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              Keay, F. E.

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## PREFACE

THE purpose of these volumes of The Heritage of India Series on the vernacular literatures is to provide, in each case, a clear and trustworthy outline of the history of the literature. Necessarily, nothing more can be compressed into a hundred pages; and, when one of the greater literatures comes under review, it is impossible, within the limits, to do justice to the whole. In this volume, great care has been taken to sketch the historic movements down to the time of Harischandra; but no attempt has been made to give a detailed account of more recent literature.

Amongst the many persons who have supplied information, or given other help, I must especially thank the Editors of this Series; the Rev. G. J. Dann, who kindly read the book in manuscript and offered valuable criticisms; and the Rev. Dr. W. C. Macdougall and Mr. M. T. Kennedy, who have carefully read through the proofs. I am also much indebted to Mr. Kallu Singh and Mr. Sakhawat Masih, masters of my own school, for help in translating some of the extracts.

FRANK E. KEAY.

*Jubbulpore: August, 1920.*

## I.

# THE HINDI LANGUAGE AND ITS NEIGHBOURS.

**The Indo-Aryan Languages.**—The Indo-Aryan languages form one branch of the great Indo-European family of languages, which are now spoken over Europe and a large part of Western and Southern Asia. Somewhere near the borderland of Europe and Asia lived the people who spoke the original language from which these various languages have been derived. One great class of this people, called the Aryans, migrated eastwards towards the Oxus, but as they advanced further were split up into two sections, and their language also developed on two different lines. One of these two forms of language became the parent of the Iranian family of languages (Medic, Pahlavi, Persian, etc.). The other branch of the Aryan people pushed on into the valley of the Kabul, and thence into the plains of North India. The migration of these peoples was spread over a long period of time. Those who came into India are known as Indo-Aryans. The Indo-Aryan language received a literary culture in quite ancient times and its literary form became known as Sanskrit, that is the "purified" language. This polished literary dialect became fixed, but the ordinary speech of the people, which is called Prakrit, that is "natural," or "unartificial," gradually changed. Diphthongs and harsh combinations were softened, **but** the language still remained, like Sanskrit, synthetic. The dialects of different areas began to differ more and more from one another. Some of the older **forms** of **the** Prakrits meanwhile, like Sanskrit, became fixed

and received literary culture, such for instance as Pali. In the last stage of the Prakrits, before the modern Indo-Aryan languages developed from them, they are known as Apabhramsas. These are the direct parents of the modern vernaculars of North India, namely, Hindi, Punjabi, Marathi, etc., which came into existence somewhere about 1000 A.D., though the date differs considerably in the case of different languages. These modern languages are no longer synthetic but analytic.

Hindi.—It is most important to understand clearly what we mean by Hindi, as the word is often used ambiguously. It is often, for instance, applied in a loose sense to the vernacular speech of the whole of North India between the Punjab and Sindh on the West, and Bengal on the East. But the philological researches of scholars, such as Sir George Grierson, have shown that there are really four chief languages in this area, namely, Rajasthani, Western Hindi, Eastern Hindi, and Biharī, each having a different parentage. Biharī really belongs to a group of languages of which Bengali is another member. Western Hindi is closely connected in origin with Panjabi. The word Hindi is also often used to denote modern literary High Hindi in contradistinction to Urdu; but both High Hindi and Urdu were, as will be shown below, developed from a dialect of Western Hindi. Hindustani (or Hindostani) is also a name used sometimes to denote the vernaculars of all Hindustan, that is the country between the Punjab and Sindh and Bengal, but is also sometimes used to mean the simpler speech which is the *lingua franca* of modern India, and of which both Urdu and High Hindi are literary developments.

**Scope of this Book.**—The literature whose history will be described in this book will include Rajasthani, Western Hindi, Eastern Hindi, and Biharī literature but not Urdu. It may seem at first sight somewhat arbitrary to group together the literatures of these languages which are believed to have been distinct in development, and when Western Hindi, for instance, is

more closely connected in origin with Punjabi, and Bihar! with Bengali, than with the other languages here grouped with them. Moreover Urdu, whose literature is here excluded, is developed from a dialect of Western Hindi. But the justification for grouping these literatures together lies in this, that whereas Punjabi and Bengali and Urdu have developed modern literatures which are proceeding each on its own lines, the languages whose literary history is contained in this book have become closely connected in their literary development. In the areas where they are spoken "High Hindi" has come to be accepted as a literary language by almost all those who do not use Urdu, and though the older vernaculars are still used for poetical compositions, not one of them is developing a separate prose literature of its own. Moreover, though considered by scholars as distinct, they are closely related languages which have mutually influenced each other, and the literature of any one of these vernaculars is to a large extent understood by those who speak one of the others. These languages are spoken by over a hundred million people.

As the literature dealt with in the following pages is really connected with distinct though cognate languages it is more accurate to describe it, as Sir George Grierson has done, as the "Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindostan/' But for the sake of convenience and to avoid circumlocution it will generally be referred to here as "Hindi Literature/' The bulk of it is written in Western Hindi or Eastern Hindi. Bihar! literature is not very extensive and, except for the lyrics of Vidyapati, not very important. Rajasthani literature mostly consists of bardic chronicles.

Urdu as a literary language has an important point of difference from Hindi in the metres it employs. These follow Persian models, and the substance of Urdu poetry is largely influenced by Persian themes.

Dialects.—The chief dialects of *Rajasthani* are Mewati, Marwari, Jaipur!, and Malvi. Of these Marwari is the chief literary dialect. It is also called

Dingal, and in this connection is distinguished from Pingal, the name given in Rajputana to the Braj Bhasha dialect of Western Hindi, which was also used in this area as a literary dialect.

*Western Hindi* has as its principal dialects, Bangaru, to the west of the Ganges in the highlands of the South-Eastern Panjab; Braj Bhasha, the language spoken in Muttra and the surrounding district, which is the chief dialect of Western Hindi for poetry; Kanauji (very similar to Braj Bhasha), which is spoken in the lower part of the central Doab and the country to the north; Bundell, in Bundelkhand and a good portion of the Narbada valley in the Central Provinces; and another dialect spoken in the neighbourhood of Delhi and Meerut. Delhi being for a long time the headquarters of the Muhammadan conquerors of North India, it was from the dialect of this district that the *lingua iranica* of the Mughal camp originated. A great many words of Persian and Arabic origin were introduced into this dialect as well as those of Panjabi and Rajasthani, and the Persian character was used for writing it. The word "Urdu" literally means "Camp." Urdu was the camp language. Muhammadan influence extended its use far and wide, and it eventually became a literary language. Modern "High Hindi" was developed from Urdu by the exclusion of Persian and Arabic words and the substitution of those of pure Indian origin, Sanskrit or Hindi. The name Khari Boli (*i.e.* "pure speech") is sometimes used by Indian scholars both for the original dialect of Delhi and Meerut, and for the modern High Hindi developed by Lallu Ji Lai; but they are not identical, as will be shown later in a subsequent chapter when the circumstances of the formation of modern literary Hindi are related.

The dialects of *Eastern Hindi*, from North to South are AvadhI, Bagheli, and Chhattisgarhi. Of these the chief literary dialect is AvadhI, spoken in the country of Ayodhya (Oudh). AvadhI. is also known as Baiswarl.

*Bihari* has three principal dialects, namely Maithili, Bhojpuri, and Magahi. Maithili is the chief literary dialect, and practically all the works which have come down to us are in this dialect. It is spoken in the region which formed the old kingdom of Mithila, that is in Bihar north of the Ganges.

**The Hindi Alphabet and Written Character.**—The alphabet used for Hindi and the other languages included with it in this book is the same as that of Sanskrit, and is arranged in the same way, that is on phonetic principles. One or two of the Sanskrit letters are not used however in Hindi. The written character is generally what is called the Devanagari (or Nagari), which is also used for Sanskrit. But other forms are also used. Mahajani (or Sarrafi) and Baniya are only used in business. They are both modifications of Kayathi (or Kaithi). This word is from Kayath, or Kayasth, the name of the writer-caste amongst the Hindus. Kayathi character was originally derived from the Devanagari by slight alterations which better adapt it to the purpose of writing quickly. It is used chiefly in the Eastern portion of the area with which we are concerned, but even there is not so common as Devanagari.

**Vocabulary.**—The vast majority of words used in the languages we are considering are those which have come down from the original Indo-Aryan language through the long development of the centuries. But in the language of to-day there are often found words which are direct borrowings from Sanskrit. These are called *Tatsama* words ("the same as that") to distinguish them from *Tadbhava* words ("of the nature of that"), which are those that have undergone change in the long process of development. In many cases *Tatsama* and *Tadbhava* forms of the same word or root co-exist in the language, such as *Yogy* and *Jog* ("fit, worthy"). Words have also been borrowed from Persian. We find these even in the works of the great writers such as Tulsi Das, and though some modern authors affect to write "pure Hindi," few

books can be found which do not contain some words of Persian origin. Some Portuguese, and nowadays many English words, have also found their way into the language.

Hindi Prosody.—There is probably no language in which prosody has been more elaborately developed than in Hindi. Its system is derived ultimately from the principles which govern Sanskrit poetry. It does not, like English, depend on accent, but, like the classic poetry of Greece and Rome, is based on the quantity of the syllables, long or short. But rhyme is also used almost universally, and in Hindi poetry a rhyme means that not only the last syllable of a line, but the last two syllables at least, correspond with those of another line. A good deal of liberty is allowed in respect of orthography and even of grammatical construction, but the rules for the various metres are very complicated. The result however in the hands of a skilful poet is the production of poetry the form and rhythm of which has a wonderful charm probably not surpassed in any language. The number of metres recognized in books of Hindi prosody is very large. A few only of the principal ones can be mentioned here. A *doha* (or *dohra*) is a couplet each line of which contains twenty-four *matras* or instants, divided up again into feet according to a recognized plan. A *Matra* denotes the length of time occupied in the utterance of a short vowel. Long vowels and diphthongs are regarded as consisting of two *matras*. The *doha* is the most popular and frequent of all metres. The *soratha* is an inverted *doha*, that is the second half of each line of the *doha* changes place with the first half. The *chaupdi* ranks with the *doha* in popularity. It consists of four lines, each of which has sixteen *matras*. Other much-used metres are the *kundaliya*, the *chhappai*, the *kavya*, the *savaiya* and the *kavitta*. Many metres are specially used in the composition of verses which are intended to be sung. In these the same rhyme is often continued throughout all the lines of the poem.



## II.

### A GENERAL SURVEY OF HINDI LITERATURE

AFTER the death of King Harsha (646 or 647 A.D.), who had built up a large Empire in North India, there was a long period of confusion and disorder. The unity of Indian History is lost until the Muhammadan conquests again restored a government strong enough to become a paramount power. During this period the Rajput clans came into prominence and various Rajput principalities took shape which were destined to play an important part in subsequent history. These kingdoms were often at war with one another, but the inroads of the Muhammadans from the West frequently united them to meet the common foe. Although Kabul, the Punjab, and Sindh had previously fallen into the hands of the Muhammadan invaders, the real conquest of India did not begin till 1175 A.D. when Muhammad Ghori commenced his attacks. In 1191 the Muhammadan progress induced the Hindu Kings to compose their quarrels and form a great confederacy under Prithiraj (also called Prithvlraj or Rai Pithora), the Chauhan ruler of Ajmer and Delhi. The Hindus were at first victorious in a battle at Tarain, but in the following year were defeated in the same place and Prithvlraj was captured and killed. Delhi was soon occupied and the Muhammadan advance continued till, under Muhammad-bin-Tughlak in 1340, it attained its maximum extent. But though many Hindu kingdoms fell, and many strongholds in Rajputana were captured, the Rajput clans reasserted themselves and were never completely subdued. Many new Kingdoms were set

up, and later Muhammadan sovereigns often found it more profitable to make alliances with the Rajput monarchs than to attack them.

It was during this period that the modern vernaculars of India were taking shape, and the earliest modern vernacular literature of Hindustan appeared in the form of the bardic chronicles of Rajputana. The stirring times in which they lived produced ample themes for the royal bards, and the liberal patronage of monarchs encouraged their labours. Though full of panegyric and embellished with many legends, and therefore not to be taken as sober history, their poems nevertheless are a stirring record of the desperate struggles between the Hindu kingdoms and their Muhammadan invaders, and of the heroism and chivalry which such a period called forth. The greatest name in the literature of this period is that of Chand Bardai, the bard of Prithvlraj. Contemporary with Chand was Jagnayak, while a famous bard of the middle of the fourteenth century was Sarang Dhar, who sang the prowess of the valorous Hammir, Prince of Ranthambhor.

The rise of the worship of Rama, which took place about the beginning of the fifteenth century, gave another great impetus to vernacular literature. One branch of Vaishnavas worshipped Vishnu under the form of Krishna and this form of worship had long been popular. Now, largely owing to the great influence of Ramananda, others made Rama their principal object of worship. A later development, due in some measure to Muhammadan influence, and in which Kablr was the first great teacher, was in the direction of a non-idolatrous theism. All these various movements were part of a great religious revival which was widespread amongst the people, and all began to use the vernacular for their literature. From this time on the vernacular literature was mostly dominated by religious ideals and almost entirely on the lines which had been laid down by the Vaishnava reformers. This period begins about 1400 and includes such

poets as Namdev, Kablr, Vidyapati, Mira Bal and Malik Muhammad. The earlier bards of Rajputana wrote in a time of transition, using a language which was still full of Prakrit forms, and this was the period of the infancy of Hindi Literature. But when the poets of this next period composed their works, the language spoken was practically the same as the vernacular speech of to-day ; and, as the earliest authors in this language, they had to feel their way, for in using the vernacular for their poems they were making a great venture. This was the period of the youth of Hindi Literature.

The golden age of the vernacular literature of Hindustan begins about 1550. The Mughal sovereigns not only established a strong rule, but were liberal patrons of literature and art. Under Akbar (1556-1605), Jahangir (1605-1627) and Shah Jahan (1627-1658) the Muhammadan rule in India reached its highest point of outward magnificence and this was also the period of the greatest glory in Hindi literature. It has often been pointed out how it synchronizes with the Elizabethan age of English literature, and that at this very time England and India first came into real contact with each other. This period was marked by the introduction of an artistic influence into the literature, leading to a greater polish in versification and form, and the first attempts to systematize the art of poetry by such writers as Kesav Das and others. This was the age of the greatest stars of Hindi literature—Tulsi Das, Sur Das and Bihari Lai, as well as of other great writers like the Tripathi brothers, Dev Kavi and Senapati. It was the period when the Sikh *Granth* was compiled and when many new sects were formed, like the Dadupanths, which produced a great deal of religious verse of a high order. The end of the period however, during the eighteenth century, coinciding with the time of the decay of the Mughal Empire, was a time of decline in the high quality of Hindi literature, and does not contain many writers of first-rate excellence.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century a new influence came into Hindi literature through contact with the culture of Europe. In the eighteenth century the English had been struggling in India with the French for mastery, but now that conflict had been decided and the English supremacy was further established by the break up of the old Mughal Empire and the weakening of the Maratfia power. English influence now began to make itself more and more felt in Indian affairs, and amongst other things the contact of India with the culture of the West had the effect of stimulating many new ideas, while the sense of security which freedom from internal disorder gave, encouraged the native genius of India to reassert itself. Hence there began about this time a mighty literary renaissance in India which is still in progress. At the beginning of this period Lallu Ji Lal laid the foundation of modern Hindi prose and also created the literary dialect which was to be its principal medium. The printing-press now began to spread literature far and wide. The revival of Hindi poetry was led by Harischandra, and this period saw also the rise of the Hindi drama.

The principle adopted in this book in dividing up the literature into periods is as follows. First of all the infancy of Hindi literature, connected with the bardic chronicles, is described; and after that a new period is dated from each point where an important new influence begins to modify the literature. These periods begin (1) about 1400, when the religious influence of the Vaishnaya movements began to affect Hindi literature ; (2) about 1550, when a new artistic influence makes itself felt; and (3) about 1800, when the literature began to be affected by the modern influence which came from contact with the West. In each period the literature that shows the new spirit in its fulness will first of all be described and then the other forms in turn, and something will be said as to how far each group or each writer is influenced by the new ideas.

### III.

## EARLY BARDIC CHRONICLES (1150-1400)

The Earliest Poets.—During the time when the Rajput clans were establishing their power, and while they were struggling with the Muhammadan invaders, every court had its bards who celebrated in song the valour and heroism of their patrons and their race. These bards belonged to guilds, which were also castes, and there are said to have been Charanas, Bhatas, Sevagas and Pancholis. The Charanas and Bhatas both claimed Brahmanic descent. The language used at first by these bards must have been the local Prakrit, but gradually the Prakrit developed into the modern vernacular. A number of bards are mentioned by tradition as having composed poems between 700 and 1150 A.D. The chief of these are *Pushya* (or *Punda*), *Kedar*, *Ananya Das*, *Masaud*, *Qutub Ali* and *Akaram Faiz*. Their work, however, has not survived and it is therefore impossible to say whether the language they used is to be reckoned as Prakrit or as the modern vernacular. A poetic chronicle of the ruling family of Mewar, called the *Khuman Rasa*, which dates from the sixteenth century, is said to have been founded on a work written in the ninth century, but no fragment of the original has survived. In 1143 a certain Kumar Pal became king of Gujarat, his capital being at Anhilwar. In 1159, under the influence of the Jain scholar Hemachandra he became a Jain, and at a rather late date Hemachandra wrote a romantic poem in Prakrit entitled *Kumara Pala Charitra*. An anonymous bardic chronicle, called by the same name, in the early speech of the modern vernacular is

said to date from the middle of the thirteenth century, and is probably a free adaptation of the Prakrit poem. Visala Deva (Bisal Dev) was the king of Ajmer in 1001 A.D. when Mahmud of Ghazni made one of his raids into India. He is celebrated in a short poem called *Bisal Dev Raso*, the date of which is unknown, but which has been considered by some to belong to the thirteenth century. Till these poems are dated and their language thoroughly examined by scholars, it is not possible to say what evidence they give as to the date when the modern vernacular became clearly distinguished from the earlier Prakrit, and as even the *Prithi Raj Raso*, which is dated in 1191, is said by such an eminent authority as Sir George Grierson to be "abounding in pure Apabhramsa Sauraseni Prakrit forms," it would be rash in the absence of further evidence to place the date of the emergence of the modern vernaculars of Hindustan much earlier than the beginning of the twelfth century.

Chand Bardai.—Prithi Raj (also called Prithvi Raj or Rai Pithora), who was born 1159 and killed in 1192, was the Chauhan ruler of Ajmer and Delhi at the time of the battles of Tarain, in the second of which he was captured and afterwards slain. He was a great patron of literature, and besides Ananya Das, mentioned above, his court was also attended by the famous bard *Chand Bardai*. Chand Bardai belonged to an old family of bards, and the famous poet Siir Das is said by some to have been one of his descendants. He came to the court of Prithi Raj and was appointed as his minister and poet-laureate. His poetical works were collected by Amar Singh of Mewar in the seventeenth century, and it is probable that they were then recast and partially modernized though still full of archaic language. Chand's chief work is the *Prithi Raj Raso*. In this famous poem of sixty-nine books and 100,000 stanzas he gives the life of his patron and the history of the time in which he wrote. Chand Bardai and his patron were both killed after the battle of Tarain

in 1192. Legend and fiction are mixed up with history in the *Prithi Raj Raso*. The repeated conflicts related to have taken place between Prithi Raj and Sultan Shihabuddin seem to be quite unhistorical, and the Mughals are brought on the stage thirty years before they really appeared in Indian History. It is therefore doubtful whether the document in its entirety is a contemporary poem, but the language used, which is transitional in character and abounds in strange forms which have long since ceased to be used, makes it seem likely that the original core of the poem is certainly the work of Chand Bardai, and that it is one of the earliest poems in Hindi which have survived. Owing to the difficulty of the language it is a poem not easy to read even for scholars, but those who have studied it have a high opinion of its literary merits. It is of immense value from the point of view of linguistic study.

The following lines are taken from the twentieth book of Chand's epic. The fair Padmavati, daughter of Padam Sen, an opponent of Prithi Raj, had heard of the nobility of Prithiraj, as he had of her beauty, and when her marriage was arranged with another, she sent a message by a parrot to Prithiraj to come and rescue her. Prithiraj came with an army to seize her as his bride:—

" Watching the road in the direction of Delhi,  
 Happy was she when the parrot returned,  
 Hearing the news, glad were her eyes ;  
 The maiden was elated with the tokens of love,  
 She tore off the dirty clothes from her body,  
 Purified, and anointed, and adorned herself with robes,  
 Called for priceless jewels (for her person) from head to foot,  
 Arrayed with the tokens of the king of love.  
 Filling a golden tray with pearls,  
 Lighting a lamp she waved it round,  
 Taking her confidante with her, boldly the maiden  
 Goes as Rukmini went to meet Murari ;  
 Worshipping Gauri, revering Sankar ;  
 Circumambulating and touching their feet.  
 Then on seeing King Prithiraj,  
 She smiled bashfully, hiding her face through shame.  
 Seizing her hand, putting her on horseback,

The King, the\* Lord of Delhi, took her away.  
 The rumour spread that, outside the city,  
 They are carrying off Padmavati by force.  
 Drums are beat, there is saddling of horse and elephant,  
 They ran, armed, in all directions.  
 ' Seize ! Seize ! ' shouted each warrior.  
 Rage possessed the heroes and their king.  
 When King Prithiraj was going in front  
 With all his army behind him,  
 There the horsemen advancing arrived ;  
 King meeting King, the warriors joined in battle,  
 When Prithiraj the King turns rein,  
 The heavens stand still, the world-serpent shakes.  
 The chiefs and heroes all look (awful) as death,  
 Eager for blood on rushes the King,  
 The bows let fly countless arrows,  
 The deadly blades draw blood.  
 From the sweat of the wounds of the heroes on the field,  
 A thick stream flows, and dyes the sand,  
 As warriors of the *barat* smote,  
 On the field fell heads and headless trunks of the foe.  
 The foe fell on the field of battle ;  
 Turning his face towards Delhi,  
 Having won the battle, went Prithiraj,  
 All the chiefs were glad.  
 He took Padmavati with him  
 Rejoicing, King Prithiraj."<sup>1</sup>

Chand Bardai's son *Jalhan* is also said to have been a poet and possibly some parts of the *Raso* were composed by him.

