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A DEFENCE OF  
LITERARY TELUGU

BY

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A DEFENCE OF  
LITERARY TELUGU

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The spread of English education has given birth to a general spirit of reform throughout the length and breadth of India. It is this spirit that has, as yet, not manifested itself but is confined

influence of it is all-consuming fire. There are apparent everywhere attempts to enrich Vernacular literatures on the model of Western literatures—chiefly English. This influence is mainly responsible for the rise of two new departments in Telugu literature, *viz.* prose and drama.

There is no old Telugu prose. Some prose works were written during the time of the Nayaks in

and M. J. C.

the subject-matter of their books from the same source—the Sanskrit *Panchatantram* and elaborated it. Their styles of composition exhibit characteristic differences, though all professed to follow the same model. It must be remembered that these books were written for school boys by schoolmasters. About this time there was also an amount, by no means large, of what may be called general prose literature in the way of translations of or adaptations from the Puranas. The fragmentary prose *Bhâratam* of the late Sataghan-tam Venkataranga Sastri of Kalahasti is typical of this literature. Subsequent to his *Nitichandrika*, Mr Viresalingam Pantulu has written considerably—much as a contribution to literature but even more to popularize the cause of social reform of which he has been the champion in Southern India. His later writings, whether on social reform or literary subjects, are characterized by simplicity, ease and freedom of style in which he has set an example which is being followed by subsequent writers. In fact, Mr Viresalingam Pantulu may be said to be the father of modern Telugu prose. There are now scores of persons throughout the Telugu country who are applying themselves seriously to the task of writing Telugu prose works—chiefly novels in which also Mr. Viresalingam Pantulu set the example by his *Satyarajah's Travels* and *Rajasekhara Charitra*.

**Telugu  
Drama.**

The other outstanding feature of modern Telugu literature is the drama. There were, no doubt, dramas in former times but they were of a very primitive character written in the *Yakshagâna* style and enacted on improvised stages in public streets, from which fact they were known as the *street dramas*. The themes were taken from the Râmayanam and the Bhagavatam without any attempt at elaboration or adjustment to modern requirements and both from the point of view of literary composition and that of action, these old dramas were extremely crude. There was then no Telugu drama at all comparable either to the old Sanskrit or to the modern English drama, and so much was this the case that, while translating, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, Vidyânadha's Sanskrit work on Poetics, the author of *Narasabhûpâliyam*, left out the chapter on dramaturgy, as of no use in Telugu. If I am not much mistaken, it was a travelling Maharatta Dramatic Company from Dhârwâda or Poona side that created a taste for the drama in its present form—at least in the Northern Circars. This was about a quarter of a century ago. The taste which this company created caught on and since then, theatres and theatrical companies have sprung up in all parts of the country and may be now counted by the score. This created a demand for regular

dramas, which has met with a ready response scores of dramas being produced year after year. Most of the Sanskrit dramas have been rendered into Telugu and there have been also adaptations of some of Shakespeare's plays. There are also many original dramas for which themes are generally borrowed from the puranas and elaborated and sometimes altered to suit the modern taste. The Hindu mind still turns to the puranas for its ideals, but there is also a noticeable tendency to write on non-puranic historical subjects such as the story of Sārangadhara and the siege of Bobbili. This tendency is less in evidence in the drama than in the novel where Mr Chilakamarti Lakshmi-Narasimham of Rajahmundry has set the example of writing historical novels after the model of Scott's Novels—the themes being generally borrowed from that mine of historical romance, Todd's *Annals of Rajastan*. The drama and the novel go hand in hand and between them they occupy a large amount of space in the field of modern Telugu literature. Mention must also be made of scientific and historical literature which is beginning to come into existence chiefly through the efforts of the Vignānachandrika Mandalī of Madras. No claim for originality can be made for much of all this literature. Most of it is either translation or imitation and

attempts at originality are still far from being successful

**Attempts  
at linguistic reform  
in Telugu**

So far about literature proper There has quite recently been set on foot a movement to "reform" what may be called the shell or the husk of literature, the language It is an extremely small movement judged by the number of its advocates, but is, for certain reasons, occupying the attention of those interested in the Telugu language and literature, more than the numerical strength of its advocates entitles it to It seems, therefore, desirable to examine its claims Three names are chiefly associated with this movement — those of Mr P T Sreenivasa Aiyangar of Vizagapatam, Mr G V Apparao of Vizianagaram and Rao Sahib G V Ramamurti of Parlakimedi.

**State-  
ment of  
the case  
for the  
"Modern  
Telugu"  
School.**

Mr. Sreenivasa Aiyangar has formulated his scheme of reform in a pamphlet called "Death or life,—a plea for the vernaculars" written in his characteristic style It consists of 41 pages, of which one page contains all that he has to say by way of sober suggestion. Mr. Ramamurti has expressed his views more than once in the press—both English and Telugu—and he has now collected them all in "A memorandum on Modern Telugu:" there is no doubt as to where he

stands. The same thing cannot, unfortunately, be said of Mr. Apparao. He is enigmatical and it is not easy to find out where he is exactly. It is true that he expressed some views on the subject in the preface to his "comedy" *Kanyâ-sulkam* in 1897 and repeated them in 1909, but he tells us that they are not his present views. Pressed recently to state his case in a definite form, he said that, in his opinion, both the *classical* and the *modern* styles, as he and his friends choose to call them, should exist side by side. That is, as a member of the Text-book Committee, Mr. Apparao would approve books written in accordance with the rules of accepted usage and grammar as well as books which contravene those rules. In writing composition in the School Final and the Intermediate Examinations, he would leave the candidate's choice either to conform to or violate the rules of grammar. That this is not a fanciful description of Mr. Apparao's attitude is clear from the School Leaving Certificate Board's Circulars—No. 3479 of 29th October, 1912, and No. 20 of 10th January, 1913, for which Mr. Apparao and his friends are, no doubt, responsible. This position is nothing but trying to sit between two stools and how long Mr. Apparao will find it comfortable to hold it, he knows best. The truth, perhaps, is that he prefers to sit on the new stool and only tolerates the old one till he can kick it away.

Mr Ramamurti is more explicit. According to his scheme, "Modern Telugu" will be taught compulsorily in all schools. The study of literary Telugu and literature will be allowed as *optional* and Mr Ramamurti will not raise objection, at any rate for the present, to the Pandit teaching "the literature and the grammar of the literary language and, if necessary, composition in literary language, as the teachers of Latin and Greek do in the European Schools." He might have left Latin alone, for, at least in England, the study of Latin is considered as "an essential part of a complete modern education. No study of the development of European institutions is possible without knowledge of Latin, for, in it are contained the records of the development of law, religion, literature and thought. Latin is an essential instrument for the educated use of the vocabulary of the English language and a knowledge of it is necessary to any scientific study of the romance languages. A knowledge of the structure of the Latin language is the most valuable help to understanding the general principles of the European languages, and its regular and formal syntax is a valuable corrective to the loose phrasing which easily arises from the syntactical freedom of modern English."\*

\* Circular No. 574 of the Board of Education, London

It is clear that Mr. Ramamurti would not let the literary Telugu, which is current to-day, to stand even in the same relation to his "Modern Telugu" as that in which Latin stands to Modern English. He would make it Greek to the future generations of Telugu people and therein lies the distinguishing feature as well as the condemnation of the "Modern Telugu" movement.

What, then, is the "Modern Telugu" which these gentlemen wish to substitute for the literary Telugu? Mr. Ramamurti tells us that it is the "Modern Telugu dialect now current among the educated classes of the Telugu community." That is, the language in which the "Educated classes" speak, the language used by Mr. Viresalingam Pantulu in his farces, which, in Mr. Ramamurti's estimation, is "the best and the most energetic, idiomatic Telugu." It is this language that the "Modern Telugu" School would have taught compulsorily, so that, in due course, the literary Telugu may become Greek to the Telugu people. They would not be satisfied with reforming the language on the basis of "Old Grammar and Modern Vocabulary." This attempt, in Mr. Ramamurti's opinion, "is unscientific, unnatural and unpractical. It is simply a quixotic method of reforming a language." The only *scientific, natural, prac-*

**"Modern  
Telugu"  
means  
Colloquial  
Telugu**

*tical* and *sane* course, in the opinion of these scholars, is to abolish, by a single stroke of the pen, the current literary language which is the result of the growth of centuries and to instal in its place numerous colloquial dialects. With the literary language, of course, goes the literature. So much the better, say they. The name "Vēngī Dêsa" of the country over which the Eastern Chalukyas ruled is sometimes rendered by Sanskrit Pandits as वङ्गराज्यं (burnt-up kingdom) and this etymology is supported by the fable that the early Chalukyan Kings celebrated the revival of Hinduism in the Telugu country which they brought about, by burning up the ancient literature of the land which was mainly the creation of the Jains. The "Modern Telugu" scholars apparently believe in the practicability of such measures in the twentieth century.

**Attempts to confuse the point in issue by importing irrelevant matters.**

Before examining, in detail, this extraordinary scheme of reform, it is necessary to clear the atmosphere by exposing the attempts made to confuse matters by importing irrelevant things into the controversy. The only point of controversy between the "Modern" and the "Classical" schools or the *gramya* and the *grandhica* schools, as they are called in Telugu, is that which relates to *grammar and literary usage*. The question of *style, poetics, rhetoric and literary themes* is altogether

*outside the pale of this controversy* and there is no excuse for mixing up the two. The literary school is as anxious as the colloquial school to improve the tone and character of the literature, though it does not, like the colloquials, wish to exaggerate its defects. It has, in fact, commenced the work and is doing it. For the last twenty years or more, new literature has come into existence which is free from most of the defects of the old and every year scores of new books are brought out to which no exception can be taken on the score of taste or propriety. There has scarcely been greater literary activity in the country at any time before, since the time of Krishna Deva Raya of hallowed memory. It is doubtful if, even in Krishna Raya's time, there was as much *popular* enthusiasm for literature as there is now. The modern Telugu literature is, to a great extent, in the hands of persons who have received English education—some very sound education, and it is as unlikely that they will revert to the objectionable features of the old literature as Mr Ramamurti and his friends will do it. True, some of these compositions have their faults, but they are mostly faults of style and idiom due to *inadequate* acquaintance with the classical literature and *not* to excess of it. Authors of these days who do not know English take the cue from their English know-

ing brethren in matters of taste and 'there is altogether a great change for the better. If more has to be done in this direction, it is the duty of all parties to contribute to that result to the extent of their power.

