

INDIAN LITERATURE

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INDIAN LITERATURE

[Short Critical Surveys of 12 Major
Indian Languages and Literatures]

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THE BASIC UNITY OF INDIAN LITERATURES

India is a vast country of many languages : Panjabi, Hindi and Urdu in the North-West; Oriya, Bengali and Assamese in the East; Marathi and Gujarati in the Central-Western regions and Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam in the South. There are, besides, several other languages which are as significant both from the literary and the philological points of view—for example, Kashmiri, Dogari, Sindhi, Konkani and Turu etc. Each one of them—especially each one of the former twelve languages, has its own treasure of literature which is extremely valuable from the point of view of literary quality, variety, volume, as well as antiquity. If we were to amass at one place the literary wealth of only the modern Indian languages, it will be as vast as the entire literature of Europe collected together : with the treasures of Vedic Sanskrit, Sanskrit, Pali, the Prakrits and the Apabhramshas superadded, the volume transcends our imagination—an ocean of Knowledge surges before us deeper than the Indian Ocean, vaster than the geographical dimensions of India, loftier than the summits of the Himalayas and subtler than the conception of the Spirit. Each literature has a sharp individuality stamped with the characteristics of its own region. The regions of Panjabi and Sindhi and of Hindi and Urdu are so mixed up, yet their individual character cannot be mistaken. The social and cultural life of the Maharashtrians and the Gujaratis is so common, yet can these two literatures be confused ? Similarly, the four South Indian languages come from the same stock—they are all Dravidian languages, yet can there be any mistake between Tamil and Kannada or between Telugu and Malayalam ? The same is the case with the languages of Eastern India : Oriya and Assamese are deep-laden with Bengali, yet they have fully absorbed

ment. For these and other reasons the political conditions in the various linguistic states of India have been quite similar.

The cultural unity of the country has been still greater and more deep-rooted. During the past thousand years, India has seen many a religious and cultural movement which swept over her entire geographical dimensions. After the disintegration of Buddhism, an interfusion of some of its sects with those of Shaivism and Shaktism gave birth to the Nath cult which was spread over the whole country near about 1000 A.D.—upto Tibet in the North, in the regions of Eastern Ghats in the South, in Maharashtra in the West and almost everywhere in the East. Although they laid greater emphasis on Yoga, yet the intellectual and emotional aspects of religion were not neglected by these sects of mendicants who comprised the Naths, the Siddhas and the Shaivites—all, in their fold; and a number of them adopted the medium of poetry for self-expression and for the propagation of their beliefs. Thus, almost in every part of India, these hermits contributed to the growth of the majority of modern Indian languages in their earlier stages. They were succeeded by the Saint poets and the Muslim Sufis who influenced the social and religious life of India on a very wide scale. The Saint poets derived their inspiration from Vedanta—they practised and propagated a cult of devotion to the Absolute God. The Sufis also believed in an Absolute God but their medium of communion was love : although their stronghold was in the North-West India and in the Eastern regions, yet in the Bahmani State and in Bijapur and Golkunda as well, they had their centres and many a Sufi saint came from the South. Thereafter, started the Vaishnava movement which swept over the whole country with great velocity. Several forms of worship of Ram and Krishna with all their delicacies enchanted the devout and the whole atmosphere resounded with the music of devotional songs. The Muslim culture was also shedding its influence : the elements of the Iranian civilization with its love of luxuriance and ornament were being rapidly absorbed in the Indian pattern of life and a new court culture was evolving. Its richness was, however, soon lost in the general political and economic depression leaving a kind of sickly eroticism in its

wake. Then came the Western traders who brought with them Western manners and customs and who were quietly followed by Christian missionaries. In the later half of the 19th century, the British Empire had been established in India and the ruling class started propagating in a planned manner their civilization and culture and indirectly their religion also. This direct contact and conflict between the East and the West gave birth to modern India.

Now, take the literary background. Although all the languages of India do not belong to the same stock, yet their literary inheritance is common. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Puranas, the Bhagvata, classical Sanskrit literature, *i.e.*, the works of Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, Bana, Sri Harsha, Amaruka and Jaideva etc., the Buddhist and Jain literature in Pali, Prakrita and Apabhramsha—all this wealth has been inherited by all our languages alike. In philosophy, the Upanishads, the six schools of philosophy, the Smritis and in poetics many a classic such as the Natyashastra, the Dhwanyaloka, the Kavyaprakasha, the Sahityadarpana and the Rasagangadhara etc., have directly or indirectly influenced the thought-content of the Indian writer in every language. These have been really the perennial sources of inspiration for all the Indian literatures and their influence has gone a long way in bringing the Indian literatures together. Thus, there is an inherent unity in the Indian literature as a whole which has flourished against a common socio-political, cultural and literary background ever since its birth.

An investigation into these common features will bear fruitful results.

The first trend which is common to most of our major languages is the Nath literature. The Nath and the Shaivite mendicants have made a valuable contribution to the development of the earlier phases of most of our literatures. Obviously, there was much greater activity in this field in the North-West and the East than in the South. In the South, Shaivism, of course, was very popular, but the attitude of the Shaivite poets there was more emotional than metaphysical or mystical. The abnormal Yogic practices influenced by Shaivite philosophy were not quite in vogue there—a purely

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devotional attitude towards Shiva prevailed. The Nayanmars of Tamil, the Palkuriki poets and their successors in Telugu and the leaders of the Vira-Shaiva cult like Basaveswara and others in Kannada were different in spirit from the Nath and the Siddha poets of the North : the Southern poets were pure devotees whereas those in the North were mystics engaged in abnormal practices. Yet the influence of the Nath cult had infiltrated far in the South as is borne out by works like the Navanath-charitram of Telugu. In Bengali and in Marathi, the Nath school of poetry was a great force. In Marathi, Gorakhnath himself wrote his book 'Amarnath-Sanvad': another major Nath poet of Marathi was Gaininath. Bengal, of course, was the stronghold of the Nath cult : the Nath literature is obviously the richest in Bengali both in quality as well as in quantity; the literary creations under the inspiration of the Sahajiya cult and the semi-philosophical songs—the Charyageet—were also mixed up with it. In the Assamese and the Oriya languages, there was hardly any sustained literary activity in this line although the impact of the Nath movement was unmistakable on both. The second citadel of the Nath cult was the Panjab. Whereas in Bengal it flourished in communion with the Buddhist movement, in the Panjab it was deeply influenced by Islam in general and by Sufism in particular. The historians of Panjabi literature trace their beginning in the writings of Gorakhnath and Charpat Nath. Some of their contemporary Muslim mendicants, like Farid and others, also contributed to its growth. The authors of this peculiar class of Panjabi literature were called Gurus, Naths, Siddhas, Pirs and Babas. This same stream flowed into Hindi as well—perhaps deeply coloured by Panjabi : actually it is today difficult to distinguish between the Hindi and the Panjabi of that age. A number of verse and prose compositions of the Nath hermits are available in Hindi. Thus there is a widespread current of the Nath literature flowing through most of the major languages of India.

The second main trend in the earliest literature of modern Indian languages is the heroic poetry—and this also is a common trend. Heroic poetry in Tamil had its beginnings in the Sangam Era (500 B.C.—200 B.C.). Some of the narratives in the 'Patithup-

pattu' are valuable specimens of heroic-cum-bardic poetry. For example, the 'Porunaratrappadai' or 'The Story of the Commander' was written in the glory of the king of Karaikala. The poet sings here of the fertility and the industrial as well as agricultural resources of the Chola State constantly fed by the everflowing streams of the Kaveri as also of the wisdom and valour of the ruler. The fourth narrative 'Perumpanatrappadai' sings of the ruler of Kanchi and the 'Padhitruppathu' is a collection of eulogies of the kings of Chera dynasty by several poets. The famous epic of the Sangam Era—the Silappadhikaram—also is a work of heroic poetry. The author was the son of the Chera Emperor and he had become a mendicant in his later life. The popular heroic poem—the 'Palnati Vir Charitram' of Telugu—is a remarkable specimen of this kind of poetry. Written in popular speech, this poem narrates in a forceful and elevated style the glorious achievements of the heroes of Palnad (Guntur). The earliest poetic collection in Malayalam—the 'Pajaya Pattukal'—contains many heroic ballads; Percy McQueen has collected a large number of bardic folk-songs written in old Malayalam. The medieval heroic narratives of Marathi and the 'Pawaras' (a ballad form of heroic poetry) also fall within this category. These bards have sung of the glorious deeds of their patron-rulers and heroes. Some of the earlier Gujarati poems like the 'Ranamalla-chanda' by Shridhar and the 'Kanhad-de Prabandh' by Padmanabha are invaluable treasures of Indian heroic poetry. In Panjabi, Guru Govind Singh has composed some immortal heroic poems, but his 'Chandi-Kavya' and other works don't really belong to this category of heroic poetry, which is, as I have hinted above, more or less bardic in character. The later poets of Panjabi did write in praise of the Sikh heroes and martyrs a number of bardic poems which are scattered here and there. In Hindi, an entire period is called the 'Heroic' or the 'Bardic Age': such poetry was written in Hindi not only in the first half but also in the later half of the medieval ages. The 'Prithviraj-Raso' and a number of other Raso-works written before or after and the heroical ballads like the 'Alha-khand' in the earlier period and the works of Bhushan and Sudan etc. in the later period occupy a place of honour in the history of heroic poetry of

our country. They have their counterparts in Urdu also where poets like Anis and Dabir made a handsome contribution in their own way.

Mystic Poetry is another major tendency of our literature and there have been mystic poets of very much similar character in almost all the languages of our country. The 'Eighteen Siddhars' of Tamil were saints who wrote mystic poetry in simple language. In Telugu, we have Vemana and Virabrahmam and in Kannada Sarvajna and others, who are all major poets of this school. The mystics of Marathi are, of course, very well-known. Saint Jnandeva and his follower Namdeva of the Mahanubhava cult, many a saint of the Warkari Panth and the great Eknath etc., have written philosophical poetry of a high order under the inspiration of Vedanta. This creative activity continued for centuries and Marathi language possesses an enormous treasure of mystic poetry rich both in quantity as well as quality. In Gujarati, the writings of Akho in the 17th century and of several other saint poets like Sahajanand, Pritam Das etc. are equally mystical in character. These poets raised their voice against the orthodox Vaishnava sects—specially against the luxurious religious practices prevalent in the Vallabha sect which was so popular in Gujarat and stressed the efficacy of simple and pure life and of genuine love for God and for humanity. The Baul songs of Bengali were also written in the same vein : they occupied a prominent position in the literary history of Bengal in the 17th and 18th centuries. They expressed the common religious beliefs of the Hindus and the Muslims in simple and natural language. Their authors were saint poets who lived in villages or nearabout—away from the pleasures of life : they had renounced the World and had drunk deep at the fountain of Divine Love. The Kangha poet Bhimabhai revived this trend in Oriya in the 19th century. On the whole, however, the Mystic School of Poetry gained maximum momentum in the North-Western languages—in Hindi, Panjabi and Urdu. Constantly enriched for centuries by great seers and poets like Nanak Deva and other illustrious Sikh Gurus as also by a large number of saint-poets—both Hindus and Muslims—Panjabi contains a vast treasure of such poetry. Similarly, the mystic school in Hindi is well represented by Kabir, Nanak,

Dadu, Sundardas and many others : the stream flowed clear and massive from the beginning of the 15th right upto the 19th century. The Urdu poets also, writing under the influence of Sufism, made their own contribution which is adequate in quantity and rich in quality : really speaking the two trends of medieval poetry that Urdu shares fully with other modern Indian languages are the mystical lyrics and the philosophical romances.

We now come to the long chain of romances which is also spread over the entire range of Indian literatures. It is a matter of pleasant surprise that themes of these romances in almost all the languages of the country are so very similar : almost the same legends have been poeticized in different languages with some local variations. The romances in Telugu like the 'Rajasekhara-Vilasam', 'Prabhavati-Pradyumnam', 'Kalapurnodayam', 'Chandramatiparinayam', 'Rasikjanmanobhiramam' and 'Chandralekhavilasam' are rich in poetry and also in theme. The series of romances in Gujarati are still richer. In old Gujarati, Asayat wrote 'Hansawali' in 1371 A.D., Bhim wrote 'Sadayavatsa-Katha' in 1410 A. D. and Hiranand's romance 'Vidyavilasini' was written two decades later. In the 16th century A. D. such poems became all the more popular and a number of high-class poetic romances such as 'Nandbattisi' of Narpati, 'Madhavanal-kamkandala' dogdhak (1528 A. D.) of Ganpati, 'Hansavati-Vikramcharit-vivah' (1560 A. D.) of Madhusudan Vyas, 'Dholamaru-chaupai' (1561 A. D.) of Kushal-Labh and 'Rupchandra-kunwar Rasa' (1581 A. D.) were composed within less than half a century. In the eighteenth century Samala made valuable contribution by adding to this series Padmavati (1718 A.D.), 'Sudabahoteri' (1765A.D.), 'Vinechand-ni-barta and Madana-Mohana' etc. In Bengali, the poetic romance centred round the love-story of Vidya Sundar and several poets headed by Bharat Chandra wrote poetic narratives based on this self-same theme. About a century earlier, some Sufi poets had adopted the themes of Hindu life for their mystical romances : Syed Alaol of the court of Arakan had translated into Bengali Jayasi's famous classic—the Padmavat—which served as a source of inspiration to many works of this type. This current was all the more powerful in the languages of the North-

West and there are long series of romances in Panjabi and Hindi. The major romances in Panjabi are :

Yusuf-Julekha	Gopi Chand
Sassi-Punnu	Chandarbhaga
Hir-Ranjha	Sinhasan-battisi
Dhol-Sammi	Betal Pachchisi
Shirin Farhad	Sorath Vija
Laila Majnu	Padmani
Rup Basant	Salbahan
Gul Sanobar	Urvashi
Kamrup-Kamlata	Tilottama
Bahram Gor	Ukha
Chandarbadan Mear	Bharathari
Hatim-Tai	Devayani
Puranbhat Sundaran	Bajmati
Nal Damayanti	Mrigawati
Rasalu Kokila	Sakhi Sarwar
Sefulmuluk	Sohani Mahiwal
Mirja Sahiban	Rora-Jalali
Khera-Sammi	Suleman Balkis
Gugga	Chitrawali

Of these, the Hir of Waris Shah is the richest—both in poetic quality and in romantic luxuriance. A number of other poets also—Damodar and Mukbil before him and Hamid, Abdul Hakim, Mohammad Muslim, Budha Singh, Ahmad Yar, Hasan and others after him wrote romances of a higher order and each one of them has its own merit. In Hindi, such poetry is still richer in quality as well as in quantity. About fifty poetic romances have already been discovered in Hindi and I am sure there are many more scattered about. Here, the Padmavat of Jayasi tops the list, of course, it may perhaps claim the highest rank among the romances of the Indian languages : in the art of plot-structure and in the richness of pathos, it excels even the Hir of Waris Shah. Of the rest, 'Madhumalti', 'Chitravali', 'Gyandeep', 'Hans-Jawahir', 'Anurag-bansuri', 'Dholamaru-ra-doha', 'Beli Krisna-rukmini-ri', 'Ras-Ratan', the four versions of 'Madhavanal-Kamkandala', 'Rupmanjari', 'Bisaldev-Raso', 'Prem-

Payonidhi', 'Puhupavati' and 'Nal-Daman' deserve special mention. In Urdu also, there is a series of romances—*masanavis* as they are called—which deal with spiritual or sensual love. They were written primarily by the poets of the South right from the beginning of the 17th century—Mulla Wajahi wrote *Kutub-Mushtari* in 1609 A.D., Ghabbasi wrote 'Saifulmuluk aur Badi-ul-Jamal' and 'Tutinama' (1639) based on *Shuk-Saptati* and Mir Taqi and Mirza Shauq made handsome contributions. They were followed by 'Phulban' of Ibn Nishati, 'Man Lagan' of Bahari and 'Ratan-o-Padam' of Wali Vellori. The Urdu poets in the North also tried their hand at romances. But quite often their tone was different. In place of the simple joys and sorrows of love of popular Indian life, the northern poets brought in Persian sophistication and their romances were essentially ornate and classical or pseudo-classical in character : the *masanavis* of Mir Hasan and Daya Shankar 'Naseem' possess all these traits. Thus, we find a chain of romances of very much similar themes spread throughout India from Multan to Andhra and from Gujarat to Bengal.

The most powerful trend of Indian literature is, however, the Vaishnava poetry which dominates almost all the major languages of the country. Devotion is a vital element in Indian religion and as such there has been a vast treasure of devotional literature in almost all our languages from the very beginning. This element is still richer in the languages of the South where devotional writing began much earlier also. In Tamil the famous collection of the devotional songs is the 'Nalayirappirabandham' which consists of 4000 songs written by twelve Alwar devotees. Of these Thirumangai Alwar and Nammalwar possibly wrote the largest number of songs and poetess Andal was distinguished for the intensity of her emotion. In the later Medieval Age (1200-1750 A. D.) Pillaipperumal Ayyangar was a great Vaishnava poet whose 'Ashta-Pirabandhnam' is a remarkable work of Vaishnava poetry. In Telugu both the branches of Vaishnavism namely the Rama cult and the Krishna cult inspired great poetry—there are more than 150 long poems based on the story of Rama. The well-known musician and poet Tyagaraja has dedicated all his compositions to Rama. The ear-

liest Ramayana in Telugu is the Ranganatha Ramayana which was written in the later half of the 13th century; the Bhaskara Ramayana and the Ramayana by Buddha Reddi also are equally important. Later on Kummari Molla wrote the famous Ramayanam which is not only large in volume, but is also very popular in Andhra on account of its poetic merit, simple style and charming descriptions. The most outstanding work of the Krishnaites is the 'Bhagwatam' by Bammara Potana which is not inferior to its original in Sanskrit in poetic richness although it is primarily based on the same work. In the Prabandha Period (1500-1750 A.D.) the 'Parijatapaharanam' of Timmana was a rare achievement. In the Telugu literature of Madura the 'Satyabhama-santwanam' and the 'Radhika-santwanam,' which was written much later by poetess Muddupalni in the decadent age, are lovely poems of the Krishna cult. In Kannada, Vaishnava literature covers one full era—the third era in the history of earlier Kannada literature is called the Vaishnava Era. Although some of the earlier epics of Kannada are based on the life-stories of Rama and Krishna, yet they don't come within the category of Vaishnava poetry. Real Vaishnava poetry is found in the countless prayerful songs of poets like Purandara Das and Kanaka Das who belonged to the 17th century A.D. These songs exercise a vital influence on the cultural life of Karnatak even today by virtue of their rich emotional content and popular lyrical style. The Ramayana and the Bhagwata were also translated into Kannada by several devout poets in this era. The first available work of Vaishnava literature in Malayalam is the 'Krishna-Gatha' of the 15th century. This poem deals with the whole life of Krishna—there are in all 47 episodes which depict all the phases of Krishna's romantic life in a charming manner without ever losing their poetic fervour. Although normally, the poet has delineated all the sentiments with success, yet he excels in the portrayal of love—erotic as well as maternal. The 'Krishna Gatha' was followed by 'Bhasa-Bhagwatam', 'Harinam-Kirtanam' and a number of dramatised versions of Krishna's life like the 'Krishna-nattam' and others. The tradition of Rama-Kavya in Malayalam was even earlier : the 'Ramacharitam' of the Tamil School and 'Kannassa Ramayanam' of the Niranam poets are remark-

able works on the subject. Yet the greatest achievement in the field is the 'Adhyatma-Ramayana' by Eluttaccan. Whereas Valmiki has portrayed Rama as a great man and a noble ruler, Eluttaccan has deified Him like Tulsidas and has offered prayers to Him with feelings of warm devotion. Of the various Champu-poems (mixed poems), the Ramayana-Champu is the best and among the dramatic poems, the 'Rama-nattam' occupies the highest position. In Marathi, Eknath wrote his short poetic narratives and devotional 'abhangas' under the direct influence of the Bhagwata cult and diffused an atmosphere of spiritual bliss over contemporary literature. After him, Vaishnavism found an extremely effective exponent in Tuka Ram whose songs (the abhangas) cast a spell all over the Maharashtra region. It was, however, on Gujarati and on the languages of the East, namely on Bengali, Assamese and Oriya that Vaishnavism showered its choicest blessings. Gujarati like its sister language Brajbhasha excels predominantly in Krishnaite poetry—its poets like Narsi Mehta, Bhalana, Nakara, Vishnu Das, Premananda and others occupy a prominent place in the galaxy of the Vaishnava poets of India—poets like Narsi, Bhalana and Premananda occupy the same rank as Chandi Das, Surdas and Nand Das. Their poetry is an invaluable album of the richest pen-pictures of colourful episodes of Krishna's life. One could pay as glowing tributes to the Krishna-Kavya of the Eastern languages—especially of Bengali.

Although a poet like Chandi Das had enriched Bengali literature before the advent of Chaitanya, yet after Chaitanya the movement gathered tremendous momentum and all the poets of Bengali—nay of Oriya and Assamese as well—were completely soaked in the 'Madhura Ras'. The poetic literature which was written during a century and a half after Chaitanya under his direct inspiration can be divided into two categories : (i) biographical, and (ii) lyrical. Of his contemporary lyricists who drew their inspiration from and followed Chaitanya, Murari Gupta, Narahari Sarkar, Vasudeva Ghosh and Ramananda Basu were chiefly notable and among the multitude of poets who flourished after them, Jnana Das, Govinda Das, Lochana Das, Balrama Das and Shekhara (Kavi Shekhara, Ray Shekhara) occupy a prominent position by virtue of the quan-

tity of their work. Then, there was the Vaishnava Sahajiya sect for which love was the means and the end both : although it sometimes looks like a branch of Vaishnavism, yet in reality it was a successor of the original Sahajiya sect. According to them, every man in his 'essential' personality is Krishna and so also every woman is Radha. The devotee has to realize in himself or herself Krishna or Radha first—and then through their union he or she can achieve the state of eternal love or eternal bliss. The poets of this sect have composed thousands of songs and written a large number of technical treatises on the subject. Thus the Vaishnava literature in Bengali was dominated by poets of the Krishna cult. Yet the contribution of the Ramaites was not quite insignificant : the Ramayana of Krittibas Ojha by itself is a work of rare merit. The major poets of the Ram cult in Assamese are Madhava Kandali, Shankar Deva and Madhava Deva who composed the Assamese Ramayana in the 14th-15th century A. D. The other work of Madhava Kandali—'Devajit'—bears evidence of his devotion to Krishna, wherein he sings of the superiority of Krishna over other incarnations of Vishnu. In the 15th century, Shankar Deva composed his 'Kirtans' and his disciple, Madhava Deva compiled and edited them under the title of 'Sanyukta-kirtan-ghosha' having added his own songs to it. This kind of song is called the 'Bargeet' which is a form peculiar to Assamese poetry. Generally, these songs cover all the aspects of Krishna's life, but their main theme is the childhood of Krishna and in this respect they can compare favourably with the compositions of Brajbhasha poets on the same subject. In Oriya also, the Krishna cult was equally popular and Oriya poetry was so deeply soaked in the 'Madhura Ras' of Chaitanya that the historians of Oriya literature today are not prepared to consider it as an unmixed gain. The main poets of this sect are Dinakrushna Das, Abhimanyu Samantashinhar, Kavisurya Baladeva, Bhaktacharan and Gopalkrishna who flourished between the 17th and 19th centuries of the Christian era. These poets have written passionate lyrics to express their devotional experiences and delineated the romantic events of Krishna's life in colourful language. Among the Ramaites, the greatest was Balrama Das whose Ramayana occupies a unique

position in Oriya literature. Urdu and Panjabi are, however, exceptions in this respect. Although in Urdu as well, one could name a few poets who have written about Rama and Krishna—not only the Hindus but also some of the Muslims like Nazir Akbarabadi have written poems of devotion to Krishna—yet such poetry is insignificant both in quantity as well as in quality and does not really agree with the spirit and genius of Urdu poetry as such. Similar is the case with Panjabi. The Panjab was first under the influence of Islam and then Sikhism, which believed in an Absolute God, became the popular religion there, with the result that not much scope was left for Vaishnavism. Although the great Sikh Guru Govind Singh himself has written on the life of Rama and Krishna, yet it lacks the true Vaishnava spirit. Among the languages of the North-West, Hindi, of course, possesses an immensely rich treasure of Vaishnava poetry. Poets of almost all the Krishnaite sects wrote profusely in Brajbhasha. Besides the poets of Vallabha Sampradaya, who had their stronghold in Braj, the poets of other sects also such as the Nimbarka, the Gaudiya and the Madhwa made valuable contributions. The Radha-Vallabh Sampradaya of Hita Harivansha and several other sects which based their philosophy primarily on Eros wrote passionate poetry on the erotic life of Radha and Krishna. The poets of the Ramaite cult had their stronghold in the regions of Oudh. The greatest Hindi poet in this field was, of course, Tulsidas who possessed a mighty genius and a universal poetic vision. From all points of view—devotional fervour, philosophical profundity and poetic wealth—Tulsidas reigns supreme. There are two major currents in Hindi Rama-kavya : one emphasises the moral aspects of life under the influence of Tulsidas and the other revels in the gaieties of life and depicts Rama as a romantic hero and although the first note is predominant by and large, the second also is not entirely insignificant. Thus, taken as a whole, the medieval Indian literature is dominated by Vaishnavism and within Vaishnava poetry itself the Krishnaites hold the field.

In this context, one is naturally reminded of the dramatic literature in Indian languages wherein the note of basic unity is still more remarkable. The folk-drama based on the life of Krishna

and several other legends of mythology was very popular in the medieval ages and existed in every language in one form or the other. The self-same folk-drama assumed the form of Yakshagana in Telugu and Kannada, Attaktha in Malayalam, Lalit in Marathi, Yatra in Bengali and other eastern languages and of Rasa in Gujarati and Hindi. Here it is not the similarity of the theme, but the similarity of the form and the style which is really amazing : in all these forms of the Indian folk-drama we come across the same luxuriance of lyrical element, the same lack of action, and the same religious or pseudo-religious motifs.

Hereafter begins the modern age in which the lines of development are all the more identical. In almost all the Indian languages, the modern age begins with the first struggle for India's freedom in 1857 or nearabout. The impact of Western civilization was felt in the South and in Bengal a little earlier than in the central and North-Western regions, but the dawn of the Modern Age in India is marked not so much by the contact as by the conflict with the Western civilization—in other words by the rise of political consciousness in India and as such the Modern Age in all the Indian languages covers more or less the same period. During these hundred years from 1857 to 1957 A. D., there are five clear phases of literary development : (a) renaissance (b) national-cultural awakening (c) romantic revival (d) socialistic consciousness under the influence of Marxian philosophy and (e) the dawn of Freedom. With some difference of time, all these trends can be easily discerned in the various literatures of modern India.

In Tamil, the leader of the Renaissance was Ramlinga Swamigal who made a successful effort through his writings to revive the glory of ancient Indian culture and evoke a broad outlook by emphasising the unity of the various castes and creeds. He was succeeded by Subramanya, Bharathi who was a mighty exponent of Indian nationalism in all its aspects—social, political and cultural. Chidambaram Pillai and V. V. S. Iyer who were active patriots of those days added vigour to the growing nationalist forces in Tamil literature. Although Tamil literature has always attached great value to tradition, yet herein too, the Communist movement did

cast its spell and poets like Bharathidasan have expressed in quite sharp tones the feelings of popular emancipation. The leader of the Renaissance movement in Telugu was Viresalingam : his contribution which is large in volume and varied in form, is in essence inspired by the new cultural awakening in the country to which he made a handsome contribution in his own way. G. V. Ramamurti and Gurzada V. Apparao gave this cultural awakening further impetus and started the modern Telugu movement. In the first quarter of the 20th century, poets like Rayaprolu Subbarao lent romantic splendour to Telugu poetry and in the fourth and fifth decades Srirangam Srinivasarao and Dasarathi brought into Telugu literature a feeling of sharp social consciousness under the influence of Communism. In Kannada, the modern age was ushered in with the establishment of the Karnataka Vidya-vardhaka Sangha in 1890 when its founders who had all received Western education launched a scheme of translating into Kannada important works of English and Sanskrit. This gave them an opportunity to review and revive the past in new light. The movement gathered momentum from the Non-cooperation campaign of Mahatma Gandhi and a number of patriotic poets such as Srikantayya, Govinda Pai, Bendre, Sankara Bhat infused new vigour into life and literature. Almost simultaneously Kannada poetry was touched by the golden rays of Tagore's romantic genius and Puttappa and Gokak wrote beautiful lyrics under his influence. For about two decades these two currents flowed in full swing ; thereafter, the impact of Marxian philosophy was felt by the authors of Kannada also and Krishna Rao, Karanth, Niranjana and a few other younger poets voiced the sentiments of the exploited masses with great gusto. So also in Kerala—the region of Malayalam, modern education had begun to show its effect in the middle of the 19th century. Classical works from English and Sanskrit were translated to cope with the growing needs of education. The Renaissance movement in Malayalam was led by Kerala Varma, Venmani and A. R. Raja Varma. The nationalist sentiment found its fullest expression in the later works of poet Vallathol who has written on all aspects of our national glory and condemned social and economic inequalities with passion. The harbinger of the

romantic spring in Malayalam was Sankara Kurup who was joined by Krishna Pillai whose pastoral elegy 'Ramanan' won phenomenal popularity. By about 1936 A. D., Malayalam poetry began to take a new turn. The main inspiration was Left Wing politics. In 1937, in a conference held at Trichur, some enthusiastic litterateurs founded a progressive school under the name of 'Jeevat Sahityam' which was after sometime renamed as 'Purogamana Sahityam'. This school received its inspiration and strength from critics like A. Balakrishna Pillai, M. P. Paul and Joseph Mundasseri. Some of the better known progressive poets of Malayalam are N. V. Krishna Warriar, Akkitam, Vayalar Rama Varma, O. N. V. Kurup and P. Bhaskaran. In Marathi, the modern age had dawned in the first-half of the 19th century. Quite a variety of forces were responsible for it—such as the liberal education policy of the authorities, Elphinstone and Malcolm—of the Bombay Presidency College, the activities of the Bombay Native Education Society and the Dakshina Prize Committee, the work of the Christian missions, and publication of effective journals by Bal Shastri Jambhekar and Krishna Shastri Chiplunkar, then the publication of the 'Kesari' and lastly the contribution of stalwarts like Lokamanya Tilak, Justice Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. As early as the middle of the last century, several talented writers of Marathi translated the works of Kalidas, Bhavbhuti and Shudraka on the one hand and of Milton, Dryden, Scott, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith and Wordsworth on the other and thus imported a new imagery into Marathi. Mahajani, Kirtikar and Kunte occupy a prominent place in the poets of this group. They gave a new turn to Marathi poetry by imparting to it a note of national sentiment, seriousness of thought, an element of subjectivity and the directness of expression. Keshavasut's ballad 'Tutari', the incomplete heroical epic 'Raja Shivaji' of Kunte and the heroic lays of Govindagraj and of the revolutionary leader Savarkar are powerful exponents of the national fervour. In the field of romanticism also Keshavasut was the pioneer, although the movement attained its full splendour in the poems of the later poets like Bee and Balkavi. Of late—within the last two decades, some of the youthful poets—Sharat Muktibodh, Karandikar and a few others have been writing under the inspiration of the Communist ideology

and almost contemporaneous are the literary activities of the new intellectuals who have lost a talented leader in the death of Mar-dhekar. The historians of Gujarati divide their modern literature in three phases : (i) 1825-1885 A. D., (ii) 1885-1920 A. D. and (iii) 1920 onwards. They run more or less parallel to similar phases in other literatures. The dominant figure in the first era, namely the renaissance, was Narmada who was a contemporary and also in a way a co-worker of Bhartendu Harishchandra of Hindi. In the second phase, the national-cultural forces came to the forefront and they received further impetus in the third era. Gandhi was the fountain-head of this stream and a number of talented Gujarati writers received inspiration from him directly or indirectly. Nanhalal, Prof. Thakore, Kaka Kalelkar, Anand Shankar Dhruva, Uma Shankar, Sundaram and K. M. Munshi are the leaders of this school. The romantic art flowered in the lyrics of poets like Pujalal whose poetry combines in itself a subtle sense of beauty with charming imagery of an unconventional pattern. About 1940, in Gujarati also, the echoes of the Progressive Movement were heard in the works of several young poets like Maniar and others. Similarly, the experimentalists like Rajendra Shah and his colleagues are showing activity for the last one decade or so. Of modern Indian literatures, Bengali is possibly the richest in many respects. In the 19th century Bengal produced great social and cultural leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Maharshi Devendranath Thakur and several literary giants such as Ishwar Chandra Gupta, Madhusudan Dutta and Bankim Chandra who brought about a revolution in society and literature. Here also the background of the modern age was prepared by the impact of Western culture and education on India's genius. The contact of Bengal with Europe was more intimate and direct and, therefore, modern age dawned there a little earlier and with greater splendour than in the Western regions. There also the process of regeneration was more or less the same ; the work of the Fort William College, propaganda of Christian missionaries and consequent reorientation of Hindu religion and culture by Indian leaders, activities of the School Text Book Society and translations of English classics combined to bring about a regeneration of Bengali literature in the latter-half of the 19th century. The second phase

in modern Bengali literature is shrouded in the literary glory of Rabindra Nath who gave a new mystic tone and evoked an exquisitely fine sense of beauty in Bengali poetry. Rabindra Nath had a universal poetic vision : his sympathies transcended the borders of the country and embraced the whole of humanity so that his nationalism always had a broad human and cultural base. Thus, he was the fountain-head of the two powerful currents of Modern Indian Poetry—namely, the National-cultural school and the Romantic-mystic school. Although both of them are equally important, yet the latter attracted a larger number of followers and the new romantic trends which developed in various Indian languages in the first quarter of this century drew their inspiration from Rabindra Nath. In the fourth decade, however, there was a reaction against him and several Bengali authors who were influenced by Leftist ideologies raised their voice against the bourgeois mentality of Rabindra and Sharat. In poetry Subhash Mukhopadhyaya and in fiction Manik Bandyopadhyaya revolted against the two leaders and gave free expression to Marxian ideals. Then came the intellectuals like Vishnu De and others who are trying to recast the basic poetic pattern to suit the emotional and intellectual requirements of the modern age. In Assamese and Oriya also the evolution has been more or less similar. In Assamese literature, Anandaram Phukan was the first pilot of the nationalist movement and his collaborators were Kamalakant Bhattacharya, Hemchandra Barua and others who roused national consciousness by their heroic ballads and debunked prevalent social evils through their satires. The leaders in the second epoch were Chandra Kumar Agrawal, Lakshminath Bezbarua and Hem Chandra Goswami who can really be described as the makers of modern Assamese literature. The sentiments of patriotism which had infused new vigour into modern Assamese literature found fullest expression in the writings of these three authors and of several others inspired by them. Along with the powerful current of patriotism, one could also discern in these works the earlier traces of romanticism matured later on in the poetic art of Hiteshwar Barbarua, Yatindranath Duvara and Devakant Barua. Their poetry is highly subjective and is deeply influenced by English

Romantic Poetry and by Rabindra Nath. After the movement of 1942, the younger Assamese litterateurs were attracted towards Socialism and the poems in the collection 'Modern Assamese Poetry' published in 1946 are resonant with violent notes of revolt against economic exploitation and social inequalities. Of late, Assamese poetry has also caught the infection of modern intellectualism and the new generation of poet—sat least the modern of them—are imitating Eliot and his colleagues with great zeal. Similarly, in modern Oriya literature, we find more or less parallel phases of evolution. There, the pioneers were Fakirmohan Senapati, Radhanath and Madhusudan. The light which they kindled blazed in full splendour in the writings of Gopabandhu Das and his contemporaries. The Satyavadi group of Gopabandhu was the stronghold of national and cultural re-awakening in Orissa and many a litterateur was directly or indirectly connected with it. Their attitude towards life and literature was, however, so rigidly moralistic from the very beginning that the urge for beauty and aesthetic bliss was as though throttled. The result was the emergence of the 'Sabuja' group of artists who drew their inspiration from Tagore and revelled in the expression of joy and romance of life. The poetical works of Baikunth Pattanayak and the novels and stories of Kalindicharan Panigrahi fall in this category. In the thirties, however, the growing influence of Socialism and Communism began to weaken Tagore's hold on the imagination of the aspiring litterateurs of Oriya and in the fifth decade it found effective expression in the poems of Sachi Routray and others and in the contemporary era T. S. Eliot's complicated poetic mechanism is attracting Vinod Routray, Vinod Nayak and others. Then come the three languages of North-Western India—namely Panjabi, Urdu and Hindi. They also, like their sister languages, saw the dawn of Renaissance in the middle of the 19th century. Sir Atar Singh in Panjabi, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in Urdu and Bharatendu Harishchandra in the non-official and Raja Shiva Prasad Sitar-e-Hind in the official circles of Hindi opened the shutters to bring in fresh air and new light by reorganizing education, by translating or arranging translations of Sanskrit and English works and by publishing journals. The Christian Missions also played their part. In 1852 A. D., Ludhiana Christian

Mission published a translation of Bible in Panjabi and prepared a dictionary of Panjabi in 1854. In Urdu, Hali wrought radical reforms by removing from poetry shackles of conventional forms and using it as a medium for propagating the changing social and political values of life. Sir Syed renovated Urdu prose and fashioned it to suit the requirements of modern life. He set up a literary-scientific organization for translating English classics into Urdu and brought out a journal 'Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq' which played a very vital role in the development of Urdu prose. In Hindi, this period is known as Bhartendu Era in which Bhartendu and his literary friends rejuvenated old techniques and introduced new forms in Hindi to cope with the demands of new life. It was really an era of great creative activity and revolutionary changes were wrought in the thought-content and in the form of Hindi Poetry as well as of Prose. The Christian Missionaries and the British rulers were also going ahead with their projects, of course, with a different purpose. Translations and commentaries of Christian scriptures were published in Hindi and Urdu both and the British administration rendered valuable service to Hindi by employing the staff of Fort William College as also of some outside agencies like the School Text Book Society etc., in the preparation of text-books in Hindi. These aspirations further matured in the first two decades of this century when the notes of patriotism became more distinctly audible in the literatures of Panjabi, Urdu and Hindi. In Panjabi Gurumukh Singh Musafir and Hira Singh Dard wrote effective patriotic poems, in Urdu the great Iqbal shines out like the Sun although the verses of Akbar and Chakbast gained wider popularity on account of their liberal attitude. In Hindi, this was the time when our national poet Maithili Sharan Gupta was attaining the peaks of his glory and he was followed by poets like Makhanlal Chaturvedi and Bal Krishna Sharma 'Navin'. Later on, Siya Ram Sharan Gupta and Dinkar struck new notes in the national choir. The third main trend in modern Indian literature—namely Romanticism—attained its full glory in Chhayavad. Enriched by the poetic creations of Prasad, Pant, Nirala and Maha Devi, Chhayavad is a wonderful phenomenon in Indian poetry. In Panjabi, Bhai Vir Singh and

Puran Singh are the leading poets of this school and in Urdu the poems of Akhtar Shirani and Majaz are bathed in romantic colours. Thereafter, the influence of Socialism becomes clearly marked in these literatures also. In Panjabi and Urdu, the note of revolt is louder than in Hindi : Josh Malihabadi, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Ahmad Nadim Qasimi, Ali Sardar Jafari in Urdu and Amrita Pritam and Kartar Singh Duggal in Panjabi have given a powerful expression to the people's challenge. In Hindi, Pant's 'Yug-vani' and 'Gramya', a number of stray poems of younger poets like Narendra, Anchal, Suman and Nagarjun, the novels and short-stories of Yashpal and the major works of Rahul Sankrityayana are written under the influence of Marxian philosophy. The latest trend, of course, is the Experimental Poetry or Prayogavad as it is styled in Hindi. Whether it bears this name or another or no name at all, there is no doubt that the more intellectual poets of Urdu and Panjabi also are being attracted towards this new trend and the poems of Pritam Singh Safir in Panjabi and of Faiz and N. M. Rashid are obviously written under this strain.

The latest and also the greatest event in the history of India is the recovery of national freedom which has naturally influenced the literatures of all the modern languages of the country. India looks upon her freedom as the freedom of the World, as the liberation of all the countries from colonial and imperial bondages. For us, it does not signify only material victory—it is really a symbol of spiritual emancipation. All the regions of India resounded with festive songs in different languages to celebrate Independence, these songs are characterized by an unearthly bliss and a genuine sentiment of sympathy and friendship for the whole world. India's successful peace-policy has deeply inspired the major poets of all our languages and given great impetus to National-Cultural Poetry which has now become really the most vital trend in Indian literature from Kashmir to Kerala and from Assam to Saurashtra. In free India, the native languages have regained their rightful place and planned efforts are being made for their development in order to cope with the growing educational and administrative requirements of the nation,

Thus, we see how the literatures of modern India have evolved and are still evolving on almost identical lines: (i) contact and conflict with Western culture through the efforts of Christian missions and European trading companies and the consequent Renaissance; (ii) growth of national and moral consciousness in literature as a result of the national movement under Gandhiji's leadership; (iii) reaction against moral austerities of the Reformist movement in life and literature and birth of Romanticism; (iv) impact of Marxian ideology; (v) experiments to find new forms of expression for the complex experiences of modern intellectual life under the influence of litterateurs like T.S. Eliot and philosophers like Sartre, and lastly (vi) expansion of the national-cultural trends with concrete ideals of Universal Brotherhood after Independence—this, in brief, is an outline of the development of Modern Indian Literature, common to all the languages of the country.

Besides these regular trends, we find in Indian literatures some other common elements also which are less sustained and yet very important: for example, the series of narrative poems based on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are common to all the languages of India. The Kamba Ramayanam in Tamil, the Ranganath Ramayana and the Bhaskara Ramayana etc. in Telugu, the Pampa Ramayana in Kannada, the Adhyatma Ramayana of Eluttaccan (Ezhuttachchan) in Malayalam, the Ramakatha of Moropant in Marathi, the Krittibasa Ramayana in Bengali, the Ramayana of Madhava Kandali in Assamese, the Bilanka Ramayana of Saraladas and the famous Ramayana of Balarama Das in Oriya, and the Tulsi Ramayana—more precisely the Ramcharitmanas of Tulsi Das in Hindi are beads of the same rosary. Similarly, the poetic narratives based on the Mahabharata are spread over the whole country: in Telugu three ancient poets Nannaya, Tikkana and Errana completed the Mahabharata, in Kannada the Mahabharatas of Pampa and Kumara Vyasa are very famous and in Malayalam the Mahabharata of Eluttaccan is in a way more original and complete than his Ramayana itself. In Marathi, Shridhar wrote the 'Pandava Pratap' but that is not quite remarkable; in Bengali there were about 30 renderings of the Mahabharata in the 17th

and the 18th centuries of which the Mahabharata of Kashiram is easily the best, in Assamese Ramasaraswati composed several Vadha-Kavyas based on the Mahabharata, in Oriya the famous Mahabharata poet is the great Saraladas who is known in Orissa as the 'Utkal Vyas', in Panjabi Krishnalal produced a verse-translation, and in Hindi the Mahabharata of Gokul Nath etc., in the later medieval age and the 'Jaya-Bharat' of Maithili Sharan Gupta in the modern times are works of permanent literary merit. So also, the translations of the Bhagwata have been as common to all these languages. Quite obviously, all these renderings have served as strong ties of unity. Then, the influence of the works of Sanskrit poetics is another tie that binds Indian literatures together. The 'Natyashastra' of Bharata, the 'Dhwanyaloka' of Anandwardhana, the 'Kavyadarsha' of Dandin, the 'Kavyaprakasha' of Mammata, the 'Sahityadarpana' of Vishwanatha, and the 'Rasagangadhara' of Jagannatha have been popular with the literary scholars in all the languages of the country. They are being studied, interpreted and also translated in different languages for the past several centuries. That is the reason why there is a basic unity in our literary ideals all over India.

So far we have investigated the common elements in the theme and the content of Indian literature, but the similarity of forms and style is no less striking. To all the literatures of India, the poetic forms of Sanskrit namely the Mahakavya, the Khand-kavya the Muktak, the Katha and the Akhyayika etc., the various forms of Apabhramsha such as the Charit-kavya, the Prem-gatha (romance), the Rasa and the Pada, and so also some of the patterns of Persian poetry have come down as a common legacy. Besides the *varnika* metres of Sanskrit, many a popular metre like the Doha and the Chaupai are the favourite vehicles of Indian poetry. In the modern times, the literary forms of the West such as the lyric with all its sub-divisions namely the ode, the elegy, the sonnet and the verse-libre have infiltrated into all our languages alike. The same is true about our language complexion. Although the languages of India belong to two different stocks—the Aryan and the Dravidian, yet the influence of Sanskrit, and Pali, Prakrits, Apabhramsha and Persian in the past and of English in the present is

responsible for great similarities in the vocabulary and also in the syntax of our languages today. These languages have been drawing freely from Sanskrit right from their origin for the development of their semantics, for colour and metaphor and for the formation of new words and expressions; and they are doing so all the more at present. Within the last fifty years, the influence of English language also has been very deep and vital. English is infinitely rich in metaphor and all the languages of our country have been absorbing the idioms, the modes of expression and the phrases of English consciously or unconsciously. Our prose, of course, is directly modelled on English prose. Consequently, there is a fundamental unity in the literary medium of our country which is re-strengthened by the unity of theme.

Thus, it is not difficult to believe that 'Indian Literature is one though written in many languages'. Unfortunately, till we regained our independence greater emphasis had been laid on the elements of diversity. Its essential unity is yet to be revealed in its fullness. This requires, in the first instance, an objective and systematic investigation into the elements of unity in variety and for that a basic change in our methods of study and research will be necessary. An enquiry into any trend of Indian literature cannot be confined to one language only for such an enquiry will always be very incomplete. For example, if a researcher in Madhura Bhakti confines his studies to Hindi or Bengali alone, he will not discover the whole reality : he will have to explore the literatures of Gujarati, Oriya, Assamese, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam as well wherein this current flows with almost the same force. There will be obviously many gaps in our study if it is limited to one language only. Many an event which appears casual or accidental to the historian of Hindi literature is really not so. The origins and the earlier traditions of the vast treasure of devotional songs in Hindi, which baffled Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla, can be easily traced in the Southern languages and in Bengali besides, of course, the Apabhramsha. The treatment of childhood by Surdas was not a mere accident in Hindi literature : the Gujarati poet Bhalana in his descriptive lyrics, the Malayalam poet of the 15th century in his Krishnagatha and the

Assamese poet Madhava Deva in his 'Bargeets' have dealt with this subject with keen interest and with great success. A comparative study of the poems based on Ramayana and Mahabharata in different languages solves so many problems easily. There are countless designs in the plot-structures of our medieval Romances which cannot be properly understood without a close comparative study of these forms in various Indian literatures. To appreciate the essential meaning of Sufi poetry, we shall have to traverse into the realms of North-Western literatures—such as Kashmiri, Sindhi, Panjabi and Urdu, besides Persian, of course. Studies in Ramkavya in any Indian language—specially of the North, will be incomplete without a proper appreciation of the conception of Rama in 'Tulsi's 'Ramcharitmanas'. Similarly, the influence of the Ashta-Chhap poets of Brajbhasha had perceptibly or imperceptibly infiltrated into the poetry of Bengal and Gujarat and no research in their Krishna-kavya will bear desired fruits without a proper assessment of this influence. This method of inter-literary research will prove immensely useful in finding out many a missing link in every literature, in resolving various knots and will reveal in a most effective manner the essential unity of Indian thought and sentiment.

But this task is as formidable as it is important. The first and foremost is the difficulty of language. So far the knowledge of the Indian research-scholar is limited, besides his own language, to English and Sanskrit only—without any acquaintance with other regional languages. As such, one can legitimately apprehend that our scheme of inter-literary research might just remain a pious wish. Yet, I am sure that this difficulty cannot be insurmountable—and we can overcome it by coordinated and planned efforts. Some language-groups are such that a student of one language can pick up another with just a little practice—there translation, nay even transliteration is not necessary : for example one can manage (a) Bengali, Oriya and Assamese, (b) Hindi and Marathi and (c) Telugu and Kannada with the help of a few word-meanings and grammatical notes. For Hindi, Panjabi and Urdu, transliteration with some word-meanings can suffice : almost the same device could be used for Hindi and Gujarati, Tamil and Malayalam to a great extent. In

the case of other languages, we can resort to translations. Then, there are many other effective measures of inter-linguistic communication such as publication of literary histories of India in different languages, comparative studies, comparative researches, inter-literary seminars etc. Fortunately, such a consciousness has been roused in the country and several institutions are engaged in this useful work. It is a stupendous task and is yet in its infancy; it requires a well-organized all-India campaign and these sporadic efforts made here and there will not do. However, the very conception of the 'Indian Literature' as one unit is an auspicious augury. India's national unity is based on its cultural unity and cultural unity requires sound emotional integration which is possible only through literature. Just as an integrated Indian nation is emerging steadily inspite of all the apprehensions and suspicions of the pessimists, so also a composite 'Indian Literature' is evolving gradually through the diversity of languages. With a common spiritual 'subconscious', how can the literary expression be essentially different ?

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In the end, may I add a few words, about the present volume ? The plan was drawn up about five years ago and I had started work on it immediately after. Quite naturally we wanted to present authentic surveys of different Indian literatures and accordingly we approached first-rank critics of all languages to assist us in the task. The original response was quite good and we sent round a tentative outline to our collaborators with a view to achieving a basic uniformity in the treatment of the subject, leaving, of course, the final decision to them. At the outset, with the ready promises of cooperation, it appeared as if the project was not so difficult as I had thought but as time passed, many formidable obstacles crossed my way : some scholars had readily agreed in the beginning, but afterwards they backed out almost as easily. Such a state of uncertainty continued for about a year and a half and I was torn between the 'Ay's and 'No's of my collaborators all the time : it was always a grievous shock whenever somebody abruptly said 'No' after having given a solemn promise. There were on the other hand certain very conscientious writers who had kept their word and their articles were lying with me for long for I could not use them unless the

series was complete : they really showed extraordinary patience, but there was a limit to it and some of them had actually started asking me to return their articles. This tug-of-war should have unnerved anybody, yet with my usual obstinacy, I persisted and ultimately after a hard struggle for full four years succeeded in collecting all the twelve articles. In the meantime, two of my publishers whom I had contracted were scared away by the uncertainty of the project and I was faced with the problem of finding out publishers for this symposium which required a substantial investment and was on the whole a very complicated scheme. At long last, I got hold of the present publishers and with their cooperation the 'Indian Literature' is now in your hands. The original outline which we had sent round to the authors had obviously become ineffective and the majority of the articles were written independently with the result that the uniformity which we had originally aimed at was shattered : even in length no uniformity could be achieved. But there was no alternative : requesting the authors to revise their articles would have only meant depriving ourselves of those articles. Therefore, we decided to publish them as they were without bothering about uniformity. There are many other flaws in our work—the absence of diacritical marks being the most glaring of them—still I am not dissatisfied with this attempt. It is the first venture to present a joint survey of Indian Literatures : our writers are authorities in their subjects and some of them occupy the very highest positions; some of the leading literateurs and educationists adorn our Editorial Board. I would, therefore, present this volume to the student of Indian Literature without much diffidence.

In the end, I shall express my sense of deep gratitude to the learned authors and also to the members of the Editorial Board for all the guidance and assistance they have graciously given me from time to time. All the articles have been written originally in English, except for the one on Hindi Literature which has been rendered into English by Shri Kanwar Lal of Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi. I thank him sincerely and also Shri M. N. Chaube who has assisted me in various ways in bringing out this book.

TAMIL

The History of the Tamil Language

TAMIL is the most ancient and highly cultivated of the South Indian languages. According to M. Srinivasa Iyengar, "Tamil occupies the same position in the Dravidian family that Sanskrit does in the Aryan".¹ It is a classical language like Sanskrit, Greek or Latin; while her ancient contemporaries have changed beyond recognition and some of them ceased to be spoken tongues, Tamil continues to be one of the most vigorous languages of modern India. It may be said to be the only ancient language which is still young and healthy and also capable of expressing modern ideas. Its history can be traced upto the age of Tholkappiyam, the earliest extant Tamil grammar, which is generally ascribed to 1000 B. C. Having pursued our enquiry so far back we find ourselves dealing with a highly developed language, possessing a rich past of which we know nothing. Tholkappiyanaar, the author of the grammatical work referred to, himself admits that he is not the first grammarian, quotes his predecessors and refers to a literary tradition already in existence.² The language of his age, as expounded by him in his work, differs from modern Tamil in vocabulary, but in morphology and syntax it remains almost the same. A study of this ancient work enables us to assess only the changes which the language has undergone through the subsequent ages. But it does not at all lead us to investigate into the origin of the language.

There are a few legends and mythological references which tell us about the origin of the language. But it is only Dr. Caldwell of the last century who made an earnest and scientific attempt to trace its origin and development by a comparative study of the grammars of Tamil and the cognate languages, *viz.* Telugu, Kannada and

1 Tamil Studies, pp. 151-152

2 Tholkappiyam, Porulathikaram, 53

Malayalam. He tried to advance further by a study of the languages of uncivilized peoples closely allied to these languages, the uncultivated languages of this group, *viz.* Tuda, Kota, Gond, Ku, Rajmahal, Oraon and Brahui.¹

Tracing the origin of a language is always found to be bound up with that of the people who spoke it and thus the problem belongs to primitive history, rather than to philology. Before the advent of the Aryans there was a race of people in India who were, for some reasons, called by the historians as the Dravidians. The Dravidians and the Aryans might have been ethnologically of the same race, but after having lived together for a certain period as members of the common stock of humanity, they might have separated themselves and migrated to different countries in different directions. The Dravidians settled in India and the Aryans went to the different parts of Asia and Europe. Many are the theories put forward regarding these Dravidians and Aryans, mostly hypothetical and imaginative, rather than historical and factual. Leaving apart these theories, the student of linguistics finds that there was already a language spoken by the people throughout the length and breadth of India long before the arrival of the Aryans. The Aryans came and settled in North India and from there a few gradually moved towards the South. So much so, the mixture of their language with that of the natives (the Dravidians) is found to be more in the north than in the south.

Apart from the history of the people, the language itself furnishes certain evidences as to their antiquity. According to V. R. R. Dikshitar², "in the most ancient layers of the Tamil language can be discovered not only ample trace of Neolithic culture but also the birth of the iron age culture which succeeded it." Its origin is generally believed to be coeval with the birth of man. There are geological reasons to consider that South India was the part of the world to settle first as a land mass and that the original race of mankind as well as the first language might have come into existence in South India and later on this original race travelled to other parts

1 A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages, p. 6.

2 Pre-historic South India, p. 179

of the world. There are a large number of Dravidian sounds, words and expressions in the north Indian languages as well as in the Scythian or North-Asian languages. R. G. Bhandarkar observes the existence of the short 'e' and 'o' in Pali and the predilection the people showed for them, as well as the change of dentals to cerebrals without any influencing cause, and remarks: "these sounds must have existed and played an important part in the original language of the people, so that they were unable to shake them off entirely, even when they left their mother tongue and learned that of the Aryans with whom they came to be closely incorporated. If the original Pali speakers belonged to the same race as the Dravidians of Southern India, we have a reason to believe that their native tongue contained them; for they exist in the Dravidian languages and are very characteristic of them."¹ P.D. Gune admits that there are in the north Indian languages words of other than Sanskrit extraction and says that "they throw great light on the vocabulary not only of the Prakrits, but also of the present vernaculars and the non-Indo-Aryan element in them". Some of these words, according to him, are clearly Dravidian.² It is also obvious that the modern North Indian languages have the same fundamental grammatical structure as the South Indian languages.³ The indigenous people of India are denoted by various terms, as the old or pre-historic Tamils by some, as Proto-Dravidians by some, more commonly as Dravidians for the sake of convenience to distinguish them from the Tamils who evolved later on as such from the original people in South India and cultivated Tamil as a literary language. These ancient Dravidians moved to the western countries not only by sea but also by land in days of unrecorded history and they left their impression on the languages of those countries. This largely explains why the languages of those countries adopted some peculiar features of the Dravidian languages, the features now found in the Tamil language.⁴ This theory is confirmed by the large number of Dravidian words and grammatical expressions in the Scythian group of languages in Central and

1 Collected Works of R. G. Bhandarkar, pp. 293-4

2 An Introduction to Comparative Philology, p. 220

3 V. R. R. Dikshitar, Pre-historic South India, p. 179

4 Ibid. pp. 194-195

North Asia and in the Brahui language spoken in Baluchistan, as well as in the language of the mountaineers of Rajmahal in North India.

The European scholars who came to this country during the last century and studied the languages spoken by the peoples were impressed that all the Indian languages originated from Sanskrit which they found out to be a language closely affiliated to the European languages. Hence they used the term 'Indo-European family' to include and indicate the affinity of all the Indian languages as well as Sanskrit. They came to this conclusion after studying mainly the vocabulary of the Indian languages, especially those of the North Indian languages. Neither the South Indian languages nor their literary works were examined adequately. The grammars of the various languages were not compared, nor were they aware of the non-Sanskrit elements in these languages. Resemblances which at first appeared to them to be valid evidences of relationship between the South Indian languages and the Indo-European languages, were overvalued despite the fact that these resemblances pertained to the unreliable field of vocabulary. While acknowledging the fact that the Dravidian languages came under Sanskrit influence, V. R. R. Dikshitar asserts that it was only in much later time and that the Dravidian languages had till then an independent origin and growth.¹

Rasmus Rask of Denmark was the first to perceive that the South Indian languages were totally different from Sanskrit and from the North Indian languages. The term 'Dravidian' was not yet popular then and therefore he called these South Indian languages 'Malabaric' while some others termed them as 'Tamuluc' or 'Tamiluc'.²

This was an eye-opener to the linguists who came later on and sought evidences for grouping these languages separately as belonging to the 'Dravidian family'. They realised that the North Indian languages and to a certain extent Sanskrit also had in them a few

1 Pre-historic South India, p. 192

2 Abel Hovelacque, The Science of Language, p. 77

Whitney D. W., Language and the Study of Language p. 326.

Dravidian elements.¹ Dr. Gundert and Dr. Kittel who made special study of Malayalam and Kannada wrote articles as early as 1869 and 1872 on the Dravidian elements in Sanskrit in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society* and in the *Indian Antiquary* for 1872. Dr. Caldwell did pioneer work in comparing the grammars of all the Dravidian languages. His research revealed that in morphology and syntax, the Dravidian languages differed from the Indo-European languages and that this difference was more fundamental than the apparent similarity in vocabulary. He tried to prove the affinity of the Dravidian languages with the Scythian family. But one feels right in agreeing with Grierson who considers them as an isolated family with independent features of their own.²

Telugu and Kannada and Malayalam of the Dravidian languages are dependent on Sanskrit, but this dependence pertains to vocabulary and does not allude to their origin from Sanskrit.³ Tamil, despite its borrowing a few words from Sanskrit, stands independent. The infusion of foreign words in a language is always an evidence of the contact of the people speaking a different language, but not of the affinity of the languages, much less of the origin of the language that borrowed. In Tamil, especially in mediaeval and modern literature, there are a number of Sanskrit words and even those words are found to have been sparingly used with restriction. Tholkappiyanar, the ancient grammarian, permits the usage of such words in literature, provided they are adapted to the Tamil phonetic system.⁴ The later grammarians have framed rules for this adaptation. All these go to prove that even in the field of vocabulary Tamil is not dependent on Sanskrit. "Tamil is rich in synonyms and generally it is not through any real necessity but from choice, and the fashion of the age, that it makes use of Sanskrit."⁵ If Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam of South India have admitted Sanskrit

1 The Aryan population of North India is not, therefore, a pure race, but containing among others, a strong Dravidian element.—Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, Vol. IV—p. 278.

2 Ibid. p. 289.

3 C. P. Brown : *A Grammar of the Telugu Language*.

4 Tholkappiyam, *Eluttathikaram*, 401.

5 Caldwell: *A Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages*, p. 55

words to a greater extent, it is mainly due to the fact that the literatures and the grammars of these languages have mostly been written by Sanskrit scholars.

The coincidences of vocabulary are, says A.H. Sayce, accidental.¹ According to him, it is in the sentence, not in the isolated word, that languages agree or differ. The borrowing of grammatical forms is of much rarer occurrence and of more fundamental nature.

Even in the field of vocabulary, the most fundamental words of languages, viz., personal pronouns, numerals, etc. reveal to a certain degree the affinity or difference between them and the evidences they furnish as to the origin of a language are in a way reliable. But the numerals and personal pronouns of Tamil are totally different from those of Sanskrit and other Indo-European tongues.

On the other hand, the modern North Indian languages, though called Indo-European or Aryan family of languages, have substituted agglutinated postfixes for flection and so have adopted the grammatical machinery of the Dravidian languages.² Further the syntax of the former languages is almost the same as that of the latter, so much so that sentences from one language can be translated into another language by the mere substitution of word for word, as seen in the following two sentences in Tamil and Hindi. One has to fill in the appropriate words and postpositions of one language in the sentence-form of another, and the structure is then found complete.

Tamil : Nan vittukku pokir-en

Hindi : Men gharko jata-hun

I house-to going-am

(I am going to house)

There are many such points of agreement between the North Indian tongues and the Dravidian languages in the structure of words and sentences, i. e., in morphology and syntax. Only penetrating study can bring to light such resemblances. Such a

1 Introduction to the Science of Language, p. 87

2 Sayce: Introduction to the Science of Language, p. 174

study, it is regrettable to note, has not yet been undertaken in a scientific spirit. This requires an acuteness of perception and freedom from prejudices. Great play is here afforded for subjective views and inherited prepossessions. One must try to be free from these and seek for truth and truth alone. Such a comparative study leads one to conclude that the primitive parent Dravidian language was the spoken language of the whole of India during the pre-historic age and that the modern South Indian languages, Tamil, Telugu etc., were directly derived from it, whereas the North Indian languages evolved from the same parent language but became more and more changed on account of the mixture of many foreign words and forms.

From the points of view hitherto explained it is evident that during the pre-historic age, before the advent of the Aryans into India, the then North Indians as well as the South Indians were speaking different dialects of the parent language of the Dravidian family. Later on, after the two races mixed together in the North, Sanskrit came up as a language refined for literature, as its name itself suggests. A little earlier than this, or simultaneously with this, in the remote South, Tamil evolved itself as a literary dialect (called Sen-Tamil) while the spoken dialect (called Kodun-Tamil) gradually underwent modifications, mostly due to the local cultural, social and political developments and changes and partly due to the influence of the social and cultural developments in the North. The dialects spoken in the adjoining countries were left uncared-for and so changed considerably from age to age till at last about the ninth or tenth century, Sanskrit scholars wrote works of grammar and literature in those dialects and thus paved way for the evolution of Telugu and Kannada.

From the time when a dialect of the parent language of the Dravidian family came to be developed as a literary language called Tamil, it had been recognised as the standard language of Tamilnad, the southern part of the country famous for its cultural and social evolutions. In ancient India, only two languages had been recognised as cultured, Sanskrit of the North and Tamil of the South. Legends and mythological references trace the former to the Sanskrit

grammarian Panini and the latter to the Tamil grammarian Agattiyar.¹ Mythology traces the origin of these two ancient languages to Lord Siva who is said to have taught these to those grammarians respectively. This merely points to the antiquity as well as the highly cultivated literary role of the two languages.