*Jagnayak*.—*Jagnayak* (or *Jagnik*) was a contemporary of Chand Bardai and attended the court of Paramardi (Parmal) of Mahoba in Bundelkhand, who was a rival of Prithiraj. His works have not survived, unless we have in the *Mahoba Khand* (or *Alha Khand*), which has been described as a spurious canto of Chand's epic, a poem which was written by Jagnayak. This poem has been handed down by oral tradition and exists in many recensions which differ from one another both in language and subject matter. It is still sung by professional singers in India and the language is always modernized to suit the dialect of the reciter.

<sup>1</sup> Translation by Mr. John Beames, in Vol. 38 of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1869), pp. 152, 153.

The heroes of this poem are Alha and Udal (or Udan). Portions of one recension have been translated into English ballad metre by Mr. Waterfield, under the title of "The Nine-Lakh Chain or the Maro Feud." A few stanzas will give some idea of this poem. It relates Alha's victory over King Jambay :—

The warriors staggered, they scattered and broke,  
 In hope their lives to save ;  
 When Jambay saw they fled, he spoke,  
 And his elephant onward drave.

" Mahoba's champion, Devi's son,  
 Now settle thy cause with me ;  
 Alive from the field shall go but one,  
 So turn by turn strike we."

" I may not strike, by the Chandel law ;  
 Do thou strike first, O King " ;  
 Then a good red bow did Jambay draw,  
 And fitted the notch to string.

The aim was good, the string did twang,  
 Fast did the arrow fly ;  
 Across the howda Alha sprang,  
 And the shaft went whizzing by.

Then his javelin flew as near they drew,  
 Now how may Alha bide ?  
 Queen Sarada's care at his right hand there  
 She turned the spear aside.

" Now hear, Banaphar," Jambay spake,  
 " Twice hast thou foiled my blow ;  
 In peace thy way to Mahoba take,  
 For thrice thou 'scap'st not so."

But Alha there his breast made bare,  
 And did to the Raja cry ;

" No part of a Kshatri's trade it were,  
 From the battle trench to fly."

" There are homes in heaven stand ready for all,  
 To-morrow if not to-day ;  
 And if in Maro this tide shall fall,  
 My name shall live for aye."

" One chance is left thee, King, to save,  
 And see thou miss no more " :  
 Then drew the King his shining glaive,  
 And thrice he smote full sore.

No hurt on Alha's body happ'd,  
 His shield was lifted high ;  
 At length the sword of Jambay snapp'd,  
 Then wist he death was nigh.

' I have hewn down elephants with this blade,  
 And lopped their limbs away ;  
 Its master's need has it now betrayed,  
 My life is lost to-day! "

" Now, Raja, now my stroke take thou,"  
 And his elephant on he drove;  
 Howda to howda, tusk to tusk,  
 Close met the champions strove.

Then Alha forward dash'd his shield,  
 With the boss he dealt a blow ;  
 The elephant's driver was hurl'd to the field,  
 And he waver'd to and fro.

Then Jambay drew his dagger keen,  
 Long time their steel they plied ;  
 On Alha's body no hurt was seen,  
 " Now bind the foe," he cried.

Pachsawad whirl'd his iron chain,  
 Dasjied the howda to the ground ;  
 Soon Alha lighted on the plain,  
 And fast his arms he bound.<sup>1</sup>

Sarang Dhar.--*Sarang Dhar*, a bard who flourished in the middle of the fourteenth century, is said to have been a descendant of Chand Bardai. He is the reputed author of two poems known as the *Hammir Rasa* and the *Hamrriir Kavya*, which are chronicles of the royal house of Ranthambhor. The valour of Hammir in his struggle against the emperor Ala-ud-dm, at whose hands he received his death, is very famous. Parang Dhar is also the author of an anthology of Sanskrit lyric stanzas called the *Sarngadhara Paddhati*, which was published in 1363.

These early bards had a long line of successors, some of whom will be mentioned later on. Their chronicles are valuable not only as literature, but as a record of the times in which they lived. I Like the old

<sup>1</sup> Calcutta Review, Vol. 63 (1876), pp. 414 ff.

chronicles of other lands they contain much that is legendary and unreliable as history, but the light which they throw on the period in which they were written is nevertheless of very great value.

**Other Poets of this Period.**—One or two other writers who are considered to belong to this period may also be mentioned. These are *Bhupati*, who wrote at the end of the thirteenth century, and *Nalla Singh*, *Mullet Ddud*, and *Amir Khusro*, who flourished about the fourteenth century. The latter was a Persian poet to whom Hindi verses are also ascribed. There is also a certain Gorakhnath who is regarded as the founder of an order of Yogis, and as the author of both Sanskrit and Hindi works. Some doubt has been expressed as to his being a historical person at all, but it seems likely that he was, and that he lived about 1200 A.D. The Hindi works, which include one in prose, are almost certainly not written by him. They are probably the works of his followers. They have been placed by some as early as the middle of the fourteenth century, but their date at present must be regarded as very uncertain.

## IV.

### EARLY BHAKTI POETS (1400-1550)

The Vaishnava Revival.—A new development in Hindi literature was caused by the growth of the Vaishnava movement in North India. The Muhammadan conquest had been a time of great difficulty for the Hindu religion. Scholars had been dispersed, idols broken, and temples cast down. But though Hinduism suffered severely it was not destroyed, and a great impetus was to be given to the Vaishnava form of the Hindu faith. The Vaishnava religious movements of North India at this time fall into three groups, Ramaite, Krishnaite, and deistic. But all the various sects have many points in common. A personal God, who is full of love and pity for his devotees, is the object of worship, and towards him devotion (*bhakti*) is demanded as the most important requirement from those who would obtain release. The movement as a whole was a revolt against the cold intellectualism of Brahmanic philosophy and the lifeless formalism of mere ceremonial. It was essentially a popular religious movement, and this is emphasised by its use of the vernacular, rather than Sanskrit, in the vast amount of literature it produced. This constitutes the importance of the movement from the point of view of Hindi literature.

Ramananda's Predecessors.—It is generally agreed that it was Ramananda who gave the greatest impulse to the religious revival in North India about this time, but there were others who were his predecessors and the harbingers of the movement. The *Adz Granth* of the Sikhs, compiled by Guru Arjun in 1604, has preserved some of the earliest specimens we possess of Hindi

poetry of the *bhakti* movement. Among those devotees (*bhagats*) of whose compositions fragments have been preserved in the *Granth*, and who are earlier than Ramananda, are Sadna and Namdev. The *Granth* contains also a fragment of a certain *Jaidev* who has sometimes been identified with Jayadeva, the author of the Sanskrit *Gita Govinda*, who lived towards the end of the twelfth century. But the identification is more than doubtful and the date and the circumstances of this Jaidev are unknown.

*Sadna*, who probably flourished about the beginning of the fifteenth century, is said to have been born in Sindh and to have been a butcher (*kasai*). He gave up his trade and became a devotee. Only a couple of his hymns are preserved in the *Granth*,

*Namdev* belonged to the Maratha country and was a devotee of Vithoba at Pandharpur. He probably flourished between about 1400 and 1430. By caste he was a tailor, and according to the legends preserved about him he showed great devotion in his boyhood, but afterwards for a time lived an evil life in company with a band of dacoits. He repented, however, and became a great devotee. He is the author of a considerable number of Marathi hymns, but he was a noteworthy religious leader in the north of India also, and wrote many verses in Hindi. A considerable number of hymns composed by him are in the *Granth*. *Namdev* is a most interesting figure and probably one of the first leaders of the new religious revival which began about this time in North India.

Ramananda, who lived probably from about 1400 to 1470, was an ascetic who somewhere about the year 1430 began to preach that the eternal God should be worshipped under the name of Rama, that Rama alone was the source of release from the evils of transmigration, and that this should be sought by fervent devotion (*bhakti*) towards him. The way had already been prepared by the preaching of others on similar lines, and Ramananda evidently met with such success that he took up his residence in Benares and made that the

headquarters of the new movement. He was undoubtedly one of the most important Hindu religious leaders in North India, for not only is the sect of Ramanandis, which acknowledges him as its direct founder, still very large, but a great many other sects owe their first impulse to the movement he initiated, or else were founded by those who were originally his disciples or members of his sect. As a writer, however, Ramananda does not hold an important place. Hymns in Hindi purporting to have been written by him are still preserved, one of them in the *Adz Granth*. In this hymn he seems to be declining an invitation to go and worship Vishnu in a temple, on the ground that God is all-pervading and that he has found God in his heart. It must not be inferred from this, however, that Ramananda forbade idolatry though he may have criticised it. He preached a vivid faith in the reality of the one personal God, spiritual and invisible, whom he called Rama, but no break was made with idolatry, the Hindu pantheon, or the old mythology. Nor did Ramananda throw over the system of caste. It is true that like other *bhakti* teachers before his day he was willing to acknowledge that even outcastes, by means of *bhakti*, could obtain release, and that amongst his personal disciples there are said to have been not a only a Sudra, a Jat, and an outcaste, but even a Muhammadan weaver and a woman. But there is no evidence that he modified the social rules of caste in the slightest. From the point of view of Hindi literature the significance of the movement initiated by Ramananda was in depending for its literature almost entirely on the vernacular. The followers and successors of Ramananda practically gave up the use of Sanskrit, and this of course gave a great impetus to the development of Hindi literature.

Ramananda's Disciples.—The immediate personal disciples of Ramananda were, according to tradition, twelve in number, and Hindi compositions of some of these have been preserved. *Pipa* was the Raja of Gagaraungarh and is said to have been born in

the year 1425. On becoming a disciple of Ramananda he abdicated his sovereignty and became a mendicant. *Dhana*, the Jat, is said to have been born in 1415. *Sen* was a barber at the court of the Raja of Rewah. Of these three disciples of Ramananda only a few hymns have been preserved in the *Adz Granth*. *Bhawanand*, another disciple, is the reputed author of an explanation in Hindi of the Vedanta system of philosophy in fourteen chapters called the *Amrit Dhar*. *Rai Das* was the *chamar* disciple of Ramananda, and attained great celebrity as a devotee. More than thirty of his hymns have been preserved in the *Adi Granth*. The following, in which he describes his relation to God, is a specimen:—

" If Thou art a hill, then I am Thy peacock ;  
 If Thou art the moon, then I am Thy *chakor*;  
 O God, if Thou break not with me, I will **not break** with  
 Thee;  
 If I break with Thee, whom shall I join ?  
 If Thou art a lamp, then I am Thy wick ;  
 If Thou art a place of pilgrimage, then I am Thy pilgrim.  
 I have joined true love with Thee ;  
 Joining Thee I have broken with all others.  
 Wherever I go there is Thy service ;  
 There is no other Lord like Thee, O God.  
 By worshipping Thee Death's noose is cut away.  
 Rav Das singeth to obtain Thy service."<sup>1</sup>

Kabir.—The greatest of the disciples of Ramananda, whether as a poet or a religious leader, was the Muhammadan weaver Kabir (1440-1518). According to legend he was really the son of a Brahman widow, who, in order to conceal her shame, exposed the infant in the Lahar Tank near Benares, where it was discovered by Niru, the Muhammadan weaver, and his wife Nima, and brought up by them as their own child. Another version gives an entirely miraculous account of his birth. Even as a boy he is said to have given offence both to Hindus and Muhammadans. The former he angered by putting on a sacred cord though of low caste, and the latter by using Hindu names for God

<sup>1</sup> Macauliffe, " The Sikh Religion," Vol. VI. p. 331.

though he was a Muhammadan. He was taunted also with being a *nigura*, that is one without a *guru*. Desiring to remove this reproach he wished to become a disciple of Ramananda, but feared that he might not be accepted. He therefore had recourse to a stratagem. Lying down upon the steps of the *ghat* which he knew Ramananda visited, he hoped that in the dark the *guru* might stumble over him, and that probably then no words would rise so readily to his lips as the *mantra* of his order. This hope was realised and Ramananda uttered the words "Ram, Ram." Kabir claimed that he had been initiated and Ramananda admitted the claim. After this initiation Kabir is said to have visited his *guru* regularly, but though a disciple of Ramananda he went far beyond his master in his teaching. Whether he was originally a Muhammadan or not, there is no doubt that Muhammadan influence can be traced in his ideas. He was the founder of the deistic movement in India. He uses the name Rama for God (as well as other names such as Hari, Govind, Allah, etc.) and has Vedantic ideas, but he rejected entirely the doctrine of incarnations, and with no unsparing voice condemned idolatry and most of the Hindu ceremonies and rites. The influence of Kabir, both direct and indirect, has been enormous. Not only is the sect of Kabirpanthis, which claims him as its founder, still very numerous, but many other sects owe to him the leading ideas of their theology. Many of these sects will be mentioned later on in connection with the literature which their leaders produced. There are many legends but not very much reliable information about the life of Kabir. His interest in religious questions to the neglect of his weaving seems to have brought him sometimes into conflict with his family, but even more trouble came to him from the opposition of both Hindus and Muhammadans, who were offended in turn at his denunciation of many of their practices. He seems to have been persecuted by the Emperor Sikandar Lodi, after being denounced by both Hindus and Muhammadans as a troublesome person, and finally was

exiled from Benares by the Emperor's orders. He went to live at Maghar in the Gorakhpur district, where he ended his days.

The poems composed by Kabir are very numerous. It is probable that he himself did not commit them to writing, but that they were remembered and treasured up by his disciples. Various collections of poems ascribed to Kabir have come down to us, but there is a strong probability that there is much in these collections that is not his genuine work. One collection is to be found in the *Adi Granth* of the Sikhs, which was compiled in 1604. Another collection is contained in the *Bijak* (literally "invoice," or "account-book," or perhaps "a document by which a hidden treasure can be located"). This work was produced in connection with the Kabir Panth after the death of Kabir probably as a book of instruction. It is often said to have been compiled by Bhago Das, one of Kabir's immediate disciples, about the year 1570. The *Bijak* is a collection of verses in various metres. The *Ramainls* are short doctrinal poems. The *Sabdās* are similar but in a different metre. The *Chauntlsa* is an exposition of the religious signification of the consonants of the Nagari alphabet. In the thirty verses of the *Vipramalist* an attack is made on the orthodox system of the Brahmans. The *Kaharas*, *Vasantas*, *Belts*, *Chancharls*, *Birhults* and *Hindolas* are religious verses in the metres so named. The collection ends with over four hundred Sakhis, or short apophthegms, each consisting of a single *dohd*, and the *Sayar Bijak Ko Pad*, which sums up the whole matter. Neither the verses contained in the *Adi Granth* nor those in the *Bijak* can be regarded in their entirety as the work of Kabir. Besides these there are a very large number of Sakhis (of which over five thousand have been collected) and other verses ascribed to Kabir which are still current in India. At the Kabir Chaura, which is the headquarters of the Kabir Panth at Benares, there is said to be a collection of the works of Kabir, called the *Khas Granth*, which includes about twenty different books.

Many of these are evidently the works of disciples or successors, though few of them have been published. The dialect used in the compositions contained in the Bijak is the old Avadhi dialect of Hindi. The poetry of Kablr is rough and unpolished, and the style and language make it not always easy to understand. Words are often loosely strung together with very little regard to grammatical accuracy, and the sentences are often elliptical and full of colloquialisms. The frequent play on words and the obscurity of many of the similes used increase the difficulty. But in spite of all this Kablr must be given a very high place in Hindi literature. The amazing boldness with which he attacked the religious practices of his day, tolerating no shams and demanding reality in all those who were seeking after God, and the moral earnestness of his appeal to men to put the things of God first, would in itself give his work an outstanding importance. But besides this the stinging satire which he has at his command, and his ability to produce striking epigrams, and the fascinating rhythm of his verse, all combine to give a wonderful power to his poetry. He has been called the pioneer of Hindi literature and the father of all Hindi hymns; but though, in view of the predecessors we have already mentioned, such a claim can hardly be allowed, it is certainly true to say that it was he more than any others before him who popularized Hindi religious literature and vastly extended its influence, and Hindi literature of the same type subsequent to Kabir owes to him a great debt.

Translations of his poems give very little idea of the charm and force of his style, but a few extracts may help to give some idea of the kind of literature he produced. Here are one or two of the *Sakhis* ascribed to him:—

" Everything is from God and nothing from His servant;  
He can change a mustard-seed into a mountain and a mountain  
into a mustard-seed."

" The house of God is distant, as is a tall palm ;  
He who climbs to the top, tastes of heaven ; he who falls is ground  
in pieces."

" Consider the parable of the sieve ; it suffers the flour to pass, but retains the husk ;  
So men let pass what is good and swallow what is useless."<sup>1</sup>

The lines below illustrate Kabir's theological standpoint :—

If God be within the mosque, then to whom does this world belong ?  
If Ram be within the image which you find upon your pilgrimage, then who is there to know what happens without ?  
Hari is in the East; Allah is in the West. Look within your heart, for there you will find both Karim and Ram ;  
All the men and women of the world are His living forms.  
Kabir is the child of Allah and of Ram : He is my guru, He is my Pir."<sup>2</sup>

One more extract will illustrate the poetical merit of Kabir's verse :—

No one knew the mystery of that weaver : who came into the world and spread the warp.  
The earth and sky are the two beams : the sun and moon are two filled shuttles.  
Taking a thousand threads he spreads them lengthways: to-day he weaveth still, but hard to reach is the far-off end.  
Says Kabir, Joining Karma with Karma, woven with unwoven threads, splendidly the weaver weaves.<sup>3</sup>

The son of Kabir, named *Kamal*, is also said to have been a poet, and his couplets to have been made in refutation of the sayings of his father whom he seems to have opposed. Hence arose the proverb, "An unlucky family was Kabir's, in which the son Kamal was born."

**Nanak.**—Of the many movements which owe their inspiration to the teaching of Kabir none is more important than the religion of the Sikhs, which was founded in the Punjab by Nanak (1469-1538). It is said that Nanak, when twenty-seven years of age, met Kabir, and the influence of the latter is seen not only in the large number of Kabir's compositions afterwards included in the Sikh *Grantk*, but in the doctrines of Nanak, which are very similar to those of Kabir, and

<sup>1</sup> Translations from Westcott's "Kabir and the Kabir Panto," pp. 95, 86, 93.

<sup>2</sup> Translation by Sir Rabindranath Tagore, "Kabir's Poems," 69.

<sup>3</sup> *Bijak*. Ramaini 28. (Rev. Ahmad Shah's translation.)

undoubtedly owe a great deal to him, though Nanak stands nearer to Hinduism than Kabir. Nanak made journeys in several directions accompanied by his disciple Mardana, who played the rebeck while Nanak sang. His hymns and other poetical utterances were in a mixture of Punjabi and Hindi. Although he is not equal to Kabir as a poet, yet his verse is clear and pithy, and not lacking in poetical excellence. Nanak soon gathered a number of followers and one of his most famous compositions is the *Japji*, a collection of verses which he arranged for their daily use in praise and prayer. Besides this he composed a very large number of other verses which are included in the Sikh *Grayith*\* The following is one verse from the *Japji*:—

"There is no limit to God's praises; to those who repeat them there is no limit.

There is no limit to His mercy, and to His gifts there is no limit.

There is no limit to what God seeth, no limit to what He heareth.

The limit of the secret of His heart cannot be known.

The limit of His creation cannot be known ; neither His near nor His far side can be discovered.

To know His limits how many vex their hearts.

His limits cannot be ascertained ;

Nobody knoweth His limits.

The more we say, the more there remains to be said.

Great is the Lord, and exalted is His seat.

His exalted name is higher than the most exalted.

Were any one else ever so exalted,

Then He would know that exalted Being :

How great He is He knoweth Himself.

Nanak, God bestoweth gifts on whom He looketh with favour and mercy."<sup>1</sup>

The Krishna Cult.—The followers of Ramananda, as well as those of Kabir and Nanak, generally gave the name of Rama to the Supreme God, though other names were sometimes used. The followers of Ramananda accepted Rama as an incarnation, and permitted idolatry, but the doctrine of incarnation and the use of images were both rejected by Kabir and Nanak. It was indeed still *bhakti* to Rama which they

<sup>1</sup> *Japji*, XXIV ; Translation by Macauliffe, "The Sikh Religion" Vol. I. 208.

preached, but to Rama as the invisible God, not as an incarnation. There was however another group of Vaishnavas who worshipped God under the form of another incarnation, namely Krishna. Like the Ramaite cult the worship of Krishna also had its beginnings in the centuries before this period, but about this time received a new impetus, which was marked, as well as furthered, by the use of the vernacular for its religious literature. Sometimes it was the child Krishna who was especially thought of as an object of worship, but more often it was that aspect of Krishna's life which was concerned with his relation to Radha and the other Gopis that received most attention.

Radha-Krishnaite verse goes back to the Sanskrit *Gita Govinda* of Jayadeva in the twelfth century, and as early as the fourteenth century Krishna hymns appeared in Bengali. Between 1450 and 1480 there flourished a Gujarat! poet named *Narsingh Mehta* who wrote Radha-Krishna lyrics in that language. He is also credited with having composed similar verses in Hindi.

*Vidyapati Thakur*, who lived at Bisapi in the Darbhanga district of Bihar in the middle of the fifteenth century, is one of the most famous Vaishnava poets of Eastern India. He was the founder of a school of master-singers which afterwards spread all over Bengal. Little is known of his life, but he was the author of several Sanskrit works. His chief fame however rests on his sonnets in the Maithili dialect of Bihari. In these he uses the story of the love which Radha bore to Krishna as an allegory to describe the relation of the soul to God. Many of these were afterwards adapted to Bengali and made popular by Chaitanya, and Vidyapati has had many imitators. His poems possess great literary merit and he has had a great influence on the literature of the Eastern part of India.

*Umapati* was probably a contemporary of Vidyapati, and also wrote Krishnaite songs both in Maithili and in Bengali.

