy (daughter-in-law) Panchali, nor Ulupi, nor the princess of the Sattwata race, will do the least wrong to these people.[28] The affection which thou hast shown towards us and which in Yudhishtira is seen to exist in a still larger measure is incapable of being forgotten by the people of the city and the provinces. Those mighty car-warriors, viz., the son of Kunti, themselves devoted to the duties of the righteousness, will protect and cherish the people even if these happen to be unrighteous. Do thou, therefore, O king, dispelling all anxiety of heart on

account of Yudhishtira, set thyself to the accomplishment of all meritorious acts, O foremost of men.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Hearing these words, fraught with righteousness and merit, of that Brahmana and approving of them, every person in that assembly said, 'Excellent, Excellent' and accepted them as his own. Dhritarashtra also, repeatedly applauding those words, slowly dismissed that assembly of his subjects. Thus honoured by them and looked upon with auspicious glances, the old king, O chief of Bharata's race, joined his hands and honoured them all in return. He then entered his own mansion with Gandhari. Listen now to what he did after that night had passed away.'"

SECTION XI

Vaisampayana said, 'After that night had passed away, Dhritarashtra, the son of Amvika, despatched Vidura to Yudhishtira's mansion. Endued with great energy and the foremost of all persons possessed of intelligence, Vidura, having arrived at Yudhishtira's mansion, addressed that foremost of men, that king of unfading glory, in these words, 'King Dhritarashtra has undergone the preliminary rites for accomplishing his purpose of retiring into the woods. He will set out for the woods, O king, on the coming day of full moon of the month of Kartika. He now solicits from thee, O foremost one of Kuru's race, some wealth. He wishes to perform the Sraddha of the high-souled son of Ganga, as also of Drona and Somadatta and Valhika of great intelligence, and of all his sons as also of all well-wishers of his that have been slain, and, if thou permittest it, of that wicked-souled wight, viz., the ruler of the Sindhus.[29] Hearing these words of Vidura, both Yudhishtira, and Pandit's son Arjuna of curly hair, became very glad and applauded them highly. Bhima, however, of great energy and unappeasable wrath, did not accept those words of Vidura in good spirits, recollecting the acts of Duryodhana. The diadem-decked Phalguna, understanding the thoughts of Bhimasena, slightly bending his face downwards, addressed that foremost of men in these words, 'O Bhima, our royal father who is advancing in years, has resolved to retire into the woods. He wishes to make gifts for advancing the happiness of his slain kinsmen and well-wishers now in the other world. O thou of Kuru's race, he wishes to give away wealth that belongs to thee by conquest. Indeed, O mighty-armed one, it is for Bhishma and others that the old king is desirous of making those gifts. It behoves thee to grant thy permission. By good luck it is, O thou of mighty arms that Dhritarashtra today begs wealth of us, he who was formerly begged by us. Behold the reverse brought about by Time. That king who was before the lord and protector of the whole Earth, now desires to go into the woods, his kinsmen and associates all slain by foes. O chief of men, let not thy views deviate from granting the permission asked for. O mighty-armed one, refusal, besides bringing infamy, will be productive of demerit. Do thou learn your duty in this matter from the king, thy eldest brother, who is lord of all. It becometh thee to give instead of refusing, O chief of Bharata's race. Vibhatsu who was saying so was applauded by king Yudhishtira the just. Yielding to wrath, Bhimasena said these words, 'O Phalguna, it is we that shall make gifts in the matter of Bhishma's obsequies, as also of king Somadatta and of Bhurisravas, of the royal sage Valhika, and of the high-souled Drona, and of all others. Our mother Kunti shall make such obsequial offerings for Karna. O foremost of men, let not Dhritarashtra perform those Sraddhas. Even this is what I think. Let not our foes be gladdened. Let Duryodhana and others sink from a miserable to a more miserable position. Alas, it was those wretches of their race that caused the whole Earth to be exterminated. How hast thou been able to forget that anxiety of twelve long years, and our residence in deep incognito that was so painful to Draupadi? Where was Dhritarashtra's affection for us then? Clad in a black deer-skin and divested of all thy ornaments, with the princess of Panchala in thy company, didst thou not follow this king? Where were Bhishma and Drona then, and where was Somadatta? Thou hadst to live for thirteen years in the woods, supporting thyself on the products of the wilderness. Thy eldest father did not then look at thee with eyes of parental affection. Hast thou forgotten, O Partha, that it was this wretch of our race, of wicked understanding, that enquired of Vidura, when the match at

dice was going on, – 'What has been won?' Hearing thus far, king Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, endued with great intelligence, rebuked him and told him to be silent."

SECTION XII

Arjuna said, 'O Bhima, thou art my elder brother and, therefore, my senior and preceptor. I dare not say anything more than what I have already said. The royal sage Dhritarashtra deserves to be honoured by us in every respect. They that are good, they that are distinguished above the common level, they that break not the distinctions which characterise the good, remember not the wrongs done to them but only the benefits they have received.' Hearing these words of the high-souled Phalguna, the righteous-souled Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, addressed Vidura and said these words, 'Instructed by me, O Kshatri, do thou say unto the Kuru king that I shall give him as much wealth from my treasury as he wishes to give away for the obsequies of his son, and of Bhishma and others among his well-wishers and benefactors. Let not Bhima be cheerless at this!'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Having said these words, king Yudhishtira the just, highly applauded Arjuna. Meanwhile Bhimasena began to cast angry glances at Dhananjaya. Then Yudhishtira, endued with great intelligence, once more addressed Vidura and said, 'It behoves not king Dhritarashtra to be angry with Bhimasena. This Bhima of great intelligence was greatly afflicted by cold and rain and heat and by a thousand other griefs while residing in the woods. All this is not unknown to thee. Do thou, however, instructed by me, say unto the king, O foremost one of Bharata's race, that he may take from my house whatever articles he wishes and in whatever measure also he likes. Thou shalt also tell the king that he should not allow his heart to dwell on this exhibition of pride in which Bhima, deeply afflicted, has indulged. Whatever wealth I have and whatever Arjuna has in his house, the owner thereof is king Dhritarashtra. Even this thou shouldst tell him. Let the king make gifts unto the Brahmanas. Let him spend as largely as he likes. Let him free himself from the debt he owes to his sons and well-wishers. Let him be told besides, – O Monarch, this very body of mine is at thy disposal and all the wealth I have. Know this, and let there be no doubt in this.'

SECTION XIII

Vaisampayana said, 'Thus addressed by king Yudhishtira, Vidura, that foremost of all intelligent persons, returned to Dhritarashtra and said unto him these words of grave import. 'I at first reported thy message to king Yudhishtira. Reflecting on thy words, Yudhishtira of great splendour applauded them highly. Vibhatsu also, of great energy, places all his mansions, with all the wealth therein, as also his very life-breaths, at thy disposal. Thy son, king Yudhishtira, too, offers thee, O royal sage, his kingdom and life-breath and wealth and all else that belongs to him. Bhima, however, of mighty arms, recollecting all his innumerable sorrows, has with difficulty given his consent, breathing many heavy sighs. That mighty-armed hero, O monarch, was solicited by the righteous king as also by Vibhatsu, and induced to assume relations of cordiality towards thee. King Yudhishtira the just, his prayed thee not to give way to dissatisfaction for the improper conduct which Bhima has displayed at the recollection of former hostilities. This is generally the behaviour of Kshatriyas in battle, O king, and this Vrikodara is devoted to battle and the practices of Kshatriyas. Both myself and Arjuna, O king, repeatedly beg thee for pardoning Vrikodara. Be gracious unto us. Thou art our lord. Whatever wealth we have, thou mayst give away as thou likest, O ruler of Earth. Thou, O Bharata, art the Master of this kingdom and of all lives in it. Let the foremost one of Kuru's race give away, for the obsequial rites of his sons, all those foremost of gifts which should be given to the Brahmanas. Indeed, let him make those gifts unto persons of the regenerate order, taking away from our mansions jewels and gems, and kine, and slaves both male and female, and goats and sheep. Let gifts be made unto also those that are poor or sightless or in great distress, selecting the objects of his charity as he likes. Let, O Vidura, large pavilions be constructed, rich with food and drink of diverse tastes collected in profusion. Let reservoirs of water be constructed for enabling kine to drink, and let other works of merit be accomplished. – Even these were the words

said unto me by the king as also by Pritha's son Dhananjaya. It behoveth thee to say what should be done next. After Vidura had said these words, O Janamejaya, Dhritarashtra his satisfaction at them and set his heart upon making large presents on the day of full moon in the month of Kartika."

SECTION XIV

Vaisampayana said, – 'Thus addressed by Vidura, king Dhritarashtra became highly pleased, O monarch, with the act of Yudhishtira and Jishnu. Inviting then, after proper examination, thousands of deserving Brahmanas and superior Rishis, for the sake of Bhishma, as also of his sons and friends, and causing a large quantity of food and drink to be prepared, and cars and other vehicles and clothes, and gold and jewels and gems, and slaves both male and female, and goats and sheep, and blankets and costly articles to be collected, and villages and fields, and other kins of wealth to be kept ready, as also elephants and steeds decked with ornaments, and many beautiful maidens who were the best of their sex, that foremost of kings gave them away for the advancement of the dead, naming each of them in due order as the gifts were made. Naming Drona, and Bhishma, and Somadatta, and Valhika, and king Duryodhana, and each one of his other sons, and all his well-wishers with Jayadratha numbering first, those gifts were made in due order. With the approval of Yudhishtira, that Sraddha-sacrifice became characterised by large gifts of wealth and profuse presents of jewels and gems and other kinds of treasure. Tellers and scribes on that occasion, under the orders of Yudhishtira, ceaselessly asked the old king. – Do thou command, O monarch, what gifts should be made to these. All things are ready here. – As soon as the king spoke, they gave away what he directed.[30] Unto him that was to receive a hundred, a thousand was given, and unto him that was to receive a thousand was given ten thousand, at the command of the royal son of Kunti.[31] Like the, clouds vivifying the crops with their downpours, that royal cloud gratified the Brahmanas by downpours of wealth. After all those gifts had been distributed, the king, O thou of great intelligence, then deluged the assembled guests of all the four orders with repeated surges of food and drink of diverse tastes. Verily, the Dhritarashtra-ocean, swelling high, with jewels and gems for its waters, rich with the villages and fields and other foremost of gifts constituting its verdant islands, heaps of diverse kinds of precious articles for its rich caves, elephants and steeds for its alligators and whirlpools, the sound of Mridangas for its deep roars, and clothes and wealth and precious stories for its waves, deluged the Earth. It was even in this way, O king, that that monarch made gifts for the advancement in the other world of his sons and grandsons and Pitris as also of himself and Gandhari. At last when he became tired with the task of making gifts in such profusion, that great Gift-sacrifice came to an end. Even thus did that king of Kuru's race perform his Gift-sacrifice. Actors and mimes continually danced and sang on the occasion and contributed to the merriment of all the guests. Food and drink of diverse tastes were given away in large quantities. Making gifts in this way for ten days, the royal son of Amvika, O chief of Bharata's race, became freed from the debts he owed to his sons and grandsons."

SECTION XV

Vaisampayana said, – 'The royal son of Amvika, viz., Dhritarashtra, having settled the hour of his departure for the woods, summoned those heroes, the Pandavas. Possessed of great intelligence, the old monarch, with Gandhari, duly accosted those princes. Having caused the minor rites to be performed, by Brahmanas conversant with the Vedas, on that day which was the day of full moon in the month of Kartika, he caused the fire which he worshipped daily to be taken up. Leaving his usual robes he wore deer-skins and barks, and accompanied by his daughters-in-law, he set out of his mansion. When the royal son of Vichitraviryya thus set out, a loud wail was uttered by the Pandava and the Kaurava ladies as also by other women belonging to the Kaurava race. The king worshipped the mansion in which he had lived with fried paddy and excellent flowers of diverse kinds. He also honoured all his servants with gifts of wealth, and then leaving that abode set out on his journey. Then O son, king Yudhishtira, trembling all over, with utterance choked with tears, said

these words in a loud voice, viz., – 'O righteous monarch, where dost thou go? – and fell down in a swoon. Arjuna, burning with great grief, sighed repeatedly. That foremost of Bharata princes, telling Yudhishtira that he should not behave in that manner, stood cheerlessly and with heart plunged into distress. Vrikodara, the heroic Phalguna, the two sons of Madri, Vidura, Sanjaya, Dhritarashtra's son by his Vaisya wife, and Kripa, and Dhaumya, and other Brahmanas, all followed the old monarch, with voices choked in grief. Kunti walked ahead, bearing on her shoulders the hand of Gandhari who walked with her bandaged eyes. King Dhritarashtra walked confidently behind Gandhari, placing his hand on her shoulder.[32] Drupada's daughter Krishna, she of the Sattwata race, Uttara the daughter-in-law of the Kauravas, who had recently become a mother, Chitrangada, and other ladies of the royal house-hold, all proceeded with the old monarch. The wail they uttered on that occasion, O king, from grief, resembled the loud lamentations of a swarm of she-ospreys. Then the wives of the citizens, – Brahmanas and Kshatriyas and Vaisyas and Sudras, – also came out into the streets from every side. At Dhritarashtra's departure, O king, all the citizens of Hastinapore became as distressed as they had been, O monarch, when they had witnessed the departure of the Pandavas in former days after their defeat at the match at dice. Ladies that had never seen the sun or the moon, came out into the streets on the occasion, in great grief, when king Dhritarashtra proceeded towards the great forest.'"

SECTION XVI

Vaisampayana said, 'Great was the uproar, at that time, O king, of both men and women standing on the terraces of mansions or on the Earth. Possessed of great intelligence, the old king, with joined hands, and trembling with weakness, proceeded with difficulty along the principal street which was crowded with persons of both sexes. He left the city called after the elephant by the principal gate and then repeatedly bade that crowd of people to return to their homes. Vidura had set his heart on going to the forest along with the king. The Suta Sanjaya also, the son of Gavalgani, the chief minister of Dhritarashtra, was of the same heart. King Dhritarashtra however, caused Kripa and the mighty car-warrior Yuyutsu to refrain from following him. He made them over into Yudhishtira's hands. After the citizens had ceased following the monarch, king Yudhishtira, with the ladies of his house-hold, prepared to stop, at the command of Dhritarashtra. seeing that his mother Kunti was desirous of retiring into the woods, the king said unto her, 'I shall follow the old monarch. Do thou desist.' It behoveth thee, O queen, to return to the city, accompanied by these thy daughters-in-law. This monarch proceeds to the woods, firmly resolved to practise penances. Though king Yudhishtira said these words unto her, with his eyes bathed in tears, Kunti, however, without answering him, continued to proceed, catching hold of Gandhari.