References are there in the earliest Kavya of Sanskrit, the Valmiki Ramayana, to the great Tamil kingdom of Pandiyas and its cultural and political glories. The earliest extant Tamil literature called Sangam literature bears ample internal evidences to these. Professor Max Muller gives due credit to Tamil as "the most highly cultivated language that possesses the richest stores of indigenous literature." The language that was one of the many dialects of the primitive and parent language of the Dravidian family spoken throughout the length and breadth of this sub-continent some thousands of years ago, thus evolved itself as one of the highly cultivated languages of the world. Its antiquity is also evident from the fact that many Tamil words like 'tugi' (for peacock, from Tamil 'togai') and 'arousa' (for rice, from 'arici' in Tamil) were introduced in the European languages as early as Solomon's time, and according to some scholars even earlier in the fourth millenium before Christ when there was commercial intercourse between Tamilnad and the Mesopotamian valley.

Tamil has retained its vigour and youthfulness and still remains one of the highly cultivated languages of the world. Dr. Winslow in the introduction to his Tamil-English Dictionary says : "It is not perhaps extravagant to say that in its poetic form Tamil is more polished and exact than Greek, and in both dialects with its borrowed treasures, more copious than Latin. In its fulness and power, it more resembles English and German than any other language". Dr. Slater said "the Tamil language is extraordinary in its subtlety and sense of logic". According to W. Taylor, "it is one of the most copious, refined and polished languages spoken by man".

Its phonetic laws governing the grouping of vowels and

1 The earliest masters in linguistic observation and classification were the old Indian grammarians—Jespersen, *Language*, p. 21.

consonants in words are simple and natural. Languages in which there is an overabundance of involved consonant groupings or of consonant sounds to the detriment of vowel sounds are not pronounced correctly; there is in such languages a wide gulf between spelling and pronunciation, as in English. Tamil grammarians had anticipated more than three thousand years ago what most languages are now discovering and had already avoided such consonant combinations and favoured regular alternation of consonants and vowels. Tamil Grammarians lay great stress on the system of syllabation so as to avoid unpleasant consonant combinations and endings and permit only such groups and endings which are easy to pronounce and aesthetically appealing to the ear.

The technique of word formation in Tamil had been clearly explained by early grammarians and is still in vogue, unchanged and unquestioned. Tamil resorted to this technique and coined words from native roots and from words already coined out of such roots in an endless variety of ways ; so much so, there are now found in Tamil innumerable derivations and compounds with their roots easily recognisable. This is possible in Tamil because it is an agglutinative language which always has the advantage of combining logical analysis with economy of means. This is the reason why Tamil had even as early as 200 A. D. a large and copious indigenous vocabulary of words that are now found in ancient Tamil literature, and why it has always been resisting unrestricted borrowing of words from other languages, even from Sanskrit. The Tamil vocabulary, even in its earliest literary period called the Sangam period, is found to be very rich and abundant, and if, as Vendryes says, the vocabulary of any language reveals its culture¹, the early Tamil vocabulary really stands as an evidence not only to the fertility and vigour of the language but also to its ancient culture.

Tamil is the only language in the world that retains its basic form unchanged as a spoken language for the past twenty centuries and more ; it is still the language spoken by about thirty-five million people in India, Ceylon and Malaya. Such an uninterrupted conti-

1 Language, p. 306

nuity in its growth and development is due to its simple and natural phonetic laws and its healthy and indigenous technique of word-formation as explained above.

The Beginnings of Tamil Literature

As the culture of the ancient Tamils was indigenous to the soil on which they lived, and as it evolved before they came into contact with other people, the earliest Tamil literature was mainly due to the influence of the physical surroundings, due to geographical and not historical causes. The land was fertile with its mountains and rivers, plateaus and fields, stretching to the sea on the east, the west and the south. Nature and life lived in such natural surroundings inspired the imaginative bards to sing. Naturalism and romanticism were the distinct qualities of their poems. There were poets like Wordsworth who painted pictures of the hills, the lakes, the rivers and the innocent folk of Tamilnad, though they never personified Nature as modern poets do ; there were poets like Scott with apt descriptions of Nature, based on close observation, so accurate that a botanist might acquire a correct idea of the vegetation of the country. Their love of Nature was so powerful that it permeated the themes of love as well as of war in their poems. This blending of feelings in men and women with the beauties of Nature, though subtle and mysterious, had been recognised and maintained as essential in the literary conventions of the earliest period of Tamil literature.

The earliest extant literature of the Tamils is called Sangam Literature and it is dated not later than 500 B. C. to 200 A. D. It is a bouquet of blossoms varied in form and fragrance, colour and complexion. Volumes of poetry had been swept away by inundations and many more were lost in course of time as the ancient people felt no need to preserve them. The early poets of Tamilnad, as those of other countries, sang unconsciously as birds. Even when the bards recorded the glorious deeds of their royal heroes in their poems, they were not preserved by the next generation and so perished. Later on somewhere about the third or fourth century A. D., some of the bards and the patrons felt a need for preserving them and they collected the available poems, selected those worth communicating to posterity and compiled them. These are the anci-

ent collections now available to us. They are called the Eight Anthologies and the Ten Idylls. They consist of two thousand three hundred and eighty one verses varying from small lyrics of three lines to an idyll of seven hundred and eighty-two lines.

There are four hundred and seventy three poets known either by the names they bore or by causal names culled from their poetical works ; in the case of hundred and two poems, the authors are unidentified. Among the identified poets, about thirty are women, the famous poetess Avvaiyar being one of them.

These are mainly classified into two, one 'Akam' or 'esoteric' dealing with love, and the other 'Puram' or 'exoteric' dealing with war and administration and morals. In no other period was Tamil literature more bound by traditional literary conventions than in this period of Sangam works. The poets were firm in keeping up the tradition. The land was treated in five regions, viz., mountains, forests, fields, coasts and arid deserts, and the theme of love in five aspects, viz., union, patience, sulking, wailing and separation. Each of these five aspects had for itself a region, a season and an hour ; each region had its own flora and fauna, habits and customs, food and music etc. The poet dealing with a certain aspect of love restricted himself to its particular region, season, hour, flora, and fauna, etc. The natural peculiarities of each region are made to bear on the aspect of love pertaining to it. This is the reason why the Sangam poets while dealing with Nature elaborately, never took interest in Nature for its own sake. Yet their treatment of Nature was original, even if ponderous, and it was popular though bound by such strict conventions. They knew all the effects which the painter and the sculptor can and cannot achieve and brought them all into their poems successfully. They had a consummate choice and taste in words with which they skilfully painted such pictures.

These literary conventions are found in Tholkappiyam, the earliest extant treatise on grammar. It is dated back to 1000 B.C. It contains 1276 sutras. Its first part is on Orthography, the second on Morphology and the third on Literary conventions and usages. It is evident that this work was preceded by centuries of

literary culture, for it lays down rules for different kinds of compositions deduced from literary works of the best authors whose works had been in existence then and also refers to other grammatical works which are now extinct. We have only names of certain works known to us through the references to them in later works and hence to attempt an account of the pre-Tholkappiyam works, will be groping in the dark. But for the survival of Tholkappiyam, the existence of literary works in Tamil before 1000 B.C. could not have been believed and it would have been considered as one of the legends gathering round Sangam literature. Now it is asserted that Tholkappiyam is a work written during a period when literary activity in Tamil reached its high watermark.

The first part deals with phonetic rules and different assimilations of sounds in words in a scientific manner. The second part elaborately explains the parts of speech, the formation of simple and compound words and syntax. It is a peculiarity in Tamil that the grammarians have based gender on the signification of words, not on the endings of words. There is no such thing as grammatical gender in Tamil even as early as Tholkappiyam. Modern philologists are of the opinion that Tholkappiyam is an advanced grammatical treatise and their view is based on the study of the first two parts of the work.

The third part, called Porulathikaram, treats of literary conventions, rhetoric, prosody etc., and is the most important part and reflects such a mature culture as to lead us to infer that the Tamil people should have had a high degree of civilisation for many centuries before such a work could arise. As V.R.R. Dikshitar says, this part gives us a glimpse of the political, social and religious life of the people and the importance of the work is further enhanced by several commentators of great repute. According to Tholkappiyam, the subject-matter for a literary composition may be either Akam, the esoteric treatment of love, or Puram, the exoteric treatment of war and administration and morals. He also deals with sentiments expressed in poetry, rhetoric, prosody, idioms and traditions. Simile is the basis of all the figures of rhetoric, and

it is analytically treated in one chapter. The chapter on prosody explains all the metrical devices of the language. The early Tamil literature possesses varied and polished forms of verse which are indigenous and independent of any Sanskrit model. This also proves the existence of an age-long poetic literature in Tamil before 1000 B.C. which enabled the author of the ancient grammar *Tholkappiyam* to explain in detail the different metres and their rules as deduced from the poetical works of his age. "Dravidian genius", says T. S. S. Iyengar, "was conspicuous not merely in the sphere of language, but also in that of literature. Of all the races of India, the only people who had a poetical literature independent of Sanskrit are the Tamils, a typical Dravidian people."

As convention and system play an essential part in the literary works of the post-*Tholkappiyam* period, a proper understanding of them requires a basic knowledge of the third part of this great work of grammar.

There are references here and there in the great commentaries of Sangam literature to other grammatical works called *Agatthiyam*, *Pannirupadalam*, *Avinayam*, *Kakkaipadiniyam*, *Natrattham*, etc. The former of these is said to have been written by *Agatthiyanar*. There are many legends associated with this author and others of the three Sangams or Academies of Tamil literature.

The Sangam Period (500 B.C. to 200 A. D.)

The Ten Idylls (*Patithupattu*) This is an anthology of ten idylls by eight different authors of the Sangam period or the Epoch of the Academies. These are richly wrought descriptive poems in the most finished classical style and contain charming portraits of Nature in some of her striking moods. In these we do not find that idle accumulation of hyperbolic conceits which characterises the literature of the mediaeval period. Only a sober-minded and judicious estimate of the values of life rendered pleasant with the beauties of Nature is found in these poems. The shortest of them contains 103 lines and the longest 782.

Of these ten, *Tirumurugatruppadai* is a religious idyll by the

celebrated poet Nakkirar. Atruppadaï is a general theme in which a minstrel, songster, actor or poet who returns with bounteous presents from a benevolent patron addresses and guides a fellow minstrel, songster, actor or poet who suffers from the pangs of poverty and seeks for a patron to relieve his sufferings. This 'atruppadaï' by Nakkirar is an exceptional one and is dedicated to God Muruga (Subrahmanya) and is in the form of a devotee addressing a fellow devotee who is in search of Him. The title means 'The Guide to God Muruga'. The different manifestations of the God and His different shrines in South India are described. There is a valuable commentary by Nacchinarkkiniyar on this.

The second idyll Porunaratruppadaï is a 'Guide to a war-minstrel', and is sung in praise of the Chola king Karikala. The poet Mudatthamakkanniyar gives a description of the ancient Chola kingdom, its fertility due to the unfailing waters of the Kaviri river, its agricultural and industrial prosperity and the wisdom and martial glory of the Chola king. The idyll affords rich materials to the student of ancient South Indian history.

The third work Sirupanatruppadaï by the poet Natthatthananar of Nallur is in the form of an address by a well-rewarded lyrist to a fellow artist. The patron celebrated here is Nalliyakkodan, a chieftain of Erumainadu. He is said to have excelled the seven great patrons called 'Seven Vallals' in his rich gifts to the bards. The poem abounds in descriptions of cities and villages and of the different kinds of life led by the people there.

The fourth of this anthology is Perumpanatruppadaï by Urutthirankannanar in praise of the ruler of Kanchi (Conjeevaram), Thondaiman Ilanthiraiyan. It is also a guide to the lyrist and equally valuable for a student of political and social history of ancient South India.

Mullaipattu is the fifth idyll by Napputhanar, gold merchant of Kavirippumpattinam, the ancient sea-port city of South India. It portrays the feelings of an ideal wife eagerly awaiting her husband's return from a military expedition. The hero on the eve of his victorious return from the battle-field is counting his losses, while the queen in her seven-storeyed palace in a wintry night

is counting days and consulting omens. When the queen almost lost all her patience and hopes, suddenly her ears catch the sounds of the king's trumpets and conches blown at a distance along with the sounds of his chariot and his horses on his way home. The king's elephants were trained in a northern language probably Prakrit. The Greeks, the Turks, the Egyptians, and the Chinese were there as the king's chamber-guards and they were called 'Yavanar' in Tamil.

Madhuraikkanchi is the next idyll, the longest of the idylls consisting of 782 lines. Though very rich in descriptions, it is free from fantasies or conceits. The author Mangudi Marudhanar here celebrates the ancient city of Madhurai and the Pandiya king Neduncheliyan of Thalaiyalankanam fame. Details of the army, trades, festivals, seaports, customs and manners of the people, and the administrative and martial glories of the Pandiya dynasty are all given in this long poem.

Nedunalvadaï, the seventh idyll is also by the famous poet Nakirar. He here celebrates the Pandiya king Neduncheliyan. The king is in his winter camp adjoining the battlefield and spends his sleepless nights walking here and there in the drizzle consoling the wounded warriors, horses and elephants. The steady chill north wind is felt in the umbrella under which the king walks and also in the flame of the torch that bends south-wards. The queen in the palace is at the same time lying sleepless and careworn in an ivory cot, well-curtained, painted, ornamented and cushioned. It is a midnight chill with the howling north wind. The monkeys on the trees shiver with cold and contract their limbs; the birds drop down in their flights; the shivering cows forget even their motherly affections and kick their calves; the shepherds do not indulge in their favourite pastoral amusements, but light up fires and warm their palms at these fires and then apply them to their cheeks; the domesticated pigeons fail to distinguish day from night and simply stay at home altering their posture and exchanging seats with their lovely mates to relieve the monotony of idleness; the exquisitely wrought fans so much useful in summer now hang in corners covered with cobwebs; only the fire-pans are there every where in need; the

windows are all closed against the blowing wind. In this manner the chill north wind's effects are artistically portrayed. The queen in her cot notices the paintings on the curtain which remind her of love and move her to tears. The queen lies there in such distress. The elderly women try their best to console her and pray to the war-goddess for the speedy and victorious return of the king from the battle-field. The whole poem is an excellent treatise of rich imagination and the poet allows the words to weave themselves into elegant and descriptive patterns. The title is very apt and highly suggestive meaning 'the tedious but favourable north wind.'

Kurinchippattu, the eighth idyll, is a mountain-song as its name denotes. Its author, Kapilar, has contributed the maximum number of poems to the Sangam literature and is reputed for depicting the mountain sceneries and the love-aspect pertaining to it, namely, the furtive love that leads to wedlock. This long poem is said to have been composed by him in order to acquaint the Aryan King Prahasthan with the charms of the Tamil language and literature. This teaches that the qualities of modesty and chastity adorn women.

The next idyll, Pattinappalai is by the same author as that of Perumpanatruppadai, but the king celebrated here is Karikala Chola. For this work, the author is said to have been rewarded sixteen hundred thousand gold pieces. There is a very elaborate picture of the great sea-port city of ancient days, Kaverippumpattinam in 218 lines. This maritime city was the capital of the Chola kingdom and the great centre of trade for the countries in the east and in the west. The poet describes its parks, palaces, alms-houses, religious centres, beach, customs-house, etc. ; the bales of goods in the customs house are depicted to have the Chola king's seal of tiger-mark and the goods imported and exported are also described. The Greeks, the Chinese and others had their residential quarters in the city. Honesty was the badge of the traders. The poem, though in main dealing with the theme of separation of lovers, yet celebrates the Chola king and concludes with praise of his valour and heroism.

The last idyll, Malaipadukadam, is an address of an actor to a fellow actor. Its title is highly figurative, meaning 'Rat of the Moun-

tain.' Rut here signifies various sounds echoed in the mountain which is imagined to be an elephant. The poet Perun-Kauciganar vividly describes the Naviram hills of the chieftain Nannan. Details of the musical instruments and the artists' way of life are given as in other 'atruppadais'.

From these idylls, it is evident that the Tamil kings and chieftains encouraged and patronised the poets and through them rendered unique service for the advancement of Tamil literature. They rewarded the deserving poets with liberal presents in the shape of gold coins, gold flowers, land, elephants and chariots with horses. The patrons were wise and well-read, and some of them were scholars and wrote immortal poems which are found in the Eight Anthologies called Ettutthokai.

Puram-Nanuru.

This is the most popular and historically most valuable of the Eight Anthologies of the Sangam period. Puram means exoteric and refers to themes of war, administration and morals; 'nanuru' means four hundred; and so the title indicates that this is a collection of four hundred verses on the themes mentioned above. This forms a very important record of Tamil civilization in ancient times. About 150 poets have contributed to this collection and all of them were unflinching advisers and faithful friends of the rulers; they even averted war by intervening between agitated kings and advising them suitably. They were wise, practical and very influential. Some of the kings were scholars and their poetic contributions find place in this anthology. There are many truths expounded by the poets in their own straightforward and significant manner. As specimens of these valuable literary gems, the English renderings of Rev. Dr. G.U. Pope of three of them are given below :—

The Sages¹

To us all towns are one, all men our kin.

Life's good comes not from others' gift, nor ill,
Man's pains and pains' relief are from within.

Death's no new thing; nor do our bosoms thrill

¹ Sent by Dr. Pope as a New Year's Greeting to all his friends in India in January 1906.

When joyous life seems like a luscious draught.

When grieved, we patient suffer ; for, we deem
This much-praised life of ours a fragile raft
Borne down the waters of some mountain stream
That o'er huge boulders roaring seeks the plain.

Tho' storms with lightnings' flash from darken'd skies
Descend, the raft goes on as fates ordain.

Thus have we seen in visions of the wise !—
We marvel not at greatness of the great ;
Still less despise we men of low estate.

Let all share !

All those who loved thee,—all whom thou dost love,—
Thy kindred all, with seemly virtues crowned,
All who in times gone by, thy wants relieved,—
Call them together now ; bid all the world !
Nor counsel nor direction ask of me !
Thus will we live, ponder no more,
Give thou to all, my housewife dear !
The lord of Muthiran's fruitful hill,
Kumanan, Lord of the mighty spear
Hath given this wealth, which ALL SHALL SHARE !

Pannan's Abode

May *Pannan* happy live as long as I enjoy this life.
See here, ye bards, this suppliant hither makes his way
By poverty compelled he listens for the sound of food dis-
pens^d
Like to the birds that congregate upon the fruitful tree
In fertile soil, the suppliants come, in ranks,
Crowding like tiny ants that, when they know
The rainy season nigh, bear off their eggs
To some dry, favoured mound.—Although they see
The tribes with all their little ones advance
In thronging multitudes, again and yet again they seek
Thedwelling of the man who heals the sore disease of
penury.
'Ah tell us is it near or far,' they cry !

Agananuru

The title means 'four hundred poems on love'. The length of these poems varies from thirteen to thirty seven lines. The collection is classified into three parts which are given suggestive names as Kalitriyani-nirai (the array of male elephants), Manimidai-pavalam (a string of corals interspersed with gems) and Nitthilakkovai (a necklace of pearls). 145 poets have contributed to this collection. At the instance of the Pandiya king Ukkira-peruvaludhi, Uruthirasananar compiled this work. This work is also referred to as Agappattu or Agam.

Natrinai

This is also a collection of 400 verses on love by 175 poets, and the lines range between nine and twelve. The compiler was a Pandiya king, Maran Valudhi.

Kurun-thogai

These are another four hundred verses on love by 204 poets but the lines vary from four to eight. The compiler was a chieftain called Purikko. The illustrious commentators Perasiriyar and Nacchinarkkiniyar wrote valuable commentaries on this work.

Ain-kurunuru

This is a collection of five hundred short lyrics of three to six lines, on the theme of love, and was compiled by the poet Kudaluru Kilar at the instance of the Chera king Irumporai. This has been classified into five parts. The first hundred deal with the agricultural region and the aspect of love pertaining to it and was written by the poet Orampokiyar. The second hundred on the sea coast region is attributed to the poet Ammuvar. The third is from the famous poet Kapilar and deals with the mountain region. The authorship of the fourth hundred on the arid tracts is attributed to Odhal-andhaiyar. The fifth hundred is on the forest region and is the work of Peyanar.

Padhitruppatthu

This is a collection of hundred verses classified into ten tens as the title itself signifies. The first and the last ten are lost. The remaining eight tens celebrate eight kings of the Chera dynasty and their authorship is attributed to eight different poets. The poets

were amply rewarded by these kings. Each verse is labelled with a telling phrase occurring in it. This work is a store-house of historical facts about the Chera kings and customs and manners of the people of the Chera country (now known as Travancore State).

Paripadal

Originally this contained seventy long poems, out of which only twenty four by thirteen poets have survived the wreck of ages. The title refers to a particular metre which was popular in ancient times. Though the general theme of these verses is love, some of them are in praise of gods and some on the river Vaigai, the Tirupparankunram hills, etc. This has a commentary from the pen of the scholarly commentator Parimel-alagar.

Kalitt hogai

The poet Nallantuvanar compiled 150 songs in Kali metre, which deal with detached incidents of love in the form of dialogues. There are a good number of moral maxims in these verses. Five different authors have contributed to this collection, each dealing with an aspect of love. M.S. Pooranalingam Pillai appreciates this work as a rare and excellent specimen of Tamil literature : "its sentiment and diction are refined and polished. It abounds in implied, hidden or condensed comparisons and innuendoes."¹ We have an elaborate commentary on this from the pen of the versatile commentator Nacchinarkkiniyar.

Sangam poets

These ancient poets who have contributed to these eight anthologies knit together the feelings of man and the beauties of Nature in its closest bonds and warmest associations. These two subjects were interwoven as warp and woof in the fine tapestry of ancient Tamil poetry. The poets united the power that observes the phenomena of external Nature with an insight into human feelings as influenced by them. Most of the poems tune with the feelings and the passions of men and women depicted along with pictures of natural scenery.

These poems prove that there had been in Tamilnad a regular evolution of culture which was never rendered discontinuous by any

1 Tamil Literature, p, 62

catastrophe and that there had been in the country three indigenous dynasties of Tamil rulers called the Chera, the Chola and the Pandiya kings. The people cultivated their arts and industries peacefully and lived a moral and cultured life in cities and villages and also proved themselves to be valiant soldiers and heroic wives during wars. This is the reason why the early Tamil literature presents a picture of a vigorous civilization alive with the play of imagination, and stands till today as an inexhaustible source of the history of ancient South India.

K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar appreciates the literary merit of these poems in these words: "The literary value of these poems, particularly of the Ten Idylls, can hardly be over-estimated. Concise and elegant, lively, pulsating with human sentiments, sometimes poignantly, these poems may be called, in the plenitude of the term, classic. More sober and less rhetorical than Pindar, who is the best term of comparison, they are perhaps the only products of Indian literature, which, free from precosity and the abuse of intellectual virtuosity, have the grace, equilibrium and the sobriety of Attic art."¹

These poets wrote many stanzas but only fragments of their writings have been rescued and compiled in these anthologies. Nature in the forms of floods and fire and white ants and man himself in his apathy and neglect contributed to the disappearance of many of the works of these great poetical geniuses written on palmyra leaves. What remained have been gathered and preserved in these anthologies.

A later poet, by name Perundhevanar, author of the early Bharatham, wrote invocatory verses on gods to the eight anthologies and they are quite in tune with the ancient lyrics.

The eighteen minor works

Some of these eighteen works do not belong to the Sangam period. Though they were written later, they were classified as Minor works and treated together. Of these eighteen, eleven are didactic, while the rest are poems on love. The world-famous Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar is one of these works.

Thirukkural

This is the masterpiece of Tamil literature and the best of the ethical works of the world. The ethical literature of the Tamils had won the admiration of all the foreigners who studied it. Rev. Dr. G.U. Pope who has translated both Thirukkural and Naladiyar into English, observes : "I have felt sometimes as if there must be a blessing in store for a people that delight so utterly in compositions thus remarkably expressive of a hunger and thirst after righteousness." Dr. Albert Schweitzer appreciates Thirukkural for its wealth of maxims and remarks : "There hardly exists in the literature of the world a book which contains such lofty maxims."

This work of Thiruvalluvar in 1330 couplets shows the richness and power of the Tamil language. The metre adopted is a short couplet very well suited to convey great truths in epigrams. The book is so popular that the author as well as his work has earned the admiration and reverence of all ages, all sects and all religions. It has been rendered into almost all the important languages of Europe and India. This work has twelve old commentaries and many modern. The most popular of the old commentaries is that of Parimel Alagar.

A poet in appreciation of this great work said : "it is a perforated mustard seed in which is comprehended the riches of the seven seas", meaning thereby that there is much wisdom in every small couplet. Avvaiyar, the accomplished poetess of the age, is said to have improved his lines substituting 'atom' for 'mustard seed'. It is in three divisions—On Virtue, On State and Citizenship and On Love. Everything, the author explains from a high ethical standpoint. Ethics, philosophy, statecraft, the art of life, love, all yield their eternal secrets to this great author. Translations of a few of the couplets are given here :

"The pipe is sweet, the lute is sweet" say those
Who have not heard the prattle of their own children.
Those who do not know how to act agreeably to the world,
Though they have learnt many things, are still ignorant.
Those who endure abstinence from food are great,
Next to those who endure the uncourteous speech of others.

(Translation by Rev. Drew)

Of what avail is perfect goodness if it cannot do
 Pleasing things even to those who have pained.
 True modesty is the fear of evil deeds; all other modesty
 Is simply the bashfulness of virtuous maids.
 There are two looks in the dyed eyes of this fair one;
 One causes pain, and the other is the cure thereof.
(Translation by John Lazarus)

Forgiving trespasses is good always ;
 Forgetting them hath even higher praise.
 The loveless to themselves being alone;
 The loving men are others' to the very bore.
 Mid up-lifted hands of prayer may a weapon be hid;
 The weeping tears of foes are of like effect.
(Translation by M. S. Pooranalingam Pillai)

Naladiyar

This is an anthology of 400 quatrains composed by different Jain ascetics. The arrangement and subject-matter are almost the same as Thrikkural. It has been rendered into English by Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope. In his introduction to the translation, he remarks : "These are not so much the originality of its teaching; as the peculiar terseness and vigour of its style; and the fidelity with which it reflects the thoughts and ideas of the great mass of the Tamil people, and indeed the yeomanry of India".¹

Nanmanikkadigai

Its title means 'The salver of Four Gems'. It contains 104 quatrains and each of them consists of four gem-like maxims. Vilambinaganar is the author. Translation of two stanzas by Rev. G. U. Pope is given below:—

From the rock the radiant gem is born;
 From the dear one's speech high joys are born;
 From gentle kindness is virtuous action born;
 And everything from wealth is born.

Sweet words make men your own; harsh words
 Unpleasing cause men's hearts to harshly blame; A Gentle
 word

¹ The Naladiyar: General Introduction, p. viii

Brings gracious thoughts to human hearts. By this
The heaven that passes not is gained.

Kar-narppadhu

This contains 40 stanzas on the rainy season as the title denotes. But the season is only secondary here, as the main theme is the patient sufferings of the lady-love at home eagerly awaiting the return of her lover. There are many descriptions of Nature in this.

Kalavali-narppadhu

In this, the poet Poigaiyar describes in 40 quatrains the battle of Kalumalam and sings the praise of the Chola king Ko-chenkannan, though he was the poet-laureate of the Chera king imprisoned by him. This was only to please the victor and to obtain from him an order of release of the prisoner, who, unfortunately died of prolonged fasting and severe thirst before the order reached him.

Iniyavai-narppadhu

This deals with pleasant maxims in forty quatrains, three or four in each of them. Iniyavai means pleasing things. Pudhan Chendhanar is the author.

Inna-narppadhu

This is also in forty quatrains, each dealing with three or four maxims. But only unpleasant things to be avoided are given here. The author is the great poet Kapilar.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| { | Ain-thinai-aimbadhu |
| | Ain-thinai-elubadhu |
| | Thinai-moli-aimbadhu |
| | Thinaimalai-nutraimbadhu |

These four works come under a separate category, as each of them deals with the five aspects of love. The first and the third comprise fifty quatrains each, the second seventy and the fourth one hundred and fifty. The authors are Maran Poraiyar, Muvadiyar, Kannan-Chenthanar and Kani-Medhaviyar respectively.

Thirikadugam

The title means 'three spices' and is very appropriate as each of the hundred and one verses in this work introduces three things for comparison, contrast or illustration. The author Nalladhanar gives them as a tonic on the minds of men.

Acharakkovai

The author Peruvayin-Mulliyar explains some rules of life and etiquette in 100 stanzas. Some of these rules are not universally acceptable, but in general many of them are useful.

Palamoli-nanuru

This comprises 400 quatrains, each explaining a proverbial truth. The proverb itself is given in the last line. The author Munrurai-araiyanar is a Jain king. Some of the proverbs convey lofty ideas and ideals. Some embody old stories then prevalent in the country.

Chiru-pancha-mulam

In 98 quatrains, the author Kariyasan deals with morals and the art of life. In each quatrain there are five maxims and the title meaning 'the five small drugs' is very apt.

Mudhu-molik-kanchi

This consists of ten chapters each containing ten maxims. The author is Kudalur Kilar.

Eladhi

There are eighty-two quatrains in this work, each giving five or six points of practical wisdom. The title literally means 'medicinal articles, cardamum, etc'. The author Kanimedhaviyar is the same as for "Thinaimalai-nutraimbadhu".

Innilai or Kainnilai

These are two different works and there is difference of opinion as to which of them is included in the Eighteen Minor works. The former is by Poigaiyar and it is a work on the four objects of life, virtue, state, love and bliss.

The twin Epics

Though of a little later age viz., 200-300 A. D. the twin epics Silappadhikaram and Manimekalai are generally considered along with the Sangam classics. These two epics have been called the Illiad and the Odyssey,¹ or the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, of Tamil literature.² The author of Silappadhikaram was not an ordinary bard seeking the patronage of kings and chieftains, but he was the son of a Chera king and the young prince became an

1 Indian Inheritance, p. 146

2 Studies in Tamil Literature, V. R. R. Dikshitar, p. 78

ascetic and was therefore called Ilango-Adigal. The title means 'The story of the Anklet' and the epic describes a moving and poignant Story of Kannagi who is worshipped as the goddess of chastity in Tamilnad and in Ceylon. It is in three parts dedicated to the three capitals of the three great kingdoms of Tamilnad, *viz.*, Madhurai of the Pandiyas, Kaverippumpattinam of the Cholas and Vanchi of the Cheras. The epic gives full and vivid accounts of the Tamil society eighteen centuries ago. The author's knowledge of fine arts, especially of music and dancing are well displayed. It is remarkable for the various metres employed to suit different dramatic representations. Its fine portraitures of the heroine and the hero and its gorgeous and picturesque descriptions of various scenes are remarkable. According to the historian V. R. R. Dikshitar, it is a valuable mine of information for rewriting the history of the early Pandiya, Chola and Chera kings, and it shows the relation of states with one another, not excluding North Indian states like Avanti and Magadha.¹ As a literary work, it is an epic of dignity and sublimity written by a royal author always laying stress on the cardinal virtues of life.

The other epic Manimekalai was written by Chatthanar. It is the story of Manimekalai and her ascetic career. She was the daughter of Madhavi and Kovalan, the hero of Silappadhikaram. The author was a staunch Buddhist and there is an elaborate exposition of the doctrines of Buddhism. It also contains a wealth of details regarding the social and religious conditions and the different institutions prevalent in the country in the second or third century A. D. Though sectarian in outlook, this work is appreciated for its easy flow of words and lucid expression of ideas.

Mediaeval Period (600 A. D. to 1200 A. D.)

The three centuries after the twin epics form a period of darkness and the next epoch in Tamil literature begins in the 6th century A. D. with the devotional songs of the Saiva Nayanmars and the Vaishnava Alvars. They came at a time when Jain and Buddhist influences were in their climax and these two religions

were the chief objects of their attack. Jain and Buddhist institutions gradually lost their popularity but individual authors of those religions continued to contribute to the growth of Tamil literature and poetical and grammatical works. What they lost in their religious institutions they gained through their works as authors and commentators.

Another distinct change during this period is the fall of the age-old dynasties of the Tamil land and the ascendancy of the Pallavas till 10th century. The Pallava kings were great patrons of Sanskrit literature and consequently Sanskrit works came to be translated into Tamil, and free mixture of Sanskrit words and adaptation of Sanskrit works was encouraged.

Devotional Literature

Thirugnanasambandar, Thirunavukkarasar, Sundarar and Manickavachagar are the four great exponents of Saivism called Nayanmars. The Alvars of Vaishnavism are twelve viz., Poygai Alwar, Pudhatthalwar, Peyalwar, Thirumalisai Alwar, Thiruppan Alwar, Thondaradipodi Alwar, Thirumangai Alwar, Kulasekara Alwar, Periyalwar, Andal, Nammalwar and Madhura Kaviyar. These saints travelled from place to place, from shrine to shrine throughout the length and breadth of Tamilnad and wove their songs of mysticism and praise round the local deities. To them, religion was devotion to God through love (bhakti) and in the ecstasy of such devotion sang hundreds and thousands of songs which embodied both depth of feeling and felicity of expressions. Later on, Nambi Andar Nambi made a collection of Saivaitic hymns and arranged them into eleven Thirumurais; Saint Nathamuni rendered similar service for the Vaishnava hymns and arranged them in an anthology called Nalayirappirabandham.

Thirugnanasambandar was a contemporary of Paranjotiyar who was the commander-in-chief of the Pallava king Narasimha Varman I and distinguished himself in the battle against the Chalukyas in the middle of the seventh century A. D. His 3000 hymns form the first three 'thirumurais' of Saivism.

The next three 'thirumurais' contain 3000 hymns of saint Thirunavukkarasar who was an early contemporary of the former.

The Pallava king Mahendra Varman I was the ruler during the period of this saint.

The seventh 'thirumurai' contains 1000 hymns by Sundarar who lived during the time of the Chera king Cheraman Perumal i. e., in the early 9th century. His poems called Thirutthondar Thiru-Andhadhi formed the basis of the Saiva epic Periya Puranam.

These 7000 hymns of the three Saiva Nayanmars are called Thevaram. They have been recited in the South Indian temples in an age-long tradition from the twelfth century onwards and their music is indigenous to the soil and is still preserved without any significant change. The Carnataga music of South India is said to have originated from this ancient indigenous music of Tamilnad.

The eighth 'thirumurai' is by Manikkavachagar and is in two parts, Thiruvachagam and Thirukkovaiyar. His soul-stirring lyrics take the foremost rank among the devotional songs of Tamil literature. Rev. G. U. Pope has translated Thiruvachagam into English. This work is the spontaneous outpouring of his ardent feelings and emotions under the stress of sublime spiritual impulses. The other work Thirukkovaiyar contains 400 mystic stanzas on the theme of love and has a commentary from the pen of Perasiriyar.

The ninth group or 'thirumurai' consists of the hymns of nine other devotees who came later and they are called 'Thiru-visaippa'. The tenth contains 3000 mystic songs by the great yogi Thirumular who preceded all these saints. His work is called Thirumandhiram or sacred mantras and they are very much valued for their mystic expressions. The eleventh group embodies a number of poems composed by various other devotees from Nakkirar to the compiler Nambi Andar Nambi himself. The twelfth is the great work of Sekkilar called Periyapuranam which is a composite literature treating of the lives of sixty-three devotees in seventy-two cantos of 4286 stanzas.

Periyapuranam was composed during the reign of Kulotthunga II (1133-1150 A. D.). It is an epic of a high standard remarkable for its chaste diction and sublime religious feelings as well as its

poetic qualities. It is an encyclopaedia of information of the different tribes and classes of the Tamil country of the mediaeval period and of their customs, manners, practices, occupations, pastimes, ornaments, etc.

As aforesaid, the collection of 4000 Vaishnava hymns is called *Nalayirappirabandham*. Of the twelve Alwars, the largest number of hymns have been contributed by Thirumangai Alwar and Nammalwar. The first thousand hymns are known as Thirumoli and are the works of seven Alwars including Andal, the daughter of Periyalwar whose mystic songs are poetry of a very high order. The second thousand hymns are by Thirumangai Alwar and are known as Peria-thirumoli. The third thousand songs, called 'Iyalpa' are by the first three Alwars. Nammalwar's hymns are classified as the fourth thousand. His work 'Thiruvaymoli' is the most famous devotional poetry and is noted for the depth and reach of philosophical ideas and mystic experience. It is said to be the very essence of the Veda.

These works of Alwars had excellent commentaries from a group of devotees of a later period and they are remarkable for their subtlety, sagacity and devotion to the Alwars.

The Kaviyams

There are five major 'kaviyams' and five minor 'kaviyams' in Tamil. The twin epics already dealt with are included in the major kaviyams. The other three are Jivaka Chinthamani, Valaiyapathi and Kundalakesi. The five minors are Nilakesi, Chulamani, Udhayanan Kathai, Yasodhara-kaviyam and Nagakumarakaviyam. These are either Jain or Buddhist works and though written with the primary view of propagating those religions, some of these have been widely read by all sects for their literary merits. The last one of the minor kaviyams is known only by name. Only fragments of Valaiyapathi, Kundalakesi and Yasodhara-kaviyam are available now.

Jivaka Chinthamani was written by the Jain ascetic, Thiruthakka-dhevar of 10th century A.D. This Jain epic is based on the Sanskrit original Kshatra-Chudamani. It is the story of the prince Jivaka in 3145 stanzas and is noted for its chaste diction and vivid descriptions. It brought into Tamil two new things : one was the Sanskrit Kavya form and the other the Viruttham metre which has

now become very popular with writers. Kamban's immortal epic *Ramayanam* is said to owe much to this Jain epic. It furnished a very good model for the later authors. The author's other work is *Nari-viruttham*, a small treatise of fifty *virutthams* on the nature of a fox. It teaches the instability of life and its pleasures.

Perunkathai is an epic by another Jain *Kongu-velir* who was not only a poet but also a prince who was a patron of poets. It is full of descriptions and details of institutions, instruments, customs and manners of the author's times. The story here is of *Udhayan*, King of *Vatsa*. Some parts of the work are irrecoverably lost, and only 16,000 lines are available now.

Merumanthira-puranam is another Jain work by *Vammanacharyar* and contains 1406 stanzas. It is the story of two Jain brothers and there is a full exposition of the Jain beliefs in it.

Other Works of the Period

A grammatical treatise in sixty *sutras* on clandestine love was composed by *Iraiyanar* and a very critical commentary was written in a classical style by *Nakkirar*, not the *Sangam* poet, but a scholar of a later period bearing the same name. This commentary is said to be the first prose work extant in *Tamil*, if the prose portions in the epic *Silappadhikaram* are not taken into account.

There was one *Kallatanar* among the *Sangam* poets who has contributed many classic stanzas to the ancient anthologies. Later, in this period we find another poet by the same name who has composed a work *Kalladam* which records the miracles of *Siva* and the glories of *Madhurai* in 100 stanzas of *Agaval* metre. There was another poet called *Kallada-devanayanar* who composed a small treatise on the life of the *Saiva* devotee *Kannappar* called '*Thirukannappa Dhevar Maram*.'

Purapporul-Venba-Malai is a grammar work on *Purapporul* which includes war, state-administration and citizenship. It is divided into twelve chapters based on an earlier work *Panniru-padalam* which is lost. There are 361 quatrains which throw much light on the political and social conditions of the past.

Cheraman Perumal was a *Chera* king and a *Saiva* devotee, a contemporary of *Saint Sundar*, whom he accompanied in his pilgrim-

mage to the sacred shrines. He composed four devotional works, the chief of them being Thiruk-kailai-Jnana-Ula. There were other Siva worshippers, Senthanaṇḍar and eight others whose hymns were collected and arranged in the Saiva Thirumurai under the title 'Thiruvaiṣippa.' One of those devotees, Kandaradhithanaṇḍar was a prince, a descendant of the Chola king Paranthakan I. Pattinaṭṭhaṇḍar, a rich merchant of Kavirippumpattinaṇḍam was also a Saiva devotee and his compositions also find place in the 'Thirumurai.' Nambi-Andaṇḍar-Nambi, the compiler of these 'thirumurai' also richly contributed to the eleventh volume. His Thiru-thondar-thiru Andhaḍhi formed the basis of the Saiva hagiology, Periapuraṇam which was added to the 'Thirumurai' as the twelfth and the last group.

Jain scholars were as active during this period as the writers of other religions and they produced grammar works, commentaries and lexicons. Narkkaviraṇḍa Nambi wrote Agappaṇḍuḷ Vilakkam explaining the rules and conventions of the five aspects of love as dealt with in Tamil literary works, especially in that species of literature called Kovai. Guṇasaṅḍaraṇḍar and Amithasaṅḍaraṇḍar, two contemporary Jain ascetics wrote grammatical work on Tamil prosody, viz., Yappaṇḍunkalam and Yappaṇḍunkalakkaṇḍigai. The latter work was annotated by the author of the former. They framed rules for the new metres Viruttham, etc., adapted from Sanskrit. Guṇaviraṇḍaḍṭhaṇḍar, another Jain author wrote Nemiṇaḍḍham, a grammatical treatise on Orthography and Morphology. It is also called Sinnuḷ. Vacchaṇaṇḍhi-malai or Venbaṇḍa-pattiyal is another grammatical work by this author, which explains the conventions that were set up in later days regarding the auspiciousness of certain letters and words in the beginning of a treatise. It also deals with the different kinds of literary works of the mediaeval period.

Putthamiṭṭhiraṇḍar wrote an elaborate work on the five-fold divisions of Tamil grammar, viz., Letters, Words, Subject-matter, Prosody and Rhetoric. He lived during the reign of Vira Chola and his work is named after him as Vira-Choliyaṇḍam. He diverged from the rules and conventions of Tamil grammar and freely adopted the rules of Sanskrit grammar. Consequently his work was not accepted by the learned and soon fell into oblivion.

Ilampuranar was a Jain scholar with deep knowledge of the ancient Tamil literature. He was the pioneer-commentator on *Tolkappiyam*, the ancient grammatical treatise, and was therefore called 'the commentator', 'Uraiyasiriyar', by the later commentators. A Jain ascetic Pavananthi studied his commentary keenly and with the help of that composed a grammar on Orthography and Morphology at the instance of the king of Kolar (Mysore), Siya-Ganga-Amarabharanan. His work, *Nannul*, though defective in some points, has been the popular grammar book for the past several centuries. It has been annotated by many scholars.

Thivagaram and Pingalandhai are the two lexicons of this period. Thivagarar and his son Pingalar composed these works. They were also Jains.

The later Avvaiyar

There lived in this age another poetess of the same name as the Avvaiyar of the Sangam period and she was also equally great and popular and enjoyed the patronage of kings and chieftains. There are many legends regarding her, all ascribing to her a highly original character. Her works are simple and full of practical wisdom and through them she became a friend of the people all over the country. According to some legends, she was the contemporary of the great poet Kamban and was senior to him in many respects. *Atthichudi*, *Konraivendhan*, *Mudhurai* and *Nalvali* are her important works. They are a series of moral and prudential precepts expressed in pointed and condensed sentences. There are many other minor poems attributed to her.

Kamban

He is the poet who produced the immortal Tamil epic *Kamba Ramayanam*. Though it is an adaptation of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, it shows an originality of composition and excels in poetic merits. He has so mastered the Tamil language that in his poetry thought and expression go hand in hand. His powers of description and narration are wonderful. Like Kalidasa and Shakespeare, he is fancy's child. His imagination runs riot in many places. The great patriot V.V.S. Aiyar has produced a critical study of this great work and therein he says: "It is my purpose in this book to make an attempt

to prove that in the Ramayana of Kamban the world possesses an epic which can challenge comparison not merely with the Iliad and the Aeneid, the Paradise Lost and the Mahabharata, but with the original itself, namely the Ramayana of Valmiki. This is not the language of mere patriotic enthusiasm. It is an opinion that has grown slowly with years and after deep and careful study."

Kamban chose Viruttham as the metre for his great work and he succeeded in making the Tamil verse as decorative and melodious as possible. His age is according to some, tenth century, and others say that he lived in the early twelfth century. His patron was Sadaiyappa Vallal in whose praise there are some memorable poems in the great epic. His other works are not so popular; they are Sadagopar-andhadhi, Sarasvathi andhadhi, Er-elubadhu, Cholakuravanji, Silai-elubadhu and Thirukkai-vilakkam.

His son Ambigapathi was also a poet of high order. Ambigapathikkovai was his only work.

Ottak-kutthar

He was a contemporary of Kamban and wrote the seventh part of Ramayanam viz., Uttharakandam which winds up Kamban's work. He was, according to legends, a very severe critic of poetry and was merciless towards his juniors. Andhadhi, Kovai and Ula are his favourite forms of literary works. His Thakkayagapparani is a pioneer work in 'Parani' literature. 'Parani' is a species of literature which eulogises a warrior who has killed a thousand male elephants in a battlefield. His other works are Muvar Ula, Itti Elubadhu, etc.

Jayankondar

He is the author of the famous war-poem, Kalingatthupparani that describes the conquest of Kalinga country by the Chola king Kulottunga I. Similes, hyperboles and other poetic fancies abound in this work. The stanzas are remarkable for their harmony of sound and sense.

Later Period (1200 A. D. to 1750 A. D.)

In this period came many minor poets and commentators and religious leaders of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Jainism had already lost its ground and these two religions reigned supreme. The Shaiva Siddhanta philosophy, the philosophy indigenous to South India, was formulated and systematised by a group of leaders, the chief among them being Meykandar whose Sivajnana Bodham is the greatest of the Shaiva scriptures. Shivajnanaswamigal wrote an elaborate commentary on it called Dravida Maha Bhashyam. The works of the other apostles are thirteen in number and these together with the scripture mentioned above are called the Fourteen Shaiva Siddhanta Shastras. Among the Vaishnavas, there arose a group of Acharyas from Nan-Jiyar to Periya Jiyar who wrote elaborate commentaries on the Four Thousand Hymns of the Alvars. Their style is intelligible only to the orthodox and to those who know Sanskrit; for they are written in a mixed language of Tamil and Sanskrit called Manipravalam (meaning 'gem and coral'). But their service to the sacred hymns is of great value and has no parallel in the literary world.

There was another school of great men called the Eighteen Siddhars. They were mystics and experts in medicine and philosophy. Their verses are very simple but difficult to interpret. Even colloquialism finds place in these works. They have been very popular on account of their value as mystic poetry.

Another school of literary men also belong to this period. They are the famous commentators of Tholkappiyam and other ancient works. They have brought out the deeper meanings of the texts and supplemented them by explanations and quotations from other works. The pioneers among them were Nakkirar, the commentator of Kala-viyal (also called Iraiyanar Agapporul) and Ilampuranar who commented on Tholkappiyam. They belong to the mediaeval age. Later on Perasiriyar, Senavaraiyar, Nacchinarkkiniyar, Adiyarkunallar, Mayilainadhar and others came to the field one by one. Each of these annotators has his own style and characteristic merits. All of them have rendered invaluable service to the understanding

and preservation and popularization of many literary works. Their erudition, critical study and minute observation are appreciable. The commentary of Adiyarkkunallar on Silappadhikaram deserves special mention here, for he gives many authentic references and valuable informations in the course of his annotations.

Thirukkural had many commentators and of them Parimelalagar is noted for his subtlety and terseness.

There were a number of minor poets who made their valuable contributions to the Tamil literature. Some of them even distinguished themselves as great writers of the age. Some produced monumental adaptations of Sanskrit works.

Poyyamolip-pulavar composed Thanjai-vanan Kovai of 400 stanzas illustrating Narkaviraja Nambi's grammar on love theme. Paranjothi's popular work Thiruvilaiyadal-puranam celebrates the great deeds of grace of Shiva and it is an adaptation of the Sanskrit work Halasya Mahathmiyam. There is again a lexicon by a Jain writer Mandalapurudar and it is called Sudamani-Nigandu. Villiputhurar was an expert in composing verses to desired effects of sounds called 'sandhams' and with this talent wrote Bharatham, an adaptation of the Sanskrit Itihasa of Vyasa. Sanskrit words are freely mixed in this work as well as in the hymns of his contemporary Arunagirinadhar. Yet they are admired for the rush of verses and sandhams in their works.

Kalamegap-pulavar is reputed for his extempore verses. Among his works, Thiru Anaikka-Ula deserves mention. He has left us many isolated poems. There are many legends referring to his miraculous feats of poetic composition. Adhimadhura-kavi was his contemporary.

Two poets (twins) by name Irattaiyar lived in this period. Of them the elder was lame and the younger blind and so the former got on the shoulders of the latter and led the way. They earned their livelihood through their poetic talents. The first two lines of each quatrain were composed by one of them, and immediately the other completed it. Ekambanadhar Ula and many isolated verses are their contribution.

Another Kalambagam by name Thiru-pathirippuliyur Kalambagam was written by Tholkappiya-Thevar. This is a species of literature in Tamil comprising 100 verses varying in subject matter as well as in metre.

Some of the Puranas in Sanskrit were translated into Tamil, and some adapted. Some other Puranas were composed to celebrate the deities of some shrines. One such is Sethu-Puranam by Niramba-alagiya Dhesigar, who was proficient in Sanskrit and Tamil. He also wrote Thirupparangiri-Puranam. Adhivira-Rama-Pandiyan of the Pandiya dynasty wrote many works. Of them Naidatham is popular. Kasikandam (celebrating Kasi or Benares), Ilingapuram and Kurmapuranam are translations of Sanskrit Puranas. His hymnal work Thirukkaruvai-padhitruppatthandhadhi is in melting strains. Narunthogai, otherwise known as Vetrivarkai is a series of maxims written by him in a chaste and classical style. His elder brother Varathunga Pandiyan is also a poet. Piramottara-kandam eulogises the Shaiva religion and contains many mythologies.

Harischandra-puranam was written by Virak-kavirayar. The verses are simple and flowing. It is the story of the king Harishchandra and the Queen Chandramadhi. The author's selection of diction and metre to suit the feelings of the reader, is appreciable. Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa was translated into Tamil by Arasa-kesariyar.

The Tamil Milton was the blind poet Viraraghava Mudaliar. He wrote many isolated verses and two works celebrating the deity and the shrine at Thirukkalukunram.

Among the later Jains, there was a poet who deserves mention here. He was Thirumunaippadiyar, the author of a work of moral maxims called Araneric-charam.

Kandapuram is an elaborate work in 10346 stanzas based on the Sanskrit Shiva Shankara Sangithai. The author Kachiyappa Shivachariar was a master of Tamil and Sanskrit. It is full of legends and stories as well as descriptions of the different regions. His student Koneriyappar is said to have added one more chapter Upadesa Kandam to this religious work.

The Shaiva monasteries called 'mutts' served as seats of Tamil learning, particularly philosophy and religion. Literary works were preserved and taught and annotated. New works were produced by competent scholars of the mutts, sometimes by the heads of these institutions who distinguished themselves by their erudition. There were a number of them attached to the Thiruvavadhurai mutt and the Dharumapuram mutt. Thiruvannamali mutt and Thuraimangalam mutt of Virashaiva cult also contributed to the Tamil literature. Isana Dhesigar alias Swaminadha Dhesigar composed a grammatical treatise called Ilakkanak-kotthu and a philosophical work and a Kalambagam besides other minor works of less importance. His disciple Shankara-Namacchivayar wrote an elaborate and valuable commentary on the grammar book Nannul. Sivajnana Munivar's works are many and varied. Some of them are Tholkappiya Sutra Vrutti, (a grammatical treatise), Kanchipuranam (on a celebrated deity of Kanchipuram or Conjeevur), Dravida Maha Bhashyam (an elaborate commentary on the original Shaiva Scripture Shivajnana-Bodham), and Somesar Mudhumoli Venba. He established his fame as a great thinker, controversialist, grammarian, commentator, philosopher and poet.

Vinayaka Puranam, Thanigaip-puranam and some other minor works were produced by Kacchiappa Munivar.

Vaidhiyanadha Navalur's grammar Ilakkana Vilakkam was an improvement on Nannul and allied grammar works but was not so popular. With his help, a literary work 'Prabodha Chandrodhayam' in 2012 stanzas was written by Thiruvengkattammannan.

Kumaraguruparar and Sivappirakasara are the two eminent poets of this period who have produced immortal works.

Kumaraguruparar lived in the seventeenth century and turned a Shaiva ascetic at the Dharumapuram mutt. He became a poet very early in his life. He went to North India, had an interview with the Moghul Emperor Akbar and established a mutt at Benares. He learnt Hindi and Sanskrit and his discourses on Kamba Ramayanam in the North Indian language are said to have inspired

many devotees and scholars there. Kandhar Kali Venba, Pandara Mummanik-kovai, Minatchi-Pillai-Tamil, Minatchi Ammai Kuram, Minatchi Irattai Manimalai and Madhuraik-Kalambagam are some of his works. He wrote a 'kalambagam' on Benares while residing in his mutt there and named it Kasik-kalambagam. Kalambagam means a medley and as already explained, is a species of literature in Tamil containing 100 stanzas on a variety of subjects and in different metres. A moral treatise, Nithineri Vilakkam consists of 192 stanzas and is a lamp in the path of righteousness as its title indicates. The first stanza, as rendered into English by M. S. Purnalingam Pillai¹ is as follows :—

Youth is a bubble on the water; wealth's plenitude
Is as long waves that roll on its surface;
This well-knit frame is writing traced on the water, my
friends !

Why bow we not within the courts of Him, our Lord.

The other eminent author, Shivappirakasar belonged to the Virashaiva mutt at Thuraimangalam. His younger brothers Karunaipirakasar and Velayya Dhesigar were also scholars and writers. Shivappirakasar is the author of twenty three works, some of which are literary and some others religious. Of them Pirabulingaleelai is a valuable literature of epic type and is widely read. Nalvar Nanmani malai eulogises the four Shaiva apostles of Thevaram and 'Thiruvachagam and is the most popular work of this author. His ethical treatise Nanneri is in classical style and is well known for its wealth of similes. One of its stanzas in its English rendering is given below² :—

The friendship of the good will daily increase in sweetness ;
Others' friendship will ever more and more become worthless,
Hear, O beloved !

If the tender fruit ripen, it becomes sweet to the taste ;
If the twig grow mature, what pleasure's there ?

1 Tamil Literature, p. 297.

2 Tamil Literature by M. S. Purnalingam Pillai, p. 303.

The poet's brother Velayya Dhesigar was the author of three puranas and three 'malais' and one 'leelai'. The other brother Karunaip-pirakasar died young leaving Kalatthippuranam to be completed by his brother Velayya Dhesigar.

Thatthuvarayar, Kannudaiyavallal, Santhalinga Dhesigar and Thayumanavar were the philosopher-poets of the age. The former composed many works of philosophy. Of these, Thayumanavar is the most popular and his works are remarkable for his zeal and devotion as well as his tolerance and catholicity.

Pillaipperumal Ayyangar, a devout Vaishnava produced eight poetical works which are compiled as 'Ashta Pirabandham'. Ellappa Navalar, a Shaiva poet and the former's contemporary composed three puranas and one 'Kalambagam'. Padikkasupulavar is known for his Thondai-mandala Sathagam ; it is a work full of informations about Thondai-mandalam, the northern districts of Tamilnad. There are many isolated verses of this poet collected in Thanip-padal-thirattu. His contemporary Palapattadaichokkanadhappulavar is the author of some minor works, including 'Thevai Ula', which eulogises the shrine of Ramesvaram.

Nallappillai added about ten thousand stanzas to Villiputhurur's epic Bharatham and amplified it. His other work Thevayanai Puranam in 3000 stanzas is almost forgotten by the Tamils. There were many other minor poets whose works also have met the same fate, the reason being their lack of originality.

Modern Period (1750 to 1950)

The advent of Muslims into South India resulted in the rise of poets among the Muslims. During the British administration, the influence of western literature and the study of English have contributed much to the development of Tamil literature.

Among the Muslim poets, Umaru-pulavar is the author of the epic Seerap-puranam narrating the life of the prophet Mohammed in 12000 stanzas. Masthan Sahib is reputed for his devotional lyrics and philosophical verses, which closely resemble those of Thayumanavar.

Many European scholars also enriched Tamil literature by their grammar works, lexicons, research works and even by poems. Among the earliest, Constantius Beschi from Italy stands the foremost. He called himself Viramamunivar and dressed like the Tamils. In the course of ten or twelve years he learned Tamil and wrote *Thembavani*, an epic recounting the incidents connected with the Old and the New Testaments. It is a valuable poetical work rich in imagination and descriptions. His *Sathur-Agarathi* is the first Tamil dictionary. He wrote two Tamil grammar works in Latin and one in Tamil. The latter is called *Thonnul-Vilakkam* and elaborately treats the five parts of Tamil grammar. His *Vethiyar Olukkam* and *Avi-viveka-Purana Guru Kathai* are some of the earliest prose works in Tamil. He also composed a *kalambagam* (medley) and some other minor works.

Dr. Caldwell was a great linguist and a pioneer in Dravidian philology. His comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages is yet a very valuable work of research, though a few of his theories are not acceptable now.

Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope translated *Thirukkural*, *Naladiyar* and *Thiruvachagam* and enriched them with valuable introductions, lexicons, concordances and notes. His strenuous and untiring labours of love for Tamil literature will always be remembered with gratitude by the Tamils.

Among the native Christian poets *Vedanayagam Pillai* and *Krishna Pillai* deserve special mention. The former has many works to his credit. They are written in simple style and contain maxims of a high standard. *Nithinul*, *Penmadhimalai* and *Sarva samayak-kirtthanai* are some of his poetical works. *H. A. Krishna Pillai's Rakshanya Yatrigam* or *Pilgrim's Progress* is a valuable Christian epic in 4000 stanzas.

Thirikuda Rasappak-kavirayar wrote an immortal work *Kutralak-kuravanchi*, which in dramatic form celebrates the deity and the shrine of *Kutralam* (Courtallum). The famous waterfall at *Kutralam* is described in many stanzas with vivid imagination and powerful diction. He is the author of thirteen other works, one of

them being a puranam eulogising the same deity and the same shrine.

Mukkudal Pallu is a type of literature written by Ennaiyina Pulavar. It is a witty and humorous dramatic representation of the peasants' life. The other works of this type are not so popular.

Arunachalak-kavirayar immortalised his name through his Rama-nadagam which is a narration of the story of Ramayana in the form of an opera. He is also the author of a puranam on the sacred place Sirkali, and another work of drama called Asomuki Nadagam.

Maccha-puranam, a free rendering of the Sanskrit work of the same title was written in verses by Vadamalaiyappappillaiyan. Among his other works are one puranam on Nidur, a sacred place and a medley in 100 verses.

Ramalinga Swamigal was the spiritual leader of the country in the nineteenth century. He was also an inspired poet. All his poems are devotional songs on a high plane and the collection goes by the name of Arutpa, i.e. verses by Divine Grace. They are very melodious and soul-stirring hymns. His Jiva-Karunya-Olukkam is one of the best prose works written during the last century. His power of expression and depth of feeling are remarkable. He was a great saint and mystic who had realised the oneness of all religions.

Meenakshi sundaram Pillai was a prolific writer of the nineteenth century. His contributions are 16 'puranams', 9 'pillait-tamils', 11 'andhadhis', 2 'kalambagams', 4 'malais', 1 'kovai', 1 'ula', 1 'leelai', etc. Thirunagaikkaron Puranam is a typical puranam in 2506 stanzas, a Tamil rendering of a Sanskrit original.

Ceylon has produced a number of scholars and writers who have enriched Tamil literature by their valuable contributions. Arumuga Navalar of Jaffna came to Madras and devoted his life to this field and edited many works with great care. He was the first Tamil author to write school-texts in prose. He also rendered Periyapuranam in standard prose and paved the way for the development of modern prose style. C. W. Damodaram Pillai also came from Jaffna and was a pioneer in editing Tamil classics. He

composed a poetic work *Unjal* on a deity, besides some isolated poems written on occasions. Kathiraivel Pillai compiled a popular dictionary in Tamil. Murugesu Pandithar was another author from Jaffna who wrote *Nithinuru* (Hundred Maxims) and other minor works, *Unjal*, *Pathikam*, *Siledai*, etc. Many are the men of letters who confined to Jaffna itself and contributed to Tamil literature.

Vedanayagam Pillai's *Piradhabamudaliar Charitram* inaugurated novel in Tamil. Professor P. Sundaram Pillai wrote a Tamil drama in blank verse, *Manonmaniyam*, on the model of Shakespeare's plays and opened a new field of Tamil literature. His research articles are invaluable. V. G. Suriyanarayana Sastriar was a poet and dramatist. He also wrote three dramas on the Shakespearian model, viz., *Rupavathi*, *Kalavathi* and *Manavijayam*. He also composed a grammar on the art of drama, *Nataka Iyal*. There is a collection of his poems on different subjects, *Pavalar Virundhu* (Poets' Feast) and another collection of sonnets, *Thanip-pasurat-Thokai*. The latter was translated into English by Dr. G. U. Pope. His prose works are much appreciated for his high style. 'Tamil Moliyin Varalaru' is a pioneer work of History of the language.

Twentieth century has produced many talented men of letters in various fields, poetry, prose, drama, novel, journal, etc. Dr. Swaminatha Ayyar unearthed many literary works and edited and published each of them with his enlightening preface and valuable index and concordance etc. His patient work and ardent zeal in the old Sangam classics were unique. His prose works are many and varied and are models of simple and lively style.

Swami Vedhachalam alias Maraimalai-adigal wrote a number of prose works, research theses, poems and novels in chaste Tamil of a high standard. His translation of Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam* into Tamil is exquisite. His object was to place the Tamil language in its pristine purity. He was the first to write critical works of great worth on Sangam literature.

The prose and poetical works of Thiru. Vi. Kalyana-sundara Mudaliar are remarkable for their dynamic vigour and lofty ideals.

His 'Valkkaik-kurippugal' is an excellent model of autobiography. Among his prose works, Pennin Perumai, Manidha Valkkaiyum Gandhi Adigalum and Ulloli are his masterpieces. He was a journalist of a very high standard.

Karthigeya Mudaliar, Srinivasa Pillai, Raghava Ayyangars, Subramaniya Pillai and Soma Sundara Bharathiyar are the other critics and prose-writers of the period.

The great poet of modern times, Subramanya Bharathi came at a time when India was in a social, political and cultural revolution. The poet's works reveal deep influence of Mazzini's writings. The Tamil patriot-scholar V. O. Chidambaram Pillai's vigorous political life and the great national movement stirred his emotions. This is the reason why Bharathi was able to understand and feel the many painful problems of the present when most of his contemporaries among the Tamil authors were quite satisfied with the old, traditional, sterile and unproductive themes. This also explains why of all the English poets Shelley appealed to him so much that he founded a literary circle called Shelleyan Guild and read and explained the verses of this English poet of liberty to his friends. In his poetry, as in his life, Bharathi is a poet of freedom. Personal freedom, the National liberty and the fundamental equality of all men find reiterated expression in his verses. His national poems are concerned with the national movement for freedom. His religious and philosophical poems are born of his inner experience and his craving for universal brotherhood or oneness. For children he has composed many songs Pappap-pattu and others and a small book of maxims 'Pudhiya Atthichudi' which is in imitation of the work of the ancient poetess Avvaiyar. Panjali Sabadham is a short epic written by him, in a powerful language. It is based on a single episode of the Mahabharatha. Therein we see his attempt to integrate the present forces with the past history. It is only after his death in 1921, that his literary greatness came to be more and more appreciated and the value of his works Kannan-pattu and Kuyil was fully recognised. Now Bharathi is a name near and dear to every Tamil heart. His songs are heard in every concert and meeting and are seen in every book and journal in Tamil.