Mira Bai.—About the same time as Vidyapati, or perhaps a little later, there flourished in the west of Hindustan a writer whose poems helped to popularize the Krishna cult in that region. This was *Mira Bai* (fl. 1470) the most famous of Hindi poetesses. There has been a great deal of confusion as to her date and the details of her life. But it seems that she was a princess of Rajputana who was married to Bhojraj, the heir-apparent of Kumbha, Maharana of Mewar. Her husband died before he came to the throne, and Kumbha was put to death by another son Udekaran (or Uda), who seized the throne in 1469. Mira Bai, who was a devotee of Krishna even from her childhood, seems already to have given offence to the family of her husband by her refusal to conform to their particular form of Hindu worship, and her frequent lavish expenditure in the entertainment of *sadhus*, and when her brother-in-law Udekaran had gained the throne, he persecuted her so much that she fled from Chitor and became a disciple of Rai Das, the *chamar* disciple of Ramananda. This must have been about the year 1470. She is said to have been especially devoted to that form of Krishna known as Ranchhor, and a legend says that one day while worshipping with great devotion she was taken up into the image and disappeared. Rai Das, as a follower of Ramananda, was a worshipper of Rama, and it is not clear why Mira Bai chose him as her *guru*, or whether Rai Das in any way modified her views, but he is mentioned two or three times in the poems ascribed to her. The lyrics of Mira Bai are occupied with intense devotion to Krishna, though in some of them she uses the name of Rama also for God. They are written in the Braj Bhasha dialect and are graceful and melodious verses. There are many similar lyrics in Gujarat! which are also ascribed to Mira Bai. The following is the translation of one of her lyrics:—

" God (*i.e.* Krishna) hath entwined my soul, O Mother,  
With His attributes, and I have sung of them.

The sharp arrow of His love hath pierced my body through and through, O Mother.  
 When it struck me I knew it not; now it cannot be endured, O Mother.  
 Though I use charms, incantations, and drugs, the pain will not depart.  
 Is there any one who will treat me ? Intense is the agony, O Mother.  
 Thou, O God, art near; Thou art not distant; come quickly to meet me.  
 Saith Mira, the Lord, the mountain-wielder, who is compassionate, hath quenched the fire of my body, O Mother.  
 The Lotus-eyed hath entwined my soul with the twine of His attributes."<sup>1</sup>

**Vallabhacharya.**—The spread of the worship of Krishna, however, owed most to Vallabhacharya. He was the son of a Brahman from South India and was born at Benares in 1479. He established an image of Krishna at Gobardhan in the Braj country, and from this as his headquarters spread the doctrine of his sect in many parts of India. He wrote many works in Sanskrit, but nothing in Hindi, though the movement he initiated has produced many Hindi writers. He died in 1531 and was succeeded as leader of the sect by his son Vitthalnath.

*Vitthalnath*, who lived from about 1515 to 1585, not only became the leader of the sect which his father had founded but is also credited with having been a Hindi writer. Besides Hindi verses the genuineness of which is doubtful, he is also said to have been the author of a short prose work called *Mandan* dealing with the story of Radha and Krishna, which must be one of the earliest extant prose writings in Hindi. It is written in Braj Bhasha. Four of the disciples of his father Vallabhacharya, together with four of his own disciples became the celebrated *Ashfa Chimp*, who are mentioned in a later chapter.

**Divisions of the Bhakti Movement.**—During this period (1400-1550) the various *bhakti* movements of Hinduism fall into three groups, namely (1) those **who**

<sup>1</sup> Translation by Macauliffe, "The Religion of the Sikhs," Vol. VI. 356.

worshipped Rama as an incarnation and practised idolatry, (2) those who worshipped God under the name of Rama, but rejected idolatry and the doctrine of incarnation, and (3) those who worshipped Krishna. In each group during this period Hindi literature came to be used and was one of the great factors which helped to spread the various movements, while they on the other hand helped to stimulate the growth of Hindi literature. Almost the whole of subsequent Hindi literature is impressed with one or another of these forms of Vaishnava doctrine.

Malik Muhammad Jayasi.—The bardic chronicles had a much more local currency than the religious verse described above, and outside Rajputana contributed little to the development of vernacular literature, but one remarkable poem of this period seems to show how even the poetry of the bards had been affected by the religious revival. This was the *Padnmavati* of *Malik Muhammad Jayast* who flourished about 1540. Malik Muhammad was a Muhammadan devotee, but was acquainted with Hindu lore, and profoundly affected by the teaching of Kabir. He was much honoured by the Raja of Amethi, who attributed the birth of a son to the prayers of the saint, and his tomb is still to be seen at Amethi. Besides the *Padumavati*, he wrote also a religious poem called the *Akharavat*. In the *Padumavati* he tells the story of a certain Ratan Sen who, hearing from a parrot of the great beauty of Padumavati, or Padmini, journeyed to Ceylon as a mendicant and returned to Chitor with Padmini as his bride. Ala-ud-din, the ruling sovereign at Delhi, also heard of Padmini and endeavoured to capture Chitor in order to gain possession of her. He was unsuccessful, but Ratan Sen was taken prisoner and held as a hostage for her surrender. He was afterwards released from captivity by the bravery of two heroes. He then attacked king Dev Pal, who had made insulting proposals to Padmini during his imprisonment. Dev Pal was killed, but Ratan Sen, who was mortally wounded, returned to Chitor only to die. His two

wives, Padmini and another, became *sail* for him, and while this was happening Ala-ud-din appeared at the gates of Chitor, and though it was bravely defended, captured it. At the end of the poem Malik Muhammad explains it all as being an allegory. Chitor is the body of man, Ratan Sen is the soul, Padmini is wisdom, Ala-ud-din is delusion, the parrot is the *guru*, and so on, and thus a religious character is given to the story. Malik Muhammad's poem is based on the facts connected with the actual siege of Chitor, which took place in 1303, but he has considerably modified the details and borrowed also from other stories. The poem is written in the vernacular dialect of Malik Muhammad's time tinged slightly with an admixture of Persian words and idioms. It was originally written in the Persian character. It is a work of great originality and poetic beauty, and must be reckoned as one of the masterpieces of Hindi literature.

The following translation of an extract from Malik Muhammad's description of Ceylon will give some idea of his excellence as a poet:—

" When a man approacheth this land, 'tis as though he approacheth Kailasa the mount of heaven. Dense mango-groves lie on every side, rising from the earth to the very sky. Each tall tree exaleth the odours of mount Malaya, and the shade covereth the world as though it were the night. The shade is pleasant with its Malaya breeze ; e'en in the fiery month of Jyestha [May-June] 'tis cool amidst it. It is as though night cometh from that shade and as though from it cometh the greenness of the sky. When the wayfarer cometh thither suffering from the heat he forgetteth his trouble in his blissful rest, and whoso hath found this perfect shade, returneth ne'er again to bear the sun-rays.

" So many and so dense are these groves, that I cannot tell their end. The whole six seasons of the year do they flower and fruit, as though it were always spring.

" The pleasant thick mango-groves bear fruit, and the more fruit they bear, the more (humbly) do the trees bow their heads. On the main branches and trunks of the jack trees, the jack fruit ripen, and fair appeareth the *barhal* to him who looketh. The *khirnt* ripeneth aweet as molasses, and the black wild plum, like black bees (among its leaves). Cocoanuts ripen and ripeneth the *khurkur*; they ripen as though the orchards were in Indra's heaven. From the *mahua* doth such sweetness exude, that honey is its flavour, and flowers its scent; and in these princes' gardens are other good fruits, good to eat. whose

names I knew not. They all appear with nectar-like branches, and he who once tasteth them remaineth ever longing for more.

"Areca and nutmeg, all fruits, are produced there luxuriantly. On every side are thick groves of tamarinds, of palmyras, and of date-palms.

" There dwell the birds, singing in many tongues, and sporting joyfully as they look upon these nectar-branches. At dawn the honey-suckers are fragrant, and the turtle-dove cries out ' 'Tis thou and only thou ' (*eka-itu hi*). The emerald parroquets sportively rejoice, and the rock-pigeons cry *kurkur* and fly about. The hawk-cuckoo crieth for its beloved, and the skulking warbler shouted *tuhih khi, Kuhu kuhu* ever crieth the cuckoo, while the king-crow speaketh in many tongues. <sup>1</sup> Tyre, tyre ' [*dahi, dahl*] crieth the milkmaid-bird, while the green pigeon plaintively telleth its tale of woe. The peacock's cry *kun kun* sounded sweet to the ear, and loudly caw the crows.

" Filling the orchards, sitteth every bird that hath a name, and each praiseth the Creator in his own tongue.

**Other Poets of this Period.**—Two other poets of this period may also be mentioned—*Narottam Das* (fl. 1530) wrote the *Sudama Charitr* and the *Dhruv Charitr*. These works are stories in verse. He was also the author of detached poems.

*Kripa Ram* (fl. 1540) was the author of a work entitled *Hit Tarahgini* written in Braj Bhasha. Its importance lies in its being the earliest extant work in Hindi dealing with the art of poetry, and it shows how the way was being prepared for the work of Kesav Das.

<sup>1</sup> *Padumavati*, Canto I I . 27-29; Translation by Sir George A. Grierson and Pandit Sudhakara Dwivedi in *Bibliotheca Indica* of Asiatic Society of Bengal; New Series, No. 877, Vol. I. 15, 16.

## V.

# THE MUGHAL COURT AND THE ARTISTIC INFLUENCE IN HINDI LITERATURE

(1550-1800)

**The New Influence in Hindi Poetry.**—Although the religious language of the Muhammadans was Arabic, the literary language they used in India, and the language of the court, was Persian. This language possessed a large literature, which had already developed a highly artistic character before the Muhammadan power was established in India. Many Hindus who were connected with the court came to learn this language, and when Urdu literature developed it was fashioned after Persian models. Though Hindi developed on its own lines, without any direct influence from Persian, it seems not unlikely that the polished Persian verse with which many Hindus became acquainted may have suggested a higher artistic standard in Hindi literature than there had been before. At all events about the middle of the sixteenth century there appeared a new artistic influence in Hindi literature, which was developed under encouragement from the Mughal court.

Previous Muhammadan rulers had encouraged literature, but it was Akbar who first extended patronage to those who wrote in Hindi. The reign of Akbar (1556-1605) was marked by its brilliance and splendour. Not only was he successful in war and in establishing a strong and, on the whole, good government, but he was also a great patron of art and literature. Architecture, music, painting and calligraphy were all encouraged. The Emperor established a large library of

books of various languages, and had translations made from Sanskrit into Persian and the vernacular. Poets were patronized and rewarded with great liberality. The magnificence of such a reign, like the glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth in England which was contemporary with it, could not but exercise a stimulating influence on all sides, and this was felt in Hindi literature as well as in other directions. Even those writers who lived far away from the influence of the court were helped by feeling that they could carry on their labours in peace under a government strong enough to secure good order, and tolerant towards Hindus as well as Muhammadans. Akbar pursued a deliberate policy of protection and encouragement of Hindu learning. The patronage extended by him, and others in high position, to Hindu as well as to Muhammadan writers, stimulated a great outburst of literary activity, and encouraged improvement in the standards of poetic art. The influence was of course felt most by those writers who lived in close touch with the court.

**Poets at Akbar's Court.**—*Akbar* himself is the reputed author of a few detached verses in Hindi, in which he signs himself Akabbar Ray. They were probably composed in the Emperor's name by the court musician Tan Sen. Some of Akbar's great ministers of state were also authors. It was largely due to the influence of Raja *Todar Mai* (1523-1589) in making Hindus learn Persian that Urdu was developed and accepted as a language. Besides translating the *Bhagavata Purana* into Persian, *Todar Mai* was the author of some Hindi verses, the best being on morals (*niti*). Raja *Birbal* (1528-1583) was a Kanauji Dube Brahman, and was at first a poet at the court of the Raja of Jaipur. The latter sent him to the court of Akbar, where his ability soon brought him into favour. He was not only skilled in business so that he soon rose to a high position, but also possessed great musical and poetical talent. Akbar gave him the title of *Kavi Ray* (poet-laureate) and he received rapid promotion. He was famous as a poet for

his short verses of a witty and humorous character. No complete work by him has survived, but many verses ascribed to him are still current. When he reached a high position he himself became a patron of other poets. Raja *Manohar Das* (fl. 1577), another of Akbar's courtiers, was also a poet. Maharaja *Mdn Singh* (1535-1618) of Jaipur, one of Akbar's generals, was a great patron of literary men, and is reputed to have given as much as a lakh of rupees for a single verse. *Abul Faiz* (or *Falsi*) was brother of *Abul Fazl*, who wrote the *Aln-i-Akbarl*. Both were friends of Akbar. *Abul Faiz* was not only a Persian poet but the author of many Hindi couplets.

The most skilled Hindi poet amongst Akbar's great ministers of state was *Abdul Rahim Khankhana* (1553-1627). He was the son of *Bairam Khan* through whose aid Akbar, in his youth, had been established on the throne. He was acquainted with Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and Hindi, and besides being a poet himself was a great patron of poets, especially of *Gang Kavi*. His Hindi verses, especially those on morals (*niti*) are very much admired, and he was a poet of a high order. Amongst the several works he produced is the *Rahlm Sat Sal* in which some of his best poetry is found.

*Tan Sen* (fl. 1560-1610) of Gwalior, a Hindu convert to Islam, was the most celebrated musician at Akbar's court and indeed of his age. After service at other courts he was summoned by Akbar in 1563, and the first time he performed Akbar is said to have given him two lakhs of rupees. Besides being a singer he also wrote poems in Hindi. He lived on into the reign of *Jahangir*. Amongst his compositions are the *Sahgit Sar* and the *Rag Mala*. *Ram Das* of *Gopchal*, the father of the great poet *Stir Das*, was another great singer of Akbar's court, regarded as second only to *Tan Sen*. Among other Hindi poets who attended Akbar's court were the two friends *Karnes for Karan*) and *Narhari Sahay*. The latter was given by Akbar the title of *Mahapatr*, the Emperor

saying that other bards were vessels of virtue (*Gun kd patr*), but that Narhari Sahay was a great vessel (*Mahapatr*).

A more famous poet connected with Akbar's court was *Ganga Prasad*, who is more commonly known as *Gang Kavi*. He lived probably from about 1533 to 1617. Very little is known of his life, and though he was very much honoured in his day only about thirty or thirty-five of his verses are still extant. On one occasion Abdul Rahim Khankhana, who was his special patron, is reported to have given him as much as thirty-six lakhs of rupees for a single verse. He is said to have excelled in the comic style and also in his description of battles.

The **Art of Poetry**.— Besides the many poets who were closely connected with the court, the reign of Akbar was the period when such great poets as Tulsi Das and Sur Das flourished. These will be dealt with in later chapters in connection with the religious movements with which they were connected. But more closely in touch with the court was a movement to systematize the art of poetry itself. While great writers like Tulsi Das and Sur Das were far beyond their contemporaries in the success they achieved in the handling of metres and the polish of their verse, earlier poets had often failed in this respect. But the artistic influence which had been brought to bear on Hindi poetry now became self-conscious in various works, themselves in verse, which determined the canons of poetic criticism.

Kesav Das.—Kripa Ram, who is mentioned in a previous chapter, was probably the forerunner of this movement, but the first great writer on the art of poetry was *Kesav Das Sanadhya Misra* (1555-1617) of Orchha in Bundelkhand. His first important work was the *Vigyan Gita*, which he dedicated to his patron Raja Madhukar Shah of Orchha. His most admired work is his *KaviPriya*, in which he describes the various literary qualities which should mark a good poem and other matters connected with the art of poetry. This work, which has made Kesav Das an authority on poetry, was

dedicated to a famous courtesan of those days named *Pravin Ray Paturi* who was also the authoress of numerous short poems which have a great reputation. The *Ram Chandrika* of Kegav Das was inscribed to Indrajit Singh, son of Madhukar Shah. It was Kesav Das who, through Raja Birbal's instrumentality, got Akbar to excuse Indrajit from a heavy fine he had imposed upon him, and Kegav Das was greatly honoured by Indrajit. Kesav also wrote the learned *Rasik Priya* on poetical composition (*sahitya*) and the *Ram Alahkritmanj art* on prosody. These works on poetry and kindred subjects were not only concerned with giving rules, but also provided original illustrations, so that each work is also a collection of verse of great poetic merit. The poetry of Kesav Das is not easy reading, but there is no doubt of his being a poet of very great skill, and his name is to be reckoned amongst the foremost. Very many commentaries on his principal works have been written, and he has had many imitators. The translation of a few of his lines, which is all that we have space for here, can give only a very inadequate idea of his poetry:—

Kesav says my [grey] hairs have done to me what my enemies cannot do;

Maidens with a countenance fair as the moon, and eyes like deer, now call me Baba [father].

\* \* \* \* \*

Do not employ a Brahman who is greedy of fees; do not make a fool your friend ;

Do not serve an ungrateful master; do not praise poetry that is full of defects.

\* \* \* \* \*

Kesav says, When I see glancing eyes my good resolutions go, and the opinion of the world is no longer heeded ;

My ears become deaf to instruction, and my eyes closed to all discernment of right and wrong ;

The chariot-like motion of the good intentions of my mind becomes stopped like a river that has ceased to flow.

May the Creator forbid that such a woman should fix her eyes on me.

\* \* \* \* \*

Avoid a horse with an unsteady gait, a servant who is a thief, a mind which is fickle, a friend without intelligence, a master who is a miser.

Taking food in another's house, dwelling in dog-kennels, travelling in the rainy season—these things, says Kesav Das, give a lot of trouble.

Keeping company with sinners, a woman under the control of Cupid, a son of ill-fame—these are hurtful to the mind.

Folly, old age, sickness, poverty, falsehood, anxiety—these things, says Kesav, are a hell upon earth.

Some Contemporaries of Kesav Das.—The brother of Kesav Das, whose name was *Balbadra Sanadhya Misra*, wrote several works which include a commentary on the *Bhagavata Purana*. His most famous poem is a *Nakhsikh*, which is recognized as a standard work. This is a form of literature which is common amongst Hindi writers, and is closely connected with works on the art of poetry. In a *Nakhsikh* every part of the body of a hero or heroine from the toe-nail (*nakh*) to the top-knot of the hair (*sikh*) is described with illustrative verses. Such a work was intended to be used by other poets in want of ideas. A similar kind of work is a work on lovers, or a *Nayak-Nayika Bhed*, in which various kinds of heroes and heroines are described and classified with a minuteness which is often pedantic and absurd. Other writers on the art of poetry of this period were *Bal Krishna Tripathi* (fl. 1600) and *Kasl Nath* (fl. 1600), the former of whom wrote a good prosody called *Ras Chandrika*,

Artistic Poets of the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan.—The effects of the encouragement given to Hindi literature by Akbar lasted long after his death. Jahangir (1605-1627) and Shah Jahan (1627-1658) very largely continued Akbar's policy of encouraging poets. Dara Shukoh, the son of Shah Jahan, was a great patron of learning and literature with a strong leaning towards Hinduism. Even in the time of Aurangzeb (1658-1707), although he was unfavourable to Hindu learning, the title of *Kavi Ray* continued to be given to deserving poets.

*Sundar* (fl. 1631) was a Brahman who held the title of *Kavi Ray* at the court of Shah Jahan. He wrote a work on poetical composition called *Sundar Sringar*, and was also the author of a Braj Bhasha

version of the *Singhasan Battisi*, which was afterwards translated into Urdu by Lallu Ji Lal.

*Senapati* was born about 1589 and died after 1649. He was a Kanauji Brahman and a devotee of Krishna. His principal work was the *Kavitta Ratnakar*, which is dated 1649, and deals with various aspects of the art of poetry as well as other matters. He excelled in his description of nature, and is especially famous for his description of the six seasons in which he is considered to have excelled all Hindi poets with the exception of Dev Datt. Another work of his is the *Kavya Kalpadrum*. His poems were probably written as detached verses and collected afterwards. The following is from his description of spring (*basa-nt*):—

" During the sportive spring the *palas* trees are in full bloom, with red flowers, parts of which however appear from their blackness to have been dipped in ink. Swarms of bees are going to them to gather honey. The mild south wind is blowing fragrance in the gardens and forests. The poet Senapati says, ' In the spring, by constantly looking at these flowers the idea of writing poetry has been strongly brought to my mind.' The red glow of the upper part of the flowers clearly portrays the burning desire and yearning of a lover, while the blackness of the lower part, like a fire burnt out completely and turned to charcoal, suggests the pangs of separation."

**The Tripathi Brothers.**—Ratnakar Tripathi was a Kanauji Brahman who lived at Tikvampur in the district of Cawnpore and had four sons, all of whom became famous Hindi poets. They flourished in the reigns of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb in the latter half of the seventeenth century and amplified and developed the work of Kesav Das. The eldest was *Chintamani Tripathi*, who was patronised by several rulers as well as by the Emperor Shah Jahan. He is regarded as one of the great authorities on the subject of poetical composition (*sahitya*). Among his works are *Chhand Bichar*, a treatise on prosody, *Kavya Vivek*, *Kavi-kul Kalpataru*, and *Kavya Prakas*. He was also the author of a *Ramayan* in *kavitta* and other metres. The name of the youngest brother was **Jata Sankar** or **Nil Kanth Tripathi**. Both Chintamani and Nil

Kanth were excelled as poets by the other two brothers, Bhushan and Mati Ram.

*Bhushan Tripathl* visited the courts of several kings, but his special patrons were Siv Raj (or Sivaji) of Sitara and Chhatrasal of Panna. On one occasion the latter monarch helped with his own shoulder to carry the poet's palanquin, and Siv Raj bestowed lavish rewards upon him, giving on one occasion five elephants and twenty-five thousand rupees for a single poem. The principal work of Bhushan is the *Siv Raj Bhushan* which is an excellent account of rhetoric as used in poetry, and each figure of rhetoric is illustrated by a verse in honour of Siv Raj. It was composed between 1666 and 1673. Some of the works of Bhushan have been lost. But besides the *Siv Raj Bhushan* there are extant other verses in praise of Siv Raj and of Chhatrasal. Bhushan is considered to have excelled in the tragic, heroic, and terrible styles, and holds a very high rank amongst Hindi poets. He is especially famous for his keen interest in the progress and glory of the Hindus, and this is one of the features of his poetry which is very much admired. It was this interest which attached him so much to Sivaji, the Maratha hero, who did so much to weaken the Muhammadan power. Here is a translation of one of his verses:—

"As Indra subdued Jambha, as the *barav* fire overcomes the sea, as Ramachandra overcame the hypocrite Ravan, as the wind overpowers the waters, as Sambhu overcame Cupid, as Rama, the Lord of Brahmans, overcame Sahasra Bal, as fire overcomes the branches of a tree, as a leopard overcomes a herd of deer, as a lion overcomes elephants, as light overcomes darkness, as Krishna overcame Kanha, so, Bhushan says, the lion Siv Raj overcomes the Muhammadans."