But all this has nothing to do with the present controversy wherein the only point in issue is whether the grammar based on current literature should be followed or not. There is a persistent attempt, however, on the part of some of the members of the colloquial school, to conceal the point in issue in a heap of irrelevant stuff about style, erotics, superstition, ethnography and what not. This serves a double purpose—it lends an air of plausibility to the advocacy of colloquial dialects by associating it with matters in which the need for improvement is admitted and it affords an opportunity for abusing the Pandit—a red rag to the colloquialist. Here are a few choice passages culled from Mr Ramamurti's Memorandum

“The Pandit daily administers to the pupils small doses of the superstition and of the exploded knowledge of the ancient world, lest they should grow too fat on the modern fare of Western knowledge which the Government are so solicitous of diffusing among the masses. Some Pandits, like the Pandit of the Presidency College, who, having learnt a little English, have developed the critical faculty, exercise it in exposing the immoral tendencies in Western

science and demonstrate the unsuitability of such teaching to the ethical nature of the Aryan Soul ”

“ He (Pandit) hates the very idea of teaching the pariah ”

“ It has now become quite a fashion for the Telugu Pandit to tickle the vanity of his disciples and admirers by calling all the Dravidian Telugus Aryans and by saying that their mother-tongue was either Sanskrit or derived from Sanskrit ”

“ He indulges in long descriptions of each limb and organ of the human body, most often of the woman, and her sexual relation with man, in all their gruesome details and in the most obscene fashion ”

Many more similar passages can be quoted but these suffice to show to what lengths of irrelevancy and unfairness the advocates of “Modern Telugu” are prepared to go. The Pandit is naturally enough their special object of hatred. It is said of the Jains of old that their creed required them to say *ब्रह्महत्या* (destruction to the Brahmin) the first thing after they rose from bed daily. It seems an article of faith with the “Modern Telugu” scholars to abuse the Pandit whenever they can do so. It is not intended here to enter into a defence of the Pandit who can do it for himself. Luckily for the cause of scholarship, men of the “Modern Telugu” school are not the arbiters of the fate of the

Pandit Government have a more correct notion of his worth and will not let him die out yet

Mr Ramamurti's vehement and undignified attack on the proceedings of the Pandits' Conference which was held in May last year under the auspices of the Telugu Academy is characteristic. Mr Ramamurti did not attend the Conference, though he had an opportunity of doing so, and he has altogether misunderstood the scope and tenor of the resolutions passed at the Conference. His friend and colleague Mr Apparao attended the Conference and was a party to the resolutions concerning *Sringararasa*. He it was that had previously presided over a meeting which sent up a memorial to Government praying that the prosecution of a certain bookseller for publishing certain obscene books should be withdrawn. He was a member of the committee appointed by the Academy to consider the whole question and suggest a rule of guidance for the future, and again it was he that drafted the committee's unanimous opinion.

**The only point in issue is one of grammar and usage**

So much about the irrelevant issues raised. All these must be entirely eschewed and attention should be concentrated on the only point in issue which is one of *grammar* and usage. The "Modern Telugu" school re-

quires that future Telugu literature should be written in and that the Telugu boys should be taught “the language of the educated classes,”—which means the language *spoken* by the “educated classes” among the Telugus—whatever that term may mean, “the simple and *homely* Telugu of the educated classes,” the language used in Mr Viresalingam’s farces which is “the best and the most energetic, idiomatic Telugu,” the language of *Kanyásulkam* and of *Kasîyâtra Charitra*—the classic and Bible of this school Let us now examine the reasons adduced for the proposed radical change Put in simple language, they amount to this, *viz*, that the present literary dialect is archaic and artificial and, therefore, unintelligible to the people The same thing is reiterated in different places in different combinations and permutations of words but this is the gist of them all This view of the literary dialect is a gross exaggeration almost amounting to a misrepresentation It may be easily admitted that some books are written in a highly pedantic and artificial style but that is a fault of *style* and does not touch the point now in issue Even that fault is more in evidence in the latter day literature than in the earlier and classical literature

**Argument  
for the  
proposed  
change.**

Telugu literature may be divided into two broad divisions, *viz.*, that which is intended

**Two-fold  
classification  
of**

**Telugu  
litera-  
ture  
Puranic  
litera-  
ture**

for all people and that which is intended only for the scholar. The former class comprises *Bhâratam*, *Bhâgavatam* (in a limited sense), *Râmâyanam* and the Puranas in general. These, as stated by Appakavi, were meant for the uneducated people,\* and they have served their purpose and are serving it now. Our oldest book is still our best book, *i e*, the *Bhâratam*, and this book and the *Bhagavatam* and *Râmâyanam* are the most familiar things in the country. They are recited and expounded in every nook and corner of the Telugu country—in populous towns as well as in small out-of-the-way villages and thousands of men and women (women more than men) throng to these recitations and are instructed and entertained by them. People derive their inspiration from these books in matters of religion, morality and social conduct and they look up for their high ideals in those books. They are to this day what they were intended to be—a source of inspiration in all matters of faith and conduct as the Bible is to the Christians. This is within the knowledge of every Telugu man and woman and even the “Modern Telugu” scholars cannot deny it. How can it be said, then, that the language of these books is altogether unintelligible to the present day Telugu

\* In ancient India and in the India of the middle ages, and, in fact, till comparatively recent times, education meant education in Sanskrit

people? There is another department of literature which comes under this class, *viz*, the modern dramatic (and prose) literature. As has been stated already, scores of Telugu dramas are issued every year and they are enacted by the numerous dramatic companies that have sprung up throughout the country. There is not a town of decent size which does not possess at least one permanent theatre. Some own two or more. There are also travelling dramatic companies. They play dramas composed in the literary dialect and are patronized by people of all classes—from the rajah to the ryot. To talk of the language in which these books are written as “archaic and unintelligible” is ignorance and to talk of this language in the same breath with Latin and Greek is to have no sense of proportion.

The other division of Telugu literature is represented by what are called the *Prabandhams* which correspond to the Sanskrit *Kāvya*ms. These are more or less artificial poems and are not meant for the man in the street. Much of the criticism that is ignorantly levelled at Telugu literature generally applies to some of the later *Prabandhams* which are spurious imitations of *Vasucharitra*. The style of these books is, no doubt, artificial and pedantic but it is only the *style* that is so—not the *grammar*. What we are concerned with here is the

**Praban-  
dha  
litera-  
ture**

grammar or (to use a more expressive term)  
*Lakshanam* This is *not at fault*

**It is easy  
to write  
a simple  
style in  
the  
literary  
dialect.**

That it is practicable and easy to write a simple style in the literary dialect is amply proved by Mr Viresalingam and his followers Mr Ramamurti himself feels constrained to admit this For, he says, "Some Telugu writers, evidently under the influence of the Western literary ideals, have now and then made some experiments in simplifying and modernizing the ancient and artificial poetical language so as to adapt it to modern needs, but, except a few scholars like Rao Bahadur K Viresalingam Pantulu Garu, they have almost failed \* \* \* \*

"Even Mr Viresalingam Pantulu began his literary work as a thorough-bred Orthodox Pandit, but under the impulse of the social reform which he advocated, gradually tried to free himself from the chains which bound him, *but the influence of the literary tradition in which he was trained proved too strong even for such a reformer* He knew that the prose of his *satires* and some of his *humorous writings* was the best and most energetic, idiomatic Telugu and the effect it produced was most telling, yet he could not boldly use that language in his other works *Though he has simplified the language and made it less unnatural and more intelligible, it remains in its structure and grammar the artificial Telugu of the Pandit*" (The italics are mine)

Here is an admission that Mr. Viresalingam has succeeded in "simplifying and modernizing" the language of ancient literature but it does not suffice the "Modern Telugu" scholar who wants freedom to teach in his "homely" language, *i.e.*, his colloquial dialect. The fault with Mr. Viresalingam (a dauntless reformer, no doubt) is that he was trained in "literary and linguistic tradition" Here we have the clue to the creed of this new school. They do not want to have anything to do with "the literary and linguistic tradition" They would cut themselves off from it and start a new language and a new literature quite different from the old—with Mr Ramamurti as its *Vâganusâsana*—lawgiver! They would burn up the literary tradition of centuries and justify the appellation of Dagdharâshtra of the Telugu country, and they will write their new literature uninfluenced by that tradition. A madder scheme of literary and linguistic reform has seldom been put forward. It does not deserve the name of reform. It is a veritable French revolution not yet anywhere attempted in the field of letters.

The proposed scheme of reform is revolutionary and quixotic.