Kunti said, 'O king, never show any disregard for Sahadeva. He is very much attached to me, O monarch, and to thee also always. Thou shouldst always bear in mind Karna who never retreated from battle. Through my folly that hero has been slain in the field of battle. Surely, my son, this heart of mine is made of steel, since it does not break into a hundred pieces at not seeing that child born of Surya. When such has been the case, O chastiser of foes, what can I now do? I am very much to blame for not having proclaimed the truth about the birth of Surya's child. O crusher of foes, I hope thou wilt, with all thy brothers, make excellent gifts for the sake of that son of Surya. O mower of foes, thou shouldst always do what is agreeable to Draupadi. Thou shouldst look after Bhimasena and Arjuna and Nakula and Sahadeva. The burthens of the Kuru race have now fallen on thee, O king. I shall live in the woods with Gandhari, besmearing my body with filth, engaged in the performance of penances, and devoted to the service of my father-in-law and mother-in-law.'[33]

'Vaisampayana continued, 'Thus addressed by her, the righteous-souled Yudhishtira, with passions under complete control, became, with all his brothers, plunged into great distress. Endued with great intelligence, the king said not a word. Having reflected for a little while, king Yudhishtira the Just, cheerless and plunged in anxiety and sorrow, addressed his mother, saying, – 'Strange, indeed, is

this purpose of thine? It behoves thee not to accomplish it. I can never grant thee permission. It behoves thee to show us compassion. 'Formerly, when we were about to set out of Hastinapore for the woods, O thou of agreeable features, it was thou who, reciting to us the story of Vidula's instructions to her son, excited us to exertion. It behoves thee not to abandon us now. Having slain the kings of Earth, I have won sovereignty, guided by thy words of wisdom communicated through Vasudeva. Where now is that understanding of thine about which I had heard from Vasudeva? Dost thou wish now to fall away from those Kshatriya practices about which thou hadst instructed us? Abandoning ourselves, this kingdom, and this daughter-in-law of thine who is possessed of great fame, how wilt thou live in the inaccessible woods? Do thou relent! Kunti, with tears in her eyes, heard these words of her son, but continued to proceed on her way. Then Bhima addressed her, saying, – 'When, O Kunti, sovereignty has been won, and when the time has come for thee to enjoy that sovereignty thus acquired by thy children, when the duties of royalty await discharge by thee, whence has this desire got hold of thy mind? Why then didst thou cause us to exterminate the Earth? For what reason wouldst thou leave all and wish to take up thy abode in the woods? We were born in the woods. Why then didst thou bring us from the woods while we were children? Behold, the two sons of Madri are overwhelmed with sorrow and grief. Relent, O mother, O thou of great fame, do not go into the woods now. Do thou enjoy that prosperity which acquired by might, has become Yudhishtira's today.' Firmly resolved to retire into the woods, Kunti disregarded these lamentations of her sons. Then Draupadi with a cheerless face, accompanied by Subhadra, followed her weeping mother-in-law who was journeying on from desire of going into the woods. Possessed of great wisdom and firmly resolved on retirement from the world, the blessed dame walked on, frequently looking at her weeping children. The Pandavas, with all their wives and servitors, continued to follow her. Restraining then her tears, she addressed her children in these words."

SECTION XVII

Kunti said, 'It is even so, O mighty-armed son of Pandu, as thou sayest. Ye kings, formerly when ye were cheerless, it was even in this way that I excited you all. Yes, seeing that your kingdom was wrested from you by a match at dice, seeing that you all fell from happiness, seeing that you were domineered over by kinsmen, I instilled courage and high thoughts into your minds. Ye foremost of men, I encouraged you in order that they that were the sons of Pandu might not be lost, in order that their fame might not be lost. You are all equal to Indra. Your prowess resembles that of the very gods. In order that you might not live, watching the faces of others, I acted in that way.[34] I instilled courage into thy heart in order that thou who art the foremost of all righteous persons, who art equal to Vasava, might not again go into the woods and live in misery. I instilled courage into your hearts in order that this Bhima who is possessed of the strength of ten thousand elephants and whose prowess and manliness are widely known, might not sink into insignificance and ruin. I instilled courage into your hearts in order that this Vijaya, who was born after Bhimasena, and who is equal unto Vasava himself might not be cheerless. I instilled courage into your hearts in order that Nakula and Sahadeva, who are always devoted to their seniors, might not be weakened and rendered cheerless by hunger. I acted in that way in order that this lady of well-developed proportions and of large expansive eyes might not endure the wrongs inflicted on her in the public hall without being avenged. In the very sight of you all, O Bhima, Dussasana, through folly, dragged her trembling all over like a plantain plant, during the period of her functional illness, and after she had been won at dice, as if she were a slave. All this was known to me. Indeed, the race of Pandu had been subjugated (by foes). The Kurus, viz., my father-in-law and others, were cheerless when she, desirous of a protector, uttered loud lamentations like a she-osprey. When she was dragged by her fair locks by the sinful Dussasana with little intelligence, I was deprived of my senses, O king. Know, that for enhancing your energy, I instilled that courage into your hearts by reciting the words of Vidula, O my sons. I instilled courage into your hearts, O my sons, in order that the race of Pandu, represented by my children, might not be lost. The sons and grandsons of that person who brings a race to infamy never succeed in attaining to the regions of the righteous. Verily, the ancestors of the

Kaurava race were in danger of losing those regions of felicity which had become theirs. As regards myself, O my sons, I, before this, enjoyed the great fruits of that sovereignty which my husband had acquired. I made large gifts. I duly drank the Soma juice in sacrifice.[35] It was not for my own sake that I had urged Vasudeva with the stirring words of Vidula. It was for your sake that I had called upon you to follow that advice. O my sons, I do not desire the fruits of that sovereignty which has been won by my children. O thou of great puissance, I wish to attain, by my penances, to those regions of felicity which have been acquired by my husband. By rendering obedient service to my father-in-law and mother-in-law both of whom wish to take up their abode in the woods, and by penances, I desire, O Yudhishtira, to waste my body. Do thou cease to follow me, O foremost one of Kuru's race, along with Bhima and others. Let thy understanding be always devoted to righteousness. Let thy mind be always great."

SECTION XVIII

Vaisampayana said, 'Hearing these words of Kunti, the sinless Pandavas, O best of kings, became ashamed. They, therefore, desisted, along with the princess of-Panchala, from following her.[36] Beholding Kunti resolved to go into the woods, the ladies of the Pandava household uttered loud lamentations. The Pandavas then circumambulated the king and saluted him duly. They ceased to follow further, having failed to persuade Pritha to return. Then Amvika's son of great energy, viz., Dhritarashtra, addressing Gandhari and Vidura and supporting himself on them, said, 'Let the royal mother of Yudhishtira cease to go with us. What Yudhishtira has said is all very true. Abandoning this high prosperity of her sons, abandoning those high fruits that may be hers, why should she go into the inaccessible woods, leaving her children like a person of little intelligence? Living in the enjoyment of sovereignty, she is capable of practising penances and observing the high vow of gifts. Let her, therefore, listen to my words. O Gandhari, I have been much gratified with the services rendered to me by this daughter-in-law of mine. Conversant as thou art with all duties, it becometh thee to command her return.' Thus addressed by her lord, the daughter of Suvala repeated unto Kunti all those words of the old king and added her own words of grave import. She, however, failed to cause Kunti to desist inasmuch as that chaste lady, devoted to righteousness, had firmly set her heart upon residing in the woods. The Kuru ladies, understanding how firm her resolution was regarding her retirement into the woods, and seeing that those foremost ones of Kuru's race (viz., their own lords), had ceased to follow her, set up a loud wail of lamentation. After all the sons of Pritha and all the ladies had retraced their steps, king Yudhishtira of great wisdom continued his journey to the woods. The Pandavas, exceedingly cheerless and afflicted with grief and sorrow accompanied by their wives, returned to the city, on their cars. At that time the city of Hastinapura, with its entire population of men, both old and young, and women, became cheerless and plunged into sorrow. No festivals of rejoicing were observed. Afflicted with grief, the Pandavas were without any energy. Deserted by Kunti, they were deeply afflicted with grief, like calves destitute of their dams. Dhritarashtra reached that day a place far removed from the city. The puissant monarch arrived at last on the banks of the Bhagirathi and took rest there for the night. Brahmanas conversant with the Vedas duly ignited their sacred fires in that retreat of ascetics. Surrounded by those foremost of Brahmanas, those sacred fires blazed forth in beauty. The sacred fire of the old king was also ignited. Sitting near his own fire, he poured libations on it according to due rites, and then worshipped the thousand-rayed sun as he was on the point of setting. Then Vidura and Sanjaya made a bed for the king by spreading some blades of Kusa grass. Near the bed of that Kuru hero they made another for Gandhari. In close proximity to Gandhari, Yudhishtira's mother Kunti, observant of excellent vows, happily laid herself down. Within hearing distance of those three, slept Vidura and others. The Yajaka Brahmanas and other followers of the king laid themselves down on their respective beds. The foremost of Brahmanas that were there chanted aloud many sacred hymns. The sacrificial fires blazed forth all around. That night, therefore, seemed as delightful to them as a Brahmi night.[37] When the night passed away, they all arose from their beds and went through their morning acts. Pouring libations then on the sacred fire, they continued their journey.

Their first day's experience of the forest proved very painful to them on account of the grieving inhabitants of both the city and the provinces of the Kuru kingdom."

SECTION XIX

Vaisampayana said. 'Following the advice of Vidura, the king took up his abode on the banks of the Bhagirathi which were sacred and deserved to be peopled with the righteous. There many Brahmanas who had taken up their abode in the woods, as also many Kshatriyas and Vaisyas and Sudras, came to see the old monarch. Sitting in their midst, he gladdened them all by his words. Having duly worshipped the Brahmanas with their disciples, he dismissed them all. As evening came, the king, and Gandhari of great fame, both descended into the stream of the Bhagirathi and duly performed their ablutions for purifying themselves. The king and the queen, and Vidura and others, O Bharata, having bathed in the sacred stream, performed the usual rites of religion. After the king had purified himself by a bath, the daughter of Kuntibhoja gently led both him, who was to her as her father-in-law and Gandhari from the water into the dry bank. The Yajakas had made a sacrificial altar there for the king. Devoted to truth, the latter poured libations then on the fire. From the banks of the Bhagirathi the old king, with his followers, observant of vows and with senses restrained, then proceeded to Kurukshetra. Possessed of great intelligence, the king arrived at the retreat of the royal sage Satayupa of great wisdom and had an interview with him. Satayupa, O scorcher of foes, had been the great king of the Kekayas. Having made over the sovereignty of his kingdom to his son he had come into the woods. Satayupa, received king Dhritarashtra with due rites. Accompanied by him, the latter proceeded to the retreat of Vyasa. Arrived at Vyasa's retreat, the delighter of the Kurus received his initiation into the forest mode of life. Returning he took up his abode in the retreat of Satayupa. The high-souled Satayupa, instructed Dhritarashtra in all the rites of the forest mode, at the command of Vyasa. In this way the high-souled Dhritarashtra set himself to the practice of penances, and all his followers also to the same course of conduct. Queen Gandhari also, O monarch, along with Kunti, assumed barks of trees and deer-skins for her robe, and set herself to the observance of the same vows as her lord. Restraining their senses in thought, words, and deeds, as well as by eye, they began to practise severe austerities. Divested of all stupefaction of mind, king Dhritarashtra began to practise vows and penances like a great Rishi, reducing his body to skin and bones, for his flesh was all dried up, bearing matted locks on head, and his person clad in barks and skins. Vidura, conversant with the true interpretations of righteousness, and endued with great intelligence, as also Sanjaya, waited upon the old king with his wife. Both of them with souls under subjection, Vidura and Sanjaya also reduced themselves, and wore barks and rags.'

SECTION XX

Vaisampayana said, 'Those foremost of ascetics, viz. Narada and Parvata and Devala of austere penances, came there to see king Dhritarashtra. The Island-born Vyasa with all his disciples, and other persons endued with great wisdom and crowned with ascetic success, and the royal sage Satayupa of advanced years and possessed of great merit, also came. Kunti worshipped them with due rites, O king. All those ascetics were highly gratified with the worship offered to them. Those great Rishis gladdened the high-souled king Dhritarashtra with discourses on religion and righteousness. At the conclusion of their converse, the celestial Rishi Narada, beholding all things as objects of direct perceptions, said the following words.'

Narada said, 'There was a ruler of the Kekayas, possessed of great prosperity and perfectly fearless. His name was Sahasrachitya and he was the grandfather of this Satayupa. Resigning his kingdom to his eldest son endued with a large measure of righteousness, the virtuous king Sahasrachitya retired into the woods. Reaching the other end of blazing penances, that lord of Earth, endued with great splendour, attained to the region of Purandara where he continued to live in his company. On many occasions, while visiting the region of Indra, O king, I saw the monarch, whose sins had all been burnt off by penances, residing in Indra's abode. After the same manner, king Sailalaya, the grand-

father of Bhagadatta, attained to the region of Indra by the power alone of his penances. There was another king, O monarch, of the name of Prishadhra who resembled the wielder of the thunder-bolt himself. That king also, by his penances proceeded from the Earth to Heaven. In this very forest, O king, that lord of Earth, Purukutsa, the soil of Mandhatri, attained to high success. That foremost of rivers, viz., Narmada, became the consort of that king. Having undergone penances in this very forest, that ruler of Earth proceeded to Heaven. There was another king, highly righteous, of the name of Sasaloman. He too underwent severe austerities in this forest and then ascended to Heaven. Thou also, O monarch, having arrived at this forest, shalt, through the grace of the Island-born, attain to a goal that is very high and that is difficult of attainment. Thou also, O foremost of kings, at the end of thy penances, become endued with great prosperity and, accompanied by Gandhari, attain to the goal reached by those high-souled ones. Dwelling in the presence of the slayer of Vala, Pandu thinks of thee always. He will, O monarch, certainly assist thee in the attainment of prosperity. Through serving thee and Gandhari, this daughter-in-law of thine, possessed of great fame, will attain to residence with her husband in the other world. She is the mother of Yudhishtira who is the eternal Dharma. We behold all this, O king, with our spiritual vision. Vidura will enter into the high-souled Yudhishtira. Sanjaya also, through meditation, will ascend from this world into Heaven.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'That high-souled chief of Kuru's race, possessed of learning, having, with his wife, heard these words of Narada, praised them and worshipped Narada with unprecedented honours. The conclave of Brahmanas there present became filled with great joy, and desirous of gladdening king Dhritarashtra, O monarch, themselves worshipped Narada with profound regards. Those foremost of regenerate persons also praised the words of Narada. Then the royal sage Satayupa, addressing Narada, said, 'Thy holy self hath enhanced the devotion of the Kuru king, of all those people here, and of myself also, O thou of great splendour. I have, however, the wish to ask thee something. Listen to me as I say it. It has reference to the king Dhritarashtra, O celestial Rishi, that art worshipped by all the worlds. Thou art acquainted with the truth of every affair. Endued with celestial sight, thou beholdest, O regenerate Rishi, what the diverse goals are of human beings. Thou hast said what the goal has been of the kings mentioned by thee, viz., association with the chief of celestials. Thou hast not, however, O great Rishi, declared what those regions are that will be acquired by this king. O puissant one, I wish to hear from thee what region will be acquired by the royal Dhritarashtra. It behoveth thee to tell me truly the kind of region that will be his and the time when he will attain to it.' Thus addressed by him, Narada of celestial sight and endued with austere penances, said in the midst of the assembly these words highly agreeable to the minds of all.'