*Mati Ram Tripathl* lived first at the court of Maharaja Rav Bhau Singh of Bundi and afterwards at that of Raja Sambhu Nath Sulanki. In honour of his first patron he composed a work on rhetoric called *Lalit Lalam*. Among the illustrative verses are many in praise of his patron as well as love verses and others. His work is considered to give a very clear and easily understood account of the subject of rhetoric. It was

composed about 1664. The *Chhand Sar Pingal* is a treatise on prosody composed in honour of Sambhu Nath. The *Ras Raj* is a treatise on lovers containing a *Nayika Bhed* and is considered to be a very excellent work. Mati Ram also composed the *Sat Sat Mati Ram*. As a poet he is famed for the purity and sweetness of his language, the excellence of his similes, and for his descriptions of the dispositions of men. Many of his *dohas* are considered equal to those of Bihari Lal.

Other Poets of the time of Shah Jahan.—Raja Sambhu Nath Singh of Sitara (fl. 1650) was the friend and patron of Mati Ram and other poets. He was the author of a *Nayika Bhed* and a *Nakhsikh* which are much admired. The latter is sometimes considered to be the best work of its kind extant.

*Sarasvati* (fl. 1650) was a Brahman of Benares, learned in Sanskrit composition. At the instance of Shah Jahan he took to writing poems in Hindi. His chief work of this kind was the *Kavindra Kalpa Lata*, in which there are many poems in praise of his patron as well as of prince Dara Shukoh and the Begam Sahiba.

*Tutsi* (fl. 1655) was only a mediocre poet himself, but in 1655 he compiled an excellent anthology of poetry, called the *Kavi Mala*, which includes poems by seventy-five different authors from 1443 to 1643.

Another writer of this period was *Vedang Ray* (fl. circ. 1650). He was the author of the *Parsi Prakas*, a work describing the manner of counting the months, etc., by Hindus and Muhammadans, which was compiled by the orders of the Emperor Shah Jahan.

Bihari Lai Chaube.—The most celebrated Hindi writer in connection with the art of poetry is *Bihari Lal Chaube* (circ. 1603-1663). He is said to have been born in Gwalior and to have spent his boyhood in Bundelkhand. On his marriage he settled at Muttra the home of the Braj Bhasha dialect, in which his verses are composed. His patron was Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur, who gave him a gold *ashrafi* for each *dohd*. Bihari Lai's fame as a poet rests upon his *Sat Sat*

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(1662), which is a collection of approximately seven hundred *dohas* and *sorathas*. The majority of the couplets take the shape of amorous utterances of Radha and Krishna, but each couplet is complete in itself. They are intended to illustrate figures of rhetoric and other constituents of a poem. As the verses do not connect themselves into a story the order of their arrangement can be changed and they have come down in different recensions. The most famous is that made for prince Azam Shah, the third son of the Emperor Aurangzeb, and hence called the Azam Shahi recension. A brief description of this work will help to indicate the nature of Hindi works on poetics. The vast amount of literature of this type seems to indicate that in India the dictum that a poet is born and not made would have to be reversed. In the Azam Shahi recension there are first a few miscellaneous verses. Then there are verses applicable to each of four kinds of hero (*nayak*), followed by nearly two hundred verses which describe the varieties and sub-varieties of heroine (*nayika*). Next there are verses illustrating the various constituents of poetic style (*ras*), its excitants and its ensuants, among which verses about a hundred and seventy deal with the pangs of love in separation. The third section is a *Nakhsikh*, and ends with verses descriptive of the six Indian seasons. In the fourth part there are moral apophthegms and allusive sayings and a collection of verses illustrating sentiments appropriate to various occasions. In the last part besides the conclusion and other verses there are verses illustrating the different styles (*ras*) of poetry, which are considered in India to be nine in number. These are *hasya* (comic), *karuna* (pathetic), *raudra* (furious), *vira* (heroic), *bhayanaka* (terrible), *bibhatsa* (disgustful), *adbhuta* (marvellous), *Santa* (quietistic), and *srihgara* (erotic). Only the first eight are referred to in this part of the *Sat Sai*, as the last (*srihgara*) had already been dealt with at length in an earlier part of the recension.

Bihari Lal was not the originator of this form of composition. Similar works had appeared in Sanskrit, one of which is called *Sapta Satika*, the Sanskrit equivalent of the Hindi *Sat Sal* (" seven centuries/' i.e. of verse). Tulsi Das had written a *Sat Sal* before the time of Bihari Lal, as well as other Hindi poets. But Bihari Lal undoubtedly achieved very great excellence in this particular line, and his work has had a large number of commentators (as many as thirty in number) and many imitators. Hari Prasad (fl. circ. 1775) of Benares translated the *Sat Sal* into Sanskrit. Each couplet had to be complete in itself, and yet in such a small space the poet must give an entire picture. Conciseness of style was therefore an absolute necessity, and besides this all the different artifices of Indian rhetoric had to be illustrated in turn. The work of Bihari Lal is a triumph of skill and of felicity in expression. He is perhaps at his best in his description of natural phenomena, as when he describes the scent-laden breeze under the guise of a way-worn pilgrim from the south. Naturally a work of this kind abounds in obscurities and on account of the peculiarity of its style is very difficult to translate. In the following verse Bihari Lal gives a riddle:—

At even came the rogue, and with my tresses  
 Toyed with a sweet audace—with ne'er a 'please'  
 Snatched a rude kiss—then wooed me with caresses.  
 'Who was it, dear ? ' ' Thy love ? ' 'No, dear, the breeze.'<sup>1</sup>

Jaswant Singh.—*Maharaj a Jaswant Singh* of Jodhpur (Marwar) figures in history as an opponent of Aurangzeb. He was born in 1625 and died in 1681. In 1634, while still a boy, he came to the throne. In literature his chief fame rests on his *Bhasha Bhushan*, a work on rhetoric in 261 *do/ids*. This work, which was founded on a Sanskrit one, has had a large number of commentators. Though Kesav Das was the first great Hindi writer on this subject he is considered heretical in some points, and for those who do not follow Kesav

<sup>1</sup> Translation from *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II, p. 423.

Das, the *Bhasha Bhushan* is the great text-book. Jaswant Singh was the author of several other poems which are connected with the Vedanta philosophy.

**Dev Kavi.**—*Dev Datt*, more commonly known as *Dev Kavi* (circ. 1673-1745) was a Sanadhya Brahman who was born at Etawah. At the age of sixteen he recited his first effort before Prince Azam Shah. In search of a patron he visited many places in India but seems to have been dissatisfied with each in turn. His most famous patron was Raja BhogI Lai. His various wanderings enabled him to give accurate descriptions of the inhabitants of different parts of India. He was a prolific writer and is credited by some with having composed as many as seventy-two different works. Only about thirty of these are extant. They include a play called *Dev Maya Prapahch* and works on the art of poetry. Amongst his most famous works are the *Jatibilas*, the *Rasbilas*, and the *Premchandrika*. Most of his verse is of an erotic character, but from the point of view of form and language he is to be reckoned amongst the greatest Hindi poets. He wrote in Braj Bhasha, and his verse is adorned with all the recognised ornaments of style. In his handling of rhymes, his use of attributes, his drawing of comparisons, his knowledge of the sayings current amongst men, and his description of heroines who represent women typical of various parts of India, he is considered to have shown the greatest skill.

Here are some translations of his verses:—

" Call me a wicked person, noble or ignoble, call me poor, or one who is to be blamed, call me a woman of ill-fame—whether in this world, the world of men, or in the best of worlds I dwell, nevertheless I am separate from all these worlds ; whether my body is destroyed, or the gods and gurus are destroyed, or my life is destroyed, I will not give up my obstinacy. He who dwells in Brindiaban, wearing a crown and yellow garments, with him I am madly in love."

" The work of a man of noble race, the gentility of a nobleman, the wealth of a generous man, a woman of good character, the honour of giving, generosity like that of Sur Das, the lustre of virtue, a woman who walks like an elephant, water in the hot weather, the sunshine of October, the smiling lightning accompanied by clouds during the

month of November, the full moon, the morning sun, the days of the winter season, the nights of spring—Dev says these are most excellent."

**Later Writers on the Art of Poetry.**—The reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) was marked by the beginning of the decay of the Mughal Empire. It was also the time when a period of decadence in Hindi poetry set in. This however was not felt at first as is shown by the names mentioned above. But towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, and still more after his time in the eighteenth century, the decline becomes evident. While the number of poets still continues to be great there are no names of such outstanding importance as marked the time of Akbar and his immediate successors, and most of the writers are only imitators of greater poets who preceded them. The severe Aurangzeb was unfavourable to the arts and to Hindu learning, but the court patronage of poets was not entirely withdrawn, and many poets attended his court and also that of his son Bahadur Shah (1707-1712). The following are some of the writers on the art of poetry and kindred subjects from the time of Aurangzeb down to the end of the eighteenth century :—

*Kulpati Misra* (born circ. 1620) was a Chaube Brahman of Agra and a nephew of Bihari Lal Chaube. He attended the court of Maharaja Ram Singh of Jaipur. His chief work, which is dated 1670, is the *Ras Rahasya*, a work on poetics.

*Ram Ji* (born 1646) was the author of a *Nayika Bhed* as well as other works.

*Mandan* (born 1643), of Bundelkhand, wrote several works on poetical composition.

*Sukh Dev Misra* (fl. circ. 1680), of Kampila, attended several courts. The Raja of Gaur gave him the title of *Kaviraj*. He wrote works on prosody, poetical composition and other subjects and is considered a poet of very great merit.

*Newaj* (fl. circ. 1700) was a Brahman who lived at the Court of Raja Chhatrasal of Panna. He was the author of a play called the *Sakuntala Natak* as well as of many detached verses.

*Kalidas Trivedi* (fl. circ. 1700), of Banpura in the Doab, was for many years in attendance at the court of Aurangzeb, and afterwards at that of the Raja of Jambu. He is considered to be an excellent poet. Among other works he compiled an anthology, called *Kalidas Hajara*, which contains a thousand poems selected from the works of over two hundred poets from 1423 to 1718.

*Alam* (fl. 1703) was a Brahman who fell in love with a Muhammadan woman named Shekh Rangrezin, who was a dyer by trade. He became a Muhammadan and married her. *Shekh Rangrezin* also wrote poetry. Alam was in the service of Muazzam Shah, son of Aurangzeb. His poetry is considered to be very beautiful.

*Sripati* (fl. 1720) is counted as one of the authorities on poetical composition. His most famous work is the *Kavya Saroj'*. He wrote several other works also.

*Surafi Misra* (fl. 1729), of Agra, wrote a commentary on the *Sat Sat* of Bihari Lal, and also one on the *Ras-ik Priya* of *Kesav Das*. He also wrote works on rhetoric and other subjects, including a *Nakhsikh*.

*Ganjan* (fl. 1729), of Benares, was a Brahman who was in the service of Qamruddin Khan (the Vazir of the Emperor Muhammad Shah) who gave the poet liberal rewards. At the orders of his patron Ganjan wrote a work on poetics in which there are many verses in praise of the Vazir. It is considered to be a work of great merit.

*Guru Datt Singh* (fl. 1734) was Raja of AmethL He wrote under the name of *Bhupati*. His principal work was an excellent *Sat Sal* in imitation of that of Bihari Lal.

*Tosh Nidhi* (fl. 1734) lived at Singraur in the district of Allahabad. He wrote the *Sudhanidhi* and other works on poetics including a *Nakhsikh*, which are much admired.

*Dalpati Ray*, a merchant, and *Bansidhar*, a Brahman (fl. 1735), both of whom lived at Ahmedabad, wrote in collaboration the *Alankar Ratnakar*. It was inscribed

to Raja Jagat Singh, of Udaipur, and is a kind of commentary on the *Bhasha Bhushan* of Raja Jaswant Singh.

*Somnath* (fl. 1737) was a Brahman who was patronised by a son of the Raja of Bharatpur. Among other works he wrote the *Piyush Nidhi*, which is considered to be a standard work on the art of poetry.

*Ras Lin* (fl. 1740), whose real name was Sayyad Gulam Nabi, of Bilgram, in the district of Hardoi, wrote several works on poetics which include a *Nakhsikh* called *Ahg Darpan*.

*Uday Nath Trivedi* (fl. 1740), of Banpura in the Doab, was the son of Kalidas Trivedi. He was the poet-laureate at the court of the Raja of Amethi, and wrote on the subject of poetics. His son *Dulah Trivedi* (fl. 1750) also wrote on the same subject.

*Bairl Sal* (fl. 1768) wrote on the subject of rhetoric. His *Bhasha Bharan* is considered to be a standard work of great excellence.

*Kishor* (fl. 1768) was an excellent poet whose various detached verses are collected in the *Kishor Sangrah*. He is considered to be very successful in his description of the six seasons.

*Datt* or *Dev Datt* (fl. circ. 1770) was the author of the *Lalitya Lata*, a work on rhetoric which is said to resemble the *Lalit Lalam* of Mati Ram.

*Chandan Ray* (fl. 1773) attended the court of the Raja of Gaur. He wrote many esteemed works on the art of poetry. He had twelve pupils, all of whom became successful poets.

*Ratan Kavi* (born circ. 1741) wrote works on poetics, which include the *Fateh Shah Prakai* and the *Fateh Bhushan*. He is considered to be a poet of great merit. His examples are mostly verses in praise of his patron Fateh Shah of Bundela.

*Manx Ram Midra* (fl. 1772) has given in the fifty-six verses of his *Chhand Chhappani* a very concise and well-written account of the art of poetry. This poem, which somewhat resembles the Sanskrit Sutras, is considered to be very excellent.

*BodhaFirozabadi* (fl. circ. 1773-1803) was connected with Panna. He was the author of the *Ishqnamd* and some detached verses which are much admired. He was a poet of love, and his verses were written mostly in praise of a courtesan named Subhan.

*Jan Gopdl* (fl. 1776) was the author of the *Samarsar*, a work which is said to be full of poetic feeling,

*Devkl Nandan* (fl. 1784-1800) wrote the *Sringdr Charitr*, which is a *Ndyak-Ndyika Bhed*, and other much-praised works connected with the art of poetry.

*Than Ram*, or *Than* (fl. 1791), a Bhat, was the author of a work on poetics called *Dalel Prakdi*.

*Bern* (fl. 1792-1817) wrote works on poetics, rhetoric, etc. His best verses are said to be verses of satire.

*Bhaun* (P. 1794), a Bhat, who was skilled in all the graces of poetry, wrote in Braj Bhasha works connected with the poetic art.

*Bhikari Das* (fl. 1734-1750) was a Kayasth of Pratapgarh, in Bundelkhand. He is more generally known by the name of *Das*. His patron was Hindupati, brother of Raja Prithvipati. He borrowed phrases from other poets, especially from Sripati, but is considered nevertheless to be an excellent poet. Besides many works connected with the art of poetry he also translated the *Vishnu Purana* into Hindi verse.

*Guman Misra* (fl. 1744) attended the court of Akbar Ali Khan. He translated the *Naishadha* of Sri Harsha" and wrote several works on poetics.

*Raghu Nath* (fl. 1745), of Benares, was the father of Gokul Nath, who is celebrated as the translator of the *Mahabharata* into Hindi. Raghu Nath was a writer on the art of poetry, his works being much admired. They include a commentary on the *Sat Sal* of Bihari Lal.

*Kumar Mani Bhatt* (fl. 1746) was a very skilled poet, who wrote a good work on poetics called *Rasik Rasal*.

*Sambhu Nath Misra* (fl. 1749) attended the court of Bhagwant Ray Khichi, Raja, of Asothar. He wrote

several much-admired works on poetics and was the preceptor of Siv Arsela and other poets.

*Szv Arsela* (fl. circ. 1750) wrote on poetical composition and prosody.

*Jagat Singh* (fl. circ. 1770) belonged to the family of the Raja of Gonda and Bhinga and was a pupil of Siv Arsela. He wrote on prosody and rhetoric.

*Thakur* (fl. circ. 1750) excelled especially in the *savaiya* metre, and his works are mostly in the erotic style. His most famous work is the *Thakur Satak*. He also wrote a commentary on the *Sat Sal* of Bihari Lal.

*Hari Char an Das* (fl. 1778) was a Brahman, of Krishnagarh (Marwar). He wrote commentaries on the *Kavi Priya* and *Rasik Priya* of Kesav Das, as well as on the *Sat Sal* of Bihari Lal, and was the author of other works also.

## VI.

### TULSI DAS AND THE RAMA CULT

(1550-1800)

Tulsi Das.—The most celebrated name in Hindi literature is undoubtedly that of *Tulsi Das*, whose Hindi *Ramayan* has had great and deserved fame not only in India but throughout the whole world. The details of his life, apart from legends, are very scanty. He is said to have been born about 1532, and his father's name is given as Atma Ram and his mother's as Hulasi. His own name was at first Rambola, but when he became a devotee he took the name of Tulsi Das. The place of his birth is not known with certainty. According to some he was born at Hastinapur; according to others at Hajipur, near Chitrakut. But the tradition which is most generally accepted is that he was born at Rajpur, in the district of Banda. He was a Kanauji Brahman, and it is said that his *guru* was Narharidas, who was sixth in preceptorial succession from Ramananda. He himself tells us, in the introduction to the *Ramayan*, that he studied at Sukar-khet, or Soron. When he was a young man it is said that he loved his wife very much, and one day, when she had gone home to her father's house, Tulsi Das was greatly troubled on account of separation from her. He therefore hastened after her, although it involved crossing a swollen river in the dark. His wife, however, rebuked him, saying that if only he would have as great devotion to Rama, the earth would become gold. These words acted as a call to Tulsi Das. At daybreak he left home, and became a devotee of Rama, taking up his abode at Benares.

There he spent the greater part of his life, though he also visited other places, such as Soron, Ayodhya, Chitrakut, Allahabad, and Brindaban. Many legends are told about him, but scarcely anything that is reliable. Nabha Das, the author of the *Bhaktamala*, is said to have been his friend, and Sur Das is also supposed to have visited him. He was not directly connected with the court, though Raja Man Singh and Abdul Rahim Khankhana are said to have befriended him, and no doubt he was affected by the artistic influence in literature which was characteristic of the age in which he lived. Tulsi Das died at Benares in 1624.

The great masterpiece of Tulsi Das is the *Ramayan*. This is the name by which it is generally known, but he himself called it the *Ram-charit-manas*, the "Lake of the deeds of Rama." It was commenced in 1575, according to his own statement in the prologue. The story of Rama had been told long before by the Sanskrit poet Valmiki, who lived probably in the fourth century B.C., and it has been a frequent theme of Indian poets in the various languages of India. The *Ramayan* of Tulsi Das is not, however, a translation of that of his Sanskrit predecessor. The general outline of the story is the same, but there is a great deal of difference in treatment. It is only in the broadest outline that the two agree. Not only are there different episodes in each, but even in the main story the incidents are differently placed and often have quite a different complexion. The main difference, however, between the work of Valmiki and that of Tulsi Das is in their theological outlook. In books II to VI of Valmiki's poem Rama appears as a man and only a man, except in one passage which has been interpolated into the sixth book. The first book, in which Rama and his brothers are regarded as partial incarnations of Vishnu, is considered by scholars as a later addition. In the poem of Tulsi Das, however, Rama appears throughout as an incarnation of the Supreme God. The same theological position as that

of Tulsi Das was also characteristic of a Sanskrit work by an unknown poet called the *Adhyatma Ramayan*, the date of which is not earlier than the fourteenth century A.D. It is not unlikely that it was this work which was the real precursor of Tulsi Das's *Ramayan*. Besides their theological attitude they have other points in common, but even a casual acquaintance with the two poems will make it clear that the work of Tulsi Das is far superior in poetic merit.

Tulsi Das was in line with that tendency of the *bhakti* movement, which we have already noted in a previous chapter, in using the vernacular for his great poem. But he knew he would meet with his critics, especially amongst the Sanskrit pandits, who would affect to despise his work as a concession to the uneducated multitude. There is quite a long passage in the introduction to the *Ramayan* in which he vindicates his style against the critics. "My lot," he writes, "is low, my purpose high; but I am confident of one thing, that the good will be gratified to hear me though fools may laugh. The laughter of fools will be grateful to me—as they have no taste for poetry nor love for Rama I am glad that they should laugh. If my homely speech and poor wit are fit subjects for laughter, let them laugh; it is no fault of mine. If they have no understanding of true devotion to the Lord, the tale will seem insipid enough; but to the true and orthodox worshippers of Hari and Hara the story of Raghubar will be sweet as honey." The wonderful acceptance, however, which the poem of Tulsi Das has received has been its greatest vindication. Amongst all classes of the Hindu community in North India, with the exception perhaps of a few Sanskrit pandits, it is to-day everywhere appreciated and venerated whether by rich or poor, old or young, learned or unlearned, and it has sometimes been called the Bible of the Hindu people of North India.

One most commendable feature of the *Ramayan* is its pure and lofty moral tone, in which it compares very favourably with the literature put forth by some

of the devotees of Krishna. In one passage, in which Tulsi Das has been explaining why he calls his poem the "Lake (or "pond") of Rama's deeds," he says, "Sensual wretches are like the cranes and crows that have no part in such a pond nor ever come near it; for here are no prurient and seductive stories, like snails or frogs and scum on the water, and therefore the lustful crow and greedy crane, if they do come, are disappointed/' This claim made by Tulsi Das was a just one, and it is this feature of his poem which has given it so much value in holding up a high moral ideal before its readers.