The tendency of language has everywhere been to develop a common uniform literary dialect out of a number of heterogeneous local colloquial dialects. This has been the history of English, of French and of German. What

Tendency of language is to develop a literary dialect.

literature there was in English up to the fourth quarter of the 15th century was in local dialects and since then, a common and uniform literary dialect has sprung up and is now used in all the English-speaking parts of the world. This is what H C Wyld—an author whom the colloquial school delights in quoting—says on the subject—

“The works written in this country down to the third quarter of the fifteenth century show more or less strongly marked points of divergence in the form of language, according to the province in which they were written. These differences are observable in the vocabulary, more strongly still in the inflections, and most characteristically of all in the sound system, so far as this can be reconstructed from the spelling. From the period at which Caxton's activities begin (1475) the dialectal variety, which had hitherto been so remarkable a feature, disappears to all intents and purposes from literature. Henceforth the language of books becomes uniform, the spelling, owing to the necessity for comparative consistency felt by the printers, rapidly crystallizes, and the form of language thus displayed differs but little *in its written form* from that of the present day of which it is, indeed, the lineal ancestor”\*

Not only has English developed a literary dialect, but it has also developed a standard form of spoken dialect which closely resembles the literary dialect. This feature of the

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\* Historical study of the mother-tongue, p.,294.

English language will be referred to again. There are scores of spoken local dialects in England at the present day, but they are not used for purposes of literature and it is said that they show a tendency to be levelled up to the standard dialect. Curiously enough, it was also in the 15th century that the French literary dialect took its definite shape. It took Germany a longer time to develop its literary dialect and "the movement (towards the establishment of one accepted literary language throughout all German-speaking countries) reaches its culmination with Goethe and Schiller." \*

Mr Ramamurti speaks of the Italian language and of its growing out of Latin. Here is what a writer who ought to know more about both those languages than Mr Ramamurti, says about their relationship —

**The case of Italian misunderstood by the Colloquial School**

"The modern Italian speech is the child of Latin, in the sense in which French and Spanish are the children of Latin, or rather, like French and Spanish, it is a new shape which Latin has gradually put on after hundreds of years of use and misuse. Perhaps, a word must be said in order to explain the chasm between Latin literature and the Italian literature of Dante. At no time, even in the zenith of Roman prosperity did all parts of Italy speak the same Latin, even

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\* Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol II, German language

if they spoke Latin at all Local peculiarities of Grammar and pronunciation were numerous and marked Moreover, in the most golden days of Latin speech, that Latin which we know and learn was the language of a literary and cultured class, the Latin of the people was different and more free As generations went by, and the Roman Empire grew, the difference between the literary and the popular speech became wider and wider still, until the one was scarcely recognizable in the other And when Italy, in the Dark Ages, was ravaged, unsettled and dismembered, when little state sprang up here and little state there, when the literary and cultured class almost disappeared the upshot was that the speech of the people prevailed, just as Saxon-English prevailed over Norman French

\* \* \* \*

Dialects exist in all these places and in many more, even to day, nevertheless, there is an orthodox Italian language "the Tuscan speech with the Roman utterance" in which cultivated people endeavour to speak, and which is the only language recognized for serious literature"\*

Three points are clear from this, *viz*, that the relation between Italian and Latin is not as it is understood by Mr. Ramamurti, that the fall of Latin was due to great political and social cataclysms and that Italian again has developed a literary dialect distinct from the spoken dialects. The example of Italian properly understood strengthens the view herein

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\* The foreign debt of English literature, T G Tucker, pp 180 and 181

taken, *viz.*, that the tendency of language everywhere is in the direction of a uniform literary dialect

Granting, for the sake of argument, what is not true, *viz.*, that colloquial Telugu stands in the same relation to literary Telugu as Italian to Latin, the history of the latter shows that there is no justification for making the revolutionary change which is contemplated. It required nothing less than the disruption of an empire with the consequent disappearance of the literary and cultured class, to kill Latin. What is there to warrant attempts to make a similar change now? Wave after wave of political change has swept over the land without affecting the course of the orderly development of the Telugu language and, under the aegis of the British rule, the country is now enjoying a measure of peace which it, perhaps, never enjoyed before and culture in all directions is progressing. Is this any reason for hatching literary revolutions? The fact is that the whole of this scheme is a misconceived and a misshapen thing.

We shall now proceed to consider, in greater detail, in what relationship literary Telugu stands to colloquial Telugu as a whole. The "Modern Telugu" school men talk as if there were structural and radical differences between

**The true relationship of literary to colloquial Telugu.**

the two and compare the literary Telugu to Latin or Greek and the colloquial Telugu to modern English or Italian “Old literary Telugu is now like Latin \* \* Modern Telugu is like Italian” says Mr. Ramamurti. All this talk is absurd and extravagant and a gross exaggeration. The difference between the two dialects grammatically is no more than exists between the literary and colloquial dialects generally. Mr. Ramamurti admits that Mr. Viresalingam Pantulu has succeeded in “simplifying and modernizing” the literary dialect without touching its structure and grammar. What more can be reasonably required? The truth is that in approaching this subject, the colloquialists are obsessed by what they know about the history of the English language with which they are certainly more familiar than with their mother-tongue. False analogy vitiates many a scheme of reform—perhaps all the world over, but particularly in India at the present day and the “Modern Telugu” reform movement is not less, but more vitiated in the respect.

**Analogy of English language inapplicable to Telugu.**

The English language has certainly undergone many and even violent changes. Its very *structure* is now different from what it was in the Anglo-Saxon period. But these changes are, to a great extent, peculiar to that

language and not a little due directly or indirectly to the political vicissitudes of England. The causes which brought about these changes may be found set forth in any book dealing with the history of the English language and literature. They may be stated briefly as follows. In what is called the Anglo-Saxon period, the language existed only in dialects. There were four principal dialects which possessed more or less literature—chiefly the West Saxon dialect. Then came the Norman conquest, the most notable event in the literary no less than in the political history of England. The effect of this event on the language of the country is better expressed in the words of Lounsbury —

Two general facts in regard to language became apparent as the effect of the conquest, one is that, though the native tongue continued to be spoken by the great majority of the population, it went out of use as the language of high culture. It was no longer taught in the schools. It was no longer employed at the court of the king or the castles of the nobles. It was no longer used in judicial proceedings, to some extent even it ceased to be recognized in the services of the Church. This displacement was probably slow at first, but it was done effectually at last. The second fact is that, after the conquest, the educated classes, whether lay or ecclesiastical, preferred to write either in Latin or in French, the latter steadily tending to become more and more the language of literature as well as of polite society. We have, in consequence, the singular

spectacle of two tongues flourishing side by side in the same country, and yet for centuries so utterly distinct and independent that neither can be said to have exerted much direct appreciable influence upon the other, though in each case the indirect influence was great " \*

" And so it came to pass that, while Norman-French became the language of the court, the school and the bar, the Saxon tongue held its place tenaciously in the farm-house and cottage, in the transactions of the market place and in the everyday proceedings of common life " †

" English, indeed, after the conquest, did not cease to be a written language, it did cease to be a cultivated one. None of those conservative influences were cast about it which are sure to prevent rapid and radical changes in any tongue that is regularly employed by the educated. But the great body of the people clung to it. They were ignorant, and they corrupted it, but, as they could not or would not learn the language of the higher classes, they preserved it. While French, therefore, continued to remain for centuries the tongue employed in polite conversation, while it and Latin were the ones mainly employed in literature, the native speech could not and did not fail, as time went on, to make its influence more and more felt by the mere weight of numbers on the part of those using it " †

It was during this period of degradation into which the Norman conquest had

\*History of the English language, T R Lounsbury, p 51.

† History of the English Bible, J Brown, D D, p 15

‡ Lounsbury, pp 54 and 55

brought it, that the English language underwent radical changes in structure, grammar and syntax, owing to its being spoken mainly by the uneducated classes and owing to the absence of the restraining influence of a great literature. It was in this period, in short, that "English has divested itself of accidence, and has done the most that any language can do to divest itself of syntax"

In the thirteenth century, the English Kings lost their French possessions and after this, more and more attention came to be paid to things English and, among other things, the English language began to be cultivated. "It was in the fourteenth century that the forces which give stability and credit to a language began first to operate powerfully upon the speech employed by the great body of the people. It was in the latter half of that century that English literature, in the strict sense of the word, properly begins. Numerous works had, indeed, been written between the conquest and this period, but, with the exception of some few specimens of lyric poetry, there had been nothing produced, which, looked at from a purely literary point of view, had any reason to show for its existence."\*

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\* Lounsbury, pp 67 and 68

The common literary dialect for which foundations were thus laid in the fourteenth century, became accomplished or nearly accomplished in the closing part of the next century. Some writers place this somewhat later, but this does not affect the present question. And the common dialect that was then formed has continued practically the same to the present day, so far as its *Lakshanam* is concerned. Lounsbury says that while there have been numerous additions in vocabulary, grammatical changes have been exceedingly few. "During the past four hundred years, not a single one has taken place in the inflection of the noun, unless the assumption by two or three of the regular plural in *s* be so considered. In the inflection of the adjective, there could be none, because, at the beginning of the modern English period, it had already been reduced to the root form. It is only in the inflection of the pronoun and the verb that certain changes can be found." He proceeds to describe these changes which are very few indeed.\*

Of the future of the modern English language, the same author says —

"English, in the form which it has had essentially for the last three hundred years, may doubtless disappear, but its destruction, if it ever takes place, will be under conditions such as have

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\* Lounsbury, p 163

never before existed, and will be owing to agencies which differ wholly from those that have brought about the ruin of any of the great cultivated languages of the past" \*

Professor Bradley, some time President of the Philological Society, is of the same opinion and thinks that "there is reason for believing that the grammar (of the modern English) will remain for centuries very nearly what it is now."

It will be clear from this short account of the history of the English language that most of the changes that have occurred in it are peculiar to that language. This is also clear from the fact that the cognate German language has changed very much less than English notwithstanding that it developed a common literary dialect much later than English. As regards French, we are told that in it "there is no such strongly marked division as exists between old and middle English or even between middle and modern English" and that "the difference between French of the eleventh century and that of the twentieth is less than between English of the same dates."†

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\* Lounsbury, p. 480.

† Encyclopædia Britannica, Vol II, French language.