Narada said, 'Repairing at my will to the mansion of Sakra, I have seen Sakra the lord or Sachi; and there, O royal sage. I have beheld king Pandu. There a talk arose, O monarch, regarding this Dhritarashtra and those highly austere penances which he is performing. There I heard from the lips of Sakra himself that there are three years yet of the period of life allotted to this king. After that, king Dhritarashtra, accompanied by his wife Gandhari, will go to the regions of Kuvera and be highly honoured by that king of kings. He will go there on a car moving at his will, his person adorned with celestial ornaments. He is the son of a Rishi; he is highly blessed; he has burnt all his sins by his penances. Endued with a righteous soul, he will rove at will through the regions of the deities, the Gandharvas, and the Rakshasas. That about which thou hast enquired is a mystery of the gods. Through my affection for you, I have declared this high truth. Ye all are possessed of the wealth of Srutis and have consumed all your sins by your penances.'

Vaisampayana continued.. "Hearing these sweet words of the celestial Rishi, all the persons there assembled, as also king Dhritarashtra, became greatly cheered and highly pleased. Having cheered Dhritarashtra of great wisdom with such talk, they left the spot, wending away by the path that belongs to those who are crowned with success."

SECTION XXI

Vaisampayana said, 'Upon the retirement of the chief of the Kurus into the forest, the Pandavas, O king, afflicted besides by grief on account of their mother, became very cheerless. The citizens also of Hastinapura were possessed by deep sorrow. The Brahmanas always talked of the old king. 'How, indeed, will the king, who has become old, live in the solitary woods? How will the highly blessed Gandhari, and Pritha, the daughter of Kuntibhoja, live there? The royal sage has always lived in the enjoyment of every comfort. He will certainly be very miserable. Arrived in deep woods, what is now the condition of that personage of royal descent, who is, again, bereft of vision? Difficult is the feat that Kunti has achieved by separating herself from her sons. Alas casting off kingly prosperity, she chose a life in the woods. What, again, is the condition of Vidura who is always devoted to the service of his elder brother? How also is the intelligent son of Gavalgani who is so faithful to the food given him by his master? Verily, the citizens, including those of even nonage meeting together, asked one another these questions. The Pandavas also, exceedingly afflicted with grief, sorrowed for their old mother, and could not live in their city long. Thinking also of their old sire, the king, who had lost all his children, and the highly blessed Gandhari, and Vidura of great intelligence, they failed to enjoy peace of mind. They had no pleasure in sovereignty, nor in women, nor in the study of the Vedas. Despair penetrated their souls as they thought of the old king and as they repeatedly reflected on that terrible slaughter of kinsmen. Indeed, thinking of the slaughter of the youthful Abhimanyu on the field of battle, of the mighty-armed Karna who never retreated from the fray, of the sons of Draupadi, and of other friends of theirs, those heroes became exceedingly cheerless. They failed to obtain peace or mind upon repeatedly reflecting that the Earth had become divested of both her heroes and her wealth. Draupadi had lost all her children, and the beautiful Subhadra also had become childless. They too were of cheerless hearts and grieved exceedingly. Beholding, however, the son of Virata's daughter, viz., thy sire Parikshit, thy grandsires somehow held their life-breaths.'

SECTION XXII

Vaisampayana said, 'Those foremost of men, the heroic Pandavas, – those delighters of their mother – became exceedingly afflicted with grief. They who had formerly been always engaged in kingly offices, did not at that time attend to those acts at all in their capital. Afflicted with deep grief, they failed to derive pleasure from anything. If any body accosted them, they never honoured him with an answer. Although those irresistible heroes were in gravity like the ocean, yet they were now deprived of their knowledge and their very senses by the grief they felt. Thinking of their mother, the sons of Pandu were filled with anxiety as to how their emaciated mother was serving the old couple. 'How, indeed, is that king, whose sons have all been slain and who is without refuge, living alone, with only his wife, in the woods that are the haunt of beasts of prey? Alas, how does that highly blessed queen, Gandhari, whose dear ones have all been slain, follow her blind lord in the solitary woods?' – Even such was the anxiety manifested by the Pandavas when they talked with one another. They then set their hearts upon seeing the king in his forest retreat. Then Sahadeva, bowing down to the king, said, 'I see thy heart to be set upon seeing our sire. From my respect for thee, however, I could not speedily open my mouth on the subject of our journey to the woods. The time for that sojourn is now come. By good luck I shall see Kunti living in the observance of penances, with matted locks on her head, practising severe austerities, and emaciated with sleeping on blades of Kusa and Kasa. She was brought up in palaces and mansions, and nursed in every comfort and luxury. Alas, when shall I see my mother who is now toil-worn and plunged into exceeding misery? Without doubt, O chief of Bharata's race, the ends of mortals are exceedingly uncertain, since Kunti, who is a princess by birth, is now living in misery in the woods.' Hearing these words of Sahadeva, queen Draupadi, that foremost of all women duly honouring the king said, with proper salutations, – Alas, when shall I see queen Pritha, if, indeed, she be yet alive. I shall consider my life as not passed in vain if I succeed in beholding her once more, O king. Let this sort of understanding be

ever stable in thee. Let thy mind always take a pleasure in such righteousness as is involved, O king of kings, in thy desire of bestowing such a high boon on us. Know, O king, that all these ladies of thy house are staying with their feet raised for the journey, from desire of beholding Kunti, and Gandhari, and my father-in-law. Thus addressed by queen Draupadi, the king, O chief of Bharata's race, summoned all the leaders of his forces to his presence and told them, – 'Cause my army, teeming with cars and elephants, to march out. I shall behold king Dhritarashtra who is now living in the woods.' Unto those that supervised the concerns of the ladies, the king gave the order, 'Let diverse kinds of conveyances be properly equipt, and all my closed litters that count by thousands. Let carriages and granaries, and wardrobes, and treasuries, be equipt and ordered out, and let mechanics have the command to march out. Let men in charge of treasuries go out on the way leading to the ascetic retreats on Kurukshetra. Whoever amongst the citizens wishes to see the king is allowed to do so without any restriction. Let him proceed, properly protected. Let cooks and superintendents of kitchens, and the whole culinary establishment, and diverse kinds of edibles and viands, be ordered to be borne out on carts and conveyances. Let it be proclaimed that we march out tomorrow. Indeed, let no delay occur (in carrying out the arrangements). Let pavilions and resting houses of diverse kinds be erected on the way.' Even these were the commands which the eldest son of Pandu gave, with his brothers. When morning came, O monarch, the king set out, with a large train of women and old men. Going out of his city, king Yudhishtira waited five days for such citizens as might accompany him, and then proceeded towards the forest."

SECTION XXIII

Vaisampayana said. 'That foremost one of Bharata's race, then ordered his troops, which were protected by heroes that were headed by Arjuna and that resembled the very guardians of the universe, to march out. Instantly, a loud clamour arose consisting of the words – Equip, Equip! – of horsemen, O Bharata, engaged in equipping and their steeds. Some proceeded on carriages and vehicles, some on horses of great speed, and some on cars made of gold endued with the splendour of blazing fires. Some proceeded on mighty elephants, and some on camels, O king. Some proceeded on foot, that belonged to that class of combatants which is armed with tiger-like claws.[38] The citizens and inhabitants of the provinces, desirous of seeing Dhritarashtra, followed the king on diverse kinds of conveyances. The preceptor Kripa also, of Gotama's race, that great leader of forces, taking all the forces with him, proceeded, at the command of the king, towards the old monarch's retreat. The Kuru king Yudhishtira, that perpetuator of Kuru's race, surrounded by a large number of Brahmanas, his praises sung by a large band of Sutas and Magadhas and bards, and with a white umbrella held over his head and encompassed around by a large number of cars, set out on his journey. Vrikodara, the son of the Wind-god, proceeded on an elephant as gigantic as a hill, equipt with strung bow and machines and weapons of attack and defence. The twin sons of Madri proceeded on two fleet steeds, well cased in mail, well protected, and equipt with banners. Arjuna of mighty energy, with senses under control, proceeded on an excellent car endued with solar effulgence and unto which were equipt excellent steeds of white hue. The ladies of the royal household, headed by Draupadi, proceeded in closed litters protected by the superintendents of women. They scattered copious showers of wealth as they proceeded. Teeming with cars and elephants and steeds, and echoing with the blare of trumpets and the music of Vinas, the Pandava host, O monarch, blazed with great beauty. Those chiefs of Kuru's race proceeded slowly, resting by delightful banks of rivers and lakes, O monarch. Yuyutsu of mighty energy, and Dhaumya, the priest at the command of Yudhishtira, were engaged in protecting the city. By slow marches, king Yudhishtira reached Kurukshetra, and then, crossing the Yamuna, that highly sacred river, he beheld from a distance the retreat, O thou of Kuru's race, of the royal sage of great wisdom and of Dhritarashtra. Then all the men became filled with joy and quickly entered the forest, filling it with loud sounds of glee, O chief of Bharata's race."

SECTION XXIV

Vaisampayana said, 'The Pandavas alighted, at a distance, from their cars and proceeded on foot to the retreat of the king, bending themselves in humility. All the combatants also, and all the denizens of the kingdom, and the spouses of the Kuru chiefs, followed them on foot. The Pandavas then reached the sacred retreat of Dhritarashtra which abounded with herds of deer and which was adorned with plantain plants. Many ascetics of rigid vows, filled with curiosity, came there for beholding the Pandavas who had arrived at the retreat. The king, with tears in his eyes, asked them, saying, – 'Where has my eldest sire, the perpetuator of Kuru's race, gone?' They answered, O monarch, telling him that he had gone to the Yamuna for his ablutions, as also for fetching flowers and waters. Proceeding quickly on foot along the path pointed out by them, the Pandavas beheld all of them from a distance. Desirous of meeting with their sire they walked with a rapid pace. Then Sahadeva ran with speed towards the spot where Pritha was. Touching the feet of his mother, he began to weep aloud. With tears gushing down her cheeks, she saw her darling child. Raising her son up and embracing him with her arms, she informed Gandhari of Sahadeva's arrival. Then seeing the king and Bhimasena and Arjuna, and Nakula, Pritha endeavoured to advance quickly towards them. She was walking in advance of the childless old couple, and was dragging them forward. The Pandavas, beholding her, fell down on the earth. The puissant and high-souled monarch, endued with great intelligence, recognising them by their voices and also by touch, comforted them one after another. Shedding tears, those high-souled princes, with due formalities, approached the old king and Gandhari, as also their own mother. Indeed, regaining their senses, and once more comforted by their mother, the Pandavas took away from the king and their aunt and mother the jars full of water which they had been carrying, forbearing them themselves. The ladies of those lions among men, and all the women of the royal household, as also all the inhabitants of the city and provinces, then beheld the old king. King Yudhishtira presented all those individuals one after another to the old king, repeating their names and races, and then himself worshipped his eldest sire with reverence. Surrounded by them all, the old monarch, with eyes bathed in tears of joy, regarded himself as once more staying in the midst of the city called after the elephant. Saluted with reverence by all his daughters-in-law headed by Krishna, king Dhritarashtra, endued with great intelligence, with Gandhari and Kunti, became filled with joy. He then reached his forest-retreat that was applauded by Siddhas and Charanas, and that then teemed with vast crowds of men all desirous of beholding him, like the firmament teeming with innumerable stars."

SECTION XXV

Vaisampayana said, 'The king, O chief of Bharata's race, with those foremost of men, viz., his brothers, who were all possessed of eyes that resembled lotus-petals, took his seat in the retreat of his eldest sire. There sat around him many highly-blessed ascetics, hailing from diverse regions, from desire of beholding the sons of that lord of Kuru's race., viz., the Pandavas of wide chests. They said, 'We wish to know who amongst these is Yudhishtira, who are Bhima and Arjuna, who the twins, and who is Draupadi of great fame.' Then the Suta, Sanjaya, in answer to their queries, pointed out to them the Pandavas. naming each, and Draupadi too as also the other ladies of the Kuru household.'