V. O. Chidambaram Pillai was a reputed politician and composed a few books in verse. They are ethical and philosophical. Chelvakesavaraya Mudaliar wrote a critical study of Kamban and another of Thiruvalluvar and some other prose works. His prose is of a peculiar type, interspersed with many proverbs and full of Sanskrit words. V. V. S. Iyer, another patriot, translated Thirukural into English, wrote an appreciation of Kamban with English rendering of selected stanzas. P. Sambandha Mudaliar is a prolific writer of dramas more suited for staging than for reading. The poet Dhesigavinayagam Pillai mastered the art of translating English poems into Tamil and his poetic contributions of this type are many. Bharathi Dhasan and Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai are the popular poets after Subramanya Bharathiar.

Though Tamil flourished as a cultured language even before the Christian era, there were no pure prose works as such before the advent of the Europeans into South India. Fr. Beschi was one of the pioneers who wrote prose works and created models for writers who came subsequently. Ramalinga Swamigal, Arumuga Navalar, Vedhanayagam Pillai contributed much to the development of prose. Prose-writing became quite common in the beginning of this century on account of the political, social and cultural movements and the Tamil journals that catered to the needs of the people. Patriots like Chidambaram Pillai and Bharathiar, and journalists like Thiru. Vi. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and Kalki Krishnamurthi distinguished themselves as eminent writers of prose. Maraimalai Adigal wrote in a chaste and charming style and insisted on the use of pure Tamil words only. He led the Puritan movement in Tamil prose which exercised great influence on his contemporaries as well as his successors.

Rajam Ayyar and Madhavayya contributed to the growth of novel in Tamil literature. Bengali novels and English novels and Marathi novels were translated into Tamil. In course of time, the novel found many readers among the Tamils and consequently number of authors engaged themselves in this field.

The short story in Tamil came much later than the novel. Rev.

Beschi in the eighteenth century and Vedanayagam Pillai and Veerasami Chettiar in the nineteenth century wrote many short stories but the technique was developed only in the beginning of this century. The great poet Bharathi and the patriot V.V.S. Ayyar have left us several short stories which are interesting and inspiring models.

Pudhumaip-pitthan, Ku. Pa. Rajagopalan and Kalki Krishnamurthi have contributed much to this species of literature. Of these men of letters, Pudhumaip-pitthan was the most original and talented artist. His translations also are valuable. There are at present many volumes of collections of short stories by different authors, some of them already fading as books of the hour and some shining brighter as books of all times.

There is a good future for the novel and the short story in Tamil and there are already a number of books worth preserving. But the drama inspite of the contributions of Sundaram Pillai, Suryanarayana Sastriar and others, has not yet made its mark as a species of literature worth reading, though it has been exquisitely developed on the stage.

General Evaluation

Tamil literature reflects the culture and civilization of South India from the early period of 1000 B. C. The early literary works were all secular, a part of them dealing with state, citizenship, war and moral and the rest dealing with love in all its subtle psychological aspects with Nature's background. The poets are capable of the loveliest and most dignified utterances even on erotic themes. The matter and the metre are indigenous and have no parallel in any other literature. Purity of diction, unity of thought, directness of expression and intensity of emotion characterised these early literary compositions. Humanity is mirrored in its esoteric and exoteric aspects in these crystal-clear utterances. Among the 473 poets, there are about 30 poetesses including the famous Avvaiyar and about 25 royal poets. This is an evidence of the high cultural development of the period.

Dr. G. U. Pope points out, "classical Tamil bears every mark of slow and natural evolution". He also remarks that "the ancient grammatical works existing in Tamil, and its wonderful metrical system prove its assiduous cultivation for long ages. An elaborate, scientific series of metres, such as Tamil glories in, adapted to every style and theme of composition, is the growth of centuries". It is this age which produced the eminent didactic works including the immortal Thirukkural universally praised for its high ethical codes and inspiring practical wisdom.

In the next epoch, the devotional poetry is of special importance. It is so rich and so sublime that its influence has been predominantly felt in almost all the subsequent works till today. Later on, poetry takes a new way to adjust itself to the changes of time, to suit the people's enthusiasm for religious activities and social ideologies. Poets of various religious institutions come forward with epics to propagate their own religions—Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism. Among them there are a few immortal works which have stood the test of time and are now accepted as great books for all times and for all sects. The influence of the Itihasas, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata as well as the Sanskrit works of the Jains is clearly seen in the Tamil literary works of this epoch.

It is only in the later period that the Sanskrit puranas are translated and adapted into Tamil. The literature of this period is full of the frigid conceits and the pedantic exercises of the grammarians, and the simplicity, the directness and the restraint characteristic of the early literature are now lost. Most of the poets of this age seem imitative and repetitive not only in their narrations but also in their descriptions. Taste in poetry has become sophisticated and poets are judged by the jingle of their alliteration and the acrobatics of their metre. We come across with really talented writers capable of original productions but they are only a very few. Even the works of these eminent poets evince a childish delight in riotous imaginations and hyperbolic utterances. There is, in many

works of this period, not so much of art as of artificiality, and therefore many of these works have fallen into oblivion.

The modern period, with its craving for realism has lost much of imagination. On account of the close contact with other nations and cultures many foreign and alien elements have become our own and to a certain extent enabled us to enrich our literature. In prose, though not in poetry, many new themes and forms have come up. Prose works are multiplying in the form of novels and short stories. Only drama is yet to develop and improve in characterisation and in evolution of plots.

The new epoch of renaissance in Tamil literature ushered in with the great poet Bharathi as its leader.



TELUGU

Origin and Growth of Telugu

Telugu is also known as Andhra which is, however, a fictitious name used in consequence of the historical fact that the Andhra Empire in course of time extended over a large part of the Telugu Country. But the Andhra Empire and the Telugu Country were never exactly co-extensive. A part of the modern Maharashtra Country, which for a long time formed part of the Andhra Empire was never a part of the Telugu Country. The modern coastal districts of the Telugu Country belonged to Kalinga and were not a part of the Andhra Empire. It may be said that they were also conquered by the Andhra Emperors but it cannot be maintained that they were held for such a long time as could be sufficient to flood it with Andhra race or Andhra language.

Of the earliest known poets of the Telugu literature of the 11th and 12th centuries A. D., Nannaya and Nannichoda used the words Telugu and Tenugu to denote the language in which they composed their poems. When Nannichoda used "*Andhra Vishaya*" to denote the country in which he said "that *Telugu* was fostered by the Chalukya kings", "*Andhra Vishaya*" was used by him like "British India" or "Portuguese Goa", though it was quite out of date when used by him.

Subsequent writers took a fancy to use '*Andhra*' to mean "Telugu" either for language or country or people. '*Andhra*' sounds more dignified and enters into Sanskrit compounds more readily than 'Telugu'. Foreigners that visited the country, people dwelling on or near its borders and the ordinary people generally would use the word 'Telugu' to denote either the language or the country or the people. It is only in recent times of political awakening and nationalism that '*Andhra*' came to be a favourite expression and

many Telugus particularly of the Coastal districts are now fond of using it. But the Telugus of the Rayalasima districts and of Warrangal have not only no fancy for 'Andhra' but prefer to call themselves 'Telugus' and their language 'Telugu.'

For want of space in this short brochure I do not propose to discuss here the origin of the words, 'Telu (n) gu' or 'Tenu(n) gu, both used as variant forms. In all probability the former was the earlier. The letter 'l' is changed into 'n', l a v a n a (Skt.) meaning 'salt' becomes 'n u n o' in Oriya ; 'n o l' (Tamil) meaning 'to perform a vow' becomes 'n o n' in Kannada. Moreover, 'Telu (n) gu' was in earlier times, as is at present, more frequently used than 'Tenu(n) gu' as in *Tela(n) ga*, *Telangana*, *Telinga*, *Telaings*, *Televaha* etc.

Telugu—a Dravidian language

I am entirely in favour of the theory that Telugu belongs to the Dravidian group of the Indian languages. Its foundations are entirely Dravidian, though the super-structure has become in course of time mixed like the English language by freely borrowing and assimilating foreign words. Of the other languages that contributed most to the growth of Telugu, Sanskrit stands first. When the Aryan culture spread to the South, it was the Telugu-Kannada country that embraced it earlier than any other part of South India. There are, therefore, thousands of words in Telugu that can be traced to Sanskrit either directly or through the Prakrit dialects of the Andhras and others with whom the Telugus came into contact but the linguistic affinity should not be determined by the existence of such borrowed words, whatever be their number and however extensively they may be used in the country. Linguistic affinity between any two languages has to be determined with a judicious reference to the basic words like those that relate to the parts of the body, habitat, dress and food ; terms of relationships, pronouns, numerals, affixes—prefixes and suffixes ; declensional and conjugational forms etc. Judged by such accepted principles governing the affinity of the languages, Telugu should be regarded as a language of the Dravidian group. The table shown below illustrates the point :—

(English)	Telugu	Tamil	Kannada	Malayalam
(eye)	Kannu	kan	kan	kan
(nose)	mukku	mukku	mugu	mukku
(yard)	doddi	totti	doddi	toti
(gruel)	ganji	kanji	ganji	kanni
(sour)	kali	kali	kali	kali
(brother, elder)	anna	annan	anna	annan
(brother, younger)	Tammudu	Tambi	Tamma	Tampi
(two)	rendu	irandu	Eradu	rantu
(three)	mu (n) du	munru	muru	munnu
(-with)	-toda (n)	-udan	-odane	-utan
(-to)	-ku	-ku	-ke or ge	-ku
(-in)	-lo	-il	-ol	-il
(he)	va (n) du	avan	avanu	avan
(thou)	nivu	ni	ninu	ni
(I am coming)	nenu vastu unnanu	nan varku inran	nan barutta en	nan varun nan

There is no material adequate enough to help us trace the growth of Telugu prior to Nannaya (A. D. 1022-1063) whose translation of the Sanskrit Mahabharata into Telugu is the first piece of Telugu literature as yet discovered. The language, style and art of composition which we find in Nannaya's work are so perfect and elegant that we cannot but infer that there must have been poetic composition in Telugu for a good many years prior to Nannaya and that Nannaya himself must have written a number of verses in Telugu to achieve the mastery in style which he exhibits in his work. In fact a pillar inscription at Bezwada (now known as Vijayavada) containing Yuddhamalla Shasanam (announcement) and a few other inscriptions of the pre-Nannaya period contain verses and the language used in them is almost exactly the same as was used by Nannaya. It is not possible to determine the exact period of time when the Telugu language came into existence but we are definite about its existence as a separate offshoot from the Dravidian stock

by about 600 A. D. from the evidence of a Telugu inscription containing Telugu words and phrases.

Of the four main Dravidian languages, viz., Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, Tamil has preserved the Dravidian element most and has been least affected by Sanskrit or Prakrit while the remaining three languages have freely borrowed Sanskrit and Prakrit words. Malayalam has comparatively greater Dravidian affinities with Tamil than either Kannada or Telugu and though there is a large amount of similarity between Telugu and Kannada, the Dravidian element is richer in Kannada than in Telugu. On account of its geographical position, the Telugu country was influenced by the Aryan language and culture earlier and more than the rest. It may also be said that of all the Dravidian languages Telugu is spoken by the largest number of people, about 35,000,000 while Tamil is spoken by about 20,000,000.

In tracing the earliest phase of the development of the Telugu language I shall refer first to one typical feature of the pre-Nannaya period, the pluralising particle, 'gal' or 'kal' which has survived in Tamil, Malayalam and Kannada but was replaced by 'l (u)' long before Nannaya's time. Traces of its earliest existence in Telugu have been, however, preserved in the plural forms of some words. The plural form of 'mranu' meaning 'tree' is 'mra (n) kulu' which gradually underwent changes and became 'mrakulu', 'a' in kal becomes 'u' as a result of the vowel harmony with the final 'u'—a feature peculiar to Telugu and modern Kannada. Similarly, the plural form of 'kolanu' (=tank) is 'kolankulu' which gradually underwent changes becoming 'kola(n) kulu' and 'kolakulu.' Such words are, however, very rare in Telugu. In later times, the Telugu mind was so strongly obsessed with the prevailing notion that 'lu' was the pluralising particle that if they were familiar with the singular form 'mranu' they used 'mranulu' for plural and if they were very familiar with the plural form 'mrakulu', they used 'mraku' for singular. In modern times, 'kola (n) kulu' has become obsolete but the singular form 'kolanu' is still used; hence the plural form now used is 'kolamulu.' Many words like 'igalu' (flies), 'mugulu' (elephants), 'elikalu' (rats) are used in

Telugu with the pluralising particle—'kal' or 'gal.' But the Telugus who have developed the idea that 'lu' is the pluralising particle drop only 'lu' to form the singular forms as *iga* (fly), *enugu* (elephant), *elika* (rat); cf. *i*, *anai*, *eli* in Tamil. I am disposed to think that in all probability *Telinga*, *Kuinga* and *Kalinga* (*Kolinga*) are such back forms in singular.

Telugu has retained the epicene pluralising particle 'r(ə)' as in Tamil and other Dravidian languages e. g. *varu* (those), *viru* (these) *evuru* (who), *miru* (you) but the ubiquitous influence of 'lu' is so strong that without it, the pluralising sense is not fully satisfied. Hence in course of time, forms like *varalu*, *viralu* and *miralu* developed. They look like childrens, mens, datas etc. In some cases the epicene pluralising particle 'ru' is replaced by 'lu' as in *vandru* (they) which has become *vandlu* and *vallu*; *kutundru* (daughters), *kutundlu* and *kutullu*.

Though for want of sufficient data, it is not possible to trace the gradual growth of Telugu before *Nannaya*, it is possible to indicate the lines on which changes were effected at least in a few cases with the help of two or more sets of forms, one of which was complete and the other was abridged or contracted, both of which Nannaya used; e. g., 'Pujinchitivēni' and 'Pujinchite'; the former is a compound of 'Pujinchitivi' (thou hast worshipped) and 'ēni' (=if) and the latter is the contracted form. The intermediate steps can be reconstructed from the usage of the earlier and later poets who would use any of these forms freely to suit the exigencies of metre, viz. *Pujinchitiveni*, *pujinchitenin*, *pujinchiteni*, *pujinchiten*, *pujinchite*.

In the same way, *aite*, *ante*, *unte* are respectively the abridged forms of *aitivenin* (if thou hast become), *antivenin* (if thou hast said), *untivenin* (if thou hast been). Poets use all these forms in their composition but in ordinary speech now, the abridged forms only are generally used. Till recently, these abridged forms were used with the full consciousness on the part of the speaker that they referred to the person addressed to, in the second person, singular, but now they are used without any such distinction of number, person or gender. Similarly *cheste* (=if did), *Kottise* or *Kodise* (=if struck),

pots (=if went) etc. are used with reference to any person, number or gender.

For tracing the gradual changes in the language from the time of Nannaya to the present day, we have material of various kinds, viz., classical poetry, verses in inscriptions, prose works containing philosophical discourses, puranic stories, popular stories, inscriptions in prose, folk songs etc. The orthodox or conservative scholar attaches the greatest importance to the classical poetry. He is justified in doing so from the standpoint of literature but when I trace the history of the language I would attach the least importance to it. Quite at the start there could not be much difference between the language of the first piece of literature, and the language spoken by the society in which the author lived. It must be said that he wrote in the language he spoke though he might embellish it with the polished dialectal forms and with Sanskritic expressions. But each succeeding poet would like to preserve the language of his previous poets as exhibited in their works. Though he might use the language of his own times to some extent, his ideal was to confine himself to the language of the works of his predecessors. Early grammarians wrote their grammars with the materials in classical literature. The classical ideal has become more and more so conservative that poets of classical literature generally failed to discriminate between what was current and what was obsolete. Hence neither the classical literature nor the grammars which were based, though imperfectly, on it can adequately reflect the growth of the language. Popular literature which really reflected the growth of the living language was looked down upon with disregard and even the famous songs of master composers like *Thyagaraja* and *Kshetraya* were not recognised by the Telugu pandits as a part of the Telugu literature. Authors of popular literature exercised enough of freedom to express their thoughts in the living language of their times while '*the older the better*' had been the ideal of the poets of the classical literature who inevitably developed an artificial language. Pandits would favour even obsolete expressions but condemn forms which had not the stamp of old grammars or the usage of previous poets of eminence, according

to their estimation. What they did was like cutting down the tender leaf-buds and gluing the fallen withered leaves in their place. Later grammarians were more liberal than the conservative Pandits and supplemented the old grammars with rules admitting the newly developed forms. But such later grammarians were few and far between ; nor was their supplemental work complete or up-to-date.

The fundamental principles of '*desya*' by which was meant the regional language were however enunciated by the oldest grammarians and the function of grammars was also well defined by them. An earliest grammar of Telugu composed in Sanskrit says : "*nitya pravahini desya*" which means that the regional language (Telugu) is ever constant like a river. The implication is that the language is like the river known by the same name and is, in that sense, existing for ever but like the waters of the river, the contents of the language are ever changing. That grammar also said : "*(Sabda)-siddhir lokad drsya*" which means that the correct form of an expression should be determined by the usage current among the people." Regarding the function of grammars, it says, "*prayogamulam vyakaranam*" which means that the grammar of a language should have the support of the usage. Some Pandits argued that it was the usage not of the people but of the poets but in the light of the previous statement, it should ultimately mean the usage current among the people. But many Pandits ignore these fundamental principles.

A careful study of the available material will show that the Telugu language like all other living languages of the world has been steadily growing in diction and changing in form and that the changes make their appearance first in inscriptions containing announcements to be easily understood by the people in the country and in popular songs and prose literature ; next, though to a small extent, in classical poetry recognised by the Pandits and last in grammars.

In the time of Nannaya, the interrogative particle was '*e*' and the emphatic particle was '*a*' as is evidenced in Nannaya's Mahabharatam : '*Vare*' ? (= Is it they ?) ; '*rare*' ? (= do they not come ?) ; '*vara*' (= it is they, none else), '*rara*' (= they do not come at all). By

the time of Tikkana 'a' came to be used as a particle of interrogation and 'e' as that of emphasis; 'vara' (=is it they?); 'rara' (=do they not come?); 'vare' (=it is they, none else). Tikkana made use of these forms and occasionally used the older forms also because they had not become quite obsolete by his time. He did not use a form like 'rara' (=they do not come at all) because it became obsolete by his time. While Nannaya used 'emiyunu' (=nothing whatever), Tikkana used the subsequently developed form 'emini' (=nothing whatever). He would have used the further developed form 'emi' also because he used a similar form 'nammi nammani' for the older form 'nammiyu (nu) 'nammani', (lit. meaning 'having believed not believing; 'not fully believing') in his Mahabharata, Shanti parva (II-351). We find it in the manuscript copies but it was changed in the printed editions because Pandits consider such forms as 'vulgar'. But Srinatha's usage of 'emi konkaka' in his Haravilasam appears even in the printed edition of the poem.

The older forms 'antayun' (=all, everything), 'inkan' (=still further), 'tsalan' (=plenty) have become 'anta,' 'inka,' 'tsala' and they were used by later poets of recognised merit.

For want of space, I shall just refer to the changes in broad outlines indicating wherever necessary which of these appeared also in the poems of poets of recognised merit.

The vocative particle 'o' came to be used, in course of time, as an interrogative particle also as in *ledo* (=is it not there?). Subsequently, it came to be used to convey the idea of uncertainty of two or more possibilities as in 'ado', 'ido' (=I wonder which—that or this?); 'adi auno kado' (=I wonder whether it is yes or no?). In 'emo! emo', the first is in the vocative case generally used in addressing a woman with familiarity and the second with a change in intonation conveys the idea of uncertainty in a questioning mood. Correct intonation or modulations of voice in such expressions is possible when they are actually in use.

The nasal sound in some words was well pronounced in the earliest period, and later came to be half pronounced and now-a-days not pronounced at all except in some remote corners of the Telugu

desa, where the people having lost touch with the main currents of the changing language, preserved older forms. E.g. *ko(n)ti* (=monkey), *chi(n)kati* (=darkness), *a(m)botu* (=stud bull), *vandu* (=he that) and *vindu* (=he this) developed out of *avan* and *ivan* still in use in Tamil. The demonstrative particles 'a' (that) and 'i' (this) are accented in Tamil and, therefore, preserved in that language. But in Telugu, there was a shifting of accent to the second syllable and the unaccented particles became so weak that they were likely to be dropped ; but at the same time the demonstrative particles had to be preserved. In such conflicting circumstances, the vowel with which 'v' was combined underwent a change in accordance with the demonstrative vowel and the particles were dropped. There was also another change in these words. While the final nasal was distinctly pronounced in Tamil, the last part of it was oralised by the Telugus with the result that 'd' developed and struck to 'n'. The final 'u' is a characteristic feature of Telugu which likes to have words ending in a vowel. There is yet another change in the formation of these words. When in course of time the full nasal sound in *vandu* and *vindu* as well as in any other words came to be pronounced as half nasal, a symbol to represent what is known as *ardhanusvara* came to be used. It is like a semicircle or the first of a pair of curved brackets '('. In modern times, when the nasal is not heard at all, it has practically gone out of use. The conservative scholar wants to preserve it though he cannot correctly use it in the case of many words.

Verbs ending in 'yu' like *cheyu* (=do) and *koyu* (=cut or pluck) had conjugational forms like *cheyudunu* (=I would do) and *koyudunu* (=I would pluck or cut) in the definite thought-mood to denote the habit of doing so or to indicate the contingency of such an act, according to the usage of Nannaya but later poets used in their place, modified forms *chetunu* and *kotunu* on the analogy of *vattunu* (*vachchu*=to come) and *tsutunu* (*tsutsu*=to see). These forms are still in use, though some are in the habit of saying *chedunu* and *tsudunu* (from *cheyudunu* and *tsutsudunu*).

There are several other instances of vast changes in the development of new conjugational forms. What were originally, as in the time of Nannaya predicative pronominal forms developed in

course of time into new conjugational forms denoting past action, viz., *chesina-vadanu* (=having done he am I meaning 'I am he who did') '*chesinadananu*' (=having done she am I meaning 'I am she who did'). These forms have gradually undergone the following changes viz. *chesinavadanu-chesinadanu-chesinada* and *chesinanu* ; *chesinadananu-chesinadananu* and *chesinanu*. Both the masculine and the feminine forms with distinct pronominal suffixes were reduced to a common abridged form, *chesinanu* which does not indicate any sex distinction. In modern times, it had been further reduced to *chesanu* and even to *chesa* with an inaudible nasal sound at the end, which appears when followed by a word or particle beginning with a vowel, as in *chesa+ani=chesanani*. Cf. *mon* and *mon-uncle* in French. The forms *chesinanu*, *chesanu*, *chesa* are now used as conjugational forms in the past tense, particularly in the coastal districts.

There are, however, regular conjugational forms indicating the past tense, viz., *chesitini* (=I did); *chesitimi* (=we did); *chesitivi* (=thou didst)—*chesitiri* (=you did) ; *chesenu* or *chese* (=he did); *chesiri* (=they did). These forms of the earliest period have continued to exist in the Rayalasima and other interior districts though they are generally pronounced without *i* in *sit*. The dropping of this vowel seems to have occurred long ago because we come across the word '*istimi*' from *ichchitimi* in several inscriptions dating from 1270 A. D. and later on similar forms came to be used by poets also. Srinatha a famous poet of the 15th century used '*vastutsustimi*' for '*vatstsutsu tsusitimi*' in one of his stray verses ; and Piduparti Basava a poet of the next century used similar forms in his *Prabhulinga lilalu* without any compunction. A few other poets also used such forms but the ban put on them by the Pandit and the grammarian has not been formally lifted.

People accustomed to these conjugational forms observe the distinction between *chesitiri* (=you did) and *chesiri* (=they did) but the people of the coastal districts who have dropped these forms in their ordinary speech get confused if they attempt to use them in their literary productions. Even the greatest of poets of the coastal districts of the 20th century have used *chesiri* in the sense of 'you did'

and the linguistic sense is not generally offended either in the case of those that use such incorrect forms or in the case of those that hear them used.

Similarly, forms like *iruvai* for *iruvadi* (=twenty) appear in inscriptions dating from 1233 A.D. and they were subsequently used by eminent poets. Srinatha of the 15th century used *iruvai* in his *Kasikandam*, Nandi Mallaya and Ganti Singanna of the same century used *aravai* for *aruvadi* (=sixty) in their joint production, *Varahapurana*; and Ramarajabhushana used *nutiruvai enimidi* (=128) in his poetics, *Narasabhupaliyam*.

There are thus a hundred and one changes of material importance during the last nine hundred years from the time of Nannaya. For want of space I can not give an exhaustive list of the changes I have noted, nor can I trace even a few of them chronologically illustrating their gradual modifications in detail.

Some words have undergone changes in meanings, some of which are gradual, indicating the process of progressive thought and some, illustrating the shades of ideas, one gliding into another like the colours of a rain-bow. Telugu affords ample scope for study to students of semantics. To illustrate my point I shall cite just one example. Take for instance, the word, *mata* which primarily means "word". Starting from its idiomatic use I shall show the shades of changes in its usage. To an acquaintance at a distance, we simply say, '*mata*' and make a beckoning gesture. He at once understands that we have a confidential and serious message to which he has to listen and at once approaches us. '*Veyyi matalela? okka matalo cheptanu*' (=Why thousand words? I shall say in one word.) conveys the idea that there is no need for a lengthy discourse and what is proposed to be conveyed can be done in one or two words. '*Matalapogu*' literally means a heap of words but is used to refer to a loquacious fellow who cannot accomplish any thing. '*Matakari*' literally means 'word maker' but is a complimentary expression which refers to an adept in speaking cleverly or charmingly. '*Ma abbayiki ippudippude matalu vastunnavi*' literally means 'to our child just now words are coming'; it signifies that the child is just developing the ability to articulate pseehc sounds. '*Gumasta mulanga ma ayanaku mata vachchindi*' literally

means 'through the clerk, to my husband word came'. The implication is that her husband is subject to some disrepute or censure as a result of his clerk's misbehaviour. '*Matapadadam kashtam*' which literally means 'word falling is difficult' denotes that it is difficult to endure censure. '*Razu mataku addu ledu*' literally means 'to king's word there is no obstruction'; the implication is that none can defy the king's order. '*Na mata vintava*!' which literally means 'my word do you hear?' implies a further step beyond mere listening to what is said, its accomplishment. '*Vadi mata sagadamu ledu*' literally means 'his word is not advancing'. It has the force of saying that he has lost his influence and his commands are of no avail. In '*a pani ches-tanani mata ichchinanu*' (lit. means 'that work I shall do that word I gave'); *mata* means here 'promise' '*vadiki naku matalu levu*' which literally means 'to him and to me there are no words' signifies that we are no longer friends or on talking terms. '*Mata*' is sometimes used where there is absolutely no reference to speaking as in '*a muga filla mata emi chesaru?*' It literally means 'that dumb girl's word, what have you done?' The word '*mata*' in this sentence does not for obvious reasons refer to the articulated word of the girl. It means 'the case of the girl.' We have some other instances of a similar nature regarding the use of this word, *mata*, viz., '*ame ledanna mata nizam*' (she is not there word true). It really means 'it is true that she is not there'. '*Emi ni sangati? unde mata? poye mata? vegam cheppu?*' (=What about your proposal? Staying word? Or going word? soon tell.) It really means 'What about your decision? Let me know soon whether you stay or go?' '*Vadu okka matalo vachchinadu*' literally means that 'he in one word came' but it denotes that he came in an instant. '*ayyo! ademi mata?*' It literally means 'alas! that what word?' It expresses a disapproval of an unpleasant statement with an air of sympathy.

Some words have a historical background. '*Kammalu*' means 'ornaments for the ears, attached to the lobes; they are set with costly precious stones'. In olden days very small scrolls of the soft tender leaves of palms were worn in the lobes of the ears by women and the palm leaf was known as *kamma*. The *kamma* scrolls were replaced by ornaments made of gold or brass but even these orna-

ments were known by the same name. A number of changes have taken place in the shape of the material used in the case of these ear ornaments but all have been known by the same old name. The full grown leaf of the palm is also known as *kamma* and it was used, like paper now a days, for writing on. Short letters were also written on bits of that leaf. Hence *kamma* came to mean a letter and is used in that sense, even today.

Some words have widely changed their meanings. *Chira* in early times meant any cloth. Tikkana of the 13th century A. D. used it as cloth for a turban. But now it means a '*sari*', a long cloth used only by well-to-do ladies.

Repu was used by Nannaya of the 11th century A. D. in the sense of 'morning' in contrast to *mapu* meaning evening, but in course of time, *repu* came to be used for tomorrow and that is now the only sense in which it is used. One could say 'in olden days '*repu vachchitini*' (=in the morning, I came). But it will be ridiculous to say so because it means now, 'tomorrow I came.'

The influence of Sanskrit words that crept into the Telugu language has been so strong and extensive that even the ordinary man likes to use them in preference to their corresponding Telugu words of Dravidian origin. In some cases, I too feel that the full sense is not brought out by using the Telugu words such as '*pedda chettu*' (=big tree), '*pedda konda*' (=big hill or mountain); '*pedda eru*' (=big river). These words do not convey the full meaning according to the conception of the speaker so well as the corresponding Sanskrit expressions, '*maha vrksham, maha parvatam, maha nadi,*' however much you may emphasise the word *pedda* in pronunciation or intonation.

Some Sanskrit words have acquired new shades of meaning and even altogether different meanings in the usage of the Telugus. E.g. *Abhyantaram* in Sanskrit means 'inner chamber' but has come to mean in Telugu 'objection'. The transition from the original meaning in Sanskrit to the present meaning in Telugu is in this case very interesting. When secrets had to be talked over, people resorted to the inner chamber. When the master of the house said, "Shall we resort to the inner chamber?", the visitor would say, "Yes" if he wanted to divulge a secret and would say "no need for it, I have no

objection to speak it here,” if there was no such secret message. The secondary sense came to importance and Telugus say, “*Abhyantaram ledu*” in the sense of ‘no objection’.

Telugu has borrowed thousands of words from the languages of the several different people with whom they have come into contact. C. P. Brown, an eminent scholar of Telugu published in the second quarter of the last century a voluminous supplement of ‘Mixed Dialects’ along with a comprehensive lexicon of Telugu. I need not cite examples but I should like to present here just an instance of how borrowed words are assimilated by the Telugus.

The English word ‘rule’ crept into the language and it is now practically a Telugu word but there is an interesting feature in the use of it. It is more frequently used in the plural number in two ways. With the English pluralising particle ‘s’, ‘the Teluguised word *rulsu* is used to mean regulations or laws and with the Telugu pluralising particle ‘*lu*’ the Teluguised word ‘*rullu*’ is used in the sense of ‘lines.’ The difference between *rulsu* and *rullu* is carefully maintained though the English word ‘rules’ has the two meanings.

Some qualifying words acquire the meaning of the substantives which they qualify with the result that in course of time, the substantive is dropped altogether. In Sanskrit *chandra* which in the Vedic dialect, only meant ‘bright’, acquired the meaning of ‘*ma*’ signifying ‘moon’ and came to mean ‘moon’ without ‘*ma*’. In Vedic Sanskrit, the word for moon was ‘*chandramah*’ but not *chandra*. *Chandramah* really meant ‘bright moon’, while ‘*purnimah*’ meant ‘full moon’ and ‘*amah*’ meant ‘no moon’. From these compounds, it can be easily inferred that originally the word signifying ‘moon’ was *mah*. [Cf. moon, mensem, month etc.]

Similarly *allam* from Sanskrit *ardra*, Prakrit *adda* (wet) came to mean ‘green ginger’ in Telugu and *Sonthe* from Sanskrit *sushka*; Marathi *suntha* came to mean ‘dried ginger’ in Telugu. The word denoting ginger has altogether disappeared from the Telugu language, leaving the qualifying words to acquire its meaning. Similar is the case in Kannada and Marathi also. The original word for ginger was in all probability a pre-Dravidian word belonging to

the primitive group of languages of the Austric family. Because it is a culture word, it is found with slight variations in pronunciation in about 20 languages extending from China and islands of the Pacific ocean to England in the West : Chinese—kiang; Burmese—khyang; Siamese—khing; Java—zinger; Khassi—s'ing; Manipuri—sing; Tamil—inje; Malayalam—inji; Pali—singivere; Sanskrit—sringaveram; Savara—singeram; Latin—Zingiberi; Greek—Zingiberis; Old English—gingifere; Modern English—ginger (pronounced as jinjer); French—gingembre (pronounced as zah zahbr). Zanzibar on the east coast of Africa was probably the place where ginger obtained from the east was stocked for export to the Western countries. Ginger is an auspicious article which is absolutely necessary for the Savaras at the religious functions and on marriage occasions.

Telugu is very rich in proverbs and riddles and they have the characteristic features of alliteration, rhythm and rhyme.

Proverbs :

“*matalu kotalu datutavi; kallu gadapa data levu*”—(=Words breach forts; feet cannot pass the threshold), spoken of a great boaster and little doer.

“*ladu leni kattu, kola leni pettu*”—(=a tie without a rope and a hit without a missile).

“*sushka priyalu, sunya hastalu*”—(=vain cajoleries, empty hands).

Riddles :

“*dani bhogam raja bhogam; dani palu penta palu*” (=its enjoyment is royal but its ultimate fate is dung hill or dustbin): the reference is to a leaf platter.

Accent :

There is accent in Telugu and it plays a significant part in speech and verse. Many Telugu scholars do not seem to have recognised its presence in their own speech and their failure to recognise it is due to their prejudice against the spoken tongue where it is present and their regard for the literary language of the books which can only be seen on paper but not heard. Accent in Telugu is not, however, so strong and distinct as in English.

For want of space in this brochure, I shall not enter into details nor do I propose to discuss the play of accent in Telugu verse. Readers interested in this subject may read my article on "Accent in Telugu speech and verse" contributed to the Eightieth Birth-Day Volume presented to Sir George Grierson in 1931 and published as Bulletin of the Linguistic Society of India, Lahore, Vol. VI, 1936.

The Modern Telugu Movement

There is vast difference between the spoken tongue now current and the classical language as formulated by the grammarians and recognised by the orthodox pandits. The difference could have been bridged over, if the fundamental principles of grammar were observed with a liberal mind and linguistic sense. Poets subsequent to Nannaya have been using, though not freely, forms not accepted by the previous grammarians but current during their time and some of the newly developed forms were noticed and included by the later grammarians in their new grammars. A healthy development of literature, both prose and poetry, had been developing until the middle of the 19th century when Chinnayasuri, a great and influential Pandit of Madras set back the hands of progress by writing a prose version of the first two parts of *Panchatantram* in the poetic language wilfully ignoring the long standing tradition of prose writing prevailing in his time. If this tradition continued without interruption there would have been, by this time, a very healthy and perfect prose with neither the pedantary of the Pandit nor the vulgarity of the unlettered. But Chinnayasuri set a model of poetic prose with Sanskrit expressions and high sounding compounds that are intelligible only to the Pandit and his book has been since then prescribed year after year in schools and colleges. It could not have been harmful to students or young writers if his book was only meant for study in the class room like Chaucer's poems in Chaucer's language but Chinnayasuri's book came to be regarded as a model for future prose writers and even school boys' composition in prose. Writers subsequent to Chinnayasuri gave up the old tradition of writing prose in the spoken tongue and imitated his style replacing ordinary expressions which readily suggested themselves to them by

archaic expressions and Sanskrit words. What was more harmful, Chinnayasuri wrote a grammar which might, though not quite completely or correctly, describe the language of the remote past, but did not recognise forms which later on developed and used by poets upto his time. Chinnayasuri's authority and model of prose writing prevailed for a period of about sixty years from 1850 to 1910, when the Modern Telugu movement commenced, with a new approach to prose writing on the lines that had been prevailing upto the time of Chinnayasuri.

In some respects Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam Pantulu a great Pandit and prolific writer and social reformer (1847-1919) was the pioneer. He wrote some social plays in spoken Telugu; but he used what is known as classical dialect, for serious composition partly because he was afraid that he might fall in the estimation of his fellow Pandits and partly because he had also some conservative ideas regarding the standard of a language. The cruelty of the ideal of Chinnayasuri was that the young pupils of the secondary and even the elementary schools were compelled to write in the so-called classical language, avoiding forms of speech with which they were familiar at home and abroad and even in the class room where the teacher used the spoken forms in explaining a verse or narrating a story. What was produced in course of time was a mongrel and spurious prose like Dog-Latin. With the impact of English, the spoken tongue of the Telugus who received English education was also vitiated. Many graduates who had acquired good knowledge of modern scientific subjects could not, as was pointed out in the Education Commission Report of 1903, impart that knowledge to the masses in the country through the medium of their mother tongue.

It was to set right the prevailing evil that the Modern Telugu movement arose to revive the status quo ante-Chinnayasuri; but the orthodox Pandits and their misguided followers shouted slogans like "*language in danger*". The education department of the Madras Government and the Universities which were in favour of this modern Telugu movement were frightened by the growing opposition in the

country and consequently could not recognise modern Telugu even for the purpose of composition in prose in the class-room. Their decision was announced in 1914. It was then that Rao Saheb G. V. Ramamurti Pantulu, one of the pioneers of this movement rose to the occasion and with his courage of conviction and pertinacity of purpose toured for about six years (1914-20) all over the country, visited the several colleges (all of which were then affiliated to the University of Madras) delivered his lectures on the growth of the Telugu language, produced evidence from old records and convinced his audiences that the Modern Telugu movement was sound. A movement that started in 1910-11 with a "*small coterie of four or five faddists*", as it was then called by the leaders of the opposition, progressed gradually and was largely favoured by many Pandits and scholars like Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam Pantulu, Chellapilla Venkata Sastry, the first poet-laureate of Andhra State, by the vast body of the younger generation and by almost all the Telugu Journalists. Rao Saheb died in 1940 with the satisfaction that his endeavour had been, to a considerable extent, successful. He was only sorry that the Universities (Madras and Andhra) and the Government could not yet be brought round to favour this movement because the authorities had still misapprehensions and had not the courage to face a possible contingency of opposition.

There is also some justification for hesitation on the part of the authorities. Along with the good results, particularly a voluminous prose literature, there has been also a growing disregard for a standard or dignity of the language. But this can be easily controlled and set right by a committee of scholars who can review the position and suggest a course of action. Approximation of the so-called classical and spoken dialects could and should be effected by bringing grammars upto date and recognising such forms of the spoken tongue as show proximity to the latest developed forms used by poets and writers of recognised merit. A standard of language for literary purposes can easily be formulated by the Universities and other Educational authorities. It must be clearly understood that no dialect of the language could be out of court in dramas or stories

where the language of the different characters should be consistent with their usage in life. Some scholars and progressive writers including the author of this brochure have been endeavouring to attain this object and they hope to achieve success in the near future.

History of Telugu Literature (A. D. 1000-1955)

INTRODUCTION

Nannaya's Mahabharata is generally regarded as the first work in Telugu because no piece of Telugu literature prior to Nannaya has been yet discovered. It cannot be said definitely that there was no literature in the pre-Nannaya period because there are some valid grounds for stating that there must have been some literature. There are inscriptions from the commencement of the 7th century A. D. and while those of the 7th and 8th centuries contain only Telugu words and sentences, inscriptions of the 9th and 10th centuries contain Telugu verses in Dravidian metres peculiar to Kannada and Telugu. History tells us that during this period, Buddhism was waning and Jainism waxing in Southern India and the influence of the latter was felt by the poets as is evident in Kannada literature during this period ; and if there were Telugu poets and Telugu literature, it is quite possible that they were also influenced by Jainism. Errana, the third great poet who lived in the 14th century, in one of the introductory verses of his poem 'Nrsimha Purana' says, "I think, with reverence, of Nannaya and Tikkana who transmitted the Hindu Dharma (Brahmanism) as expounded by Vyasa to the Telugu people who had been reading the gibberish (*gasata bisata*) accounts relating to the stories of the past and had not, therefore, understood the real significance of the Mahabharata." The reference is, in all probability, to the Buddhist and Jain versions of the Puranic tales. The Virasaivas massacred the Jains in large numbers in the Karnatic country but no bloodshed was on record in the Telugu country. It is said that while the Jains were extinguished in the Karnataka country, Jaina literature, culture and creed were destroyed in the Telugu country and that is why we do not find any Telugu literature in the pre-Nannaya period. There

is no use speculating further on this question. Let us pass by this period of uncertainty.

Period of Translations and Adaptations (A. D. 1000-1500)

MAHABHARATA POETS :

When the curtain rises, we see before us a vivid picture of what is real in life with an appropriate background and correct perspective—Rajaraja Narendra, the king of the Eastern Chalukya dynasty (1022-1063) holding his court at his capital city of Rajahmundry on the banks of the Godavari. He asked *Nannaya*, the poet-laureate of his court to translate into Telugu, the Mahabharata as it was expounded by Vyasa in Sanskrit because *Bharatasravanasaki*, the passionate desire to listen to the story of the Mahabharata, was very strong in him. The real motive for the king's choice of this subject was his consciousness of his descent from the kings of the lunar race to which the Kauravas belonged. Nannaya commenced the work entrusted to him and acknowledged his indebtedness to his friend and colleague, Narayana Bhat for the assistance he had rendered in the composition though we do not know in what way and to what extent he had done it. Nannaya could not go beyond the first two (Adi and Sabha) parvas and a part of the third (Aranya or Vana) parva probably on account of his demise. Rajaraja Narendra died in 1063 and with his death political changes adverse to the growth of Telugu literature, prevailed. Rajaraja Narendra's son acquired his maternal grand-father's kingdom of the Cholas and went away to be its ruler leaving his father's kingdom to his uncle.

It was *Tikkana* of Nellore of the 13th century that continued the work left unfinished by Nannaya in a different political atmosphere. He did not take up Aranya Parva to complete it probably because he shared the superstitious belief that the writer of the Aranya Parva might be subject to a calamity. So he translated fifteen Parvas commencing with Virata Parva. It was Errana or Errapragada of the 14th century that had the courage to translate the portion left out by Nannaya in the Vana Parva but in doing so he endeavoured to maintain the style and language of Nannaya with the object of doing it in the name of Nannaya.

Nannaya, Tikkana and Errana constitute as the translators of

the Mahabharata, the authoritative Poet-trio of Telugu literature. Tikkana and Errana were also the authors of some other works as we shall see presently.

Nannaya's translation has several omissions and commissions ; some of which no doubt enhance the merit of his translation while some others are not commendable. For example, the description relating to Matsya Yantra contest, victory of Arjuna and Draupadi garlanding him as the bridegroom is poetic and attractive while it is prosaic and insipid in Sanskrit. But we can not appreciate Nannaya's omissions in some places. For example, when Duryodhana ravaged the modesty of Draupadi with orders that she should be dragged into the court, Gandhari was very indignant and seriously proposed to her husband that though he was their eldest and dearest son, he should be abandoned. The incident, among several other similar incidents, exhibits Gandhari's good nature and sense of justice and decorum. This was described in the original but left out by Nannaya in his translation. Nannaya added in several other places one or two words to emphasise and extol the superiority of the Brahman though there was nothing in the original to support his statements.

Nannaya's Mahabharata being the first known piece of Telugu literature has been held with great respect but except those that have either linguistic interest or religious fervour many people do not generally read his work completely. There are, however, a few portions such as the episodes of Kacha and Devayani in Adi Parva, Sisupala Vadha in Sabha Parva and Nala Charitra in Aranya Parva which are frequently read with interest.

By the time Tikkana who had the patronage of Manuma Siddhi (1200-58) of Nellore took up the translation of the Mahabharata, there had been new developments in the political, social and religious condition of the people. The Eastern Chalukya kingdom was disrupted, the importance of Rajahmundry vanished ; local chiefs became independent ; poets had to depend upon ordinary patrons of literature ; Jainism vanished and Virasaivism developed and the Vaishnava cult stood opposed to it. If Nannaya desired to popularise the Vedic cult as expounded by Vyasa against the spread of Jainism in the previous period, Tikkana endeavoured to

minimise the vigour of the aggressive Virasaiva cult by presenting the unity of Godhead and bringing about harmony between the Saivas and the Vaishnavas. That is why he dedicated his Mahabharata to Hariharanath. He went a step further in adopting a free translation of the Mahabharata, leaving out minor episodes, abridging the less important sections and improving on the descriptions made by Vyasa and depicting the characters of the story in such a way that they appear to be kinsmen of the Telugus. While Nannaya used more of Sanskrit than of Telugu in his translation, Tikkana used more of Telugu than of Sanskrit in his rendering. What is more interesting, Tikkana was not content with mere translation, he exhibited in his work poetic art of a high order. His Virata Parva is a romantic poem complete in itself. His Udyoga Parva is a chivalrous heroic poem illustrating the magnanimity of the heroes, their statecraft, statesmanship and diplomacy. His description of the war is not insipid but is so charming that it is read with absorbing and increasing interest. He could make his description of even the burial or cremation ground appealing to us.

The third of the poet-trio is Errapragada who on account of his extreme devotion to Lord Siva came to be known as Sambhudasa and from the Prabandha style of his poems other than the Mahabharata as 'Prabandha Paramesvara'. It is said that in the language used by him the Telugu and Sanskrit expressions are equally balanced. He dedicated his lengthy poem, *Harivansam* to Prolaya Vema Reddi also known rarely as Anavema Reddi, ruler of Vinukonda kingdom of the Telugu country (1340-69) with his court at Addanki, the capital of his kingdom.

During 1070 and 1370 there were other poets besides the three Mahabharata poets of whom Nannichoda stands foremost.

Nannichoda (about 1100 ?)—The existence of Nannichoda and his poem, *Kumara Sambhava* had been unknown to the world until 45 years ago. Manavalli Ramakrishna Kavi a great oriental scholar, now an octogenarian, brought to light the poem, a manuscript copy of which had been lying unnoticed in the Sarasvati Mahal Manuscripts Library at Tanjore. It was edited and published by him in 1914. The scholars of the Telugu country were startled when in the introduction, the editor made the astounding statement that

Nannichoda lived about A. D. 940 and his *Kumara Sambhava* was composed long before Nannaya was born. It is beyond our comprehension to understand how the Telugu scholars could be so long oblivious of the existence of such a great poet and his lengthy poem. In this short survey of Telugu literature I can not enumerate the various discussions regarding the exact time of Nannichoda's existence and shall just mention the latest and widely accepted opinion of a large section of the scholars.

Nannichoda was the son of Choda Balli, a Chola ruler about A. D. 1100 of Pakanadu, of which Nellore district was then a part. He did not mention the name of any Telugu poet prior to him in the introductory verses under the usual caption of tribute to the past poets. He mentioned only Sanskrit poets like Valmiki and Vyasa and included the names of Kalidas and Udbhata because their versions of *Kumarasambhava* were the sources from which he took the material for his Prabandha. Referring to the Telugu poetry prior to his times, Nannichoda merely mentioned in general terms that while in the past *Marga kavita* had been well spread in the country, the Chalukya and other kings 'gave rise to' '*desi kavita*,' by which he evidently meant poetry in the regional language and that they maintained it in Telugu in the Andhra region. The significance of these words is still a matter of controversy among Telugu scholars. It is not clear whether by *margakavita* he meant poetical composition exclusively in Sanskrit or composition in the regional language with a heavy load of Sanskritic patterns, style and expressions. The significance of *Desi kavita* as used by him depends upon the interpretation of '*marga kavita*.' The subsequent Telugu poets of Saiva cult who wrote their poems to spread their faith in the country adopted a simple style and used simple language so that they might be easily read and understood by the people but none of them used the expression *desi-kavita*. *Teta Telugu* and *Janukavita* were used by them, the former meaning 'crystal clear Telugu' and the latter, 'profound poetic composition'.

The structure of the Telugu language used by Nannichoda is in all respects quite in accordance with what we find in the early Telugu works of this period except that it has some dialectal

variations, a few words of Dravidian origin but now used only by Tamilians or Kannadigas.

Nannichoda was a great devotee of Lord Siva and an ardent follower of the Saiva cult that prevailed in those days ; a disciple of Jangama Mallikarjuna Deva, a renowned sage and preceptor of the Saivites of the age. He dedicated his poem to that sage and it is through that dedication that it has been possible to fix the date of the poet as about A. D. 1100.

Nannichoda's *Kumarasambhavam* is a lengthy poem of 12 cantos and 2000 verses in all. It was composed in a fully developed Prabandha style satisfying all the requirements of Prabandha, viz., introductory verses of invocation to the supreme and family gods and to the gurus for their blessings, tributes to the previous great poets for inspiration, censure of bad poets ; announcement of dedication of the poem to a deity or a guru or a patron; a description of the ancestors of the patron as well as of the author; *Shashihyanta* verses of which every verse ends with a word relating to the recipient of the dedication in the sixth case, with the case suffix, '*ku (n)*' meaning 'to'; an introductory verse at the beginning and closing verses at the end of the second and subsequent cantos, all relating to the deity or patron to whom the Prabandha is dedicated, a colophon giving particulars of the author, his parents and the deity or guru from whom he acquired the ability to compose the poem. In addition to these essential elements determining the framework, the poem must be based on a well-known Puranic or historic legend with high class heroes and heroines and there must be in the poem descriptions of not fewer than eighteen various subjects such as city, rivers, mountains, gardens, classes of people, hunting, sports, processions, marriage and consummation etc.; various sentiments such as love, ferocity, wonder, pathos etc.; several styles and modes of stylistic ornaments and figures of speech. As a further merit, the poem is expected to contain verses with acrobatic feats of composition such as *garbhakavitvam*; the composition of a lengthy verse in one metre containing one or more smaller verses that can be formed with parts of the main verse, having a complete and self-contained meaning is called *garbhakavitvam* and the composition of a verse all the letters of which can be arranged in a design representing a coiled cobra, or a

cart-wheel or a dagger or something else is known as *Bandhakavitvam*. A poem that is composed with all, or as many as possible, of these requirements is called a Prabandha. Errana, a poet of the 14th century, composed his *Harivamsa* in a style approaching that of a Prabandha and called himself *Prabandha Paramesvara*; he could not have assumed that title had he been acquainted with *Kumarasambhava* composed by Nannichoda.

Poets of the Saiva cult attract our attention after we have noticed Nannichoda's *Kumarasambhava*. Mallikarjuna Panditaradhya, author of *Sivatatvasara*; Palkuriki Somanatha, author of *Basava Purana* and *Panditaradhya Charitra*; Yathavakkula Annamaya, author of *Sarvesvara Satakam* (a century of verses). Of these Palkuriki who lived about 1200-1240 composed his poems in *teta tenugu* in the *desi* dvipada metre so that they might be easily understood by the people. Though he wrote his poems with the zeal of a propagandist, his poems exhibit the poetic skill of the author; they contain natural descriptions, convincing arguments, interesting anecdotes and inspiring thoughts. Of the two poems, Panditaradhya *Charitra* may be regarded as a book of general knowledge relating to almost all the fields of human activity such as social customs, domestic problems, arts and crafts and music with the names of the *ragas* and *talas*. It is a mirror in which the culture of the people and social customs of the age are all reflected.

The earliest of Somanatha's poetic works is *Anubhava saram* in which he indulged in the composition of verses in *Vritta* metres borrowed from Sanskrit prosody. His *Vrshadhipa Satakam* the first well-formed sataka in Telugu literature was also in *Vrittas*, the last line of each of which ends in "*Basava basava Vrshadhipa*". He first exhibited his scholarship in the early works and when his ability to write high-class poems was well established he composed his poems in *desi* metre for propaganda. In his *Gangotpatti Ragada* he exhibited his knowledge of music. His *Basavodaharanam* is an interesting poem of a new type of literature which has a special technique of composition. It is a combination of *Vrittams* of Sanskrit metres and *ragadas* of *desi* metres of varying rhythms that can be classed as *trisra chaturasra*, *khanda* and *misra*—all arranged in the traditional order of the seven or eight case endings.

RAMAYANA POETS OF THIS PERIOD :

The story of Rama seems to be more popular in the Telugu country than anywhere else. There have been in Telugu literature about one-hundred and fifty poems—major and minor—and a larger number of prose works relating to the story of Rama. Bammara Potana dedicated his *Bhagavatam* to Rama. Tyagaraja, the greatest singer and composer of songs dedicated his *Kirtanams* to Rama. There is hardly any branch of Telugu literature—whether it is a poem or a drama, or novel or short story or song or sataka or anything else in which the story of Rama is not represented. Even today there are poets who are composing lengthy poems relating to Ramayana.

The earliest Ramayana in Telugu literature is generally known as *Ranganatha Ramayana* but the author, as mentioned in the poem itself, is *Gona Buddha Reddi*. Why the poem came to be known as Ranganatha Ramayanam is a matter of speculation; Gona Buddha Reddi was a tributary prince under Pratapa Rudra of the Kakatiya dynasty—either the first or second, ruling at Warrangal and his Ramayanam was composed about A. D. 1240 or during 1290-1295.

This is now a very popular poem in the Rayalasima districts of the Telugu country. It was not much favoured by the Pandits because it was composed in easy *dvipada* metre and in simple Telugu unlike the Prabandhas. There was probably a kind of competition among poets to win the appreciation of the people, rather than of the Pandits; if Palkuriki and other Saiva poets composed their poems in *dvipada* metre and easy language, the poets of the Vaishnava cult also composed their poems in the same metre and in easy language.

Buddha Reddi's Ramayana is not a translation but an adaptation of Valmiki's Ramayana. There are several anecdotes in it, not mentioned by Valmiki, but based on the traditional accounts current generally all over the country and particularly in the region known as Kishkindha. Of these anecdotes, the most important relate to Jambumali, Kalanemi and Sulochana. There is much of good poetry in this Ramayana with elevated and inspiring thoughts and beautiful descriptions in simple language and attractive style.

Close upon the heels of this Ramayana, meant for the people, came what was known as *Bhaskara Ramayana* which was composed not so much for the ordinary people as for the educated classes just in

the way in which the Mahabharata was composed with *Vrttams* of Sanskrit prosody as well as *desi* metres and interspersed by short or long passages in prose. Such a composition containing verse and prose is known as a *Champu Kavya*.

In the case of this Ramayana also, there is a dispute about the authorship. Who is this Bhaskara? Mantri Bhaskara, the grandfather of Tikkana or Hulakki Bhaskara who was a poet and Guru in the court of Sahini Mara, to whom this Ramayana was dedicated? Moreover, just as the Mahabharata was the production of three poets, this Ramayana also, though known by the name of a single author Bhaskara, was the production of four or five poets with this difference that while the authors of the Mahabharata were centuries apart, the authors of this Ramayana were contemporaries and members of either a family or a literary group. The story that Mantri Bhaskara was the central figure in arranging for this conjoint effort and that he translated *Aranya Kanda* was first believed by Rao Bahadur K. Viresalingam, earliest author of the "Lives of Telugu Poets" but later on was discarded by him. If that Bhaskara is eliminated, the number of authors is reduced to four : (1) Hulakki Bhaskara, author of *Aranya*, *Kishkindha* and the first part of *Yuddha Kanda* : (2) Mallikarjuna Bhat, Bhaskara's son author of *Bala* and *Sundara Kandas* ; (3) Kumara Rudra Dev, son of Sahini Mara and Bhaskara's pupil, author of *Ayodhya Kanda* and (4) Ayyalarya, friend and colleague of Bhaskara author of the second part of *Yuddha Kanda*. Sahini Mara is the great grandson of Gona Buddha Reddi and at the time of accepting the dedication of this Bhaskara Ramayanam, a cavalry officer of a tributary principality during the time of Pratapa Rudra II of Warrangal.

Language and style varied with the authors. *Aranya Kanda* is by far the best. Bhaskara who composed it used dignified but easy flowing language and his descriptions are picturesque. The same author described in the *Yuddha Kanda* incidents of fighting with lively interest. His son, Mallikarjuna Bhat excelled him in poetic beauties and in the modes of stylistic ornaments. Kumara Rudra Dev's language is the easiest and most entertaining. Ayyalarya exhibited profundity in thought and scholarship in expression. Bhaskara Ramayana is on the whole a standard work in Telugu

literature. Its popularity is still high though many other complete versions of the Ramayana have come into the field.

Ketana, son of Mantri Bhaskara and the paternal uncle of Tikkana is said to have composed *Kadambari* in verse as a free translation of Bana's prose work in Sanskrit. He should not be confused with another Ketana known as *Mranayaketana* who composed *Vijnanesvariya* as a free translation of Yajnavalkya Dharmaśāstra in Sanskrit : *Andhra Bhasha Bhushanam*, a grammatical treatise of the Telugu language, the first of its kind as claimed by him and *Dasakumaracharitra* in verse, a free translation of Dandi's work in Sanskrit prose for which he earned the title of Abhinava Dandi in Telugu literature : and this poem was dedicated to Tikkana whose appreciation was well deserved.

Marayamantri, disciple of Tikkana was the author of an adaptation of *Markandeya Purana* in Sanskrit and dedicated it to Nagaya Ganna, minister of Prataparudra II (1295-1323).

Nachana Soma who lived 30 years after Errapragada, about A. D. 1360-1380 is one of the best poets of this period. He is the author of *Uttara Harivamsam* and *Vasantavilasam*. The former is a free translation of the Sanskrit Purana but though Puranic in theme, Nachana Soma's version is of the type of a Prabandha and *Vasanta Vilasam* is really a Prabandha. Viresalingam is justified in thinking that Nachana Soma's *Uttara Harivamsam* is a better production than that of Errapragada and that Nachana Soma excels Nannaya and Tikkana also in some respects—particularly in the matter of style and language ; in poetic beauties and charming descriptions of dramatic situations and incidents. There are many interesting stories in this poem such as Usha's marriage and Narakasura Vadha. A copper plate inscription unearthed recently says that Bukka Devaraya of Vijayanagara Kingdom donated a village to him along with five more Brahmans in A. D. 1376 as a reward for his literary merit both as a poet and a scholar deserving the title of 'Sarvajna'.

Vemulavada Bhimakavi seems to be an extraordinary poet but his life is clouded with myth and miracle. We have only a few verses of his in some anthologies. The exact time and place of his existence are matters of speculation and controversy.

Madikisingana (A. D. 1420) author of *Vasishtha Ramayana* and *Padma Purana*, Jakkana (A. D. 1406-22) author of *Vikramarka Charitra* and Anantamatya (A. D. 1430) author of *Bhojarajiyam* a poem and *Chhandodarpanam* (grammar and prosody) are some other important poets of this period of "Puranas and translations" prior to Srinatha and Bammara Potana who deserve some special notice.

Tradition says that Srinatha and Potana were contemporaries and brothers-in-law and that the former tempted the latter to dedicate his Bhagavatam to Sarvajna Singa Bhupala of Warrangal and there has been a great controversy on all these points of traditional interest. The conclusions of Chaganti Seshayya who is now engaged in writing and publishing his *Andhra Kavi Tarangani* in several volumes seem to be very sound and acceptable. As he says Srinatha and Potana were neither contemporaries nor brother's-in-law; the former lived during A. D. 1380-1445 and the latter in A. D. 1450-1510.

Srinatha was a renowned scholar, well-versed in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Telugu, held a supreme position under Vema Reddi during A. D. 1400—20 as examiner of candidates for literary contests; a prolific writer with about 13 works to his credit; one who defeated a great scholar, Arunagirinatha known by the title of Dindima Bhat in the presence of his patron, Praudha Devaraya of Vijayanagar in a contest of scholarship and Sastric discourse as a result of which the bell metal drum which had been, as a symbol of privilege, sounded to announce the visit of Dindima Bhat to the Royal court was broken to indicate his defeat and Srinatha was then "bathed in gold" by Devaraya, the richest reward in those days. Srinatha was honoured by every king whose court he visited. He must have amassed much wealth but he was in his last days subject to abject poverty because he had spent away his money in luxury and his patrons were either dead or vanquished.

Living in the age of Puranas and translations, he composed his poems as translations or adaptations of Sanskrit Puranas and Kavyas such as *Bhimesvara Puranam*, *Kasikhandam*, *Haravilasam* and *Naishadha Kavyam*. Of these his Sringara Naishadham is regarded as one of the *Pancha mahakavyas* of Telugu literature. It is not a literal translation of the Sanskrit kavya of Sri Harsha; he gave prominence to the

sentiment of Sringara, *Akkiraju Umakantam* a great scholar of recent years, a fastidious critic pointed to a few defects in Srinatha's *Sringara Naishadham* but recognised the poetic genius of Srinatha in his *Kasikhandam* and *Bhimesvara Puranam* and remarked that they appeared like original poems and the Sanskrit originals as translations. Srinatha's *Haravilasam* is in the opinion of many scholars the best of his poems ; it is known as a *Kathaprabandha* of four typical and interesting stories relating to Lord Siva of which the story relating to *Chirutondanambi*, a Vaisya devotee of Siva is the best specimen of Srinatha's poetic art.

Srinatha's *Kridabhiramam* also known as *Vithinatakam*, though vulgar at some places, exhibits the poet's wide range of experience and keen insight into the varied walks of life of all classes of people in his age. It introduces only two characters in the poem, one who narrates and describes a person or a place and another who listens and puts a question by way of enquiry. It abounds in interesting descriptions of the several scenes of social life at Warrangal. There are also many *Chatu* or stray verses current in the country attributed to Srinatha most of which resemble in language, style and erotic sentiment verses we find in this romantic poem.

Pandit Umakantam who edited Srinatha's *Palnati Vira Charitra*, a popular ballad in the desi metre of manjari (dvipada without *prasa* or rhyme) and wrote a lengthy scholarly introduction both in English and Telugu, thinks it is the best of not only Srinatha's works but also of the entire Telugu literature of this period on account of its originality in theme and composition. He thinks that the theme, being a fratricidal war of the latter part of the 12th century A. D. stands favourably in comparison with the theme of the Mahabharata. The heroes of Palnad (in Guntur District) exhibit the valour, prowess and integrity of the best heroes of the Mahabharata. Pandits who worship high flown language with heavily loaded Sanskrit compounds and modes of stylistic ornaments think that Srinatha's *Sringara Naishadham* is the best of his poems and he could not have condescended to write a ballad in such a popular language. But Pandit Umakantam expresses the false traditions and standards of style set by the orthodox Pandits and explains the real values of poetic art which he notices in this ballad.

Erotic sentiment peeps through Srinatha's works and assumes strong colours when the opportunity is favourable for its expression. Stray erotic verses current in the country, the authorship of which is not known, are generally attributed to Srinatha provided they have poetic merit in them.

Srinatha's works in general and his *Sivaratri Mahatmyam* in particular show that he could also be grouped with Saiva poets of the age, but his devotion to Siva was not of a fanatical or dogmatic nature. It is also doubtful if he had in his life the religious fervour which he exhibited in his poems.

BAMMERA POTANA (A. D. 1450-1510) :

A real devotee in thought, speech and deed was Bammerra Potana, always associated with his *Bhagavatam*, his masterpiece. Though an adaptation of the original in Sanskrit, Potana's poem excels the original in poetic art. Every episode in it is an interesting poem complete in itself and his piety is reflected in almost every verse of his composition. The right word in the right place, an appropriate simile, a harmonious sentiment, an expression which provokes the required thought in the listener are some of the prominent features of Potana's poetry. Even the worst atheist will be easily converted to faith in God when he reads Potana's episodes such as *Prahlada Charitra*, *Gajendra Moksha* or *Dhruvopakhyanam*. Devotees—lettered and unlettered—memorise select verses of *Gajendra-moksha* and recite them early in the morning along with their prayers. *Rukmini Kalyanam* is very popular among Telugu girls who memorise it with delight and are never wearied of reciting it.

