

Rebuke to Banyans

Red-berried banyan, still unsatisfied,
For all your swelling bulk and verdurous pride
Of sweeping branches, throwing out new sprays
And fibres ever, seeking still to raise
Fresh pillars and augment your kingdom vast,
Fenced from the sun and the destructive blast
Of the wild month of rains, that strips and tears
Tough pipals and to earth the siris bears,
Uproots the sturdy jack, and maims the teak!
Somewhat in envy, banyan, do I speak;
Yet not unjustly. If my_tree could show
One-tenth so rich a pomp, such scarlet glow
Of green-set fruit that feeds the scuffling bats
And eager birds, and even for sorbid rats
Scatters a largesse. . . such a shining roof
Of glossy leaves, Night's temple huge, sun-proof,
With cool, deep glooms where gods and flies awhile
Shelter from noon... with many a dappled aisle,
Where rays of light in harmless arrows fall,
And tired winds sleep, and birds forget to call...

If this were mine, I should not grab more land
Or seek proportions vaster, lot more grand;
I would not still of waxing empire dream,
Chamber to chamber add, and giant beam
With beam inlay, and endless swink and toil;
With nervous, itching fingers still more soil
Grasp and for yet more swollen kingdom strive!
No! I should rest, and save my soul alive.

EDWARD THOMPSON

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