The dialect which Tulsi Das uses is the old Baiswari, or Avadhi, dialect of Eastern Hindi, and through his influence Ramaite poetry since his day has generally been in this dialect. He uses, however, many words from other dialects, especially from Braj Bhasha. His language abounds in colloquialisms, and Tulsi Das has little scruple in altering a word, or adopting a corrupt pronunciation, to make it fit into his metre or rhyme. Like other Indian poets he makes use of many conventional similes and stereotyped phrases. The gem which is supposed to be in the serpent's head, and the mythical power of the swan to separate milk from the water with which it has been mixed, and his constant use of such phrases as "lotus-feet," are examples. But there are many other passages which show that Tulsi Das was a true observer and lover of nature. In one place he speaks of King Dasrath, in his great distress, writhing "like a fish in the scour of a turbid river," a passage which, Mr. Growse tells us, puzzled commentators until someone discovered that this was a true phenomenon of nature. Tulsi Das's love of nature comes out in many such passages as the following, taken from the *Aranya Kand* :—

"The Lord went on from there to the shore of the deep and beautiful lake called Pampa ; its water as clear as the soul of the saints ; with charming flights of steps on each of its four sides ; where beasts of different kinds came as they listed, to drink of the flood, like crowds of beggars at a good man's gate. Under its cover of dense lotus-leaves the water was as difficult to distinguish as is the unembodied

supreme spirit under the veil of delusive phenomena. The happy fish were all in placid repose at the bottom of the deep pool, like the days of the righteous that are passed in peace. Lotuses of many colours displayed their flowers; there was a buzzing of garrulous bees, both honey-makers and bumble-bees; while swans and waterfowl were so noisy you would think they had recognised the Lord and were telling his praises. The geese and cranes and other birds were so numerous that only seeing would be believing, no words could describe them. The delightful voice of so many beautiful birds seemed as an invitation to the wayfarers. The saints had built themselves a house near the lake, with magnificent forest-trees all round—the *champa*, the *malsari*, the *kadamb* and *tamala*, the *patala*, the *kathal*, the *dhak* and the mango. Every tree had put forth its new leaves and flowers and was resonant with swarms of bees. A delightful air, soft, cool and fragrant, was ever in delicious motion, and the cooing of the cuckoos was so pleasant to hear that a saint's meditation would be broken by it. The trees, laden with fruits, bowed low to the ground, like a generous soul whom every increase of fortune renders only more humble than before."<sup>1</sup>

The story is divided into seven chapters, or *kands*, named respectively *Bal*, *Ayodhya*, *Aranya*, *Kishkindha*, *Sundar*, *Lanka*, and *Uttara*. Of these the second, which describes the scenes at Ayodhya that led up to Rama's banishment to the forest, is considered the best. The characters are consistently drawn, and many of the scenes are full of deep pathos. The grief of Dasrath, the filial piety meekness, generosity and nobility of Rama, the wifely devotion of Sita, the courage and enthusiasm of Lakshman, the unselfishness of Bharat, as the genius of Tulsi Das has described them, cannot but awaken a response in the heart of the reader.

The object which Tulsi Das had in mind, however, was not merely to tell in beautiful verse a wonderful story, but to use it as a vehicle for preaching the supreme value of the worship of Rama. Though Tulsi Das accepted, like other leaders of the Vaishnava movement, the pantheistic teaching of the Vedanta, it was tempered by belief in a personal God, whom he identified with the incarnation Rama. His poems is a passionate appeal to men to devote themselves to the worship of this God. The theological digressions

<sup>1</sup> Translation by Mr. F. S. Growse.

which Tulsi Das sometimes makes, and the frequent hymns he inserts, may be to some extent a drawback to the literary value of the *Ramayan*, but they are excused by the purpose which Tulsi Das had in view. In these hymns the powers of Tulsi Das as a poet are manifest, and even those who do not accept his religious ideas cannot but admire the spiritual earnestness which the hymns display. The following is from the *Bal Kand*:—

" To the King of heaven be all glory given, refuge of creation in distress and care,  
 Priests and kine befriending, hell's brief triumph ending, best beloved of Lakshmi, Ocean's daughter fair.  
 Heaven and earth's upholder, who, than all men bolder, dares to scan the secret of thy strange mysterious way ?  
 Ever kind and loving, humble souls approving, may thy gracious favour reach now to me, I pray.  
 Spirit all-pervading, fleshly sense evading, hail Mukund immortal, lord of blissfulness supreme.  
 Ever pure and holy, whom the Queen of Folly has no power to tangle in her world-deluding dream.  
 Glory, glory, glory, theme of endless story, sung by saints and sages in an ecstasy of love.  
 Daily, nightly gazing on the sight amazing, source of every blessing, Hari, lord of heaven above.  
 Triune incarnation, who at earth's creation, wert alone presiding, and other aid was none;  
 Though in prayer unable, and my faith unstable, O great sin-destroyer, hear our hapless moan.  
 Life's alarms dispelling, all disasters quelling, comfort of the faithful, be our succour now ;  
 All the gods implore thee, falling low before thee, with unfeigned submission of body, soul, and vow.  
 Lord God Bhagavana, Ved and eke Purana, Sarada and Seshnag, and all the saintly throng,  
 Find the theme too spacious, only know thee gracious ; hasten then to help us in our hour of wrong.  
 In all grace excelling, Beauty's chosen dwelling, ark on life's dark ocean, home of all most sweet,  
 God and saints and sages, now this tempest rages, fly in consternation to clasp thy lotus feet." <sup>1</sup>

The *Ramayan* is undoubtedly a great poem, worthy to rank amongst the great classical masterpieces of the world's literature. It is not indeed without its literary

<sup>1</sup> Translation by Mr. F. S. Growse.

defects, and other Hindi poets, such as Sur Das, may have excelled Tulsi Das in the polish of their verse and their handling of metres. But the *Ramayan* of Tulsi Das will always hold its place as the work of a great literary genius. The importance of its influence, too, cannot be exaggerated. Tulsi Das founded no sect, and indeed added nothing to the theology of that school of Hinduism to which he belonged, but there is no doubt that the *Ramayan* has been the most potent factor in making Vaishnavism the accepted cult of the vast majority of Hindus in North India to-day.

A brief mention must be made of the other literary works of Tulsi Das. All of them have the object of popularizing the worship of Rama. In the *Ram Gitavali* Tulsi Das tells the story of Rama in verses which are adapted for singing. The *Dohavali*, or *Doha Ramayan*, is a collection of *dohas* and is not so much an epic poem as a moral work. Sir George Grierson thinks that it is probably a collection of *dohas* from other poems of Tulsi Das, made by a later hand. The *Kavittavali*, or *Kavittsambandh*, also deals with the story of Rama and is written in *kavitta* metre. The *Vinay Patrika* is a collection of hymns to Rama and is a work which is very much admired. The *Sat Sal* is a similar work to that which Bihari Lal wrote fifty years later, but is connected with Rama instead of with Krishna. It contains seven hundred emblematic *dohas*. It is dated 1585. A great many other works also are ascribed to Tulsi Das, but with regard to the genuineness of some of them there is a great deal of doubt. Although the *Ram-charit-manas* is undoubtedly his greatest work his poetic powers are also exhibited in the other works which he composed.

**The Bhaktamala.**—It marks the greatness of the achievement of Tulsi Das that amongst Ramanandis, or other worshippers of Rama as the incarnation of the Supreme, there seem to be fewer Hindi works of outstanding importance than in other sections of the **Vaishnava** movement, **and** this is no doubt due to the

dominating influence of Tulsi Das's great work. There are, however, some writers who must be mentioned. The *Bhaktamala* was the work of *Nabha Das* (fl. 1600), who was also known as *Narayan Das*. He was the disciple of Agra Das, who according to some was a leader of the Vallabha movement of Krishna worship, but by others is said to have been a disciple of Ramananda. Nabha Das was a Dom by caste, and it is said that when he was a child he was exposed by his parents during a time of famine to perish in the woods. Agra Das found him and brought him up. It was at the suggestion of his preceptor that Nabha Das, when he arrived at maturity, wrote the *Bhaktamala*, probably somewhere between 1585 and 1623. The *Bhaktamala*, or "Roll of the Bhagats," is a poem in old Western Hindi, written mainly in the *chhappai* metre. It gives an account of the principal Vaishnava devotees, whether worshippers of Rama or of Krishna, though it deals chiefly with those who were worshippers of Rama. Nabha Das himself seems to have been a Ramanandi. The style is very obscure and compressed. Generally one stanza only is given to each devotee, and in this his chief characteristics are described in the briefest possible manner, with allusions to different legendary events in his life. The *Bhaktamala* holds a very important place in Indian religious history. It would, however, be almost unintelligible but for the commentary which always accompanies it. This was written in the *kavitta* metre by *Priya Das* in 1712. In this commentary further legends are added. There have also been other later commentators, and their work is often printed together with the original text of *Nabha Das* and the gloss of *Priya Das*. The *Bhaktamala* has been fully translated and adapted in all the chief vernaculars of India.

Maluk Das.—*Maluk Das*, who lived in the reign of Aurangzeb, was the founder of a sect which is closely connected with the Ramanandis. The Maluk Dasis worship Rama as an incarnation of the Supreme and also use images. The main difference between this

sect and that of the Ramanandis seems to be that the teachers of the Maluk Dasis are not ascetics, but, like their founder, laymen. Maluk Das was a trader by occupation, and is said to have been born at Kara, in the district of Allahabad, and to have died at Jagannath. Monasteries of his followers at Kara and other places are still in existence. The works ascribed to Maluk Das include the following :—*Das Ratna* ("The Ten Jewels "); *Bhaktavatsal*, which deals with Krishna's regard for his devotees ; *Ratna-khana*, which is a dissertation on the soul and God. He is also the reputed author of a large number of detached verses and apophthegms which are still quoted amongst the people. A famous one is translated as follows, and has been compared with the teaching of St. Matt. vi. 26:

" The python doth no service, nor hath the fowl of the air a duty  
to perform (to earn its living);  
Quoth Maluk Das, For all doth Rama provide their daily  
bread."

The idea of the couplet is based on the belief current in India that the python (*ajagara*) is unable to hunt for its food, but has to wait with its mouth open for its prey to walk into it.

#### **Other Works connected with the Worship of Rama.—**

A disciple of Tulsi Das, who was also his constant companion, was *Bent Madhav Das* (fl. 1600). He is said to have written a biography of his master called *Gosain Charitr*, and was also the author of other works, including a *Nakhsikh*. Besides the *Ramayan* (or *Ram-charit-manas*) and other works of Tulsi Das dealing with the story of Rama, there appeared during this period several other works connected with the same subject. *Chintamani Tripathi* (fl. 1650), who is mentioned in the previous chapter as a writer on the art of poetry, also wrote a *Ramayan* in *kavitta* and other metres.

*Man Das* (born 1623), of Braj, wrote a Hindi poem entitled *Ramcharitr*, which is founded on two Sanskrit works, the *Ramayana* of *Valmiki* and the *Hanuman Nataka*,

*Ishwari Prasad Tripathi* (fl. 1673) wrote the *Ram Bilas Ramayan*, which is a translation of Valmiki's poem.

*Bal Ali* (fl. circ. 1692) was the author of two works both in praise of Rama and Sita and entitled *Nehprakas'* and *Sita Ram Dhyanmahjari*. *Jank Rasiki Saran* (fl. 1703) wrote the *Avadh Sagar*, which is a poem in honour of Rama. *Bhagwant Ray* (fl. 1750) was the ruler of Asothar, in the district of Fatehpur, and for several years resisted the attacks of the Mughal Emperor, till he was killed by treachery in 1760. He was the author of a *Ramayan*. Another work dealing with the story of Rama was the *Ram Bilas* of *Sambhu Nath* (fl. 1750). *Tulsi Sahib* (1763-1843) was the eldest son of the Raja of Poona, but was unwilling to succeed to the throne. He therefore left his kingdom and renounced the world, and becoming a wandering ascetic finally settled in Hathras. Besides many hymns, he wrote a work called the *Ghat-Ramayan*. He claimed that in a previous birth he was none other than the great Tulsi Das himself, and had in that birth composed the *Ghat-Ramayan*, but as it aroused a great deal of opposition it was not published to the world but the *Ram-charit-manas* was substituted in its place. His work differs in style and language, as well as in subject matter, from that of his more-renowned namesake, and is decidedly inferior in character.

*Madhu Sudan Das* (fl. circ. 1782), who was a poet of considerable merit, was the author of the *Ramasvamedh*, in which he describes the horse-sacrifice made by Rama. Like Tulsi Das he was a devotee of Rama, and his poetry resembles that of the great master.

*Maniyar Singh*, also called *Yar* (fl. circ. 1785), was another devotee of Rama who was a skilful poet. He was a Kshatriya, of Benares. His works include the *Saundarya Lahari*, the *Sundarkand*, and the *Hanuman Chhabbisi*, all of which deal with some of the legends regarding Rama and Hanuman.

*Ganesh* (fl. 1800), who was patronised by the Raja of Benares, besides other poetical works, composed in Hindi verse a translation of part of Valmiki's *Ramayana*.

## VII.

### THE SUCCESSORS OF KABIR

The Kabirpanthis.—The great influence which the teaching of Kabir exercised is shown by the large number of sects which owe their origin to the ideas which he promulgated. These sects have their literature in the vernacular. The Kabirpanthis, who trace their direct origin to Kabir, have two divisions. One has its centre at the Kablr-chaura in Benares, and is also associated with Maghar where Kabir died. The other has its centre in Chhattisgarh in the Central Provinces. Each of these divisions is ruled by a *mahant*, and each has its literature. The descent of the Benares *mahants* is traced back to Surat Gopal, and that of the Chhattisgarh *mahants* to Dharm Das. These are sometimes said to have been personal disciples of Kabir, but probably lived a little later. Although the Kabirpanthis have as a whole kept free from the worship of images, Hindu influence has in various ways found its way back into the sect. Kabir rejected the doctrine of divine incarnation, but he himself is often now regarded as an incarnation of the Supreme. Hindu practices which he condemned, such as the use of the rosary, have been introduced. Except the works ascribed to Kabir himself the large amount of literature belonging to this sect has been scarcely examined by those outside the sect. The *Bijak*, already mentioned in connection with Kabir, was probably compiled about fifty years after his death. Two other works belonging to this sect may also be mentioned. These are the *Sukh Nidhan*, which probably belongs to about the middle of

the eighteenth century, and the *Amar Mul*, which is probably as late as 1800. A Kabirpanthi who flourished about 1800 and wrote some pithy verses in *kundaliya* metre was *Paltu Sahib*.

The Sikhs.—It has already been mentioned in a previous chapter that the religion of the Sikhs, founded by Nanak, was greatly influenced by the teaching of Kabir. Nanak was followed by nine *gurus* most of whom were poets. The sacred book of the Sikhs, called the *Granth Sahib* (or sometimes the *Adi Granth*, i.e. "Original Granth," to distinguish it from the later *Granth of the Tenth Guru*), was compiled in 1604 by Guru Arjun (1563-1606), who was the sixth Guru of the Sikhs. It contains the compositions of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjun, Guru Teg Bahadur (the ninth Guru) and a couplet of Guru Govind Singh (the tenth Guru). The compositions of these last two Gurus were added after the first compilation. Besides the writings of these Gurus, the *Granth* also contains panegyrics of the Gurus by the bards who attended on them or admired their characters, and hymns of several *bhagats*, such as Namdev, Kabir and others, whose teachings corroborated that of the Gurus. The hymns are not arranged in the *Granth* according to their authors but according to the thirty-one *Rags*, or musical measures, to which they were composed. All the Gurus, except the last, adopted the name of Nanak as their *nom de plume*. At the beginning of the volume is placed the *Japji*, which was composed by Nanak, and then follow the *So-Daru*, the *So-purkhu*, and the *Sohila*, which are extracts from later parts of the books. All these pieces were intended for devotional purposes, and therefore placed at the beginning of the book. After the *Rags* at the end of the volume is the *Bhog*, or conclusion, which contains *slokas* and panegyrics. The whole forms a lengthy volume, the ideas which it contains being repeated in endless variation. For the Sikhs it is a hymn-book and prayer-book as well as a manual of theology. The language varies in different parts, but

for the most part the hymns are written in old dialects of Hindi with some admixture of Panjabi. A hymn of Guru Nanak was given in a previous chapter. The following is one of the hymns of Guru Arjun:—

" On the way where the milea cannot be counted,  
The name of God shall there be thy provision ;  
On the way where there is pitch darkness,  
The name of God shall accompany and light thee ;  
On the way where nobody knoweth thee,  
The name of God shall be there to recognise thee ;  
Where there is very terrible heat and great sunshine,  
There the name of God shall be a shadow over thee ;  
There, *sai*th Nanak, *the name of God* shall rain nectar on thee."

The tenth Guru, whose name was *Govind Singh*, held office from 1675 to 1708. It was he who developed the Sikhs into a great military order called the Khalsa and organized them to resist the Muhammadans. Under him many Hindu ideas were introduced into the religion of the Sikhs. Govind Singh composed many verses mostly in Hindi (Braj Bhasha), but some also in Persian and Panjabi. These works, together with the translations and other verses of some in the Guru's employ, were collected in the year 1734, after Govind Singh's death, by Bhai Mani Singh into one volume, which is called the *Granth of the Tenth Guru* to distinguish it from the *Adz Granth*. It is used for the promotion of valour and other purposes, but it is not regarded by the Sikhs as having the same authority as the *Adz Granth*. Besides the *Japji*, or hymns, in praise of God, and many other religious verses, it contains the *Vichitr Natak*, which is an account of the life and mission of Govind Singh, and other poems calculated to stir up the martial valour of the Sikhs.

The Dadupanthis.—The founder of the sect of Dadupanthis was Dadu (1544-1603), who was born at Ahmedabad, but spent most of his life in Rajputana. According to common report he was a cotton-carder by caste, but the tradition of his followers that he

<sup>1</sup> Translation by Macauliffe, "The Sikh Religion," Vol. I I I . 302.

was a Brahman is probably correct. His spirit of forgiveness and kindness (*daya*) was so great that he was called *Dadu Dayal*. His teaching is very similar to that of Kabir, but is not so much affected by Muhammadan ideas. Much of the Hinduism against which *Dadu* protested has found its way back into the sect. *Dadu* rejected, for instance, the teaching of the Vedanta, caste, and idolatry, but some of his modern followers are Vedantists, and only twice-born Hindus are allowed to read the *Bani*, and the sect has no dealings at all with outcastes. Moreover, *Dadu's Bant* is worshipped with idolatrous rites. *Dadu's* teaching was spread by fifty-two disciples. His doctrines are contained in the *Bani*, a book of about five thousand verses. It is divided into thirty-seven chapters dealing with such subjects as the Divine Teacher, Remembrance, Separation, The Meeting, The Mind, Truth, The Good, Faith, Prayer, etc. The verses of *Dadu* are very attractive and have a musical rhythm, and hymns which are included amongst them are set to music and used both for public and private worship. The following is a translation of a few of *Dadu's* verses :—

" Receive that which is perfect into your hearts to the exclusion of all besides ; abandon all things for the love of God, for this *Dadu* declares is the true devotion.

" Cast off pride, and become acquainted with that which is devoid of sin. Attach yourselves to Rama, who is sinless, and suffer the thread of your meditations to be upon him.

" All have it in their power to take away their own lives, but they cannot release their souls from punishment ; for God alone is able to pardon the soul, though few deserve His mercy.

" Listen to the admonitions of God, and you will care not for hunger nor for thirst; neither for heat, nor cold ; ye will be absolved from the imperfections of the flesh.

" Draw your mind forth, from within, and dedicate it to God ; because if ye subdue the imperfections of your flesh, ye will think only of God.

" If ye call upon God, ye will be able to subdue your imperfections, and the evil inclinations of your mind will depart from you ; but they will return to you again when ye cease to call upon him.

"*Dadu* loved Rama incessantly; he partook of his spiritual, essence and constantly examined the mirror, which was within him.

"He subdued the imperfections of the flesh, and overcame all evil inclinations ; he crushed every improper desire, wherefore the light of Rama will shine upon him."<sup>1</sup>

The sect which Dadu founded has a very large literature in Hindi. Dadu's two sons were poets, and all his fifty-two disciples are reported to have composed verses, as well as many later followers. The most important poet amongst his disciples was *Sundar Das* the younger (fl. 1620-1650), who is also called *Busar*. By the Dadupanthis he is regarded as one of the best Hindi poets, worthy to rank amongst the highest names in Hindi literature. He was a voluminous writer. Amongst his most admired works are his *Savaiyas* (sometimes called the *Sundar Bilas*) and the *Gyan Samudra*. *Nischal Das*, a later Dadupanthi poet, introduced Vedantic ideas into the teaching of the sect.

The Lal Dasis.—*Lal Das*, who died in 1648, was the founder of a sect known as the Lal Dasis. He belonged to Alwar, and came from a predatory tribe called the Meos. Like other teachers whose doctrines can be traced to Kabir's influence he emphasized the value of the repetition of the name of Rama. His teaching and hymns are contained in a work called the *Bant*. The members of the sect often sing the hymns to music.

The Sadhs.—The sect of the Sadhs was founded in 1658 by *Bir Bhan*, and is found chiefly in the upper part of the Doab. *Bir Bhan* claimed to have received his doctrines from a superhuman instructor in the form of verses (*sabdās*) and couplets (*sakhis*). These were collected into a volume called the *Adz !Upadesa* ("Original Instruction"). These verses, together with those of other teachers like Kabir, Nanak and Dadu, are recited at the meetings of the sect.

*Dharni Das*.—*Dharni Das* was born in 1656 and lived at the village of Manjhi in the district of Chhapra. He was a Kayasth by caste, and became a devotee. He founded a sect which still survives. He is the

<sup>1</sup> Translation by G. R. Siddons, in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. VI. (1837).

reputed author of two Hindi works, the *Satya Prakas* and the *Prem Prakas*.

Some Sufi Poets.—A Muhammadan who wrote Hindi verses was *Yari Sahib* (1668-1723). He seems to have been a Sufi, and lived and taught at Delhi. Some of his disciples also wrote Hindi verse, such as *Kesav Das* and *Bulla Sahib*, both of whom flourished about 1730. A disciple of *Bulla Sahib* was *Gulal Sahib*, and the latter had a disciple called *Bhikha Sahib*. Both of these flourished in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and both are the reputed authors of Hindi verse. Two other Hindi writers who may have been connected with the same, or a similar movement, are *Dariya Sahib* of Bihar, and *Dariya Sahib* of Marwar. Both of these were Muhammadans and flourished in the first half of the eighteenth century. Another Muhammadan writer of Hindi verse who also lived in the first half of the eighteenth century was *Bulle Shah*, and was probably a Sufi.