Potana is not, however, the sole author of the complete *Bhagavatam*. The major part of it was, no doubt, written by him; but a few other parts were done by his disciples, Velegandala Naraya, Ganganarya and Erchuri Singana. There is a traditional story to account for this plurality of authors. It says that he alone completely wrote the poem and that Sarvajna Singa Bhupala of Warrangal desired that it should be dedicated to him but Potana refused to do so because he did not like to dedicate it to a human being however great he might be and that he dedicated it to Rama and that consequently Singa Bhupala got enraged and had the manuscript buried underground and when later on it was unearthed portions

of it were worm-eaten and they were filled up by Potana's disciples. But the story is of the type of an aetiological myth. Sarvajna Singa Bhupala was an eminent Sanskrit scholar and poet and never interested in Telugu poetry; he was so magnanimous that he would not have stooped to commit such malicious crime.

Pillalamarri Pina Virabhadra of the last part of the 15th century A. D. was the author of *Sakuntala Parinayam* and *Jaimini Bharatam*. The former is based on the episode in the Mahabharata and on the development of the theme in Kalidasa's drama but the author introduced a few deviations from either of the two sources and combined certain developments variedly presented in them. For example if in the Mahabharata, *akasavani* helped Dushyanta to recognise his wife when she approached him in his palace, Kalidasa introduced a ring to help his memory and Pina Virabhadra used both the devices. *Jaimini Bharatam* is an adaptation of the *Asvamedha Parva* according to the version of Jaimini and not Vyasa.

Nandi Mallaya and his sister's son Ghanta Singaya jointly translated into Telugu verse and prose *Prabodha Chandrodaayam*, a Sanskrit allegorical play of Krishna Misra. They also composed *Varaha Puranam* as an adaptation of the original in Sanskrit and dedicated it to Narasimha Devaraya of Vijayanagar.

Dubagunta Narayana Kavi wrote during the last decade of the 15th century *Panchatantram*, an adaptation of the original in Sanskrit. This is a popular poem because it is in simple, refined and melodious language ; it delights the reader with entertaining stories containing maxims of universal interest.

TALLAPAKA ANNAMACHARYA (A. D. 1408-1503) :

To the reader who feels fed up with too many accounts of translations or adaptations of Sanskrit works, comes as a welcome relief Tallapaka Annamacharya whose long life of 95 years covers almost the whole of the 15th century A.D. He belonged to a family of scholars of oriental learning that came to Tirupati and settled down there and is regarded as the father of a new branch of Telugu literature, lyrico-devotional songs. They were all addressed to the deity of Sri Venkatesvara of Tirupati. The total number of songs he composed in both Sanskrit and Telugu is 32,000—an astoundingly extraordinary number ! It works at one song per day continuously

for 88 years. In addition to these songs he composed in Telugu a Sataka of 105 verses addressed to Lord Venkatesvara and probably a few more works mentioned as *Venkatachala Mahatmyam* and *Dvipada Ramayanam* but they are lost. What a prolific writer !

His songs are of many varieties in theme, tune, rhythm and structure. They are valued for the devotional concepts and the literary merit they exhibit. He was not only a poet but also a great scholar of music who could sing his songs most melodiously and attract large crowds.

While Tirupati favoured the rise of Vaishnava cult and patronised literature devoted to Vaishnava lore, Saivism did not altogether fade out; it had its stronghold in the Rayalasima districts and in some parts of the Hyderabad state. The *Piduparti* family of poets devoted their lives to the composition of several works relating to the stories of *Basavapurana* and *Panditaradhya Charitra* both in the desi and Sanskrit metres—all old wine in new bottles.

The Prabandha Period (A. D. 1500-1750)

We now proceed to the Augustan period or Golden age of the Telugu literature which is also known as the Rayala Yugam because it commenced with Krishna Devaraya (A. D. 1503-1530) and his court poets of whom *Alasani Peddana* was the poet-laureate. The Prabandha type of literature was the ideal of the day in this period. Poets vied with one another in producing the best Prabandha that could be appreciated by the court Pandits and were rewarded by the royal or other patrons.

Krishna Devaraya, the Emperor of the Vijayanagar Empire was then the richest patron of art and literature. He was himself a great scholar of Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada and also a poet in all the three languages. He composed many Sanskrit works, though none of them has been preserved; his *Amukta Malyada*, a Telugu Prabandha exhibits high class poetry with a theme which stimulates faith in Lord Vishnu. It was composed in ornate language with Sanskrit compounds, with poetic conceits and beautiful descriptions of the phenomena of nature illustrating the author's fecundity of imagination, insight into human nature and deep devotion to Lord Vishnu. Along with Srinatha's *Sringara Naishadha*, Krishna Deva-
raya's *Amukta Malyada* is regarded by the Pandits as a *Mahakavya*.

The authorship of *Amuktamalyada* also has been a matter of controversy among the scholars. It is attributed to Peddana, who it is said, surrendered it to his royal patron to be fathered by him. The only argument adduced to justify this theory is that some verses found in the introductory section of *Amuktamalyada* are the same as those found in Peddana's *Manu Charitra*. These verses relate to the conquests of Krishna Devaraya and in all probability Krishna Devaraya quoted them from Peddana's *Manucharitra* instead of himself composing fresh verses describing his own valour. There is so much difference between *Amuktamalyada* and *Manucharitra* in language, style, poetic conceits and emotions that any close student of the two poems will at once come to the conclusion that the authors must be different.

The introductory part of *Amuktamalyada* accounts for the selection of the theme and indicates the story of the poem. When Krishna Devaraya camped at Vijayavada and visited a temple dedicated to Vishnu at Srikakulam near Vijayavada, he had a dream in which Andhra Vishnu (Andhra nayaka) appeared and said, "Compose a poem in Telugu and describe my marriage at Srirangam with *Amuktamalyada*, the girl who has been offering me daily a garland of flowers for my decoration. I want you to do it in Telugu because the country is Telugu and I am the Telugu nayaka and since you have been conversing with several Kings that came into your presence to pay you their respects and homage in their own languages, you must have noticed that Telugu is the best of all these languages. Dedicate your poem to Lord Venkateshvara because we are all the same though we assume different forms and names".

Krishna Devaraya amplified the story suggested to him with antecedents of *Amuktamalyada* and of *Vishnuchitta*, her foster father and several episodes supporting the main theme. The poem is known by the two names of the girl and of her foster father as *Amuktamalyada* and *Vishnuchittiyam*.

The language used by Krishna Devaraya is so difficult and the construction of the sentences is so involved that without a commentary or the help of a Pandit, the poem is not easily understood. Vedam Venkataraya Shastri (1853-1923) published his edition

of this poem with a scholarly introduction, commentary of each verse and an index.

Alasani Peddana was the poet laureate at the court of Krishna Devaraya. He composed *Manucharitram* which is regarded as one of the best of the *Pancha mahakavyas* of Telugu literature—the other four being Shrinatha's *Sringara Naishadham* and Krishna Devaraya's *Amuktamalyada* already mentioned and *Vasucharitram* by Bhattumurti also known as Ramaraja Bhushana and *Panduranga mahatmyam* by Tenali Ramakrishna. There are some Pandits who maintain that Pingali Surana's *Kalapurnodayam* should be mentioned in the list in the place of *Panduranga mahatmyam* and still others who think that Pingali Surana's *Prabhavati-Pradyumnam* deserves that place and some others who think Chemakuri Venkata kavi's *Vijaya vilasam* has a better claim to that place. It is evident from this difference of opinion that the eight poems mentioned above are the best in Telugu literature. The dispute arises only because five have to be selected as the *Pancha mahakavyas* of Telugu literature corresponding to the well-known *Pancha mahakavyas* of Sanskrit literature.

The nucleus of the story of *Manucharitra* (a short name for *Svarochisha Manu Sambhavam*) was taken by Peddana from an episode in *Markandeya Puranam* relating to the birth of Svarochisha Manu, one of the fourteen Manus of the Puranic tradition. The episode is described in about 150 verses in *Markandeya Purana* as translated by Marana but Peddana developed the story and composed in Prabandha style a lengthy *Mahakavya* of six cantos and devoted about 600 verses to the story.

The story begins with an incident in the life of Pravara, a pious Brahman youth. A Siddha, one morning, came to his house and gave him an enchanted ointment which when applied to his feet would take him to any place he desired to see. Pravara made an experiment and went to the Himalayas one forenoon but could not return because the ointment melted away and the effect of the charm vanished with it. When he was in a perplexed state of mind, a Gandharva damsel, Varudhini by name happened to meet him. She was very beautiful and Pravara's handsome figure attracted her. Pravara requested her to show the way by which he could go back

to his abode. But Varudhini made love to him and invited him to her cottage. Pravara, who was too pious and too moralistic to yield to her temptations, set aside her entreaties and advances and returned home with the help of the God of Fire whom he invoked. A Gandharva youth who had been coveting Varudhini but was not successful in winning her, observed this incident and assuming the form of Pravara approached her sometime later and won her with the result that Varudhini had a son known as Svarochi, who later on had a son known as Svarochisha Manu. The most interesting and therefore most frequently read part of the *kavya* is what relates to Pravara, Varudhini and Mayapravara while the rest relating to the birth of Svarochisha Manu is more or less of the nature of a narrative, though here and there appear some interesting anecdotes. It is something like Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhava* in which what relates to Parvati and Shiva is more interesting than the story directly connected with the birth of Kumara.

Language appropriate to the characters of the story is throughout consistently maintained. Almost every verse exhibits a figure of speech or a mode of stylistic ornament, like alliteration or rhyme. The poem as a whole has a well balanced even flow and contains descriptions of all the eighteen items required for a Prabandha, none of which seems to be out of tune or out of place.

Krishna Devaraya had high regard for him. Peddana in one of his *Chatu* or stray verses refers to the most memorable incident on the occasion of the dedication of his poem to the king. When Peddana was seated in a palanquin for pompous parade Krishna Devaraya held the pole and lifted up the palanquin. Peddana tells us that he was usually addressed by the king as "*Andhra kavita pitamaha Allasani Peddanarya !*"

Tradition says that the court of Krishna Devaraya was adorned by eight poets who were like the *ashta diggajas*—elephants one at each of the eight cardinal points, *viz.*, 1. Allasani Peddana, author of *Manucharitra*, 2. Nandi Timmana, author of *Parijatapaharanam*, 3. Ayyalarazu Ramabhadra kavi, author of *Ramabhyudayam*, 4. Dhurjati, author of *Kalahastisvara mahatmyam*, 5. Madayagari Mallana, author of *Rajasekhara Charitra*, 6. Tenali Ramakrishna, author of

Panduranga Mahatmyam, 7. Pingali Surana, author of *Kalapurnodayam* etc., and 8. Ramaraja Bhushana or Bhattumurti, author of *Vasucharitra* etc. But the last three of these poets did not flourish as poets during the time of Krishna Devaraya. Ayyalarazu Ramabhadra kavi was a young promising poet who was according to a traditional story asked by the king to compose *Sakalakathasara Sangraham* but he could not finish it before the king died in 1530. Tenali Ramakrishna, whose pranks and jokes are proverbial, was probably a young promising poet in the time of Krishna Devaraya. It is curious that Tallapaka Chinnanna, who composed *Ashtamahishi Kalyanam* in dvipada metre and lived in the time of Krishna Devaraya and was rewarded by him for that poem, is not included in the *Ashtadiggajas*.

Nandi Timmana one of the *ashtadiggajas* of Krishna Devaraya composed a very lovely poem with melodious verses and an interesting theme relating to an episode mentioned in Harivamsa. The story says that once Narada brought a *parijata* flower from the Nandana garden of Indra and gave it to Krishna and he in turn gave it to Rukmini, who was then by his side. Satyabhama, noted for jealousy, came to know of this, felt insulted and lay in her bed in a fit of resentment and indignation. Krishna tried to appease her but she was too proud to be appeased by his entreaties. He bowed to her legs but even when her left foot touched his head, she would not be consoled. Finally, Krishna promised to get the *parijata* tree itself from Indra's Nandana garden and it was then that she got up with a smile of satisfaction. Krishna accompanied by Satya went to Nandana, dug up the tree, had a fight with Indra's men, a peace was effected and finally the *parijata* tree was brought to Satya's flowering garden and was planted there. Satyabhama's stories are very popular in the Telugu country. There are *Yakshaganas* and street plays (*vithi natakas*) with these themes and they are even today exhibited in the rural areas of the Telugu country and much appreciated by the masses.

Ayyalarazu Ramabhadra Kavi's *Ramabhyudayam* has greater poetic merit than his *sakalakathasara sangraham*. It is heavily loaded with Sanskrit compounds and figures of speech. In some verses the same words are repeated with different meanings.

Dhurjati's *Kalahastisvara mahatmyam* and *Sataka* are noted for the melody and poetic beauty and fine sentiments they contain. This Dhurjati's son known as Kumara Dhurjati composed about A.D. 1550-*Krishna Devaraya Vijayam*, a poem valued for its poetic merit and for the historical account of the military exploits and victories of that great king.

Madayagari Mallana's *Rajasekhara charitra* deserves a high place in Telugu literature on account of its poetic merit and beautiful verses. Krishna Devaraya had a high regard for him and Mallana had the privilege of accompanying the king along with Peddana and Timmana in his tours. *Rajasekhara Charitra* relates to the exploits of a prince, Rajasekhara of Avantipura which ultimately led to his marriage with Kantimati through the mediation of a parrot which possessed a knowledge of the past, present and future events and known, therefore, as a trikalavid. The origin of the story could not be traced. Probably it was an original story in which there was nothing of realistic or idealistic merit ; it could not be developed without supermental supports. The romantic aspect of the story is rather flat without any thrill but the erotic sentiment is kept within the limits of propriety and decorum.

Pingali Surana (A. D. 1520-'80) is admittedly one of the most brilliant poets of Telugu literature and I should like to give him the first place and I am sure that there are many scholars who agree with me. He had profound scholarship of Sanskrit and Telugu and wonderful spontaneity and felicity of expression, admirable fecundity of imagination and high poetical talent with which he developed a very interesting original story and composed a lengthy poem which reads like a charming novel. It contains several episodes each of which is quite original and complete in itself and yet connected with the main story. The relation between the main story and the episodes is kept in suspense and revealed at the close of the episode. The author introduced well-known characters of ancient lore and Puranic fame such as Brahma, Sarasvati, Naradā, Nalakubara, Rambha, Krishna, Jambavati etc. to produce the false impression on the part of the reader that the story might have been borrowed from some episode in a Purana. He begins the story with

Kalabhashini, a parrot in the previous birth and Madalasa in the next birth marrying Kalapurna. It is a very interesting story and even for a short summary of it I find no space here. One of the episodes relating to Sugatri and Salina is of psychological interest and is so charming that it deserves to be translated into Hindi.

Pingali Surana's *Prabhavati Pradyumnam* excels Kalapurnodayam in poetic merit but it is a story based on a puranic legend. There are, however, dramatic situations which exhibit the poet's artistic skill in the development of the story. Surana's *Raghavapandaviyam* is *doyarathi* kavya, which narrates two stories—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata with the same set of verses by using words with two meanings and groups of words that can be split in two ways to give two different meanings. For example, "*Karna bhishma kodanda guru pratapa*" may be interpreted as "Karna, Bhishma, Kodandaguru (meaning Drona), pratapa (their valour)" to refer to the valour of the heroes of the Mahabharata ; also as "Karnabhishma" meaning 'dreadful to the ear' + 'Kodanda' meaning (of) the bow and '*guru pratapa*' meaning 'great valour', signifying "the great valour of the bow, dreadful to the ear" to refer to the story of Rama.

Bhattumurti also known as Ramaraja Bhushana indicating that he was honoured by Ramaraja is the author of *Vasucharitra*, much praised and studied by the Telugu Pandits as affording good training in scholarship. An episode from Mahabharata is developed into a lengthy poem of six cantos. It relates to the romantic amour of Prince Vasu and his ultimate marriage with a princess Girika, the daughter of the river Suktimati and the mountain Kolahala. The poet exhibits his artistic skill, and strong imagination in developing a simple story with dramatic situations and delightful descriptions ; his profound scholarship and admirable command of Sanskrit and Telugu and his ability in composing verses which are dignified and melodious. The poem abounds in various figures of speech and modes of stylistic ornaments, pun upon words. Expressions that admit of two different meanings were used by him to suit the occasion particularly when comparisons were made. *Vasucharitra* is his masterpiece and is regarded as one of the best poems in Telugu literature.

Bhattumurti is also the author of *Harishchandra-Nalopakhyanam*, a *dvayarthi* kavya like *Raghava Pandaviyam* in which the stories of Harishchandra and Nala are narrated by the same set of verses. This is more difficult to understand because Bhattumurti used more of archaic expressions and words with unusual meanings. His *Narasa-bhupaliyam*, like Vidyanaatha's *Prataparudriyam*, is a work on poetics.

Surana and Bhattumurti are in a way innovators. Tradition says that the theme for a poem or a drama must be a well-known story from Purana or Itihasa and that the hero and heroine must belong to the higher classes of society. Surana's *Kalapurnodayam* is a story of his creation and Kalabhashini the heroine belongs to the low class of society. But the Pandits did not raise a cry because the story has a semblance of puranic legend and Kalabhashini was Saraswati's parrot in her previous birth and has a future birth as Madalasa in a high class family. Bhattumurti referring to the story of *Vasucharitra*, which has for its theme a mixture of puranic legend and fiction justifies his choice in a beautiful verse which says, "Fabricated stories are like false or imitation precious stones ; pure Puranic legends are like raw materials just dug out of the mines and mixed stories are like cut and polished diamonds and, therefore, the best." But the poets subsequent to these two poets had not the courage to follow the example set by either of them but invariably selected themes from ancient legends. It is only in modern times that we find a rapid growth of fiction and original themes for poems.

Tenali Ramakrishna's *Panduranga mahatmyam* is based on the legend of Panduranga of Pandarpur in Maharashtra. Ramakrishna is noted for his '*pada gumphanam*', the art of framing compounds and phrases which are pregnant with meaning and for his composition in simple style with pure and elevated thoughts and ideals. An episode in it known as *Nigama sarmopakhyanam* is the best and most popular, but it is a tendencious story intended to extol the greatness of Pandarpur, a holy place of pilgrimage. A Brahman known as Nigama Sarma led a vicious and dissipated life but died in Pandarpur which was enough to give him a place in Vishnuloka !

Sankusala Nrisimha Kavi who lived in the last years of Krishna Devaraya was the author of *Kavikarna Rasayanam*, a lengthy poem

in six cantos, with a short story relating to Mandhata—his devotion to Vishnu, his tapasya (penance), trance, his march to Vaikuntha led by a servant of Vishnu and Vishnu's manifestations. The poem is in *Prabandha* style with descriptions of about 45 items and containing almost all the figures of speech and modes of stylistic ornaments. The poet proudly says with an air of self-conceit : "How can an ascetic refrain from becoming a voluptuary on hearing my descriptions of the erotic sentiment and how can a voluptuary refrain from becoming an ascetic on hearing my descriptions of the *bhakti* sentiment ?" Varied are the opinions of scholars about the greatness of this poem. While some are disposed to give him a high place along with Peddana, some others feel fed up with his descriptions which were carried on *ad nauseam*.

Vemana is always associated with his satakam—not one century but several centuries of verses each of which contains his name in the vocative case. His verses contain moral, religious, social, satirical and philosophical aphorisms in simple language ; they are quite intelligible to children but their real significance is understood more and more as age and experience advance. He received some education in his boyhood and must have listened to Puranas recited and Pandits' discourses and learnt the art of composing verses in simple metres. He composed almost all his verses, in a *desi* metre known as *ataveladi*. Whatever be his early life he became, in course of time, a saint and thinker and he spoke in numbers because numbers came to him. Tradition says that he never wrote any verse but his disciples recorded his verses as and when he gave utterance to them. They are a store-house of maxims of universal interest, some of which reflect the culture of the Telugus. C. P. Brown, an early oriental scholar of the first half of the 19th century, was a great scholar of Telugu and was so enamoured of Vemana's verses that he published a special edition of some select verses with his English translation in 1829.

Southern School in Telugu Literature (A. D. 1550-1750)

During the post-Krishna Devaraya age of this period, flourished Telugu literature in Southern India at Tanjore and Madura under the patronage of the Nayak Kings and also at Pudukkota

under the patronage of the rulers there. Among the features peculiar to the Southern School in Telugu literature the following deserve special notice :

We find a comparatively larger number of poets among the rulers, women and non-Brahmans ; the popular desi metres like *dvipada* and *manjari* were more extensively used ; prose literature in simple Telugu with the dialectical forms of the spoken tongue of those regions received the recognition of the Pandits and Patrons ; music made very good progress and Ragas were classified under a systematised scheme of 72 *melakartas* ; composition of songs was patronised and recognised to be of equal status and merit along with that of the Kavyas and the erotic sentiment was the special feature of the songs and poems composed in those regions ; patrons encouraged the erotic sentiment ; poets indulged in it and people generally evinced interest in it ; even vulgar sentiments were tolerated because they were clothed in charming language with amusing modes of stylistic ornaments ; books of knowledge relating to sciences, arts and crafts also formed part of the Telugu literature of these regions ; biographies known as *Nayakabhyudayas* were composed at Tanjore and Madura ; more than anything else the *Yakshagana* literature flourished as the prominent feature of the Southern School in Telugu literature though the first *Yakshagana* was *Sugriva Vijayam* composed by Kandukuri Rudraya, a member of the goldsmith community of Kandukuru in Nellore district.

Varied is the opinion regarding the erotic literature that developed most prominently in the Southern school. Purists—genuine as well as affected—condemn it ; the liberal minded tolerate it and the people given to levity and philandering indulge in reading it over and over again. But one good feature is most noteworthy : there is poetic merit and there are, in almost all the poems of this kind of literature, melodious verses with fine sentiments expressed in simple language with attractive figures of speech.

During the time of Achyuta Devaraya (A. D. 1530-'42), successor of Krishna Devaraya, two poets rose to prominence in the South—*Bhadrakavi* and *Lingakavi*, who composed in *dvipada* metre, *Deranga puranam*, the ancient history of the Devangas, a sudra.

caste of weavers. *Pattsakappurapu Tiruvengala kavi* (A. D. 1538-'40) of the caste of the Bhatrajas, known for their extemporaneous outburst of verses composed *Tsokkanatha Charitra* in dvipada metre and dedicated it to Gollapedda Ramanayaka, Governor of Ramanad district in the South, a collection of 64 tales relating to the miracles and sports of Shiva, composed in an easy flowing style.

At Tanjore (A. D. 1600-74)

The brightest period of Telugu literature in the South was during the time of Raghunatha Nayaka (A.D. 1600-'31) and of his third son, Vijaya Raghava Nayaka (A. D. 1633-'73).

Raghunatha Nayak was a prolific writer. He composed in dvipada his father's biography known as *Achyutabhyudayam* and set the model of composing biographies in verse which was followed by his son and grand-son. He also composed in dvipada *Nalacharitra*, considered to be one of the best poems in dvipada. Some difficult verses in Shrinath's *Shringara Naishadham* were recast by him in simple Telugu. He also planned to write a complete Ramayana as an adaptation of Valmiki Ramayana, but he could not go beyond *Balakanda*. His *Valmiki Charitra* is a short poem in three cantos; it exhibits the poetic talent of the author. Among the court poets there were two brilliant poetesses *Ramabhadramba* and *Madhuravani* both of whom were scholars of Sanskrit and Telugu but unfortunately their works in Telugu were lost.

Chemakuru Venkatakavi is the best poet of this period. His *Vijaya Vilasam* (1630) is regarded by some scholars as worthy of a place among the *panch mahakavyas* of Telugu literature. A previous work of his was *Sharangadhara Charitra* which is no doubt a poem renowned for its attractive narration and beautiful descriptions but is inferior to *Vijaya vilasam* in poetic art and charm. Several verses in *Vijaya vilasam* are frequently recited by lovers of poetry in the Telugu country. Recently *Subhadra Kalyanam*, a poem by Tallapaka Timmakka, elder wife of Tallapaka Annamacharya (A.D.1408-1503) came to light. It is a lovely poem in dvipada. Some other attractive lines in it were taken by Chemakuru Venkatakavi and with slight alterations to suit the metre he used, were inserted in his poem. A poet of eminence like Chemakuru Venkatakavi cannot be accused of plagiarism on

this account. A charitable explanation may be offered. He was so attracted by those lines that though he could compose fresh lines, he thought of using them out of his regard for the talented poetess.

Krishnadhvari is the author of *dyvarthi kavya*, *Naishadha Parijatiyam* relating to the stories of Nala and Parijatapaharana narrated with the same set of verses and this is regarded by scholars as much better than Surana's or Bhattumurti's in the matter of style, language and natural flow of verses.

Kshetraya of Krishna District, known for his *padas* or songs addressed to *Muvvagopala* and Kavichodappa a well-known Sataka poet of Madura paid visits to the court of Raghunatha and were honoured by the king.

Chengalva Kala kavi who started his literary career in the court of Raghunatha Nayak and flourished in the court of Vijaya Raghava Nayak is the author of *Rajagopala vilasam* relating to the amours of Krishna with his eight wives who were depicted as representing the eight different types of the traditional Nayikas—Rukmini as *Sviya*; Bhadra as *Kalahantarita*; Lakshmana as *Vasakasajjika*; Jambavati as *Vipralabdha*; Mitravinda as *Khandita*; Sudanta as *Virahokanthita*; Kalindi as *Proshitabhartrika* and Satyabhama as *Svadhinapatika*. Munnarugudi in Tanjore district is known as *Dakshina Dvaraka* and the deity to whom the *gudi* or temple was consecrated is known as *Mannaru* and regarded as the same as Krishna. Kalakavi also known as Kalayya is regarded as an equal to Nannaya and Shrinath in poetic merit.

Koneti Dikshita Chandra is the author of *Vijaya Raghava Kalyanam*—marriage with Kantimati, which was composed as a *Yakshagana*—dance drama with verses, songs, rhythmic prose passages and dialogues in popular language. There were several other *Yakshaganas*.

Pasupulati Rangajamma popularly known as Rangaji, who by virtue of her scholarship, poetical talent and ability in poetic composition in eight languages and adeptness in ready wit, humour and conversation had the rare privilege of being "bathed in gold" by the royal patron, Vijaya Raghava Nayak and she was the first poetess to have that privilege and honour. She was the authoress of two Prabhandas *Mannaru dasa Vilasam* and *Usha Parinayam*; one

dance-drama of the *Yakshagana* type, known as *Mannaru dasa Vilasam* and three stories in prose relating to the Ramayana, the Bharata and the Bhagavata. The song drama contains verses in eight languages ; descriptions which exhibit her acquaintance with several scientific (*shastriya*) subjects and keen insight into human nature, social customs of her times. Her *chatu* or stray verses are very interesting ; they exhibit her ready wit and humour.

Vijaya Raghava Nayak (A. D. 1633-'73) was, like his father, a great patron of learning, great scholar and poet. He is the author of his father's biography ; of two more *dvipada* poems ; of songs and of about 20 *Yakshaganas*.

Tanjore was conquered by the Marathas in 1674 and was subject to their rule till 1858. The Maratha rulers patronised Sanskrit literature and to some extent Telugu also.

At Madura (A. D. 1529-1736)

The development of prose literature along with poetry is the special feature of the Telugu literature that developed under the patronage of the Nayak rulers at Madura. *Rayavachakam* by Sthanapati during the time of Visvanatha Nayak (1529-'64) is a biographical account of Krishna Devaraya, is written in good language with the high class spoken forms of his day ; and may be regarded as a typical specimen of prose literature in the early stage.

Literature worth mentioning had its commencement during the time of Tirumala Nayak (1623-'29). Kamesvara kavi (1623-'70) is the author of a poem known as *Satyabhama Santvanam*, the first of a series of poems with the erotic sentiment running through them.

Ganapavarapu Venkata kavi (1674) composed *Prabandharaja Venkatesvara Vijayam* which exhibits the poet's scholarship of Sanskrit and Telugu and his skill in performing acrobatic feats in literary composition but there is no poetic merit in it.

Vijayaranga Chokkantha (1706-'22) was a great patron of learning and poets and writers of prose such as Samukham Venkata Krishnappa, author of *Jaimini Bharatam* in prose, *Radhika santvanam* and *Ahalya Sankrandanam* in verse—erotic sentiment runs through both of these *kavyas* ; Kandurti Venkatachalapati, a prolific writer whose *Mitravinda Parinayam* is regarded as a high class Prabandha.

At Pudukkota (A.D. 1682-1839)

Though this state was mainly one of Tamils, the rulers patronised Telugu literature also to a small extent. Of these rulers, Vijayaraghunatha (A.D. 1730-69) was a famous patron of Telugu poets, of whom Koti Venkana composed in verse a Telugu lexicon known as *Andhrabhasharnavam* which groups together Telugu synonyms of the several dialects in the Telugu country adopting the plan of *Amarakosha*. Rayaraghunatha Tondaman (A.D. 1769-89), who was himself a famous poet, is the author of *Parvatiparinayam* which is regarded as a poem of high poetic conceits and original descriptions.

At Mysore (A. D. 1672-1750)

During the time of Cikka Devaraya (A. D. 1672-1704) and his successors, flourished Telugu literature under the patronage of the rulers of Mysore also. *Yakshaganas* of the type of the *Koravanji* developed here. Peda Kampa Gauda, famous for the construction of the city of Bangalore in 1537, ruled the region there known as Shivasamudra (A.D. 1513-1569), was honoured by Krishna Devaraya and Achyuta Devaraya and composed an interesting *Yakshagana* known as *Ganga Gauri Vilasam* and dedicated it to Lord Somesvara.

There were some other poets of minor importance in this region.

Kummari Molla (A. D. 13th or 16th century) composed *Ramayanam*, a pretty lengthy poem which is very popular on account of its poetic merit, simple style and attractive descriptions. There is a dispute about her time of existence. Tradition says that she was the daughter of a potter known as Kummari Gurunatha, who by virtue of his scholarship in Telugu acted as the amanuensis of Tikkana. If that is a fact, Molla belonged to the 13th century and is decidedly the very first poetess of Telugu literature. But there is no evidence to support this tradition. Some scholars think that she lived in the post-Krishna Devaraya period and this is a more probable conjecture, in which case she lived long after Tallapaka Timmakka of the 15th century and might be a contemporary of Mohanangi, daughter of Krishna Devaraya and wife of Ramaraja, said to be the authoress of a Telugu poem known as *Marichiparinayam*. But there is no evidence to support the tradition regarding Mohanangi nor is the poem anywhere to be seen.

Literature patronised by the Nawabs Of Golkonda (A. D. 1550-1581)

Ibrahim Kutub Shah, Nawab of Golkonda (A. D. 1550-81) was a patron of Telugu literature and was popularly known as Ibharam. Ponnikanti Telaganna composed *YayatiCharitra* in pure Telugu, by which is meant Telugu without Sanskrit words. He dedicated that poem to Amin Khan, a rich official in the service of Ibrahim who was, like his master, a patron of Telugu poets. Telaganna seems, to be the first to compose not merely a few verses but an entire poem, in pure Telugu and his example was followed by subsequent poets like Kuchimanchi Timmakavi who composed his *Nilasundari Parinayam* in pure Telugu.

Kandukuru Rudrayya who, as we have noticed already, composed a Yakshagana known as *Sugriva Vijayam*, composed also a poem in mixed verse and prose, called *Nirankusopakhyanam*, the theme being a religious legend on the rewards of sin and piety. His lyrical song, *Janardanashtakam* (song of eight stanzas addressed to Lord Janardhana) contains emotional outbursts of devotional thoughts. Ibrahim recognised his merit and granted him lands.

Mallareddi, author of a poem, *Shatchakravarti Charitra* and Addanki Gangadhara kavi, author of a poem, *Tapati-svayamvaranopakhyanam*, were a few other poets that received the patronage of the Nawab.

Contemporaries and friends of Ibrahim Kutub Shah were Matla Ananta Bhupala and his father, rulers of a principality of whom the former while yet he was Yuvaraja dedicated to his father, his poem *Kakutstha Vijayam* spoken of as an excellent poem in Telugu literature by virtue of its ornate language and melodious verse.

Elakuchi Balasarasvati, known as Bhattara Sarasvati kavi Mahopadhyaya (1630-1640) is a profound scholar of Sanskrit and Telugu and has been held in high esteem by Pandits. He is the author of a detailed commentary of *Andhra Shabda Chintamani*, known as *Balasarasvatiyam*; *Chandrikaparinayam* relating to an episode of Bhima who married Chandrika daughter of Kasiraja; *Mallabhupalayam* which like Bhartrhari's *Subhashitam* contains stray thoughts with moral or ethical or emotional significance. But what is really an admirable literary feat is his *tryarthi Kavyam* known as *Raghava Yadava Pandaviyam*

which narrates with the same set of verses three stories of the Ramayana, the Bhagavata and the Mahabharata A

Appakavi (A.D. 17th century) composed in verse poetics, prosody and grammar (incomplete) and his poem is known as *Appakaviyam*.

Poets of Songs

No mention was made of Kshetraya and Tyagaraja, the famous composers of songs in Viresalingam's *Lives of Telugu poets* or in similar other books on literature till recently because on account of their transgression of the rules of old grammars and use of popular forms, Pandits did not recognise songs or *Yakshaganas* or even *satakas* generally.

Kshetraya, a contemporary of Vijaya Raghava Nayak of Tanjore, is said to have composed 4,000 padas but we could not get more than 400 padas. They are illustrative of the natures of all types of *Nayikas* and *Nayakas* and though the erotic sentiment is invariably present in each pada, other sentiments also are expressed. The language used by the author is quite idiomatic and vigorous in conveying the thoughts conceived by him.

Tyagaraja lived during the time of the Maratha rulers of Tanjore ; he was a great scholar of Sanskrit and Telugu and developed from his childhood deep devotion to his favourite deity Sri Rama and learnt music. He composed many songs but we have not been able to get more than about 750 songs. His *Prahlada* and *Nauka Charitra*, composed like operas, exhibit his scholarship. Throughout his songs, the sentiment of Bhakti or devotion stands prominent and when they are sung as tuned by Tyagaraja, the *Raga bhava* and *Sahitya bhava* are most appealing to the listeners.

Period of Decadence and Despair (A. D. 1750-1850)

Decadence in literature started with the conquest of the Deccan by the Moghuls and the spread of the scare of further Mohammedan invasions and raids. A kind of despair drove the people to reliance on deities rather than self-reliance as a result of which *satakas* of devotion were composed seeking the protection of the deities of the locality. Mr. P.T. Raju cites in his Telugu literature three typical *satakas* which indicate this abject condition in the

country: *Bhadradi Rama satakam* by Narasimha dasudu, *Andhra Nayaka satakam* by Kasula Purushottamudu and *Nrisimha satakam* by Gokulapati Kurmanatham. Dangers to the temples at Bhadrachalam, Sriakulam near Vijayavada and Simhachalam were averted as tradition says by the outbursts of the verses in a frenzy of devotion by their respective authors.

Adidam Surakavi, who lived about the middle of the 18th century A.D., got on with what little patronage he was able to get from the local chiefs in Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts. He was a great poet and scholar, and is the author of several works. Tradition says that people of all ranks believed that he was so pious that he could effectively curse anybody who offended him with a verse. He was the author of a treatise on grammar in verse in support of later developments of grammatical forms which transgressed the rules of old grammars; a treatise on poetics and figures of speech also in verse. His poem, *Chandramati parinayam*, relates to the adventures and love of Harishchandra and Chandramati. His poetry is known for its easy flowing style, vigour of expression and strong emotions.

Kuchimanchi Timma kavi (1690-1757) lived in more favourable circumstances than Adidam Surakavi because the eldest members of his family for a long time had been village accountants. He had a peaceful life with plenty to support it. He was a prolific writer and author of *Rukmini kalyanam* (1715) in which the erotic sentiment was strongly exhibited; of *Rajasekhara Vilasam* (also known as *Bhallana Charitram*), *Simhachala Mahatmyam*, *Sivalila Vilasam*; *Nilasundari Parinayam* in pure Telugu; *Rasikajana manobhiraman*; *Sarpapura Mahatmyam* and *Sarva Lakshanasara sangraham* a work on grammar in verse in support of grammatical forms which transgressed the rules of old grammars but were used by poets of eminence.

His *Rasikajanamanobhiramam* is the best of his poems. It describes the adventures of a prince and his love affairs with a Gandharva damsel. It was composed in 1750 when he was sixty years old and, therefore, is rich in expression, perfect in composition and best in style. The erotic sentiment expressed in this poem was tempered with a developed sense of decorum.

Ravu Madhava Mahipati, Raja of Pithapuram was so well

impressed with his extraordinary poetic talent that he honoured him by conferring on him the title of *Kavisarvabhauma*.

Kuchimanchi Jagga Kavi, the younger brother of Timmakavi, was also a poet of eminence. Of his poems *Subhadra Parinayam* and *Somadeva rajyam* have poetic flashes, but his *Chandralekhavilasam* is of the type of billings gate literature.

There were some other poets of some importance but they cared more for acrobatic feats than for real poetic merit. One would run a verse with two letters only and another with one letter only. It is a great strain on the part of the composer and the reader has to rack his brains to understand his verses. When all the trouble is taken, a prosaic idea with neither poetry nor life in it is brought to light. One would compose a whole poem without using the labial sounds and another would write it in pure Telugu. It may sound odd if it is said that a poem in pure Telugu is not easily intelligible but the fact is that the so-called pure Telugu is not the living language of the people. It contains archaic Telugu, out of the way expressions and artificial or coined words—all with the object of avoiding words that are freely borrowed from Sanskrit and extensively used in the country.

Good poetry vanished and a period of decadence prevailed but a few poets flourished here and there like oases in the desert of Sahara. One such poet was Kankanti Paparazu, author of *Uttara Ramayana*; the theme and development were of epic poetry but the episodes illustrate Prabandha style and on the whole the poem looks like a Prabandha rather than an epic poem. His friend and colleague was Pushpagiri Timmana, author of *Samira Kumara Vijayam* and a translation of *Bhartrhari's Niti Shatakam*. Enugu Lakshmana Kavi's translation of *Bhartrhari* is much better.

The erotic poetry that had developed in Southern School of Telugu literature spread its contagion to the poets of the coastal districts in the period of decadence : Chitrakavi Singanarya of about 1750, author of *Bilhaniyam*; Sangamesvara of about 1770, author of *Ahalya Sankrandanam*; Challapalli Narasa Kavi of about 1780, author of *Yamini purnatilaka*.

Sishtu Krshnamurti (1790-1870) a great scholar of Sanskrit and

Telugu, known also for his entertaining musical recitation of the Puranas composed *Sarvakamada parinayam* but was too sensitive when attacked by a rival poet and scholar. There was his contemporary, Pindiprolu Lakshmana kavi who had written a *dvyarthi Kavya* known as *Ravana Dammiyam* or *Lanka Dahanam* narrating two stories, one the famous story of Ravana and another, an account of Dharmayya, who was a rich man of the poet's time who disappointed him in a matter of reward and whom he, therefore, wanted to scandalise by comparing him with Ravana. Pindiprolu was much senior in age and more advanced in poetic composition than Krishnamurti who was a great scholar. There was rivalry between the two. One day when Krishnamurti was reading out his poem at a public gathering Pindiprolu mercilessly criticised one of his verses and because the people had greater regard for the poetic art of Pindiprolu, they applauded his criticism and Krishnamurti felt humiliated and left Ramachandrapur in East Godavari district and went about distant places and finally settled down in a corner of Vishakhapatnam district and continued his career under the patronage of a local chief. Such were the ups and downs of some scholars and poets.

Of the poetesses of this period of decadence, two deserve our notice—Tarigonda Venkamamba and Madina Subhadramma both of whom lived in the first half of the 19th century. Unlike Muddupalani of the Southern School of literature during the previous century who resorted to expressions of vulgar erotic sentiments in her *Radhika Santvanam*, these two poetesses had the modesty of family women and even when the occasion arose for an expression of the erotic sentiment they were within the limits of perfect decorum. Venkamamba was the authoress of a Prabandha known as *Venkatachala Mahatmyam* based on the legend of Lord Venkateswara at Tirupati and his amours with *Padmavati*, which affords good reading on account of the poetic art in it; and of *Rajayogasaram*, a philosophical discourse in dvipada which is no doubt a dry abstract subject for the ordinary reader but is easily understood because her expression was so simple and lucid.

Madina Subhadramma (1780-1840) the maternal aunt of Shri Raja Gode Narayana Gajapati Rayaningaru whose shatakas relating

to Kesava Krishna, Raghunayaka and Raghavarama, exhibit her command of Telugu, poetic talent and pious thoughts.

There were hundreds of shatakas during this period with varying themes—religious, devotional, moral, social and satirical. A few anthologies of shatakas have been published and there is a demand for a comprehensive one because verses in shatakas have flashes of poetic genius and are of universal interest.

The Modern Period (A. D. 1850-1955) :

Though this period is only of 100 years' duration, the volume of literature that developed during this period is twice as much as that of all the previous periods put together, though in quality it may be inferior. This period admits of a division into two sections : 1. The period of *transition* (A.D. 1850-1910) and the period of *renaissance* (A.D. 1900-'55). This is only a rough and not a rigid division because the features of the former extend to the latter and the features of the latter made their appearance in the former section.

Period of Transition (A.D. 1850-1910)

Scholars and poets of this period were subject to a kind of conflict in their aims and ideals. On the one hand there was the tradition of the past which they respected and on the other, new ideas due to the influence of English education that was imparted at schools attracted their attention. The orthodox and heterodox differences crept into the field of Telugu literature also. The orthodox writers had the support of the holy tradition and commanded the respect of the people while the heterodox writers started with fear and hesitation to adopt the new patterns of literature which they were noticing in English literature at schools and colleges; but they could only make experiments and show their writings to friends of their own tastes and ideals. It was only with the growing influence of the official position that they could make some progress. So far as the ideal of the grammatical language was concerned all wanted grammatical language for poetic compositions but even there, their conception of what was quite grammatical and what was not, varied. A few pedants would accept only the earliest grammar and follow the usage of the earliest poets, particularly the three Mahabharata poets and when they were confronted with the new developments in langu-

age found in the poems of the later poets of renown they would say, "The earlier the better". Some others were liberal enough to accept the usage of the later poets; appreciate new turns of expression but would always seek for an authority either the usage of the renowned poets or rules of grammar. Some others again would take delight in felicity of expression, fancy for foreign words and for popular sayings and proverbs irrespective of old rules of grammar. Poets of the Southern school at Tanjore, Madura and Pudukkota generally belong to this last class of liberals. The prose tradition that started at Madura was generally followed all over the Telugu country, and hundreds of books in Telugu prose were written during 1700-1850 and they were almost all in popular Telugu—living Telugu in varying degrees—language with an outward semblance of literary language and more and more of popular forms that transgressed the rules of old grammars, popular literary language dignified enough but used in scholarly discourses rather than in poetry and the spoken tongue in varying shades in stories where dialogues were written. With the opening of schools, the demand for school books not only for language but also for non-language subjects increased. Pandits like Ravipati Gurumurti wrote for school children, stories like *Panchatantram* and *Dvattrimsat-sala-bhanjaka* stories in the spoken dialect of the higher classes. C.P. Brown collected the prose literature, the manuscript copies of which had been scattered, edited and published a few of them with his English translation—books like "the wars of the Rajas being the history of (Handeh) Anantapuram" written in popular Telugu in or about A.D. 1750-1810. In his dictionaries, English-Telugu and Telugu-English, he wrote the meanings and explanations in popular Telugu. The Pandits who collaborated with him were liberal enough to approve the method he adopted. In 1847 an edition of Nannaya's *Adiparvam* was published in which while the left side page was devoted to the text of Nannaya's composition, the opposite page on the right side was devoted to the prose version written by Vaiyakaram Ramanujacharyulu in popular Telugu and on the title page of this publication appears the name of Chinnaya suri to indicate that he supervised the book and approved of the plan. In spite of such ample evidence of prose tradition prevailing for about

100 years, Chinnaya Suri (1806-62) arrested the progress of prose writing in popular Telugu by writing his *Nitichandrika* (an adaptation of *Mitralabha* and *Mitrabheda* of *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesha* in Sanskrit) in the rhythmic and ornate language of ancient Prabandhas. He must have taken several months to compose his book in that style of select phrases. With the extraordinary influence he commanded in Government circles as the Pandit of the Presidency College at Madras, he persuaded the Government to introduce his book in all schools as a text-book for compulsory study. There could be no harm if he stopped there. Students could study it as they did a classical poem and acquired knowledge of literary language. He went a step further; he had it set as a model for prose composition at schools. He wrote for the guidance of the teachers and the taught, his *Balavyakaranam* which was based on the rules of the old grammars and old classics in Telugu poetry. His grammar was neither complete nor quite correct. His *Nitichandrika* was not without errors even according to his own grammar. If C. P. Brown was living then, he would have averted this wrong step and his Pandits, some of whom were better scholars than Chinnaya Suri, would have supported Brown. But there was then none strong enough to oppose Chinnaya Suri and the innovations he then introduced progressed unchallenged for about 60 years until 1910 when the modern Telugu movement and modern Renaissance started with full vigour. For a period of 20 years, the controversy between the classical school—advocates of the innovation by Chinnaya Suri—and the modern school—advocates of the *Status quo ante-Chinnaya Suri* raged furiously and since 1930, the latter have been gaining firmer ground to stand upon and hundreds of prose works have been published, during the last thirty years (1925-'55) in popular Telugu. Though they have gained extensive popularity in the country, they have yet to receive the formal approval of the Universities and the Government.

Telugu Literature During A. D. 1850-1910

PROSE :

Imitation, a natural weakness with man, appears in the field of literature also. The inevitable consequence of it is decadence. That is what we have noticed in the case of Prabandha composition.

Similar was the case with prose composition done in imitation of Chinnaya Suri's prose. Among the prose writers that imitated Chinnaya Suri's prose may be mentioned Korada Ramachandra Sastri (A.D. 1816-1900) who was a great Sanskrit Pandit first and Telugu poet next. He indulged in literary acrobatic feats and was good sport in literary contests with rival Pandits. His *Rathanga dutam* in Telugu prose exhibits his scholarship and a liking for rhythmic prose heavily loaded with Sanskrit compounds. Several other writers indulged in this kind of prose style. Even Kandukuru Viwesalingam had a fancy for this style and wanted to continue the work of Chinnaya Suri by writing *Vigrahatantram* in imitation of Chinnaya Suri's style but he very early realised the uselessness of doing so and with an admission of the fact in the introduction he wrote the *Sandhitantaram* in a comparatively easier style. Nagapudi Kuppusvamayya (A.D. 1865-1951) who was a renowned Sanskrit and Telugu scholar and a good literary critic wrote his *Bharata Saram* and *Bhojarajiyam* no doubt in an elegant style but exhibited his fondness for archaic expressions, jingle and alliteration. He used to follow the same style even in his letters to fellow Pandits and to journals. But fortunately this kind of writing has lost its popularity. Models of good prose were set by Kandukuri Viwesalingam and Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham about whose writings details are presented in subsequent pages.

POETRY :

Prabandha style of writing a poem continued to be the ideal which the poets of this transition period set before themselves and the literary acrobatic feats in which the poets had hitherto indulged continued. Mantripragada Suryaprakasa kavi (A. D. 1808-'73) for example composed a *dyarthi kavya* relating to the legends of *Krishna* and *Arjuna* and *Vikramadev Varma* (A.D. 1869-1952) Maharajah of Jeypore, a great scholar of Sanskrit, Telugu and Oriya and a poet in all the three languages and a literary patron of education, literature and arts was so enamoured of this *dyarthi kavya* that he published his commentary on it. Matstsa Venkata Kavi (A.D. 1856-1903) a Telugu poet wrote *Suddhandhra nirvachana-niroshthya Kusa-Lava Charitra* in pure Telugu, all verse, without labial sounds, a poem relating to the story of Kusa and Lava in an artificial style using as a matter of

necessity, archaic words and the words with out of the way meanings noted only in the lexicons. There were pleasant and unpleasant pugnacious scholars and poets who, whenever an opportunity came, were ready to outwit their rivals. *Allamarazu Subrahmanyam* (A.D. 1831-'92) and *Madabhushi Venkatacharya* (A.D. 1835-'95) entertained their patrons and Pandits particularly at Pithapuram with their literary combats. Both could exhibit extemporaneous composition of verses on the spot. Madabhushi possessed extraordinary powers of repeating verses on hearing only once ; and Allamarazu exhibited his superiority in poetic art.

Avadhanams—*Ashtavadhanam* and *Shatavadhanam*—became a notable feature of this period, probably a special feature of the Telugu poets. By *Ashtavadhanam* is meant the performance of eight feats of literary importance including composition of verses at one¹ and the same time and by *Shatavadhanam* is meant composition of one-hundred verses, the first lines of which are dictated first and then their second, third and fourth in regular order. The subject, metre and other features of the verses were left to the choice of the audience. The *avadhani* had to do all this from memory without any assistance of paper and pencil. *Madabhushi Venkatacharya* was the first known *avadhani* of fame in the Telugu country. His performance was a source of inspiration to Devulapalli brothers—Subbaraya Shastri (A.D. 1853-1909) and Krishna Shastri (1856-1912) also known as Tammaya Shastri. Both had already been authors of poems of merit when they happened to see the *Shatavadhanam* performance of Madabhushi Venkatacharya at Pithapuram and on the next day after that performance they could successfully perform a *Shatavadhanam* at the court of the Maharajah of Pithapuram without any previous practice. The members of the Allamarazu family also were noted for their *avadhanams*. *Allamarazu Rangasayi* (1860-1936) could do them single-handed until he became a septuagenarian. A sensation was created in the country during 1890-1920 by a rapid succession of joint poets who, as rivals of one another, performed these *avadhanams*; viz., Tirupati Venkatesvara kavulu, Kopyarapu Sodarulu and Venkata Ramakrishna Kavulu. A sort of triangular fight among the three pairs was carried on for some years and they indulged in darting against one another extem-

pore verses and even poems which were vituperative and caustic. Of these Kopparapu Sodarulu were noted for their extraordinary rapidity in extemporaneous composition ; they could compose more than a hundred verses in an hour and it was difficult to record them in long hand. Venkata Ramakrishna poets activity had a limited sphere. Tirupati Venkatesvara poets commanded the greatest respect and regard in the country. Of these two poets Divakarla Virupati Shastri (1871-1919) excelled in scholarship and Chellapilla Venkata Shastri (A.D. 1870-1950) in rapidity of composition. With the premature death of Tirupati kavi, Venkata Shastri felt bereaved but carried on his literary work with ever-increasing popularity, name and fame and was finally acclaimed as the first Andhra poet laureate when poet-laureateships were instituted by the Indian Republic in 1949. Many of the poets of the present generation are proud of styling themselves as his disciples (sishtyas). Avvari Subrahmanya Shastri, Veturi Prabhakara Shastri, Veluri Sivarama Shastri, Pingali Lakshmikantham and Katuri Venkatesvararao and some others have been his direct students. Kavisamrat Visvanatha Satyanareyana was his student in the class room but has been largely enthused by him. There have been '*Ekalavya*' disciples also. Tirupati Venkateswara poets were prolific writers. They wrote poems, original as well as translations and a number of dramas. Their collected works were recently published in several volumes. Their dramas relating to the Pandavas have become very popular and have been frequently staged and the verses in them have been so attractive that even the unlettered cart drivers recite them with delight. *Sravananandam* among their minor poems and *Devibhagavatam* and *Buddha Charitra* among their major poems have been recognised as the best of their poetical works. Both of them were convinced of the soundness of the modern Telugu movement sponsored by Gidugu Venkata Ramamurti and Guruzada Venkata Apparao and Venkata Shastri wrote his later prose compositions in spoken Telugu.

Venkata Ramakrishna Ravulu Oleti Venkata Rama Shastri (A.D. 1883-1939) and his cousin, Vedula Ramakrishna Shastri (A.D. 1889-1918) were appointed by the present Maharaja of Pithapuram as his court poets. The younger of this pair, Ramakrishna Shastri was a

prodigy : he translated *Narakasura Vyayogam* in his 11th year : composed *Damayanti Kalyanam* in pure Telugu in his 14th year and later on his *Kukavinindanam* in Prakrit and *Karma Vijaya Vyayogam* in Sanskrit. When he died, Venkata Rama Sastri bemoaned his loss and in his lamentations addressed Sarasvati, the goddess of learning and said "Our Ramakrishna was born as thy incarnation in our family. If he were alive I would not have approached thee for help in my literary pursuit."

Kopparapu Sodarulu were survived by their younger brother Butchi Rama Shastri and each by a son who are now carrying on their avadhanams and exhibiting their extemporaneous compositions.

There were in this period of transition, stalwart Sanskrit scholars who were also Telugu poets. Paravastu Rangachari (A.D. 1822-1900) who was a profound scholar of Vedic lore, Sanskrit Vyakarana and Alankara shastra and Prakrits translated *Upanishads* into easy Telugu verse : the members of his family have been renowned scholars of Sanskrit and Prakrits. Akondivysamurti Shastri (A.D. 1860-1916) who was a profound Sanskrit scholar well versed in Tarka, Vyakarana and Vedanta shastras wrote in Telugu verse, *Mahabharata Navanitam* as a fresh adaptation of the Mahabharata. His translation of *mrargharaghavam* has been appreciated for its correct rendering. Mudumba Nrsimhacharyulu (A.D. 1841-1927) who was a great Pandit and a still greater poet, a versatile genius and a prolific writer wrote many Shatakams and wrote several minor poems representing the several varieties of the erotic sentiment. Medepalli Venkata Ramanacharyulu (A.D. 1862-1943) who was a scholar of Sanskrit and Telugu and of Prakrits translated into Telugu verse *Setubandha Mahakavya* composed by Pravara Sarma in Prakrit : a Telugu Prabandha known as *Devavrata Charitra* relating to the legend of Bhishma. He also composed Sanskrit poems.

Charla Narayana Shastri (A.D. 1881-1932) was a great Sanskrit scholar, well versed in Telugu language and grammar. He wrote in easy Telugu verse *Narayaniya Andhra Vyakaranam* based on old grammars and provided for forms of later development. Of his poems, his *Mahisha Shatakam* is the best.

Kalluri Venkata Rama Shastri (A.D. 1857-1928) wrote a valuable

commentary on Chinnaya Suri's *Balavyakaranam*, known as *Guptarthaka Prakashika*. He also translated Kalidasa's *Megha Sandesham* and his is one of the best translations of the poem.

Kokkonda Venkataratnam (A.D. 1842-1915) the first Telugu scholar to receive from the British Government, the title of Maha-Mahopadhyaya ; Vedam Venkataraya Shastri (A.D. 1853-1929) and Kandukuri Viresalingam (A.D. 1848-1919) were the chief Pandits of the prominent colleges of the country who had their rivalries and carried on their triangular literary fights in the leading Telugu journals of that period. *Amudrita Grantha Chintamani* at Nellore was edited by a Telugu scholar, Pundla Ramakrishnayya who favoured Vedam Venkataraya Shastri ; and Viresalingam had his own journal, *Vivekavardhani* and Kokkonda his journal, *Andhra Bhasha Sanjivini*. They attacked one another in their respective journals. Their articles were generally interesting, entertaining and enlightening but contained poignant criticisms, unpleasant remarks, rejoinders and repartees.

Kokkonda was very punctilious about the use of the so-called classical or literary language in which he used to carry on his speech at home and abroad ; with the educated and uneducated ordinary persons and his language amused the listeners. He was the author of several books in Telugu of which *Dhananjaya Vijaya Vyayogam* and *Narakasura Vijaya Vyayogam* represented a type of dramas and his translation of the Sanskrit drama, *Andhra Prasanna Raghavam* was on the whole a good translation but was severely criticised by Vedam Venkataraya Shastri. The criticism bulged into a big volume—thrice as big as the translation, in which he pointed out several hundreds of mistakes and indulged in indecorous language. Some years later Gidugu Venkata Ramamurti pointed out a hundred and one errors committed by this Shastri in reviewing the drama and how he erred in mistaking correct forms as mistakes.

Venkataraya Shastri was indeed a great scholar of Sanskrit Sahitya and poetics and also a Telugu scholar of a high rank. His editions of Srinatha's *Sringara Naishadha* and Krishna Devaraya's *Amuktamalyada*, Chemakuru Venkata Kavi's *Vijaya Vilasam* and *Sarangadhara Charitra* with his exhaustive commentaries and notes

exhibit his profound scholarship and critical acumen though he blundered at some places. He was the author of several books, some of which are original and some others translations of Sanskrit works. Of his original work three dramas are important, *Usha*, *Bobbili* and *Prataparudriyam*, and of these three, the last is his master-piece and is very popular in the country. He translated *Naganadam*, *Ratnavali*, *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, *Malavikagnimitram*, *Vikramorvashiyam*, *Uttara Ramacharita* and *Sahitya darpanam*.

In his *Prataparudriyam*, he used the spoken tongue for all the minor characters with appropriate dialectal variations, for which he was much criticised by the conservative advocates of the classical language who would like to use the classical language for all the characters irrespective of their status and learning. Guruzada Apparao one of the sponsors of the modern Telugu movement pointed out that the author must have consistently used the appropriate spoken tongue for the higher characters also. But Shastri defended his position by pointing to the convention of using Prakrit and Sanskrit in Sanskrit dramas.

Details about Viresalingam are given at the end of this section.

Amudrita Grantha Chintamani was the most prominent Telugu journal of the last twenty years of the 19th century ; it came to a close in 1904. Many scholars who were otherwise not widely known to the public came to prominence by their contributions published in that journal. Mandapaka Parvatishvara Shastri an eminent scholar residing in Bobbili was considered to be the best Telugu poet during the last decades of the 19th century. His lengthy poems in the same Vrtta metre, each with a single theme were highly admired by the Pandits of those days. He was the author of many shatakas. His biography was published by Pundla Ramkrishnayya (A. D. 1860-1904) the editor of this journal.

Dasu Srirama Kavi (A. D. 1864-1908) was a Sanskrit and Telugu scholar and poet and was well versed in music and Bharata natyashastra. His life was short but he was a prolific writer. He translated into Telugu many Sanskrit dramas of which, *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* was done in pure Telugu ; his translation of *Devi Bhagavatam* has some merit. He wrote several books on music useful

to the beginners as well as advanced students of music. He was a poet first and a scholar next. His poetry is inspiring ; his voice was melodious ; his speech was eloquent, full of ready wit and humour.

Sringarakavi Sarvarayadu (A. D. 1863-1939)—One of his ancestors got this title "*Sringarakavi*" because he wrote erotic poetry and that became the name of the family. Sarvarayadu wrote about 71 works in all, the names of which he mentioned in a lengthy verse of 21 lines; but they are of ordinary merit. There are, no doubt, flashes of poetic merit but they are few and far between.

Achanta Venkataraya Sankhyana Sarma (A. D. 1864-1933) was a brilliant scholar of several languages. He wrote very few books because he had a perfection complex. He used to read his poetry to his friends but would not publish it because he was not satisfied with it. He had his own Telugu monthly known as "*Kalpalata*" in which he published some of his short poems like *Chandamama* (moon) and his prose version of *Uttara Ramacharita* in parts. Whatever he published was perfect. His journal was very popular because it published a series of questions in literature which could not be answered except by those who made a thorough study of Telugu literature and he used to offer prizes for the best set of answers.

Journalists during this period, particularly the editors, were lovers of Telugu literature and old traditions but they encouraged experiments which did not violate old conventions of poetry and the liberal rules of later grammars.

Kochcherlakota Ramachandra Venkata Krishnarao (A. D. 1871-1919), Zamindar of Polavaram in East Godavari was a patron of letters. Divakarla Tirupati Shastri was his court poet. He edited a monthly journal, "*Sarasvati*" which was devoted to publishing in parts unpublished Telugu poems of great poets in the past and the poems of the living poets and also essays etc.

Janamanchi Venkataramayya (A. D. 1872-1933) was a good poet known for the simplicity, lucidity and melody of his verse. He translated Sanskrit dramas of which his *Malatimadhavam* is the best. He wrote also several short poems of merit.

Vatsavayi Venkata Niladrirazu (A. D. 1881-1931) known as

Kavirazu to mean that he was a poet among princes or a prince among poets. He translated many Sanskrit dramas and attempted to bring out in his liberal translations the real significance of the original as explained in the commentaries.

Mantripragada Bhujangarao (A. D. 1876-1941) was another scholar and poet among the Zamindars of the country. He wrote in collaboration with P. Chenchayya in English, a short book on "A History of Telugu Literature".

Among non-Andhra Telugu poets of merit should be mentioned Umar Alisha (A. D. 1885-1945) who started his career as a poet in his boyhood. His translation of *Omar Khayyam* is the best of his poems. He wrote several dramas of popular interest.

Vikrama Dev Varma (A. D. 1869-1952), Maharajah of Jeypore was a non-Andhra and Oriya by birth but a great scholar of Telugu language and literature as well as of his mother tongue Oriya. He had a good knowledge of Sanskrit ; he was a poet in all the three languages. He wrote several dramas and short poems of which his play known as *Srinivasa Kalyanam* is the best. He was a patron of learning and of scholars and poets.

Setti Lakshmi Narasimham (A. D. 1882-1941) was a poet and author of several works. His verses relating to *Ravivarma Pictures* were very popular and attractive. His name will be mentioned later on in this brochure under modern Telugu movement and dramas.

The Dawn of the Modern Age (A. D. 1880-1920)

The dawn of the modern age in the social and the literary history of the Telugus made its appearance during A. D. 1880-1920 and five brilliant persons are acclaimed to be the makers of the age : 1. Rao Bahadur Kandukuri Viresalingam, 2. Guruzada Venkata Apparao, 3. Rao Saheb Gidugu Venkata Ramamurti, 4. Komarraju Venkata Lakshmanarao, and 5. Desoddharaka Kasinathuni Nagesvararao.

Viresalingam (1848-1919) devoted almost all his life to social reform and literary pursuits. Very early in his public career he promoted the cause of education among women by starting schools, started a journal, known as *Hasya Sanjivini* to ridicule the evil social

customs and another journal *Vivekavardhani* to foster fresh creative art in literature and to publish in parts the unpublished pieces of literature of the past poets. Viresalingam was a prolific writer. There was hardly any branch of literature to which he had not contributed and what ever he wrote, be it an essay, or a farce or a short poem or a novel or a poem of the *Prabandha* type or a drama or anything else was read with an abiding interest by the reading public. He was neither a great Sanskrit Pandit of the type of Sishtu Krishnamurti or Vedam Venkataraya Shastri nor a brilliant poet like Kuchi Manchi Timmakavi or Chellapilla Venkata Shastri but was the founder of a new age in Telugu literature. He was the first novelist, the first essayist, the first playwright to write an original drama or a farce in Telugu, the first writer on scientific subjects, the first to write an autobiography and the first to introduce composition of short poems—the first to start the new trends of the modern Telugu literature. In the early part of his literary career, the infection of Chinnaya Suri's style of writing prose spread to him also as a result of which he wrote the *Vigraha tantra* in continuation of Chinnaya Suri's *Mitralabha* and *Mitrabheda* in the same pedantic style but very soon realised the uselessness of such an artificial style and wrote the *Sandhi tantra* in a comparatively easier style with the marks of infection still present in it. In course of time his prose became simple, perfect and uniform and he came to be regarded as the father of the modern prose in Telugu literature. His writings were a source of inspiration to the contemporary and the subsequent writers in Telugu. He knew that the spoken tongue was more vigorous and more effective than the literary Telugu with its archaic expressions and used it for his farces intended to expose the prevailing evils in the social life of his times but he was afraid of using it for his essays or other serious prose writings. He did not study the history of the Telugu language nor was he a student of philology. Along with others, he had opposed the modern Telugu movement until in 1916 he happened to listen to Gidugu Ramamurti's speech at Kovvur near his place, Rajahmundry. He, then, realised that the movement was based on sound principles of language and though by that time he was too old to continue his literary work, he thought of writing a modern Telugu grammar

with the help of Ramamurti's collection of materials on the usage of the poets—what later on appeared in Ramamurti's *Balakavi Saranyam*. A society was formed in 1919 to promote modern Telugu literature and Viresalingam was the first President of that society but within a few months after this, he died ; and Ramamurti had to carry on his work without his support and guidance.