**History  
of the  
Telugu  
language**

We shall now briefly consider the history of Telugu. The earliest Telugu book extant consists of the first two books and nearly the whole of the third book of the Bhâratam composed by Nannayabhata, the Court Poet of King Raja Raja of Rajahmundry, who, we learn from inscriptions, was crowned on 16th August, 1022 A D. The greater portion of this grand work consisting of 15 books was composed by Tikkana Sômayâi who lived at Nellore about two hundred years later and the third book was completed by Errapagragada during the first half of the fourteenth century. There was thus an interval of three hundred years or more between the first and the last of this trio of Bhârata poets.

**Nannaya-  
bhata  
and the  
origin of  
the  
literary  
dialect.**

Many think that Nannaya was the very first Telugu poet and that he created the literary dialect. This opinion is based on the absence of works which can be referred to a date prior to Nannaya's time and the literary title of Vâganusâsana,—lawgiver, which is accorded to Nannaya, by universal consent. But it is impossible to accept this view. The history of cultivated languages everywhere shows that a more or less extended course of experiments precedes the formation of a fully developed literary dialect such as that which Nannaya used and there are no valid reasons for supposing that this was not the case with Telugu. In Nan-

naya's time the relation between Telugu and Sanskrit became settled and established and this could not have been the work of one man, however great. Again, Nannaya himself nowhere hints that he was doing anything that was novel or that had not been attempted before. He tells us, in a matter of course way, that he undertook this translation at the request of his royal master, and he hopes that his poetry would commend itself to other poets. It would not be consistent with the context to suppose, as some do, that, here, Nannayabhatta meant only Sanskrit poets. It was the Telugu and not Sanskrit poets that should appreciate Telugu poetry and it is they for whose appreciation Nannaya would care. Nannichôda, who lived about midway between Nannaya and Tikkana says that Telugu literature was encouraged by the Chalukyan Kings since the days of Satyâsraya by whom is evidently meant Kubja Vishnuvardhana's brother. In any case, it is only reasonable to suppose that there must have existed some ballad and lyric poetry—mostly in vernacular metres—before Nannaya created the epic poetry in Telugu.

Nevertheless, Nannaya must have done something to deserve the position of supremacy in the field of Telugu literature—the position of law-giver—which has been ungrudgingly accord-

ed to him from the time of his great successor Tikkana to this day. It would seem that it was he that gave the finishing touches to the literary dialect which has since become universal throughout the Telugu country, the dialect into which the great epic of Mahabharatta could be easily rendered, the dialect which has been the medium of the best musical compositions of Southern India, the dialect which has earned for itself the proud distinction of being the "Italian of the East" and the dialect which the Telugu people count as one of their greatest treasures on earth. He is the first Telugu poet whose works are known to exist. He is the first and best of our poets—the Homer and the Dante of Telugu. The literary usage to which he gave sanction has been accepted as standard by subsequent writers.

**The literary dialect has changed though slowly.**

**Old period.**

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that Nannaya has been slavishly followed by the subsequent generations of Telugu writers. While all writers acknowledged Nannaya as their guide, friend and philosopher and adopted the broad features of the literary usage created by him, each followed the bent of his own mind so far as general loyalty to Nannaya would permit him. In some respects, no two writings could be more dissimilar than those of Nannaya and Tikkana. The former makes

a free use of Sanskrit vocabulary while the latter uses a Telugu word wherever he can do so Nannaya's Sanskritism does not, however, obtrude on the reader's notice and there is no ring of pedantism about it When he uses a Sanskrit word, one is inclined to think that he does so because the Sanskrit word fits in better than a Telugu word. The great merit of Tikkana's style is that it has succeeded in rendering the transcendental ideas which lie scattered everywhere in the Mahabharata into simple Telugu speech The fifteen books of the Bhāratam which Tikkana wrote are a mine of native Telugu speech and idiom The language and idiom are sometimes dialectal—of the dialect current in what are now the Nellore and Guntur districts—but it is all ennobled by becoming the language of the Bhāratam Nannaya's style is easy, free and flowing Tikkana is full of simple, native Telugu idiom and terse—the latter, the effect of the former On the whole, Nannaya's poetry is easier to read and understand than Tikkana's Tikkana did not deliberately deviate from the standard set by Nannaya, but, in the abundance of pure Telugu idiom that he made use of, there must be much not only in vocabulary, but also in idiom, terms of expression, and syntax that is not to be found in the more Sanskritic style of Nannaya. The subject is

worth investigating in detail but this is not the place for it

Tikkana's style found a notable imitator in his great disciple Kêtana who has earned the gratitude of the succeeding generations of Telugus by his *Āndhra bhâshâbhûshanam*—probably the oldest Telugu grammar extant—even more than by his other works. We find nearly the same features of style in Nannichôda's *Kumîrasambhavam* and Baddena's *Nittsâstra Muklâvali* and a few more other books written about this period. All these writers flourished in the country which, roughly speaking, is now comprised in the Guntur and Nellore Districts, and it seems reasonable to suppose that this style is what prevailed in that part of the country at the time we are considering. Nannaya wrote in the language of Rajahmundry

**Middle  
period.**

When we come to what is sometimes called the middle period of Telugu literature, we find poets like Pôtana and Srînâdha introducing into their poetry, fresh *forms of expression* from the current speech of their time. Srînâdha has always been regarded as a free lance among the poets of his time and he seems to have taken credit for the innovations which he introduced, for, he tells us in his *Bhîmakhandam* that some call his language Sanskrit and some call it Telugu, but that, in truth, it is Cana-

rese. What the poet meant exactly by calling his language Canarese is not clear, but there is no doubt that he meant to say that he wrote in a language that was somewhat different from that of his predecessors Appakavi, the great Telugu lawgiver of the modern times finds fault with Põtana—the born-scholar as he calls himself—for departing from the established usage in some respects, and taboos his *Bhâgavatam*, a splendid work of art which would do honour to any language, as unworthy to be quoted as authority for correct literary usage

The next great land-mark in the history of Telugu literature is furnished by the literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There was a “Revival of Telugu learning” during the sixteenth century and the one notable feature of the literature of this period in the *Prabandha* style of composition which, in later days, has deteriorated into pedantic, lifeless verbiage. Another feature of this period, which, in some respects, is even more notable than the first, is the rise of what may be called the Southern School of Telugu literature. The Telugu Naik Kings of Tanjore, Trichinopoly and Madura of this period were great patrons of learning and, under their auspices, a large amount of Telugu literature came into existence—both poetry and prose

**Prabandha period and Southern School of Telugu literature.**

—and it is only now that the extent and value of this literature are attracting the attention they deserve. Freed, to some extent, from the restraining influence of the literary public opinion of the mother country, the Southern poets deviated from the strict standard both of grammar and of taste to a certain extent. Desiring to make their language spicy and “palatable,” poets like the author of the *Vijayavilāsam*, introduced several colloquial forms of expression and deviated here and there from the strict rules of *Sandhu* and it is presumably also for the same reason that some of these poets indulged in that excess of erotic sentiment which has wrongly come to be associated with Telugu literature generally. It is true that the aberrations of the Southern poets did not go unchallenged. It is impossible that they should have been overlooked but, nevertheless, the poets were accepted as authorities of literary usage even by such a purist as Appakavi. In fact, Appakavi accepts almost any author as authority provided he is not Pōtanna and he even accepts stray verses of doubtful authorship. This is the measure of tolerance which the much maligned Pandit is capable of, and I would request the “Modern Telugu” scholars to ponder over it.

**Modern  
period**

This leads us on to the modern period of Telugu literature with which we are quite

familiar Mr Ramamurti has given his testimony that some at least of the present day writers have succeeded in "simplifying and modernizing" the literary dialect. They have done it not by a wholesale slaughter of the rules of grammar, for the "structure and grammar" of their language is essentially that of the established literary dialect—but by making use of the more familiar words and by refraining from making *Sandhi* where it is likely to obscure the meaning or make the language sound pedantic \*

From this necessarily cursory survey of the course of development of the Telugu literary dialect, it cannot help occurring to the reader that the dialect has not stood still from the time of Nannayabhatta till now without swerving an inch this side or an inch that side, as is most incorrectly represented, but that it has undergone a gradual and orderly course of development as literary languages generally do. That it has not undergone more violent changes, is due to the absence of adequate causes therefor. The only event that might have affected it much more than it has done is the Muhammadan Conquest of the

**Telugu  
and the  
Muham-  
medan  
Conquest.**

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\* Mr Ramamurti does not sympathize with this method and as soon as he sees the slightest deviation from the strict letter of ancient usage in the interests of clearness of expression, he is more vehement than the Pandit in condemning it but for a different reason.

**Telugu country** The entire Telugu country was never subject to Muhammadan rule for a long time. It was the Kakatiya Kingdom that fell under their sway first and even here, the outlying parts of the kingdom south of the Krishna continued for a long time to be ruled—first by the Reddis of Kondavidu and then by the Vijayanagara kings who continued to rule though an ever-diminishing kingdom till they could hand over symbolical possession of the Indian Empire to the British by ceding to them, in 1639, the site of the Fort Saint George—the first British territorial acquisition in India. For obvious reasons, the Muhammadan rule affected the spoken and official language more than the literary language. This influence has been the greatest in the Nizam's Dominions which have been subject to Muhammadan rule since the fourteenth century. That the literary language has not been appreciably affected is due to its having attained a highly cultivated state already and to the existence of a large amount of classical literature.