Sanjaya said, 'This one that is as fair of complexion as pure gold, that is endued with a body which looks like that of a full-grown lion, that is possessed of a large aquiline nose, and wide and expansive eyes that are, again, of a coppery hue, is the Kuru king. This one, whose tread resembles that of an infuriate elephant, whose complexion is as fair as that of heated gold, whose frame is of large and expansive proportions and whose arms are long and stout, is Vrikodara. Behold him well! The mighty bowman who sits besides him, of darkish complexion and youthful frame, who resembles the leader of an elephantine herd, whose shoulders are as high as those of a lion, who walks like a sporting elephant, and whose eyes are as expansive as the petals of a lotus, is the hero called Ar-

juna. Those two foremost of men, that are sitting besides Kunti, are the twins, resembling Vishnu and Mahendra. In this whole world of men, they have not their equals in beauty and strength and excellence of conduct. This lady, of eyes as expansive as lotus petals, who seems to have touched the middle age of life, whose complexion resembles that of the blue lotus, and who looks like a goddess of Heaven, is Krishna, the embodied form of the goddess of prosperity.[39] She who sits besides her, possessed of the complexion of pure gold, who looks like the embodied rays of the moon, in the midst of the other ladies, is, ye foremost of regenerate ones, the sister of that unrivalled hero who wields the discus. This other, as fair as pure gold, is the daughter of the snake-chief and wife of Arjuna.[40] This other whose complexion is like that of pure gold or like that of Madhuka flowers, is the princess Chitrangada. This one, that is possessed of the complexion of an assemblage of blue lotuses, is the sister of that monarch, that lord of hosts, who used to always challenge Krishna. She is the foremost wife of Vrikodara. This is the daughter of the king of Magadha who was known by the name of Jarasandha. Possessed of the complexion of an assemblage of Champakas, she is the wife of the youngest son of Madravati. Possessed of a complexion as darkish as that of the blue lotus, she who sits there on the earth, and whose eyes are as expansive as lotus-petals, is the wife of the eldest son of Madravati, This lady whose complexion is as fair as that of heated gold and who sits with her child on her lap, is the daughter of king Virata. She is the wife of that Abhimanyu who, while divested of his car, was slain by Drona and others fighting from their cars.[41] These ladies, the hair on whose heads shows not the parted line, and who are clad in white, are the widows of the slain sons of Dhritarashtra. They are the daughters-in-law of this old king, the wives of his hundred sons, now deprived of both their husbands and children who have been slain by heroic foes. I have now pointed them out in the order of precedence. In consequence of their devotion to Brahmanas, their understandings and hearts are divested of every kind of crookedness. Possessed of pure souls, they have all been pointed out by me, – these princesses of the Kaurava house-hold, – in answer to your queries.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Thus that king of Kuru's race, of very advanced years, having met with those sons of him that was a deity among men. enquired about their welfare after all the ascetics had gone away. The warriors who had accompanied the Pandavas, leaving the retreat, sat themselves down at a little distance, alighting from their cars and the animals they rode. Indeed, after all the crowd, viz., the ladies, the old men, and the children, had been seated, the old king duly addressed them, making the usual enquiries of politeness.'"

SECTION XXVI

Dhritarashtra said. 'O Yudhishtira, art thou in peace and happiness, with all thy brothers and the inhabitants of the city and the provinces? Are they that live in dependance on thee also happy? Are they ministers, and servitors, and all thy seniors and preceptors also, happy? Are those also that live in thy dominions free from fear? Dost thou follow the old and traditional conduct of rulers of men? Is thy treasury filled without disregarding the restraints imposed by justice and equity? Dost thou behave as thou shouldst towards foes, neutrals, and allies? Dost thou duly look after the Brahmanas, always making them the first gifts (ordained in sacrifices and religious rites)? What need I say of the citizens, and thy servants, and kinsmen, – are they foes, O chief of Bharata's race, gratified with thy behaviour? Dost thou, O king of kings, adore with devotion the Pitris and the deities? Dost thou worship guests with food and drink, O Bharata? Do the Brahmanas in thy dominions, devoted to the duties of their order, walk along the path of righteousness? Do the Kshatriyas and Vaisyas and Sudras also within thy kingdom, and all thy relatives, observe their respective duties? I hope the women, the children, and the old, among thy subjects, do not grieve (under distress) and do not beg (the necessaries of life). Are the ladies of thy household duly honoured in thy house, O best of men? I hope, O monarch, that this race of royal sages, having obtained thee for their king, have not fallen away from fame and glory.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Unto the old king who said so, Yudhishtira, conversant with morality and justice, and well-skilled in acts and speech, spoke as follows, putting some questions about his welfare.'

Yudhishtira said, 'Doth thy peace, O king, thy self-restraint, thy tranquillity of heart, grow? Is this my mother able to serve thee without fatigue and trouble? Will, O king, her residence in the woods be productive of fruits? I hope this queen, who is my eldest mother, who is emaciated with (exposure to) cold and wind and the toil of walking, and who is now devoted to the practice of severe austerities, no longer gives way, to grief for her children of mighty energy, all of whom, devoted to the duties of the Kshatriya order, have been slain on the field of battle. Does she accuse us, sinful wretches, that are responsible for their slaughter? Where is Vidura, O king? We do not see him here. I hope this Sanjaya, observant of penances, is in peace and happiness.

Vaisampayana continued, 'Thus addressed, Dhritarashtra answered king Yudhishtira, saying, – 'O son. Vidura is well. He is performing austere penances, subsisting on air alone, for he abstains from all other food. He is emaciated and his arteries and nerves have become visible. Sometimes he is seen in this empty forest by Brahmanas.' While Dhritarashtra was saying this Vidura was seen at a distance. He had matted locks on his head, and gravels in his mouth, and was exceedingly emaciated. He was perfectly naked. His body was besmeared all over with filth, and with the dust of various wild flowers. When Kshatri was beheld from a distance, the fact was reported to Yudhishtira. Vidura suddenly stopped, O king, casting his eyes towards the retreat (and seeing it peopled by so many individuals). King Yudhishtira pursued him alone, as he ran and entered the deep forest, sometimes not seen by the pursuer. He said aloud, 'O Vidura, O Vidura, I am king Yudhishtira, thy favourite!' – Exclaiming thus, Yudhishtira, with great exertion, followed Vidura. That foremost of intelligent men, viz., Vidura, having reached a solitary spot in the forest, stood still, leaning against a tree. He was exceedingly emaciated. He retained only the shape of a human being (all his characteristic features having totally disappeared). Yudhishtira of great intelligence recognised him, however, (in spite of such change). Standing before him, Yudhishtira addressed him, saying, 'I am Yudhishtira!' Indeed, worshipping Vidura properly, Yudhishtira said these words in the hearing of Vidura. Meanwhile Vidura eyed the king with a steadfast gaze. Casting his gaze thus on the king, he stood motionless in Yoga. Possessed of great intelligence, he then (by his Yoga-power) entered the body of Yudhishtira, limb by limb. He united his life-breaths with the king's life-breaths, and his senses with the king's senses. Verify, with the aid of Yoga-power, Vidura, blazing with energy, thus entered the body of king Yudhishtira the just. Meanwhile, the body of Vidura continued to lean against the tree, with eyes fixed in a steadfast gaze. The king soon saw that life had fled out of it. At the same time, he felt that he himself had become stronger than before and that he had acquired many additional virtues and accomplishments. Possessed of great learning and energy, O monarch, Pandu's son, king Yudhishtira the just, then recollected his own state before his birth among men.[42] Endued with mighty energy, he had heard of Yoga practice from Vyasa. King Yudhishtira the just, possessed of great learning, became desirous of doing the last rites to the body of Vidura, and wished to cremate it duly. An invisible voice was then heard, – saying, – 'O king, this body that belonged to him called Vidura should not be cremated. In him is thy body also. He is the eternal deity of Righteousness. Those regions of felicity which are known by the name of Santanika will be his, O Bharata. He was an observer of the duties of Yatis. Thou shouldst not, O scorcher of foes, grieve for him at all. Thus addressed, king Yudhishtira the just, returned from that spot, and represented everything unto the royal son of Vichitraviryya. At this, that king of great splendour, all these men, and Bhimasena and others, became filled with wonder. Hearing what had happened, king Dhritarashtra became pleased and then, addressing the son of Dharma. said, – 'Do thou accept from me these gifts of water and roots and fruits. It has been said, O king, that one's guest should take that which one takes oneself.' Thus addressed, Dharma's son answered the king, saying, – 'So be it.' The mighty-armed king ate the fruits and roots which the monarch gave him. Then they all spread their beds under a tree and passed that night thus, having eaten fruits and roots and drunk the water that the old king had given them.'"

SECTION XXVII

Vaisampayana said, 'They passed that night which was characterised by auspicious constellations even thus, O king, in that retreat of righteous ascetics. The conversation that occurred was characterised by many reflections on morality and wealth. Consisting of delightful and sweet words, it was graced with diverse citations from the Srutis. The Pandavas, O king, leaving costly beds, laid themselves down, near their mother, on the bare ground. Indeed, those heroes passed that night, having eaten the food which was the food of the high-souled king Dhritarashtra. After the night had passed away, king Yudhishtira, having gone through his morning acts, proceeded to survey that retreat in the company of his brothers. With the ladies of his household the servants, and his priest, the king roved about the retreat in all directions, as he pleased, at the command of Dhritarashtra. He beheld many sacrificial altars with sacred fires blazing on them and with many ascetics seated on them, that had performed their oblations and poured libations in honour of the deities. Those altars were overspread with fruits and roots of the forest, and with heaps of flowers. The smoke of clarified butter curled upwards from them. They were graced, besides, with many ascetics possessed of bodies that looked like the embodied Vedas and with many that belonged to the lay brotherhood. Herds of deer were grazing, or resting here and there, freed from every fear. Innumerable birds also were there, engaged in uttering their melodious notes, O king. The whole forest seemed to resound with the notes of peacocks and Dadyuhas and Kokilas and the sweet songs of other warblers.[43] Some spots echoed with the chant of Vedic hymns recited by learned Brahmanas. Some were adorned with large heaps of fruits and roots gathered from the wilderness. King Yudhishtira then gave those ascetics jars made of gold or copper which he had brought for them, and many deer-skins and blankets and sacrificial ladles made of wood, and Kamandalus and wooden platters, and pots and pans, O Bharata.[44] Diverse kinds of vessels, made of iron, and smaller vessels and cups of various sizes, were also given away by the king, the ascetics taking them away, each as many as he liked. King Yudhishtira of righteous soul, having thus roved through the woods and beheld the diverse retreats of ascetics and made many gifts, returned to the place where his uncle was. He saw king Dhritarashtra, that lord of Earth, at his ease, with Gandhari beside him, after having finished his morning rites. The righteous-souled monarch saw also his mother, Kunti, seated not much remote from that place, like a disciple with bent head, endued with humility. He saluted the old king, proclaiming his name. 'Sit down' were the words the old king said. Receiving Dhritarashtra's permission, Yudhishtira sat himself down on a mat of Kusa grass. Then the other sons of Pandu with Bhima among them, O thou of Bharata's race, saluted the king and touched his feet and sat themselves down, receiving his permission. The old Kuru king, surrounded by them, looked exceedingly beautiful. Indeed, he blazed with a Vedic splendour like Vrihaspati in the midst of the celestials. After they had sat themselves down, many great Rishis, viz., Satayupa and others, who were denizens of Kurukshetra, came there. The illustrious and learned Vyasa, possessed of great energy, and revered by even the celestial Rishis, showed himself, at the head of his numerous disciples, unto Yudhishtira. The Kuru king Dhritarashtra, Kunti's son Yudhishtira of great energy, and Bhimasena and others, stood up and advancing a few steps, saluted those guests. Approaching near, Vyasa, surrounded by Satayupa and others, addressed king Dhritarashtra, saying, – 'Be thou seated.' The illustrious Vyasa then took an excellent seat made of Kusa grass placed upon a black deer-skin and covered with a piece of silken cloth. They had reserved that seat for him. After Vyasa had been seated, all those foremost of regenerate persons, endued with abundant energy, sat themselves down, having received the permission of the Island-born sage."

SECTION XXVIII

Vaisampayana said, 'After the high-souled Pandavas had all been seated, Satyawati's son Vyasa said, – O Dhritarashtra of mighty arms, hast thou been able to achieve penances? Is thy mind, O king, pleased with thy residence in the woods? Has the grief that was thine, born of the slaughter of thy sons in battle, disappeared from thy heart? Are all thy perceptions, O sinless one, now clear? Dost

thou practise the ordinances of forest life after having made thy heart firm? Does my daughter-in-law, Gandhari, allow herself to be overwhelmed by grief? She is possessed of great wisdom. Endued with intelligence, that queen understands both Religion and Wealth. She is well conversant with the truths that relate to both prosperity and adversity. Does she still grieve? Does Kunti, O king, who in consequence of her devotion to the service of her seniors, left her children, attend to thy wants and serve thee with all humility? Have the high-minded and high-souled king, Yudhishtira, the son of Dharma and Bhima and Arjuna and the twins been sufficiently comforted? Dost thou feel delight at seeing them? Has thy mind become freed from every stain? Has thy disposition, O king, become pure in consequence of the increase of thy knowledge? This aggregate of three, O king, is the foremost of all concerns, O Bharata, viz., abstention from injury to any creature, truth, and freedom from anger. Does thy forest life any longer prove painful to thee? Art thou able to earn with thy own exertions the products of the wilderness for thy food? Do fasts give thee any pain now? Hast thou learnt, O king, how the high-souled Vidura, who was Dharma's self, left this world? Through the curse of Mandavya, the deity of Righteousness became born as Vidura. He was possessed of great intelligence. Endued with high penances, he was high-souled and high-minded. Even Vrihaspati among the celestials, and Sukra among the Asuras, was not possessed of such intelligence as that foremost of persons. The eternal deity of Righteousness was stupefied by the Rishi Mandavya with an expenditure of his penances earned for a long time with great care.[45] At the command of the Grandsire, and through my own energy, Vidura of great intelligence was procreated by me upon a soil owned by Vichitravirya. A deity of deities, and eternal, he was, O king, thy brother. The learned know him to be Dharma in consequence of his practices of Dharana and Dhyana.[46] He grows with (the growth of) truth, self-restraint, tranquillity of heart, compassion, and gifts. He is always engaged in penances, and is eternal. From that deity of Righteousness, through Yoga-puissance, the Kuru king Yudhishtira also took his birth. Yudhishtira, therefore, O king, is Dharma of great wisdom and immeasurable intelligence. Dharma exists both here and hereafter, and is like fire or wind or water or earth or space. He is, O king of kings, capable of going everywhere and exists, pervading the whole universe. He is capable of being beheld by only those that are the foremost of the deities and those that are cleansed of every sin and crowned with ascetic success. He that is Dharma is Vidura; and he that is Vidura is the (eldest) son of Pandu. That son of Pandu, O king, is capable of being perceived by thee. He stays before thee as thy servitor. Endued with great Yoga-puissance, thy high-souled brother, that foremost of intelligent men, seeing the high-souled Yudhishtira, the son of Kunti, has entered into his person. These also, O chief of Bharata's race, I shall unite with great benefit. Know, O son, that I am come here for dispelling thy doubts. Some feat that has never been accomplished before by any of the great Rishis, some wonderful effect of my penances, – I shall show thee. What object is that, O king, whose accomplishment thou desirest from me? Tell me what is that which thou wishest to see or ask or hear? O sinless one, I shall accomplish it.'