Of the works of Viresalingam published in ten volumes, his translation of Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* is still the best though more than a dozen translations by various other scholars—previous to him and after him have come into the field. His *Rajasekhara Charitra* is the first novel in Telugu and though it was based on Goldsmith's 'Vicar of Wakefield' reads like a story of the Telugu people. His "*Satyarajah's New Travels*" though based on Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels' reads like an original fiction and is as humorous as Swift's work. His *Harischandra Natakam* is an original drama in Telugu literature. Such of his essays and farces as had a local contemporary interest are not now read as the themes are out of date but the influence his literature had on the contemporary and the later writers of the 20th century was so great that even today the effect of his productions is felt in the current Telugu literature and the present Telugu society.

A brief account of the other four makers of the modern age in Telugu literature will be found in the subsequent sections of this brochure.

The Modern Telugu Movement and the Growth of Navya Sahitya—Renaissance (1910-1955) :

The Modern Telugu movement and the Modern period of Renaissance (Navya Sahitya) are erroneously regarded by some as identical and the relation between the two is not properly understood by many.

The Modern Telugu Movement sponsored by Gidugu Venkata Ramamurti and Guruzada Venkata Apparao is practically an endeavour to restore the *Status quo ante-Chinnayasuri* in prose writing and the modern period of Renaissance is the result of the impress of English literature which the Telugus studied in High Schools and Colleges during A.D. 1850-1900. Even with the Modern Telugu

Movement there could have been a development of the new trends in Modern literature. It is, however, a fact that the Modern Telugu Movement encouraged the younger generation to express their thoughts in the living language without any fear of adverse criticism from the pandits.

I shall briefly summarise the achievements of Gidugu Venkata Ramamurti (A.D. 1863-1940). By 1909 he was known as a scholar of English and History ; as an educationist and as the author of Antiquities of Mukhalingam which he established as the capital of the later Eastern Gangas of Kalinga and as the author of Savara Readers and Dictionaries. He was well versed in Philology—Aryan as well as Dravidian and had a good knowledge of Sanskrit but his knowledge of Telugu literature and old grammars was quite ordinary. In 1910 he retired from service and by that time his attention had been drawn to the wide disparity between the language of the books and the spoken tongue of even the best scholars. He then set about thinking and in consultation with his friends, particularly with Guruzada Apparao, began to study books on linguistics. He devoted two years to an intensive study of the Telugu language and literature and in collaboration with his friend, Guruzada Apparao sponsored the Modern Telugu Movement.

When in 1914 the University of Madras published its decision that it was “not in a position to recognise what is known as Modern Telugu for University purposes” and the Government withdrew its circular giving the option to the candidates of the School Final Examination to write their translation and composition in the spoken tongue. Ramamurti commenced his propaganda work. The impetus came from the tips he had from the Educational authorities who said that they were favourable to the movement but they had to yield to the vehement opposition in the country. He toured all over the country and gradually succeeded in convincing many scholars and writers that the movement he sponsored was sound. We noticed how Viresalingam was convinced of the soundness of the movement. By 1920 he had a large following. He openly declared in his speeches and writings that the classical or literary language used in Telugu poems varied with times and no Telugu Grammar either correctly

or completely represented. It and that no writer correctly wrote his poems or prose works in the literary language which he advocated and that it was cruelty against students to insist on their writings in such a language and that the Pandits prior to Chinnayasuri were prudent enough to write prose in the living language and poetry in the traditional language of the kavyas. Ramamurti advocated the standard spoken Telugu and wrote his essays in the language he advocated and said that every dialect had its place in stories or dramas where different characters had to speak in their own dialects. In the case of poetry he said that all obsolete words and grammatical forms should be avoided as far as possible. His essays and other writings were published in 1934 by the Navya Sahitya Parishad. His *Balakavi Saranyam*, the result of his deep and extensive study of Telugu literature traces the usage of the poets corresponding to the growth of the language, a work that had not been done by anybody previous to him in a systematic manner and this helps to bridge over the gulf of difference between the literary language and the standard spoken Telugu. He died with the satisfaction that he could convince the country and expected that the Universities and the Government would recognise the Modern Telugu but their recognition has not been formally obtained.

For the new trends in modern Telugu literature, it was not the Modern Telugu Movement but the influence of the English literature acquired at schools and colleges that was mainly responsible and here again it was Vireshalingam who first started the new experiments though he did not give up the old models. While scholars of Sanskrit and Telugu unacquainted with English followed the time-honoured models and produced literature with the same old themes and hackneyed patterns, the English educated Telugus generally made their experiments and followed the example set by Vireshalingam. There were some other poets who wrote short poems, e.g., Dr. Ramalinga Reddi got a prize in his college days (1902) for his short poem *Musa-Jamma Maranam* based on a local legend and Achanta Venkataraya Sankhyana Sarma's *Chandamama* (moon), a lyrical poem. Similar short poems were written by several other poets who liked new models. But the earliest that came to prominence were Guruzada Venkata Apparao and Rayaprolu Subbarao.

Guruzada Venkata Apparao (A. D. 1861-1916) was a good scholar of English, Sanskrit and Telugu literatures and developed poetic talent. He wrote in 1896 a social play, in the spoken Telugu dialect, known as *Kanyasulkam* ridiculing the evil customs and stupid superstitions in the Telugu country, particularly the pernicious custom of infant marriages and the selling of girls in marriage to old men. Vireshalingam had already written such plays but they were of the type of farces and though they were written in the spoken Telugu varying with the characters, they were not criticised by the Pandits because Vireshalingam did not claim the dignity of literature for them. Apparao wrote his *Kanyasulkam* not as a farce but as a regular drama with acts and scenes. It was well reviewed in the newspapers and by some scholars. Moreover it was dedicated to the Maharaja of Vizianagaram, a great patron of education and poets and scholars. In a few years it became a very popular play. In 1909 dawned the Modern Telugu Movement. This encouraged Apparao to publish a second and revised edition of *Kanyasulkam* which had the full technique of a drama. From 1910 appeared his short poems and short stories in the leading Telugu journals of those days which influenced the younger generation of poets and story-writers. He also collaborated with Gidugu Ramamurti in sponsoring the Modern Telugu Movement.

Rayaprolu Subbarao (A. D. 1892) had nothing to do with the Modern Telugu Movement. While yet he was a student of the sixth form, he wrote his maiden poem *Lalita* (A. D. 1908) as an adaptation of Parnel's *Hermit* and between 1909 and 1912, he composed *Anumati*, an adaptation of Tennyson's *Dora* and *Kashta Kamala*, an original poem. In 1912-'13 he wrote *Trnakankanam* another original poem which brought him fame. This was followed by a number of lyrico-romantic poems which were much appreciated for the novelty of presentation. Two verses of *Andhravali* beginning with "*Amaravati pattanamuna bauddhulu visvavidyalayamulu sthapint sunadu*" meaning "When the Buddhists established Universities at Amaravati (on the banks of the Krishna)" and with "*Tana giti yaravajalini patakuluga diddi vardhivilina teluguvani*" meaning "The Telugu speech that flourished with her songs which embellished the music of the Tamil singers," are very frequently recited all over the Telugu country.

Apparao's earliest poems came out like flashes but their popularity was suspended by the prejudice against the Modern Telugu Movement with which he was associated and against the spoken tongue he used in his poems. Rayaprolu's poems were composed in the traditional literary language and they have had a continuous appreciation. After the Modern Telugu Movement gained a firm ground in the country, Apparao's poems were again popular and the new metre which he introduced in *Muttyala Saramulu* (3-4 shorts) was very attractive. This accounts for the varied opinion in the country as to which of the two was the real founder of the *Natya Sahityam* in Telugu. The fact is that both started independently and were first prominent Navya Sahitya poets each in his own way.

I cannot find space in this short brochure to present detailed accounts of about two-hundred poets of eminence that have appeared during the last forty years. I shall just note the currents and counter-currents, the literary circles and the main branches of modern literature with references to representative poets and poetesses of the present age.

Vijnana Chandrica Mandali (A.D. 1911-'20)—Komarraju Venkata Lakshmana Rao was the principal member, the leader and guide. He was helped by Dr. Achanta Lakshmiapati and G. Harisarovattamarao. The Mandali published books in Telugu on Physics etc. which were no doubt good books but could not be understood by those for whom they were intended ; but they afforded good guidance to those that followed this example. The Mandali's novels and biographies on Shivaji by Lakshmanarao and on Abraham Lincoln by Harisarovattamarao had better success. Lakshmanarao was a scholar of several languages and with his wide culture started the publication of a Telugu Encyclopaedia but with his premature death it did not proceed beyond the first three parts covering the articles under the first letter of the alphabet *a*. Later on, Desodharaka K. Nageshvararao took it up but with his premature death it could make little progress and stopped with articles under the second letter *a*. But the attempts made by Lakshmana Rao and Nageshvararao have given to the Telugu country a young man, Mallampalli Somashekhara Sarma who with his devotion to historical research

has studied Andhra History, first in collaboration with Chilakuri Virabhadrarao who had written the History of the Andhras and next independently; has edited innumerable inscriptions and now is almost the only authority on Andhra History among the Telugu scholars.

Andhra Pracharini Granthamala (1911) of the East Godavari district now at Kakinada published about two hundred novels in Telugu written by Venkata Parvatishvara Kavulu, Cheganti Seshayya and many others. Most of the early novels published by this institution were translations of the Bengali novels.

Venkata Parvatishvara Kavulu is an abridged name for Balant-rapu Venkatarao (1880 -) and Oleti Parvatisam (1882-1955) both of whom were joint poets who wrote several poems of which *Ekanta Seva* is their best production. Their *Ramayanam* is unfinished and though Parvatisam died a few months ago, Venkatarao expects to finish it in a few months. They are regarded as good poets of the modern age.

Andhra Sahitya Parishad (A.D. 1911), which was started mainly for the purpose of suppressing the Modern Telugu movement, succeeded in its attempt so far as the University and the Government were concerned but could not arrest the progress of the movement in the country. It is in existence because it had the patronage of the Maharaja of Pithapuram and other Zamindars and rich people and has funds and Jayanti Ramayya Pantulu, the central figure of the Parishad kept it active for a long time (1912-1940). It has done good service to the country by publishing many valuable unpublished books of the past poets, started a journal known as *Andhra Sahitya Parishad Patrika* and compiled a voluminous Telugu lexicon under the patronage of the Maharaja of Pithapuram, four volumes of which have been published and the last three volumes are in the press. But with the extensive progress and popularity of the Modern Telugu movement its pristine glory and prestige have gradually decreased. Its journal is still running but is read only by a limited number of scholars who have an attachment for old traditions.

Sahiti Samiti (1919) was organised by the young poets of the age who had been influenced by Ramamurti, Rayaprolu and Apparao. Tallavajjhala Shivashankara Shastri (A. D. 1893) was the central

figure and the moving force. He is a fine scholar of Sanskrit, Telugu and several other languages of India and Europe ; a prolific writer, wellknown as the author of a poem known as *Hridayesvari* and several other verse plays. He translated into spoken Telugu *Jataka Tales* from Pali texts. Of the other members of the Samiti, Chinta Dikshitulu (1891-) known for his juvenile books, Nori Narasimha Shastri (1900) for his novels and *Devi Bhagavatam* in verse; Munimanikyam Narasimharao (1898) whose *Kantam* and other humorous stories are very popular; Vedula Satyanarayana (1900) who wrote original short stories and translated Bengali novels and whose *Dipavali*, a collection of his short poems earned him the title of *Gautami Kokila* (Cuckoo of the Gautami valley); Viasvanatha Satyanarayana (1895-) who has been a prolific writer of major and minor poems, *Kinnera sani* songs, of novels like *Veyipadagalu* (=thousand hoods) and who is now writing a mahakavya of the *Ramayana*; Devulapalli Krishna Sastri (1897), one of the sweetest warblers of the age and known widely as the author of *Krishnapaksham*, Radio plays and cinema'songs; Mokkalapati Narasimha Shastri (1892) ever remembered as the author of a humorous novel, *Barrister Parvatisam*; Nayani Subbarao (1899) author of *Matrigitamulu*, patriotic poems about national heroes; Nanduri Subbarao (1895) with immortal fame for his *Yenki Patalu*, lyrical songs relating to a rustic girl, Yenki and her lover Nayadu Bava, wherein he transgressed all old conventions of grammar and poetics ; are the most prominent writers of the age.

Navya Sahitya Parishad (1933) provided for a need for a wider and more comprehensive institution to bring together all the modern writers of this age. It had the guiding force of Tallavajjhala Shiva-shankara Shastri and Telikicherla Venkataratnam, an active young scholar to work for the Parishad with devoted interest. In addition to a Telugu journal known as *Sahiti* started by the Sahiti Samiti, this Parishad started a bi-monthly Telugu journal known as *Pratibha*. While *Sahiti* encouraged mere creative art, *Pratibha* provided also for articles on literary topics, book reviews etc. It had the privilege of celebrating the 71st birthday of Gidugu Ramamurti and publishing his writings in four volumes. It had also published minor poems, stories, one-act plays and some other books that were fresh in thought.

G. Harisarvottamarao as a journalist characterised this new type of poetry as *Bhavakavitvam* and the authors of it as *Bhavakavis* without any bias. But the old-fashioned scholars thought that those poets themselves assumed that name to indicate that what they wrote had Bhavam or thought. They were ridiculed as Abhavakavis. Some of the liberal poets, who also wrote short poems but with old traditions and new themes, did not like to be called Bhavakavis. Among such liberal poets were Pingali Lakshmikantam (1894) and Katuri Venkateshvararao (1895) who as joint authors wrote *Tolakari*, *Saundaranandanam* and *Paulastya Hridayam*. The first meaning "Early or first showers" is an appropriate name for their early production. It was promising their future achievements. The second was based on Ashvaghosha's poem relating to the amours of Nanda (the step-brother of the Buddha) and Sundari, his wife, their conversion to the Buddhist faith and the transformation of their carnal love to the spiritual devotion. The third is an idealistic picture of the bright side of Ravana's heart. The two poets wrote also separately some stories, essays etc.

There are some other prominent poets like Duvvuri Rami-reddi who may be regarded as a sweet warbler and a pastoral poet ; Gurram Joshuva (1895) known for his lucid expression and inspiring ideas of whose several poems his *Firdausi* is the best ; Abburi Ramakrishnarao known for his successful experiments in using Sanskrit metres for Telugu poems and expressing deep thoughts in simple language. Kavikondala Venkatarao (1892) is a prolific writer of short pastoral poems, folk songs and short stories. Pilaka Ganapatishastri (1911) known for depth of thought and felicity of expression wrote many short poems of which *Brahmarshi Sutramulu*, *Ratnopaharam* and *Vibhranti Amurakam* are the best.

The *Vegujukka* series at Berhampore with Tapi Dharmarao (1888) and Devarazu Venkatakrishnarao (1890) published some poems, novels and short stories.

The Telugu Literary Association at Vizianagaram was a source of inspiration to the young writers of the age as that was the home of Guruzada Venkata Apparao. Dr. Burra Seshagirirao (1884-1941) was a great Sanskrit and Telugu scholar who collaborated

with Ramamurti and Apparao and was the author of *Bobbili* drama and literary criticism in Telugu. Bhogarazu Narayana Murti (1889-1931) author of *Vimala*, a novel, *Kankanam*, a poem on an abstract theme and *Pandugakatnam*, a poem relating to a social theme was a promising poet of merit. Adidam Ramarao (1886), a scholar, has published many short poems and lives of Kalinga Telugu poets. Malladi Vishvanatha Kavirazu (1889-1946) was a prolific writer of about 80 short plays with social themes. K. Rangachari published many *Jataka* stories, as adaptations of Sanskrit or Prakrit tales.

Kavita Samiti at Vishakhapatnam had a good circle of poets and playwrights with Marepalli Ramachandra Shastri (1873-1948), popularly known as Kaviguru, as a source of inspiration. He organised a Dramatic Association and wrote several plays and Setti Lakshminarasimham also wrote several plays for the Association. Vikramadeo Verma (the prospective Maharaja of Jeypore) was helping their activities. Among the several disciples of that kaviguru two have become prominent: Gobburi Venkatananda Raghavarao published his astronomical interpretation of the Vedic hymns and books on scientific subjects in lucid Telugu, and Puripanda Appalasvami who is now publishing the comprehensive story of the Mahabharata in the spoken dialect. Shrirangam Shrinivasarao, popularly known as Sri Sri and his cousin Narayana Babu and his nephew, Bhagavatula Shankarashastri, popularly known as Arudra, who are famous among progressive writers and poets, hail from that literary atmosphere at Vishakhapatnam.

Andhra Sahitya Parishad (1943) and Andhra Sarasvata Parishad (1949) at Hyderabad have brought to light prominent young writers of this new age, through the literary activities of Devulapalli Ramanujarao, Pulijala Hanumantarao, Parsa Venkatesvararao, Biduru Venkata Seshayya, Bhaskarabhatla Krishnarao, Lokinandi Shankaranarayana. Among the old and influential persons that patronise the literary activities are Ramakrishnarao, Madapati Hanumantarao. Suravarapu Pratapareddi (1895-1954) was a devoted student of Telugu literature and history and writer of several books and essays. His social history of the Andhras based

on Telugu literature was awarded the posthumous prize of Rs. 5,000 by the Sahitya Akademi at Delhi in 1955 as the best book during 1947-'53.

Among the prominent poets of Hyderabad, Dasarathi Krishnamacharyulu (1927) of whose short poems *Agnidhara* and *Rudravina* are the best and G. Narayana Reddi (1931) of whose short poems *Navvani Guvvu* and *Jalapatam* are the best, stand as the most popular poets of the present age. Dharanikota Shrinivasulu is considered to be the Munimanikyam of Telangana for his humorous short stories. Bagi Narayanamurti (1912) is a musician, actor and playwright. Veldurti Manikyarao (1918) is a charming writer for children and the masses.

Gadiyaram Ramakrishna Shastri, editor of the *Sujata* has studied the antiquities of Telangana and published good literature on the subject. Khandavalli Lakshmiranjanam (1908) has written in Telugu, Andhra History and culture as well as History of Telugu literature. Kuruganti Sitarama Bhattacharya (1890) published *Navyandhra Vidhulu* in four volumes and in the later stages of its production he was assisted by his son-in-law Pillalamarri Hanu-mantarao coming to prominence with his short poems and literary essays.

Puttaparti Narayanacharyulu (1915), a scholar of several languages, wrote many short poems of which his *Sivatandavam* and *Penugonda Lakshmi* are the best. Mallavarapu Vishveshvararao (1904) a product of Shantiniketanam has adapted Tagore's poems in melodious Telugu verses; his *Kalyana Kinkini* is the best of his productions. Bezavada Gopalareddi (1909) another product of Shantiniketanam has been translating into Telugu, Tagore's poetry and short plays in rhythmic metres and dignified language.

In fairness to the poets of the old school who follow the old traditions of epic and Prabandha types of poetry and endeavour to maintain the standard literary language I must devote some space at least to the top-most poets of the age.

Shripada Krishnamurti Shastri (1866), is the oldest of the living poets, still strong and vigorous; Andhra Poet-laureate from 1950 and like "the last of the Romans", the most prominent figure among the

living poets of the classical school. He has been the recipient of many titles conferred on him by the public and of Kalaprapurna by the Andhra University. He held for a time his *Vajrayuddha* (the name of a Telugu journal which he edited) with which he wanted to smite to death the Modern Telugu Movement as well as the new type of poetry but put it aside when he realised that it was powerless like the Papal Bull in the Protestant States. It is only very recently that he has realised that the language of the people should be the vehicle of expression to educate the masses and for popular literature. He is a prolific writer who is always engaged in writing. He translated Vyasa's *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavata* and Valmiki's *Ramayana* once again—all single-handed, while each required the collaboration of three or four when they were done for the first time. He composed many other lengthy poems, many dramas and prose works—about 200 works and a million lines of poetry. There are no doubt several scholars who appreciate his poetry but many fail to do so. With all his devotion to the standard literary language, his works, like the works of the other poets of the classical school, have many errors in grammar and are not free from the influence of Modern Telugu which he wants to avoid. None of his poems has become popular.

Janamanchi Seshadri Sarma (1882-1952) was a poet to be ranked along with Shripada Krishnamurti Shastri, a prolific writer devoted to classical standards of poetry without taking any part in literary controversies. He was the author of 25 lengthy poems most of which were translations of Sanskrit works. His *Brahmanda Puranam* was his masterpiece. His *Hridayanandam* is an original poem affording happiness and delight to the heart.

Janamanchi Venkataramayya (A. D. 1872-1933) was a poet of eminence who though devoted to the classical standards, realised the need for writing in simple, easy and idiomatic Telugu. He wrote several short poems which appeal to the reader's heart and soul. Of his translations of Sanskrit dramas, his *Malati Madhavam* is the best.

Tripurana Venkata Surya Prasadarao Dora (1889-1945) well-versed in Sanskrit and Telugu wrote chiselled poetry always taking care to see that the grammatical forms he used had the sanction of the old grammars or poets' usage. He translated Sanskrit Kavyas—

Raghuvansa, *Kumara Sambhavam* etc; his adaptation of Kalidasa's *Meghasandesam* in matra metre is most melodious and the best of his works. His original poetry is scanty: his elegiac poem addressed to the memory of his father who died while yet he was a baby is full of pathos. His father, Tammaya Dora (1849-1890) was the author of a Telugu poem, *Devi Bhagavatam*, a translation of ordinary merit.

Durbha Subrahmanya Shastri (A. D. 1875) is much devoted to the old standards of grammar and poetry, a good teacher and a source of inspiration to his students of whom Duvvuri Ramireddi, Muttarazu Subbarao and Mocherla Ramakrishnayya are prominent. He translated into melodious Telugu verse Shankara's *Saundaryalahari* and *Vivekachudamani*. His translation of *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* is faithful to the original.

Seshadri Ramana Kavulu, abridged name for the joint poets Dhupati Seshacharyulu and Dhupati Venkata Ramanacharyulu are known as good scholars and poets. They wrote a good commentary on Bhattumurti's *Vasucharitra*, verse by verse, *Bhaktavatsalu Satakam* and some plays like *Paparya Niryanam* and novels like *Kondapalli Muttadi* both based on local historical incidents and some other works.

Malladi Suryanarayana Shastri (1880) is a scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu. *Prematatvam* is his best poem. His translation of *Uttararama Charita* is in lucid style; his original drama *Bhishma Pratijna* is the best of his plays. His stories from Bhasha's dramas are of interest to students. His grammar *Andhra Bhashanusasanam* is based on his study and the notes he got from Gidugu Ramamurti. He was first opposed but later on was in favour of the Modern Telugu movement.

Anantapantula Ramalingasvami (1893), though not opposed to the Modern Telugu movement or the new trends in Telugu literature, is devoted to the old style of writing, adopting however new patterns. His *Suklapaksham* is a collection of his short poems of which *Bhavatarangam* is the best. The name *Suklapaksham* is an indication of a sportive challenge to Devulapalli Krishnasastri's *Krishnapakshma* in *Bhavakaritvam*.

Vishvanatha Satyanarayan (1893) though mentioned already as a member of the Sahiti Samiti in the earliest part of his literary career

deserves a special notice as a prolific writer of about sixty to seventy books, viz., major and minor poems, songs, novels, dramas, essays, short stories etc. His *Kinnerasani Patalu* (folk songs) and patriotic verses are very popular. His language is vigorous and high sounding with Sanskrit compounds but his style is uneven, stilted and pathetic. Of his novels, *Veyi Padagalu* received the Andhra University prize, but his *Cheliyalikatta* has greater merit. Of his dramas, *Nartana Sala* was for a time, a popular drama. The public honoured him with the title of Kavisamrat and a parade was held while he was seated on an elephant as was done by Krishnadeva Raya to honour Peddana in the 16th century A. D. He is now publishing his novel adaptation of *Ramayana*.

Another poet to receive such a high honour was Tripuraneni Ramasvami Chaudari (1890-1943) who defying the Vyasa tradition wrote a new Purana resetting the story of the Mahabharata to support the cause of the *Dhartarashtras* against the *Pandavas* and to denounce Krishna and Dharmaraja. He was the uncrowned prince of the Kamma community, opposed to the Brahmans.

Veluri Shivarama Shastri (1895) is a brilliant scholar of Sanskrit and Telugu. One of the best disciples of Chellapilla Venkata Shastri, he has the extraordinary ability of repeating a Sanskrit sloka or Telugu verse on hearing it once. His talks are a source of inspiration to his listeners. His stories in prose and verse are adaptations of the Bengali writers. Many of his works, while in the stage of manuscripts, were burnt away in an accidental fire. He is now prematurely old and not in his young cheerful moods.

Durbhaka Rajasekhara Shatavadhani (1888) started his literary career as an ordinary scholar and poet and in course of time performed *Avadhanams* and finally became a *Mahakavi* and has been honoured at several places with more than fifteen titles like Kavi Sarva-bhauma, Mahakavi Chudamani, Abhinava Tikkana etc. He is fond of themes relating to the National heroes and heroines and themes relating to *Ramayana*. His lengthy poem *Ranapratapa Sinha Charitra* in five cantos is his master-piece.

Gadiyaram Venkata Sesha Shastri (1897) started his literary career as an auxiliary to Rajasekhara Shatavadhani in his *Avadhanams*

and gradually came to prominence with his lengthy poem, *Sri Shiva Puranam* which earned him the state prize of Rs. 500/-awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti in 1949. The poem relates to the life of Shivaji.

Shatavdhanam, Ashtavadhanam and Asukavitvam are still practiced and exhibited by the Junior Kopparapu brothers, their younger uncle and Srirama Narsimhamurti poets (Gandham Sriramamurti and Iranki Narasimhamurti) etc. The last joint poets have published their latest production *Kavita Silpam* relating to the features of the several acrobatic feats in poetry.

Adibhatla Narayanadas (1866-1942) a great Sanskrit, Telugu, English and Persian scholar, the first producer of Harikatha type of literature on an extensive scale; a musician and singer whose performances were very frequently requisitioned on festive and marriage occasions. He composed 20 Harikathas, each with verses, songs, rhythmic prose and anecdotes. They exhibited his scholarship, versatility, knowledge of music and fecundity of imagination. Many of the living Harikatha performers are proud of calling themselves as his disciples. He was also a poet of several poems like *Batasari*, an adaptation of Goldsmith's *Traveller*. Beauties from Shakespeare in Telugu verse and *Panasala*, an adaptation of Omar Khayyam. This type of literature made further progress in the country by the writings of Balajidas and other performers.

Minstrel songs known as *Burrakathas* have become very popular during the last 20 years. They relate to accounts of the national heroes. Sunkara Satyanarayana was the first to start this type of literature. Nazar Sheik is the best and most popular composer and singer. Umamahesvararao, Krishnamurti and Radha Rukmini are some others, active in this field. Prayaga Narasimha Shastri, a sweet singer combines Harikatha and Burra Katha types and recites his compositions relating to the national heroes of India and particularly Andhra.

Women writers

In fairness to the fair sex I must devote some space to the literature produced by the Telugu poetesses. Utakuri Lakshmikantamma a good Sanskrit and Telugu scholar published her book *Andhra Kavya-*

trulu—an account of 131 women writers from Chanama, wife of Khadga Tikkana and the sister-in-law of Tikkana, the Mahabharata poet of the 13th century A.D. to the present day living poetesses. This book got the State prize of Rs. 500—awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti in 1951-52.

For want of space I shall refer only to the most important representative poetesses of the present age because I already gave a brief account of the poetesses of the previous periods of Telugu literature. I did not refer to Chanama as only two stray verses alleged to be of her composition are extant.

Among the poetesses of the last years of the 19th century Mamidanna Subhadramma deserves notice as the authoress of *Ramayana* in dvipada based on *Adhyatma Ramayana* songs of the previous age. Kotikalapudi Sitamma (1872-1934) came to prominence with her *Sadhurakshna Shatakam* and her *biography of Viresalingam* as a poem. Bhandaru Achchamamba, a good scholar of English, Marathi and Telugu wrote in good prose *Abala Satcharitra Ratnamala*. Siram Subhadramma (1876-1947) was a poetess of high merit. Her *Ramayana* is the best among her poems and her novel *Jagila* was based on a French story narrated by her younger brother Setti Lakshminarasimham.

Encouraged by Viresalingam's activities to promote education among women, educated ladies started journals for women. Balantrapu Seshamma edited *Hindu Sundari* during the time of Viresalingam and was writing leading articles advocating social reform. Pulagurti Lakshminarasamma (1878-1953) edited *Savitri* to oppose social reform transgressing old traditions of caste and creed. Vinjamuri Venkataratnamma (1889-1950), famous for her *Sarada Lekhalu* (letters), edited *Anasuya* from 1914 to 1920 and this was revived for a year or two by her daughters, the famous talented singers, Anasuya and Sita encouraged by her father, Lakshminarasimharao, author of a poem, *Nauroz* and their maternal uncle Devulapalli Krishnashastri.

Among the poetesses of the present age, stands foremost Kanchanapalli Kanakamma (1893) bearing the title of Kavita Visarada, a prolific writer of poems and stories. Her poem *Jivayatra* and her drama *Hamsa Vijayam* both of philosophical interest are the

best of her productions. Gudipati Indumati Devi (1892) is another prolific writer of major and minor poems, songs and stories. Her *Lakshmana Parinayam* and *Ambarisha Vijayam* and *Janmabhumi* are the best of her poems. She is a powerful speaker and can entertain large audiences for hours with her anecdotes and verses.

Prominent among those that received Dr. Kesari's Suvarnakankanam for their contributions to the Telugu literature are Kanuparti Varalakshamma (1896) known very widely for her *Sarada lekhalu* (under epistolary literature), 'Kavikalahamsi' Chebrolu Sarasvati Devi whose *Ramayana* is much appreciated; Gidugu Lakshmikantamma (1903) who along with her husband's sister, Jonnalagadda Saradamba (1912-'44) published many short poems and songs of which their dialogues in verse on ethical and social problems are most interesting; Sthanapati Rukminamma (1915) authoress of several lyrico-romantic poems; and 'Kavi-tilaka' Pulavarti Kamala Devi is a prolific writer of several poems, dramas and novels.

Ponaka Kanakamma (1892) and Dronamrazu Lakshmi Bayamma (1904) are the joint authoresses of a Telugu version of *Bhagavatgita* and of *Aradhana*, a tribute to Ramana Maharshi. Kalluri Visalakshamma (1901) whose lengthy poem *Bharatakathamritam* is the best of her productions is a talented poetess of the old type. Ganti Venkatasubbamma (1890) a scholar of several languages has composed many short poems of which *Girija Kalyanam* is the best. Ravuri Venkata Subbamma (1890) a scholar of Sanskrit and Telugu is the authoress of a poem, *Karpuramanjari* an adaptation of the Prakrit work by Rajasekhara Kavi.

Simakurti Satyavati Devi (1895) who belongs to a cultured family of modernists in social life and progressive movements, developed poetic talent in her girlhood; published along with her short poems, her mother Annapurnamma's Shatakam attacking the superiority complex of man and his desire to keep back the woman behind the purda as his slave.

Desirazu Bharati Devi (1905) composed several poems and stray verses. Her book on the influence of the earliest poet-trio on later Telugu poets won her the State prize awarded by the Telugu Sahitya Samiti in 1955.

Puttavarti Kanakamma (1930) a partner in life and a literary companion of Narayanacharyulu, a brilliant poet of the age, has independently written many short poems which exhibit her originality in theme and development, poems relating to repentance of *Yasodhara*, *Aggrieved Sita*, *Ruined city of Vijayanagaram* in every one of which we find her fecundity of imagination, deep thought and lucidity of expression.

Burra Kamala Devi (1908) acquired scholarship in Sanskrit, Telugu and English, composed many short poems relating to Nationalistic movements, lyrico-romantic poems with various themes and varying metres. Pathos is generally the main sentiment in her poems. Chunduri Rama Devi (1912) is a regular contributor of short stories and poems to the leading Telugu journals. Her poem *Dampatyam* exhibits her high conception of happiness in married life.

Tallapragada Visva Sundaramma (1900); Saudamani alias Basavarazu Rajyalakshmi (1904) and Chavali Bangaramma (1900) are the three topmost *Bhavakavyitris* of the present age. Kottapalli Lalita (1930) brought up in a poetic atmosphere at home with her father, Rayaprolu Subbarao and enthused by her husband Virabhadra Rao, a brilliant scholar of Telugu language and literature, creates her own standards of language and metrical conventions and writes lyrical poems caring more for melody and thought than for form.

There are many other women writers for whom I find no space in this short brochure.

Drama and one-act plays

Telugu drama—either original or translation did not appear in Telugu until the dawn of the modern age. People were probably content with the *Yakshaganas* and street plays. With the advent of the Hindi plays from outside and the English theatres, the need for Telugu dramas was felt. Ananda Gajapati, the Maharaja of Vizianagaram started a Dramatic Association at his palace but was interested in the performance of Sanskrit plays. Kokkanda Venkataratnam's *Narakasura Vijaya Vyayogam* and Vireshalingam's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* were the earliest translations of Sanskrit plays. Vireshalingam also translated *Merchant of Venice* and *Comedy of Error* but English plays have produced no impression on Telugu public.

The earliest playwrights who wrote for regularly organised Dramatic Associations were Dharmavaram Krishnamacharya (1853-1913) and Kolachalam Srinivasarao both of Bellari. The former was the author of about 30 dramas of which *Chitranaaliyam*, *Padukapattabhishekam*, *Vishada Sarangadhara* and *Prahlada* have been most popular for the stage. The author himself was a famous actor and trained by him, his nephew Tadiparti Raghavachari became a distinguished actor of national and international fame. Krishnamacharya is known as "Andhra Nataka Pitamaha".

Kolachalam Srinivasarao also wrote many dramas for a rival association at Bellari of which *Vijayanagara rajya patanam* (Fall of Vijayanagar Empire) is the best.

A little later Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham came to prominence as a playwright. Of his several dramas, *Prasannayadavam* (Narakasura's fall) and *Gayopakhyanam* based on a Puranic legend became very popular.

About the same time or a little earlier appeared Vedam Venkataraya Shastri's *Prataparudriyam*, a mixture of historical fact and fiction which has maintained its popularity for more than fifty years though it is a very lengthy drama. Apparao's *Kanyasulkam* appeared about the same time and is regarded as the best of the social plays and is still staged. Kallakuri Narayanarao's *Varavikrayam* came as a counterpart and had some popularity for a time; but his *Chintamani* based on Bilvamangala story has had better success.

Baljepalli Lakshmikantam (1880-1951) a renowned poet and scholar wrote *Harishchandra* as an original drama and was for a long time very popular. Kopparapu Subbarao's *Roshanara* based on fact and fiction had a very great popularity but its performance was banned as it provoked the resentment of the Muslims because Sivaji was honoured and Aurangzeb's family was dishonoured. His *Tara Sasankam* has become popular but the amours of Tara and Sasanka (the moon) are indecorous though not quite pornographic. But his Little Theatre organization and one-act plays, *Neti Natudu* and *Allimutha* have won the approbation of the public.

Panuganti Lakshminarasimharao who had the patronage of the Maharaja of Pithapuram was a prolific writer of literary essays like

Sakshi and about 30 dramas and short plays such as *Padukapattabhishekam*, *Narmadapurukuchchiyam* and *Kanthabharanam*. Many of his dramas were for several years very popular in the coastal districts of the Andhra Desa.

Jagan Mitra Nataka Samajam which flourished at the commencement of the 20th century with the guiding force of Kaviguru (Marepalli Ramachandra Shastri), the co-operation of Setti Lakshmi Narasimham and the patronage of Vikramadeo Varma (the prospective Maharaja of Jeypore) was frequently staging the drama written by these three writers and also other dramas such as *Rasaputravijayam* by Ichchapurapu Yajnanarayana Sarma.

The Chintamani Nataka Samajam led by Nagesvararao and Gunnesvararao encouraged playwrights to write dramas for them. Chilakamarti's dramas, Vaddadi Subbarayudu's *Veni Samharam* and several other dramas were played by it.

Surabhi Drama Company toured with their families the members of which appeared as heroes and heroines and staged dramas mainly relating to *Ramayana*.

Similarly several other dramatic associations at Behrampore, Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, Rajahmundry, Ellore, Masulipatam, Tenali, Nellore, Madras and other places were a source of inspiration to the playwrights.

About 35 years ago Puranam Surishastri of Masulipatam toured the country and collected materials regarding dramas, dramatic associations and actors at various places and wrote books on dramaturgy. He said that there had been about 500 dramas—either original or translations and I may say that 500 more dramas and short plays or one-act plays have been written during these 35 years.

Puranic dramas like *Pandava Vijayam* by Tirupati Venkatesvara poets : *Sri Krishna Tulabharam* by Muttarazu Subbarao ; historical dramas like *Khilji rajya patanam* by Gundimeda Venkata Subbarao ; translations of D.L. Roy's Bengali dramas like *Chandragupta*, *Shahjahan*, *Durgadas* by several writers like Sripada Kamesvararao, Jandhyala Papaya Shastri and Jonnalagadda Satyanarayana etc., became popular for the stage.

The Natakakala Parishad has been encouraging playwrights by

rewards and prizes as a result of which Atreya, Kondamudi Gopalraya Sarma etc. have been producing dramas for the modern stage. Themes relating to the down-trodden labourers, peasants, ill-paid clerks, N.G.O's are on the increase, by authors who have communist and socialist views. They are all written in the spoken dialect.

The Yuvaraj of Pithapuram, R. V. M. C. Ramarao (1905—) a realistic poet and playwright who was influenced by the modern Telugu Movement and the new trends of the modern age has written poems as well as some plays like *Alokamunundi Ahvanam*, *Tiranikorikalu* —*atarvata* and *Varudhini Pravarakhyam* which exhibit his fecundity of imagination.

Muddu Krishna (1899) has written short social plays *Ti kappulo tupanu* (A storm in a tea cup), *Bhimakalapamulo Bhamakalapam* (Romance of an old man with a false Life Assurance agent, a young lady) are interesting comedies.

One-act plays had their origin in the farces of Vireshalingam but their interest vanished as soon as the social problems raised by them were out of date. Social plays are thus shortlived, unless typical characters are created as in Apparao's *Kanyasulkam*. Bhamidipati Kamesvara Rao has written many one-act plays, all of which are full of humour. Of his several plays, *Anni tagadale* (all are matters of dispute), *Appudu* (then), *Ippudu* (now), *Idu-zodu* (equal pair) etc. are very popular.

Malladi Vishvanatha Sarma Kavirazu (1890—1946) and his son Avadhani (1915) wrote many short and one-act plays, some of them were published in journals. Their *Asampurna Ramayanamu* is a parody of the type of acting on a sporadic stage of professional actors.

Venkata Rajamannar, Pakala (1901) now Chief Justice, High Court, Madras, started his literary career as the editor of a journal, *Kala* (1922). He wrote one social play "*Tappevaridi*" (whose fault is it?) and many one-act plays of which *Deyyalu lanka* (haunted isle) *Matriprema*, *Vrihadasam* and *Emimagavallu* (what males are they?) are the best.

Narla Venkatesvara Rao (1908), a journalist, now editor of a leading Telugu Daily, *Andhra Prabha*, is a good prose writer with a unique style in the spoken dialect of the cultured classes and has

written many short and one-act plays some of which have been published in a collected volume known as *Kottagadda* (new clod).

Acharya Atreya (1914) is the author of a new type of social plays like *Vastavam*, *Inadu* (this day), *Gumasta*, *Vishvashanti* and *Dr. Kotnis* and short and one-act plays like *Evaru donga?* (who is the thief?), *Pragati* (Progressess), *Otu niki* (=vote to you only). His plays are popular and he is a good character actor.

There are several other young men and women who have been writing short and one-act plays of good quality. A new entrant into the field is Kumari G. Balatripura Sundari who won the state prize of Rs. 500 awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti for the best set of six one-act plays in 1954-55.

Novels and Short Stories

Story writing had its commencement in the 17th century A.D. but it was a narration of a Puranic story or a fairy tale with a stereotyped chronological order and very little artistic merit. Some Parsi tales attracted our Telugu writers in the early years of the 19th century. Yerramill Mallikarjunudu wrote in popular Telugu "*Char Darvish*" stories in about 1830. Novel, novelette and short story as works of art developed only after our writers came into contact with English literature. The earliest novels commencing with Vireshalinam's *Rajasekhara Charitra* were based on themes suggested by the novels in English literature or translations or adaptations of English and Bengali novels.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya's novels in Bengali attracted the attention of our Telugu writers of whom G. V. Dorasamaya translated *Annada Matham* (1907) and *Kapalakundala* (1908), C. Bhaskararao wrote *Prafulla* or *Devichandurani* and Chillarige Srinivasarao wrote *Saivalini* (1910).

Original novels were also written in the last years of the previous century as the result of a prize competition by Chintamani organisers. Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimham as author of *Ramachandra Vijayam* (1894), *Hemalata* (1894) and *Ahalyabai* (1897-8); and Khandavilli Ramachandrudu as author of *Dharmavati Vilasam* (1893), *Malati Raghaviyam* (1895) and *Lakshmi Sundara Vijayam* (1894) won

prizes. Kelavarazu Venkata Shastri's novels *Rajya Lakshmi* and *Lakshmi Prasadam* were also good novels with a social background.

Dodla Venkata Ramireddi wrote *Kalavati* as an adaptation of Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* in Malayalam. Krottapalli Suryarao wrote adaptations of *Amira Hamza* and *Hasane Azayab*, besides original novels like *Guna Sundari*.

Historical themes of early Mohammedan and Rajput adventures, of Kakatiya heroes and heroines, of later Mughal period, of Vijayanagar Empire and of the Maharathas were the basis for novels like Velala Subbarao's *Rani Samyukta* (1908). Rayasam Venkata Sivudu (1872-1953) wrote *Balamba Rani* based on a legend from mediaeval Indian History; was the editor of *Zenana Patrika* for women and was a writer of many essays and stories.

Hundreds of novels have been published by Chintamani Granthamala, Andhra Pracharini Granthamala, Vegujukka Grantha Series, Sarasvati series of Addepalli Lakshmanasvami and other series at various other places.

Unnava Lakshminarayana's *Malapalli*, the result of awakened India is a novel, written in racy idiomatic living language with the varying dialects of the characters in it. The Hindi version of this will be published by the Sahitya Akademi in a few months.

Madhira Subbarao published, in popular Telugu, traditional *Kasimajli* (Benaras pilgrim) stories at Rajahmundry in 1903-1908 in four volumes and about the same time, Nandirazu Chalapatirao (1878) editor of *Manjuvani*, a Telugu weekly, Ellore and a prolific writer and publisher of several Telugu books and a poet whose *Mangalagiri Mahatmyam* is the latest and the best of his works, published a refined version of these pilgrim stories under the caption of *Nizamaina* (real) *Kasimajli stories* attributing their authorship to an Avadhuta.

Interesting accounts of pilgrimages were written in book form by the pilgrims themselves; Enugula Virasamayya wrote his *Kasiyatra Charitra* in 1832 in his spoken Telugu while in recent times Jonnalagadda Satyanarayana wrote his account in the literary language.

Adavi Bapirazu's *Narayanarao*, Vishvanatha Satyanarayana's *Veyi*

Padagatu and *Cheliyali Katta*, Nori Narasimhashastri's *Narayanabhattu* and Rudramadevi and Sivarazu Venkata Subbarao's (alias Buchchi-babu) *Chivaraku migiledi* are some of the original novels of recognised merit.

Kovvali Narasimharao and Jampana Chandrasekhararao have written cheap but very popular novels.

Short Stories :

Guruzada Venkata Apparao is the first to write short stories in an artistic manner; but he wrote very few like *Mata-manti* (chitchat). Gudipati Venkatachalam excelled Apparao both in quality and quantity and went a step further in using the spoken tongue but violated at several places canons of decorum in presenting the incidents in rank realism. Chinta Dikshitulu (1891) a good scholar of English and Telugu and inspired by world's famous stories has written many stories for young and advanced children which exhibit his artistic skill in narration and his study of child psychology. His stories are published in several small volumes. His stories for children like *Suri*, *Siti*, *Venki*, *Lakkapidatalu* and *Lilasundari* are some of his very popular stories for children. Kodavatikanti Kutambarao is a prolific writer of short stories like *Kathasagar*, *Adajanma* etc. of stories which are adaptations of Russian and English stories. T. Gopichand has a charming style in the development of an ordinary story; his *Bharyalonevundi* (it is only in the wife), *Tandrulu Kodukulu* (fathers and sons) are very interesting. Munimanikyam Narasimharao (1898) is known all over the Telugu country as a humorous story writer and his *Kantam* (lit. dear wife) is always associated with him from his *Kantam kathalu*, *Nenu-ma-Kantam*, *Kantam kaifiyat*, *Kantam kapuram* etc. His stories won him the state prize of Rs. 500 awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti in 1949-50. Mokkalapati Narasimhashastri (1892) is another humorous story-teller. His *Barrister Parvatisham* is a funny novelette; *Kannavi-Vinnavi* (=what are heard and seen) are humorous short stories. A short play *Subbarayadu pelli* is an interesting comedy. In almost all his writings, it is the stupidity of the hero that contributes to the humour of the story and the author is adept in depicting it, in a realistic manner.

Some have written translations or adaptations of popular Hindi short stories like *Aluri Bairagi* (1925).

Shripada Subrahmanya Shastri (1891) exhibits his mastery of the idiomatic spoken Telugu of the cultured class in his short as well as lengthy stories.

Malladi Ramakrishna Shastri (1905) is the most prolific writer of short stories—more than 500, most of which have appeared in almost all the Telugu journals during the last 20 years. He has a unique style of his own; his narration leaves gaps demanding imagination on the part of the intelligent readers to fill them. His stories exhibit deep thought, strong imagination and a realistic conception.

Palagummi Padmarazu (1915) has been recognised as one of the best short-story writer since he received the second prize in the World story writing competition held in 1951. The story he sent for the competition is *Galivana* (cyclone). He has written more than 50 short stories besides a few poems of ordinary merit.

Mudda Vishvanatham (1919) published many interesting short stories in leading journals and of his writings, *Janmabhumi*, *Subhodayam* and *Premanjanelu* are the best.

Avasaraala Suryarao (1923) editor of Visalandhra Daily has published a volume of short stories, known as *Akasadipalu* and has edited and published Guruzada Apparao's letters and stories.

Tenneti Suri (1928) has published several stories such as *Viplava rekhalu*, *Subbalakashmi*; his drama '*Na rani*' is popular for the stage.

Avantsa Somasundar (1924) has published his stories about slaves besides some short poems such as *Gadavari Jalapralayam*.

Aniseti Subbarao (1922) is a vigorous writer of short stories as well as short poems such as *Agnivina* and *Bichechagalla padalu*.

Chaganti Somayazulu (1915) wrote short stories like *Annam parabrahmam*.

There are many more writers of short stories and their number is daily increasing.

Shrinivasa Shiromani is now publishing in the literary supplement of the *Andhra Patrika*, Valmiki *Ramayanam* in popular prose in a very attractive style.

Essays and Literary Criticism etc.

Among the new trends of Modern Telugu literature, essay

writing, no doubt, occupies a prominent place but, essays are found only in the several Telugu journals but are not published in books because they command no sale in the country. The first essayist was Samineni Muddu Narasimha Nayadu who published a collection of eight essays of his in 1862 under the title of *Hitasuchi*. He adopted the use of the spoken tongue of the cultured classes deliberately in opposition to the archaic literary language used by Chinnayasuri, his contemporary. They relate to social and domestic topics.

The next essayist is Vireshalingam who wrote many short essays on different topics and they are published in collected volumes. He adopted simple style and used easy literary language. Chilakamarti followed his example to some extent.

Essays on language made their appearance during the last years of the previous century. Vavilala Vasudeva Shastri's essay on *Andhra Bhasha* published in 1861 is probably the first essay on the subject. In 1896 T.V. Seshagiri Shastri published in two parts his essays on *Andhra bhasha tatvam* and K. Gopal Rao, his essay on *Andhra bhasha charitra Sangraham*. In the same year K. R. V. Krishnarao, editor of *Sarasvati* published his essay on *Andhra bhashabhiivridhi*. Many essays appeared when there was a controversy between the advocates of the literary and spoken Telugu during 1912-1920. Gidugu Ramamurti's essays were published in two parts in 1934 by the Navya Sahitya Parishad. They were written in the spoken tongue of the cultured classes which he advocated for serious composition in Telugu prose.

Essays on topics relating to Telugu literature commenced with Kashibhatta Brahmayya Sastri's *Bhaskarodantam* in 1896. Venneti Ramachandrarao published his critical essay on *Manu Charitra* and *Vasucharitra*. Vajjhala China Sita Ramasastri (1878), a great Sanskrit and Telugu scholar and an authority on traditional Telugu grammars, has written several essays on topics relating to language and literature in vigorous literary language. Critical appreciations of poets and their works appear in the introductions to the published works.

Ramalingareddi Kattamanchi (1880-1953) a brilliant scholar of English and Telugu; an educationalist; Vice-chancellor of the

Andhra University for a long time; started his literary career as a poet who composed '*Musalamma maranam*' and author of Political economy in Telugu, and has established his fame as a man of letters in Telugu with his literary criticism, known as *Kavitalva vicharamu* and a few other miscellaneous essays. He was a free thinker and some of his views were attacked by Kaluri Vyasamurti who published his criticism known as *Kavitalva vichara vimarsanam*.

G. V. Krishnarao who is now awarded by the Madras University Ph. D. for his lengthy thesis on *Kalapurnodayam* is a good critic of art and literature; a versatile writer of poetry, prose, short story and literary criticism all of which exhibit his scholarship and deep thought.

Tekumalla Rajagopalarao (1886-1933) collected folk songs and wrote essays on Telugu metres and literary topics.

Veturi Prabhakara Shastri (1883-1953) was a Pandit without pedantry and a poet without pageantry; a great scholar of oriental learning; an authority on matters relating to Telugu language, literature, inscriptions and old manuscripts. He wrote very few poems like *Munnalla Muttsata Kapotakatha* and *Vishvasam* which may be classed among the best short poems of Telugu literature. He was an ideal research scholar; a good critic and his literary essays, particularly his scholarly introduction to Shrinatha's *Kridabhiramam* and Palkuriki Somana's *Basava Puranam* are the best of his writings. His account of *Srinatha*, his life and works sets a model to those that propose to write a series of Men of Letters in Telugu.

Chilakuri Narayanarao (1890-1952) was a scholar of several languages, a student of and auxiliary to Gidugu Ramamurti in the spread of the Modern Telugu movement; a voracious reader, an indefatigable research scholar and a prolific writer. His writings represent all branches of literature—short poems, short plays, short stories and literary essays and his *History of the Telugu Language* in two volumes published by the Andhra University serves as a comprehensive book of reference to the students of the Telugu language. He endeavoured to establish the Aryan origin of the Telugu language which is, however, not tenable.

Rallapalli Ananta Krishna Sarma (1893) is a great scholar of

Sanskrit and Telugu, and well-versed in classical Karnatic music. He wrote very few poems but they exhibit his high poetic talent. His *Tara Devi*, *Mirabai* are melodious; his *Penugonda Konda* is a lovely song. His essays relating to literary topics and literary criticism are regarded as models of essay writing, viz., *Vemana Sarasvatopanyasamulu*, *Natakopanyasamulu*, *Sahityopanyasamulu* etc. He is now engaged in setting to music, Tallapaka Annamacharya's innumerable songs.

Korada Ramakrishnayya (1891-) is a good Sanskrit and Telugu scholar and a student of Dravidian Philology. His essays relating to Telugu language and literature are the results of his critical study. He advocates the theory of the Dravidian origin of the Telugu language in support of which he published a comprehensive book on *Dravidian cognates*. He was the recipient of the State prize awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti in 1949-'50 for his "*Telugu Language—its Origin and History*" in Telugu.

Ganti Jogi Somayazulu (1900-) is a good scholar of English, Sanskrit, Telugu and several other languages. He started his literary career as a poet and composed a beautiful poem known as *Ramachandruni Hampi Yatra* in which many verses are full of pathos as they describe "the glories of the past now in ruins". His *Andhra Bhasha Vikasamu* is a voluminous book on the History of the Telugu language in Telugu. His literary essays relate to Telugu and a critical study of Kalidasa.

Nidadavolu Venkatarao (1904-) is a scholar of Telugu literature and has written many essays on topics relating to Telugu literature. He was the recipient of the State prize awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti for his literary criticism exhibited in *Tripurantakodaharanam* in 1948-'49. His *Lives of Telugu Poets*, Vol. 1, *Southern School in Telugu Literature* are his recent books in Telugu and they are published by the Madras University.

Divakarla Venkatavadhani (1913) has published several essays relating to Sanskrit and Telugu dramas and miscellaneous topics.

Khandavalli Lakshmiranjanam (1905) has published many essays relating to Telugu literature and culture in two volumes.

Mallampalli Somasekhara Sarma (1891) who had devoted his life to study and research is the author of many essays on *Andhra*

Virulu, *Amaravati Stupam* and other subjects relating to Andhra History which contain valuable information.

Bhupati Lakshmi Narayanarao (1905) a scholar of Sanskrit and Professor of Telugu has published an essay on *The Telugu Mahabharata* and *The Style of Tikkana* and has been contributing several articles on poetics to *Kinnera* and other Telugu journals.

Pillalamarri Venkata Hanumantha Rao (1918) collaborated with his father-in-law Kuruganti Sitarama Bhattacharyulu in the second edition of his "*Navyandhra Sahitya Vidhulu*" in four parts; has independently written many short poems like *Raga Rekhalu*; and is the author of essays relating to literature and poetics—*Sahitya Samiksha*, *Sahitya Sampada* and *Sahitya Samalochanam* etc.

Moturi Satyanarayana (1901) a great Hindi scholar knowing many languages is the author of many essays on various literary subjects in Telugu.

Nanduri Bangaravya (1903) author of dramas like *Andhra Tejamu*, *Khadga Tikkana* and *Rajalakshmi* and critical essays on *Abhinana Shakuntalam* etc.

Jammalamadaka Madhavarama Sarma (1907—) is very well-known as a great Sanskrit and Telugu scholar and orator; and as an author of several books relating to poetics—translation of *Nava-rasa Gangadharam* for which he received the State prize awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti in 1948-49 *Andhra Prataparudriyam*, *Dhvani Saram*, etc.

Timmavajjhala Kodanda Rama Shastri (1917—) who has translated some Sanskrit dramas has also written essays on literature.

Akkirazu Umakantam was a great Sanskrit, Telugu and English scholar, wrote a scholarly introduction to Shrinatha's *Palnati Virulu* and several essays on literary topics and poetics.

Panchagnula Adinarayana Shastri was a great Sanskrit, Prakrit, Telugu and Hindi scholar and translated *Vatsyayana Kamasutras*, a critical essay on *Yenki Patalu* and *Prakrit metres* and several other essays.

Bulusu Venkata Ramanayya (1907—) a good Sanskrit and Telugu scholar has translated Sarvajna Singa Bhupala's *Rasarnava Sudhakaram* and wrote a lengthy treatise on *Andhra Alankara Vijnana Charitra* and many other essays.

Journalism

There are now three Dailies, 77 Weeklies, 32 Fortnightlies and 108 Monthlies in Telugu in all of which appear short poems, short stories, short and one-act plays and essays etc. Among the journalists, there are several scholars, poets and authors and authoresses of short stories, short and one-act plays, essays etc., some of whom have been already noticed in this brochure and among others there are :—

Setti Isvararao (1917), editor of *Soviet Bhumi*, has written many short poems and essays as well as Radio talks. Rambhatla Krishnamurti (1920) is the author of many short stories and poems like *Jvala-toranam*. Madhavapeddi Gopalakrishna Gokhale (1917) is a progressive writer and author of several short stories and poems, Aluri Bairagi (1925) is a Hindi scholar and author of some short poems and short stories ; Patibanda Madhava Sarma, editor for some time of *Usha*, *Vina* and *Balaprabha* wrote short poems and essays and Etakuri Balatramamurti (1918) is the author of a brief history of the Andhras. K.V. Ramana Reddi (1928) has written short poems, a collection of which was published with the title of *Adavi* (forest); Govindu Rama Shastri (pen name : Gorashastri) (1918) is the author of a short play, *Dura tiralu* (=distant shores) essays and 50 Radio plays.

Tirumala Ramachandra (1914) a scholar of Sanskrit, Telugu and many other languages, a beloved student of Veturi Prabhakara Shastri is the author of a drama, *Bharata Vijayam*, of essays relating to the Telugu language and literature ; Mahidhara Ramamohanarao (1908) a scholar of English, Telugu and Sanskrit is the author of *Addekompa* (a rented house), a social play and translations of some novels. Dhanikonda Hanumantharao (1919) is the author of several short stories like *Ilavelpu* (=favourite deity).

Vidvan Vishvam (1915) is a good scholar of Sanskrit and Telugu and is the author of many short poems like *Na hridayam* (=my heart), *Viri Kanne* (=the maiden flower) etc., of novels like *Manvudu*, of short stories like *Proddu tirigindi* (=the sun turned west) and critical essays like *Sahityamimamsa*, relating to the nature of literature.

Tummala Venkataramayya (1915) a student of Russian literature is the author of short poems and songs like *Errajenda* (red flag) ; Gangineni Venkateshvararao (1929) is the author of short stories and a novel, *Adarsa kutambalu* (=ideal families); Pingali Venkatasubbarao (1896), is the author of short poems.

Bhagavatula Shankara Shastri (1895), pen-name—Arudra, is the author of several short poems, short stories and essays relating to literary topics.

Juvenile Literature

Till about 1908 there had been no attempt worth mentioning to produce Juvenile literature. Children had only primers and graded school Readers with easy lessons relating to general knowledge and some stories, in the living language during 1850-'60 and later in the literary language. At the end of the readers were published easy verses from Vemena, Sumati, Kumari and other Satakas. There were no doubt stray verses and ditties in easy language which children learned to recite from their mothers; but they were neither printed in book form nor were included in school Readers because they were composed in popular language not approved by the educational authorities. The author of this brochure was one of the earliest to make experiments in children's stories and songs. He published a few of them in *Vivekavati*, a Telugu monthly, published by the Christian Literature Society, during 1908-'10. The time was not ripe for that sort of literature but they were popular among children and they were later on published in the school readers published by Longmans and Macmillans. Later on, Chinta Dikshitulu became an adept in writing poems and stories for little children. In 1940, a leading Telugu monthly, *Bharati* devoted two pages to Juvenile lecture under the heading of Balanandam and this attracted a number of writers whose poems and stories for children have been published month after month since then. In 1944 Nyayapati Raghavarao and his wife Kameshwaramma as joint editors started a monthly journal *Bala* by name and during the last 11 years hundreds of poems, short stories and short plays written by various authors have been published. '*Chandamama*' another important journal for children was started by Chakrapani (Aluri Venkata Subbarao) in 1948 and it has been also publishing similar poems and stories. About 50 to 60 books have been published, some with attractive illustrations. M. Bapinidu and the author of this brochure were the recipients of the State prize awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti in 1948-49 for their books—*Pillala Bommala Bharatam* (illustrated Bharatam for

children) by the former and *Balanandam* (a collection of poems, songs and stories to delight the children) by the latter. Chinta Dikshitulu was the recipient of a prize awarded by the Central Government to encourage juvenile literature in 1954-55. Edida Kameshvararao is now writing for children, songs and stories at Bezwada. There seems to be a very bright future for the rapid growth of the Juvenile Literature in Telugu.

All India Radio is playing a very important role, in the development of literatures in all the main languages of India. Many talks on literary and other topics of educative value, many songs of the living poets, many Radio plays and features by the living authors have been broadcast. Only a few of them appear in the Telugu Radio Journal, *Vani* and with the permission of the Radio authorities some have been published in Telugu journals but many are only filed in the record room of the Radio Stations. It is desirable to publish at least a selection of them in half-yearly volumes.

Among those employed in the Radio Stations there are poets, essayists and story writers of good merit. Achanta Janakiram, a fine scholar of English and Telugu is now Editor of '*Vani*', the Telugu Radio Journal, Balantrapu Rajanikantarao, a poet and singer, author of '*Satapatra Sundari*' a collection of his poems and songs was the recipient of the State prize awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti for the best set of short poems in 1952-53; Yendumuri Satyanarayana bearing the pen-name, Vatsava (1913), is the author of several short poems like *Bangaru Papayi*, several stories, short plays and essays; Panyala Ranganatharao (1950) has written several short poems like '*Asrugiti*' and '*Premalata*' and short stories like *Adyantam*, *Anuradha* and *Nikosam*; Vinjamuri Shivaramarao (1909) has written many short stories, poems and short plays and is regarded as one of the best writers of the Radio plays; Jalsutram Rukmininatha Shastri (1914—) a fine Sanskrit and Telugu scholar is best known for his parodies—verses imitating the styles of several contemporary poets, short stories like *Errati Chikati* (=red darkness), a short play, *Sabari* and about 500 Radio plays : Bhaskarabhatla Krishnarao (1918), a well-known writer of short stories, Keshavapantulu Narsimha Shastri (1919) author of *Tyagadhanulu Ratnalakshmi Shatakam* and *Prabandha Patralu*, Prayaga Narasimha Shastri's light songs are frequently heard

from Madras Station. Narla Chiranjivi (1925-) a progressive writer and author of many stories and poems for children.

There are a good many scholars, both men and women, that broadcast their talks on literary, social and cultural topics.

Biographies and Auto-Biographies

Here also it is Vireshalingam that started this branch of literature. He wrote several biographies of the great men of the world and his autobiography. Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimham and *Rayasam Venkatasivudu* followed the example set by Vireshalingam. Gorrepati Venkata Subbayya (1898) has written biographies of great national heroes and heroines like N. G. Ranga and Sarojini Devi for the latter of which he got the State prize awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti in 1949-50; and among others that won similar prizes were Kilambi Raghavacharyulu for *Srikrishna Devaraya* and Vedam Venkataraya Shastri (junior) for *Akkanna* and *Madanna* in 1950-51.