The Charan Dasis.—Char an Das (1703-1782) belonged to the *Dhilsar* caste of *Baniyas*. About the year 1730 he founded a sect at Delhi, which still exists. He had many disciples who spread his teaching, and he admitted as disciples not only men but women also. His teaching is very similar to that of Kabir, and emphasizes such doctrines as the value of the repetition of the name of God, the importance of the word (*sabda*), the need of devotion (*bhakti*), and the necessity of having a *guru*. Idolatry was denounced by Charan Das, but has crept back into the sect. The *guru* holds a very important place in the sect and is regarded as divine. Like similar sects it has a large literature in Hindi, and great stress is laid on this amongst its members, the use of Sanskrit being discouraged. The sect possesses translations in Hindi of the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, which are said to have been made, at least in part, by Charan Das himself. Charan Das also composed many other Hindi works which are much esteemed by his followers. Two of his women

disciples were poetesses. These were *Sahajo Bat* and *Daya Bai*. They are said to have been sisters and to have belonged to the same caste as Charan Das. Their verses are of considerable merit and full of devotion. The *Daya Bodh* of Daya Bai was composed in 1751.

The Siv Narayanis.—*Siv Narayan* was a Rajput who lived near Ghazipur. In 1734 he founded a sect which worships God as Brahman without attributes, and rejects idolatry. Siv Narayan is himself regarded as an incarnation by his followers. Outward conformity to the observances of Hindus and Muhammadans is permitted and people of all castes are admitted as members. It is said that the Emperor Muhammad Shah (1719-1748) became a member of the sect. The founder was a voluminous writer and is credited with having composed sixteen books of Hindi verse.

The Garib Dasis.—The *guru* of *Gay-lb Das* (1717-1782) is said to have been Kabir, which, although an anachronism, seems to show that the sect he founded sprang from the Kabirpanthis. This sect, which is still in existence, consists only of *sadhus*, who must belong to the twice-born castes. The book which he composed, called the *Guru Granth Sahib*, contains 24,000 *sakhis* and *chaupdis*. Of these, however, 7,000 are said to be *sakhis* of Kabir. Garib Das lived at the village of Chhurani in the Rohtak district of the Panjab.

The Ram Sanehis.—The sect of Ram Sanehis was founded by *Ram Charan* (born 1718), who lived in Rajputana. He was at first an idolater, but gave up the worship of idols and founded the sect of *Ram Sanehis*, or "*Lovers of Ram*." The sect is now represented merely by an order of *sadhus*. His sayings and hymns have been collected into a *Bant*. The third leader of the sect, named *Dulha Ram*, who became a Ram Sanehi in 1776, composed about 10,000 *sabdas* and 4,000 *sakhis*. He died in 1824.

The Satnamis and Jagjivan Das.—The sect of the Satnamis seems to have been founded before the middle of the seventeenth century, but the circumstances of its origin are unknown. It was reorganised

about 1750 by *Jagjivan Das*, who lived at Kotwa, between Lucknow and Ayodhya. As the name of the sect implies, they adore the True Name alone, the one God, who is without attributes, but the Hindu pantheon is recognised and the Hindu incarnations regarded as the manifestations of God. Jagjivan Das is said to have been a Kshatriya by caste, but the sect has spread mostly amongst the outcastes. The Hindi verses of Jagjivan Das are in several works, which include the *Pratham Granth*, the *Mahapralay*, and the *Gyan Prakas*. A disciple of Jagjivan named *Dulan Das*, who lived in the district of Rai Bareilly, was also a Hindi poet. Other successors of Jagjivan who wrote Hindi verse were *Jalali Das* and *Devi Das*. A development of the Satnami sect occurred in Chhattisgarh, in the Central Provinces, under a certain Ghazi Das, between 1820 and 1830. He introduced the ideas of the sect amongst the *chamars* of that district though he did not acknowledge his indebtedness to Jagjivan.

The Pran Nathis.—*Pran Nath* lived at Panna in Bundelkhand at the beginning of the eighteenth century, under the patronage of Raja Chhatrasal. He was the founder of a small sect in which not only Hindu and Muhammadan but also Christian influences were at work. By caste Pran Nath was a Kshatriya, but he was versed in Muhammadan as well as in Hindu learning, and he endeavoured to reconcile the two religions. The members of his sect are sometimes called Dhamis, from Dham, a name they give to the Supreme spirit. They eat in common, but continue to observe the Hindu or Muhammadan practices of their own families. The works of Pran Nath are fourteen in number, all in verse, but none of them of very great length. Though the grammatical structure is purely Hindi, the vocabulary is very largely Arabic or Persian, and the language is very uncouth.

General Characteristics.—All the writers who are mentioned in this chapter wrote in that poetic style which is classified by Indian authorities as quietistic

(*santa ras*). Much of their verse is smooth and rhythmical, and the artistic influences which had come into Hindi literature were no doubt felt by them to a certain extent. But their interest was religious rather than literary, and few of them rank high amongst Hindi poets. If their verses are less rugged than those of Kabir, they are also often lacking in the vigour and charm which characterise his work. The subjects dealt with in these voluminous works are not very extensive. The need of a *guru* and the respect due to him, the value of the repetition of the name of God, the supreme importance of devotion (*bhakti*), the delusions of *maya*, the value of truth, the duty of living a righteous and sober life, these and a few kindred topics are repeated over and over again, in different ways, at interminable length, in a manner which to the ordinary reader is apt to be tedious. Nevertheless there are many striking passages to be found which are full of beauty and inculcate valuable lessons. During the greater part of this period the North of India was passing through a time of great political change. The reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) was a long struggle against disintegrating forces, and after him the political disorder grew worse. Internecine strife and rebellion were frequent. The invasions of Nadir Shah (1739) and afterwards of Ahmad Shah Durrani (1756) were a time of terrible disaster. The Marathas also were constantly attacking the Mughal Empire, which by the end of this period ceased to exist except in name. It was a time of frequent calamity, of persecution and tyranny; but during this period many thoughtful men sought peace of heart in piety and quietism, and it was in such circumstances that much of the religious verse referred to in this chapter was produced. In these poems the writers not only expressed their own aspiration and feeling after God, but gave forth many beautiful thoughts which were a solace to others in times of distress, and an incentive to them to live nobly and to seek after the highest ends. The sects whose literature is described in this chapter all owe something to Kabir, in some cases

the influence being direct and in others indirect. They all stand, in theory at least, for a non-idolatrous theism, and a great many of their theological conceptions are the same as, or similar to, those which Kabir taught

## VIII.

### THE KRISHNA CULT

(1550-1800)

The Ashta Chhap.—Vallabhacharya and his son Vitthalnath, who have been mentioned in a previous chapter as the early leaders of the Vallabhachari sect at Gobardhan, near Muttra, each had four disciples, all of whom were Hindi poets. They are known as the *Ashta Chhap*, or the Eight Seals, or Diestamps, because the poems they produced are regarded as standards for that dialect of Western Hindi in which they wrote. This dialect was the Braj Bhasha, named after the district in which they lived, namely Muttra and Brindaban and the surrounding country." Since their time almost all Hindi poetry connected with the Krishna Cult has been composed in Braj Bhasha, and it has also come to be looked upon as the poetic dialect of Hindi *par excellence*, though Tulsī Das and most of the worshippers of Rama wrote in Eastern Hindi. The disciples of Vallabhacharya who are included in the *Ashta Chhap* were *Sur Das*, *Krishna Das Pay Ahari*, *Parmanand Das* and *Kumbhan Das*. Those of Vitthalnath were *Chahtrbhuj Das*, *Chhit Syami*, *Nand Das* and *Govind Das*. All these flourished about the middle or second half of the sixteenth century.

*Krishna Das Pay Ahari* seems to have been a rival of *Sur Das*, though not equal to him in poetical merit. He was, however, the writer of graceful and melodious stanzas. His best known work is called the *Prem-sattvanirup*. *Krishna Das* had several pupils who became poets. According to some one of them was

Agra Das (fl. 1575), who was in turn the preceptor of Nabha Das, author of the *Bhaktamala*.

*Nand Das* holds, next to *Sur Das*, the highest place as a poet amongst those who are included in the *Ashta Chhap*. He was a Brahman, and some have believed him to be a brother of the great *Tulsi Das*. There is a proverb about him which says, *Aur sab gariya, Nand Das jariya*, "All others are simply founders (or melters), but *Nand Das* is the artificer (who joins the pieces of metal into a composite whole)." He was the author of several larger works as well as of detached verses. One of his compositions is a poem in imitation of the Sanskrit *Gita Govinda*, called *Panchadhyayi*.

**Sur Das.**—The greatest of all the *Ashta Chhap*, however, was *Sur Das*. The particulars of his life are very scanty and uncertain. It is said that he was a Brahman and the son of *Baba Ram Das*, who was a singer at the court of the Emperor *Akbar*. At the age of eight he went with his parents to *Muttra*, and became the pupil of a devotee. Afterwards he removed to *Gau Ghat*, between *Agra* and *Muttra*, where he became a disciple of *Vallabhacharya*. In the commentary which he himself wrote to some of his emblematic verses he says that he was a descendant of the famous bard *Chand Bardai*, that his father's name was *Ram Chandra*, and that his grandfather, *Hari Chandra*, lived at *Agra*. Some, however, consider him to be a Brahman and regard the verse where this information is given as spurious. His father lived at *Gopehal* and had seven sons, six of whom were killed in battle with the *Muhammadans*. He alone, blind (either literally or figuratively) and worthless, as he says, remained alive. He had a vision of *Krishna*, and thereafter "all was darkness" to him, which may mean he became blind. He went to live at *Braj*, and became one of the *Ashta Chhap*. Tradition places his birth in 1483 and his death in 1563, but these dates are uncertain. All the traditions agree as to his blindness, either from birth, or from a later period of his life, and he is often referred to as "the blind bard of *Agra*."

Sur Das excelled in many styles of composition. A large number of episodes and passages from the *Bhagavata Purana* were reproduced by him in exquisite verse, and he was the writer of a great number of lyrics in connection with the worship of Krishna and Radha, which were collected together in the *Sur Sagar* and the *Suravali*. The *Sahityalahari* contains emblematic verses (*Drishtakut*), for which Sur Das himself wrote an explanatory commentary. He also wrote in Hindi the story of *Nala and Damayanti*. Altogether he is credited with having composed as many as 75,000 verses. Sur Das holds a very high place in literature. Some Indian authorities would give him the foremost place amongst Hindi poets, though most persons would reserve that honour for Tulsi Das. An often quoted couplet referring to Hindi poetry says, " Sur is the sun, Tulsi the moon, Kesav Das is a cluster of stars, but the poets of to-day are like so many glow-worms giving light here and there." Sur Das is undoubtedly a poet of great power. He is considered to excel in his use of all the ornaments of style recognized by the authorities on Hindi poetry and in his use of images and similes. An anonymous poet of Akbar's court said with regard to him, " Gang excels in sonnets and Birbal in the *kavitta* metre ; Kegav's meaning is ever profound, but Sur possesses the excellency of all three."

A few specimens of his work are given here :—

All days are not alike ;

One day King Harischandra had in his power wealth like Mount Meru ;

The next day he went to live in the house of a Chandal, and removed clothes from the burying-ground.

One day a man is a bridegroom, attended by a bridal company, and in every direction flags are placed ;

The next day he has to live in the forest, and there stretches forth hands and legs.

One day Sita is crying in a very terrible forest;

The next day having become re-united with Ramchandra, both go about in a balloon of flowers.

One day Raja Yudhishtir was reigning with Sri Bhagwan (Krishna) as his follower ;

The next day (his wife) Draupadi is made naked, and Dusan takes away her clothes.

The doings of the former birth appear; O foolish mind, give up anxiety ;

Sur Das says, " How far can I describe the qualities? True are letters written by the Creator (on the forehead)."

\* \* \* \* \*

Without Gopal these bowers become like enemies.

In those days (when he was here) these creepers seemed very cool, Now they have become a heap of fiery flames.

In vain the River Jamuna is flowing, and the birds twitter ;

In vain the lotuses are blooming, and the black bee hums ;

Sur Das says, " Looking for the lord, my eyes have become red like the *ghunghchi* seed. "

\* \* \* \* \*

Night and day my eyes shed tears ;

It is always the rainy season with me, since Syam went away.

The collyrium does not stay on my eyes, my hands and my cheeks have become dark,

The cloth of my bodice never gets dry, because the heart in the midst of it is running like a stream of water.

My eyes have become rivers, my limbs tired, and the fixed stars are moving away.

Sur Das says, " Braj is now being submerged (in tears), why do you not deliver it ?"

**The Chaurasi Varta.**—An important work which belongs to this period is the *Chaurasi Varta* (or "Eighty-four Tales"), reputed to have been written by *Gokulnath* (fl. 1568), the son of *Vitthalnath*. It is earlier in date than the *Bhaktamala*, and whereas the *Bhaktamala* contains accounts of devotees of various Vaishnava sects, the *Chaurasi Varta* is devoted exclusively to stories, mostly legendary, of the followers of *Vallabhacharya*. It lays a great deal of stress on the erotic side of the Krishna legends. From the point of view of the literature it is very important as being written in prose, of which it is one of the earliest specimens. It is written in a very clear and easy style, and although written three hundred and fifty years ago the language used differs very little from the modern Braj dialect.

**Other early Vallabhacharis.**—Two or three other early members of the Vallabhachari sect who were Hindi poets must also be mentioned. *Bhagwan Hit* (fl. circ. 1574) is said to have been a disciple of

Vitthalnath. He was the author of some Krishnaite lyrics of considerable merit. *Raskhan* (fl. 1634) was a Muhammadan at first and his name was then Sayyad Ibrahim. He became a worshipper of Krishna and wrote verses in his honour which are said to be full of devotion and sweetness. A disciple of Raskhan was *Qadir Baksh*, who also wrote Hindi poetry.

The Radha-Vallabhis.—A new sect was founded in Brindaban about 1585 known as the *Radha-Vallabhis*. In this sect Radha is placed above Krishna as an object of devotion. Its founder was *Hari Vamia* (also called *Hit Haribans*, or *Hit Ji*). His father was a Gaur Brahman named Vyasa, who was in the service of the Muhammadan Emperor. Hari Varhs'a wrote in Sanskrit the *Radha-sudha-nidhi*, which consists of 170 couplets. His principal work in Hindi is the *Chaurdsi Pad* (or *Premkata*). The erotic side of the Krishna cult is very prominent in these works and they are full of sensuous imagery, but Hari Varhga possesses great skill as a poet and holds a high place in Hindi literature. A few stanzas are here given :—

" Whatever my Beloved doeth is pleasing to me ; and whatever is pleasing to me, that my Beloved doeth. The place where I would be is in my Beloved's eyes; and my Beloved would fain be the apple of my eyes. My Love is dearer to me than body, soul, or life ; and my Love would lose a thousand lives for me. Rejoice, Sri Hit Hari Vans ! the loving pair, one dark, one fair, are like two cygnets ; tell us who can separate wave from water ?

" O my Beloved, has the fair spoken ? this is surely a beautiful night; the lightning is folded in the lusty cloud's embrace. O friend, where is the woman who could quarrel with so exquisite a prince of gallants ? Rejoice, Sri Hari Vans ! dear Radhika hearkened with her ears and with voluptuous emotion joined in love's delight.

" Come Radha, you knowing one, your paragon of lovers has started a dance on the bank of the Jamuna's stream. Beves of damsels are dancing in all the abandonment of delight; the joyous pipe gives forth a stirring sound. Near the Bansi-bat, a sweetly pretty spot, where the spicy air breathes with delicious softness, where the half-opened jasmine fills the world with overpowering fragrance, beneath the clear radiance of the autumnal full moon, the milkmaids with raptured eyes are gazing on your glorious lord, all beautiful from head to foot, quick to remove love's every pain. Put your arms about

his neck, fair dame, pride of the world, and, lapped in the bosom of the Ocean of delight, disport yourself with Syam in his blooming bower." <sup>1</sup>

Many members of this sect have been Hindi poets, amongst whom we may mention *Nagari Das*, who flourished at the end of the sixteenth century, *Dhruv Das* (fl. circ. 1630), who was a very voluminous writer, and *Sri Hit Brindaban Das Ji Chacha* (fl. 1743). All these were poets of some merit, especially the last, who wrote many verses of great beauty in praise of Krishna.

**The Hari Dasis.**—Another sect at Brindaban is that of the Hari Dasis. It was founded by Svami *Hari Das*, who lived at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. His teaching seems to be closely akin to that of Chaitanya. Besides works in Sanskrit he left poems in Hindi. The best known are the *Sadharan Siddhant* and the *Ras Ke Pad*. Hari Das possessed considerable merit as a poet. Here are a few stanzas of the *Sadharan Siddhant*:—

" Set your affection on the lotus-eyed, in comparison with whose love all love is worthless; or on the conversation of the saints: that so the sin of your soul may be effaced. The love of Hari is like the durable dye of the madder; but the love of the world is like a stain of saffron that lasts only for two days. Says Hari Das, Set your affection on Bihari, and he knowing your heart will remain with you for ever.

" A straw is at the mercy of the wind, that blows it about as it will and carries it whither it pleases. So is the realm of Brahma, or of Siva, or this present world. Says Sri Hari Das : This is my conclusion, I have seen none such as Bihari.

" Man is like a fish in the ocean of the world, and other living creatures of various species are as the crocodiles and alligators, while the soul like the wind spreads the entangling net of desire. Again, avarice is as a cage, and the avaricious as divers, and the four objects of life as four compartments of the cage. Says Hari Das, Those creatures only can escape who ever embrace the feet of the son of bliss.

" Fool, why are you slothful in Hari's praises? Death goeth about with his arrows ready. He heedeth not whether it be in season or out of season, but has ever his bow on his shoulder. What avail heaps of pearls and other jewels and elephants tied up at your gate? Says Sri Hari Das, Though your queen in rich attire await you in her

<sup>1</sup> Translation from Mr. F. S. Growse's *Mathura*, pp. 196 ff.

chamber, all goes for nothing when the darkness of your last day draweth nigh." <sup>1</sup>

Hari Das was succeeded as leader of the sect by *Vitthal Vipul*, and the latter by *Biharini Das*. Both these were Hindi poets, Biharini Das being a very voluminous one. In his numerous verses he uses the most erotic language to express the intensity of his religious devotion. *Sital* (fl. 1723), who was a leader of the sect, was also a skilful poet. *Sahachari Saran* (fl. 1763) also belonged to the Hari Dasis. Amongst his works is the *Lalit Prakas*, which contains sayings of Hari Das, the founder of the sect.

Other Writers of Krishna Verse.—*Gada Dhar Bhatt* (fl. 1565) was a Krishnaite belonging to the sect of Chaitanya and wrote verses of considerable merit in Krishna's honour. *Bihari Lal Chaube*, whose work has been described in a previous chapter as a writer on the art of poetry, was also connected with the Krishna Cult. Most of the verses in his famous *Sat Sat* deal with some phase or other of the story of Krishna. Other writers on the art of poetry also wrote Krishnaite verse.

*Taj'*, who flourished in the first half of the seventeenth century, was the wife of a Muhammadan, but was a worshipper of Krishna. She wrote some much admired verses in his honour.

*Bhishma* (fl. circ. 1650) translated the famous tenth chapter of the *Bhagavata Purana* into Hindi verse, under the title *Bal Mukund Lila*.

*Bakhshi Hahsraj* (fl. 1732) was a Kayasth of Panna, who was a skilful poet. He wrote the *Saneh Sagar*, which is an account of Radha and Krishna, as well as some other works.

*Man*, a Brahman of Baiswara, wrote in 1761 a translation of the *Krishna Khanda* entitled *Krishna Kallol*.

A famous work in connection with the Krishna Cult is the *Braj Bilas* (1770). It was the work of *Braj Bast Das*, of Brindaban, and contains a description

<sup>1</sup> Translation from Mr. F.S. Growse's *Mathuro*, p. 210.

of Krishna's life during his residence at Brindaban. Braj Basi Das belonged to the sect of Vallabhacharls.

*Sundari Kunwari Bal* (fl. 1760 to 1798) was a princess of the Rathor family, and daughter of Raj Singh, Maharaja of Rupnagar and Krishnagarh. She was married to Bal Bhadra Singh, Maharaja of Raghavgarh. Many of her family were poets, and this lady wrote a large number of poems full of religious devotion, many of which are in honour of Krishna.

*Manchit Dvij* (fl. circ. 1779), of Bundelkhand, was the author of *Surbhldanllla*, which is an account of the childhood of Krishna, and *Krishnayan*, which is a life of Krishna. His poems are considered to be of a very high standard of poetic excellence.

*Bibi Ratan Kunwar*, of Benares, was born about 1842. She was the grandmother of Raja Siv Prasad, who helped to develop Hindi literature in the nineteenth century. In the *Prem Ratna* she has given an account of the devotees of Krishna, and in addition she was the authoress of many other verses.

General Remarks on Krishnaite Literature.—A great deal of the poetry connected with the Krishna Cult deals with the amours of Krishna with the Gopls (milkmaids) of Braj, and especially with Radha. The great Hindu teachers of *bhakti* threw a mystical glamour over these stories. Krishna was to them the Supreme Deity, from whom all creation was but a sportive emanation, and who was full of love to his devotees. Radha and the other Gopis stood for human souls, of whom Radha especially typified the devotee, ready to offer her whole self in devotion to God. In the literature connected with this form of the *bhakti* movement the writers often use the most erotic language and sensuous imagery to describe the soul's devotion, under the picture of Radha's self-abandonment to her beloved. Many of the verses could not be translated into English. Yet the writers of these lyrics of passionate devotion were often men of real religious earnestness, quite free from any impure motives in composing them. That literature of this kind has,

however, a very dangerous tendency has too often been shown in the history of the Krishna movement.

Many of the writers mentioned in this chapter were poets of very high merit. The artistic influences which had come into Hindi literature are to be seen in a very marked degree in their work. Muttra, which was the centre of the movement, was in close proximity to the Mughal court, and Sur Das is said by tradition to have had some connection with the court. But, through whatever channel the influence came, there is no doubt that the poets of Braj felt very strongly the tendencies towards the perfection of the poetic art, and the excellency and fame of their poetry was so great that from their time onwards Braj Bhasha came to be regarded as the chief poetic dialect of Hindi.