**The re-  
straining  
influence  
of liter-  
ature on  
language**

The restraining influence of a standard literature is admirably set forth in Lounsbury's book already quoted. Speaking of literary English, he says as follows —

“It is with the Middle English period that English *literature* in the limited but strictly

proper sense of the word may be said to begin. The productions of writings of a character so high as to be recognized everywhere as authoritative standards of expression could not fail to have an immediate effect upon the future of the language. It is the one great result of the influences now brought to bear upon it, that, from the end of the fourteenth century, our tongue has pursued an orderly development. It suffers changes, and, indeed, constant changes, both in grammar and in vocabulary, if it did not, it would no longer be a living speech. But these changes take place within well defined limits, they require the consent of vast numbers, sometimes of generations, they are spread over great spaces of time. The conservative and restraining influence of literature over language necessarily grows more powerful with every successive century, because literature itself is read and studied by constantly increasing numbers. The changes that have taken place during the five hundred years that have gone by since the beginning of the Middle English period bear not the slightest comparison, either in extent or importance, with those that took place during the two hundred years before that period. How comparatively insignificant the former are has already been fully exemplified in the extract which has been given from

Chaucer, with the ancient spelling in one case preserved and, in the other case with it modernized. An examination of these shows clearly that it is the difference of orthography, far more than the difference of vocabulary and of construction, that makes the language of the fourteenth century seem difficult '\*

**Literary  
Telugu  
not rigid**

I shall now proceed to show, in a very brief manner, that there is no unbending rigidity of form, either in the body of words or even in their inflections as used in literature. Chinaya Suri quotes in his grammar no less than 16 forms of the word ఒకఁడు (one man) and no less than 29 forms of its plural. Take the very common instance of a noun ending in మ—సున్నము, for instance. This is the normal and usual form of the word. But it may also be written as సున్నమ్ము by doubling the *m* and as సున్నంబు by converting the second *m* into *b*. All the three forms are used in poetry as the exigencies of metre or rythm require but a man who wants to write plain simple prose would naturally use the normal form. There is, at any rate, nothing to prevent him from doing so. Take again, the word అనఁక (that is or that is to say). It has the following forms, viz., అనఁక అనంక అనఁకా అనంకా అనఁకఱ అనంకఱ అనఁకాఱ అనంకాఱ

\* History of the English language, pp 140 and 141

You get four more forms by adding *u* to the final *u* of the second set of these forms and that makes a total of twelve of what may be called the regular forms. Then, we have four irregular forms,—అసవుడు నావుడు, నాన్, నా. Thus we have no less than sixteen forms of this simple word, all of which are met with in poetry. But in plain prose one would use the normal form అసఁగా in preference to the others. At any rate, none but a lover of pedantry would use any of the irregular forms. These irregular forms, one may call, archaic—in the sense that they are not current in spoken dialects and are not understood by uneducated people. They are used in verse to suit the requirements of metre and there is no need to prohibit them any more than such English terms as *meseems*, *methinks*, *quoth he*, etc.

Let us consider another set of forms, వచ్చు is the infinitive form of the verb meaning to come. Its future, third person, singular forms are వచ్చును, వచ్చున్ వచ్చెడిని, వచ్చెడిన్, వచ్చెడును వచ్చెడున్. The first is the most usual form while the rest are chiefly found in poetry. The third and fourth forms have given rise to two sets of colloquial forms. The form వచ్చెడిని is made up of వచ్చు + ఎడి + ని which, by the operation of Sandhi becomes వచ్చె + డి + ని. Now, sometimes the syllable డి is omitted in rapid speech and as a compensation for its

loss, the vowel sound ఎ in వచ్చె is doubled or lengthened. This gives us the form వచ్చేని which is in use in some parts of the country. The corresponding adjectival form వచ్చే for వచ్చు or వచ్చెడి or వచ్చెడు is more common. The phenomenon of dropping a final syllable and doubling the vowel sound which goes before it is also found in such expressions as వచ్చీరాని for వచ్చియు గాని, వాడూనేను for వాడును నేను, &c. In fact, it is very common. Some of these expressions such as వచ్చీరాని have crept into the latter day literature and it is a matter for consideration whether other forms should not be recognized also. But this is a point to be considered by those that have been trained in "the literary and linguistic tradition" and not by those that do not feel the influence of that tradition, by those that wish to *reform* and *not* by those that want to *revolutionize* the language.

**Popularity of literary dialect**

The foregoing remarks are, it is hoped, sufficient to show that the language of Telugu literature is not the rigid and inflexible thing it is represented to be, that it has not stood still from Nannaya's time to Viresalingam's, but that it has changed, though slowly and "within certain well defined limits" and that the preposterous proposition that it is Greek to the Telugu people is a gross exaggeration.

If this result is attained, it knocks the bottom out of the case of the "modern" school, for, it shows that there is no need for the radical changes which that school attempts. If any doubts linger, they should be dissipated by the popularity which some of the present day publications written in the literary dialect have attained. I understand that the Vignānāchandrīka Mandalī of Madras has two thousand permanent subscribers each of whom buys a copy of every one of its publications. Four books (on Science) have sold 5,000 copies each, one Novel 4,000 copies, another Novel 3,565, one book on History more than 4,000 copies, two more 3,000 copies or more each, and so on. Mr Chilakamartī Lakshmi Narsimham of Rajahmundry informs me that he has sold no less than 16,000 copies of his drama *Gayōpakhyanam* and 9,000 copies of another drama called *Prasannayōdavam*. Neither of these books has been prescribed as a text-book in schools. He says that his novels also are very popular and that some of them have been prescribed as text-books. These figures are not small considering the low state of general education in the Telugu country and considering also the well-known want of reading habits among the people, and they give the lie direct to the statement that literary Telugu is unintelligible.

**There is  
no stan-  
dard-  
spoken  
Telugu**

Having disposed of the alleged necessity and propriety of the proposed change, we will now consider its practicability. When the "Modern Telugu" scholars advocate that future literature should be written in the "Modern Telugu dialect now current among the educated classes," *i.e.*, the spoken dialect of the educated classes, they assume that there is a uniform spoken dialect prevailing in all parts of the Telugu country. This is a baseless assumption, and here again we see the influence of false analogy. The "Modern" scholars, no doubt, borrow the idea of a standard-spoken dialect from the English language and try to persuade themselves to suppose that a similar state of things exists in Telugu. Nothing is farther from fact. Our friends ought to know that a standard-spoken dialect is a peculiar feature of the English language and that it is due to causes more or less peculiar to that language. We do not hear of any such phenomenon in any other principal language even in Europe, and we are told that, in Germany, "the question as to whether a unified pronunciation (*einheits-sprache*) is desirable or even possible has occupied the attention of academies, scholars and educated public during recent years," that certain scholars such as Prof K Luck and Prof O Brenner "warn against any such

attempts to create a living language on an artificial basis" and that the decision is left to time \*

Standard English took its origin from the same source and at the same time as the literary English and has since been cultivated with sedulous care like the latter. The two dialects have run in parallel lines at no great distance from each other. The great Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, the spread of general education in the country and the efforts of the clergy have greatly contributed to this result. This is what Wyld says on the subject—

**Standard-spoken English—Its origin and nature.**

"But the same form of English which became the vehicle of literature came also to be regarded 'as the best and most correct' form of *spoken* English. At the present time, some variety of this dialect is almost universal among all educated people. It was originally, no doubt, a *class* dialect, primarily that of the court. It is now spoken by all classes who have received any education.

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It is a fact that both regional and class dialects are giving way before the encroaching standard English. The reasons for this, at the present time, are not far to seek. The main factor in obliterating regional dialects is our system of Primary education which places, in schools all over the country, teachers trained according to a uniform scheme, whose own pronunciation

and general way of speech has been carefully supervised in Pupil Teachers' Colleges or Training Colleges. Another important class of speech missionaries are the Clergy of the Church of England, and last, but by no means least in importance as an agent in smoothing out the most marked local peculiarities of dialect, is the wonderful increase of facilities in locomotion, which enables the population to move about freely, and to visit easily districts comparatively far removed from their place of abode"\*

In another place the same author says —

"At the present time, it will not be denied that to inculcate the speaking of correct English is the chief solicitude of a very large number of persons engaged in Primary and Secondary education in this country. Those whose business it is to teach, who are to become public speakers, or wish to enter upon public life, or affairs of any kind, undoubtedly find it convenient to get rid of whatever native 'Vulgarisms' or dialectal peculiarities their speech contains, and to attempt to approximate their spoken English to that standard form which is no longer confined to a single province, or to a particular social class"†

**Why  
there is  
no stan-  
dard-  
spoken  
Telugu.**

Can any one honestly say to himself that there is a standard-spoken Telugu comparable to standard-spoken English or that any of the agencies to which the standard English owes its existence and development exist in the Telugu country or that "those whose

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\* The growth of English, pp 123 and 124

† Historical study of the mother-tongue, p 356

business it is to teach, or who are to become public speakers, &c.," try to get rid of the "native vulgarisms or dialectal peculiarities" of their speech? Certainly not. The kind of literature that influences the spoken language is the dramatic (especially comic) and prose literature which was practically non-existing in the Telugu country till about 15 or 20 years ago. Dialectal differences both of grammar and vocabulary are well known and Mr. Ramamurti himself is obliged to admit this when he says that Telugu "in its purest form is spoken in the Coast Districts—particularly in Godavari, Guntur and Krishna," and that "variations in usage are indeed noticeable in the Deccan Districts," though he tries to minimize their importance by stating that "they are not such as to render the speech of a Guntur graduate unintelligible to the educated classes of Kurnool or Cuddapah"\* It is not then the dialect which they themselves speak that the "Modern Telugu" scholars would set up as standard Telugu but the dialect of Godavari, Krishna and Guntur. This is generous of them, but how would their proposal commend itself to other people living outside the three favoured Districts—to the people of the Ceded Districts, of the Tamil Districts, of the Canarese country and to

**Dialectal  
varieties  
in spoken  
Telugu**

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\* The "*Hindu*" of 11th December, 1912

the millions of Telugu people living in the Hyderabad territory? Would they like one of the local dialects being enthroned in the place of the deposed literary dialect and would they be loyal to it as they are now to the latter dialect? Most unlikely. It is more likely that, when once the empire of literary Telugu is broken up and dissolved, local dialects would set up petty independent principalities, each in its own place and then—we would go back to the times prior to Nannayabhatta.