Popular Science

It is again Vireshalingam that made a public attempt to popularise modern science during the last years of the previous century and it is only after the mother tongue became the medium of instruction for non-language subjects in schools that teachers and others who were interested in Education wrote text books on the various science subjects of the school course. Mantripragada Sambashivarao's *Physics* and Vemuri Vishvanatha Sarma's *Chemistry* and Ramalinga Reddi's *Political Economy* published by the Vignana Chandrika Series were only steps to further progress. It is only after the spread of the Library movement, and spread of adult education that it was realised that unless scientific subjects were presented in a popular manner they would not appeal to the people at large. To foster the science branch of Telugu literature, the Universities of Andhra and Madras and the State Government through the Telugu Bhasha Samiti instituted prizes and have been getting some good books in this field. Goteti Kanakaraju (1886-1953) wrote several books relating to Agriculture for which he got the State prize awarded by the Telugu Bhasha Samiti in 1948-49. Among others that won similar prizes were Dr. Gullapalli Narayanamurti for *Rural Sanitation* in 1948-49, and for *Psychology* in 1949-50; N. M. Venugopala Nayudu for *Ram-*

yaharmyam (Physiology) in 1949-50; Hari Adi Seshuvu for *Electricity and its extensive use* in 1950-51; for his *Applied Chemistry* 1951-52; and for his *Folk Songs and Literature* in 1952-53; Bovanapalli Padmarazu for his *Economics—Cooperation* in 1950-51; Dr. I. Venkatesvara Sarma for his *Forest Drugs and Medicine* in 1950-51; Vinjamuri Varaha Narasimhacharyulu for his *Karnatic Music and its Progress* in 1951-52; D. V. A. Acharya for his *Film Technique and Pictures* in 1951-52; M. Sangamesam for *Humour in Telugu Literature* in 1952-53; Koduri Lilavati and G. Balatripura Sundari for *Domestic Economy* in 1952-53; K. Seshagiri Rao for his *Astronomy* in 1952-53; Vedala Tiruvengala Charyulu for his *Founders of the four systems of Philosophy in Southern India—Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva and Vallabhacharya* in 1953-54; Nataraja Ramakrishna for his *Bharata Natya and other systems of Dance in Southern India* in 1953-54. K. Vasudeva Rao for his *Social life of the Andhras in the 20th century. A. D.*; B. Narasimharao and S. L. Narasimham for their books on *Inheritance and Acquired Qualities*.

The Telugu Bhasha Samiti (1948) of which Bezawada Gopala Reddi is the President and Moturi Satyanarayana and Uppuluri Embarumanar are the Joint Secretaries has undertaken the publication of a Telugu Encyclopaedia in 12 volumes each of which is devoted to a main subject or a group of allied subjects and has published two volumes—(I) *History and Politics* volume of which the editors are G. Harisarvothamarao, Pratapagiri Ramamurti and G. V. Sitapati (Chief Compiler and Editor) and among the other contributors of articles to which are K. A. Nilakantha Shastry, Mamidipudi Venkata Rangayya etc; (II) *Physics and Chemistry* volume of which G. Harisarvothamarao, Vasantarao Venkatarao, Vemuri Visvanatha Sarma and Medepalle Venkata Narasimhasvami are the editors and among other contributors of articles to which are S. V. Ramamurti, Vissa Apparao, Shripada Gopala Krishnamurti etc.

Of these Editors, Vasantarao Venkatarao has published several small books on popular science and composed also short poems and songs on scientific subjects in such a simple style that they have attracted the general reader. A. V. Ramarao who assisted Vasantarao Venkatarao in compiling the material for this second volume is

the recipient of the Central Government prize for his *Heavenly Bodies and the Solar System* in 1955.

There are many more writers who have contributed to the Telugu literature of the present age but I am sorry that I have not been able to refer to them for want of space.

KANNADA

Language : Name and Area

Kannada usually denotes the language spoken by the people of the whole of Mysore State, the four districts of the Bombay State viz., Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwar and Karwar (also known as North Kanara) and the districts of Mangalore (South Kanara) and Bellary from the Madras State as well as the three districts of Raichur, Bidar and Gulbarga (Hyderabad State) and of Coorg.* That the language was spoken in earlier days over a wider area is evident from conditions obtaining in the modern Kolhapur and Sholapur districts. A poet of the tenth century A.D., Nripatunga, has mentioned that Kannada language extended from Godavari in the north to Kaveri in the south. Kannada was also used as the name of the country where the said language prevailed. The other variant is Karnata (-ka) or Karnata (-ka) which is mainly found in Sanskrit works from as early as the period of the Mahabharata. We are not sure whether this latter was just a Sanskritised form of the original "Kannada" or whether the latter itself was its derived form. Nor are we certain if in either form it denoted the people or their land or their language. When the Portuguese first landed in India on the West coast they found the Kannada language prevailing there. "Canarijs" was the Portuguese word for both the people and the language. This word—also written as (C)Kanarese—was long in vogue making confusion worse confounded since few outsiders saw that Kanarese was the same as Kannada.

Origin and Antiquity

There has been no study of Kannada language and literature from a historical point of view. Strange enough, there is not even that kind of traditional account which glorifies an ancient language.

* These geographical limits refer to the South of pre-organization days.

No god and no sage has ever been associated with the origin of the Kannada language. Kannada was not either as original or as ancient as Sanskrit or Tamil. Nevertheless Kannada has been accepted as belonging to that branch of languages known as Dravida or Dravida. (There is a view that Tamil is the oldest of this branch and that actually the word Tamil is the derived form of the original dravida or dramila). It was rather unfortunate that the Dravida group did not attract, as did the Sanskrit, the studious interest of the Western scholars: though, the earliest attempts at studying Kannada in the modern days could be traced only to Western scholars and missionaries like Wurth, Kittel, Ziegler, Rice and others. This study has shown that in spite of its overwhelming influence, Sanskrit is not the mother-language of Kannada and that, on the other hand, Kannada is definitely a language belonging to the Dravida group to which also belong Tamil, Telugu, Tulu and Malayalam. These Dravidian languages have, since the Vedic times, been confined to the peninsular region of South India. Researches in this respect have been meagre and, even then, very recent. It is believed that the Dravidian races were there in India before the Vedic Aryan hordes invaded the land. References in the Vedic hymns to "snub-nosed", "non-sacrificing", "phallic-worshipping" tribes are construed as indicating the original Dravidians who must then have occupied regions north of the Vindhya ranges. The civilisation unearthed at Mohenjodaro is supposed to be that of the Dravidian peoples. One thing is certain: the Dravidian peoples and their civilisation go back to a period long before the Christian era. The incoming Aryans, as well as fresh invading hordes, proved stronger and gradually drove the Dravidians, already living a town-life, further and further south. Those tribes that were fairly advanced in civilisation crossed the Vindhyas and for a long time settled into a peaceful and prosperous life. Less adventurous tribes like the Mundas or Todars (and a few others who are now considered hill-tribes) flew into the remote recesses of forests and deteriorated in complete isolation.

The Agastya Legend

A reference must be made here to a legend which, though seemingly a pure mythological fabrication, appears to be based on faint

historicity. This is the legend of Agastya, a sage of the olden times, who is particularly described as a person of diminutive stature. The name Agastya appears in the Vedic hymns where he is described once as the son of Mitra and Varuna. He is mentioned as bringing about a reconciliation between Indra and the Maruts (I-170). He is also described as an ascetic finally yielding to the temptings of Lopamudra (I-179). In the *Atharva Veda* Agastya is associated with witchcraft, and, finally in *Maitrayani Samhita* (IV-2-9) he is mentioned in connection with cows with a peculiar mark on their ears (vistya-karnyah). This Agastya, in later epic and Puranic literature grew into a "mighty" figure who crossed the Vindhya ranges, who discovered the two oceans and finally curbed King Nahusha. It is interesting to note that this Nahusha is mentioned in the Rigveda as an ally of the Dasyu-s (the snub-nosed people). If we remember that the word na-hus (na-hut) also means "non-sacrificing" then we will be in a position to surmise that the Vedic Agastya must have been not only a pioneer but a successful Aryan missionary to enter the south. Perhaps that explains the tradition of the Tamil literature wherein Agastya is called a "Tamir muni", a Tamilian sage and is also mentioned as the member of the "Talaichangam", the first Sangham (council of experts) and the author of the first authoritative grammar of Tamil known as *Agatthiyam* or the grammar of Agastya. The Agastya legends by themselves, and lacking other confirmatory evidence, have little historical value. Nevertheless they furnish additional strength to the great antiquity of the Dravidian group.

Distinctive features of the Dravidian group

The Agastya legend lends support to another peculiarity of the early growth of some of the Dravidian languages. Agastya, an Aryan, is believed to have written the first grammar of Tamil. Sometimes he is mentioned as the very first Tamil author. Does that mean that the Aryan outsiders were the first to put Dravidian languages to literary use? As we shall see later, even in Kannada the earliest writers were the Jains who had migrated from the North. Many an early Kannada writer acknowledges with pride that he is an author of books in Sanskrit. Even as late as the twelfth and the seventeenth centuries grammar of the Kannada language was written in Sanskrit

sutras. Nevertheless, the Dravidian languages formed a group that could be clearly distinguished from the Aryan. In spite of the fact that Sanskrit and Sanskrit-educated pandits influenced these languages from their very inception, they retained their individuality. It is this individuality which enables us to assert that the Dravidian group of languages is entirely different from the Indo-European group. In illustration we shall mention here some features :

- (A) **Phonology** : The Dravidian group has certain sounds which are peculiar to it and are not to be found either in the Indo-European group or in the Indo-Aryan branch. For example, short **e** and short **o**. The two sounds cannot even be represented in Devanagari script since they have no such short vowels. Secondly, the cerebral consonants **t**, **d**, **n**, etc., are admitted to be peculiarly Dravidian. They are not to be found in Indo-European languages. Even in modern Indo-Aryan languages which possess them, the cerebrals are the result of euphonic or positional causes, while in the Dravidian languages they are to be found in all positions. It may also be mentioned here that in spite of what the alphabetical symbols show, the Dravidian languages have no aspirates (either voiced or unvoiced, eg., **kh**, **gh** etc.) nor is the visarga a Dravidian sound.
- (B) **Nouns** : Nouns in the Indo-European languages have their own gender. This feature obtains even in the modern Indo-Aryan languages where a word, quite irrespective of its meaning, has a gender of its own. For example, of the two Marathi words **ag** (a) and **ghar** (a) both ending in **-a** and both denoting inanimate objects, the former is feminine and the latter neuter in gender. In no Dravidian language does a noun have a gender of its own. As a matter of fact, gender-distinction may be said not to exist in the Dravidian languages. The only distinction is between grown-up human beings on the one hand and the rest on the other. The latter (including children) is neuter, while in the former a distinction is made, but only in the singular, between male and female. This distinction is lost in the plural forms which are epicene.

(C) **Numerals :** Dravidian words for numerals are in no way related to Sanskrit numerals ; on the other hand, the present Dravidian languages show a close affinity between their numeral words : e.g.,

Sanskrit	Tamil	Telugu	Kannada	Malayalam
eka	ondru	okati	ondu	onnu
dve	irandu	rendu	eradu	rendu

Sanskrit and its derived languages have separate words for twenty, thirty etc., and prefix one, two and so on. But in the Dravidian languages, twenty, thirty etc., are formed as two-ten, three-ten and so on, while for eka-vimsati (one and twenty), the Dravidian would be in Kannada, ippattu-ondu, twenty and one.

(D) **Verbs and verbal forms :** Dr. Caldwell who wrote the first comparative grammar of Dravidian languages has come to the conclusion that the Dravidian verb is "entirely destitute of a passive voice, properly so called, nor is there any reason to suppose that it ever had a passive." (p. 463). Similarly, he points out another peculiarity viz., the absence of a relative pronoun in Dravidian languages. "The place of the relative pronoun" he says "is supplied by a part of the verb which is called the *relative participle*." (p. 523) Dravidian languages are peculiar in having negative verbal forms which are not to be met with in any Indo-European or derived languages. While the latter utilise the negative participle, in Dravidian language it is an ablaut in the verbal form that gives it a negative sense. For example : Kannada, Madida, done ; but Madada, not done.

(E) One of the chief characteristics of the Dravidian languages is their agglutinative type while that of the Indo-European is inflexional.

Antiquity of Kannada

We have seen above that the Dravidian group is not only a distinctive family of languages but its existence reaches as far back as the Vedic days. Even when the Aryans first invaded India, the Dravidians were there with a flourishing urban civilisation. It is

natural to expect such a people to have a literature of their own. However, we do not come across any Dravidian written works as early as the Vedic writings. The introduction of the art of writing must, to some extent, account for that fact; the conquering Aryans also may, to some extent, be responsible for this situation. Actually, till the Vedic and Aryan civilisation completely overwhelmed the Dravidians, no Dravidian language shows itself in writing. The case of Kannada language is no exception. Till we come to the ninth century A.D. there is no Kannada literary work available. But the earliest piece of literature we have tells us, on the other hand, that Kannada literature must have been flourishing long long before. The first literary work available viz., the *Kavirajamarga* (the royal road for poets)—it may be noted that all the words in the title are Sanskrit words—is composed by Nripatunga or Amoghavarsha, a king of the Rashtrakuta dynasty who ruled from Manyakheta (814-877 A. D.) It is written in metrical Kannada and deals with poetry and poetics. The author quotes from many earlier works. The very fact that a treatise on poetics could be composed tells us that long before that many literary works must have been produced. The author himself mentions earlier prose writers and poets, and, in the course of his treatment refers even to earlier grammatical and rhetorical works (I-58, 75, 113 etc.). He even mentions two styles of poetry (viz., *bedanda* and *chattana*). Unfortunately, however, the authors and the work mentioned have not been identified or discovered. Though no work as such earlier than the ninth century is available, we have numerous Kannada inscriptions which speak of the antiquity of Kannada literature. From the fifth century A.D. onwards, any number of Kannada inscriptions is available. The style of these inscriptional compositions is highly evolved and rich, and, with a sense of certainty we can conclude that Kannada literature must have had a long history by the fifth century. The earliest inscription known is that of Halmidi which has been ascribed to the reign of a Kadamba king, Kakutstavarsha, 265-282 A. D.* Reference may also be made to a Greek papyrus of the second century A.D. found at Oxyrrhynchus

* See also Appendix.

in Egypt. Herein occur a few words quoted from some Indian languages which Dr. Hultzsch (JRAS, 1904, p. 399) identifies as Kannada. No evidence as such is necessary to convince us that the history and the origin of Kannada literature can safely be traced earlier than the Christian era. The style of the earliest inscriptions—even as early as the third century—with the free and full admixture of Sanskrit words and with an easy flow and poetic fancy makes it evident that it is the product of a long, earlier growth.

II

The history of a language is the history of the people who speak it. In the absence of a reliable history of the people it would be difficult to reconstruct the history of its language. The story of the Kannada language in its hoary past, as narrated above, is an illustration. We know that Kannada belongs to an independent family of languages quite distinct from the Indo-European family to which Sanskrit belongs, and yet in its earlier available examples, Kannada is intimately influenced by and even structurally mixed with Sanskrit. It is said that the language of a conquering people imposes itself on that of the conquered. The Aryans, however, were not merely conquerors. They came to India, settled down and spread over the vast country in the course of many centuries. During the process, some Aryan dialects developed as permanent neighbours of the Kannada language. These too in their turn influenced and were influenced by Kannada. The Kannada people who once lived as one people from Kaveri to Godavari gradually split up, first into different principalities and, later, into different administrative groups. As a result of this process a language like Kannada has developed into regional dialects—each dialect influenced by its neighbouring language, e.g., by Tamil or Telugu in Mysore area or by Marathi in the north Karnatak area. Considerations such as these have made the writing of an accurate history of the Kannada language still more difficult.

Early Phase

We have seen above that the antiquity of Kannada reaches as far early as before the Christian era, though the earliest literature

available belongs to the ninth century. What was the position during these thousand years? Was there any literature produced? How did the language develop? These are all questions to which, at present, we know no answers.* Apart from inscriptions, and even then from about the fourth or the fifth century A.D., no literary data are available. At the same time, the first writer whose work is available viz., Nripatunga of the late ninth century refers in his *Kavirajamarga* to writers like Durvinita, Nagarjuna, Jayabandhu and Vimalodaya as his predecessors and writers of prose. He also mentions poets and writers who composed works wherein poetry and prose were combined. Literary forms, works on grammar and rhetorics are mentioned and sometimes criticised. But the unfortunate fact is that not one of these earlier works is saved for us.

There is an interesting statement of Nripatunga (I-38,39) wherein he says that even the common illiterate persons in the Kannada country had a natural aptitude for using and understanding poetry. All the more surprising then that inspite of such a high literary culture not one Kannada work prior to Nripatunga should have been saved! Did stronger causes or particular circumstances create such an anomalous situation? A reference to such fragmentary accounts as are available of the earlier writers mentioned would partly explain this anomalous situation. Durvinita, for example, is one of the writers mentioned by Nripatunga. This Durvinita is identified by scholars with a Ganga king of that name who ruled from 482 to 522 A. D. Nripatunga mentions him as a prose writer. He is supposed to be the author of a work *Shabdavatara* and of a commentary on the 15th canto of Bharavi's Sanskrit poem *Kiratarjunyam*. He is also reputed to have rendered into Sanskrit the *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya. What is of interest to us here is that Durvinita wrote more in Sanskrit. Perhaps he wrote in Kannada as well and we accept Nripatunga's word for it. But the hold Sanskrit had on people both as a religious and a fashionable language was such that even a Kannada writer aspired to be known more for his Sanskrit than for

* Recently Dr. A. N. Narasimhayya and Dr. G. S. Gai have made special study of the language of Kannada inscriptions from 6th to 10th century A. D.

his Kannada writing. This does not surprise us when we look at the samples of Kannada writing available in inscriptions even as early as the fourth century A.D. There are too many Sanskrit words; lengthy Sanskrit compounds are freely used; even metres are those that we find as peculiar to Sanskrit; and, as the author of the Aihole inscription sings with pride, we are asked to compare these compositions with the Sanskrit compositions of poets like Bharavi and Kalidasa. Till the time of king Nripatunga this must have been the atmosphere—an atmosphere where a people voluntarily underrated their own language in deference to the one which had not only influenced it in all matters of cultural expression but in addition was also associated with the origin of their religion. However, Nripatunga seems to be the first Kannadiga to voice with pride the glories of his mother-tongue and of his mother-land, the Kannada-nadu. Here is an example of his patriotic lyricism.*

In all the circle of the earth
 No fairer land you'll find
 Than that where rich sweet Kannada
 Voices the people's mind.

'Twixt sacred rivers twain it lies
 From famed Godavari
 To where the pilgrim rests his eyes
 On holy Kaveri.

If you would hear its purest tone
 To Kisuvolal go ;
 Or listen to the busy crowds
 Through Kop'na's streets which flow.

Or seek it in Onkunda's walls,
 So justly famed in song
 Or where in Puligere's court
 The learned scholars throng.

* "These English metrical renderings are quoted from *A History of Kannada Literature* (2nd Edition) by E. P. Rice in the *Heritage of India* Series.

The people of that land are skilled
 To speak in rhythmic tone ;
 And quick to grasp a poet's thought,
 So kindred to their own.

Not students only, but the folk
 Untutored in the schools,
 By instinct use and understand
 The strict poetic rules.

Adolescence

It has been usual with historians of Kannada literature to divide the history into three periods, *viz.*, (1) Jaina period (2) Virashaiva period or the Lingayat period and (3) Vaishnava period. The first period extended from the beginning to the 12th century, the second from the 12th to the 15th and the third from the 15th to the 18th. Recently, when for reasons other than literary, emphasis shifted from communalism to nationalism, the same periods were renamed as the Epic Age, the Age of Revolt (of Bhakti Cult) and the New Age. At one time, the distinction was based on the style and form of the language and the three periods were known as (1) the period of early old Kannada (2) of old Kannada and (3) of new Kannada. These various attempts only show that the basis of division has not yet been found to be satisfactory. It is true that from the ninth century onwards and starting with Nripatunga we have a series of famous poets like Pampa I (941 A.D.), Ranna (993 A.D.), Chavundaraya (978 A.D.) who either belonged or were converted to Jainism and that each of them wrote a kind of a Jaina Purana. But that by itself would not justify us in describing a Jaina period as such. The number of equally famous poets who either did not write a Jaina Purana or were not themselves Jains is perhaps larger in the same period. Whether the poem is written by a Jain or a Virashaiva or a Vaishnava poet depended more on historical circumstances which revived these cults in that order. If Jainism influenced the way of life of the common people, a true poet would write against that background. But to divide a period on a religious denomination and to mention that Puranas of that religion were also

written would convey an impression that the literature was either a result of a proselytism or of a missionary spirit. That would be far from the truth. Pampa I who wrote the *Adipurana* also wrote *Vikramarjunavijayam* (generally known as *Pampa-Bharata*) wherein the Mahabharata story is described and the poet's patron, King Arikesari, is identified with the hero, Arjuna. Similarly, Ranna wrote the *Ajitapurana* and he also wrote a very powerful and dramatic poem known as *Gadayuddham* or *Sahasabhimavijayam* wherein also the poet's patron, Chalukya king Iriva Bedanga Satyas'raya is identified with Bhima of the Mahabharata story. There is one Nagachandra, better known as Abhinava-Pampa or Pampa II, who, under the patronage of a Vaishnava king (the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana, 1104-1141 A. D.) wrote *Mallinathapurana* (the story of the 19th Teerthankara) and *Ramachandra-charitra-purana* which is commonly known as *Pampa-Ramayana*. The word Purana seems to have been used more with reference to the source of the story than to any religious aspect.

For a better understanding of the history of Kannada literature, it is necessary to have a perspective other than the one underlining the above-mentioned classification. Religion in India has always more inspired than been propagated by literature. In certain respects both religion and literature are inspired by identical causes, as, e.g., by an awakening of self-consciousness. The rise and growth of Kannada literature from Nripatunga onwards was a result of such an awakening. We have seen above, in the few lines quoted, the accents of pride and self-consciousness in Nripatunga for his own language. He has found before him a style wherein Sanskrit predominated and a fashion whereby Sanskrit was more respected. But why should it be so when "rich sweet Kannada voices the peoples' mind"? So Nripatunga, who recognised the Sanskrit style as Margi and the popular as Desi, made his people aware of the strength and beauty of their own language. This is the beginning of a period which may be recognised as a *Period of Adolescence*, a period when the urge of the offspring to emphasise its independence is as natural as it is strong. From time to time in this early period we come across writers who insist that dependence on Sanskrit

could be dispensed with or that anything could be expressed in "pure" Kannada. Thus a poet called Nayasena (1112 A.D.) in his book *Dharmamṛitam* definitely warns writers from mixing Sanskrit with Kannada. "Could any wise man mix ghee with oil?" he asks. Another poet by name Andayya (1235 A.D.) actually went to the length of writing a whole poem without using a single Sanskrit word. Of course, the attempt could not succeed. The poet saved his conscience by not using Sanskrit words in their pristine (*tatsama*) form but was compelled to accept them in their derived (*tadbhava*) form. Whatever the result, the intention is there to demonstrate that the language which "voiced the peoples' mind", which was heard "in the busy crowds through Kop'nas streets which flow" and was also "so justly famed in song"- that this language was not only rich and sweet but powerful enough to write stories like that of *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.

And so we meet, in our earliest available literature, with more works based on or inspired by such Sanskrit epics as the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*. If the history of Kannada literature were to be recognised in the logical stages of its development, we have to place the inscriptional as the childhood stage of Kannada. There are no inscriptions however early they be, that are free from Sanskrit words, and, the earlier we go the tighter becomes the stranglehold. And then comes Nripatunga who says that Kannada is an independent language with its own prose and poetry, and he makes the Kannada people conscious not only of the vastness of their territory but also of the richness of their language. Now starts the stage of adolescence in which poets write as if to demonstrate the fact that Kannada can do what Sanskrit had done; and more too, since Kannada has its own style. This style is what we find in the inscriptions, a style where prose and poetry mingled, a style to be known as the *Champu* style. Sanskrit poetry had no *Champu* (though all dramas in Sanskrit could be recognised as *Champu* in form but drama was not given as high a place by the rhetoricians as poetry). The *Champu* style was honoured as pure Kannada style and was employed by almost all earlier poets like Pampa and Ranna. These two poets rendered into Kannada episodes from the Sanskrit *Mahabharata*. It is more

than a rendering since each poet identified his patron with one of the Pandava brothers as a hero and gave his own interpretation of the various characters. Pampa also wrote the *Adipurana*, the history of first Tirthankara and Ranna followed it by his *Ajitapurana* which narrates the history of the second Tirthankara. Mention should be made here of another poet named Ponna, known as "Ubhaya-kavi" (a poet both in Sanskrit and Kannada) whose *Shantipurana*, the story of the sixteenth Tirthankara, is recognised as a great poetical work. This Ponna was a contemporary of Pampa I and flourished in the court of the Rashtrakuta king Krishnaraja who ruled from his capital at Manyakheta (939-968 A.D.). Of greater interest is another contemporary work called *Tri-sasti-laksana-mahapurana*, popularly known as *Chavundaraya-purana*, in honour of the author Chavunda. Chavunda was a minister of the Ganga king Rachamalla IV (974-984 A.D.) He received the title "raya" for his great achievement of having the colossal statue of Gommateswara erected at Sravanabelagola. He was also the patron of the poet Ranna. From one point of view *Chavundaraya-purana* is a great literary achievement, since in Kannada, it is the first work to be written entirely in continuous prose. Students of Sanskrit literature would realise how, even in Sanskrit, works written entirely in prose were so few as to be negligible. Chavundaraya seems to have realised the vision of Nripatunga.

It will be seen that all these earlier writers have written about Jaina Tirthankaras. *Chavundaraya-purana* is the complete history of all the twentyfour Tirthankaras. It was this that led scholars to recognise this period as the Jaina period. But, as pointed above, we find the same poets writing, if we could use the word, "secular" poetry as well. Their object seems to be not to preach or explain Jainism in classical poetic style but to compose independent literary works in Kannada. And since Sanskrit happened to be associated with Vedic Hinduism, it was in the fitness of things that, to be independent of Sanskrit, Kannada should turn to Jain tradition and mythology. It is of great interest to note that Pampa and Ponna were converts to Jainism and Ranna was a Vaisya (bangle-seller community). That pride of language and not desire to preach

Jainism was what really moved these writers is better illustrated by another great writer who was also patronised by Chavundaraya. This was Nagavarma I who about 984 A.D. wrote a work on prosody called *Chhandombudhi*. In this standard work, the author explains, addressing his wife, the metres in Kannada. Every metre is described in a verse composed in that very metre. This Nagavarma also rendered into Kannada the Sanskrit *Kadāmbari* of Bana.

With the writing of a work on prosody the independence of Kannada was fully asserted. The process, however, was not yet complete. The adolescent stage could be said to be complete by the middle of the thirteenth century when Kesiraja, about 1260 A.D. wrote his *Shabdamanidarpanam* which is the first standard grammar of the Kannada language. It is written in Kannada, the rules in verse, in a metre called Kanda which is entirely Kannada in evolution, and the explanatory passages or Vritti written by the author himself—in prose. Kesiraja has made an exhaustive study of the language and of all earlier works and the treatment of the subject is very systematic. In the meanwhile, Kannada poetry was enriching itself with fresh vigour, new enthusiasm and daring experimentation. From the days of Pampa I to the time of Kesiraja the achievement of Kannada poetry was from glory to glory. The various ruling princes of Ganga, Rashtrakuta and Hoysala dynasties—themselves cultured and enlightened—bestowed generous patronage on their court poets. Perhaps, poets who had no patronage were as numerous and the achievements of Kannada poetry owed to them too. Patronage, however, gave the impetus and the leisure to new writing. Mention has already been made of Nagachandra or Abhinava-Pampa who wrote the popularly known *Pampa-Ramayana*, of Andayya and of Nayasena. In 1049 A.D. one Shridharacharya wrote a Kannada work on Astrology. In the same century one Rajaditya wrote his *Vyavaharaganita*, explaining mathematics in metrical style. A Chalukya prince called Kirtivarma, at about this time, wrote the first veterinary book called *Govaidya*. A contemporary of Abhinava-Pampa was the first poetess Kanti, in the court of King Ballala. Special mention must be made of poets like Nemichandra, Rudrabhatta, Harihara and Raghavanka whose contribution to Kannada poetry was both

original and inspiring. Nemichandra, along with Rudrabhatta basked in the court patronage of King Veera-Ballala (1172-1219 A.D.). *Lilavati* written by Nemichandra in Champu style is the first work of fiction in Kannada. Nemichandra also wrote the *Neminatha-purana* which is popularly known as *Ardhanemipurana* since the poet died without completing it. Rudrabhatta is an equally accomplished poet who described the story of Krishna's life in his champu work called *Jagannatha-Vijaya*. Side by side with such eminent poets lived a scholar Nagavarma II, who has given us three works on Kannada language, literature and grammar. *Kavyavalokana* is a work on the art of poetry and deals in metrical style, with the grammar of the language, poetic style and poetic convention. The second work, *Karnataka-bhashabhushana* is written in Sanskrit in the Sutra and Vritti style, dealing with Kannada grammar. Lastly, his *Vastukosha* is a Sanskrit-Kannada glossary, the first of its kind. Poetry, prosody, fiction, grammar, lexicons, books on mathematics and veterinary science—a varied field indeed over which the newly awakened Kannada browsed, and yet that was not enough. It was still impatient to find further fields and pastures new. Stories of *Panchatantra* were retold in Kannada by one Durgasimha (1145 A.D.) and another writer Sisumayana (1230 A.D.), told stories to the accompaniment of a musical instrument, in a new metre, more often to folk tunes and known as *Sangatya*. It was, however, left to two other writers to strike, after all these experimentations, an entirely new path. These two writers were Harihara (also known as Hariswara) and Raghavanka.

Harihara and Raghavanka were both related to each other, Raghavanka the younger one being a nephew and a disciple of the former. Both of them are supposed to have lived at the time and connected with the court of one of the Ballala kings identified by the late Dr. Narasimhacharya with Narasimha I (1141-1173 A.D.). Both these poets were Shaivites and devotees of Virupaksha of Hampi. Harihara composed a champu work, *Girijakalyana*, which must soon have gained popularity for the ease and flow of the style as well as for its poetic excellence. Harihara was not only a master of style but demonstrated also for the first time the power of simple Kannada words. This was exhibited by him in his other work where he in-

roduced what is called Ragale style. This style is highly suited to lyrical poetry. In introducing Ragale, Harihara broke with the past where the champu style had standardised a particular set of metres. That Harihara was inspired to reject tradition for newer ways is also clear when, in as many words, he said that he would no longer observe the distinction between *r* and *r*, and *l* and *l* (see appendix). The enthusiasm of Kannada poets that was gathering strength since Pampa I wrote the first Mahakavya reached its acme with Harihara who opened the floodgates for newer currents. From now on, we find poet after great poet experimenting with new forms of expression of which Tripadi, Sangatya and Satpadi remained in vogue till the modern days.

Raghavanka was the man who first showed the high lyrical qualities of the Satpadi (a metre with six lines and there are six notable varieties). In his *Harischandra-kavya*, Raghavanka, both by his descriptive and dramatic talents, showed the height to which the "rich sweet Kannada" of Nripatunga could rise in its sheer simplicity and elegance. Raghavanka also wrote other works, *Somanathacharitra*, *Siddharama-purana* and *Harihara-mahatva*. He was the first poet to write in the Satpadi metre.

It would be out of place in such a brief review to follow the various authors through the centuries. The main purpose here is to review historically the growth of Kannada literature from the early days and to note the contribution made by some of the greatest writers from time to time. From Nripatunga at the end of the IX century to Raghavanka who takes us to the close of the XII century, we witness the flowering of a fine literature. Kannada, which before Nripatunga was more utilised to describe kings and their gifts on stone-inscriptions, developed in the course of these three centuries to a language where, least indebted to Sanskrit and Sanskritisms, it could express the aspirations of a people in their own language. Harihara and Raghavanka, aided no doubt by earlier poets and grammarians and rhetoricians and a host of others, raised Kannada to the pinnacle of its power and glory. And still the story brings us only as far as the twelfth century, a time when most of the other Indian literatures of the North had not even sounded their baby-cry.

III

Renaissance :

Kannada literature, by the twelfth century, had found its own accents and the Kannada people, too, about the same time had found their own soul. This was the time when, throughout in the Karnatak, the people were roused to recognise their inner strength and virtue. The leader who led them was a man of high sensitivity and keen perception who understood and sympathised with the common man. The revival of Virashaivism by Basaveswara in the 12th century was as much a social revolution as a religious movement. Historians have not yet enlightened us on the life and social conditions of those days; but we can very well imagine a society slowly sinking into a lethargy of mind and of action, with a mystic attitude ending in an other-worldly outlook and pusillanimity. This was the time when a foreign invader had advanced, for the first time, south of Vindhya and deprived the natives of their sense of self-respect. The greatest achievement of Basaveswara was to restore that self-respect and to inspire people to sink their differences and to work as one society. "The world is the maker's smithy. Only he who shines in this world shall also shine in the other," he said. It is not the place here to describe this great movement. For our purposes the movement is significant because it gave to Kannada literature a new instrument of expression, instinct with poetical melody but incisive prose at the same time. This was the Vachana style. Vachanas, or sayings, are very simple in style, prose in construction (with a sort of rhyme, nevertheless,) pithy and proverb-like. Their imagery belongs not to the world of poetical conventions but to the daily life of the common man. "Is the owner of the house inside, or, is he out? There is grass on the threshold and dust in the courtyard, so I am asking, is the master in? I ask, is the master of the self (mind) in? For there is dirt on the body and falsehood in the heart. Is the master residing in?" That was, how, Basaveswara took his message and teachings to the people in terms of their own life and experience. For the first time, Kannada literature applied itself to the search and description of that vaster field, viz. the inner world. For centuries to come, the Vachana style inspire

Kannada literature. More than that, the very simplicity of the style, instinct with sincerity, opened the literary world to persons other than scholars well-versed in grammar and rhetorics. There are many Vachana-karas (authors of the Vachanas) who, in their ordinary life, belonged to the so-called low professions. Dignity of labour and equality between all members of the society were the cardinal points of Basaveswara movement. So we find, like the famous Akka Mahadevi, a number of women writers. Let historians recognise this movement as a great religious upheaval; but, for Kannada literature, it was a new birth, and from now on, Kannada, the language of the people and not of the cultivated courtier or the pedantic grammarian, became the vehicle of expression.

This newly born Kannada could be recognised in the style of a number of great poets of the next two or three centuries irrespective of the poet's religion. The Vachanas of the Virashaivas, the tilting Satpadis of the Brahmins like Kumara-Vyasa and Lakshmisha, the Sangatya (lyrics) of the Jain Ratnakaravarni and the songs of the devotees (dasa-s)—all these are written in the same Kannada of the common man.

The Vachanas deserve to be mentioned first. Basaveswara himself is credited with thousands of these sayings. The tenets of the revived Virashaiva religion, rules of conduct, criticism of ignorance and superstition and blind worship of tradition, dignity of labour and equality of man—and many such ideas are expressed in pithy, homely, eloquent and illustrative language. The style is not metrical, nor is it prose as we understand it generally. There is a peculiar kind of rhythm and the words are such as are used by an ordinary man in his daily life and for his daily purposes. Each Vachana, at the end, has a colophonic symbol, the name of a deity or a saint adopted by the author. Thus the colophon "Kudala-Sangama" tells us that the Vachana is that of Basaveswara; Akka mahadevi in her colophons, uses the word "Chenna mallikarjuna" and so on. These Vachanas, since the last few years, are being collected, edited and published, and in a few cases English translations of some have been attempted. Sincerity is poetry here. Apart from Basaveswara, Akka mahadevi, Devara Dasimayya and

some others whose Vachanas belong, from a literary point of view, to a very high order there are hundreds of other Vachana-karas—and most of these Vachanas have been handed down orally. Their beauty and simplicity have turned them into oft-quoted proverbs. Along with the Vachanakaras must be mentioned a class of virakta-s (recluses), who wandering from place to place, sang their wisdom in popular language. Nijagunayogi is one such who wrote only in popular metres like Tripadi and Sangatya and also in Ragale and prose. But the greatest among such writers is Sarvajna who wrote in Tripadi, a metre of three lines only, each succeeding line having shorter measure than the preceding. The first line has twenty *matras*, the second twenty with caesura at the fifteenth and the third eight but followed by the word “Sarvajna” which is the colophon for every Tripadi. The style of this poet is so essentially Kannada that it could never be rendered into any other language except by using more words and by missing the haunting rhyme. Here is a poet who uses the simplest and the least number of words to convey a great truth—and there is no walk of life that is not observed by Sarvajna. And, for the first time, we find a poet with a genuine sense of humour.

The life, work and character of Basaveswara naturally inspired a number of poets to write his biography. It did not take long for the reviver and reformer to be deified. Bhimakavi, in the middle of the 14th century, wrote his *Basava-purana* where Basava is an incarnation of Nandi, the vehicle of god Shiv. After Bhimakavi, we have another great poet, Chamarasa, who wrote *Prabhulingalile*, extolling Prabhulinga or Allama-Prabhu, the revered preceptor of Basaveswara. It is said that king Praudhadevaraya (1419-1446) was so enamoured of the poem that he caused it to be translated into Telugu and Tamil.

It would not be possible to mention here each and every poet of the renaissance period. Kannada literature was now flourishing under the patronage of the Vijayanagara kings and, naturally, both the quality and the number of literary works was high. But mention will have to be made of three poets in particular, viz., Kumara-Vyasa, Lakshmisha and Sadaksari. These three represent the highest

peak of literary achievement, and, for centuries to come, we have only to look down to Kannada literature. Kumara-Vyasa whose name was Narayana says that he is a born and not an educated Pundit. He wrote the Bharata story with Krishna as the hero. "This work of mine is a battle-drum to kings, the essence of Vedic lore to the Brahmins, philosophy to the yogis, *Sringara* to the *virahis* (or lovers in separation), an ornament to the learned and a guide to the poets," says the poet in his first canto. Nor is his claim unjustified. To this day, the learned study its beauty, the illiterate enjoy its recitation, the musicians sing its poetry and to others it is a thrill to listen. Kumara-Vyasa has written his work in the Bhamini-Satpadi metre while the other poet, Lakshmisha, has employed the longer, Vardhika-Satpadi to write his *Jaimini Bharata*. This is another work which is recited even today and it is a store-house of delectable anecdotes described in sweet and musical poetry. Sadaksari was, however, a poet of a different *timbre*. He has written three poems—all in the champu style. Sadaksari is a great scholar who wrote both in Sanskrit and Kannada. He was the head of a Matha and he says in one of his poems that poetry is an art not to be learned but one to be born with. His *Rajasekhara vilasa*, the story of a Chola prince, is a very famous work. In *Sabara-sankara-vilasa*, the fight between Arjuna and Shiv (in the garb of a Kirata) is the main story. These works belong to the second half of the 17th century and in this passage of time, as with Sadaksari, we see once again the beginnings of Sanskrit influencing Kannada. Sadaksari's style admits long Sanskrit words and compounds. The scholars have once again asserted themselves and literature, as at one time earlier, is a sort of a show-room. Perhaps—the decline of the Vijayanagara power meant a setback to the living language of the populace or—the spirit to revive the ancient culture as against the Muslim attacks and power meant an inevitable recourse to Sanskrit. Whatever it be, the fact is that by the time we come to the end of the 17th century the domination of Sanskrit over Kannada is complete. At the very beginning of the century, in 1604, a scholar by name Bhattakalanka, wrote another grammar of Kannada language (*Karnataka Shabdanushasanam*) but strangely he did it in 592 *Sanskrit* Sutras and commentary on

them in the same language. For the Kannada that the Vachanakaras gave us we have to go now not to the classical Kannada poets but to devotees of the Bhakti school like Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa. These devotees have composed innumerable songs in simple popular style and like the Vachanas of old these songs have been kept alive even to this day.

A casual reference to the Vijayanagara kings has been made above. The patronage of these kings and some other minor princes contributed a good deal to the growth of the Kannada literature. In the Vijayanagara court both Telugu and Kannada poets flourished. Mutual influence and indebtedness followed. Even as early as 1195 A.D. one Palkurike Somanatha had composed a *Basava-purana* in Telugu which is said to have been used later by Bhimakavi. But as time went on, Sanskrit once again claimed a place of honour. From the 16th to the end of the 17th century, the Sanskrit classics, and especially *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata*, were translated into Kannada. The first drama as such to be written in Kannada is *Mitravindagovinda* by one Singararya in 1680 A.D. The play is a frank adaptation of Sri Harsa's *Ratnavali*. It should be noted that Singararya was in the court of Devaraja Wodeyar of Mysore (1672-1704) in whose reign Kannada literature developed to a very great extent under royal patronage. It was in this reign that a supposed Sudra attendant of the queen, by the name Honnamma, composed in the popular Sangatya metre, a poem called *Hadibadeya Dharma* (Duty of a Faithful Wife). This is the only work which breathes the freshness of the style of the Vachanas.

It is suggested above that, for historical reasons, Sanskrit might have claimed more respect and attention. Whatever the reasons, the effect of this revived interest in Sanskrit must have been harmful to the growth of Kannada literature. For, after the 17th century, we do not come across any Kannada work deserving our serious notice till we come to the modern period. The overwhelming influence of Sanskrit and its artificial revival as late as the 17th century must have taken literature away from the people. And, further, royal patronage which had mostly encouraged literary activities, ceased to exist in the unsettled conditions of the 18th century. And so we

come to the end of a period of more than five-hundred years during which Kannada developed with the aspirations of the people and as an instrument of expression of the new ideas and the new way of life given by the social revolution inspired by Basaveswara and others. For almost two-hundred years, *i. e.*, till the end of the 19th century Kannada literature as such simply ceased to exist.

IV

Modern Kannada :

History, it is said, repeats. Perhaps that is the wrong way to describe what is a natural phenomenon. Repetition, it should be recognised, is history. Life, growth, decay; spring, rains, autumn; that is the chain that repeats itself. Only we cannot say which is the first link. But we do know that any one link inevitably leads to the next, that out of the very decay life springs into existence. This is as true of man's phenomenal as of his noumenal world; of trees, plants, and animals as of ideas, movements and experience. Out of darkness light shoots. If this were not so, the rise and growth of Kannada literature from the 19th century onwards can neither be understood nor explained. By the middle of the 18th century, Kannada ceased to exist. As it emerges late in the 19th century, its ashes have been scattered over different areas. The political map of India had been changed and, in the course of it, what was one land and one group of people had then been divided into separate groups : there was Mysore, there were a few Kannada districts in the Nizam's territory, and the remaining districts, like a pack of cards, were being shuffled and dealt between Madras and Bombay presidencies. This fact has a great bearing on the growth of modern Kannada.

At the close of the 18th century, Mysore was ruled by Muslim kings. Since then Mysore Kannada, especially in its official contents, has shown great influence of Persian language; Bombay Karnatak was ruled for more than hundred years, by Maharashtrian officials and so Kannada, here, was dominated by Marathi; in Madras, Tamil and Telugu were so predominant that Kannada had to fight for its revival—in a dialectical form. History of thousand years ago now repeated itself. In those early days Kannada was so dependent on

Sanskrit that no one thought it possible to put it to literary use; now, Kannada was so influenced by the different languages as mentioned above that Kannada literature, as such, was considered an impracticability. The best that could be done was done by the Hindu kings of Mysore who replaced Tippu. Sanskrit religious works, under court patronage, were rendered into a Kannada which could hardly be distinguished from Sanskrit. Such attempts made no material contribution and yet, historically, they were very significant; for, they induced Mysore kings late in the 19th century to patronise further translations of Sanskrit works of repute.

Two developments, both outside the kings' courts and unrelated to the people, seriously influenced the revival of Kannada literature in the modern times: the first was the zealous work of a number of missionaries who came to the Kannada people with the Kannada translation of the Holy Bible and then many of whom remained to study and admire Kannada literature. It is to the credit of these missionaries that printing in Kannada was made possible by the middle of the 19th century. Since the missionaries had to mix and move with the people they had to learn their language. Grammars were written and dictionaries were compiled. Dr. Caldwell wrote a comparative grammar of Dravidian languages and Rev. Kittel compiled a huge Kannada-English dictionary in the later part of the 19th century. To this day, the two works have neither successors nor substitutes. Their activities happened at a time when Sanskrit language was being ardently studied and Sanskrit classics enthusiastically published by a host of European scholars. Naturally enough, some of these were translated into Kannada and this marked the real beginning of modern Kannada.

The other development was the founding in 1890 of an Association at Dharwar called "Karnataka Vidya Vardhaka Sangha" (an Association to develop knowledge in Karnatak). The fact that the few founders were mostly men educated in English is very significant. For the first time, books from the English language were rendered into Kannada. What an odd assortment we find—Shakespeare's plays, Mrs. Henry Wood's novels and Mill's and Herbert Spencer's treatises! At the same time, Sanskrit works like

the *Hitopadesha* and *Panchatantra* and Sanskrit dramas like *Shakuntalam*, *Uttara-Ramacharitam* and *Venisamharam* were translated into Kannada. Before they knew (or without ever realising it) these writers gave a new style and modern prose to Kannada. The translations of Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam* by Karibasava Shastri from Mysore and by Turmari from Dharwar may be mentioned as the earliest classics of modern Kannada.

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To write a review, and a brief one at that, of modern Kannada literature is almost an impracticable attempt; ancient history, in spite of paucity of available material, is easy to narrate. Printing and publishing were unknown in those days. To copy a book was a tiresome pleasure even to a lover of literature. But, as a result, only the best was preserved by tradition. Today, anyone who can afford, could get his efforts in print; and, everyone whose name appears on the title-page aspires to be considered literary. Perhaps at no age in the past has so much trash in literature vied in publications (and oftentimes with temporary success) with so little of the best. This makes the task unenviable for a modern critic when he has to write of his contemporaries. However, the story of the progress of Kannada literature must be brought upto date and, for that purpose, what follows would be mostly a review of the broad outlines and the underlying forces of modern Kannada with a mere reference to those handful writers whose influence and contribution has been material.

As background to the review, one or two things will have to be noted: (1) With the spread of English education, the influence of English literature (particularly for reasons that it was a living literature of a ruling conqueror) was so fast and great that very soon Sanskrit as a literature (and later even as a language) ceased to be an influence. (2) Kannada literature in these days was produced entirely by those who were "English-educated" (and sometimes who had studied English more than Kannada). (3) The rise of nationalism in the early years of the century focussed attention on Bengali literature and that was the first "swadesi" influence to mould modern Kannada. (4) Official patronage of any

sort was conspicuous by its absence and, gradually and inevitably, writers had to write for the microscopic section of the literate. (5) Due to the Kannada territory being divided into separate administrative groups, Kannada writers could only hope to reach the small reading public within their own region.

In the light of the above conditions, Kannada literature, from the beginning of this century, made big strides. Modern literature could conveniently be divided into two periods, the first ending with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political stage. In this period most of our works are first translations and then adaptations from other languages. These other languages were Sanskrit, English, Bengali and Marathi—in that order. Karibasava Shastri and Turamari, mentioned above, along with D. N. Mulbagal and many others gave us translations of classical works from Sanskrit. A monthly periodical, *Vagbhusana*, published by the Karnataka Vidya Vardhaka Sangha, contains, apart from such translations from Sanskrit, articles and essays, apparently translated from or inspired by English originals. It is interesting to note in these earlier attempts, the slow emergence of a prose style, sometimes highly Sanskritised, sometimes halting in non-Kannada accents (due to the predominant influence of Marathi) and, at other times, an almost meaningless word-to-word translation from English. It is in this atmosphere, almost at the very end of the last century that the first independant Kannada novel, the only one for quite some time to come, was written by one who knew no English, being a trained teacher of a primary school. This pioneer was one Venkatesh Tirako Kulkarni writing under the name of "Galaganatha."

What an adventure it was to write at all in Kannada could be seen from another writer at the end of the 19th century. Nandalike Naranappa, from Udupi in South Kanara, was a poor drill teacher. He knew the ridicule he would earn if he were to stand before the people as an author! Would a drill teacher know Sanskrit? Has he studied English? How then could he have any claim to authorship? So Naranappa wrote three works in a slightly archaic style and under the name "Muddana" and passed them off as works of a writer of earlier times. If the author belonged to olden days, the

work must be good indeed.' But few people recognised the freshness and the high quality of humour not characteristic of any ancient literature. *Adbhuta-Ramayana* and *Ramaswamedha* were in prose and *Sri Ramapattabhishekam* was in verse. The second of these is written in the form of a dialogue between the author and his wife and till today it stands as one of the most brisk, brilliant dialogue sparkling with humour.

The first two decades of the 20th century show us works entirely different in source from the earlier one. Except the first social novel, *Madiddunno Maraya* (Reap Sir, what you have sown) by one M. S. Puttanna, almost all other works are adaptations of or inspired by Bengali and Marathi works. These were the two literatures of two provinces that were politically very conscious and where the patriotic sense was as impatient as it was intense. Bankim Chandra Chatterji in Bengal and Hari Narayan Apte in Maharashtra produced novels reminding the people of the days when India was free and inspiring them to struggle for freedom. B. Venkatachar, from Mysore, gave us a series of Bankim's novels in translation while Galaganatha, in Bombay Karnatak, translated Apte's novels. What is striking about these two writers is the flow and power of prose which was largely instrumental in producing an expanding reading public. In the meanwhile, another brilliant writer with his head-quarters at Dharwar was contributing, with his originality and rich fancy, a number of works—short stories, dramas, novels and essays and articles through his weekly periodical called "*Subhodaya*." This was Vasudevacharya Kerur. His famous drama is *Pativashikarana*. Actually it is an adaptation of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. But, in effect, it reads as entirely original, as the author has depicted the incidents against the background of contemporary society of Karnatak. Kerur has also translated Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He wrote three novels, a number of short stories and an original play, called *Nala-Damyanti*. His style is brilliant, though oftentimes, pedantic. His humour is sharp and crisp. His social novel *Indira* is still read with interest. This was also the time when in South Kanara authors like Panje Mangesha Rao and Muliye Timmappayya wrote the earliest short stories and

poems. Sri Panje Mangesha Rao, later on, was more known for his poems for children, the pioneer of juvenile literature. In more than and after twenty years others who wrote for children are very few in number. The foremost among them are G. P. Rajaratnama, Hoysala from Mysore and Mevundi Mallari from Dharwar. Sri Muliye Timmappayya wrote in his later days not only poems but Yaksaganas, (a kind of village play of that region).

The striking achievement of this period was the evolution of a prose style which was trenchant, facile and flexible. Newspapers and periodicals which by this time were published in large numbers gave an impetus to the growth of this prose. Once more, Kannada language has gained sufficient strength to express itself effectively whether in verse or in prose and it now needed only a spark to illuminate the world of feeling with literary candescence.

That spark was given by the first Gandhian movement of non-cooperation. For the first time, in thousands of years, we found a great yet simple sage-like leader who, by his preaching and touring the whole country, made Indians feel that they were one and, so, strong. The spirit of individual self-respect and national freedom fired the imagination of many a young writer. Dreaming of Swaraj within a year, they felt that the entire old world they saw would be swept out of existence and a new Rama Rajya would be established in its place. To break and to break with the past is the first characteristic of the younger poets in Karnatak in those early days. Of those (almost all of whom are living at the moment)—three names deserve to be mentioned. The way for these youngsters had already been paved by their elders—especially by the late Prof. B. M. Srikan-tayya who, in rendering some English poems into Kannada, gave a new form of expression. It was a definite break with tradition. And poets like D. R. Bendre, K. V. Puttappa, K. Sankara Bhat swept the whole Kannada territory by their lyrics and ballads. Bendre (Dharwar) especially, is a poet who has caught the tune of folk-life and his poems have a lively and a haunting melody. At this very time Tagorean poetry, through English and Bengali versions, had caught the fancy of some of these younger poets. K. V. Puttappa (Mysore), especially, seems to have caught something direct from the

Guru. The re-interpretation of our ancient cultural heritage is a striking peculiarity of Dr. Tagore's writings. Puttappa shows the same peculiarity and the same missionary ardour. He is the first modern Kannada poet to attempt the Ramayana story in its entirety. (Earlier, this has been attempted by a poet of a different quality—Sali Ramachandrarao who, along with Betgeri Krishna Sharma, has music and sensitivity to a high degree). Till now, most of the new poets have given us shorter poems. Bendre's *Meghduta* (one of the finest lyrics in Kannada) and P. T. Narasimhachar's *Ganesa Darsana* and one or two others are the only longer poetic attempts. The spirit and style of thirty years ago is already being assailed as inadequate by younger poets, the foremost among whom are Gopal-Krishna Adipa, C. C. Kanavi, C. K. Dixit and some others. However, the 1920s gave us a number of poets who have attempted to express a re-awakened sense of self-respect, patriotism, truth and beauty. M. Govinda Pai, V. K. Gokak, J. Sitaramiah, R. S. Mugali, Betgeri Krishna Sharma, P. T. Narasimhachar—are some who deserve special mention.

It was described above how the modern period was specially noted for evolving a prose style. In the hands of a writer like Kerur Vasudevachar it gained in quality and strength. And inevitably it led to the writing of short stories, novels and prose works. Short story was the first to appear. Kerur had already written some short stories, but as creations of literary art, were first given to us by a Mysore writer, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar ("Srinivasa"). Srinivasa wrote in very simple, homely style, with as little embellishment as possible. His themes were every day themes. He could make his characters come to life within the shortest time. He is definitely a master of short stories. His long short story *Subbanna* is one of his best and, along with many others, it has appeared in English, translated by the author himself. Srinivasa attracted readers as well as followers. And many a younger writer has followed in his style the best of whom is A. Seetharam (Ananda). Even here a new style—with an allegedly aggressive realism—is making its appearance. C. K. Venkataramayya, A. N. Krishna Rao, "Ta. Ra. Su", Basavaraj Kattimani, Betgeri Krishna Sharma, may be mentioned as some

of the living short story writers. One name must be specially mentioned here viz. that of Gorur Ramaswami Iyengar. He is a writer who brought village life to modern literature and the humorous style in which he depicts rural society and the simple and flowing style in which he writes make him stand out as a literary figure of the day. The increasing number of periodicals has contributed materially to the deterioration of the art of short story writing.

Novels were rather long to arrive in modern Kannada. In the early part of the century, B. Venkatachar and Galaganath wrote novels mostly adapted from other languages. Galaganath's contribution continued to the end of the thirties, but the style remained the same. Kerur Vasudevachar wrote three novels but the style was still more sanskritised. It is only in the last ten or fifteen years that novelists as such arose. Of these the foremost are A. N. Krishna Rao (from Mysore), K. Shivaram Karanth (from South Kanara), V.M. Inamdar and Basavaraj Kattimani and Mirji Annarao (from North Karnatak). The first two are voluminous writers. Krishna Rao has a vigorous style and a tact for provoking readers. His themes are social and his insistence on frankly exposing inhibitions of sexual life have successfully put him in the limelight. Karanth has written mostly depicting the life of South Kanara. His style is simple and straightforward, his descriptions apt and revealing and his characters utterly true to life. His *Chomana Dudi*—the shortest—is a masterpiece. It depicts the life of an untouchable. While Krishna Rao pleads and fights for the downtrodden, Karanth moves us to sympathy and penitence. Kattimani is a younger writer of great promise. There are some others like Devudu Narasimha Shastri and Sri Ranga who have contributed novels experimenting with new styles. Betgeri Krishna sharma, V.K. Gokak, R.S. Mugali are the writers from Bombay Karnatak who have some good novels to their credit. The only writer from this last region to compete with Krishna Rao and Shivaram Karanth is V. M. Inamdar who inaugurated his novel-writing by translating a Marathi novel of V.S. Khandekar. Since then Inamdar has regularly written novels. His style is very fluent, his characteristic is to analyse situation more than the character. He is the only Kannada novelist to deal directly

with a given problem; neither the missionary's zeal nor the reformist's impatience mars his writing. In the last few years, novel has been popular with writers too. A number of writers, both experienced (like Gorur Ramaswami Iyengar) and fresh have taken to novel writing. Many are readable ; as many are promising. Novels are popular reading. A number of Grantha Malas (series of regular publications) cater to an increasing number of reading subscribers—by furnishing novels. Inevitably more bad novels are published every week than good novels in a year.

Besides short stories and novels, prose works of other or a general nature are still very rare in Kannada. But the quality of prose is definitely high. Writers like Pandit Taranath, D. V. Gundappa and Sri Ranga have evolved an inimitable prose style. D.V. Gundappa is one of our senior living writers who has also written poems. One of them—*Manku Timmana Kagga*—deserves to be specially mentioned. It is a long series of short epigrammatic verses dealing with worldly events and worldly wisdom and, the simple but charming style would surely raise it to one of the world's classics. However, Gundappa has contributed more to the prose by his addresses, literary criticism and essays. V.K. Gokak is another writer of literary criticism. Karanth, Sri Ranga, N. Kasturi, A.N. Moorthy Rao are some of the elderly essayists whose *forte* is in light humour and satire.

If short stories and novels are gaining in number and quality, drama in modern Kannada, has still to establish itself. Drama is associated more with stage than with readers ; hence, till there is a Kannada stage, written dramas and amateur productions have, so to say, to keep the torch alive. In the entire Kannada literature there were no plays at all till we come to the modern days ; the only exception, mentioned earlier, was *Mitravindagovinda* (17th century) but it was a rendering of Sri Harsa's *Ratnavali*. In the early years of this century, some more plays were written but they too were translations either from Sanskrit or English. Perhaps Kerur Vasudevachar's *Nala-Damayanti* was the first original play. Though written dramas were not there, Karnatak, from the earlier days, had a popular stage where village plays or Yakshaganas were performed. These were

mythological stories and, since the performers were illiterate, no need was ever felt to preserve them in writing. It was only from the early twenties of this century that drama, as a literary form and a stage production at the same time, made its appearance. Two writers—one from Bombay Karnatak and the other from Mysore—wrote at about the same time plays with social themes. A younger pleader of Gadag, Huilgol Narayanarao, fresh from his college days in Maharashtra, wrote his first play, *Stridharmarahasya*. It was original and the theme was topical, the problem of modern educated girl. The Mysore dramatist, T. P. Kailasam named his first play *Tollu-Gatti* (Hollow and Sound) dealing with the effects of modern education. Huilgol wrote in a grammatically imposing style, while Kailasam wrote in a phonetically possible style. Kailasam, however, followed up his first play with a number of short skits the best of which is *Home-Rulu* dealing with the eternal triangle, mother, son and daughter-in-law. Kailasam was original, brilliant and a very keen observer of human nature. He is rightly regarded as the father of the modern Kannada drama. His sympathy, his humour, and, above all, his magic power to produce the proper atmosphere with utmost economy—these are the pride of modern Kannada drama. Kailasam had seen Ibsen's plays during his stay in England and that must surely have fired him to venture into writing social satires. His dialogues were in the natural colloquial style, and to the educated youth, free intermixing of English and Kannada words was "natural". The other dramatist who deserves to be mentioned is K. S. Karanth. Today he is more known for his novels but in the earlier days he wrote effective dramas and was the first Kannada writer to write and produce operas. Karanth is a versatile man—from Khaddar-hawking to the monumental children's encyclopaedia (*Bala-Prapancha*)—there is little that he has not attempted. His personality is too vigorous to do justice to the artist in him. Unlike Kailasam, he has no sympathy to spare for the failure and feebleness of man. In most of his plays, we find present day society mercilessly satirised. Either age or novel writing must have mellowed him for, his latest play *Bittida Bele* is almost Ibsen-like in atmosphere and characterisation.

Nature seems to have been in an equitable and an impartial mood. For, the third dramatist to claim our attention hails from Bombay Karnatak. Sri Ranga has the credit of writing more plays—both full-length and one-act—than either of the above two. His plays also deal with contemporary middle-class life—unemployment, social hypocrisy, joint family, corruption in public life etc. Like Kailasam, he has seen European productions in Western countries, and, like Karanth, he has little patience with stupidity and hypocrisy ; at the same time, unlike Kailasam, he has little respect for tradition and, unlike Karanth, his missionary zeal is subdued many a time by his art of playwrighting. But these and many other plays written by modern dramatists have still to establish themselves on the popular stage which, impervious to all its surroundings, has been echoing the mighty deeds of the mythological heroes. As it is, more and more amateur troupes are venturing into public productions of such plays and till that venture is successful, dramatic literature would lag behind the other forms. In addition to those mentioned above, a host of dramatists (and a number of them *ad hoc*) is essaying into dialogues and conversations. Kailasam and Sri Ranga have popularised the humorous style and, unfortunately, no other style has appealed to younger dramatists. Some of the established writers mentioned in connection with other literary forms have also written dramas in between. Among others, deserving to be specially mentioned, are “Ksirasagara” (pen name), N. K. (real and full name N. K. Kulkarni) and “Parvatavani,” K. V. Puttappa, the poet, has written some plays in blank verse and Karanth, as mentioned above, has written and produced operas. Recently, M. Govinda Pai has also published verse-plays. Mention must also be made of the poetic plays of “Srinivasa” and K. T. Puranik. Among other practitioners of the dramatic art may be mentioned Shri L. J. Bendre, D. R. Bendre, the poet and R. S. Mugali.

The story of modern Kannda literature is not by any means complete though almost every literary form has been described above. There are various contributions of a significant quality in fields other than the above. Books on modern scientific subjects

are being attempted by the Mysore University ; and English-Kannada Dictionary has been compiled ; under the patronage of the Maharaja of Mysore translations of Vedic hymns were being published ; the Karnatak Sahitya Parishat (Literary Academy of Karnatak) is, since its establishment in 1915, engaged in collecting, editing and publishing old manuscripts ; the Academy has also published some volumes of the history (social and cultural) of Karnatak ; but work of this type is very slow and very scarce for want of sufficient patronage. Kannada territory had been under the rule of five different governments and, perhaps, each government expected the other four to patronise Kannada. Except in Mysore, Kannada districts formed a minority in multi-lingual states. A Kannada writer of one region was hardly known, much less read by the Kannada people in other regions. This meant a great hardship both to writers and publishers. That, inspite of material disadvantages, Kannada has developed, in the short space of half a century, into such a vigorous and varied literature shows the innate vitality of the language and the genius of the people. Poetry, short story, drama, novel—in any and every of these forms Kannada has the best to show, the best that could hold its head against the best in any other modern literature.

APPENDIX

(1) The date given to the Halmidi inscription is according to Sri M. Govinda Pai who holds that opinion in one of his three published lectures under the auspices of the Kannada Research Institute, Dharwar. But according to other scholars the date of the inscription is the middle of the 5th century A.D. It may be mentioned here that according to Sri M. Govinda Pai, the recently discovered work, *Vaddaradhane*, belongs to this earlier period. But as there is no agreement among scholars on this point, no reference has been made here to that work.

(2) In old Kannada, in addition to the sound r and l, there were two others, r and l. Scholars are not sure of how these sounds were produced. Kesiraja, the grammarian of the 13th century thought that r and l were palatal and lingual variations of r and l. Modern philologists like Dr. Narasimhayya suspect them to be

alveolar. Dr. Caldwell thought that *r* and *l* were peculiar to Dravidian languages. Whatever that be, till the 12th century *r* and *l* were distinguished from *r* and *l*. Harihara, in his poem, says that he would have nothing to do with such a distinction. Either the distinction was lost or considered unnecessary.