SECTION XXIX (Putradarsana Parva)

Janamejaya said, 'Tell me. O learned Brahmana, what that wonderful feat was which the great Rishi Vyasa of high energy accomplished after his promise to the old king, made when Dhritarashtra, that lord of Earth, that foremost one of Kuru's race, had taken up his abode in the forest, with his wife and with his daughter-in-law Kunti; and after, indeed, Vidura had left his own body and entered into Yudhishtira, and at the time when all the sons of Pandu were staying in the ascetic retreat. For how many days did the Kuru king Yudhishtira of unfading glory stay, with his men, in the woods? On what food, O puissant one, did the high-souled Pandavas support themselves, with their men, and wives, while they lived in the woods? O sinless one, do thou tell me this.'

Vaisampayana said, 'With the permission of the Kuru king, the Pandavas, O monarch, with their troops and the ladies of their household, supported themselves on diverse kinds of food and drink and passed about a month in great happiness in that forest. Towards the close of that period, O

sinless one, Vyasa came there. While all those princes sat around Vyasa, engaged in conversation on diverse subjects, other Rishis came to that spot. They were Narada, and Parvata and Devala of austere penances, and Viswavasu and Tumvuru, and Chitrasena., O Bharata. Endued with severe penances, the Kuru king Yudhishtira, with the permission of Dhritarashtra, worshipped them according to due rites. Having obtained that worship from Yudhishtira, all of them sat down on sacred seats (made of Kusa grass), as also on excellent seats made of peacock feathers. After they had all taken their seats, the Kuru king of high intelligence took his seat there, surrounded by the sons of Pandu. Gandhari and Kunti and Draupadi, and she of the Sattwata race, and other ladies of the royal household also sat down. The conversation that then arose was excellent and had reference to topics connected with piety, and the Rishis of old, and the deities and the Asuras. At the close of that conversation Vyasa of great energy, that foremost of eloquent men, that first of all persons conversant with the Vedas, highly gratified, addressed the blind monarch and once more said, – 'Burning as thou art with grief on account of thy children, I know, O king of kings, what object is cherished by thee in thy heart. The sorrow that always exists in the heart of Gandhari, that which exists in the heart of Kunti, and that also which is cherished by Draupadi in her heart, and that burning grief, on account of the death of her son, which Krishna's sister Subhadra also cherishes, are all known to me. Hearing of this meeting, O king, of thine with all these princes and princesses of thy house, I have come here, O delighter of the Kauravas, for dispelling thy doubts. Let the deities and Gandharvas, and all these great Rishis, behold today the energy of those penances which I have acquired for these long years. Therefore, O king, tell me what wish of thine I shall grant today. I am puissant enough to grant thee a boon. Behold the fruit of my penances.' Thus addressed by Vyasa of immeasurable understanding, king Dhritarashtra reflected for a moment and then prepared to speak. He said, – 'I am exceedingly fortunate. Lucky am I in obtaining thy favour. My life is crowned with success today, – since this meeting has happened between me and ye all of great piety. Today I shall attain to that highly happy goal which is reserved for me, since, ye ascetics endued with wealth of penances, ye who are equal to Brahma himself, I have succeeded in obtaining this meeting with you all. There is not the least doubt that this sight that I have obtained of you all has cleansed me of every sin. Ye sinless ones, I have no longer any fear in respect of my end in the next world. Full as I am of love for my children, I always cherish their remembrance. My mind, however, is always tortured by the recollection of the diverse acts of wrong which my wicked son of exceedingly evil understanding perpetrated. Possessed of a sinful understanding, he always persecuted the innocent Pandavas. Alas, the whole Earth has been devastated by him, with her steeds, elephants and men. Many high-souled kings, rulers of diverse realms, came for siding my son and succumbed to death. Alas, leaving their beloved sires and wives and their very life-breaths, all those heroes have become guests of the king of the dead. What end, O regenerate one, has been attained by those men who have been slain, for the sake of their friend, in battle? What end also has been attained by my sons and grandsons who have fallen in the fray? My heart is always pained at the thought of my having brought about the slaughter of the mighty Bhishma, the son of Santanu, and of Drona, that foremost of Brahmanas, through my foolish and sinful son who was an injurer of his friends. Desirous of obtaining the sovereignty of the Earth, he caused the Kuru race, blazing with prosperity, to be annihilated. Reflecting on all this, I burn day and night with grief. Deeply afflicted with pain and grief, I am unable to obtain peace of mind. Indeed, O father, thinking of all this, I have no peace of mind.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Hearing these lamentations expressed in diverse ways, of that royal sage, the grief, O Janamejaya, of Gandhari, became fresh. The grief also of Kunti, of the daughter of Drupada, of Subhadra, and of the other members, male and female, and the daughters-in-law, of the Kuru race, became equally green. Queen Gandhari, with bandaged eyes, joining her hands, addressed her father-in-law. Deeply afflicted with grief on account of the slaughter of her sons, she said, – 'O foremost of ascetics, sixteen years have passed over the head of this king grieving for the death of his sons and divested of peace of mind. Afflicted with grief on account of the slaughter of his children, this king Dhritarashtra, always breathes heavily, and never sleeps at night. O great Rishi, through the power of thy penances thou art competent to create new worlds. What need I say

then about showing this king his children who are now in the other world? This Krishna, the daughter of Drupada, hath lost all her kinsmen and children. For this, she who is the dearest of my daughters-in-law grieves exceedingly. The sister of Krishna, viz., Subhadra of sweet speech, burning with the loss of her son, grieves as deeply. This lady that is respected by all, that is the wife of Bhuriravas, afflicted with grief on account of the fate that has overtaken her husband, always indulges in heart-rending lamentations. Her father-in-law was the intelligent Valhika of Kuru's race. Alas, Somadatta also was slain, along with his sire, in the great battle![47] Alas, a century of sons, heroes that never retreated from battle, belonging to this son of thine, this king of great intelligence and great prosperity, has been slain in battle. The hundred wives of those sons are all grieving and repeatedly enhancing the grief of both the king and myself. O great ascetic, stricken by that great slaughter, they have gathered round me. Alas, those high-souled heroes, those great car warriors, my fathers-in-law, Somadatta and others, – alas, what end has been theirs, O puissant one? Through thy grace, O holy one, that will happen in consequence of which this lord of Earth, myself, and this daughter-in-law of thine, viz., Kunti, shall all become freed from our grief. After Gandhari had said so, Kunti, whose face had become wasted through observance of many hard vows, began to think of her secret-born son endued with solar effulgence. The boon giving Rishi Vyasa, capable of both beholding and hearing what happened at a remote distance, saw that the royal mother of Arjuna was afflicted with grief. Unto her Vyasa said, – 'Tell me, O blessed one, what is in thy mind. Tell me what thou wishest to say. At this, Kunti, bending her head unto her father-in-law, and overcome with bashfulness, said these words unto him, relating to the occurrences of the past.'"

SECTION XXX

Kunti said, 'O holy one, thou art my father-in-law and therefore, my deity of deities. Verily, thou art my god of gods. Hear my words of truth. An ascetic named Durvasas, who is of the regenerate order and who is full of wrath, came to my father's house for eleemosynary charity. I succeeded in gratifying him by the purity of my external behaviour and of my mind, as also by refusing to notice the many wrongs he did. I did not give way to wrath although there was much in his behaviour quite capable of exciting that passion. Served with care, the great ascetic became highly pleased with me and disposed to grant me a boon. 'Thou must accept the boon I shall give,' were his words to me. Fearing his curse, I answered him, saying, – 'So be it.' The regenerate Rishi once more said unto me, – 'O blessed damsel, O thou of beautiful face, thou wilt become the mother of Dharma. Those deities whom thou wilt summon will be obedient to thee.' Having said those words, the regenerate one vanished away from my sight. I became filled with wonder. The mantra, however, which the Rishi gave has dwelt in my memory at all times. One day, sitting within my chamber I beheld the sun rising. Desiring to bring the maker of day before me, I recollected the words of the Rishi. Without any consciousness of the fault I committed, I summoned the deity from mere girlishness. The deity, however, of a thousand rays, (summoned by me) came to my presence. He divided himself in twain. With one portion he was in the firmament, and with the other he stood on the Earth before me. With one he heated the worlds and with another he came to me. He told me, while I was trembling at his sight, these words, – 'Do thou ask a boon of me.' Bowing unto him with my head, I asked him to leave me. He replied unto me, saying, – 'I cannot bear the idea of coming to thee fruitlessly. I shall consume thee as also that Brahmana who gave thee the Mantra as a boon.' The Brahmana who had done no evil – I wished to protect from Surya's curse. I therefore, said – 'Let me have a son like thee, O god.' The deity of thousand rays then penetrated me with his energy and stupefied me completely. He then said unto me, – 'Thou wilt have a son,' and then went back to the firmament. I continued to live in the inner apartments and desirous of saying the honour of my sire, I cast into the waters my infant son named Karna who thus came into the world secretly. Without doubt, through the grace of that god, I once more became a virgin, O regenerate one, even as the Rishi Durvasas had said unto me. Foolish that I am, although he knew me for his mother when he grew up, I yet made no effort to acknowledge him. This burns me, O regenerate Rishi, as is well-known to thee. Whether it is sinful or not so, I have told thee truth. It behoveth thee, O holy one, to gratify the crav-

ing I feel for beholding that son of mine. O foremost of ascetics, let this king also, O sinless one, obtain the fruition today of that wish of his which he cherishes in his bosom and which has become known to thee.' Thus addressed by Kunti, Vyasa, that foremost of all persons, said unto her in reply, – 'Blessed be thou; all that thou hast said unto me will happen. (As regards the birth of Karna) no fault is ascribable to thee. Thou wert restored to virginity. The deities are possessed of (Yoga) puissance. They are able to penetrate human bodies.[48] There are deities. They beget (offspring) by thought alone. By word, by sight, by touch, and by sexual union, also, they beget children. These are the five methods. Thou belongest to the order of humanity. Thou hast no fault (in what happened). Know this. O Kunti. Let the fever of thy heart be dispelled. For those that are mighty, everything is becoming. 'For those that are mighty, everything is pure. For those that are mighty, everything is meritorious. For those that are mighty, everything is their own.'"

SECTION XXXI.

Vyasa said, 'Blessed be thou, O Gandhari, thou shalt behold thy sons and brothers and friends and kinsmen along with thy sires this night like men risen from sleep. Kunti also shall behold Karna, and she of Yadu's race shall behold her son Abhimanyu. Draupadi shall behold her five sons, her sires, and her brothers also. Even before ye had asked me, this was the thought in my mind. I entertained this purpose when I was urged to that effect by the king, by thee, O Gandhari, and by Kunti. Thou shouldst not grieve for those foremost of men. They met with death in consequence of their devotion to the established practices of Kshatriyas. O faultless one, the work of the gods could not but be accomplished. It was for accomplishing that object that those heroes came down on Earth. They were all portions of the deities. Gandharvas and Apsaras, and Pisachas and Guhyakas and Rakshasas, many persons of great sanctity, many individuals crowned with success (of penances), celestial Rishis, deities and Danavas and heavenly Rishis of spotless character, met with death on the battle-field of Kurukshetra.[49] It is heard that he that was the intelligent king of the Gandharvas, and named Dhritarashtra, took birth in the world of men as thy lord Dhritarashtra. Know that Pandu of unfading glory and distinguished above all others, sprung from the Maruts. Kshatri and Yudhishtira are both portions of the deity of Righteousness. Know that Duryodhana was Kali, and Sakuni was Dwapara. O thou of good features, know that Dussasana and others were all Rakshasas. Bhimasena of great might, that chastiser of foes, is from the Maruts. Know that this Dhananjaya, the son of Pritha, is the ancient Rishi Nara. Hrishikesa is Narayana, and the twins are the Aswins. The foremost of heat-giving ones, viz., Surya, having divided his body in twain, continued with one portion to give heat to the worlds and with another to live (on Earth.) as Karna. He that took his birth as the son of Arjuna, that gladdener of all, that heir to the possessions of the Pandavas, who was slain by six great car-warriors (fighting together), was Soma. He was born of Subhadra. Through Yoga-puissance he had divided himself in twain. Dhristadyumna who sprung with Draupadi from the sacrificial fire, was an auspicious portion of the deity of fire. Sikhandin was a Rakshasa. Know that Drona was a portion of Vrihaspati, and that Drona's son is born of a portion of Rudra. Know that Ganga's son Bhishma was one of the Vasus that became born as a human being. Thus, O thou of great wisdom, the deities had taken birth as human beings, and after having accomplished their purposes have gone back to Heaven. That sorrow which is in the hearts of you all, relating to the return of these to the other world, I shall today dispel. Do you all go towards the Bhagirathi. – You will then behold all those that have been slain on the field of battle.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'All the persons there present, having heard the words of Vyasa, raised a loud leonine shout and then proceeded towards the Bhagirathi. Dhritarashtra with all his ministers and the Pandavas, as also with all those foremost of Rishis and Gandharvas that had come there, set out as directed. Arrived at the banks of Ganga, that sea of men took up their abode as pleased them. The king possessed of great intelligence, with the Pandavas, took up his abode in a desirable spot, along with the ladies and the aged ones of his household. They passed that day as if it were a whole year, waiting for the advent of the night when they would behold the deceased princes. The Sun

then reached the sacred mountain in the west and all those persons, having bathed in the sacred stream, finished their evening rites."