The terms polite-spoken Telugu and the language of the educated classes are delightfully vague. Who are the polite people and who are the educated classes? Are Brahmins only meant by these terms? If so, are they all educated? Is the language of the educated Brahmin exactly the same as that of the uneducated Brahmin? Are Brahmin women to be included in the fold of educated classes? Do women speak exactly the same language as men? If you extend the scope of the term educated classes, do educated non-Brahmins generally speak exactly the same language as the educated Brahmins? The fact is that there are very many variations in the spoken dialects of even the same part of country. Of course, Mr Ramamurti would say that the people somehow understand each other. So

do the Brahmin landlord and his pariah field servant None would think of saying that they speak the same language Taking the Brahmin dialect of the Godavari District, we have these variations of the word పచ్చినాను, పిచ్చినాను, పచ్చాను, పొచ్చాను, పిచ్చాను. పచ్చాఁ, పైచ్చాఁ, పిచ్చాఁ, the ఆ in చా being pronounced as a in land, for which sound there is no symbol in Telugu Which of these forms would the "Modern Telugu" scholar adopt as the standard form and why? Would he use ఒక శైక, వక ఒఖ వొఖ or పఖ ! వస్తాడు, or వస్తుడు as the "educated classes" say in Madras? Would he accept the expression నేను వివబద్దాను for 'I heard' as a first-class educated Telugu man of Madras would say or the phrase వుండబడ్డ వ్వంబి of the Godavari District? Such variations are too numerous to be mentioned Mr Ramamurti would, no doubt, retort by saying that there are also variations in literary forms But then, you know what they are and they have all been standardized by long usage There is no limit to the variations of sounds in spoken language. As the author of the *Āndhrasabda Chintāmanī* says every literary language must fulfil two conditions—it must be uniform and fixed (అనన్యదృశకచ్చనిత్యత్వ) i.e., it must not vary from place to place or from time to time except of course "within certain well defined limits."

Spoken  
Telugu  
neither  
uniform  
nor  
fixed.

Mr Ramamurti's "Modern Telugu" does not fulfil these conditions. It is not uniform in all parts of the Telugu country. Is its character to be fixed for the future? If so, will it not gradually become less and less alive and ultimately cease to live at all? This "Modern Telugu" scheme of reform is too absurd to be taken seriously. It is confessedly the creation of persons who do not believe in "literary and linguistic tradition." It is designed to make future generations of Telugu people strangers to their national literature and to forget their past—to convert them into a nation of Rip Van Winkles.

**How to  
simplify  
and  
modern-  
ize  
literary  
Telugu**

Taking leave of this precious scheme, for the present, we will proceed to consider soberly how to "simplify and modernize" literary Telugu. The proper way of doing it is by the use of modern grammatical forms of words and a judicious relaxation of the rules of *Sandhi*. Both these methods have been already employed with success. It has been shown above what is meant by modern grammatical forms. Those forms do not violate the rules of grammar and no Pandit can object to them. It is merely a choice of forms all of which are admissible.

The question of *Sandhi* admits of difference of opinion. There are some who think that *Sandhi* should never be dispensed with, while

there are others who contend that it should never be made in writing Both are extremists Before trying to judge between them, let us try to form a clear idea of what Sandhi is

Literally, *Sandhi* means junction In grammar, it is the name given to the change of pronunciation which takes place when two words are pronounced rapidly as if they were one word Such changes take place in all languages—though only some exhibit them in writing In his “Growth of English,” Wyld describes the operation of Sandhi in English and says that “It is easy to find numbers of two syllabled words in English which are indistinguishable in sound from other groups of syllables containing two words For instance, *honour, on her, on a, offend her, a fender, not at home* (quickly pronounced), *not a tome, not at all, man, not a tall man*, and so on.” In Sanskrit as well as in the cultivated Dravidian languages, these phonetic changes are carefully studied and embodied in rules It is a mistake to suppose, as is sometimes done, that the Dravidian languages have borrowed the rules of Sandhi from Sanskrit All that the Telugu grammarians have borrowed from Sanskrit is the nomenclature and method of treating the subject The facts or materials are all indigenous. The only Sandhi that is common to Telugu and Sanskrit is what is called the

**Sandhi.**

**Telugu Sandhi not borrowed from Sanskrit.**

పరమాపసంధి in Sanskrit, i.e., the Sandhi which occurs in cases where the final vowel of the first word is elided and the initial vowel of the second word takes its place as in వాడు + ఉండెను = వాడుండెను. But this kind of Sandhi occurs only in exceptional cases in Sanskrit. It is true that, in Sanskrit, the sound *y* occurs in cases where the first word ends in ఇ or ఈ but it comes there as a *substitute* for the vowel and *not as an augment* as in Telugu. In Telugu there is neither *guna* nor *Vriddhi* nor any other phenomenon of Sanskrit grammar.

It will thus be seen that there is little in common between Telugu and Sanskrit in the matter of Sandhi except the nomenclature and method of treatment and the same thing is true of the other parts of grammar. It is only natural that when Sanskrit scholars wrote Dravidian grammars, they should borrow the method and nomenclature of Sanskrit grammars, especially as they did not exist in the vernaculars. A similar course is adopted by European scholars writing grammars of oriental languages. This method of treatment does not make the facts of grammar any the less indigenous.

**How far Sandhi may be relaxed in prose.**

How far is Sandhi compulsory in Telugu? In verse, it is regarded as compulsory with one exception, viz., at the end of a sentence. The

word sentence is sometimes liberally interpreted so as to include a verse line. But relaxation of Sandhi even in these cases is rare in practice. Sandhi is the rule. Considerations of metre, melody and rhythm render it necessary. Poetry is, moreover, read more regularly and faster than prose. Usually a whole stanza (except of the *śiṣā* metre) is read as one "breath group" and Telugu verse is always written in stanzas. These considerations do not apply to prose and there is no reason why, in the latter, Sandhi should be observed with the same rigour. At the same time, it is an extreme view to say that prose should be written *without Sandhi*, the readers being left to make their own Sandhi as in English. It will destroy the phonetic character of the Telugu spelling and the proposal cannot come with any degree of propriety from people who sympathize with the movement to remedy the defects of the unphonetic English spelling. Reference is often made to the well-known rule of Sanskrit grammar which lays down that Sandhi is compulsory in single words (*i e.*, as between the base and the inflectional termination), between the prefix and the root and in compound words, and that it is optional in a sentence. This is sometimes quoted as supporting the *no Sandhi* school, but not properly. No Sanskrit writer of prose or poetry has understood it in that sense and

even if they did so, neither their practice nor the rule of Sanskrit grammar need bind Telugu writers unless they choose to bind themselves thereby. There is, moreover, a point in this Sanskrit rule which requires to be noted. That rule speaks of the option of the *speaker* (వివక్ష) and *not* of the writer. Sanskrit grammar no less than Telugu grammar treats of language as it is *spoken*. Interpreted correctly, the rule of option means that the Sandhi should be regulated according to the *breath group* of the speaker, *i e*, the writer. The point is that change of sound occurs only when Sandhi is made, *i e*, when words are pronounced rapidly without an interval between them. When they should be so pronounced depends partly upon the personal habits of the speakers and partly upon the genius of the language. It is certainly not consistent either with the genius of the Telugu language or with the speaking habits of the Telugu people not to make *Sandhi* at all. It is as difficult for a Telugu man to read the sentence వాడు ఇక్కడ ఉండి అంత అక్కడకు ఏగను as to read a long complex sentence in prose with Sandhi throughout. The problem is to find the golden mean. The Canarese *Sabdamanidarpana* lays down that Sandhi should be avoided where it produces sounds disagreeable to the ear or suggestive of obscenity. It utters

a warning, at the same time, that this option should not be availed of to dispense with Sandhi systematically or unnecessarily. Another class of cases may be easily suggested in which Sandhi may be dispensed with, *viz*, cases where making Sandhi is likely to obscure the meaning or convey an incorrect idea of the form of a word—such as a foreign word or a proper name. The extent to which this is likely to happen depends upon the capacity of the reader. A well educated man who is accustomed to read fluently will not find *Sandhi* very much of an obstruction. On the other hand, children and persons who are not practised in reading will welcome absence of Sandhi. The degree, therefore, to which Sandhi should be dispensed with must vary with the class of readers for whom any book is intended. I do not see any real objection to Sandhi being adjusted in this way in prose. The conference of Telugu Pandits held in May last year under the auspices of the Telugu Academy gave its sanction to this proposal. Anything more than this, it is unnecessary to do.

There is one more question which requires to be considered in this connection—the question as to how far foreign words can be borrowed. Telugu vocabulary as it is, is by no means, all pure Telugu. Words have been

**Use of  
foreign  
words.**

borrowed freely from Sanskrit both directly as well as through the medium of the *prâkrits*. They have been borrowed also from other Dravidian languages. From the sixteenth century downwards, the literature contains a few Persian and Urdu words, but their number is extremely small. Telugu owes its largest debt to Sanskrit, so much so that it has come to be regarded as a *Vikṛiti* or corrupt form of Sanskrit. But for Sanskrit, Telugu could not have become a cultivated language, much less "the best of the vernaculars" of India. The two languages have been united in happy wedlock for centuries. It is not known when the union began. We know it became firmly established in the time of Nannayabhatta. True, Sanskrit has often dominated the partnership and eclipsed the weaker partner. This is especially the case in later *prabandha* literature. On the other hand, attempts have been made to do without Sanskrit, in the so-called "pure Telugu" books, but the only result of these attempts has been a wholesale manufacture of spurious *tadbhavas* or corruptions of Sanskrit words. The most sensible course would be to use the most appropriate word or expression that the context requires. There are models both of Sanskrit and of Telugu style in the literature. If a writer is inclined to use more Telugu than Sanskrit as Tikkanna

and Ketanna did, let him by all means do it, but he should guard himself against the use of provincialisms. It is true that a great writer can standardize provincialisms, but only great writers can do it.