Epilogue :

The foregoing is a survey of the *belles lettres* only. In addition to all this, work contributing to literary studies has been progressing since the last two decades. Sri M. Govinda Pai who is at present the poet-laureate of the Madras State is a ceaseless research scholar who has been working on ancient authors and works. The Virashaiva Society has undertaken the editing and publishing of Lingayat literature. Late Sri S. D. Basawanal was responsible for a good deal of authoritative research. Scholars like Sri P. G. Halkatti and Dr. S. C. Nandimath have also contributed to such studies. The Kannada Sahitya Parishat (Bangalore) and the Vidya Vardhaka Sangha (Dharwar) have published not only ancient classical works but also some commemoration (prashasti) volumes of famous poets. Late Sri Muliye Timmappayya has published an exhaustive critical study of Pampa I. The Mysore University has published handbooks on earlier poets and also on literary and scientific subjects. Sri S. B. Joshi of Dharwar is an indefatigable student of research work on Kannada language. The veteran, Shri V. B. Alur, has been writing on philosophical subjects. He is also a joint author of the excellent translation, as early as in 1920, of Lokmanya Tilak's *Gitarahasya*. Apart from this, we have some good translations also. The foremost of this class is the work of Sri G. P. Rajaratnam who has given us volumes of Buddhist literature and the Jataka stories. A study of Jainism, a voluminous work by a young writer (Sri Mirji Annarao) is the most recent publication. Writers like, Devudu, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, A. R. Krishna Sastry have written extensively on literary and cultural subjects. The last named author has written a study of Sanskrit Drama and recently has brought out adaptations of the *Mahabharata* and the *Katha-sarit-sagara* which are great literary achievements. Mention in this connection should also be made of the devoted and critical labours of Sri M. R. Sri-

nivasa Murthy and Sri R. R. Diwakar in the literary and philosophical appreciation of Vachana literature.

Post-script :

A writer of the history of Kannada literature has an unenviable task to perform. Research work, till recently, has been almost conspicuous by its absence and one has to depend, as far as ancient history is concerned, on the few essays of scholars who are still not agreed on many of the dates ; about social history of the earlier days there is nothing to help us ; research on the language is just beginning. I have made my task less onerous by avoiding all controversial issues.

Writing on modern, contemporary literature is also difficult, but for an exactly opposite reason. Too many "writers" are still living and the entire quota of my pages may be exhausted by just listing them. To make a selection would be unfair if not odious. I know I have not mentioned all names ; but those that I have mentioned are not merely because they alone are great but for other reasons as well : some are first in the field ; some have contributed something original ; some have influenced many—or some such reason. As my space is short, I must apologise to many others who, even according to me, deserve to be mentioned when a fuller history of Kannada comes to be written.

MALAYALAM

The major languages of India belong to two families, namely, the Indo-European and the Dravidian. The important members of the Indo-European family are Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati etc. Among the members of the Dravidian family, the developed languages are Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. In this family there are about a dozen smaller languages which are considered to be uncultivated and Coorg, Tulu, Kodagu, Toda, Kota, Brahui, Kolami, etc. are the more prominent among them.

The four Dravidian languages listed in the Constitution of India are Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. Among these Telugu gets the first place as regards population. In fact, it stands second to Hindi only among the Indian languages as far as population is concerned. But as regards the antiquity and wealth of literature, Tamil gets the first place among the Dravidian languages. Though Kannada has the third place in the Dravidian family as far as population is concerned, it commands the second place as far as the wealth and antiquity of literature are concerned. Malayalam has only the fourth place both as regards the population and as regards antiquity of literature. According to the 1951 census Malayalam is spoken by 1·33 crores of people and its place among the Indian languages in this regard is the eighth.

Though people who speak Malayalam are scattered throughout the length and breadth of India, Kerala is considered to be the *Malayala Pradesh*. This area which lies in between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea is thickly populated by a people who speak a language which is now known as Malayalam. Kerala consists of three main regions known as Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. The word Kerala was not usually found either in the geography books or in the maps before the establishment of the present state of Kerala. But it is a country which has a

long history. Some scholars think that the word Kerala denotes the 'Kera' or Coconut trees which grow abundantly in the country.

If you look back there are references even in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* about Kerala. There is also reference about Kerala in Asoka's edicts. In the famous Tamil works of the Sangam period known as '*Patittipattu*', '*Chitapathikaram*' and '*Manimekhalai*' there are many references about the Chera kings and the land of Chera or Kerala. Egypt, Arabia, Babylon and Rome maintained contacts with Kerala in the olden days. There is evidence to show that teak, sandal-wood, peacocks etc. were exported to these places from Kerala.

After the regime of the Chera kings, Kerala had a sort of decentralised democratic Government. This experiment lasted for some centuries and later it degenerated, bringing in rulers from the adjoining Tamil countries known as Perumals. The Perumal regime also came to an end by 9th century after which Kerala was divided into bits and ruled by several petty chieftains. By about the beginning of 16th century, the Portuguese entered the scene and then the Dutch. These foreigners also had some hand in the Government of the land. The next important point of historical interest is the regime of the British. During their period Malabar was directly governed by them as part of Madras Presidency ; and Cochin and Travancore indirectly through native princes. After Indian independence, Travancore and Cochin were integrated into one state and later a united Kerala was established. This, in brief, is the historical background of Kerala.

After the rule of the Perumals, Kerala was never under one Government. It was divided by the forces of social, political and religious interests. But in the midst of all these dividing forces and fissiparous tendencies, one is able to see an underlying unity and common culture. This culture is reflected in the arts, festivals and the attitude of the Malayalees in general. Kerala is a very fertile and beautiful land. It has got the highest percentage of literacy in India, but still it is one of the poorest regions in India. You will find there conservatives and revolutionaries of the highest order. It is, in fact, a museum of various incongruities. Such is the birth place of the Malayalees.

Origin of Malayalam :

It is not long since the language of Kerala got the name Malayalam. At first, it was only used to denote the land which the Malayalees inhabited. The word Malayalam is supposed to consist of two words 'Mala' which means hill and 'Alam' which means the sea. It is in fact the land lying between the Arabian Sea and the long range of hills known as Western Ghats. Some scholars are of the opinion that the second word is not 'Alam' but 'Alam' which means land. Then it would mean hilly country. This derivation seems to be more probable. In any case, the difference of opinion here is not a very serious matter. But as regards the origin of the language the difference of opinion is much more serious and the controversy more difficult.

Several are the opinions expressed by scholars on the origin of Malayalam language. But they can be perhaps classified under three groups. It is clear that Malayalam exhibits influence of Sanskrit and Tamil to a remarkable degree and also shows certain individual characteristics. These form the basis of the different theories which are mostly permutations and combinations of possible explanations. Let us survey the theories which have been expressed so far and group them as indicated above.

(i) Sanskrit origin :

Kovunni Nedungadi is the first person who has said that Malayalam has originated from Sanskrit. In his grammar entitled *Kerala Kaumudi* published in 1875 he has said that Keralabhasha which is Ganga has originated from Sanskrit which is the Himalayas and joined with Dravidabhasha which is Kalindi. Though Nedungadi was an expert in Malayalam grammar, he did not have sufficient understanding of linguistic principles and so his theory is only a speculation in the garb of a metaphor. But there are a few other scholars also who agree with his views.

There is a slightly different theory propounded by certain other scholars. They say that Malayalam has not taken its root from Sanskrit but from Prakrit. But when several scholars from Dr. Caldwell onwards have proved successfully that the Indo-European family has not given birth to the Dravidian family, there is no point in discussing this theory in a serious manner.

(ii) Tamil origin.

The first person who pointed out that Malayalam should be considered as the daughter of Tamil was the famous grammarian, Dr. Caldwell. In the introduction to his *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* he says, "Malayalam, being as I conceive, an offshoot of Tamil, differing from it chiefly at present by its dis-use of the personal termination for the verbs and the larger amount of Sanskrit derivatives, it is felt it might perhaps be regarded as a dialect of Tamil than as a distinct member of the Dravidian family." He modifies this statement after a survey of their differences thus : "The difference between Malayalam and Tamil, though originally slight, has progressively increased, so that the claim of Malayalam as it now stands to be considered not as a mere dialect of Tamil but as a sister language cannot be called in question. Originally, it is true, I consider it to have been not a sister of Tamil but a daughter. It may best be described as a much altered off-shoot." Most Tamil scholars and some Malayalam scholars also have supported this view. Professor Rajaraja Varma, the author of the famous Malayalam grammar *Keralapraniniyam* supports Dr. Caldwell in general. He thinks that the Kotum Tamil, (spoken dialects of Tamil) in the areas then known as 'Kuttam, Kutam, Karka, Ven, Puzhi have later evolved into the modern Malayalam language.

The opinion that, though Tamil and Malayalam are very closely related, Malayalam is not a daughter but a sister of Tamil and the daughter of a primitive Dravidian tongue have also strong supporters. In fact, the first person who strongly advocated the independence and individuality of Malayalam language is the author of *Lilathilakam*, the 14th century grammar. Though he wrote his grammar in Sanskrit, he made it very clear that Keralabhasha has no geneological connection with Aryabhasha or Sanskrit. He also deals with the differences of Cholabhasha (Tamil) and Keralabhasha (Malayalam). Dr. Gundert, the author of the first scientific grammar and the *Malayalam-English dictionary*, clearly states that Malayalam is a sister of Tamil. In fact, Dr. Caldwell and Dr. Gundert could not agree on the origin of Malayalam language. The latter scholars like Attoor Krishna Pisharodi, Ulloor Parameshwara Iyer and Dr. Godavarma support this view in general.

(iii) Mixed Birth :

Another opinion, which may be referred to in passing, is that Malayalam has resulted out of mixing the two languages, Sanskrit and Tamil. It is quite true that Malayalam contains several words which are found in Sanskrit and in Tamil. But if this leads to a similar surmise, it is not worth-while raising arguments against such a misconception. What decides the relationship of the language with others is not the vocabulary but the grammatical structure. There is no developed language in the world which has not borrowed words from other languages. But grammar is something which cannot be borrowed like that. Even today there are just a few scholars who think that the Brahmins who came to Kerala prior to the 9th century A.D. did not know the language spoken in Kerala and spoke in a dialect mixing Sanskrit and Tamil and later on this mixed dialect evolved into Malayalam.

A similar notion, which is not very current now, is that the original inhabitants of Kerala had a dialect of their own and as a result of mixing this dialect and some other Dravidian languages a new language took shape and that is Malayalam. The possibility of mixed grammar in a living tongue has been ruled out by philologists and hence let us not waste our time in discussing the merits of these two theories.

The Approach :

The above theories were mostly propounded by scholars, some of whom were men of imagination and others intellectuals well-versed in *tarka* ; but unfortunately they did not have enough grounding in linguistics and modern methods of scientific research. Therefore, we find that their approach to the subject has been weak. They gave more emphasis to imagination than to collection of materials and analysis based on principles of philology. Therefore, the theories culminated in interesting metaphorical expressions. One of them even said that Malayalam is the daughter of Tamil and was married to Sanskrit. At present there are some scholars who collect valuable materials which are available in Kerala and study them closely and hence much light has been thrown on the subject.

The Main Problem :

I have already pointed out that the theories regarding the

origin of Malayalam can be classified under three groups. The most controversial and the most important of the three groups is the one which deals with the relationship of Malayalam with Tamil. There is no denying the fact that Malayalam is more closely allied to Tamil than to any other language in the family. This does not mean that the one is the daughter of the other. The problem is to find out how and when these languages separated from each other and what contact they maintained after that.

Let us briefly survey the arguments of scholars who think that Malayalam is an off-shoot of Tamil.

(i) In some of the old works in Malayalam the term Tamil is used to signify the language. *Brahmananda Puranam* and *Ramacharitam* are the examples. The term Tamil has a history of its own which shows the changes its meaning had throughout the several centuries. At first, it was used for the whole family of Dravidian languages. In fact, the term Tamil and Dravidian have the same origin. Some scholars derive 'Tamil' from 'Dravidian' while others derive 'Dravidian' from 'Tamil'. The latter appears to be more scientific. However, the term Tamil had a comparatively more restricted meaning later on and it referred to the three or four languages of the South excluding the important language of Andhra, i.e., Telugu. After several centuries, the term again shrunk in significance and 'Tamil' became the language of the Pandya and Chola countries which is really the modern Tamil. There are several references in '*Lilathilakam*' and other old texts which go to prove that the term Tamil only meant 'language' and nothing else.

(ii) The basic words or rather the words of everyday domestic use are the same in both Tamil and Malayalam. Even the names of villages are very much the same. This is considered to be another argument to support the mother-daughter theory. From this nothing can be proved except that Malayalam and Tamil had very close relationship. In fact the same argument may be cited to show that either Tamil is a daughter of Malayalam or both are close sisters of the same mother—'primitive Dravidian'. Just because a language is more wealthy in its ancient literature, it does not necessarily mean that that language is comparatively more ancient as spoken tongue also.

(iii) Works in Tamil like '*Pattitupattu*', '*Ainkurunuru*', '*Chilappathikaram*' etc, have been written by poets of Kerala. It is presumed that they have written in the language of the land which must have been Tamil then. It is also a fallacious argument. Sri Shankaracharya and Kulasekharavarma wrote famous works in Sanskrit. This does not mean that the language of Kerala was Sanskrit then. In modern times, people of Kerala write in English and Hindi ; but this does not mean that the language of Kerala is either English or Hindi. For several centuries Tamil was the language of administration in Kerala, because Tamil kings reigned over the land. It was also the language of education and therefore scholars thought it proper to write their works in Tamil.

(iv) There are several inscriptions on copper and stone found in Kerala which are written in the Tamil language. This also is taken as another argument to prove that the language of old Kerala was Tamil. But the fact is, that though there are several inscriptions in Tamil and Sanskrit, there are just a few old inscriptions in Malayalam also. Therefore, this argument does not go any further.

(v) Another important argument is based on the rare and valuable book entitled *Ramacharitam*. This is a work based on the Yuddhakanda of *Ramayana* and is supposed to be written in the 12th century A.D. The language of the book is very peculiar. It could be neither understood by the Malayalam scholar nor by the Tamil scholar. The language is a mixture of both. The mixing is not only visible in its vocabulary but also in its grammar. Some scholars thought that this showed a transitional stage when Tamil became Malayalam. The writer of this paper has made a comprehensive analytical study of the structure of this book and has proved that the language of *Ramacharitam* is an artificial mixture.¹ More about this book will be discussed later.

Proper background :

If we compare *Krishnagatha* which is a product of the 15th century with the poems of Mahakavi Vallathol which have been written 500 years later, we find that the language is very nearly

1 Vide—*Ramacharitam and the Study of Early Malayalam* (1956).

the same. This means that there was no appreciable change in the grammar during the last five centuries. So, when we consider materials which are scattered over a period of about 700 years from the 8th century A.D., we have to make use of this grammar as a sort of standard. The same way, we must also know the grammatical materials of Tamil and Sanskrit which will help us a great deal in comparing and sorting out the materials before the 15th century A.D. We must also have a good idea about the dialects of the language of Kerala which must have existed during these times. For that we will have to ascertain the dialectal position of the present day about which we know well and then project it back through the centuries. We know less and less as we go into the past more and more ; but still because the dialects have gone through an evolutionary process we will be able to know something worthwhile about the past also.

There is a constant, slow but unceasing, change in the spoken language of every region with reference to time. There is also a difference with reference to place which I have already pointed out. In Kerala, we have got a northern dialect, a middle dialect and a southern dialect. A man who goes from the southern dialect area to the northern dialect area will find the language there a bit odd and sometimes a bit difficult to understand too. But these differences are fast decreasing owing to the radio and the press. It is to be borne in mind that these differences were more pronounced in the past than what they are now. Then, in the same region we have got a number of isoglosses depending on the speech community. For example, the Nambudiries of Malabar have an isogloss of their own which is different from the kind of language spoken by Moplas or Muslims of Malabar.

Even though a literary work is artificial and thus in some degree or other different from the colloquial language, still it necessarily draws a lot from the colloquial standard of the area. Then again there is the question of the subject which the author deals with. A writer while writing a short-story will use a language considerably different from what he would use in his philosophical article. So, all these will have to be borne in mind when one tries

to find out where a book or a document ought to be placed in the background. Ignorance of a proper background has led our scholars to conjectures which are often wrong. So modern research has to revalue and reject some of the accepted notions of the history of Malayalam language and its literature.

Origin of Malayalam language :

We have already pointed out the various theories regarding the origin of Malayalam language and its relationship with Tamil has been also discussed very briefly. Now, at this stage, we have to go a step further steering clear through the controversial grounds. Before that is done, let us review the opinion of a few outstanding scholars on the subject. Prof. A.R. Rajaraja Varma thinks that Malayalam had separated from Tamil by about the 9th century A.D. and the process of the change is described in the introduction to his Malayalam grammar, *Kerala Paniniyam*. The differences between Tamil and Malayalam are grouped under six main headings and he thinks that the form which represents Tamil is the older in each case. Attoor Krishna Pishoradi goes to the other extreme and argues that in each case the Malayalam form represents the older one. He is strongly against the theory that Malayalam is the recent off-shoot of Tamil. He considers it as one of the earliest languages which has separated from the primitive Dravidian tongue. Dr. Godavarma takes a middle path and tries to prove that Malayalam is a sister of Tamil and as independent as any of the sisters Telugu, Kannada or Tamil. He says that the language of Kerala, even in very old times was only Malayalam and not a dialect of Tamil. Mahakavi Ulloor, author of *Kerala Sahitya Charitram* considers Malayalam as an elder sister of Tamil. Even now there are some scholars in the land who believe that Malayalam is a recent off-shoot of Tamil but they are not very many. The opinion that Malayalam is an old and independent language which should claim to be a sister of the other developed Dravidian languages has gained strength owing to recent researches. I shall indicate below some lines of approach which reveal to us the position that the language has in the family.

(i) The statement that a language has separated from its original home is a figurative one. This would indicate that even in

the original home they existed as two entities but truly a language develops dialectal peculiarities only when some people who speak the language separate and settle down in another place. Then, if the contact is not much, in course of time it will gradually develop into a dialect and later on into a different cognate language. In the case of the language of Kerala the Western Ghats on the East and the Arabian Sea on the West almost cut off the land so that the Dravidians who inhabited the land developed peculiarities in their language easily. Therefore, the relevant question is when Kerala was first inhabited by the Dravidians, had Tamil an independent existence? If so, it is possible that the original inhabitants must have spoken that language which later changed into Malayalam. But it is clear that Kerala was inhabited by people at least 10 to 20 centuries before Christ. Then the language of the Dravidians must have been one which is now spoken of as the primitive Dravidian language.

(ii) In '*Lilathilakam*', the 14th century grammar of the Malayalam language, there are several references which directly and indirectly speak of the individuality of the language of Kerala. The term '*Tamiyu*' is used to signify both the languages of Chola and Pandya which is modern Tamil as well as the language of Kerala which is Malayalam. He gives fourteen examples to show the difference between the Chola-Pandya bhasha and Kerala bhasha. It is also significant that the 14th century grammarian was able to anticipate almost all the differences between Tamil and Malayalam which the 20th century grammarian Prof. Rajaraja Verma has grouped under six headings. It is clear that even before the time of '*Lilathilakam*', Malayalam had grown sufficiently well and that it was considered to be united with Sanskrit; this union of Malayalam and Sanskrit is called '*Manipravalam*'.

(iii) In Kerala, there are several families of Tamilians who speak Tamil at home and Malayalam outside. There is evidence that the fore-fathers of some of them have settled down in the land at least as early as 10th century A.D. Some of them would have come as early as the 6th or 7th century. The following castes are typical examples: '*Tattan*' (gold-smith), '*Tachan*' (Carpenter),

'Kannan' (copper-smith) and 'Channan' (weavers). These are some of the communities which have settled down like that. Therefore, if their mother-tongue and the language of Kerala were identical at the time of their settling down, there would have been only one continuous evolution of the language and it would not have resulted in one language at home and a separate language outside. The fact that there are two languages spoken by them now, shows that when they settled down in Kerala, they had a language which was clearly different from the language of the area. This shows that before the 10th century, the language of Kerala had already developed as an independent one with a grammar of its own.

(iv) Just like inscriptions, the old sayings in a language also throw a lot of light on ancient culture. Some of these are very valuable for the philologist. But unfortunately a thorough and analytical study of the same has not so far been made in Malayalam. There are three or four collections of old sayings in Malayalam which are published. On the whole it may come to about three thousand sayings. If we compare these old sayings with the sayings in Tamil, we find that there are quite a number which have same ideas and same way of expression and a similar number having the same ideas and different ways of expression and also a third category which are different in ideas and expressions because all these three categories are significant. It is really worth investigating. The old sayings in Malayalam are not near to Tamil in grammatical structure than the modern spoken form. Even Tamil scholars who are well-versed in ancient literature find it extremely difficult to understand the old sayings in Malayalam. The language of these old sayings is morphologically and phonologically very nearly the same as modern Malayalam. Some of the sayings are definitely very old and if the language of these does show difference, there would have been definite traces of that in these sayings however changed they might have become in the course of several centuries.

In Kerala, there are so many inscriptions in Tamil and Sanskrit. There are some in Malayalam also. The earliest of them being the Trivandrum museum plate of 1065 A.D. and secondly the

Attur plate of 1251 A. D. Of course there is some influence of Tamil and Sanskrit in these inscriptions. The colloquial language of the land was Malayalam and many of the inscriptions were written either in the administrative language which was then Tamil or in the scholars language which was Sanskrit for several centuries.

(vi) Among the Dravidian languages, Malayalam exhibits a very important grammatical peculiarity which has the absence of personal termination for the verbs. Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and all other Dravidian languages attach to the verb root a suffix to indicate the person, gender and number. But as far as Malayalam is concerned, it has only the tense terminations and no addition of personal endings. This is the case not only with modern Malayalam but with literary works as well. Of course, in poetry, here and there we find personal endings modelled on the Tamil pattern. This must be considered as an influence of Tamil language and literature. Almost all the scholars agree that the primitive Dravidian language had a stage where the verb was used without personal terminations. Therefore, the probability is that Malayalam has left the parent before it developed this particular feature in the word construction. This would mean that Malayalam was one of the earliest to separate from the original home.

(vii) Dr. Caldwell thinks that among the Dravidian languages the influence of Sanskrit is found most in Malayalam and least in Tamil. Kannada and Telugu also show a high percentage of Sanskrit words in the vocabulary. The Telugu scholar, K. Ramakrishayya, considers that Telugu has the highest percentage of Sanskrit as compared to other languages of the family. Truly speaking, no one has thoroughly compared Malayalam and Telugu on this basis and so one can only say that both Malayalam and Telugu have very high percentage of Sanskrit in them. But as far as Telugu is concerned, its nearness to Aryavarta may be considered responsible for this high percentage ; but Malayalam is far away in the Southern corner and the same argument will not hold good there. Malayalam was a very restricted language and perhaps in the earlier stages it could not develop properly as a literary language. Therefore, it was quite happy to receive the wealth of vocabulary from Sanskrit. But Tamil

was very rich and naturally, it would have been reluctant to assimilate so much of the Sanskrit element. This again shows that the language of Kerala did not grow side by side with Tamil but had a separate existence of its own through several centuries.

When you consider the phonological differences which Malayalam has when compared to Tamil, in many cases we come to the conclusion that Malayalam maintains an earlier form of the two. It is not possible to go into the details here, but it may perhaps be added that to understand fully certain portions of the old Tamil literature the Tamil scholars will have to study them in the Kerala context ; then only would such passages become clear to them. This shows that Malayalam has maintained the original form in many cases, when Chen-tamil in its desire to purify the language affected many artificialities.

There are so many words which have lost their meaning in Tamil and therefore have become a stumbling block to the Tamil scholars. Many of such words are found in common use in Kerala. Examples are : 'Kanam' (tax), 'Peetika' (shop), 'Vili' (call), 'Orupatu' (plenty), 'Pulari' (morning).

It is quite clear that the people of Kerala had lived as a community for several centuries. They have a way of dress, art-forms, an art of war-fare, a system of medicine and a system of inheritance, all these reflect a culture which is specially their own. And Malayalam is the language of these people which they have nurtured for several centuries. So we can safely conclude that Malayalam is a language which has taken its origin from the primitive Dravidian tongue and has evolved into its present form under certain special circumstances prevalent in Kerala and that it is a language which can claim as much individuality and as much antiquity as any other member of the Dravidian family of languages.

II

The early period in Malayalam Literature :

Both in the literary language and in the colloquial language a great deal of a change is always happening. In the case of literary language sometimes the change may be rather quick and unnoticeable whereas in the case of colloquial language it will be always

slow and unnoticeable. The colloquial language is really the language of the masses and a few individuals cannot effect any appreciable modification in it, however influential they may be in the literary field. We don't know the exact nature of Malayalam spoken by our fore-fathers about three hundred years ago but it is easy to know the literary language that was prevalent during that period because that has gained permanency in the form of records. In Malayalam, such writings are available on subjects like medicine, astrology, mathematics and ethics. These may also be considered to be a kind of literature though they are nearer to the colloquial language than poetry which was the accepted form of literature then. Thus, we have several forms of literature representing various grades of artificiality. We can only make use of these to get an idea of the real language which is devoid of all artificiality, that is, the spoken language of the people.

"It is a remarkable peculiarity of the Indian languages that as soon as they begin to be cultivated, the literary style evinces a tendency to become a literary dialect distinct from the dialect of the common life, with a grammar and vocabulary of its own", says Dr. Caldwell in his *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Languages* (page 81). In this respect the Aryan and the Dravidian languages show the same characteristics. Sanskrit must have been the result of a process of refinement upon the earlier colloquial language. Even the oldest Sanskrit literature that we have shows a very wide difference between the language of the vulgar so that one is inclined to wonder whether Sanskrit of the 'Panineeyan' type was ever made use of in day to day affairs. The truth must be that in the evolution of language the difference between literary dialect and colloquial dialect though at first not very wide increases gradually till a stage is reached when the two are utterly different. It is also possible that the literary language after being at that stage for some centuries may slowly show tendencies to lessen the wide gulf. This tendency is observed in the modern literary dialects of South Indian languages.

According to Dr. Caldwell, Tamil had developed a classical language of high standard as early as or even earlier than the 10th

century A.D.' Next in antiquity comes the classical Kannada which, according to him, had some good literature by about the 12th century. The date given by Dr. Caldwell to early Telugu classical literature is 14th century and early Malayalam literature 16th century. Scholars in the respective languages do not agree with the dates suggested by Dr. Caldwell. In the case of Tamil, the date is pushed back to the beginning of Christian era. The view that the name 'Sen-Tamil' was given to this special dialect is held by many scholars. The classical Kanarese dialect had also a special name 'Hala Kannada', which means 'old Kannada'. The classical dialect of Telugu and Malayalam have no special names. Though there is difference of opinion regarding the date of these classical dialects, the order suggested by Dr. Caldwell remains unchallenged. Another point to be noted is the extent of the difference between classical dialect and the popular or colloquial dialect in each of these languages. Classical Tamil is almost a different language, whereas classical Malayalam is not very much different from the spoken form. If we generalise, we may say that the difference between classical dialects and popular dialect is greatest in Tamil and least in Malayalam.

The period prior to classical Malayalam, which is really the formative period as far as the literary language is concerned should be studied in a critical manner. Almost all the historians of Malayalam literature agree that the modern period in literature commences with the age of Ezhuttachan. As regards the period prior to Ezhuttachan, there is difference of opinion. Most of them divide the whole range of Malayalam literature into three periods: the early, the middle and the modern periods. This appears to be an easy way of dividing and probably they were influenced by Grimm's system. During the early period they show the influence of Tamil and during the middle period they show the influence of Sanskrit. There is not sufficient justification for this division into three periods as far as Malayalam literature is concerned.

A literary period is a period of time when the literary works show certain outstanding common characteristics which are usually based on the kind of language used for literature. As far as

Malayalam literature is concerned, there is no writer who can be compared to Ezhuttachan. He was an outstanding writer and an epoch-maker and one who has been able to set standards for future writers. But the dominant personality of Ezhuttachan (16th century) should not mislead us into thinking that modern Malayalam starts only with him. A few decades before him the composition and construction of Malayalam had already taken a comparatively modern form. This is clear from the famous work '*Krishna-Gatha*' whose language is nearly as modern as that of Ezhuttachan's works. The date of '*Krishna-Gatha*' is 15th century A.D. The revolution started by Cherussery, author of '*Krishna-Gatha*' has been completed by Ezhuttachan. So, with justification, we say that the modern period in Malayalam literature starts with '*Krishna-Gatha*' that is from 15th century A.D.

Before a language attains a fixity in literary standards, that is during the formative period, the influence of other languages and literatures will make a lasting impression on it. Tamil and Sanskrit have had such an influence on literary language of Malayalam. But it is wrong to think that the influence of Sanskrit language and literature on Malayalam language came about after that of Tamil language and literature. In fact, the influences of these languages are seen during the same period of time and therefore these should be considered as simultaneous literary schools. In the early period, we are able to observe three distinct literary schools which have contributed to the moulding of a classical language for Kerala. They are (1) the 'Pacha-malayalam' school by which we mean literary expression in pure Malayalam without any admixture, (2) The Tamil school, and (3) The Sanskrit School. The literary field of Kerala was fed by these three streams differing in quality and depth. The first one which takes its origin from the native soil was silent and colourless but clear and fast-moving. The second which came from the neighbouring land was noisy, wide and colourful but it ran most of its way through uninhabited regions. The third also hailed from distant hills ; was deep and bright but winding and turbulent and passed through higher regions.

Pacha-Malayalam School

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS : Poetry has been defined by thinkers as the artistic expression of the human mind in emotional and rhythmic language. Thus the earliest forms of poetry of any nation may be found in folk-songs and ballads. It is also possible to find traces of poetry in old sayings or aphorisms. In Malayalam, there were hundreds of folk-songs and proverbs ; but a large number of them has been lost because no one took any serious interest in preserving them. It must have appeared so ordinary that people must have thought it not worth their while to record and keep them. Some of the ballads and folk-songs are the real treasures of a nation's literature. But even the educated people are ignorant of the existence of such things. Sri C. P. Govinda Pillai has published a collection of old songs and ballads in his work entitled *Pazhaya Pattukal*. There are just a few other scholars also who have done some work in the field and the name of Dr. C. A. Menon deserves special mention. We should not also forget the services rendered by Mr. Percy Mcqueen I. C. S., who, while he was the collector of Malabar, took great pains to collect and preserve a large number of ballads and folk-songs. Thanks to these scholars we have now enough material to give us a good glimpse of social conditions of ancient Kerala and also the kind of literature that was prevalent in those days.

These songs were mostly sung at certain religious ceremonies, festivals as also at the time of farming and other occupations. There are ballads of historical and sociological importance wherein the glorious deeds of popular heroes are extolled. The language is usually very simple and the expression direct. It does not contain either Sanskrit or Tamil element in any appreciable degree and it nearly approaches the colloquial language. These songs are musical and though there is no rigid metrical system the rhythm is always maintained. It is very difficult to assign dates to the early works of this school, but several scholars are of opinion that some of these songs are at least as old as 10th century. There are just a few scholars who consider folk-songs to be as old as 4th century A.D. In this connection it should be remembered that the form of

these songs must have changed to some extent while being handed down through several centuries. But there is no doubt that they reflect in a large measure the old spoken Malayalam.

Important works :

SONGS CONNECTED WITH RELIGIOUS RITES : “Bhadrakali Pattu”, “Thiyyattu Pattu”, “Pulluvan Pattu”, “Sastrakali” (Yatrakali), and “Tottampattu” are a few of the important songs sung at ceremonial rituals. “Bhadrakali Pattu” is sung to propitiate the Goddess Kali. This is sung by a certain class of Nairs called Kuruppanmar. It is considered to be a sin to record these songs. R. Narayana Panikkar, the author of the seven-volume history of Malayalam literature, thinks that these were originally composed about ten to sixteen centuries ago. “Darikavadham” which belongs to the category of “Tottampattu” is also sung to propitiate Kali. It relates the story of Kali’s encounter with Darika. In the opinion of Dr. C. A. Menon, “Darika vadha” can be assigned to the period of “*Ramacharitam*” which according to him is 10th century A.D. “Bhramanipattu” which got its name because it was sung by Bhramanies (women of Nambeesan) also belongs to this category.

“Pulluvan Pattu” is also called “Sarpapattu” which means snakesong. There is a custom in Kerala to get certain jungle areas with a small temple in one portion reserved for snakes. Such a place is called “Kavu”. These “Kavus” are dens of snakes and snakes are worshipped by singing “Pulluvan Pattu” to the accompaniment of a certain old-fashioned stringed instrument. These songs are really very old and they are written in genuine Malayalam.

“Sastrakali” is another important type of folklore. This is made use of by Kerala Brahmins and Kshatriyas along with a sort of rustic dance round a lamp. Basing his arguments on certain legends, Sri Narayana Panikkar ascribes 8th century as their probable date.

The Christians who settled on the West Coast during the early centuries of Christian era had their own contribution to the branch of ancient literature. The most important and probably the most ancient of them is known as “*Margamkalipattu*” which relates the

glorious deeds of St. Thomas during his sojourn in the Chola and Kerala countries. Dr. P. J. Thomas in his valuable book on the Christian literature of Kerala gives specimens of several varieties of "*Margamkalipattu*." He is able to show that these songs were written before the arrival of the Portuguese in Kerala. The early portions of "*Margamkalipattu*" shows the influence of Tamil to some extent but the main body of the text is simple colloquial Malayalam with a few Syriac words scattered here and there.

The Festival Songs

Some of the songs and ballads used at the time of festivals and agricultural and other occupations are "Onappattu", "Krishipattu", "Patapattu", "Vanchipattu", "Koladipattu", "Tumbipattu" etc. "Onappattu" and "Tumbipattu" are made use of at the time of 'Onam' the most important festival of the Malayalees. "Vanchipattu" as its very name implies refers to several varieties of boat-songs. They are generally hilarious and jubilant in tone. "Krishipattu" and "Nattupattu" are made use of by the farmers specially at the time of sowing and reaping. There is practically no connected idea or story in them. But they consist mainly of rhyme and rhythm to make them more energetic in their work.

Ballads of Malabar

Malabar is famous for its popular ballads. We have the ballads of North Malabar and those of South Malabar, of which the former have gained more popularity. Dr. C.A. Menon has published a valuable collection of ballads of North Malabar. It consists mainly of "Puttoorampattukal" relating to hero Othenan. According to Mr. Percy McQueen the "Chaver" songs of South Malabar may be dated between 13th and 17th century A.D. and the "Thacholli-pattu" of the North Malabar belong to 16th century A.D. The dialect corresponds to the language spoken by the literary people and in early times when these were composed the language must have been very nearly the spoken dialect of these days. Authors are unknown, but they must have come from the more educated of the lower class.

The Tamil School

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS—The general consensus of opinion about the Perumal period is that it ended with the initiation of the Kollam era, *i. e.*, 825 A. D. The Perumals who were Tamilian kings ruling over Kerala, were responsible for bringing to the West Coast the influence of Tamil culture and education. Tamil had a highly developed classical literature by the 10th century and Kerala had no such thing at that time. Therefore, the literary influence of Tamil naturally established itself in due course. Unlike certain other influences, this takes time to get a real hold and, in the same way, its disappearance also will be very gradual. On a close examination of the literary trends of Malayalam, we can see clearly the Tamil influence in some form or the other upto the 16th century. To name this the “Dravidian School”, as has been done by R. N. Panikkar, is not quite proper. He probably thinks that by giving a general name “Dravidian”—which is the common property of all the languages in the family—the suggestion that Malayalam has borrowed something from a common parent and not from a sister will find acceptance. Whatever it be, the truth is that Tamil language and literature had a definite influence on the language of Kerala. There are some important works which bear testimony to this.

In these works we notice that the method, the diction and the metrical system were modelled on the Tamil master-pieces. More erudition than creative genius is evinced, and this has led to artificiality.

Important Works

RAMACHARITAM—By far the most important work belonging to the Tamil school is Ramacharitam. Reference has already been made about it in chapter one. Ullur S. Parameswara Iyer, who first edited a portion of the book, with the title *Prachina Malayalam Matrkakal*, says in his foreword, “I earnestly invite the attention of the reading public of South India, and more particularly of the students of comparative philology, to the invaluable linguistic and other treasures imbedded in this rare, ancient Malayalam work.” Thus *Ramacharitam* is not

only an important work which can be classified under this school, but it is, undoubtedly, a book of vital importance in the study of early Malayalam.

In fact no other book has created more problems in the history of Malayalam language and literature than *Ramacharitam*. It is no exaggeration to say that only very few scholars have attempted to read the book in full, for the language is so difficult and the construction so perplexing that readers get wearied very soon. A good knowledge of both classical Tamil and old Malayalam is necessary for a proper appreciation of the work. The book has gained recognition as the earliest work in Malayalam, but that is now questioned from different angles.

First of all, there are the problems regarding the authorship, date, place of origin and the literary form. Then there are problems which have a wider significance, especially those regarding the language. The present writer has worked on the linguistic aspect of the work and his findings are given in the publication '*Ramacharitam and the study of early Malayalam*'. The main conclusions are given below :

Ramacharitam is written in a language which is mainly an artificial mixture. Though the influence of Sanskrit is evident, it is in the vocabulary only. But as regards Tamil and Malayalam, not only are words mixed but phonology and grammar as well, and to a remarkable degree. Tamilising of Malayalam words is also not infrequent. Generally speaking, the Tamil bias appears to be a little stronger than that of Malayalam. Such a mixture cannot be expected in an evolved language under any circumstances. This does not mean that the language of *Ramacharitam* is the result of a peculiar fancy of its author. This artificial mixture was a recognised medium in those days, when literary dialects were highly artificial in all the Dravidian languages. This pattern is recognised as *Pattu* in *Lilatilakam*.

In *Ramacharitam* only yuddhakanda is treated and some believe that it was written to inspire soldiers of Kerala. Cīraman is the name of the poet who composed it, as is known from the last stanza of the work ; but nothing more is known about the author.

KANNASSAN PATTUKAL—The collection of poems known as *Kannassan Pattukal* was written by a family of poets who belonged to Niranam, a place in Central Travancore. They are popularly known as Niranam poets. *Kannassa Ramayanam* is the most important work in the collection, the author of which is one Rama Panikkar, the junior-most in the line. Rama Panikkar gives a clue to the genealogy of the family at the end of *Uttararamayanam*, from which we find that one Karunesan was the founder of the family. He had two sons and three daughters, and Rama Panikkar was born of the youngest daughter. Madhava Panikkar and Shankara Panikkar are taken to be the two uncles of Rama Panikkar. The authorship of *Bhagavadgita* in Malayalam is ascribed to the former and that of *Bharatamala* to the latter; but there is no definite proof of this. It is also suggested that the title "Kannassan", supposed to be derived from Karunesan, was taken by all the members of the family.

R. N. Panikkar assigns the period between 1375 and 1475 A.D. to these poets and there is not much disagreement on this question.

These poets were very good scholars in both Sanskrit and the native tongue. *Kannassa Ramayanam* especially displays maturity of thought and a gift for appropriate and powerful diction.

The language of the poems marks a definite stage in the development of the Tamil school. The percentage of Tamil is much less and that of Malayalam is much more than in *Ramacharitam*. We also find more Sanskrit words and expressions with Sanskrit endings. In the *pattu* type of poems such a freedom was not expected, as will be seen from *Lilatilakam*¹ and *Ramacharitam*. But the other rules contained in the *Laksanam* (precepts) for Pattukal are more or less strictly observed. The Niranam poets evolved a special metre of their own known as Niranavrttam, and for this also, it appears that they have adapted a certain type of Tamil metre. The freedom they showed both in approach and technique is responsible for the popularity of their poems.

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1. "Dramidasanghatakasaranibadham etukamonavrtta visesayuktam pattu." This rule is strictly followed in *Ramacharitam*.

Prose Works.

A good number of prose works belonging to the Tamil school are found in the Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, and the University Manuscripts Library, Trivandrum. The subjects dealt with are religion, philosophy, history, arithmetic, medicine, and astrology. Some of them have been published recently. The percentage of Tamil words is not great ; but Tamil inflexions for verbs are not uncommon. A thorough study of these works is yet to be made.

Ballads of South Travancore

South Travancore is even now a Tamil-speaking area and there are some ballads, which would even be omitted from this discussion. There is an admixture of Malayalam in them. The most important of them are *Ulakutaya Perumal Pattu*, *Acutampuran Pattu*, *Ramakatha Pattu*, *Iravikuttipilla Por Pattu*. The date varies from the 13th to the 17th century.

The Sanskrit School

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS—The Sanskrit language and literature had a predominant influence on the native language of Kerala lasting several centuries. It has resulted in a peculiar variety of literary dialect, called 'Manipravalam', and hence this school may even be called the Manipravala school. The connection of Malayalam with Sanskrit does not stop at just borrowing a few learned forms. Many languages of the world contain a great mass of semi-foreign or foreign learned forms. Bloomfield gives examples of such languages in his famous work *Language*. He also says that the languages of India use Sanskrit forms as a foreign learned layer of this kind. Though this is true in general, with reference to Malayalam we have to go a step further and say that good percentage of such borrowed forms do not remain as mere layers, but are welded into the native tongue so well that they assume a new structure. Thus the name 'Manipravalam', though familiar to other South Indian languages, as an admixture of Sanskrit and Dravidian words, has a special and distinctive sense in Malayalam

*Lilatilakam*¹, a grammar of the Malayalam language devoting most of its space to 'Manipravalam', will give us a good idea of the distinctive sense referred to above. Sanskrit words, when accepted for Manipravalam, should be declined and conjugated exactly as in Sanskrit. If Sanskrit words are used here and there without the Sanskritic terminations, they are treated as mere Malayalam words. Manipravalam, if it were to justify its name, should be a necklace strung with jewels and corals, the jewel (Mani) being Malayalam and the coral (pravalam) Sanskrit². The author of *Lilatilakam* emphasizes that the choice of words should be so made that they merge almost imperceptibly with one another owing to their likeness in tone and colour. But these precepts were disregarded as time went on and all types of mixtures were tried. On the whole there resulted a degeneration in quality.

P. Sankaran Nambiyar, one of the best scholars on this branch of literature, while commenting on the reasons for developing such a peculiar dialect, says, "They (Nambudiri Brahmins) were presumably more interested in leading by the hand the other less learned classes on to the fair fields of classical literature..... Sanskrit vocabulary and grammar, administered in short and sweet doses, would be taken in by the average reader without much effort. He would thus be initiated into the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar in the course of his joyous poetical studies, almost without his own knowledge."³

Poems in manipravala style were composed in Sanskrit metres. The importance given to the *rasa*, the abundance of figures of speech, the dignified tone and appeal, all speak emphatically of the influence of Sanskrit classics on this school of poetry. It is difficult to trace the beginnings of this school, but there is a theory that it starts with the comic compositions of the poet Tolan, who is supposed to have lived in the 9th century, as the court poet of Kulasekhara Perumal. However, its influence was tremendous for over four

1 *Lilatilakam* is a treatise on Malayalam grammar and rhetoric written in the Sanskrit language in the sutra and commentary style (14th cent).

2 *Lilatilakam*, "Bhasasamskrtayogo manipravalah."

3 Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar commemoration volume, p.376.

centuries from about the 14th century. It is neither possible nor necessary here to give a comprehensive list of the important works of the Sanskrit School ; therefore a short account of its two important branches only is given.

Important Works

THE SANDESHA KAVYAS—The Sandesha Kavyas are message poems, which in technique are modelled on Kalidasa's *Meghadut* (cloud messenger). It consists of two parts, the first half devoted to poetical descriptions of places and scenes in the country, and the second deals usually with the description of the heroine's home, her personal charm, and the actual message. Among these poems *Unnunili Sandesam* is the most outstanding. The authorship is not known and the hero is supposed to be a Raja. This poem was discovered only in 1893 and first published in book form in 1913 with an introduction by A. K. Pisharoti. According to him, the date of the poem is 1315 A.D. On a close examination of the language used, we can clearly see in it the influence of the Tamil school to some extent. Tamil words and formations are used here and there. Tamil inflection is not very rare either. We have at the same time verbs with both Malayalam and Sanskrit inflections. *Unnunili Sandesam* thus shows the three literary currents merging into one stream, though in different proportions.

THE CHAMPUS—'Champus' are works written partly in prose and partly in verse. The standard definition of Champus is "Gadya padya mayam kavyam champurityabhidhiyate." This species of literature is popular in Sanskrit. The verse in Manipravala champus follows the rules of Sanskrit prosody ; but the prose is not the usual type of prose. The prose portions really consist of verses composed in the various Dravidian metres. The percentage of Malayalam words is higher in prose than in verse, the reason probably being that prose could be less artificial than verse.

There is a theory that Champus were first composed to satisfy the needs of Cakyars who wanted some literature for Kuttu. "The Kuttu was an essential item during festivals in temples of Vishnu and Shiv as was the Pavakuttu in Kali temples." Kuttu could not be performed outside a temple ; but the demand for this type of

literary productions was so great that they had to adapt it without the ceremonial formalities. This adapted form is called 'Pathakam' which could be performed anywhere.

When compared to other branches of literature, the Champus are prodigious in bulk. The main current runs between the 15th and 18th centuries. Thus it is clear that many of them have been written in the modern period. They will also be discussed later.

There are also a number of prose works which reflect the influence of the Sanskrit school. Examples are *Bhagavatam Tamil*, *Sundarakandam*, *Bhagavad Gita Gadyam*, and a number of scientific treatises.

Recapitulation

The general characteristics of the three literary schools and also typical works belonging to each school have been briefly surveyed. There were first-rate scholars in Tamil and in Sanskrit in Kerala and they have written works in Tamil and Sanskrit respectively. But we are only interested here in the attempts of poets to fuse the elements of the native tongue with those of another which was richer and more developed. The Pacha Malayalam school was not very much affected by the other literary schools. Because it was nearer to the colloquial run of speech, the change was more with reference to place than with reference to time. The beginnings of the Pacha Malayalam school are traceable up to the 5th century (Bhadrakali Pattu), though there is no definite proof for this. By the 8th century we have Sastrakali and then the ballads of North and South Malabar ranging between the 12th and the 16th centuries. The Tamil school had its main current between the 12th century and the 16th century. The Sanskrit school had its beginnings probably by the 9th century and the stream widens considerably after the 14th century and goes on in full vigour till about the 17th century and then it gradually loses its great popularity.

Thus we see that these streams flow simultaneously, though each has its own ups and downs, deeps and shallows in its long course. It is, therefore, not correct to say that the period of Dravidian influence started by the 8th century and ended by the 14th, when the period of Sanskrit influence commenced and continued till

the 17th century, as has been done by the historian R. N. Panikkar. If it is only a question of overlapping after the change-over, it is but natural and we cannot plead incorrectness on that account, but that is not the case.

Even the other historians, who have adopted the division into the Early, Middle and the Modern periods, give us the impression that the early period exhibited the Tamil influence and the Middle period the Sanskrit influence, though they are vague about it. This has resulted in a common error of judging the antiquity of a work with reference to the percentage of Tamil words. There is some truth in saying that the Dravidian period preceded the Sanskrit period, because the Tamil school reached its high water-mark earlier than the Sanskrit school. The Pacha Malayalam school had its unnoticed and slow movement, all the time influencing the other schools.

In reality, all the three schools were influencing one another and their inter-action is clearly seen in the 14th and 15th centuries. On comparing the three major works, *Unnunilandesam* (14th cent.) of the Sanskrit school, *Kannassan Pattukal* (14th and 15th cent.) of the Tamil school, and *Krishna Gatha* (15th cent.), the first major work of the new era of Malayalam, many interesting deductions may be made regarding the nature of the inter-actions. Tamil and the Sanskrit schools have considerably relaxed their rules and become more simple by taking in a large number of genuine Malayalam words. The Tamil school is realising the usefulness of accepting what is good in Sanskrit (Ex. *Kannassan Pattukal*) and the Sanskrit school shows interest in embracing certain Tamil formations and words (Ex. *Unnunilandesam*). Even the Pacha Malayalam school was willing to be influenced by Sanskrit and to a lesser extent by Tamil to add to its elegance and charm and thus evolved a profound language as we find in *Krishna Gatha*. The tendency to accept and fuse what was best in the other schools reached its climax in the hands of Ezhuttachan, who made classical Malayalam at once popular and profound.

The sway of these schools is also well exhibited in *Lila'ilakam*, the 14th century Grammar of the Malayalam language. It is, in short, the master-key which opens to us the doors of all the three schools, and a short account of the book is given below.

LILATILAKAM—*Lilatilakam* is a treasure to students of the evolution of early Malayalam. This treatise on Malayalam rhetoric and grammar written more than a century before Ezhuttachan was discovered only a few decades ago (1908.) The author, whose identity is not known, was an outstanding scholar in Tamil, Sanskrit and Malayalam. The author's insight into linguistic phenomena is really amazing.

The work though primarily concerned with the Manipravala form, contains discussions on the linguistic features of Malayalam and its differences from Tamil. The work is divided into eight chapters called "Silpams" and it does not profess to be an exhaustive grammar of the Malayalam language. The first three *silpams* deal with the history of the language and grammar and the rest discuss literary principles. It was first edited by A.K. Pisharoti. Recently three more editions have been published, the first by K. Vasudevan Musad and the second by Suranattu Kunjan Pillai and the third by Sri Ilamkulam Kunjan Pillai.

III

Krishna Gatha

'*Krishna Gatha*' literally means song on Krishna. But the word 'gatha' has gained special significance in Malayalam literature. It means a kind of metre, which was used for the famous poem entitled '*Krishna Gatha*'. The correct name of the metre itself is 'Manjari'. 'Jalajam' in Sanskrit may mean anything, which grows out of water. But the word is used only to refer to lotus. In the same way, though 'gatha' means only song by convention, in Malayalam it means song in the particular metre 'Manjari'. There are several songs written in this metre in Malayalam, but the most outstanding among them is '*Krishna Gatha*'.

It has already been pointed out in the previous chapter that in Kerala the highly perfected and developed Sanskrit metre as well as the musical Tamil metre were in vogue for quite a long period before the 15th century. It was considered normal for learned men to make use of either of these metres and purely indigenous metres were looked down upon as unscientific and unpolished. It was at such a time that the author of '*Krishna Gatha*' decided to compose

a very long poem in a purely local metre. His independence of judgment is not only seen in the selection of metre, but also in the kind of language he used for the poem. The language of '*Krishna Gatha*' is simple. Because the normal Malayalam words and Sanskrit words, which have gained currency in Kerala, are only made use of, it could be easily understood by the average reader. The poem does not suffer any inferiority on account of this. But, on the contrary, it had actually gained much wider appeal than the sophisticated Manipravala poems.

The authorship of this famous classic is still a matter of controversy. Some scholars think that one Cherusseri Nambudiri is the author. But others hold the view that the famous Champu poet Punam Nambudiri is the author. It was P. Govind Pillai, who popularised the opinion that Cherusseri Nambudiri was the author. Cherusseri, according to him, is the name of the house of the Nambudiri. The sponsors of the famous monthly '*Kavanodayam*' criticised this view and said that there was no such house in Malabar and that Punam must have been the author. P.K. Narayana Pillai, the famous literary critic of the 20th century supported Cherusseri theory, and strongly criticised the opponents. It was T. Balakrishnan Nair, who actually did some research on this question and cleared the ground to a considerable extent very recently. According to him, there were 12 cheris in Kolattunad and the smallest of them was called Cheru Cheri (Cheru-small ; Cheri-an extent of place). Cheru-Cheri has finally taken the form of Cherusseri. The author's home belonged to this particular area. He is also of the opinion that finally this family became extinct, the last one in the family being absorbed in another family known as Punam. For this there is no evidence.

There was one king Udayavarman, who reigned during the period M.E. 621 (A.D. 1446) to M.E. 650 (A.D. 1475). At the outset, the author states clearly that he is writing the poem at the instance of King Udayavarman of Kolattunad. So we can safely conclude that the poem was written in the 15th century by one of the Court poets of King Udayavarman.

The theme of the poem is the story of Lord Krishna, from His birth to his ascension in the Heavens. The author has strictly followed the *Bhagavatam* story. Some portions may even be considered as

direct translations, whereas some others mere adaptations. This does not mean that there is little originality in the work. In fact, the author has used his imagination very successfully and in several places, he has even brightened the original. From the treatment, we find that the author is a 'bhakta' genuinely interested in philosophical subjects. It contains 47 stories and even after an interval of 500 years, there is no work on this subject in Malayalam which has surpassed '*Krishna Gatha*'. As was pointed out earlier, it is written in a simple and lucid style. The language is very much near the popular speech of the people except in the last Canto (Swargarohana), where it is highly Sanskritised.

The poem contains a large number of beautiful descriptions. The portions dealing with the early days of Krishna, his pranks, and his clever ways are described graphically. In some cases, the descriptions take the form of anecdotes and stories. For example, to describe the beautiful face of a damsel, *Cerusseri* says that there was a competition between the Moon and the Lotus to take the place of the lady's face, and when the quarrel reached its height '*Anana Lakshmi*' comes into the scene and gives a compromise formula, which runs thus : 'You Moon take the portion above the nose, and you Lotus take the portion below'. And in order that there may not be any dispute over the boundary, a strong hedge was placed and that is what is called eyebrows. Such examples are numerous in the book.

The author is very alert about the *alankaras*. Uniformly we find rhyme on the second syllable in every line. He used various kinds of *alankaras* like *Upama*, *Utpreksa*, *Rupakam*, *Slesam* etc. But he is more at home with *Utpreksa* than with any other figure of speech. You find the largest number of *Utpreksas* in '*Krishna Gatha*' than in any other book in Malayalam. In fact, the poem commences with an excellent *Utpreksa*.

The author must have been a very interesting man. He has got a very highly developed sense of humour. His humour does not usually produce outbursts of laughter, but it works slowly and its effect is enduring. I shall just give one example, to show the kind of humour, which the author has made use of. *Arjuna* fell

in love with Subhadra, his friend Krishna's sister. He took the form of a Sanyasi and went to the abode of Subhadra. Taking him to be a real Sanyasi, he was accepted as an honoured guest. Subhadra was instructed to attend to him. Subhadra did not realise that the Sanyasi was her lover Arjuna. But seeing the facial similarities, her passion was evoked, and she even doubted whether the guest could not be her own dear Arjuna. Arjuna, of course, knows everything. But for obvious reasons, he has to control his feelings, and this situation is made use of by the poet to make fun of all these characters. In fact, when she was serving food to the guest, she was so absent-minded that she forgot the order in which items should be served and made a mess of the whole thing. Instead of serving plantain after removing the skin, she actually threw away the fruit and served the skins on the leaf. The most interesting part of it is that the guest himself was so absent-minded that he did not realise that what she served were skins, but ate them as if they were fruits.

The author of '*Krishna Gatha*' is a master in handling the 'navarasas.' But he has a particular fascination for Shringara. Sometimes he even revels in it. For example, in the chapter of *Rasa-krida*, he almost loses control of himself, and hence certain portions are not quite fit to be read in public. The charm of a heroine is described thus : 'when she straightened her body Kamadeva's (Cupid's) bow got bent.'

Bharata Gatha

There are quite a few poems which belong to the category of 'Gathas'. In the short compass of this essay, it is not possible to refer to them. However, mention may be made of Bharatagatha, which is also a long poem based on the Mahabharata story. There is difference of opinion about the authorship of this poem also. Balakrishnan Nair and P. K. Narayana Pillai consider that the author of '*Krishna Gatha*' has written this work. Other scholars disagree with this opinion on the ground that Bharata Gatha, though written in the same model, is considerably inferior in poetic qualities. Mahakavi Ulloor points out a number of mistakes in the diction of Bharata Gatha and vehemently opposes the common authorship on the ground that an outstanding poet like the author of '*Krishna*

Gatha could not have committed such blunders. On the whole, it is safer to conclude that Bharata Gatha was written by another poet of second rate abilities during the period immediately after '*Krishna Gatha*.'

IV

Kilippattu

Throughout the whole range of Malayalam Literature, there is no personality who could come anywhere near Eluttaccan, because he has put the Malayalam readers under such a great debt by his outstanding works. '*Kilippattu*' is the name given to the form of verse, which he has made popular. '*Kili*' means parrot, and '*pattu*' means song, and parrot-songs have such an important place among the Malayalam classics. Usually each poem starts with an introduction where there is a clear reference to the bird which is going to sing the poem. There are several poems, where instead of the parrot either a swan or a bee does the role. But even they are considered as '*kilippattus*'. We have various such songs in the 16th and 17th centuries and they deal not only with spiritual themes, but also with material themes.

The usual belief is that the form '*kilippattu*' was started by Eluttaccan. But this is not quite true. Even before Eluttaccan, there were some songs which could be considered under the title. There are various theories about the origin of '*kilippattu*'. Some say that it refers to the parrot which is in the hands of Saraswati. Others say, this is a remembrance of Shuka Maharshi the narrator of puranic stories. Some others believe that God appeared in the form of a bird and uttered words of wisdom to Eluttaccan, which he reproduced later. There is also a section of people who believe that because Eluttaccan belonged to the Shudra caste, he was not eligible to discuss '*Vedanta*' and related topics, and hence the responsibility was given over to the bird. There are some modern critics who think that in narrative poetry, to make the story convincing, a temporary suspension of the faculty of disbelief is necessary, and that simple harmless animals would be able to perform the function, because they are not capable of scheming

and deceit. Perhaps there is some truth in this. In any case, the art of making animate and sometimes inanimate objects imaginary narrators of certain episodes is not entirely new outside Kerala. This is seen in other countries also.

The term 'kilippattu' now in essence refers to certain important metres in Malayalam. These metres are Keka, Kakali, Kalakanji and Annanada. These are the metres which Eluttaccan popularised through his works. Some people think that these metres have been borrowed from Tamil. But it is not true to facts. The basis of the Tamil metre is the 'Asai' whereas the basis of these metres is 'Aksaras' or syllables. But they do not follow the rigid Sanskrit metre. There is a lot of freedom and musical appeal in these metres and it is safer to conclude that these are indigenous tunes standardised and popularised by the great master, Eluttaccan.

Eluttaccan

Eluttaccan was born in a poor family near the Tirur railway station in South Malabar. There is a legend which says that the Nambudiri brahmins got jealous because even as a child he showed extra-ordinary intelligence. As the story goes, the Brahmins tried to weaken his intellect by the art of sorcery. But Eluttaccan got over that by the grace of God. As regards the birth of Eluttaccan there is a legend which says that he is the son of a Nambudiri who happened to spend a night in the home of a Nair virgin, when he was returning to Malabar from Trivandrum. Nobody attaches any significance to this story now. After early education mainly in Sanskrit and Tamil, he travelled in other parts of India and on his return his genius won wider recognition. Even about his real name there is a lot of controversy. The word Eluttaccan is composed of two portions, the first one 'Eluttu' meaning letters and the second 'Accan' meaning leader or father. This is more a title than a name, and this title is made use of by a section of people in Kerala even now. Tuncattu is supposed to be the name of his house. Some people think that Sankaran is the name of the poet. But others consider that it must be Ramanujan. We shall not go into the details of the discussion, as it is not very fruitful.

Even though there is no absolute proof about the date of

Eluttaccan, we have got some evidence to justify that he belongs to the 16th century. Scholars who have given their views about the period of Eluttaccan are P. Govind Pillai, R. Narayana Panikkar, P. K. Narayana Pillai and Dr. C.A. Menon. There is a difference of opinion among them ; but when one considers the various arguments put forward by these scholars, one is led to the conclusion that Eluttaccan must have lived in the 16th century. Eluttaccan is the author of several works in Malayalam. But the most outstanding among them are *Adhyatma Ramayanam*, *Bharatam*, and *Bhagawatam*. He was not only a poet but a philosopher and reformer also. We shall give a brief survey of his main works.

Adhyatma Ramayanam

Some scholars consider *Adhyatma Ramayanam* to be a part of Brahmandapurana, though there is no definite proof for this. No doubt Valmiki *Ramayana* is the original and hundreds of writers in various languages have drawn their inspiration from this immortal classic. According to Valmiki, Rama is only an ideal man, a good king of the people. But in Eluttaccan's poem, he is considered to be a God and praises are sung at many a place by the devoted author. *Ramayana*, just like some of the other classics, is not only a poem but also a religious book ; and hence as Dr. Menon says criticism made at one aspect will affect the other.

There is a theory that the story of *Ramayana* points to the Aryan invasion of South India and Ceylon. Recent researches have revealed the existence of a pre-Aryan civilisation in the Indus Valley, which may very likely be connected with that of the South. There is also the Agastya legend, to which some people attach significance. According to this legend, Agastya was the forerunner of the Aryan civilisation in the Tamil country. But if Rama is the Aryan conqueror, then Agastya has to go out of the picture. We shall not bother about the historical backgrounds of the *Ramayana* story.

Eluttaccan handles this theme as an outstanding master. The very mention of Rama is enough to transform the poet into a real devotee and epithets flow from his pen without any control. The characters Rama, Sita, Kaikeyi and Ravana have all got their

strength and individuality in Eluttaccan's work. Though the work is an adaptation and an imitation of Valmiki's great poem, when we read Eluttaccan's verses, we feel a sort of freshness, which he has brought to bear on the theme. But in spite of all this beauty and grandeur Eluttaccan's genius has not attained its full height in the *Ramayana* because the didactic purpose becomes evident here and there.

Mahabharata

As compared to *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* is more original and profound. *Mahabharata* is as vast as the sea. But Eluttaccan is able to absorb the real essence and spirit of the work and put them forth in his own way. In the *Ramayana*, we see the poet's struggle to compromise between the philosopher and the poet in him. But in *Mahabharata* the poet assumes the lead, which is a welcome change. As regards descriptions, the use of figures of speech and characterisation, Eluttaccan is immensely successful in *Mahabharata*. The language is straight and simple, but powerful and persuasive. Examples for these qualities are too numerous to mention. If just one example is cited, we can take the scene of Shakuntala's parting with the sage Kanva. Though Eluttaccan is a master of the *navarasas*, his delineation of the heroism is specially commendable. When he describes the various battles, you will always find the technique of Kerala war-fare brought in. As regards pathos, Gandhari's mourning, and Duryodhana's end may be cited as good examples.

Other Works

Apart from the *Ramayana* and the *Bharata*, there are various other works, which are considered to be written by Eluttaccan. Among them are included Nine Cantos of *Bhasha Bhagawatam*, *Uttara Ramayanam*, *Harinama Kirtanam*, and *Chinta Ratnam*. But none of these has attained the high level and eminence of either *Ramayana* or *Bharata*. Of course a part of his personality is seen in these works also.

Eluttaccan wrote his poems in response to the challenge of the society of his days, and he was guided to some extent by the forces of circumstances prevailing then. But he has attained immortal

fame, and as long as Malayalam language exists, the name of Eluttaccan will be considered supreme. He has been able to combine what is good in the various literary dialects, which were in existence during his time, and has evolved a new pattern of expression, which is suited to the Keraliya, simple enough for the average educated man, but profound in thought content, so that anybody could consider it worthwhile to copy and master.

Eluttaccan really belonged to the northern part of the Kerala, known as Malabar. But it is significant that the peculiarities of the local conversational dialects have not found a place in his literary compositions. Even now, writers in Malayalam follow more or less the pattern showed by Eluttaccan, and it is no exaggeration to say that he has set a standard for all time.

Champus and Sandesha Kavyas

The name 'Champu' will be familiar to those who know Sanskrit literature. It is a branch of literature, where prose and verse are interspersed, and thus variety brought in. In Malayalam Literature, we find that various branches of Sanskrit Literature have been copied, and 'Champu' is an outstanding example. As far as the Malayalam Champu is concerned, all the verses appear in one or the other Sanskrit metres. The language is a kind of Manipravala. It is an admixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit. But as regards prose, it is not the ordinary prose that we come across in Malayalam that is found in the Champu ; but a kind of poetic prose with a definite rhythm about it. It usually follows a pattern of certain popular metres in Malayalam ; for example, the Tarangini.