SECTION XXXII

Vaisampayana said, 'When night came, all those persons, having finished their evening rites, approached Vyasa. Dhritarashtra of righteous soul, with purified body and with mind solely directed towards it, sat there with the Pandavas and the Rishis in his company. The ladies of the royal household sat with Gandhari in a secluded spot. All the citizens and the inhabitants of the provinces ranged themselves according to their years. Then the great ascetic, Vyasa, of mighty energy, bathing in the sacred waters of the Bhagirathi, summoned all the deceased warriors, viz., those that had fought on the side of the Pandavas, those that had fought for the Kauravas, including highly blessed kings belonging to diverse realms. At this, O Janamejaya, a deafening uproar was heard to arise from within the waters, resembling that which had formerly been heard of the forces of the Kurus and the Pandavas. Then those kings, headed by Bhishma and Drona, with all their troops, arose by thousands from the waters of the Bhagirathi. There were Virata and Drupada, with their sons and forces. There were the sons of Draupadi and the son of Subhadra, and the Rakshasa Ghatotkacha. There were Karna and Duryodhana, and the mighty car-warrior Sakuni, and the other children, endowed with great strength, of Dhritarashtra, headed by Dussasana. There were the son of Jarasandha, and Bhagadatta, and Jalasandha of great energy, and Bhurisravas, and Sala, and Salya, and Vrishasena with his younger brother. There were prince Lakshmana (the son of Duryodhana), and the son of Dhrishtadyumna, and all the children of Sikhandin, and Dhrishtaketu, with his younger brother. There were Achala and Vrishaka, and the Rakshasa Alayudha, and Valhika, and Somadatta, and king Chekitana. These and many others, who for their number cannot be conveniently named, appeared on that occasion. All of them rose from the waters of the Bhagirathi, with resplendent bodies. Those kings appeared, each clad in that dress and equipt with that standard and that vehicle which he had while fighting on the field. All of them were now robed in celestial vestments and all had brilliant ear-rings. They were free from all animosity and pride, and divested of wrath and jealousy. Gandharvas sang their praises, and bards waited on them, chanting their deeds. Robed in celestial vestments and wearing celestial garlands, each of them was waited upon by bands of Apsaras. At that time, through the puissance of his penances, the great ascetic, the son of Satyawati, gratified with Dhritarashtra, gave him celestial vision. Endued with celestial knowledge and strength, Gandhari of great fame saw all her children as also all that had been slain in battle. All persons assembled there beheld with steadfast gaze and hearts filled with wonder that amazing and inconceivable phenomenon which made the hair on their bodies stand on its end. It looked like a high carnival of gladdened men and women. That wondrous scene looked like a picture painted on the canvas. Dhritarashtra, beholding all those heroes, with his celestial vision obtained through the grace of that sage, became full of joy, O chief of Bharata's race."

SECTION XXXIII

Vaisampayana said. 'Then those foremost of men divested of wrath and jealousy, and cleansed of every sin, met with one another, agreeably to those high and auspicious ordinances that have been laid down by regenerate Rishis. All of them were happy of hearts and looked like gods moving in Heaven. Son met with sire or mother, wives with husbands, brother with brother, and friend with friend, O king. The Pandavas, full of joy, met with the mighty bowman Karna as also with the son of Subhadra, and the children of Draupadi. With happy hearts the sons of Pandu approached Karna, O monarch, and became reconciled with him. All those warriors, O chief of Bharata's race, meeting with one another through the grace of the great ascetic, became reconciled with one another. Casting off all unfriendliness, they became established on amity and peace. It was even thus that all those foremost of men, viz., the Kauravas and other kings became united with the Kurus and other kinsmen of theirs as also with their children. The whole of that night they passed in great happiness.

Indeed, the Kshatriya warriors, in consequence of the happiness they felt, regarded that place as Heaven itself. There was no grief, no fear, no suspicion, no discontent, no reproach in that region, as those warriors, O monarch, met with one another on that night. Meeting with their sires and brothers and husbands and sons, the ladies cast off all grief and felt great raptures of delight. Having sported with one another thus for one night, those heroes and those ladies, embracing one another and taking one another's leave returned to the places they had come from. Indeed, that foremost of ascetics dismissed that concourse of warriors. Within the twinkling of an eye that large crowd disappeared in the very sight of all those (living) persons. Those high-souled persons, plunging into the sacred river Bhagirathi proceeded, with their cars and standards, to their respective abodes. Some went to the regions of the gods, some to the region of Brahman, some to the region of Varuna, and some to the region of Kuvera. Some among those kings proceeded to the region of Surya. Amongst the Rakshasas and Pisachas some proceeded to the country of Uttara-Kurus. Others, moving in delightful attitudes, went in the company of the deities. Even thus did all those high-souled persons disappear with their vehicles and animals and with all their followers. After all of them had gone away, the great sage, who was standing in the waters of the sacred stream viz., Vyasa of great righteousness and energy, that benefactor of the Kurus, then addressed those Kshatriya ladies who had become widows, and said these words, 'Let those amongst these foremost of women that are desirous of attaining to the regions acquired by their husbands cast away all sloth and quickly plunge into the sacred Bhagirathi. – Hearing these words of his, those foremost ladies, placing faith in them, took the permission of their father-in-law, and then plunged into the waters of the Bhagirathi. Freed from human bodies, those chaste ladies then proceeded, O king, with their husbands to the regions acquired by the latter. Even thus, those ladies of virtuous conduct, devoted to their husbands entering, the waters of the Bhagirathi, became freed from their mortal tenements and attained to the companionship of their husbands in the regions acquired by them. Endued with celestial forms, and adorned with celestial ornaments, and wearing celestial vestments and garlands, they proceeded to those regions where their husbands had found their abodes. Possessed of excellent behaviour and many virtues, their anxieties all dispelled, they were seen to ride on excellent cars, and endued with every accomplishment they found those regions of happiness which were theirs by right. Devoted to the duties of piety, Vyasa, at that time, becoming a giver of boons, granted unto all the men there assembled the fruition of the wishes they respectively cherished. People of diverse realms, hearing of this meeting between the hallowed dead and living human beings, became highly delighted. That man who duly listens to this narrative meets with everything that is dear to him. Indeed, he obtains all agreeable objects both here and hereafter. That man of learning and science, that foremost of righteous persons, who recites this narrative for the hearing of others acquires great fame here and an auspicious end hereafter, as also a union with kinsmen and all desirable objects. Such a man has not to undergo painful labour for his sustenance, and meets with all sorts of auspicious objects in life. Even these are the rewards reaped by a person who, endued with devotion to Vedic studies and with penances, recites this narrative in the hearing of others. Those persons who possessed of good conduct, devoted to self-restraint, cleansed of all sins by the gifts they make, endued with sincerity, having tranquil souls, freed from falsehood and the desire of injuring others, adorned with faith, belief in the scriptures, and intelligence, listen to this wonderful parvan, surely attain to the highest goal hereafter."

SECTION XXXIV

Sauti said, 'Hearing this story of the re-appearance and departure of his forefathers, king Janamejaya of great intelligence became highly pleased. Filled with joy, he once more questioned Vaisampayana on the subject of the reappearance of dead men, saying, – "How is it possible for persons whose bodies have been destroyed to re-appear in those very forms?" Thus asked, that foremost of regenerate persons, viz., the disciple of Vyasa, that first of speakers, possessed of great energy, thus answered Janamejaya.

Vaisampayana said, 'This is certain, viz., that acts are never destroyed (without their consequences being enjoyed or endured). Bodies, O king, are born of acts; so also are features. The great primal elements are eternal (indestructible) in consequence of the union with them of the Lord of all beings. They exist with what is eternal. Accordingly, they have no destruction when the non-eternal are destroyed. Acts done without exertion are true and foremost, and bear real fruit. The soul, united however with such acts as require exertion for their accomplishment, enjoys pleasure and pain.[50] Though united so (that is, with pleasure and pain), yet it is a certain inference that the soul is never modified by them, like the reflection of creatures in a mirror. It is never destroyed.[51] As long as one's acts are not exhausted (by enjoyment or endurance of their fruits good and bad), so long does one regard the body to be oneself. The man, however, whose acts have been exhausted, without regarding the body to be self, takes the self to be something otherwise.[52] Diverse existent objects (such as the primal elements and the senses, etc.) attaining to a body, become united as one. To men of knowledge who understand the difference (between the body and self), those very objects become eternal.[53] In the Horse-sacrifice, this Sruti is heard in the matter of the slaying of the horse. Those which are the certain possessions of embodied creatures, viz., their life-breaths (and the senses, etc.), exist eternally even when they are borne to the other world. I shall tell thee what is beneficial, if it be agreeable to thee, O king. Thou hast, while employed in thy sacrifices, heard of the paths of the deities. When preparations were made for any sacrifice of thine, the deities became beneficially inclined to thee. When indeed, the deities were thus disposed and came to thy sacrifices, they were lords in the matter of the passage (from this to the next world) of the animals slain.[54] For this reason, the eternal ones (viz., Jivas), by adoring the deities in sacrifices, succeed in attaining to excellent goals. When the five primal elements are eternal, when the soul also is eternal, he called Purusha (viz., the soul invested with case) is equally so. When such is the case, he who beholds a creature as disposed to take diverse forms, is regarded as having an erroneous understanding. He who indulges in too much grief at separation is, I think, a foolish person. He who sees evil in separation should abandon union. By standing aloof, no unions are formed, and sorrow is cast off, for sorrow in the world is born of separation.[55] Only he who understands the distinction between body and self, and not another, becomes freed from the erroneous conviction. He that knows the other (viz., self) attains to the highest understanding and becomes freed from error.[56] As regards creatures. they appear from an invisible state, and once more disappear into invisibility. I do not know him. He also does not know me. As regards myself, renunciation is not yet mine.[57] He that is not possessed of puissance enjoys or endures the fruits of all his acts in those too dies in which he does them. If the act be a mental one, its consequences are enjoyed or endured mentally; if it be done with the body, its consequences are to be enjoyed or endured in the body.'"[58]

SECTION XXXV

Vaisampayana said, 'King Dhritarashtra had never beheld his own sons. Obtaining eye-sight through the grace of the Rishi, he beheld, for the first time, O perpetuator of Kuru's race, those children of his that were very like his own self. That foremost of men, viz., the Kuru monarch, had learnt all the duties of kings, as also the Vedas and the Upanishadas, and had acquired certitude of understanding (from the same source). Vidura of great wisdom attained to high success through the power of his penances. Dhritarashtra also attained to great success in consequence of having met the ascetic Vyasa.'

Janamejaya said, 'If Vyasa, disposed to grant me a boon, kindly show me my sire in that form which he had, clad as he used to be clad, and as old as he was when he departed from this world, I may then believe all that thou hast told me. Such a sight will be most agreeable to me. Indeed, I shall regard myself crowned with success. I shall have gained a certainty of conclusion. O, let my wish be crowned with fruition through the grace of that foremost of Rishis.'

Sauti said, – 'After king Janamejaya had said these words, Vyasa of great energy and intelligence showed his grace and brought Parikshit (from the other world). King Janamejaya beheld his royal father, possessed of great beauty, brought down from Heaven, in the same form that he had and of the same age as he was (at the time of leaving this world). The high-souled Samika also, and his son Sringin, were similarly brought there. All the counsellors and ministers of the king beheld them. King Janamejaya, performing the final bath in his sacrifice, became highly glad. He poured the sacred water on his father, even as he caused it to be poured on himself. Having undergone the final bath, the king addressed the regenerate Astika who had sprung from the race of the Yayavaras and who was the son of Jaratkaru, and said these words, – 'O Astika, this sacrifice of mine is fraught with many wonderful incidents, since this my sire has been seen by me – he who has dispelled all my sorrows.'

Astika said, 'The performer of that sacrifice in which the ancient Rishi, the Island-born Vyasa, that vast receptacle of penances, is present, is sure, O foremost one of Kuru's race, to conquer both the worlds. O son of the Pandavas, thou hast heard a wonderful history. The snakes have been consumed into ashes and have followed the footsteps of thy sire. Through thy truthfulness, O monarch, Takshaka has with difficulty escaped a painful fate. The Rishis have all been worshipped. Thou hast seen also the end that has been attained by thy high-souled sire. Having heard this sin-cleansing history thou hast achieved abundant merit. The knots of thy heart have been untied through sight of this foremost of person. They that are the supporters of the wings of Righteousness, they that are of good conduct and excellent disposition, they at sight of whom sins become attenuated, – we should all bow to them.'

Sauti continued, 'Having heard this from that foremost of regenerate ones, King Janamejaya worshipped that Rishi, repeatedly honouring him in every way. Conversant with all duties he then asked the Rishi Vaisampayana of unfading glory about the sequel, O best of ascetics, of king Dhritarashtra's residence in the woods.'

SECTION XXXVI

Janamejaya said, 'Having seen his sons and grandsons with all their friends and followers, what, indeed, did that ruler of men, viz., Dhritarashtra, and king Yudhishtira also, do?'

Vaisampayana said, 'Beholding that exceedingly wonderful sight, viz., the re-appearance of his children, the royal sage, Dhritarashtra, became divested of his grief and returned (from the banks of the Bhagirathi) to his retreat. The common people and all the great Rishis, dismissed by Dhritarashtra, returned to the places they respectively wished. The high-souled Pandavas, accompanied by their wives, and with a small retinue, went to the retreat of the high-souled monarch. Then Satyawati's son, who was honoured by regenerate Rishis and all other persons, arrived at the retreat, addressed Dhritarashtra, saying, – 'O mighty-armed Dhritarashtra. O son of Kuru's race, listen to what I say. Thou hast heard diverse discourses from Rishis of great knowledge and sacred deeds, of wealth of penances and excellence of blood, of conversance with the Vedas and their branches, of piety and years, and of great eloquence. Do not set thy mind again on sorrow. He that is possessed of wisdom is never agitated at ill luck. Thou hast also heard the mysteries of the deities from Narada of celestial form. Thy children have all attained, through observance of Kshatriya practices, to that auspicious goal which is sanctified by weapons. Thou hast seen how they move about at will in great happiness. This Yudhishtira of great intelligence is awaiting thy permission, with all his brothers and wives and kinsmen. Do thou dismiss him. Let him go back to his kingdom and rule it. They have passed more than a month in thus residing in the woods. The station of sovereignty should always be well guarded. O king, O thou of Kuru's race, [thy] kingdom has many foes.' Thus addressed by Vyasa of incomparable energy, the Kuru king, well-versed in words, summoned Yudhishtira and said unto him, – 'O Ajatasatru, blessings on thee! Do thou listen to me, with all thy brothers. Through thy grace, O king, grief no longer stands in my way. I am living as happily, O

son, with thee here as if I were in the city called after the elephant. With thee as my protector, O learned one, I am enjoying all agreeable objects. I have obtained from thee all those services which a son renders to his sire. I am highly gratified with thee. I have not the least dissatisfaction with thee, O mighty-armed one. Go now, O son, without tarrying here any longer. Meeting with thee, my penances are being slackened. This my body, endued with penances, I have been able to sustain only in consequence of my meeting with thee.[59] These two mothers of thine, subsisting now upon fallen leaves of trees, and observing vows similar to mine, will not live long. Duryodhana and others, who have become denizens of the other world, have been seen by us, through the puissance of Vyasa's penances and through (the merit of) this my meeting with thee. O sinless one, the purpose of my life has been attained. I now wish to set myself to the practice of the austerest of penances. It behoveth thee to grant me permission. On thee now the obsequial cake, the fame and achievements, and the race of our ancestors, rest. O mighty-armed one, do thou then depart either tomorrow or this very day. Do not tarry, O son. O chief of Bharata's race, thou hast repeatedly heard what the duties are of kings. I do not see what more I can say unto thee. I have no longer any need with thee, O thou of great puissance.'