The "Modern Telugu" school is never tired of declaiming against the influence of Sanskrit over Telugu. They talk as if Sanskrit has not only surcharged Telugu with its own vocabulary, but has also changed its grammar. This is entirely a mistake. The Telugu grammar is essentially Telugu. The passive voice is usually ascribed to Sanskrit influence. It may be so. Strict Telugu idiom does not require the passive voice and it is not much in evidence in Nannaya and Tikkana. It is met with in Errâpragada and subsequent writers, but not so as to obtrude on the attention of the reader. You find it most in prose—modern prose. It has certainly its own use. It is often a shorter way of expression than the active voice and is especially handy where you do not know or do not want to mention the agent of the action to be described. The formation of passive voice by the addition of the auxiliary verb *padu* or its equivalent meaning to suffer, is common to all Dravidian languages and is indigenous. But there is no doubt that its use was encouraged by Sanskrit Pandits who find it in abundant use in

**How far  
Sanskrit  
influenced  
Telugu  
Gram-  
mar.**

that language In Sanskrit, the use of passive voice is much easier than that of the active voice and it is almost exclusively used nowadays in conversation except, perhaps, by a scholar here and a scholar there who is thoroughly at home in the conjugation of the verb I know only of one scholar (in the Godavari District) who is a past master in the use of verbal forms

If the Sanskrit Pandit was responsible for the use of the passive voice at first, the English Pandit of to-day is much more so Passive voice is very freely used in English and when it has to be rendered into Telugu, it is felt easier to use the same voice This very often makes the translation unidiomatic. In the use of passive voice, the English language, Mr Lounsbury says, "has gone far beyond any other cultivated modern language" Lavish use of the passive voice in Telugu would certainly be unidiomatic and repugnant to the genius of the language, but there is no doubt that the form is quite handy sometimes

**How far  
foreign  
words  
may be  
borrowed**

Wholesale borrowing of Sanskrit words and compounds is objectionable and very few defend it But it is as impossible for Telugu to be independent of Sanskrit as it would be for English to cast off Latin words. Such a pro-

posal comes with a peculiarly bad grace from persons who would leave the door open for the inrush of foreign words. As regards the use of foreign words, there is nothing to prevent it, when it is *really* necessary. Some languages are more prone to borrow than others. The need for borrowing words comes in when new meanings have to be expressed and there are no ready-made words to do so. There are three ways of meeting this new demand. One is by forming derivative and compound words from existing words. Another is by attaching new meanings to old words. And the third is by borrowing foreign words along with the meaning. The first two methods are preferable to the third. The best method of enriching a language is by stimulating its latent capacity for word-formation. It is only when this is not practicable that words should be borrowed from other languages. Some languages have greater capacity for word-formation than others. English, for instance, has not much of it. It has "divested itself" of it along with the accidence and it is consequently obliged to borrow scientific words from Latin and Greek. The German language which retains its inflectional character is more independent of the classical languages. It tries to meet the demand for scientific terms by coining its own words.

Telugu cannot be said to possess the capacity for word-formation to a large degree, though it is, in this respect, better than English and its capacity is capable of improvement on the lines of Tamil. But it has always at its service, the inexhaustible store of Sanskrit vocabulary and the immense capacity of that language to form new words. It may be said that Sanskrit also is a foreign language to Telugu. It is not so. It is nearer to Telugu than Latin and Greek are to English. Sanskrit and Telugu have been united from time immemorial and it is foolish and useless to try to separate them. The Sanskrit language contains a great deal of scientific literature which, if carefully explored, will, I have no doubt, yield many ready-made words which can be made use of to convey many of the modern scientific ideas. The Nâgari Prachârini Sabha of Benares has issued a small glossary of Hindi scientific terms—which are mostly Sanskrit. It seems that similar glossaries are under preparation in Maharati and Bengali. The Telugu Academy has, for one of its objects, the preparation of a similar glossary for Telugu. There can be no doubt that a very decent glossary can be got up by the efforts of all these agencies. Where ready-made words are not available, suitable words can be coined in Sanskrit. Of course, they should not be too long or far-fetched in

meaning Jaw-breaking compounds should be eschewed

If these methods fail, foreign words can be borrowed, but the indiscriminate and wholesale importation of foreign words whose sounds can never be assimilated with Telugu is to be condemned. There is no necessity for or reason in importing, for instance, such words as angle, point and figure which cannot be even transliterated into Telugu. And yet, this is what has been done recently in an arithmetical book intended for Primary school boys and girls.

Some of our "Modern Telugu" scholars are fond of quoting Bengali as an example for borrowing foreign words as well as for popularizing style and language. Modern Bengali literature has elicited encomiums from more than one English scholar. It has produced its Milton in Michael Madhusudan Dutt and its Shakespeare in Ravindranadh Tagore and it is but a few days ago that the highest authority in the land described the latter as the "poet laureate of Asia." Let us enquire into the character of the language in which these great poets have written. Mr Ramamurti has quoted Dr. Grierson to say that the modern Bengali language contains nearly 88 per cent. Sanskrit words. Judged by the standard of

The  
example  
of  
Bengali

Messrs. Ramamurti and Srinivasa Aiyengar, modern Bengali must be hopelessly pandit-ridden and utterly unworthy of decent literature.

The report of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat published in 1905 shows that the Bengalis are not the wholesale importers of foreign words they are represented to be. Therein we are informed that lists of technical terms for use in scientific literature were being prepared. "Pure Sanskrit words have been borrowed from the scientific literature of ancient India, with occasional changes of connotation to adapt them to modern scientific ideas. *Where Sanskrit literature offers no help, either new words have been coined or attempt has been made to naturalize foreign words by assimilating them by slight alterations to the genius of the Bengali language*" (The italics are mine)

The following extract from a letter recently addressed by the President of the Parishat to the Government of Bengal in connection with the scheme of study of the Bengali language, drawn up by the Dacca University Committee, shows that the Bengalis are no iconoclasts in linguistic matters and that they are as jealous of the purity of their literary dialect as any people.

“The language of literature of the province should be one and the same and suitable for all communities, irrespective of religious and territorial differences. The colloquial dialects may vary according to localities, peculiarities of habits and formation of the organs of utterance and not unfrequently courses (?) of religious beliefs and practices, but the Committee of the Association begs to draw the attention of the Government to *the necessity of a common language of literature of the entire province*. The Committee would gladly invite the importation of words and expressions in the language of literature of Bengal, which would tend to enrich it, notwithstanding that they are of Persian or Arabic origin and used until now by the Mahommedans only, *but it strongly deprecates the idea of forcing into the language words and modes of expression which may not be capable of easy assimilation with the language as formed in the course of centuries, or any violent departure from the style in which the admittedly classical books in the language have been written*. The Committee is of opinion that the only models of style which ought to be set to the student of Bengali literature should be the works of acknowledged merit and not written to order, which are not up to the accepted standard of style and which have yet to find a place in literature”\* (Here again the italics are mine)

Browne's Reader and *Kāsiyātracharitra* which the “Modern Telugu” school has induced the School Leaving Certificate Board to prescribe as models of composition, behind the back of the Telugu world, are books “written

**The text-books of the “Modern” school are not literature.**

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\* Published in the “*Hindu*” of 28th March, 1913

to order" and have never pretended to be literature. The former was picked up in the colloquial records of the Oriental Manuscripts Library and published for the use of junior civilians at a time when no suitable Telugu prose books existed. It is out of use now. The other book was a colloquial record of the travels of a pious Brahmin whom Mr Ramamurti calls "learned," but who never aspired to that distinction. No doubt, he occasionally rises above himself, but he never pretended to write in correct style. The book has been dormant since its publication years ago and it owes its resuscitation to the necessity to which the colloquialists are driven to find text-books for their school.

If there is a genuine desire in any quarter to introduce a change in the literary language, the most straight-forward course would be to write books in that language and offer them for public criticism and approval. For, after all, it is for the Telugu people to decide what the form of literary Telugu should be. The "Modern Telugu" School has done nothing of the sort and can claim no book which can, in any real sense of the term, be called literature. Instead of proceeding in the proper way, this school is adopting the extraordinary course of seeking the sanction of Government, through the School Leav-

ing Certificate Board, for a thing which it has not proved and which it ought to know is repugnant to the Telugu world.

One of the arguments of the advocates of "Modern Telugu" is that, though the literary dialect may be studied by those who wish to make a special study of literature, both the literature and the literary dialect are useless to the majority of the students and that, at any rate, books on science, etc., should be written in colloquial dialects. The following extract from Circular No 753 of the Board of Education, London, ought to be a complete answer to this contention

**The need for the cultivation of literary dialect.**

"It would only be wasting words to refute the view that knowledge of English in any real sense of the term will be 'picked up' naturally, that, though systematic instruction is necessary in such subjects as mathematics or foreign languages, the mother-tongue may safely be left to the occasional direction and influence of home, or to the rare chance of spontaneous liking for its study.

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Without training in the use of language, literature cannot be fully understood or properly appreciated. Without the study of literature, there can be no mastery over language, it will not only be loose, incorrect and

awkward, but will also be insufficient for the demands of life. The want of mastery over language resulting from the absence of training in expression, is among the most serious drawbacks with which those who are engaged in scientific pursuits or practical occupation have to contend, and which hamper them in the very subjects in which they are most interested and most proficient. Literature supplies the enlarged vocabulary which is the mechanism of enlarged thought, and for want of which people fall helplessly back on slang, the base coin of language. Pure English is not merely an accomplishment, but an index to and a formative influence over character."