## IX.

### BARDIC AND OTHER LITERATURE

(1550-1800)

**Bards of Mewar.**—The succession of bards in the various kingdoms of Rajputana and other parts of Hindustan was continued right down to modern times, and Mewar was one of the states where great encouragement was given to them. A chronicle of the time of Rana Jagat Singh, of Mewar, who reigned from 1628 to 1654, called the *Jagat Bilas*, was written by an unknown bard. The successor of Jagat Singh, Rana Raj Singh (1654-1681), who was the famous opponent of Aurangzeb, was a great patron of poets. The chronicle of his time, called *Raj Prakas*, was also written by an anonymous bard. At the suggestion of Rana Raj Singh his poet-laureate, *Man* (fl. 1660), wrote the *Raj Dev Bilas*, which describes the struggle between Aurangzeb and Raj Singh. Another poet who lived at his court was *Sadasiv* (fl. 1660), who wrote his patron's life under the title *Raj Ratnakar*. The son of Raj Singh was Rana Jai Singh (1681-1700) and he also was a patron of poets. A work which he had written by poets at his court was the *Jai Dev Bilas*, which is a series of lives of the kings whom he had conquered. Another author of a bardic chronicle of Mewar, entitled *Raj Pattana*, was *Ran Chhor*, whose date is doubtful.

**Bards of Marwar.**—In Marwar also great patronage was given to poets. Maharaja Sur Singh is said in one day to have distributed six lakhs of rupees to six poets at his court. His son Gaj Singh was also a patron of poets, as well as his grandson Amar Singh.

Amar Singh quarrelled with his father and was exiled. He went to the court of the Emperor Shah Jahan, but in revenge for a slight he attempted to murder the Emperor, and was cut down after killing a number of courtiers. Among the poets patronised by Amar Singh were *Banwarl Lal*, who wrote a panegyric of his patron, and *Raghu Nath Ray*, both of whom flourished about 1634. Maharaja Ajit Singh, of Jodhpur in Marwar (1681-1724), had a work written entitled the *Raj Rupakakhyat*, which contains a history of his family from the commencement of the solar race to 1724. *Karan* was the poet and bard of Jodhpur at the time of Maharaja Abhay Singh (1724-1750), son of Ajit Singh. In his poem, called the *Surya Praka's*, he wrote a history of the period from 1638 to 1731 in 7,500 lines. Maharaja *Vijai Singh*, who reigned at Jodhpur from 1753 to 1784, was himself a poet, and he also had a work written, entitled the *Vijai Bilas*, which gives an account in 100,000 couplets of the war between Vijai Singh and his cousin Ram Singh.

**Bards at Other Courts.**—Other courts also had their poets. The rebellion of Jagat Singh, of Mhow, against Shah Jahan was celebrated by a bard named *Gambhlr Ray* (fl. 1650). In honour of Rav Ratan (fl. 1650), great-grandson of Raja Uday Singh, an anonymous bard wrote a history called *Rav Ratan Rdysd*. *Jai Singh Sawai*, of Jaipur (reigned 1699-1743), was not only a patron of poets but wrote his own autobiography, entitled *Jai Singh Kalpadrum*. *Jai Singh Sawafs* brother-in-law, *Buddh Rav*, Raja of Bundi, was also a poet and a patron of poets. *Jodhraj* (fl. 1728) was a Brahman, who wrote the *Hammir Kavya* at the orders of the Maharaja of Nimrana, which deals with the same incidents formerly described by the bard Sarang Dhar, who lived in the fourteenth century. *Ghan Syam Sukla* (fl. circ. 1680) attended the court of the Raja of Rewah and wrote in his praise. He also attended the court of the Raja of Benares. His poems are considered to be of great merit. *Harikesh* (fl. 1731) attended the court of Raja Chhatrasal, of

Panna. He excelled in the heroic style. *Sudan* (fl. 1750) was a Brahman, who was patronised by Suraj Mai, a son of the Maharaja of Bharatpur. He wrote the *Sujan Charitr*, which is an account of the battles in which Suraj Mai took part. Sudan is considered to be an excellent narrative poet, especially in his account of the preparations for a battle, but he was not equal to Lal Kavi in his description of the battle itself. A bard who wrote in the Maithili dialect of Bihari was *Lal Jha* (fl. 1780), one of the most famous poets of Mithila. He was the author of a poem called *Kanarpi Ghat Larai*, which is a description of the battle of Kanarpi Ghat, in which his patron Maharaja Narendra Singh, of Darbhanga, was victorious.

Lal Kavi.—At the court of Raja Chhatrasal (1646-1731), who ruled at Panna in Bundelkhand and was himself a poet, much encouragement was given to men of letters. The most famous of these was *Lal*, generally known as *Lal Kavi*. His full name was *Gorelal Purohit*. Besides writing a treatise on lovers, he wrote in Braj Bhasha verse a celebrated work entitled *Chhatra Prakas*. It gives an account of the wars and order of succession of the ancient Rajas of Bundelkhand, and the life of Chhatrasal and that of his father are related with great detail. Lal Kavi achieved great excellence as a narrative poet, especially in his description of a battle. The following is the account in the *Chhatra Prakas* of Raja Chhatrasal's bravery at the battle of Deogarh :—

" Raja Chhatrasal, valiant in war, dreadful in battle, famed for heroic achievements, active, vigorous, and powerful as a tiger, penetrated into the midst of the Deogarh Raja's army ; while thousands of balls and arrows discharged at him fell like rain around. Firm and undaunted, redoubling his efforts he furiously attacked the numerous troops by whom he was surrounded. Entirely disregarding balls and bullets, he inflicted and received wounds in the enemy's ranks. The foe was confounded. The gods were amazed at the fighting of Chhatrasal ; and, while repelling the attack of thousands, and scattering death and destruction around, Kali delighted to see his sword-dance. His progress no one could stop ; for, as soon as an antagonist had raised his sword, Chhatrasal, by superior dexterity, inflicted a wound ; and he was equally skilful in the use of the spear. Separated from his

troops, and surrounded by foes, he fought his way from one flank of their army to the other. Wherever he went, victory followed. Disregarding severe wounds, he renewed the attack, fighting with such impetuosity and fury, that the enemy, believing him to be Kal Rudra, took to flight, and abandoned the field. Chhatrasal obtained lasting fame and renown: for the enemy fled like deer from a tiger. The kettle-drums sounded strains of victory, and Bahadur Khan ordered the camp to be pitched."<sup>1</sup>

Other Literature of the Period.—Besides the literature we have already mentioned in this and the preceding chapters, there were many other writers on a variety of subjects during the period. There are works dealing with the philosophy of the Vedanta, works connected with the Jain religion, works on morals (*nitt*), comic verses, and a great many other topics, including text-books on such subjects as lexicography, agriculture, astronomy, and veterinary surgery. A few of the authors may be mentioned here :—

*Nath Kavi* (b. 1584), who dwelt in Braj, wrote poems on the seasons and other subjects.

*Mubarak All* (b. 1583), of Bilgram in the district of Hardoi, was the author of a large number of short verses which are still current.

*Nazir* (fl. before 1600), of Agra, was a versatile poet of considerable fame whose verses are very popular and often quoted, though many of them are said to be indecent.

*Banarsi Das* (b. 1586) was a follower of the Jain religion. He lived at Jaunpur and died sometime after 1641. His works are full of religious teaching and he is much admired as a poet. In his most famous work he gives an account of his own life.

*Sri Dhar* (b. 1623), of Rajputana, was the author of a work in honour of Durga and entitled *Bhawant Chhand*.

*Ghasi Ram* (fl. circ. 1623) was a poet of considerable merit, who wrote on love, morals and other subjects.

*Puhakar* (fl. 1634) was a Kayasth who lived during the time of Jahangir. He was in prison for some offence and while there composed the *Ras Ratan*.

<sup>1</sup> Translation by W. R. Pogson, *A History of the Boondelas*.

When Jahangir heard of this he pardoned him. The poem is in the form of a story.

*Ddmodar Das* (fl. circ. 1660) belonged to the sect of the Dadupanthis. He translated the *Markandeya Purana* into Rajasthanl. This work is of interest as being in prose instead of verse.

*Chhatra* (fl. 1700), a Kayasth of Anter village in Gwalior, was the author of the *Vijai Muktavali*. This is an abstract of the *Mahabharata* in Hindi verse.

*Sabal Singh* (b. 1670) belonged to a ruling family. He also was the author of a condensed metrical translation of 24,000 verses of the *Mahabharata*,

*Baital* (b. 1677) attended the court of Vikram Sahi. He wrote moral and occasional verses and, though no complete work of his is extant, his verses are much admired.

*Devi Das* (fl. 1685) belonged to Bundelkhand. Under the patronage of Raja Ratan Pal Singh, of Karauli, he wrote a much admired work on morals called *Prem Ratmakar*. He was also the author of numerous other works.

*Molt Ram* (b. 1683) was the author of the Braj Bhasha version of a story called *Madhonal*, which was afterwards translated into Urdu by *Lallu Ji Lal*,

*Bhu Dhar Das* (fl. 1724) was a Jain who wrote works connected with the Jain religion, including the *Jain Satak* and the *Parsva Puran*. He is considered to possess considerable power as a poet.

*Ghagh* (b. 1696), of Kanauj, wrote on the subject of agriculture. His aphorisms have a wide currency in North India.

*Gahga Pali* (fl. 1719) was the author of a poem dealing with the different philosophical doctrines of the Hindus. It is called *Vigyan Bilas*, and is written in the form of a dialogue between a *guru* (teacher) and his *chela* (disciple). A mystic life based on the Vedanta philosophy is advocated.

*Kripa Ram* (fl. 1720) was an astronomer at the court of Raja Jai Singh Sawai, of Jaipur, and wrote a work in Hindi on astronomy.

*Girt Dhar* (b. 1713), of the Doab, wrote verses on morals (*niti*) and occasional pieces which are much admired. He used the *kundaliya* metre of which some critics consider him to be the greatest master. His verses abound in colloquialisms and many of them have become proverbs.

*Sri Nagari Das* (fl. 1723) was Maharaja of Krishnagarh in Rajputana. His real name was Savat Singh, but he adopted the name of Nagari Das as his *nom de plume*. He was a poet of considerable merit besides being a king of great valour.

*Nur Muhammad* (fl. 1743) was the author of the *Indravati*. It is a love story similar to the *Padumavati* of *Malik Muhammad*. It is considered to be a well-written poem.

*Manbodh Jha* (fl. 1750), also known as *Bholan Jhd*, of the district of Darbhanga, was one of the most celebrated poets in the Maithili dialect of Bihari. He wrote a version of the *Harivamsa* of which only ten sections have been preserved. These, however, are very popular.

*Nidhan* (fl. 1751) and *Daya Nidhi* (b. 1754) each wrote a treatise on veterinary surgery under the title *Salihotr*.

*Ram Chandra* was a Brahman who flourished at the end of the eighteenth century. He wrote a work in five books in honour of the feet of Parvati, entitled *Charan Chandrika*. It is considered to be a work of great poetic merit.

## X.

### THE MODERN PERIOD

(From 1800)

A NEW influence came into Hindi literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century through contact with the culture of the West. The eighteenth century had been largely a time of literary dearth, but a renaissance now began. The East India Company, which had commenced its career in India as a trading company, had now come into possession of a vast Empire and was beginning to feel its responsibilities towards those whom it was called upon to govern. This responsibility was being continually urged by many in the British Parliament. Amongst other responsibilities that were recognised was the duty of fostering and helping the culture and education of the peoples under the rule of the Company. The introduction of the printing-press helped to diffuse literary culture. The spread not only of vernacular but of English education could not but have a vast effect upon the life and thought of India. Just as in the case of the revival of learning in Europe the study of the Latin and Greek classics not only led to a stimulation of thought, but also helped to revive the literature of the European vernaculars, so also in India the study of English has been accompanied by a great renaissance of the vernacular literature of India. The peace and security which the British rule brought to India, after the long period of internecine strife and disorder through which the country had been passing, also gave the genius of Hindi literature the opportunity of reasserting itself, and of recovering from the decay into which it had fallen in the eighteenth century. This

period is marked by the creation of a new Hindi literary dialect and of Hindi prose.

Lallu Ji Lal.—At the commencement of the nineteenth century the head of the Fort William College at Calcutta was Dr. John Gilchrist. With the help of the other European officers of the College, such as Captain Abraham Lockett, Professor J. W. Taylor, and Dr. Hunter, he gave a great impetus to the cultivation of vernacular literature. Text-books suitable for the study of the European officials were collected, and a group of vernacular scholars gathered together and encouraged to produce new literature. Most of the work was in connection with the Urdu language, but *Lallu Ji Lal*, who also wrote Urdu, and *Sadal Misra*, did for Hindi what was being done by other scholars for Urdu. The works which they produced, if not the first prose works in those languages, were the first literary standards, and established prose as a recognised form of literature. Lallu Ji Lal was a Brahman whose family had come originally from Gujarat, but had long been settled in North India. Under the direction of Dr. John Gilchrist he and Sadal Misra were the creators of modern "High Hindi." Many dialects of Hindi were, as we have seen, spoken in North India, but the vehicle of polite speech amongst those who did not know Persian, was Urdu. Urdu, however, had a vocabulary borrowed largely from the Persian and Arabic languages, which were specially connected with Muhammadanism. A literary language for Hindi-speaking people which could commend itself more to Hindus was very desirable, and the result was produced by taking Urdu and expelling from it words of Persian or Arabic origin, and substituting for them words of Sanskrit or Hindi origin. The name *KhariBoli* ("pure speech") is sometimes used for the dialect of Delhi and Meerut, which was the language from which Urdu sprang, as well as for the modern Hindi literary dialect. It seems to be implied that Lallu Ji Lal was only restoring the Delhi and Meerut dialect to its original purity and using it for

literary purposes. This, however, was hardly the case, for though Urdu sprang originally from this dialect it had also assimilated many words of Panjabi and Rajasthani as well as those of Arabic and Persian origin. The Hindi of Lallu Ji Lal was really a new literary dialect. This "High Hindi," or "Standard Hindi" as it is also called, has had however a great success. It has been adopted as the literary speech of millions in North India. Poetical works still continue to be written in *Braj Bhasha*, or *Avadhl*, or other old dialects, as High Hindi has not been much used for poetry. But whereas before this time prose works in Hindi were very rare, from now onwards an extensive prose literature began to be produced. The first work in this new dialect, and one which is regarded as a standard, was Lallu Ji Lal's *Prem Sagar*, which is a version of the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavata Purana*. It was founded on a previous Braj Bhasha version of Chaturbhuj Misra, and was begun in 1804 and completed in 1810. The *Rajniti* (1809), which is also much admired for its language, was an adaptation of the *Hitopadesa* and the *Pahchatantra*, and is in Braj Bhasha. The *Singhdsan Battlasi* and the *Baital Pachisi* are collections of stories in mixed Urdu and Hindi. Besides other works in Hindi and Urdu, Lallu Ji Lal also wrote a commentary on the *Sat Sal* of Bihari Lal called *Lal Chandrika*, and gathered a collection of poems in Braj Bhasha called *Sabha Bilds*. *Sadal Misra* (fl. 1803) was the author of the *Nasketopakhydn*, which gives in Hindi prose the well-known story of Nachiketetas.

Serampore.—In connection with the revival of Hindi literature mention must also be made of the work being done about this time by William Carey and his colleagues Ward and Marshman at Serampore. Amongst the many translations of the Christian Scriptures made by these missionaries were some in the dialects of North India. The Hindi version was Carey's own work. The first portions of his Hindi New Testament were published in 1809 and the Hindi translation of the whole Bible was completed in 1818. Besides translations of

the Scriptures, Carey and his colleagues also printed editions of many vernacular works, amongst them being the *Ramayan*. Most of these editions perished in a fire which destroyed the printing-press at Serampore in 1812. In 1818 Carey began to publish a newspaper in Bengali, which was the first newspaper printed in any oriental language, and was the forerunner of the many newspapers now issued from the vernacular press. All this work of Carey and his co-workers helped greatly in the development of vernacular literature.

**Raja Siv Prasad.**—The new literary dialect which Lallu Ji Lal produced has not been without its critics. As it includes many Sanskrit words it is a speech not easy to be understood except by the learned. It tends to fall into the same extreme as Urdu. Raja Siv Prasad (1823-1895) is especially remembered as one who tried to popularise a literary speech midway between the Persian-ridden Urdu, and the Sanskrit-ridden High Hindi, which he believed to be nearer the colloquial speech of the people. The controversy is by no means settled yet. Raj Siv Prasad was the grandson of the poetess Bibi Ratan Kunwar. In his youth he was Vakil to the Maharaja of Bharatpur, but afterwards he entered the English service. He rose to the position of Nur Munshi and became an Inspector in the Department of Public Instruction. He was eventually granted the hereditary title of Raja. Besides translations and other works, all of which show the modern influence, he was the author of a great many text-books for schools.

**The Printing-Press.**—The outstanding feature of the development of Hindi literature in modern times has been the production of a very large number of works in prose. This has been very much facilitated by the use of the printing-press. It was at the College press at Fort William that printing was first used for Hindi works, but at first the expense hindered its rapid development, and the ungraceful characters of the type were not regarded with favour. The work

of Carey and others at Serampore has already been mentioned. In 1837 a lithographic press was set up at Delhi, and from that date onwards the publication of books in Hindi has been increasing continually. The introduction of lithography was soon followed by the publication of Hindi newspapers and magazines, of which there are now a large number. All kinds of books have been turned out from the press—translations of English books, books and pamphlets dealing with religious and social questions, novels, educational text-books, and books on many other subjects; but it cannot be said with regard to most of them that a high literary standard has yet been reached, and experience alone will show how many of them are worthy to rank as standard works of Hindi literature. Hindi prose literature is still feeling its way, and its standards are not yet fixed. One book which has had probably a greater circulation than any other Hindi work in modern times (whether as a whole or in portions) is the Hindi translation of the Bible, and owing to its large circulation is bound to have an important influence on the life of the people. The printing-press has also been used to produce many of the older works of Hindi literature, which are now accessible to the general public in a way which was before impossible.

**Harischandra.**—That the new influence from the West revived rather than checked the cultivation of Hindi poetry is illustrated in the case of Babu *Harischandra* (1850-1885), of Benares, who is often called Bharatendu ("The moon of India"). He was educated at Queen's College, Benares, and was a prolific and successful writer of poetry in many styles, having commenced to write at the age of sixteen. He wrote altogether about a hundred and seventy-five different works. Among these are eighteen plays, and Harischandra was the real founder of the modern drama in India. In his plays some of his best work is to be found, and they exhibit his great desire for the progress of India and the development of its intellectual freedom.

Harigchandra wrote also on various subjects including history, patriotism, religious devotion, and love. He was also the author of many humorous verses. His historical works include the *Kashmir Kusum*, or history of Kashmir, and the *Charitavall*, a series of lives of great men both Indian and European. Next to his plays his love poems are considered to be the best part of his work. Love and mirth are prominent characteristics of his poetry, which is full of power. He must be reckoned amongst the great writers of Hindi literature. He used chiefly the Braj Bhasha dialect. Harischandra also did much to cultivate interest in Hindi poetry. To accomplish this he started a magazine called *Hariichandrika*, in which he published a number of old texts with much other matter. He also produced anthologies of Hindi poetry such as the *Sundari Tilak*, which contains poems in the *savaiya* metre from the works of sixty-nine poets, and the *Kavi Bachan Sudha*, which is a collection of poems dealing with the rainy season.

As an example of the poetry of Harigchandra the following translation is given:—

O warriors, having put on your arms, arise for the fight, and fly the flag of victory;

Draw your sword from the scabbard, and join the battle.

Having girded up your loins, put your arrow to your bow ;

Put on your saffron-coloured garments and the bracelet of battle (as sign of a vow to conquer or die);

If the Aryans be united, and think of their own dignity,

They will give up quarrels amongst themselves, and support the honour of their race.

Then the strength of the mean Amirkhan cannot be great.

When a lion is roused, can a dog stand in battle against him ?

Even an ant trampled underfoot bites, although it is only insignificant.

These art\* visible enemies, woe to those who ignore them.

Woe to those who, being Aryans, have a love to those who are barbarians.

Woe to those who have any dealings with them.

Warriors, arise, and having put on all your weapons, plunge into the battle.

Write with a pen of steel the strength of the Aryans on the heart of both (conquerors and conquered).

**The Hindi and Bihari Drama.**—The Hindi drama is of very recent origin. Some earlier writers produced what are called *nataks*, or plays. Among these were Dev (fl. 1700), the author of *Dev Maya Prapanch*; Newaj (fl. 1700), who wrote the *Sakuntala*; Braj Basi Das (fl. 1770), who wrote the *Probodh Chandroday*, and some others. But their works were either without entrances and exits of the characters, or lacking in other essentials of dramatic poetry. The first real play in Hindi was the *Nahush Natak*, written by *Gopal Chand* (alias *Girt Dhar Das*) in 1857. It deals with Indra's expulsion from his throne by Nahush and his subsequent reinstatement. Next came the *Sakuntala* (1862) of Raja *Lakshman Singh* (1826-1899), which is very famous and much admired. *Harischandra* then began to write dramas, his first being *Vidya Sundar*. He wrote eighteen altogether. Other writers of Hindi drama were *Srinivas Das*, *Tota Ram*, *Gopal Ram*, *Kasi Nath Khattrl*, *Purohit Gopl Nath*, *Lala Sita Ram*, besides many others. The first Hindi play was performed in 1868.

In Bihar the dramatic tradition is very much older. *Vidyapati Thakur*, who belongs to the middle of the fifteenth century, is reputed to be the author of two plays. *Lal Jha* (fl. 1780) wrote a play called *Gauri Parmay*. In the early part of the nineteenth century *Bhanu Nath Jha* wrote the *Prabhavati Haran* and later *Harsh Nath Jha* wrote the *Ushd Haran*. The Bihari drama, however, differs from the Hindi in one very important feature, for the characters speak in Sanskrit and Prakrit, and only the songs are written in the Maithili dialect.

**Anthologies.**—The revival of interest in Hindi literature and its appeal through the printing-press to a wider public is illustrated by the large number of anthologies of Hindi verse which have appeared in this period. Besides those of *Lallu'ji Lal* and *Harischandra*, which have already been mentioned, the following may be noted:—

The *Rag-Sagarodbhav Rag Kalpadrum* contains selections from the works of more than two hundred

poets. It is a very voluminous work and was compiled by a Brahman named *Krishnanand Vyas Dev*, and completed in 1843.

The *Ras Chandrodoy*, which is a collection of poems by two hundred and forty-two poets, was compiled in 1863 by *Thakur Prasad Tripathi*.