Vaisampayana continued, 'Unto the (old) monarch who said so, king Yudhishtira replied, – 'O thou that art conversant with every rule of righteousness, it behoveth thee, not to cast me off in this way. I am guilty of no fault. Let all my brothers and followers depart as they like. With steadfast vows I shall wait upon thee and upon these two mothers of mine.' Unto him Gandhari then said, – 'O son, let it not be so. Listen, the race of Kuru is now dependant on thee. The obsequial cake also of my father-in-law depends on thee. Depart then, O son. We have been sufficiently honoured and served by thee. Thou shouldst do what the king says. Indeed, O son, thou shouldst obey the behests of thy sire.'

Vaisampayana continued, – 'Thus addressed by Gandhari, King Yudhishtira, rubbing his eyes which were bathed in tears of affection, said these words of lament. 'The king casts me off, as also Gandhari of great fame. My heart, however, is bound to thee. How shall I, filled as I am with grief, leave thee? I do not, however, at the same time, venture to obstruct thy penances, O righteous lady. There is nothing higher than penances. It is by penances that one attains to the Supreme. O queen, my heart no longer turns as of old towards kingdom. My mind is wholly set upon penances now. The whole Earth is empty now. O auspicious lady, she does not please me any longer. Our kinsmen have been reduced in number. Our strength is no longer what it was before. The Panchalas have been wholly exterminated. They exist in name only. O auspicious lady, I do not behold any one that may assist as their re-establishment and growth. All of them have been consumed to ashes by Drona on the field of battle. Those that remained were slain by Drona's son at night. The Chedis and the Matsyas, who were our friends, no longer exist. Only the tribes of the Vrishnis are all that remain, Vasudeva having upheld them. Beholding only the Vrishnis I wish to live. My desire of life, however, is due to my wish of acquiring merit and not wealth or enjoyment. Do thou cast auspicious looks upon us all. To obtain thy sight will be difficult for us. The king will commence to practise the most austere and unbearable of penances.' Hearing these words, that lord of battle, the mighty-armed Sahadeva, with eyes bathed in tears, addressed Yudhishtira, saying, – 'O chief of Bharata's race, I dare not leave my mother. Do thou return to the capital soon. I shall practise penances, O puissant one. Even here I shall emaciate my body by penances, engaged in serving the feet of the king and of these my mothers.' Unto that mighty-armed hero, Kunti, after an embrace, said – 'Depart, O son. Do not say so. Do my bidding. Do all of you go hence. Let peace be yours. Ye sons, let happiness be yours. By your stay here, our penances will be obstructed. Bound by the ties of my affection for thee, I shall fall off from my high penances. Therefore, O son, leave us. Short is the period that we have of life, O thou of great puissance.' By these and diverse other speeches of Kunti, the minds of Sahadeva and king Yudhishtira were composed. Those foremost ones of Kuru's race, having received the permission of their mother as also of the (old) monarch, saluted the latter and began to take his leave.'

Yudhishtira said, 'Gladdened by auspicious blessings, we shall return to the capital. Indeed, O king, having received thy permission, we shall leave this retreat, freed from every sin.' Thus addressed by the high-souled king Yudhishtira the just, that royal sage, viz., Dhritarashtra, blessed Yudhishtira and gave him permission. The king comforted Bhima, that foremost of all persons endowed with great strength. Endued with great energy and great intelligence, Bhima showed his submissiveness to the king. Embracing Arjuna and clasping those foremost of men, viz., the twins also, and blessing them repeatedly, the Kuru king gave them permission to depart. They worshipped the feet of Gandhari and received her blessings also. Their mother Kunti then smelt their heads, and dismissed them. They then circumambulated the king like calves, when prevented from sucking their dams. Indeed, they repeatedly walked round him, looking steadfastly at him.[60] Then all the ladies of the Kaurava household, headed by Draupadi, worshipped their father-in-law according to the rites laid down in the scriptures, and took his leave. Gandhari and Kunti embraced each of them, and blessing them bade them go. Their mothers-in-law instructed them as to how they should conduct themselves. Obtaining leave, they then departed, with their husbands. Then loud sounds were heard, uttered by the charioteers that said, – 'Yoke, yoke,' – as also of camels that grunted aloud and of steeds that neighed briskly. King Yudhishtira, with his wives and troops and all his kinsmen, set out for Hastinapura."

SECTION XXXVII (Naradagamana Parva)

Vaisampayana said, 'After two years had elapsed from the date of the return of the Pandavas (from the retreat of their sire), the celestial Rishi, Narada, O king, came to Yudhishtira. The mighty-armed Kuru king, that foremost of speakers, viz., Yudhishtira, having duly worshipped him, caused him to take a seat. After the Rishi had rested awhile, the king asked him, saying, – 'It is after a long time that I behold thy holy self arrived at my court. Art thou in peace and happiness, O learned Brahmana? What are those countries which thou hast passed through? What shall I do to thee? Do thou tell me. Thou art the foremost of regenerate ones, and thou art our highest refuge.'

Narada said, 'I have not seen thee for a long while. Hence it is that I have come to thee from my ascetic retreat. I have seen many sacred waters, and the sacred stream Ganga also, O king.'

Yudhishtira said, 'People dwelling on the banks of Ganga report that the high-souled Dhritarashtra is practising the austerest of penances. Hast thou seen him there? Is that perpetuator of Kuru's race in peace? Are Gandhari and Pritha, and the Suta's son Sanjaya also, in peace? How, indeed, is it faring with that royal sire of mine? I desire to hear this, O holy one, if thou hast seen the king (and knowest of his condition).'

Narada said, 'Listen, O king, with calmness to me as I tell thee what I have heard and seen in that ascetic retreat. After thy return from Kurukshetra, O delighter of the Kurus, thy sire, O king, proceeded towards Gangadwara. That intelligent monarch took with him his (sacred) fire, Gandhari and his daughter-in-law Kunti, as also Sanjaya of the Suta caste, and all the Yajakas. Possessed of wealth of penances, thy sire set himself to the practice of severe austerities. He held pebbles of stone in his mouth and had air alone for his subsistence, and abstained altogether from speech. Engaged in severe penances, he was worshipped by all the ascetics in the woods. In six months the king was reduced only to a skeleton. Gandhari subsisted on water alone, while Kunti took a little every sixth day. The sacred fire, O monarch, (belonging to the Kuru king) was duly worshipped by the sacrificing assistants that were with him, with libations of clarified butter poured on it. They did this whether the king saw the rite or not. The king had no fixed habitation. He became a wanderer through those woods. The two queens, as also Sanjaya, followed him. Sanjaya acted as the guide on even and uneven land. The faultless Pritha, O king, became the eye of Gandhari. One day, that best of kings proceeded to a spot on the margin of Ganga. He then bathed in the sacred stream and finishing his ablutions turned his face towards his retreat. The wind rose high. A fierce forest-conflagration set in. It began to burn that forest all around. When the herds of animals were being

burnt all around, as also the snakes that inhabited that region, herds of wild boars began to take themselves to the nearest marshes and waters. When that forest was thus afflicted on all sides and such distress came upon all the living creatures residing there, the king, who had taken no food, was incapable of moving or exerting himself at all. Thy two mothers also, exceedingly emaciated, were unable to move. The king, seeing the conflagration approach him from all sides, addressed the Suta Sanjaya, that foremost of skilful charioteers, saying, – 'Go, O Sanjaya, to such a place where the fire may not burn thee. As regards ourselves, we shall suffer our bodies to be destroyed by this fire and attain to the highest goal.' Unto him, Sanjaya, that foremost of speakers, said, – 'O king, this death, brought on by a fire that is not sacred, will prove calamitous to thee. I do not, however, see any means by which thou canst escape from this conflagration. That which should next be done should be indicated by thee.' Thus addressed by Sanjaya the king once more said, – 'This death cannot be calamitous to us, for we have left our home of our own accord. Water, fire, wind, and abstention from food,[61] (as means of death), are laudable for ascetics. Do thou, therefore, leave us, O Sanjaya, without any delay. Having said these words to Sanjaya, the king concentrated his mind. Facing the east, he sat down, with Gandhari and Kunti. Beholding him in that attitude, Sanjaya walked round him. Endued with intelligence, Sanjaya said, – 'Do thou concentrate thy soul, O puissant one.' The son of a Rishi, and himself possessed of great wisdom, the king acted as he was told. Restraining all the senses, he remained like a post of wood. The highly blessed Gandhari, and thy mother Pritha too, remained in the same attitude. Then thy royal sire was overtaken by the forest-conflagration. Sanjaya, his minister, succeeded in escaping from that conflagration. I saw him on the banks of Ganga in the midst of ascetics. Endued with great energy and great intelligence, he bade them farewell and then started for the mountains of Himavat. Even thus the high-souled Kuru king met with his death, and it was even thus that Gandhari and Kunti, thy two mothers, also met with death, O monarch. In course of my wanderings at will, I saw the bodies of that king and those two queens, O Bharata. Many ascetics came to that retreat, having heard of the end of king Dhritarashtra. They did not at all grieve for that end of theirs. There, O best of men, I heard all the details of how the king and the two queens, O son of Pandu, had been burnt. O king of kings, thou shouldst not grieve for him. The monarch, of his own will, as also Gandhari and thy mother, obtained that contact with fire.'

Vaisampayana continued, – 'Hearing of the exit of Dhritarashtra from this world, the high-souled Pandavas all gave way to great grief. Loud sounds or wailing were heard within the inner apartments of the palace. The citizens also, hearing of the end of the old king, uttered loud lamentations. 'O fie! cried king Yudhishtira in great agony, raising his arms aloft. Thinking of his mother, he wept like a child. All his brothers too, headed by Bhimasena, did the same. Hearing that Pritha had met with such a fate, the ladies of the royal household tittered loud lamentations of grief. All the people grieved upon hearing that the old king, who had become childless, had been burnt to death and that the helpless Gandhari too had shared his fate. When those sounds of wailing ceased for a while, king Yudhishtira the just, stopping his tears by summoning all his patience, said these words.'"

SECTION XXXVIII

Yudhishtira said, 'When such a fate overtook that high-souled monarch who was engaged in austere penances, notwithstanding the fact of his having such kinsmen as ourselves all alive, it seems to me, O regenerate one, that the end of human beings is difficult to guess. Alas, who would have thought that the son of Vichitraviryya would thus be burnt to death. He had a hundred sons each endued with mighty arms and possessed of great prosperity. The king himself had the strength of ten thousand elephants. Alas, even he has been burnt to death in a forest-conflagration! Alas, he who had formerly been fanned with palm leaves by the fair hands of beautiful women was fanned by vultures with their wings after he had been burnt to death in a forest-conflagration! He who was formerly roused from sleep every morning by bands of Sutas and Magadhas had to sleep on the bare

ground through the acts of my sinful self. I do not grieve for the famous Gandhari who had been deprived of all her children. Observing the same vows as her husband, she has attained to those very regions which have become his. I grieve, however, for Pritha who, abandoning the blazing prosperity of her sons, became desirous of residing in the woods. Fie on this sovereignty of ours, fie on our prowess, fie on the practices of Kshatriyas! Though alive, we are really dead! O foremost of superior Brahmanas, the course of Time is very subtle and difficult to understand, inasmuch as Kunti, abandoning sovereignty, became desirous of taking up her abode in the forest. How is it that she who was the mother of Yudhishtira, of Bhima, of Vijaya, was burnt to deathlike a helpless creature. Thinking of this I become stupefied. In vain was the deity of fire gratified at Khandava by Arjuna. Ingrate that he is, forgetting that service he has burnt to death the mother of his benefactor! Alas, how could that deity burn the mother of Arjuna. Putting on the guise of a Brahmana, he had formerly come to Arjuna for soliciting a favour. Fie on the deity of fire! Fie on the celebrated success of Partha's shafts! This is another incident, O holy one, that appears to me to be productive of greater misery, for that lord of Earth met with death by union with a fire that was not sacred. How could such a death overtake that royal sage of Kuru's race who, after having ruled the whole Earth, was engaged in the practice of penances. In that great forest there were fires that had been sanctified with mantras. Alas, my father has made his exit from this world, coming in contact with an unsanctified fire! I suppose that Pritha, emaciated and reduced to a form in which all her nerves became visible, must have trembled in fear and cried aloud, saying, – O son Yudhishtira, and awaited the terrible approach of the conflagration. She must have also said, – O Bhima, rescue me from this danger – when she, my mother, was surrounded on all sides by that terrible conflagration. Among all her sons, Sahadeva, was her darling. Alas, that heroic son of Madravati did not rescue her.' Hearing these lamentations of the king, those persons that were present there began to weep, embracing each other. In fact, the five sons of Pandu were so stricken with grief that they resembled living creatures at the time of the dissolution of the universe. The sound of lamentations uttered by those weeping heroes, filling the spacious chambers of the palace, escaped therefrom and penetrated the very welkin."

SECTION XXXIX

Narada said, 'The king has not been burnt to death by an unsanctified fire. I have heard this there. I tell thee, O Bharata, such has not been the fate of Vichitraviryya. It has been heard by us that when the old king endued with great intelligence and subsisting on air alone entered the woods (after his return from Gangadwara), he caused his sacrificial fires to be duly ignited. Having performed his sacred rites therewith, he abandoned them all. Then the Yajaka Brahmanas he had with him cast off those fires in a solitary part of the woods and went away as they liked on other errands, O foremost one of Bharata's race. The fire thus cast off grew in the woods. It then produced a general conflagration in the forest. Even this is what I have heard from the ascetics dwelling on the banks of Ganga. United with that (sacred) fire of his own, O chief of the Bharatas, the king, as I have already said unto thee, met with death on the banks of Ganga. O sinless one, this is what the ascetics have told me, – those, viz., whom I saw on the banks of the sacred Bhagirathi, O Yudhishtira. Thus O lord of Earth, king Dhritarashtra, coming into contact with his own sacred fire, departed from this world and attained to that high goal that has been his. Through service rendered by her to her seniors, thy mother, O lord of men, has attained to very great success. There is not the slightest doubt of this. It behoveth thee, O king of kings, to now discharge the rites of water to their honour, with all thy brothers. Let, therefore, the necessary steps be taken towards that end.'