The serious drawbacks of neglect of the mother-tongue are nowhere more in evidence than among the Telugu people who have received an English education. During their student life, their energies are mostly devoted to learning English and the non-language subjects and very little attention is paid to Telugu which they find it easy to scrape through, thanks to the system of examinations. The average graduate is, consequently, more "at home" in English than in Telugu and when he has to speak in the latter (which he tries to avoid), he lards his sentences liberally with English words, phrases and even clauses.

This state of things is, perhaps, in no small degree responsible for the demand for the supersession of the literary by the colloquial dialects and the free introduction of foreign words, but it is a sign of the dawn of better times for Telugu, that this desire is confined to an infinitesimal number of persons and that the vast bulk of the people whether knowing or not knowing English, are opposed to it. Many English-knowing people have, within the last few years, come to realize what they owe to their mother-tongue and are trying to discharge the debt by organized effort culminating so far in the establishment of the Telugu Academy, the latest and, in its possibilities, the greatest form of this effort. It behoves all interested in Telugu literature to encourage these efforts and not to thwart them.

It would scarcely have been necessary to point out that the science of phonetics does not sanction colloquialism, had it not been for the fact that that science is sometimes improperly pressed into service by the advocates of colloquial Telugu. Their argument, briefly stated, comes to this, *viz*, that the science of phonetics shows that spoken language changes from time to time, that these changes are all amenable to certain well-defined laws, that one set of sounds is as much governed by these laws

**Phonetics  
and  
Collo-  
quialism**

as another and that it is, therefore, unscientific to make, a distinction between "refined" and "vulgar" sounds or between "literary" and "colloquial" language. That spoken language changes rapidly can be admitted without the evidence of the science of phonetics. It is this very characteristic of changeability that is the strongest objection to the use of colloquial language for literary purposes. Phonetics deals with the changes which the sound values of words have undergone and traces them to certain general laws. It deals with all the sounds in a language and makes no distinction between the "vulgar" and the "refined" or between the "colloquial" and the "literary". It has, perhaps, more to do with the vulgar and colloquial sounds because they change more than the refined and literary sounds. In its methods, phonetics may be compared to psychology and history. Psychology investigates states of mind and reduces them to certain general laws. All states of mind are equally welcome to it. They are the material with which it deals. It does not classify these states of mind into good and bad, or moral and immoral. It does not commend certain states of mind and condemn others. To do so is the province of ethics and not of psychology. In like manner, history deals with all events irrespective of their being good or bad. It

records crime with the same impartiality as meritorious deeds and events which have produced great evils as well as events which have contributed to general good. It is the function of the historian to truly and impartially record whatever he sees. It is the function of the politician and of the law-giver to decide which tendencies are good and which are bad, which should be encouraged and which suppressed. In the same way, it is the function of the science of phonetics to deal impartially with all the sounds which it finds in a language and trace the changes which they have undergone. It is the function of *grammar* to say which of the sounds are "correct" and which are "incorrect," which are "vulgar" and which are "refined." To argue that there should be no grammar because there is the science of phonetics would be as absurd and unscientific as to argue that there should be no ethics because there is psychology or that there should be no politics and no law because there is history. The chemist investigates the properties of all colouring matters and of all drugs. It is for the painter to decide which colour should be used to produce a given effect and it is for the physician to decide which drug should be used to cure a given disease. To the chemist, poisons are neither worse nor better than non-poisonous drugs. But a physician would not be justified in using the two kinds

of drugs indiscriminately So, the distinction of words into colloquial and literary is a feature of grammar and it is absurd to argue that grammar should not make that distinction because it is unknown to phonetics

Far from prohibiting the distinction of language into vulgar and refined, phonetics may be said to help it, for, the chief *practical advantage* of a phonetic training is to enable one to distinguish between sounds which are vulgar and incorrect from those which are refined and correct In this view, phonetics becomes an auxiliary to grammar and it has been so treated by Sanskrit and Telugu grammarians Grammar itself is based on the usage of standard authors and it is this usage and not phonetics that should decide what is correct and what is not correct in language

**Conclu  
sion.**

The proper thing to do to “simplify and modernize” literary Telugu is, as far as possible, to avoid the archaic and less usual forms and words and to use words and forms which are more familiar *and grammatical*, to avoid Sandhi in prose wherever that course is necessary to secure clearness of expression and to use foreign words when it is necessary to do so Treated in this manner, literary Telugu is quite intelligible to the people and capable of meeting all the requirements of modern litera-

ture It is being so used now. Great indeed must be the capacity of the language into which could be rendered the great epic of *Mahabharatam* of which it is said "what is not here is not worth knowing" There are hundreds of persons wielding this language for literary purposes There is not a decent High School which does not contain half a dozen boys who can compose Telugu verses and the number outside schools is greater The number of the "Sarasvati" Journal for December 1911 was devoted to the publication of verses composed in honor of the Delhi Durbar It contained the verses of more than a hundred persons some of whom were women This is but a small portion of the number of versifiers in the country Then, we have several extempore poets whose performances are appreciated and amply rewarded by all classes—from the prince to the peasant To say that a language which could be used with such facility, is unintelligible to the people, can only be due to prejudice.

The propaganda of the "Modern" school goes very much beyond the necessities of the case It is ill-conceived, revolutionary and contrary to the law of the orderly development of languages It is admittedly based on the view of those who have no sympathy for "grammatical and linguistic tradition" and

is vitiated by fallacies and false analogies It is hated by the people for whose benefit it is alleged to be put forth In the press, on the platform and by memorials, the people have condemned it in no uncertain terms It is professed but by a handful of persons who have no more right to speak for the Telugu people than the Three Tailors of Tooley Street had to speak in the name of the people of England In fact, these "reformers" have come not to fulfil but to destroy and they have thereby put themselves out of Court

**Conclu-  
sion.**

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## POSTSCRIPT

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Since this pamphlet was printed, I have had my attention drawn to an "Essay on the language and literature of the Telugus" which was contributed by the late Mr C. P Brown of the then Madras Civil Service to Volume X of the Madras Journal of Literature and Science, 1st Series. I extract the following portions of the Essay as generally bearing out the views expressed in this pamphlet. Mr. Brown's opinions are valuable as proceeding, not from a Telugu Pandit, but from a cultured Englishman who had no reason to be prepossessed in favour of literary Telugu but who took pains to cultivate a knowledge of the Telugu language and literature. That Mr Brown was not a blind admirer of everything he found in Telugu literature, will be evident from his unmeasured condemnation of the pedantry of some of the Kāvyaṃs and of "Nonsensical refinements" by which he meant the strict observance of the rules of Sandhi and the use of the letters ె (Sakatarepha) and ె (Ardhānusvāra). He wrote long before the birth of Modern Telugu prose.

**The late  
Mr C. P.  
Brown on  
Literary  
Telugu**

The following extracts speak for themselves.—

(The italics are mine except those in paragraph 13)

“ 10 When we first read their poems we are led to suppose that the dialect used is entirely different from that we daily speak and write. But a little advance in knowledge will show us that *the polished dialect of Telugu used in poets deviates no more from the spoken dialect than the language of Milton, Pope and Byron differs from the English we speak and write*. My attention was first called to this fact from observing, many years ago, that a well-educated Telugu, fluent in colloquial English, was wholly unable to read a page of Marmion. Now the Bhâskara Satacam, a common school book, written in flowing verse, and easily understood by boys and girls is parallel in style to the writings of Walter Scott, or Sadi in Persian, yet, perhaps, the reader of this page never met with three Englishmen who had read that easy school book. *Let us not then call poetical Telugu difficult merely because we have not studied it*”

This admonition was addressed to a foreigner trying to learn Telugu. What should be said to an educated Telugu man complaining that literary Telugu is archaic, obsolete and unintelligible.

“ 11 From the harmony of this language some have called it the Italian of India doubtless in the poems and in the pronunciation of retired villages, it is very melodious but like Italian it has many a rough and course dialect and *the Telugu used in our Courts of Justice is a strange*

*jargon in which English and Persian phrases are thickly interspersed, forming a jumble that may be difficult to an Englishman who otherwise may be a good proficient in the language. In another very important respect it resembles Italian for no part of the language, not even in the oldest poems, has become obsolete. And to a beginner we could not recommend an easier volume than the Prabhulinga Lila, which is supposed to be about seven hundred years old. Some attribute it to a more remote age but it certainly was written before the Muhammedans invaded the country."*

"13 If we wish to learn the language completely, to have any degree of ease in speaking or accuracy in writing, we must devote some time and labour to reading a few of the easiest and most popular poems"

Among which, he includes Vemana, Sāran-gadhara (dvīpada) Vijayavilāsam and Aniruddha Charitra, all of which are Latin and Greek to the "Modern Telugu" Scholar! Speaking of the standard poem Ranganādha Rāmāyana, Mr. Brown states as follows —

"The Rāmāyana is more generally in vogue than any other sacred legend, and has been repeatedly translated into Telugu. The version written in couplets (dvīpada) by Ranganādha is an especial favourite and when we see circles of Hindus passing the evening sitting in the moonlight to hear a volume chanted and explained for their

amusement we shall generally find it is this 'tale divine' "

This book "though remarkably easy in style ranks as a (Kāvya) standard classic So clear and flowing is the verse that several good judges consider it even more easy than Vēmana or the Prabhulinga Līla which, however, are far more attractive to the English reader."

In the opinion of Mr Brown "the Telugu version of the Mahabharat also enjoys a deserved popularity as the great standard of the language indeed the verse flows as pure and sweet as that of Pope or Dryden in their happiest translations."