The *Dig-Vijat Bhushan* was compiled in the year 1869 by a Kayasth, of Balirampur in the district of Gonda, named *Gokul Prasad*. It contains selections from the works of a hundred and ninety-two poets.

The *Siv Singh Saroj* was compiled from former anthologies by *Siv Singh Sehgar*. The second edition of this very valuable work was published in 1883.

*Gokul Nath*.--A famous work belonging to this period was the translation of the Mahabharata into Hindi verse. This was begun by *Gokul Nath* (fl. 1820), of Benares, being undertaken at the instance of Raja Udit Narayan, of Benares. *Gokul Nath* was the author of other works, including the *Govind Sukhad Bihar* and the *Chet Chandrika*, in the latter of which he has described the family history of Raja Chet Singh, of Benares, who was his patron. His greatest achievement, however, was the translations of the Mahabharata. In this work he was assisted by his son *Gopi Nath* and his pupil *Mani Dev*.

The Patronage of Courts.—The modern influence on Hindi literature did not spread all at once, and in many places the old state of affairs still continued for some time. The work of the printing-press did not penetrate into all regions immediately, and poets still looked to the rulers of states to help them by their patronage. At the courts of Panna and Charkhari in Bundelkhand, of Rewah in Baghelkhand, of Nagpur, Benares, Ayodhya, and other principalities, poets and bards were still welcomed and encouraged, and several rulers were themselves poets. Maharaja *Man Singh* of Jodhpur (fl. 1810) was the author of various works chiefly in Rajasthani. *Chandra Sekhar Bajpeyl* (1798-1875), who was at the courts of Darbhanga, Jodhpur and Patiala, excelled in the erotic and heroic styles and was the author of the *Hammir Hath* and other works. Maharaja

Hindupati, of Panna, was the patron of *Mohan Bhatt*, as well as of *Rup Sahi* and *Karan* (fl. circ. 1800), the latter being a writer on the art of poetry. Mohan Bhatt attended other courts also. His son was a well-known poet named Padmakar Bhatt (see below), who also visited various courts. The Rajas of Charkhari, named Khuman Singh, Vikram Sahi, and Ratan Singh, were all great patrons of poets. *Vikram Sahi* (1785-1828) was himself a successful poet. Among his works is a *Sat Sal*, in imitation of Bihari Lai's great work. The poets who attended his court include *Baital*, *Man*, and *Bal Dev* (all fl. 1820). *Bihari Lai*, *Avadhes*, *Rav Rand*, *Gopal*, *Ram Din Tripathi* (all fl. 1840) attended the court of Raja Ratan Singh. *Surya Malta* (fl. 1840), who was at the court of the Raja of Bundi, wrote a long work called the *Bans Bhaskar*, which in the form of illustrative verses gives an account of the Kingdom of Bundi. In Baghelkhand, at the court of Rewah, poets were also encouraged both by Maharaja *Jai Singh* (fl. 1764-1834) and his son *Viivanath Singh* (1789-1854). Both these kings not only patronised poets but were themselves authors. *Vigvanath Singh* wrote in Sanskrit and Hindi. In Hindi he composed commentaries on the *Bijak* of Kabir and on the *Vinay Patrika* of Tulsi Das, as well as a work entitled *Ram Chandra ki Sawari*. The poetical traditions of this royal family were also maintained by *Visvanath's* successor, Raja *Raghu Raj Singh* (1823-1879), who came to the throne in 1858. He was the author of a much admired translation of the *Bhagavata Purana* and of a history of Hanuman, entitled *Sundar Satak*, besides many other works. Maharaja *Man Singh* (fl. 1850), of Ayodhya, was another monarch who was both a poet and a patron of poets.

**The Art of Poetry.**—Many of the poets who attended the courts of kings were writers on the art of poetry, and this particular form of composition continued to receive great attention. *Gurdin Pande* (fl. 1803) wrote an excellent work on the same lines as *Kegav Das's KaviPriya*. *Beni Pravin Bajpeyl* (fl. 1817), a Brahman of Lucknow, whose poetry is full of excellent verses,

wrote several works connected with the art of poetry. One of the most famous of writers of this period was *Padmakar Bhatt* (1753-1833), of Banda. He attended the courts of various rulers and was richly rewarded for his poetry. He is the reputed author of about seven works, mostly concerning the art of poetry, which are very much praised. One of his outstanding qualities is his skilful use of alliteration. His best work is considered to be the *Jagadvinod* (1810). At the end of his days he is said to have devoted his life to the worship of the Ganges, and wrote a book entitled *Ganga Laharl*. His grandson, *Gadd Dhar Bhatt* (fl. 1860), was also a poet and wrote on rhetoric. A contemporary and rival of Padmakar was *Gwal*, of Muttra, who wrote works on the art of poetry. His most famous work is the *Yamuna Laharl*. About the same time or a little later flourished also *Ram Sahay Das* (1820), of Benares, and *Pajnes* (1843), of Panna. The former, who was a poet of considerable merit, took Bihari Lal as his model. *Pratap Sahi* (fl. 1828) was a devotee of Rama and the author of several works connected with the art of poetry. In the cleverness of his language he is said to resemble Mati Ram. *Bihari Lal Tripathi* (fl. 1840) belonged to a family which has produced many poets, being a descendant of Mati Ram Tripathi. *Navhi* (fl. 1842) wrote several works of high standard on poetics. *Gahesh Prasad Farukhabadi* (fl. 1847-1877) was a Kayasth, of Farukhabad, who wrote a *Nakhiikh* and other works. *Giri Dhar Das* (fl. 1843) was the father of Harischandra. His real name was *Gopal Chandra*. He wrote about forty different works. *Sardar* (1845-1883), of Benares, and *Narayan Ray* flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century. The former was the author of several works on the art of poetry, including commentaries on the works of *Kesav Das* and on the *Sat Sal* of Bihari Lal, and a commentary on some of the emblematic couplets of *Sur Das*. The *Sringar Sahgrah*, another poem of Sardar, is a popular work on rhetoric, dealing with all branches of

the art of poetry. Narayan Ray was a pupil of Sardar. A much admired work in the Marwari dialect is the *Raghunath Rupak* of *Mansd Ram*, which was written about the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is a prosody in which the illustrative examples are so arranged that they give a continuous history of the life of Rama.

**Bihari Poets.**—A few Bihari poets of the nineteenth century may be mentioned, all of whom wrote in the Maithili dialect. *Bhanu Nath Jhd* (fl. 1850) and *Harsh Nath Jha* (born 1847) both attended the court of the Maharaja of Darbhanga. Bhanu Nath's best known work is a play entitled *Prabhavati Haran*. Harsh Nath wrote many songs as well as plays. A popular account of the famine of 1873-74, entitled *Kavitta Akali*, was written by *Phaturi Lal*, a Kayasth of Tirhut. *Chandra Jha*, who flourished in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was the author of a Ramayan in Maithili, which is much admired.

**Religious Verse**—Though a great deal of the literature already described has a religious connection the output of religious verse due directly to the various sectarian movements seems to have been less since the beginning of the nineteenth century than in previous times. Contact with the new influences which have come from the West has led indeed to a great deal of religious activity in India, but a large part of the new movements has been in the direction of religious reform. Prose literature, whether in the form of pamphlets or newspapers, has come to be very much used for the dissemination of religious as well as other ideas. Still, the production of poetry in connection with the various religious movements did not entirely cease. In 1806 *Jai Chand*, of Jaipur, wrote a Sanskrit and Hindi work which deals with the doctrines of the Jains, entitled *Svami Karttikeyenupreksha*. A later Jain of considerable merit was *Brinddban Ji* (circ. 1791-1858), of Benares. *Bakhtawar* (fl. 1817), of Hathras, in the district of Aligarh, who was a religious mendicant, wrote a book entitled *Sunlsar*, which was intended to

show that all notions of God and man are fallacies and that nothing exists. There were several works also connected with the Rama cult. *Mun* (fl. 1803) was the author of the *Ram Ravan Yuddh* and other works dealing with the stories of Rama. *Lalak Das* (fl. 1813), of the Lucknow district, wrote the *Satyopakhyan*, which relates the early life of Rama from his birth to his marriage. The *Ramayan* in the Maithili dialect, composed by *Chandra Jha*, has already been mentioned. *Sahaj Ram* (born 1804), who lived in the district of Sitapur, also wrote a *Ramayan* which is a translation of the Sanskrit *Raghuvamsa* and of the *Hanuman Nataka*. In the latter half of the nineteenth century *Raghu Nath Das*, a Brahman of Ayodhya, wrote hundreds of hymns in honour of Rama, of whom he was a devotee, while in the same period *Janki Prasad*, of the district of Rae Bareli, wrote several poems dealing with the story of Rama which are considered to be very excellent. Commentaries also were written on the works of Tulsi Das, such as the *Manas Sankavail* of *Bandan Pathak*, of Benares, which is a commentary on the *Ramayan*, and the *Ram Tattva Bodhanl* of *Siv Prakas Singh*, which is a commentary on the *Vinay Patrika*. These appeared in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Of writers who were devotees of Krishna the following may be mentioned: *Rasik Govind* (fl. 1801), who wrote works, which are much praised, all connected with the Krishna legends, and *Lalit Kishori* (fl. 1860-1873), whose works are also connected with Krishna and full of merit as works of poetry.

The spread of the Christian faith in India has also been accompanied by the production of Christian hymns. Many of these are translations of English hymns written in English metres, which, judged according to Indian standards, sound barbarous and uncouth. But a large number have also been written in Hindi metres, and many of these have a popularity far beyond the bounds of the Christian Church. Curiously enough, one of the most famous writers of Christian hymns in

Hindi metre was a European named *John Christian* (died about 1883). His most famous work is the *Mukti Muktavali*, a life of Christ in verse.

Thus, while the nineteenth century was a period of great change characterised especially by the development of prose literature, and the application of it to a large number of new subjects, literature of the older type still continued to be produced, though it generally exhibited little or no novelty in its themes. The period has been largely a time of transition, and in spite of its many past glories Hindi literature still awaits its more complete development. No attempt is here made to give an account of the writers in prose and poetry of the last thirty or forty years. Many of these writers are still living, and time alone will show how much of their work will have a lasting fame and prove of real value.

## XI.

### SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HINDI LITERATURE

HAVING now traced the history of Hindi literature from its earliest times to the present day, it may be helpful to mention in this chapter some of its general characteristics even at the risk of some repetition of points already mentioned.

1. The first striking feature is that, during the time when it grew and flourished through its own original force, Hindi literature was dominated by a *religious interest*. Probably much more than half of the literature directly springs from the *bhakti* movement in one or other of its aspects, A great deal of the remainder is concerned with the art of poetry; and even in these works the illustrative verses, which form the greater part of them are often connected with one or other of the various religious movements. The bardic chronicles, and some other parts of the literature, are secular in character, but even in these the religious interest is not quite out of sight.

2. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century practically the whole of the literature was in verse. There are indeed a few exceptions. The works ascribed to Gorakhnath (though almost certainly not by him) include one in prose, and if this is correctly dated as belonging to the fourteenth century it is the earliest Hindi prose work extant. Then we have the *Mandan* of Vitthalnath and the *Chaurasi Varta* of Gokul Nath in the sixteenth century, and Damodar Das's translation of the *Markandeya Purana* in the seventeenth century. Besides these, and the commentaries which accom-

panied certain works, there is very little else till we come to the time of Lallu Ji Lal. Even commentaries were often in the form of poetry. The system of versification was very complicated, but all authors seem to have found it more natural to write verse than prose. When prose was first employed, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, writers at first found it more awkward and difficult to manage than poetry. Even text-books on such subjects as veterinary surgery, astronomy or lexicography were written in verse.

3. From about the middle of the sixteenth century the literature became self-conscious, and from the time of Kesav Das onwards an enormous number of works have appeared dealing with the rules of prosody and the art of poetry generally. Apart from verse of a directly religious character this was indeed the favourite subject of composition amongst Hindi poets. The tendency to lay great stress on the form rather than the substance, and to develop a certain amount of artificiality could not, under such circumstances, be avoided. It is considered a mark of a writers ability if his words are capable of more than one meaning, and ingenuity of phrase, whether by way of *double entendre*, or alliteration, or any other literary device, is greatly admired. Even nowadays there seems to be a tendency to appraise poets more on account of their technical skill than on account of the message which they have to give. But even so the writers on the art of poetry, who include some of the best Hindi writers, have produced a great deal of verse which is very graceful and artistic, and it must be said that the strict rules as to versification, and their great elaboration, have helped to make Hindi poetry almost unrivalled for melody and rhythm.

4. *Conventionality* in the use of metaphors is another feature of Hindi poetry. Some of these metaphors do not correspond with the facts of nature, but Hindi poets are never tired of repeating them. The separation of the *chakwa* bird from its mate at

night; the eager waiting of the *chatak* bird, who is supposed to drink only raindrops, for the beginning of the rainy season; the *chakor* bird, that is never happy except when gazing on the moon; the swan that knows how to separate milk from the water with which it has been mixed—these and many other stock metaphors are continually recurring in Hindi poets. But many beautiful similes, drawn from a true observation of nature at first hand, are also found not only in the works of Tulsī Das, but also in the verses of other poets.

5. Another thing to be noticed in Hindi poetry is *the limitation of the range of its subject matter*. Not only is the religious interest dominant, but even in connection with this the subjects dealt with are confined to well-worn grooves. The stories of Rama and of Krishna form a very large part of the subject matter and have been told over and over again by poet after poet. There are differences in treatment, but the same details are constantly appearing again and again. Those religious poets who avoid these themes are very largely occupied with such subjects as have already been noted in a previous chapter, namely, the value of the *guru*, the importance of *bhakti*, the evils of transmigration, the deceit of *maya*, the transitoriness of the world, and suchlike subjects. One misses also the poetry of pure human love. There is indeed a good deal of erotic poetry of a very unhealthy type, but owing to the general practice of child-marriage, and the secluded position occupied by women, the romantic period of youth, which is the time of courtship, does not come into the lot of young men and women in India, and hence when love is described in Hindi poetry it is too often in connection with the courtesan. But the fidelity of Padmavati, the wifely devotion of Sita, and some other stories of the same type must not, on the other hand, be forgotten. There was also a tendency to look to previous writers for themes of poetic inspiration, and if a great poet achieved success in any subject, he was sure to have a large number of imitators. Thus there

are whole realms of human thought in connection with which Hindi writers have contributed nothing, and great as their work has been, the original and stimulating thoughts which Hindi literature contains are confined within a somewhat narrow area.

6. Yet in spite of its limitations Hindi literature has many excellencies, and is worthy of much greater study than it has yet received. It has truly been described as a "garden of delights." It possesses a system and variety of versification which has seldom, if ever, been excelled, and beauties of thought and phrase, and expressions of deep feeling and noble aspiration, abound. It was moreover genuinely popular, and being written in the dialects of the people, and often as a tacit revolt against the literary exclusiveness of the Sanskrit scholars, it appealed to the heart of the people, and reached a very wide audience. Many of its thoughts and expressions have become closely bound up with the life of the people, and a close acquaintance with the vernacular literature is most important for all who would fully understand the peoples of India.

## XII.

### PRESENT POSITION AND PROSPECTS

WITH such a splendid record of past achievements what is the present position of Hindi literature ? What are its prospects of development ? A brief answer to these questions is all that can be attempted in this present chapter.

In the first place it is to be noted that Hindi literature has to face many present difficulties, some of which it shares with other Indian vernaculars, and some of which are peculiar to itself. This is not the place to discuss the question whether English or the vernacular should be the medium of instruction in higher education. But it is certainly true that most educated Indian people would be very sorry that their sons should surrender the opportunity which a knowledge of English gives not only of becoming acquainted with the vast stores of Western learning, but of carrying on intercourse with educated people from other parts of India who possess a different vernacular from their own. It is, however, almost unavoidable that such a state of affairs should put Hindi somewhat at a disadvantage, for if a writer wishes to appeal to a widespread educated audience it is natural for him to use English rather than the vernacular to express his ideas, and hence there is sometimes a tendency to despise the vernacular as a medium of literature, and to regard vernacular productions as more intended for the unlearned than for the educated. This is a condition of things in every way to be deplored, and it is to be hoped that, without lessening the opportunities for

securing an acquaintance with English, the vernacular may be given a much more important place in the future.

Hindi is also under a disadvantage because its standards of prose have not yet been fixed. We have seen that not only is the prose literature a plant of very recent growth, but that the dialect of High Hindi which it uses is also a modern production. There are scarcely any prose standards of the past to look to, and the present state of the language is transitional. Some authors attempt to write in a language from which are expelled, as far as possible, all words other than those of Hindi or Sanskrit origin. But if this standard be adopted the language is for the common folk very difficult to understand. Other writers go to the opposite extreme and admit a great many words not only of Arabic and Persian, but also of English origin, even when there are simple and well-understood Hindi words which could just as well express their meaning. It seems indeed inevitable that for the expression of modern ideas a good deal of borrowing must take place, but the limits to which this should go can only be settled in course of time by the practice of good prose writers. At present there is a great deal of variation, both in translations and original works, with regard to the language used, and the adoption of some generally recognised standard is very much to be desired.

Owing to Hindi prose literature being written in a modern artificial dialect, which has not proved itself very popular for the purposes of poetry, it has come about not only that the language of poetry is different from that of prose, but that there are several different dialects still used for poetry. The existence of a widely divergent standard between the language of prose and that of poetry would be unfortunate in many ways, and it cannot be said what the ultimate issue of this matter will be, but there does seem a tendency amongst some modern poets to use a language which is approximating more to that of prose.

These disadvantages to the present development of Hindi literature are, however, being counteracted by many favourable circumstances. The spread of education, with the prospect that the day is not far distant when it will be made compulsory, at least for boys, is helping to increase rapidly the number of those who can read. Moreover, the modern tendency to extend the franchise, and to give increased political responsibility to large numbers of the people of India will also, make it necessary to acquaint them with various aspects of modern political, social, religious, and other questions. It is impossible with increasing education and enlightenment that a language which can be understood by over a hundred millions of people should not eventually develop a great modern literature, though it may not be easy to forecast the exact lines of its development.

The existence of societies for the extension and improvement of Hindi literature is also a sign of great hope. The *Nagari Pracharini Sabha*, whose headquarters are at Benares, is doing most useful work. It conducts a systematic search for old manuscripts, and publishes many good editions of the older works of Hindi literature. It also issues many useful books in which a high standard is aimed at. It encourages Hindi writers to produce original books and also to translate important books from European languages. Amongst other works it has undertaken the publication of a standard Hindi dictionary in several volumes. Many others also are publishing the works of various Hindi authors, whose works up till now have existed only in manuscript, and have often been hardly known outside the particular sect to which the authors belonged. Translations of many English and other works are being produced in great numbers, making it possible even for those who are unacquainted with English to gain some knowledge of the culture of the West. Moreover, books on subjects connected with politics, science, philosophy, morals, history, and religion are being constantly issued from the press. A great deal

of what is produced may not have great value as literature, but it is all helping to cultivate and enlarge the resources of the language to meet the needs of to-day. A Hindi society which has its headquarters at Allahabad is the *Sahitya Sammelan*, which conducts examinations in Hindi of a very high standard and grants diplomas, and is trying to establish purely Hindi schools in all parts of North and Mid India.

Amongst other societies that are doing much to extend Hindi literature the *North India Tract Society* and other Christian societies hold an important place. Through the agency of these societies a great deal of Hindi literature has been produced not only of a directly religious nature, but also stories, biographies, educational books, and books on social and other subjects. Indian people themselves are often largely unaware how much of the new movements for political freedom, social emancipation, and religious reform are really inspired by Christian ideals. India has seen the vision of a future glory for herself and her children greater even than her past achievements, excellent as these have been. New ideals of righteousness and of duty, of brotherhood and of service have come before her, and inspiration for these has been very largely due to the life and teaching of Christ, who in this as in so many other ways is the fulfilment of all that is noble and excellent in Indian life. The ideas of the old mythology, which formed so large a part of the themes of writers in the past, are on the wane, and the past ideals with regard to many other matters, are undergoing a change. India is seeking out after a larger, a fuller, a more complete life than she has lived in the past. In this development the vernacular literature is bound to have a most important part to play. The responsibility resting upon all writers, where such great issues are at stake, is very great, but the situation is one which should call forth the very best and noblest work from all who are concerned in the production of literature.

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### Translations.

Only a small portion of the vast quantity of Hindi literature has been translated into English. The following are some of the translations (the list is not exhaustive) which have been made, and which in most cases contain also information as to the authors and their work.

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- A History of the Boondelas.* By W. R. Pogson. (Calcutta, 1828). A translation of Lal Kavi's *Chhatra Prakas*.
- The Bijak of Kabir.* Translation into English by the Rev. Ahmad Shah.
- The Padumavati* of Malik Muhammad Jaisi. Edited, with a commentary, translation, and critical notes, by Sir G. A. Grierson and Mahamahopadhyaya Sudhakar Divedl. (Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta.)

## Texts.

It is impossible to give a list of all the Hindi texts which have been published, but the following list of publishers of Hindi texts may be of some use. I am indebted for this list to Pandit Syam Bihari Misra, of Allahabad.

1. The Venkateshwar Press, Bombay.  
(Has published a good edition of the *Sur Sagar* of Sur Das.)
2. The Newal Kishore Press, Lucknow.
3. The Khadga Vilas Press, Bankipore, Bihar.  
(Has published all the available works of Harischandra.)
4. The Bharat Jivan Press, Benares City.  
(Has issued works of some well-known Hindi poets.)
5. The Bang Bosi Press, Hindi Bang Bosi Office, Calcutta,  
(Has printed an annotated edition of Bihari Lai's *Sat Sat*.)
6. The Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay.
7. The Indian Press, Allahabad.  
(Has published a good edition of the *Ramayan* of Tulsi Das.)
8. L. Ram Narain Lal, Publisher and Bookseller, Katra, Allahabad.
9. The Hindi Sahitya Sammelan Office, Johnston Ganj, Allahabad.
10. The Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Benares City.  
(Has published editions of Chand Bardai's *Raso*, Tulsi Das's *Ramayan*, Bhushan's works, and a great many other famous Hindi works.)
11. The Bharat Mitra Press, Calcutta.
12. The Belvedere Steam Printing Press, Allahabad.

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