Vaisampayana continued, – 'Then that lord of Earth, that foremost of men, that upholder of the burthens of the Pandavas, went out, accompanied by all his brothers as well as the ladies of his household. The inhabitants of the city as also those of the provinces, impelled by their loyalty, also went out. They all proceeded towards the banks of Ganga, every one clad in only single piece of raiment. Then all those foremost of men, having plunged into the stream, placed Yuyutsu at their head, and

began to offer oblations of water unto the high-souled king. And they also gave similar oblations unto Gandhari and Pritha, naming each separately and mentioning their families. Having finished those rites that cleanse the living, they came back but without entering their capital took up their residence outside of it. They also despatched a number of trusted people well conversant with the ordinances relating to the cremation of the dead, to Gangadwara where the old king had been burnt to death. The king, having rewarded those men beforehand, commanded them to accomplish those rites of cremation which the bodies of Dhritarashtra and Gandhari and Kunti still awaited.[62] On twelfth day, the king, properly purified, duly performed the Sraddhas of his deceased relations, which were characterised by gifts in abundance. Referring to Dhritarashtra, Yudhishtira made many gifts of gold and silver, of kine and costly beds. Uttering the names of Gandhari and Pritha, the king, endued with great energy, made many excellent gifts. Every man received what thing he wished and as much of it as he wished. Beds and food, and cars and conveyances, and jewels and gems, and other wealth were given away in profusion. Indeed, the king referring to his two mothers, gave away cars and conveyances, robes and coverlets, various kinds of food, and female slaves adorned with diverse ornaments. Having thus made many kinds of gifts in profusion, that lord of Earth then entered his capital called after the elephant. Those men who had gone to the banks of Ganga at the command of the king, having disposed of (by cremation) the remains of the king and two queens, returned to the city. Having duly honoured those remains with garlands and scents of diverse kinds and disposed of them, they informed Yudhishtira of the accomplishment of their task. The great Rishi Narada, having comforted king Yudhishtira of righteous soul, went away to where he liked. Even thus did king Dhritarashtra make his exit from this world after having passed three years in the forest and ten and five years in the city. Having lost all his children in battle, he had many gifts in honour of his kinsmen, relatives, and friends, his brethren and own people. King Yudhishtira after the death of his uncle, became very cheerless. Deprived of his kinsmen and relatives, he somehow bore the burthen of sovereignty.

One should listen with rapt attention to this Asramavasika Parvan, and having heard it recited, one should feed Brahmanas with Habishya, honouring them with scents and garlands."

The end of Asramavasika Parvan.

FOOTNOTES

1. The derivation of Aralikas is explained by Nilakantha thus; Potherbs cut off with a kind of weapon called Ara are called Aralu. They who were expert in cooking those potherbs were called Aralikas. Ragakhandava was manufactured from piper longum, dry ginger, sugar, and the juice of Phaseolus Mango.
2. It will be remembered, Earth, unable to bear her load of population, prayed to the Grandsire for lightening that load. The Grandsire urged Vishnu to do the needful. Hence Vishnu incarnated himself as Krishna and brought about a lightening of Earth's load.
3. Mahadana implies such gifts as elephants, boats, cars, horses, etc. Everybody does not accept these gifts, for their acceptance causes a Brahmana to fall away from his status.
4. Some of the Bengal texts read avimukham hatah for abhimukam hatah. The sense is the same.
5. The king gets a sixth share of the penances performed by the Rishis living under his protection. The demerit, again, of all evil deeds done within his realm is shared by the king, for such deeds become possible through absence of supervision by the king.
6. Formerly kings and noblemen wore jewels and medicinal herbs on their arms. The last were enclosed in drum-like capsules of gold, hermetically closed on both sides. It was believed that jewels and medicinal herbs are a great protection against many evils.

7. The eight limbs of a kingdom are the law, the judge, the assessors, the scribe, the astrologer, gold, fire, and water.
8. Atta is explained by Nilakantha as the space kept for the soldiers to tread upon.
9. Grass may conceal the spies of foes. The darkness of night also may do the same.
10. Adanaruchi is a very civil way of indicating corrupt officials and thieves. Inflictors of severe punishments were looked upon as tyrants deserving of being put down. Heavy fines were at one time interdicted in England. Sahasapriya is a doer of rash deeds, such as culpable homicide not amounting to murder, to adopt the terminology of the Indian Penal Code.
11. i.e., content to work on receiving their food only. Their wages should not be higher than what is needed to feed them.
12. The word Mandala has been explained below in verse 5. The distinction between Udasinas and Madhyasthas, as explained by Nilakantha, is that the former are neutrals, while the latter are those who cherish equal sentiments towards both the parties.
13. The four kinds of foes, as explained by the commentator, are (1) foes proper, (2) allies of foes, (3) those that wish victory to both sides, and (4) those that wish defeat to both sides. As regards Atatayins, they are six, viz., (1) he that sets fire to one's house, (2) he that mixes poison with one's food, (3) he that advances, weapon in hand, with hostile intent, (4) he that robs one of one's wealth, (5) he that invades one's fields, and (6) he that steals one's wife.
14. The sixty are thus made up. Eight consisting of agriculture and the rest; twenty-eight consisting of forces and the rest; fourteen consisting of atheists and the rest and eighteen consisting of counsels and the rest.
15. i.e., land that is fertile, gold that is pure, and men that are strong.
16. The wards Kasyanchidapadi should be construed with what follows.
17. The cane yields when pressure is directed towards it. In the Santi Parva occurs the detailed conversation between the Ocean and the Rivers. The former enquired why, when the Rivers washed down the largest trees, they could not wash into the Ocean a single cane. The answer was that the cane was yielding; the trees were not so.
18. War and peace are each of two kinds, i.e., war with a strong foe and that with a weak foe: peace with a strong foe and that with a weak foe. The Bengal texts wrongly read dividhopayam or vividhopayam.
19. I expand this verse a little, following the commentator.
20. Strength is of three kinds, as explained in the next verse.
21. Utsaha is readiness or alacrity, of the forces to attack the foe: prabhusakti is the complete mastery of the king over his forces, i.e., through discipline. By strength of counsels, in this connection, is meant well-formed plans of attack and defence.
22. Maulam is explained as the strength of money. In modern warfare also, money is called 'the sinews of war'. Atavivala or the force consisting of foresters, was, perhaps, the body of Irregulars that supported a regular army of combatants. Bhritavala implies the regular army, drawing pay from the state at all times. In India, standing armies have existed from remote times. Sreni-vala is, perhaps, the forces of artisans, mechanics, and engineers, who looked after the roads and the transport, as also of traders who supplied the army with provision.
23. A sakata array was an array after the form of a car. It is described in Sukraniti fully, and occurs in the Drona Parva, ante. The Padma is a circular array with angular projections. It is the same with what is now called the starry with angular projections. It is the same what is now called the starry array, many modern forts being constructed on this plan. The Vajra is a wedge-like array. It pene-

trates into the enemy's divisions like a wedge and goes out, routing the foe. It is otherwise called suchivyuha.

24. i.e., meet the foe whether within his own kingdom or invade the foe's realm and thus oblige the foe to fall back for resisting him there.

25. i.e., for obtaining fame here and felicity hereafter.

26. Those who die become at first what is called Preta. They remain so for one year, till the Sapindikarana Sraddha is performed. They then become united with the Pitris. The gifts made in the first Sraddha as also in the monthly ones, have the virtue of rescuing the Preta or bringing him an accession of merit. The gifts in annual Sraddhas also have the same efficacy.

27. The text in verse 2, where mention is made of thousands of years as embracing the rule of Yudhishtira, is evidently vitiated.

28. The correct reading is jane and not kshane.

29. 'It is difficult to imagine why the rider of the Sindhus, Jayadratha, only should be regarded as a wrong-doer to the Pandavas. In the matter of the slaying of Abhimanyu he played a very minor part, by only guarding the entrance of the array against the Pandava warriors. It is true he had attempted to abduct Draupadi from the forest retreat of the Pandavas, but even in this, the wrong was not so great as that which Duryodhana and others inflicted on the Pandavas by dragging Draupadi to the court of the Kurus.

30. The usual way in which gifts are made at the present day on occasions of Sraddhas and marriages or other auspicious rites very nearly resembles what is described here. Instead of dedicating each gift with mantras and water and making it over to the receiver, all the articles in a heap are dedicated with the aid of mantras. The guests are then assembled, and are called up individually. The Adhyaksha or superintendent, according to a list prepared, names the gifts to be made to the guest called up. The tellers actually make them over, the scribes noting them down.

31. Each gift that was indicated by Dhritarashtra was multiplied ten times at the command of Yudhishtira.

32. As Dhritarashtra was blind, his queen Gandhari, whose devotion to her lord was very great, had, from the days of her marriage, kept her eyes bandaged refusing to look on the world which her lord could not see.

33. Nilakantha explains that as Dhritarashtra is Pandu's elder brother, therefore, Kunti regards him as Pandu's father. Queen Gandhari therefore is Kunti's mother-in-law. The eldest brother is looked upon as a father.

34. To live watching the faces of others is to live in dependence on others.

35. It has been pointed out before that mahadana means gifts of such things as elephants, horses, cars and other vehicles, boats, etc. The giver wins great merit by making them, but the receiver incurs demerit by acceptance, unless he happens to be a person of exceptional energy. To this day, acceptors of such gifts are looked upon as fallen men.

36. The words that Kunti spoke were just. The opposition her sons offered was unreasonable. Hence, their shame.

37. 'Brahmi night' implies a night in course of which sacred hymns are sung.

38. Nakharaprasa-yodhina, Nilakantha explains, are those combatants who are armed with tiger-like claws made of iron and tied to their waists.

39. Suradevata is like karivringhati or govalivardda.

40. Ulupi is implied.

41. Implying the unfair character of the fight, for one on the earth should never be assailed by one on his car.
42. Yudhishtira was Dharma's self, Vidura also was Dharma born as a Sudra through the curse of the Rishi Animandavya. Both, therefore, were of the same essence. When Vidura left his human body, he entered the body of Yudhishtira and thus the latter felt himself strengthened greatly by the accession.
43. Nilakantha here implies the peacock and not the blue jay, for the word keka is applied to the notes of the peacock alone. Dadyuhas are gallinules or a species of Chatakas whose cry resembles, Phatik jal – phatik jal – phatik jal! repeated very distinctly, the second syllable being lengthened greatly.
44. Audumvaran is an adjective of kalasan. It means 'made of copper'. Praveni is a kutha or blanket. Sruk is a ladle having the cup like cavity at one extremity only. Sruv is a ladle having cup-like cavities at both extremities.
45. Whenever a Brahmana cursed another, his penances underwent a diminution. Forgiveness was the highest virtue of the Brahmana. His power lay in forgiveness. Hence, when Mandavya cursed Dharma, he had to spend a portion of his hard-earned penances. Previously, the plea of minority or non-age could not be urged in the court of Dharma. Mandavya forced Dharma to admit that plea in the matter of punishment for offences.
46. Both Dharana and Dhyana are processes or, rather, stages of Yoga. The former implies the fixing of the mind on one thing; the latter is the abstraction of the mind from surrounding objects.
47. Valhika was the sire of Somadatta and the grandsire of Bhurisravas. Valhika, therefore, was the grand-father-in-law of the lady mentioned by Gandhari.
48. The puissance here referred to is that of Anima, Laghima, etc. i.e., the capacity of becoming minute and subtile, etc.
49. The sense is that those had been incarnated as human beings and fighting with one another met with death as regards their human existence.
50. Nilakantha explains that anayasakritani karma implies the religion of Nivritti, for the religion of Pravritti consists of acts that require ayasa or exertion for their accomplishment. The religion of Nivritti or abstention from acts is said hereto be true and superior, and productive of real fruit, in the form, that is, of Emancipation. The soul, however, in the generality of cases, united with ebhah, by which is meant ayasa-kritam karma, that is, the acts done in pursuance of the religion of Pravritti, becomes embodied and, therefore, enjoys happiness or endures misery as the case may be.
51. The sense seems to be this – when a creature stands before a mirror, its image is formed in the mirror; such reflection, however, never affects the mirror in the least, for when the object leaves the vicinity of the mirror, the image or reflection vanishes away. The soul is like the mirror. Pleasure and pain are like reflections in it. They come and go away without the soul being at all modified by them in anyway. Pleasure and pain are destructible, but not so the soul.
52. The ordinary man thinks this conglomeration of diverse objects to be his self. The man of wisdom who has exhausted his acts does not think so. He is freed from the obligation of taking a body.
53. The sense probably is this. In the case of ordinary men, the component parts of the body dissolve away, while Yogins can keep such parts from dissolution as long as they like.
54. The sense is, the deities bear away to the next world the animals slain in sacrifices. Through the bodies of such animals are apparently destroyed, yet their life-breaths and senses continue to exist.
55. The sense is that as wives etc., when lost, are sources of sorrow, wise men should abstain from contracting such relations. They might then be free from sorrow.

56. Paraparajnah is one that understands the distinction between body and self. Apara is, therefore, one that is not possessed of such knowledge; hence, as Nilakantha explains, it implies one who has not attained to Jnana nishtha. What is said in the second line is that he that adores saguna Brahma, succeeds afterwards, through such adoration, in reaching to nirguna Brahma.

57. The sense seems to be this: we spring from the unmanifest and disappear once more in the unmanifest. The Bengal texts read the first line incorrectly. It is adarsanalapatitah. The second line is unintelligible. Naham tam vedini is taken by Nilakantha as implying 'I do not know him,' i.e., him that is Emancipate. Asau cha no vetti mam is explained as a due to karanabhat. But who is asau? 'I have no renunciation,' or 'renunciation is not yet mine,' implies that Emancipation, which directly flows from renunciation, is not mine.

58. What is stated here is that if a man does an act that is bad, its consequences he will have to endure in a human body. The same with regard to rewards. By doing a meritorious act in one's human form, one will enjoy its good consequences in one's human body. So acts done mentally affect the mind and those done with the body affect the body.

It should be noted that the whole of the above translation is offered tentatively. A verbal rendering has been attempted. The chain of reasoning is not at all clear. The commentator has done much to elucidate the sense, but the original obscurities have scarcely been removed.

59. The Bengal reading manah is incorrect. It should be punah.

60. Nripam pradakshinam chakru is the construction. Nivarana has snanapanat understood after it.

61. Vikarshanam is emaciation of the body by abstention from all food.

62. The verb anvacat from root sas can govern two objectives. Here the two objectives are purushan and krityani