The first Champu in Sanskrit is supposed to be King Bhoja's *Ramayana*. Another outstanding work in the same species in *Bharata Champu*, and both these themes are made use of in Malayalam as well. Even the Sanskrit champus have been very popular because Chakyars made use of them as a basis for their histrionic art, known as 'Kuttu'. Chakyars are a small community in Kerala, who had the privilege of criticising anybody through the medium of their art. Except for their own digressions, which were dependent upon conditions, they have followed one or the other of Champus as their

basis for 'Kuttu'. Narayana Bhattatiri, a famous Sanskrit poet of Kerala, has to his credit about 30 works. But the following are more important among them : *Rajasuyam*, *Gajendramoksham*, *Naradamohanam*, *Subhadraharanam*, *Dakshayagam* and *Panchaliswayamvaram*.

The Champus in Malayalam may be divided into two, the old and the modern. But comparatively speaking, the old works are better. There will be about 200 old Champus and nearly half that number of modern works. For about three centuries from the 14th century, it may be considered to be the period of Champus, because most of the old Champus were written during that period. The most outstanding work in this branch of literature is perhaps the *Ramayana Champu*. All stories commencing from the birth of Ravana to the ascension of Sri Rama are treated in this Champu. This huge work is twice the size of *Bharata Champu*. The Cochin Malayalam Improvement Committee has brought out a good edition of *Ramayana Champu*. The authorship is ascribed to Punam Nambudiri. There are excellent descriptions in this work, and the Chakyars make good use of them.

Bharata Champu should be placed very below *Ramayana Champu*, as regards its quality. This does not mean that it is a useless work. There are several admirable passages in this work also. It is divided into ten chapters.

The book that should be referred to next, is *Noishadha Champu*. The author is Malamangalam Narayanan Numbudiri, who belongs to the 16th century. Then there are other Champus like *Kamadahanam*, *Rajaratnavaliyam*, *Kamsa Vadham* etc.

There is a lot of mixing up of the old manuscripts, because Chakyars used to combine whatever verses they liked from the various Champus and then used them for a single story. This naturally has resulted in some of the versions being independable. Mostly these works were written by the Nambudiris of Kerala. The language is usually pedantic, and sometimes out of the way.

Sandesha Kavyas

Message poems are Sandesha Kavyas, as they are usually called in the language, and are very popular in Malayalam. Most of them

are modelled on Kalidasa's famous poem *Meghadut* (Cloud Messenger). It is usually divided into two parts ; the first one dealing with the circumstances under which the message had to be sent and the route described for the benefit of the messenger, and the second being the description of the heroine and the actual message.

We find several of such message poems from the 14th century down to the 20th century. The most outstanding among the older message poems is Unnunili Sandesham. It is written in the Manipravala style of language, and it has had several editions published recently. The authorship is unknown, but there is internal evidence to show that the work was written in the 14th century. One verse from this poem is quoted in *Lilatilakam*. It gives a good description of the land lying between Kadatturutti and Trivandrum, which includes a major portion of Travancore. A close study of the poem throws a lot of light on the history and social conditions of the period to which it belongs. Apart from this, the poem in itself possesses an enduring quality. The descriptions are mostly original. The poet has a special fascination for *Sringararasa*.

Another message poem, which is as old as Unnunili Sandesham, is Koka Sandesham. The full text is not yet available. But the early portion, which has seen the light of the day, shows that the author was a poet of some standing. It is really the story of a dream which the hero relates to the heroine.

Similar poems are several, as has been already pointed out, and as regards message poems of the later period, we may have to consider them in another chapter. The Sandesha Kavyas were so popular once upon a time, that every poet thought that unless he writes a message poem, he has no place among the great writers of the language. So much so, there came a flood of these message poems from second rate writers that one of the more brilliant among them decided to give a shock to such writers by writing a satirical poem in the same form and style. This is known as Kaka Sandesham. The authorship is unknown. The message is supposed to be sent through no less an agent than a crow, which itself shows that the whole thing is written in a satirical vein.

V

Attakkatha

Kathakali, as an art form, has become world famous recently. It has gained so much popularity that foreigners get introduced to Kerala as the land of Kathakali. What is termed as 'Attakkatha' is really the literature, which is used for Kathakali. 'Katha' means story and 'Kali' means play, and hence the term means 'story enacted.' The emphasis of this word is on the play or the production side, whereas the emphasis in the word Attakkatha is on the story or on the literature. Kathakali in the traditional way is performed during the night and the performance usually commences by about 9 o' clock and continues till about daybreak. The story selected for the theme of Kathakali is usually from the Puranas, and hence there may not be much new in the subject matter. But the technique of Kathakali is highly complicated and it is in fact the most independent form of art produced by Kerala.

There are various theories about the origin of Kathakali. There is popular opinion that the inspiration of the earlier stories has been from *Gita Govindam* by Jayadeva. What is common between *Gita Govindam* and the works of Attakkatha is that both have 'slokas' and the 'ganas' interspersed. The words of the poet are usually given as slokas and those of the characters are given by way of songs, usually termed as 'padas'. As a form of art, Kathakali comes under 'Nritya', where the language of gesture is made use of. There are 24 basic gestures known as 'mudras' and various modifications of the same. Almost any idea could be conveyed by making use of these mudras. Actors never sing. They concentrate on the gesture language and expressions on the face. There will be a small group standing behind the main actors, whose duty it is to recite the verses and sing the songs. Since this art form was very popular several years ago, it gave rise to some good literature.

Ramanattam by Kottarakara Tamburan is considered to be the first full-fledged Attakkatha. There is a story current in the land, which shows that *Ramanattam* was an adaptation of *Krishnanattam*, which in turn was modelled on *Gita Govindam*. According to

the story, Kottarakara Tamburan requested the Zamorin (Raja) of Calicut to send his troupe of actors to give a performance *Krishnanattam* in his court. The Zamorin refused and commented that the people in the South are unable to appreciate such a high class form of art. This gave rise to a feeling of vengeace and Kottarakara Tamburan made up his mind to produce something which would excel Krishnanattam, and thus came *Ramanattam* into existence. It is difficult to assess the percentage of truth in this old story. There is even difference of opinion, whether the first full-fledged *Attakkatha* is *Ramanattam* itself or some other work. Professor D. P. Unni, in his introduction to *Kalakeyavadham* tries to establish that Kottayathu Tamburan is the originator of this branch of literature. Other scholars have tried to contradict him and the controversy is still going on. But we have no time to go into the details. Though *Ramanattam* has got the main qualities of *Attakkatha*, it is not considered to be a high class work. There are several verses in the body of the poem which show that the work is earlier than those of Kottayathu Tamburan. The period is the 15th century.

The whole of *Ramayana* is divided into eight parts so that each part would be sufficient for a night's performance. The parts are *Putrakameshti*, *Sita Swayamvaram*, *Vischinnabhishekam*, *Kharavadham*, *Balivadam*, *Torana Yuddham*, *Sethubbandhanam*, and *Yuddham*. He has largely drawn from Valmiki, Kamban, and Punam. But how much he has been influenced by Eluttaccan cannot be ascertained. According to the modern standards one may find certain irregularities in the metrical system and the construction of words. These are subjects on which research has to be done and just because they do not follow the current rules, it is unfair to under-estimate the poet on that account.

We have already mentioned the name of Kottarakara Tamburan which really stands out in this branch of literature. His period is considered to be about 17th century by many scholars. *Bakavadham*, *Kalyanasauganthikam*, *Krimiravadham* and *Kalakeyavadham* are the four famous works which have come out of his pen. It appears that his mother was the first person, who criticised his works. According to her, *Bakavadham* was childish ;

Kalyanasauganthikam womanish ; *Krimiravadham* was too hard ; and *Kalakeyavadham* was really good in every way. It must be mentioned that the works of Kottayana Thampuran are more popular with the Kathakali actors than other Attakkathas. In fact, so popular were they, that they have set a kind of standard, which less original writers strictly followed. The literary value of his works is unquestioned. He is at home both in *Vira* and *Sringara* rasas.

After Kottayathu Tamburan the names of Karthika Tirunal (18th century) and Aswati Tirunal (18th century) may be mentioned. But the most outstanding name in *Attakkatha* after Kottarakara Tamburan is Unnayi Warriar. What his correct name is, nobody knows, and even about his native place there is difference of opinion. His period is the later part of the 17th century. He has treated the story of Nala, so that it may be performed on four days. The title of the Attakkatha is *Nalacharitam*.

Nalacharitam exhibits the qualities of drama much more than any other Attakkatha. It is truly dramatic, but it is wrong to think that Unnayi Warriar has adapted the story of Nala into a dramatic form. It is one of the most outstanding works in Malayalam literature, from the point of view of originality. There is scarcely any other author who has displayed so much of freedom and originality in treatment as much as the author of *Nalacharitam*. It is a hard nut, not only to the actors, but even to the scholars of the language, and to the musicians. He has broken many a rule of grammar. But nobody bothers about such things, because the treatment is so interesting and the characterisation so vivid. His art is simple and inimitable.

There are several other writers in this field worthy of mention. One of them is Erayimman Tambi, who lived in the 19th century. His important works are *Uttara Swayamvaram*, *Dakshayagam*, and *Kichakavadham*. They are superb in their musical qualities, but not so suitable for production on the stage. V. Krishnan Tambi is another master of this branch of literature. His *Tatakavadham* may be considered to be a classic. Then we may mention the names

of Kilimanur Tamburan. Ittirarisa Menon, Irattakulangara Warriar and a few others.

Coming down to modern times, even poet Vallathol has written an Attakkatha. He is not known as the author of the Attakkathas usually; but as the central figure of Kerala Kala Mandalam, which was responsible for reviving this art form and bringing it into lime light. The services that he has rendered in this connection can never be forgotten by any lover of Kathakali.

VI

Tullal

'Tullal' is a popular art form in Kerala. Just like other art forms, it has also got a considerable amount of good literature. As regards the origin of this form of art and the literature associated with it, there is a story which is very popular in Kerala. This branch of literature is associated with the name of Kunchan Nambiar, who is the unrivalled master of this branch of literature. The story says that Kunchan Nambiar, in his younger days, was an associate of one Chakyar, helping him in his performance of "Kuttu". Nambiar's duty was to sound the special drum which is called 'Milavu'. It appears that one night, when the Chakyar was giving his performance, Nambiar fell into sleep and this was a good opportunity for the Chakyar to make fun of his associate. The same night Nambiar left him and decided to perform a new art of his own, and the next night he started performing Tullal. The story, if not untrue, is at least a big exaggeration, because no one could have produced a new form of art with the necessary literature in so short a time as a single day. However, the truth is that Kunchan Nambiar was the first and the most outstanding exponent of this form of art.

There are three types of Tullal, the Parayan, the Seetankan, and the Ottan. Tullal must have taken its form from the folk dramas of Kerala prevalent at that time. Parayan is the name of a low caste community and it is quite probable that this type of Tullal must have had its origin from a folk performance which that community fostered in those days. There is an opinion that this is

associated with a kind of folk dance, which was prevalent among the Pulayas—another scheduled caste community. It is a slow kind of dance. Ottan is more quick and the word 'Otu', which means to run, is perhaps indicative of this.

Several varieties of folk tunes were current in Kerala and the probability is that Kunchan Nambiar must have adopted and perfected some of those for the sake of Tullal. Tullal is in many ways similar to Chakyar Kuttu. The dancer relates a story by way of verses which are written in the popular metres. Usually well-known Puranic stories are selected as themes. But as a rule we find a large number of digressions. In fact, these digressions are really the most interesting part of the poem.

Kunchan Nambiar

Kunchan Nambiar was born in M.E. 1880 (1705 A.D.). His birth-place is Killikurisimangalam, which is near the Lakkadi railway station. Historians are divided in their opinion about the parentage of this famous poet. Some people think that his father was a Nambudiri. But others hold the view that he was a Nambiar. As usual there are legends also coming in the way. Even the real name of Kunchan Nambiar is not beyond dispute. But we shall not go into these details.

Nambiar had his traditional type of education and his chief Guru was his own uncle named Raghavan Nambiar. He came over to the South and was the court poet of Ambalappula Raja who encouraged him very much. Though Kunchan Nambiar is known mainly for his works in Tullal, he has also tried his hand in Kilippattu, Vanchipattu, Gatha, Attakkatha etc. There is a belief which has gained currency that Kunchan Nambiar has written 64 pieces of Tullal. But modern critics assign only about 40 to 45 of them to Nambiar. There are some editions which give most of these works ; but there is a real need for reliable and comprehensive editions of his works.

The poetry of Kunchan brims with humour and satire. He has a special knack for making things interesting by many devices which would attract the common man. His language is very simple and he makes fun of almost every community in Kerala.

Another point which is noteworthy in connection with his treatment is that whatever be the story he gives a Kerala atmosphere to it. Thereby there may be a distortion of the truth in one sense. But his main object is to interest people with criticisms on contemporary affairs and the Puranic story chosen becomes more or less a peg to hang his criticisms and observations. All his characters become Keraleeyas. Thus we get an atmosphere of life in Kerala 250 years ago by way of his poems. In short, Tullal is the literature of the masses and Kunchan Nambiar was extraordinarily progressive in his outlook, having brought literature to the ordinary masses.

Other Works in this Branch of Literature

There are some works in this branch of literature which merit our consideration. *Nivatakavacha Kalakeya Vadham Seetankan Tullal*, is one such. The author is Panathottath Damodaran Nambudiri. There are some excellent descriptions in this poem. Though *Gajendramoksham* is considered to be written by Kunchan Nambiar, there is difference of opinion. This is comparatively a modern work. It was written during the time of King Visakham Tirunal of Travancore and it is probable that the author must have been of the Venmani poets. Mahakavi Ullur is of this opinion.

Then there are other works like *Lankamardanam*, *Krishnarjuna Vijayam*, *Ravana Vadham* etc. Even about many of the later works there is difference of opinion regarding the authorship. This branch of literature has had its admirers among the poets of the 20th century also. But many such works are mere adaptations of the masterpieces of Kunchan Nambiar.

PROSE LITERATURE

Though Malayalam literature cannot claim a great antiquity, comparatively speaking, its prose literature is old. Sanskrit influence is seen in one type of prose and in another the influence of the Tamil language is evident. We have quite a number of inscriptions dating from the 8th century onwards. But the language of these inscriptions is different from the colloquial language of those days. Generally speaking, the old prose literature that we have is rather low in literary qualities. But there is linguistic and cultural value embedded in such works.

Various styles are tried upto the 17th century and we shall refer to some of the important works. *Bhasha Kautaliyam* is an outstanding work in the prose literature of Malayalam. Kautilya was a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya (3rd century B. C.). His famous work entitled *Arthashastra* has been adapted into Malayalam, perhaps in the 12th century A.D. The original work is divided into 15 chapters. In the Malayalam version, only 7 chapters have been discovered so far. Considerable influence of the Tamil language is found in the language of this book, though it is less than that of *Ramacharitam*.

Then there is another class of literature which shows the profound influence of Sanskrit. This is related to Kuttu and Kudiattam, the art forms associated with a community in Kerala called Chakyars. They must have started Kuttu and Kudiattam as community arts. *Attaparakaram* and *Kramadipika* are the two outstanding example of this school. According to the tradition, Tolan was the court poet of Kulasekhara Varma and is the author of *Attaparakaram*. *Attaparakaram* explains the way in which the above said art forms have to be performed and *Kramadipika* gives directions regarding the setting and other arrangements on the scene. Works like *Mantrangam*, *Mattavilasam*, and *Surppanakhangam* come under this category. All these of course are not Tolan's works and the period may be assigned to be between the 13th and 15th centuries.

Dutavakyam is a work of enduring literary qualities and among the old works it has a very high place. It relates to the portion on Udyoga Parva in *Mahabharata*, and is intended to give directions to make use of the Sanskrit Dutavakyam. *Brahmandapuranam* (14th century), *Ambarishopakhyanam* and *Nalopakhyanam* are the works which could be considered here. There was also a translation of the famous Tamil classic *Triukkural* written in the 16th century. So far it has not been fully published.

In the above paragraphs we have referred to two types of literature, which though related to the spoken language, were much different from it. Spoken language must have had its own evolution unconnected with the ornate styles of the Pandits. But it is the missionaries' influence that has brought the colloquial language

to the limelight. In 1498, Vascodagama landed in Kerala and in the 16th century the Catholic missionaries settled in large numbers on the coast of Kerala.

There is an important record which gives the canons of synod by Udayamperur. The language of this record is very near the spoken dialect of those days. It would appear to be very peculiar to the modern Malayalee. Another work which merits consideration here is '*Hortu's Malabaricus*' which is a study on the plants of Kerala by a Dutch missionary. This has been written in 1686 and printed at Rome. It contains several portions in Malayalam also. Jesuit priests established a printing press in Goa in 1577. Later on in 1605 they established another at Kodunnallur. The first printed book in Malayalam is *Samkshepa Vedartham*. It was printed at Rome in 1772.

Veda Tarkam by Kattanar was published in 1678. One of the most interesting books of the period is *Varthamana Pusthakam*. It is an account of Paremmakkal Tomma Kattanar who had the extraordinary privilege of going to Rome and staying there for a pretty long time. This happened between years 1778 and 1786. The account is given in simple and attractive language.

In the 19th century a different kind of influence is seen in the prose works of Kerala. Here the Protestant missionaries come to limelight. The British established their reign in India during the first half of the 19th century, and in the second half of the same century we find a good deal of activity by the Protestant missionaries in almost all the Indian languages. From them we had a few works on grammar and a few dictionaries and also some simple prose works. Their prose is not considered to be elegant, or high-class because their aim was to approach the ordinary man in the language known to him. Many of the foreign missionaries, even though they were learned, could not master the language and hence what they have written appears to be a bit different from the natural style. Of course, there were Christians of the land who also had their part. But their writings are with a definite purpose and hence do not come into the category of literature, which is based on imagination. All the same, the work done by them is

quite useful, especially those dealing with the structure of the language.

The earliest dictionary which appeared in Kerala was published in 1846 by Benjamin Bailey. He is the person who founded the mission press at Kottayam. But the dictionary which is the most scholarly and scientific in Malayalam was written by a German missionary by the name of Dr. Gundert. This was published in 1872. Gundert is the author of an outstanding grammar of the language also (1868). This does not mean that there were no other grammars before him. In fact, Robert Drummond, Joseph Peet, F. Spring, L. Garthwaite and a few others had also written small books on the grammar of the Malayalam language. But these were mostly intended for the foreigner who had to learn the language anew. They are mostly elementary and some of their observations are unsound. But still credit must be given to them because of the pioneering nature of their work.

We find various commentaries like *Tantrasamuchchiaya*, *Vyavaharamala*, during this period. The influence of Sanskrit in the prose popularised by the missionaries is very little. In fact, this kind of prose is considered to be 'Neecha bhasha' (degenerated dialect) by Sanskrit scholars. But according to the modern linguistics they are really valuable in as much as they represent the colloquial speech of the people. From this period, prose literature evolves into a bright, elegant and dignified style by the time of Kerala Varma Valliakoil Tamburun, about which we will refer later.

MODERN LITERATURE

19th Century

By the middle of the 19th century, the impact of the new type of education began to be felt in Kerala. The new schools, which were started in the various parts of the country, required text-books in the local language and this resulted in a popular movement of translation of well-known classics from Sanskrit. Along with it, the Kavya style of Sanskrit was also largely imitated. Later in the century, the leadership of this school came into the hands of Kerala

Varma, who has some outstanding works to his credit. This school had the influence of formalism of the Sanskrit school. *Mayurasandesham* which is a very popular Sandeshakavya written by Kerala Varma, is an excellent example.

Along with this, there were also a number of writers who made use of the popular speech for their poems. The more important among them are the Rajas of Kodungallur and Venmani Nambudiripad. Venmani gave a certain vigour and directness to Malayalam literature, though his poems are considered to be somewhat vulgar. K. C. Kesava Pillai was a poet of distinction whose style was neither so ornate as that of Kerala Varma nor so simple as that of Venmani. He chose a middle path. A. R. Raja Varma, who is known as the author of *Keralapaniniam*, which is even now the most authoritative grammar in Malayalam, was also a poet and critic. To him should be given the credit of standardising the modern prose in Malayalam.

Coming to prose writers, we have to mention the names of two outstanding novelists. Chandu Menon's *Indulekha* is written in very simple style, and still holds the record for sale among the Malayalam novels. He has written another work entitled *Sharada*, which he could not complete. But with these two novels, he has gained immortality in Malayalam literature. Equally outstanding is the contribution of C. V. Raman Pillai, who entered the scene with the novel *Martanda Varma*. Later he has produced some outstanding novels like *Rama Raja Bahadur*, *Dharma Raja* and *Premamritam*. His style is overlaid with Sanskrit words and expressions. As in *Indulekha*, modern themes were attempted in dramas also. *Kalyani Natakam* by Kocchunni Tampuran deals with the social life of the period. Another drama, worthy of mention is *Mariyama Natakam* by Kocheppan Taragan, which reflects the life of the Christian community. Humorous essay was popularised by one Kunjaraman Nayanar, under his pen-name Kesari.

Modern Period

A revolutionary change in the taste of the poets is seen towards the beginning of the 20th century. Lyric found its way into Malayalam, firstly through the late V. C. Balakrishna Panikkar, and

then through Kumaran Asan. Kumaran Asan's small poem *Veena Poovu* (the fallen flower) caused a sensation among the poets and critics of the day. It contains only 41 slokas, but these are really gems. This poem was published several times in all the important journals of Malayalam. Immediately after *Veena Poovu*, Kumaran Asan wrote a longer poem called *Nalini*. The theme was 'love'. But it was a sublimated kind of love and he broke away from the *Shringara* of the earlier poets. Though the poems of Balakrishna Panikkar and Asan gave expression to the new spirit, it took some more years for the classical style to give way to the modern movement. Poet Vallathol came to the scene and, created a lasting impression. He translated the whole of Valmiki *Ramayana* and wrote a mahakavya entitled *Chitrayogam*. But later this attitude experienced a thorough change and he became the trumpet voice of nationalism. He discarded the traditional Sanskrit metres and wrote in the indigenous metres in Malayalam. He evinced a highly developed sense of beauty in all what he wrote. He touched every subject of national importance. The cry of the social and economic injustices was also not disregarded.

When we consider the modern Malayalam literature, there is one more name which comes on a par with those of Kumaran Asan and Vallathol, and that is Mahakavi Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer. His Mahakavya, *Umakeralam*, is one of the best that we have in that branch of literature. He has written various poems. *Karnabhusanam*, and *Pingala* are two of the most outstanding. Ulloor is not only a poet, but a scholar and research worker of great distinction.

Kumaran Asan wrote a few works dealing with 'love' first, and then he took social themes wherein his genius blossomed to the full. *Duravastha* deals with the life of a Brahman woman who became the wife of an untouchable by force of circumstances. In *Chandala Bhikshuki* also we find that the main note of the story is caste system. He is considered by modern writers as the harbinger of the progressive movement in poetry. Asan, Vallathol and Ulloor were the trios of the century. Vallathol is considered as the poet who gave the greatest momentum to the spirit of nationalism. His shorter poems are compiled into 8 volumes, in the series *Sahitya Manjari*. These are

the most brilliant expressions of his genius. *Magdhalana Mariam*, which is based on the story of Mary Magdalene in the new Testament, is also his masterpiece.

It can be said without exaggeration that Malayalam poetry developed to its present stature round these three masters. There are several other poets also who have made substantial contributions to modern Malayalam poetry. The names of the more important among them may be mentioned here. Nalappattu Narayana Menon is a poet of distinction. His *Kannunirtulli* (tear drops), which is an elegy of his wife, is his most important work. He is a poet of contemplative bent of mind.

Sardar K. M. Panikkar is one of the most versatile writers in India, and he is known throughout the world, as a historian and writer of distinction in English. But few people outside Kerala know that he is also a poet, dramatist and novelist in Malayalam. *Chintatarangini*, *Pankiparinayam* and *Ambapali* are a few of his poetical works. He has also enriched the language by translations from Sanskrit and also foreign languages. His autobiography is written in simple prose and well deserves to be translated into other Indian languages and English.

Among the contemporary poets, perhaps the most outstanding is G. Sankara Kurup. He is known as a poet who uses the technique of symbolism to a great advantage. He is also progressive in his outlook. Various collections containing his poems, short and long, have been published in Malayalam. A recent collection entitled *Ottakkulal* gives some of his best poems. He is certainly a leader of the new generation. Another poet, who died at a very early age, but still has made a lasting impression, is Changampugha Krishna Pillai. His poetry has got musical quality, and charming diction. His important work is a pastoral elegy, entitled *Ramanan*. The theme is the suicide of his friend Idappali Raghavan Pillai, who was himself a gifted poet. During the war years *Ramanan* sold like hot-cakes, and it is one of the best sellers in Malayalam. Changampugha is the favourite of the younger generation. Then there are other poets like Balamaniamma, Lalitambika Antaranam, Mary John Tottam, Vennikkulam Gopala Kurup. K. K. Raja, P. Kunjiraman Nair and Pala Narayanan Nair worthy of mention.

Malayalam poetry began to take a new turn by about 1936. The main inspiration was Left Wing Politics. In 1937 a conference was held at Trichur and a progressive school under the name of 'Jeevat Sahityam' was established. Later on it is the same school that changed its name into 'Purogamana Sahityam'. The critics who inspired this school are A. Balakrishna Pillai, M.P. Paul, and Joseph Mundasseri. Some poets of the progressive school are N.V. Krishna Warriar, Akkitam, Vayalar Rama Varma, Olappamanna, O.N.V. Kurup, P. Bhaskaran and Anujan.

Historical novel also had some good contributions after C.V. Raman Pillai's works. *Keralam Simham* by Sardar K.M. Panikkar, and *Bhoota Raya* by Appan Tamburan, are good examples. Short story, as a form of literature, became mature then. The earliest masters in this field are P. Kesava Dev, Takazhi Shiva Shankar Pillai and Mohammed Basheer. All of them considerably influenced the progressive ideas. There are hundreds of short stories which were written during the last quarter of the century in Malayalam. Some of them are really high class and can compare with the best short stories in any language. Among the popular short story writers, other names which could be mentioned are Ponkunnam Varkey, Karoor, Kovoov, P.C. Kutti Krishnan, S.K. Pottakkad and Saraswati Amma. Among the most popular novels in Malayalam the following can be definitely included : 1. *Balyakala Sakhi* by Mohammed Basheer. 2. *Chemmeen* and *Randidangazhi* by Takazhi. 3. *Visha-Kanyaka* by S. K. Pottekkat. Takazhi has brought the realistic and the sociological novel to the level of great literature.

The drama is not a well developed branch of literature in Malayalam. But recently, there is a great revival in the field and top-ranking dramatists are N. Krishna Pillai, T. N. Gopinathan Nair, Chellappan Nair, the Kainikkara brothers and Edasseri Govindan Nair. E.V. Krishna Pillai was a very popular dramatist. He was also an outstanding humourist in the language. Another name equally famous in the art of humorous writing is 'Sanjayan' (M.R. Nair of Kozhikode).

During the last 50 years, there has been a good many valuable books in the branch of criticism, biography, and history of

literature. P.K. Parameswaran Nair is one of the best biographers in the language. His biography of C.V. Raman Pillai is really a high class work. Among the autobiographies, mention may be made of those written by P. K. Narayana Pillai, E. V. Krishna Pillai, C. Kesavan, and K. M. Panikkar. In travelogue also Malayalam literature has its contributions. Literature has ceased to be something for the class and it has become the inheritance of the people at large. In Kerala the percentage of literacy is the highest in India and there even the rickshaw-pullers have the habit of reading a Malayalam daily. Therefore journalism has influenced the Malayalees considerably and it has a place in the general literary set up of the land.

After the time of Gundert and A. R. Raja Varma, there were a few scholars who took pains to do research on Malayalam language and certain sections of its literature. Sri Attoor Krishna Pisharodi has made an original study on the relationship between Malayalam and Tamil. Linguistics in Malayalam and allied languages has been the subject of research by Dr. K. Godavarma. Dr. C.A. Menon also has done considerable work; but his special fields were Eluttaccan's literature and Kali worship, ballads etc. of Kerala. Recently Dr. S.K. Nair has published a useful volume on the folk dramas of Kerala. Another work of research published recently is the linguistic analysis of the ancient poem *Ramacaritam* done by Dr. K.M. George. Mention may also be made of the researches done by Suranad Kunjan Pillai, and Ilamkulam Kunjan Pillai on Kerala history and old Malayalam.

Hundreds of foreign books have reached the hands of Malayalees by way of translation. The translations from other Indian languages have also a considerable place though much work has yet to be done in the field. The translations so far have been mainly from Bengali, Hindi and Marathi and the more prominent names are that of Tagore, Bankim Chandra, Sarat Chandra, Ramesh Chandra Datt, Dwijendra Lal Roy, Prem Chand, Rahul Sankrityayan and V.S. Khandekar. '*Godanam*' and '*Volga to Ganga*' which have been recently translated into Malayalam by E. K. Devakaran Potti have been very well received by the Malayalam

readers. A few of the good Malayalam novels and stories are also appearing in Hindi. This 'give and take policy' ought to be strengthened further ; but the main difficulty in such a programme is the paucity of good translators from one language to another, though in Kerala we have many writers with sufficient knowledge of Hindi and Sanskrit.

It is not possible to touch all the various branches of modern literature. Therefore, this paper may be closed by giving an idea of the modern trend in general. In the days of old, the emphasis was on scholarship and artificiality. Poems were written to please the Royal household and naturally the subject and language had to be necessarily such as would interest them. But when the modern writer wanted to address the ordinary man, he could not use the highly Sanskritised and artificial literary Malayalam. He began to use a simple language which was very nearly the colloquial language of the ordinary Malayalee. In the short story as well as in the prose drama, it was comparatively easy to do that. But we find that even in the poems especially the lyrics written by Changanpuzha and his followers, the language is lucid and simple. The more rigid Sanskrit metres were discarded and the poets of the modern period use only the more musical and less complicated indigenous metres. Because the old literature was far above the head of the ordinary man, it did not touch even one per cent of the population, but the modern writing is read and appreciated by a great majority of educated people and this is definitely a notable progress.

The ordinary man is interested in the modern literature not simply because he can understand it, but the subjects treated therein are of vital interest to him. In order to attain this, there has been a considerable limiting of the subjects. There is no subject which is so vast, varied and complex as *life* and some aspect of that has been and will ever remain the theme for any literary work. To start with, the progressive writers wanted to limit their subject to *the life of the ordinary man*. That being a neglected subject till then, was a welcome change. Then there arose a further limiting to *the economic aspect of the ordinary man's life*. And lots of stories and

poems were written showing the pitiable condition of the poor down-trodden man. It would appear that some writers took a vow to write only about hunger and about women selling their chastity to satisfy hunger. Some writers came forward with remedies to root out these evils. And each political party was anxious to develop its own understudies to propagate their particular creed. Those who preferred freedom to write in their own way were cast out from the party, but second-rate writers got encouragement from the party and they are mainly responsible for the vast mass of literature which ought to be termed '*party literature*'. Because propaganda was patent in the majority of such works, they could not get the status of high class literature. This sort of deliberate narrowing down of the scope of literature had its own repercussions in the realm of progressive writing, where writers of more than one party did and could associate themselves.

Among some of the younger writers of this generation, there is a tendency not only to disregard scholarship, but to positively discountenance and depreciate it. This is not a healthy sign. Of course it has come as a reaction. In olden days poets were servile to kings; they praised and even worshiped them. We condemn this and rightly so. But now unfortunately the pendulum has gone to the other extreme and the same tendency is being exhibited in another garb. The slogan "Back to the soil" has perhaps made the labourer a hero. Of course the labourer is in the majority and because of adult franchise, he really wields power. Is not the writer tempted to play the labourer's pipe for certain obvious reasons? How is the labourer's work superior to that of the teacher or the lawyer? Any work is equal to any other and the question of superiority does not arise. Especially in India at this stage the educated middle class has definite and important role to play.

In the democratic set up, it is the writers' responsibility to see that the voter exercises his rights with judgment. Writers who belong to political parties communicate their ideas by way of literature and the ordinary man is many a time non-plussed with conflicting theories and approaches. Fortunately, in Kerala there is a good number of literary men with standing and recognition who have not actively

associated themselves with any political party. They view things objectively and express their opinions dispassionately. They may be able to bring together the disunited sections of the 'Progressive Writers Association' and such a step is bound to usher in a new era for the language and literature of a United Kerala.

MARATHI

Maharashtra seems to have existed as a social and political entity from the fourth century after Christ. It formed a part of what was earlier known as Dakshinapath or the 'Southward way'. This was an extension of the homeland of the Aryans of the north. The Aryan colonies to the south of the Vindhya seem to have sprung up about 700 B.C. There are references to the Dakshinapath in the *vartikas* of Katyayana, which date back to 700 B.C. These references grow more frequent in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and later in various Buddhistic works. This was the age of the dawn of Buddhism. The religious revolution led to a spreading out of the Aryans from the North. Six small states, Goparashtra, Malla Rashtra, Pandu Rashtra, Aparanta, Vidarbha and Ashmak were formed in the South. They were naturally composed of people drawn from the pre-Panini settlers like the Nagas and the post-Panini Aryans. Some of them, like the *Pandu Rashtra* and *Malla Rashtra* seem to have had even a predominantly Dravidian strain. These Rashtras evolved and developed under various dynasties like Maurya, Satavahana, Traikutaka, Wakataka, Calachuri, Rashtrakuta and Chanakya. These six states together constituted Maharashtra. The first reference to it as 'Maharashtra' is found in a work called *Mahavamsa* of about 500 A.D. Varahamihira gives a description of the people. The Aihole inscription (634 A.D.) describes Satyashraya Pulakeshi as the supreme ruler of three Maharashtras. Hu-en-tsong (629 A.D. - 645 A.D.) refers to it as 'Moholosh'. References to it are also found in Dandi, Vararuchi and Vatsayana.

The Origin of Marathi.

The origin of Marathi has been described variously. From the Vedic language and Sanskrit are believed to have been derived

Shauraseni, Magadhi, Paishachi and Maharashtri—the four different languages spoken in Mathura Mandal, Magadh, Balhik (Punjab etc.) and Maharashtra. A further change in these resulted in the Apabhhransha languages. Marathi was derived from Maharashtri-Apabhhransha. The precision and pointedness of the phonetic value in Sanskrit were lost through a process of popularisation in Apabhhransha during the Buddhistic period. These values were, to some extent, re-acquired by Marathi during the revival of the Vedic religion. Marathi may thus be described as being a re-Sanskritised and developed form of Maharashtri-apabhhransha. The four pre-Apabhhransha languages were in vogue until about 875 A.D. They had risen to a high literary level. Rajshekhar has used Maharashtri in his play '*Karpurmanjari*'. Literary works in Shauraseni, Magadhi and Paishachi are also extant. The Apabhhransha languages are believed to have come in use about 200 years later and have remained in vogue for more than a century. Maharashtri-Apabhhransha also known as Jain Apabhhransha has been used widely in Jain literature and forms an important link in the evolution of Marathi. It has been found to have been in vogue by about 400 A.D. Marathi is believed to be a developed and re-Sanskritised form of this Apabhhransha. It is found not only to be widely in use but also to have attained a place of social and literary distinction by 1275 A.D. It extended to the Vindhya and Satpura ranges in the north, to Chota Nagpur and Andhra Desh in the east, the North Canara Districts in the south and the Arabian Sea in the west.

It is difficult to trace the beginning of any language. One can only go by the dates of acknowledged inscriptions or manuscripts. The first of such Marathi inscriptions available is dated 983 A.D. It consists of but one sentence "Shri Chawundraje Karawiyale". This sentence has been inscribed in the two current languages, Marathi and Kannad, at the foot of the huge stone image of Gomateshwara in Shrawana-Belgola, near Mysore. The image was carved out of a huge rock-hill during the reign of Rachmal Gang by order of his minister Chawundrai. It is obvious that at this time, Marathi was one of the distinctly different.

current languages, widely used by the people of this area. The six inscriptions now available dating between 979 A.D.-1270 A.D. and placed in the distant parts like Mysore, Khandesh and Bombay are an index of the large area over which Marathi was spoken.

This Maharashtra society had attained a high cultural level. This was the community of Bhavabhuti and Bhaskaracharya. Changdeva, the grandson of Bhaskaracharya, established a university for the propagation of the theories of his grandfather, and used Marathi in the inscription in this place. Rajshekhar, the author of *Kavya Prakash*, was also a Maharashtra brahman. The works of these writers show that Sanskrit was the medium of all learned exposition and classical creative literature. But the language of everyday use of this cultured community was Marathi. This is abundantly proved by the inscriptions which were meant for all the common folk who visited the Shrawana-Belgola or the beautiful temple near Dhond. It is because the language was spoken so widely that the deeds of charitable gifts like the one at Patan of 1202 A. D. celebrating the gift of a Matha by King Soidwa to his guru and the imperial mandates expected to be obeyed by all, like the mandate of King Aparaditya of 1183 A. D., were published in Marathi. Marathi had obtained a venerable place in court life by the time of the Yadava Kings.

The Pandharpur inscription (1273 A. D.) of the days of Raja Shiromani Ramdevrao is in flawless Marathi. Marathi was spoken by all classes and castes. Treatises in Marathi were written and read out in the court of Ramdevrao, who was always pleased to have them dedicated to himself. In the twelfth century, during the reign of the last three Yadava kings, a great deal of literature in verse and prose was created such as : (1) stories for children, like *Panchatantra*, (2) songs and stories for women, like those of *Someshwara*, (3) stories from Puranas in verse or prose like *Ramayana* or *Krishnacharitra* of Rasal Kavi. These stories were of great help in retaining the hold of Hinduism over the masses at a time when Buddhism and Jainism were growing powerful, (4) Treatises on astrology and medicine and such other subjects for Brahmins not very well-versed in Sanskrit. Shripati's work on astrology called '*Ratnamala*' is an example.

A good deal of literature was written for kings and courtiers. This class hardly ever undertook an intensive study of Sanskrit. Ambitious authors would therefore prefer the medium of Marathi in order to appeal directly to the king or patron. The worth of a composition in Sanskrit would reach his ears only through the recommendations of middle-men like pandits and counsellors to the king. Long, rhetorical and highly decorative poems like *Nalopakhyan* and *Rukmini Swayamvara* would, therefore, be written in Marathi and read out in the Raj-Sabha. If the king was a religious and philosophical person, these pandits even tried their hand at exposition of Vedanta in lucid Marathi. One of the best examples of this is Mukund Raj's "*Vivek-Sindhu*."

The history of Marathi literature may conveniently be divided into five periods, up-to-date.

(1) The Yadav Period	...	1189-1320 A. D.
(2) The Bahamani Period	...	1320-1600 A. D.
(3) The Maratha Period	...	1600-1700 A. D.
(4) The Peshwa Period	...	1700-1850 A. D.
(5) The British Period	...	1850-1947 A. D.

During the first two of these periods, Marathi literary genius occupied itself chiefly with religious and philosophical exposition. The earliest Hindi book, according to generally accepted opinion, is one on *alankaras* or figures of speech. Hindi literature, during the first two periods from 650 A. D. to 1387 A. D., was chiefly rhetorical and secular in tone. It was produced in various dialects like the Maithili, or Rajasthani, Awadhi and Braj.

Gujerati, the neighbour language of Marathi, saw the beginnings of its literature in 1185 A. D. in the *Bharateshwara-bahubali Rasa* by Salibhadra. This was secular and heroic in spirit.¹ The main and perhaps the sole current in Marathi literature, however, during the Yadav and Bahamani period was of religious and philosophical exposition. This exposition, like the early literature in all languages, was in verse. Mukundraj, the arch-poet of Marathi, wrote his *Vivek-sindhu* primarily with the object of opening out before his patron Jaitrapal a 'sea of philosophy'. He wrote it at the age

1. K. M. Munshi : *Gujerat and its Literature*.

of sixty, when, as he says, 'even breathing was tiring to him' (स्वासीन्मेवावाहि श्रम वाटे). It is believed that he wrote this in a place now known as **Ambhor** in **Madhya Pradesh** where he was staying near the Samadhi of his guru. He bases his exposition of the basic tenets of the Hindu philosophy and Yogamarga on '*Shankarokti*' (शंकरोक्ति-
"शंकरोक्तीवरी । मी बोलिलों मराठी वैखरी । म्हणोनि निर्धारवी चतुरीं । शास्त्र बुद्धी ") and he undertook these labours in order that the World should be cleansed and sanctified and made happy. (विश्व सुस्नात होउनि सुखी व्हावें.) The work consists of eighteen chapters with a total of 1671 verses in the *oee chhanda* (ओवी छंद). Mukundraj also wrote other works like '*Paramamrit*' (परमामृत), '*Pavanavijaya*' (पवनविजय), '*Mulstambha*' (मूलस्तम्भ), '*Panchakirana*' (पंचकिरण), etc. He wrote in a chaste and lucid style which has a freshness worthy of the precursor of Dnyaneshwar (ज्ञानेश्वर). Mukundraj is believed to have belonged to a schism founded by Gorakhnath. This religious sect gained wide popularity in Upper India. He used Hindi for his literary and religious compositions in order to reach the masses and inculcate his religio-philosophical ideas in them. He was also the first to introduce a non-bardic strain in Hindi poetry. The influence spread in the South, in Maharashtra. A continuous line of the Nath tradition is found in Maharashtra, in Gorakhnath, Gaininath and others. There is a Marathi work called '*Amarnath-Sanvad*' attributed to Gorakhnath. The syntax, diction and script show that the work belongs to the eleventh century.

Yadav literature however was not limited to religiosity only. Hemadri, the versatile administrator of Ramdevrao, was a great patron of learning, art and letters. Under his patronage were written works in Sanskrit. His work in Sanskrit "*Chaturvarga-chintamani*" lays down the principles of the caste-system and systematises the relation and respective duties of the four classes and lays down rules about various kinds of ritualistic observances. His "*Lekhan-kalpataru*" is a treatise on the practice of writing, with a careful consideration of polite modes of address, forms of letters etc.

The origin of Marathi prose is also to be found in the Yadav period. The credit for its creation goes to another religious sect

called the Mahanubhavas. The sacred books of this sect were unknown to literary history until about twenty-five years ago. Every lover of Marathi literature must gratefully acknowledge the debt of the late Shri Bhawe who discovered for modern Maharashtra this vast heritage of simple Marathi prose. The founder of this sect, Shri Chakradhar, hailed from Gujarat. He was the only son (known as Harpal) of Vishaldev, the minister of the Gujarat king Trimalla Dev. This Harpal having lost all his money in his passion for dice, fell into a deep melancholy. He started on a pilgrimage to Ramtek in Madhya Pradesh on the way to which, he reached Ridhpur. There he came under the influence of a saintly pandit called Govind Prabhu. He took Guru-mantra from him, who named him Chakradhar. Stories of wide travel and varied experience are attributed to Chakradhar. He became a sanyasi in 1267 A.D. and founded his own religious sect. He led an extremely austere life of wandering mendicancy. He travelled widely over Maharashtra, which land he preferred to all others. "One should live in Maharashtra, neither in Kanada, nor in Telangana", he said. He had a large following of disciples like Nagadeva, Mhai Bhat, Nathoba and also some women disciples like Nagambika and Mahadayisa. The latter is well-known now as the first Marathi poetess. Chakradhar spoke to his disciples on not only the great philosophical problems but also on the daily conduct of life. He carved out for them a path of simple austerity and vigorous discipline. He won a deep and fond loyalty from them, which has been handed down from generation to generation.

The Mahanubhava writers have left a rich treasure of Marathi prose and verse. They eschewed Sanskrit knowingly, for theirs was a religion for the common people. When Keshobas wanted to render the master's sermons into Sanskrit verse, Nagadeva said to him 'Do not do so, O Keshav !, the common devotee of my master will be deprived of my master's teachings by this.' The Mahanubhavas worshipped Lord Krishna, Dattatraya and three Mahanubhava founders, the chief of whom was Chakradhar. The most sacred books are '*Leela Charitra*' giving the life-story of Chakradhar and '*Govindprabhu Charitra*', both of them, written by

Mhai Bhat. *Leela-charitra* was written about 1286 A.D. It is a work deeply imbued with devotion for the Master and records his travels and sayings, parables and sermons about the daily conduct of life. The *Siddhanta Sutras* collected by Keshobas is also a work of the same nature. Both are written in a simple and direct prose. Chakradhar did not write a single line himself. But the directness and chastity of his style of speaking was imbibed by his disciples. Wherever he went he gave exposition of his philosophy in parables or in directly illuminating stories. These reminiscences were recorded after he passed away by Mhai Bhat in *Leela-charitra* and by Keshobas in *Sutra-path* and *Drishtant-path*. *Smritisthala* is a collection of the reminiscences of Nagdeva, the chief disciple and successor of Chakradhar and of many other important disciples.

The poetic works of Mahanubhava writers consist of seven long poems running into hundreds of verses in the Ovee metre. Four of them *Vaccha-Haran*, *Rukmini-Swayamwara*, *Sishupal-Wadha* and *Uddhawa-Gita* are based on the life of Lord Krishna. *Uddhawa-Geeta* and *Jnana Prabodha* are philosophical and *Saihadri-Varnan* and *Ridhipur-Varnan* describe the homelands and sacred places of the Mahanubhavas with deep strain of the memories about the founders. Mahadaisa, the woman-disciple chose a different metre—the “Dhawala” which was a kind of song. The Dhawalas are full of simple devotional ardour and celebrate the story of Rukmini Swayamwara. She is also believed to have written another long poem.

Mahanubhava literature is still a subject of research and controversy. Some select Marathi scholars, chiefly from the Madhya Pradesh, have devoted years of study in deciphering them. These works were rendered into code-scripts by later Mahanubhavas apparently due to social and religious persecution from orthodox Hindus. It was partly because of this that their literature remained unknown all these years, but to it and to the devotion of the Mahanubhavas is due the credit of preserving the texts in such an uninterpolated form. Marathi scholars are now deciphering them,

fixing their chronology and discovering material about contemporary social and religious life and philosophical concepts from them.

The last years of the Yadava period were those of great prosperity on the one hand and social and religious decadence on the other. The upper classes led lazy, luxurious lives, full of ritualism under the garb of religion. Orthodoxy ruled supreme. The Pandits considered it their sacred duty to hold aloof from the contamination of the lower classes. Their knowledge of the Shastras was directed solely towards depriving the masses of religious enlightenment. The Mahanubhavas represent one kind of reaction against this social atmosphere. Their sect broke through the barriers of the caste system. It treated men and women alike and granted the right of *Sanyasa* to all. These breaches of orthodoxy were like gall to orthodoxy and led to a great deal of persecution of the Mahanubhavas. They were treated as outcastes, but by their perseverance and popularity among the people they gradually won recognition even in the court of the Yadavas.

Another extremely effective and powerful revolt against Hindu orthodoxy came from Jnanadeva. He was one of the four children of Vithalpant, who had abandoned his home and taken *Sanyasa* but had returned to domestic life according to the order of his guru. His children were born after this. They were therefore looked upon as the children of a Sanyasi and hence children of sin. Their parents died in misery, they were themselves treated as outcastes and wandered from place to place in search of Shuddhi. It was this bitter experience that made both Nivrittinath and Jnanadeva realise the tyranny of orthodoxy and the essence of true religion. Jnanadeva loved and revered his elder brother as a guru and with inspiration from him, he wrote his two masterpieces. His *Bhavarth Deepika*, popularly known as *Jnaneshwari* and *Anubhavamrita* have been the sacred books of Maharashtra and outside for the last seven hundred years. They have been read very widely and with profound devotion. They have moulded Marathi thought and given philosophical solace to Marathi minds for seven centuries. With all this, they also represent the highwater mark of old

Marathi poetry, in their profundity of thought, delicacy of diction and variety of imagery. *Jnanadeva* represents the finest flowering of the Marathi literary and philosophical genius.

Jnanadeva met orthodox Hinduism on its own ground in choosing *Bhagwadgita* for his commentary and elucidation in *Jnaneshwari*. That essence of Upanishadic philosophy was best suited to remind the degenerate society of its duties and also to diffuse the light of Swadharma (स्वधर्म)—one's own duty—according to the concept of Hinduism amongst the masses. He chose the language of the masses and raised it to heights of literary excellence, unequalled even upto now.

His works are dearly loved by the scholars and also the masses of Maharashtra. Not only that. His personality is one of the most revered ones. After he wrote his *Anubhavamrita*, he believed that he had completed his life's mission and took Samadhi in Alandi at the very young age of twenty-two. The place is one of the most sacred ones for Maharashtra.

When Jnaneshwar propounded the equality of classes in the eyes of God and especially through Bhakti, on the authority of the *Gita*, a wave of the thrill of freedom went through Maharashtra. Sainly singers sprang up in all castes and communities. Namdeva, a tailor who was already propagating the Bhaktimarg in Pandharpur, became a disciple of Jnaneshwar. Savata, a gardener, Gora, a potter, Narhari, a goldsmith, Choka, a mahar, all these extolled and celebrated the Bhagwat Dharma propounded by Jnanadeva. They sang of the equality of classes, of their longing to see God, of the realisation of God through sheer love and Bhakti. A great devotional cult arose called the Warkari Panth under the leadership of Namdeva. The challenge that Jnanadeva had given to bitter Hindu orthodoxy was felt in the corners of Maharashtra. But that orthodoxy was too thick-skinned to comprehend that challenge. The high classes were lost in their smug complacency and decadent luxuriousness, so much so that they remained blind even to the fact that Muslim armies were marching against them. In 1293 A.D. Alauddin Khilji marched against Devagiri, the capital

of the Yadavas. The days of that dynasty came to a close in 1318 A.D. The Bahamani period in Maharashtra began.

Bahamani Period.

It was, however, this school of saint-poetry that protected the flame of Hindu religion in Maharashtra and maintained the continuity of Marathi literature. Under the sway of the Muslims, court life and court language underwent a rapid change. Conversion to Islam took place on an alarming scale. Even princes and sardars succumbed to it. Tyranny and torture under the name of the religion of the rulers became the order of the day. The masses were terrorised. But the greater the anarchy and the greater the violation of religion and language and literature, the more passionately did the saints cling to their God. Some Mahanubhava pandits like Navarasa Narayan, Elhan, Chalhan etc. also maintained a steady flow of religious and philosophical works in prose and verse. Religion provided the only armour for the Marathi minds which remained unviolated by Muslim rule. Apart from this the tale of the sixteenth century is a sad one.

The works of Eknath are the finest efflorescence of this religious trend. He was the greatest of the successors of Jnanadeva, deeply imbued with the study of *Jnaneshwari*. He wrote a commentary on the eleventh 'Skandha' of the *Bhagwat*, another ancient text profoundly honoured by the orthodox, but even as Jnanadeva gave a new orientation to Marathi thought through his commentary on *Gita*, Eknath propagated the cult of Bhagwat Dharma, through his commentary on *Bhagwat*. It was a corollary of the philosophical position of Jnanadeva—the position of a new humanism. It is this neo-humanism which forms the basis of the deep-bred sense of equality in Maharashtra, which was later moulded by Ramdas into the idea of Maharashtra Dharma. Eknath spoke of the region of Bhagwat Dharma as "Anand-wan-bhuwan". He was confident that Bhagwat Dharma was capable of creating a 'Country of Joy'. The essence of Bhagwat is Bhakti (भक्ति). Eknath spread the cult of Bhakti amidst the high and the low by his grave mellifluous words in the people's own language. He also rendered the *Ramayan* and many other Puranic stories in his own verse.

He has rendered another invaluable service to the culture and literature of Maharashtra—that of editing and copying out the *Jnaneshwari*. During the three hundred years since it was written, the great work had become almost corrupt and forgotten. Eknath edited and produced an authentic version.

Eknath also wrote several small narratives and *abhangas* and some semi-prose works of a type called “Bharud”. He was not only a saint and a great poet, he was also an active social reformer. All his efforts were directed towards somehow checking the onslaught and the devastatingly corrupting influence of Islam. Swaraj was already gone. He strained every nerve to help retain Swadharma at least. All his literary work is therefore inspired with the objective of spreading a feeling of oneness and equality among the various orders of the Hindus.

Eknath was surrounded and followed by a number of minor poets who wrote in his strain. Dasopant was the most noteworthy of them. He was a voluminous writer of facile verse. He is skilled in the use of anecdotes, allegories and metaphors. His work is imbued with the consciousness of the power of Marathi as against Sanskrit.

Transition to Maratha Period.

This brings us to the end of the Bahamani period. It was a period of slavery and religious persecution and decadence, but the pure stream of Marathi literature and religious and philosophical verse flowed on unhampered. The gift of Jnaneshwar was cherished and cultivated by his successors. The cult of this new Marathi literature spread widely even beyond the region of Maharashtra especially in the Jehagirs of Shahaji in Tanjore. Marathi had to be adopted by the Christian missionaries in Goa. A specimen of this is afforded by the *Christ-Purana* of Father Stephens who came to India in 1549. He is the first Englishman known to have visited India and the only Englishman to write a considerable poem in any Indian language. For all his studies in European culture and his Latin training, he surrendered to the charm of the freshly developing Marathi language. ‘Like a jewel among pebbles’, he wrote, ‘like a sapphire among jewels, is the

excellence of the Marathi tongue. Like the jasmine among blossoms, the musk among perfumes, the peacock among birds, the zodiac among the stars, is Marathi among languages." His work is deeply imbued with the influence of Jnaneshwar in its style and diction. A large number of semi-worldly writers bring up the rear of the sixteenth century.

Mukteshwar, the grandson of Eknath, represents this vein. He carries on the tradition of his grandfather in devoting himself to re-telling stories from *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat*. But he is more earthly, delighting in the glories of a luxurious worldly existence. His narratives, however, are specially interesting as an index of the spirit of the times in one peculiar way. They are full of a strange kind of anachronism. His heroes from the Puranas like Dushyanta face enemies and tyrants of the seventeenth century Maharashtra. The exploits of the Pandavas include the conquest of the Muslims and even the English. He tries to present the ideal of a good king and a noble aristocracy before a Maharashtra which lay bleeding before the conquerors. The age was getting ready, as it were, for the rise of Shivaji, the liberator.

The dawn of the seventeenth century saw the quintessence of the devotional school in the Abhangas of Tukaram. His extreme other-worldliness has given rise to innumerable stories of his unpractical thriftlessness and has made him a dearly-loved personality. But the finest feature of his devotional poems is their intense lyricism. Tukaram speaks to his God with an intensity of personal emotion which is unparalleled in Marathi poetry. His diction naturally attains a directness and lucidity. He had little claim to learning or philosophy. Spontaneity and sincerity are the main springs of his work. But this itself made him the finest example of the Warkari Panth. He is indeed the crown of that 'Panth'. His crystalline humanity and humility made him the greatest leader of the devotional school and a fine influence upon it. Under his banner gathered all castes and creeds. His Abhangas found a path in all corners of Maharashtra. He was a great unifying influence in the ranks of Maharashtra, the best and perhaps the last exponent of Bhagwat Dharma. This consolidation of the masses under a religious banner

went a long way towards the creation of a helpful atmosphere for Shivaji's efforts for the liberation of the Hindus in Maharashtra.

Age of Shivaji and his successors.

The highwater mark of this urge for liberation arising out of a profound consciousness of the need of national re-organisation is to be found in the work of the great saint Ramdas. He was himself a Sadhu, but he was keenly conscious of the degeneration into which the people and their religion had fallen. He trained his disciples with the definite objective of bringing about a religious re-birth, established Maths, rebuilt dilapidated or destroyed temples. But, chief of all, he wrote volumes of verses for the spiritual guidance of the people. His *Dasbodh*, is the bible not only of his disciples, but of millions of people in Maharashtra. It combines deep religiousness with profound practical wisdom and social consciousness. It is written with a directness and simplicity that often verges on the prosaic. There is a good deal of other minor verse attributed to Ramdas.

Ramdas is well-known as the guru of Shivaji. The literary work of Ramdas and the organisation of his disciples and Maths are sufficient proof of the synthesis of religious devotion and social consciousness that is to be found in his genius.

The tradition of philosophic interpretation of Jnaneshwar, the elaborate decorativeness and style of Mukteshwar was carried on in the days of Shivaji by Waman Pandit. He appears to have remained unaffected by the political events of the day. He lived in a world of metaphysics and *Puranas*. He brought to bear a fine sense of the decorativeness of words upon the stories in *Puranas* and wrote long *Akhyanas* in a high-flown, alliterative style. He also wrote his own commentary on the *Gita* and claimed that it gave a more correct interpretation of it than Jnanadeva did. He, therefore, called it *Yathartha Dipika* (यथार्थ दीपिका). It differs from the *Jnaneshwari* or *Bhavartha Dipika* not only in its pedantry and affectation, but also in its philosophical position. It emphasises the *Jnana marg* in the *Gita*, instead of *Bhakti marg* as Jnanadeva did. The *Yathartha Dipika* has never been able to command the love and devotion that *Jnaneshwari* has.

The works of Waman Pandit represent strains that are widely different. *Yathartha Dipika* forms one type representing his intellectualised spirituality, has asceticism and other-worldliness. His *Akhyanas* (narrative and descriptive poems) based on stories from the *Puranas*, like *Gajendra Moksh*, *Seeta Swayamwar*, *Venu Sudha* are vivid, picturesque and elaborate. These strains are so different that scholars have tried to make out a case of different authorship and to prove that there were more than one persons of the name of Waman Pandit. But there is very little room for such a conjecture.

Other poets like Nagesh and Vithal and others brought up the rear of the poetry of the days of Shivaji. There was a large group of the imitatives of Waman. The poetry of Ramdas group also created a school of its own, much more so, because Ramdas founded a sect for the moral and religious renaissance of Maharashtra. Missionaries of this sect went as far as Tanjore, the Jahagir of Shahaji, where by now Vyankoji, the step-brother of Shivaji was ruling. The language of this place was naturally Marathi. Raghunath Pandit a noteworthy poet belonged by creed to the Ramdasi Panth, but in style he belongs to the school of Waman Pandit. He wrote a rich verse, devoted to Akhyanas like Waman. His *Nala Damayanti Swayamvara* is well-known. Another Tanjore poet of a later date is Samraj. He belonged to the days of Sahu, the son of Vyankoji, under whose patronage the first Marathi plays were written.

The works of Ramdas represent the apotheosis of the high seriousness and practical idealism of the Marathas during the days of the establishment of their 'Swaraj'. But this period also brought to them the thrill of the successful foundation of this Swaraj. They were filled with a sense of confidence and pride in the exploits of their heroes and also a rich joy of earthly pleasures. This aspect of their life created a new type of poetry in the Powadas and Lavanis. The poets who wrote and sang these were known as "Shaheers". They recited these to the accompaniment of extremely simple musical instruments—a Daph to keep time and a Tuntuna (a one-stringed instrument). The poet and his chorus, who repeated the refrain, held audiences of thousands spell-bound by their high-pitched voices and spirited enunciation. The Powada is a form of

heroic poetry, brisk in movement and vivid in diction, eminently suited to describe the lightning warfare and selfless valour of the Marathas. Many of them were written by eye-witnesses or contemporaries of great events of these days. The first of these is one on the meeting of Shivaji and Afzalkhan, written by Agnidas and the second on the capture of fort Sinhagarh by Tanaji, written by Tulsidas. Agnidas wrote in a direct and dynamic style while Tulsidas is more elaborate and polished. The first Powada is believed to have been heard by Shivaji and Jijabai personally, after the great event of the liquidation of Afzalkhan.

The days of Shivaji also witnessed the development of Marathi prose. Mahanubhav works, as we saw, continued through the centuries. A form of historical prose called Bakhars from the Persian word Khabar, had also come into existence during the Yadava period. Marathi Bakharkars described the achievements of other kings also like Malikambar or the Battle of Rakshastagdi, which struck the knell of the kingdom of Vijayanagar. Father Stephen's prose introduction to his *Christ-Purana* is also noteworthy for its style. The prose of Shivaji's period is to be found mostly in valuable letters and administrative communications. The oldest Bakhar of these days is the "*Wakenavis Bakhar*" which gives an account of the life of Shivaji in 96 sections. It has formed the basis of most later biographies of Shivaji. Another independent account of the life of Shivaji is the '*Sabhasadi Bakhar*' written at the behest of Rajaram by Krishnaji Anant Sabhasad in about 1697. It is based on the author's personal knowledge of Shivaji's life and is also endowed with a high quality of style. One of the finest specimens of such historical prose is afforded by the "*Ajna Patra*" of Ramchandra Pant Amatya, the minister of Sambhaji, son of the founder of Kolhapur state. It is instilled with mature political wisdom and is a fine specimen of the polite prose of the day.

The Peshwa Period.

The years after Shivaji were difficult ones. It was only the loyalty of the people and the courage of his chosen followers that helped Rajaram in somehow saving the Maratha kingdom. Disintegration threatened; the main springs of literature dried away.

But the efforts of Rajaram and his followers brought about a stability which led to the security and glory of the days of the first three Peshawas. None of these remarkable statesmen had a very peaceful time. They were continually harassed by onslaughts from outside and rifts within the kingdom. Their own ambitions added to the distractions. But the central parts of Maharashtra had greater security than during this period, and Poona, the capital of the Peshwas, became a centre of learning, typically Maharashtrian culture and luxurious social life.

Krishna Dayarnava and Shridhar were the leading poets of the early days of the Peshwas. The quiet flow of the philosophical verse of the first and the deeply devotional narratives of the second were widely appreciated in Maharashtra. Shridhar's '*Ramvijaya*', '*Harivijaya*', '*Pandavpratap*' are still read devotedly by orthodox Hindus and his '*Shivleelamrit*' yet forms a part of the daily prayer of hundreds of Marathi women. But the sense of security and cultured ease of the Peshwa period are best reflected in the poetical works of Moropant, or Mayur Pandit as he is known in learned parlance. He enjoyed the patronage of the Baramatikars, a family into which the Peshwas had married. He had received a thorough training in the Sanskrit classics and religious texts. He was an adept in the use of classical diction and prosody. His main vocation was that of a Puranik or of reading out verse stories from the *Puranas* in temples, commenting upon them and elucidating to the men and women, young and old, high and low, who would throng to the temples. He was naturally inspired to compose verse-stories to embellish the Puranas-stories in a style attractive and yet within the grasp of such mixed audience. He brought to bear upon them all his learning and also his gifts of perspicacity and decorativeness. It is strange that this eighteenth century Marathi poet reveals all the outstanding characteristics of eighteenth century English classicism. He spent all his wit upon narrating what "Oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed". He re-narrated the story of Krishna in his erudite *Krishna-Vijaya*, the stories from the Bhagwat in his *Mantra-Bhagwat*. He avoided metaphysical discussion and concentrated on story-element giving even skilful touches of

character portrayal. He told the chronicle of Hariwansha and, not the least, he is believed to have written one-hundred and eight versions of the story of Rama, some with different narrators in different situations and some in different metres. Ninety of these are yet available. Some of them, like the one with Sita as a narrator surrounded by the happy company of sisters-in-law and friends after her return from Vanawas and known as *Sita-Ramayan*, show great ingenuity of invention. Moropant was also fond of what is known as *Chitrabandh*, or poems in patterns of initial letters and other kinds.

The favourite verse of Moropant was the Arya vritta. He infused new life into the old Sanskrit verse and gave it a wonderful finish and variety. His works would easily come to some lakhs of Aryas. He also wrote fine slokas in various metres.

Ingenuity in narration was the forte of Moropant, but that was not his sole achievement. In his later days he wrote some short 'stotras' or hymns that have made him even more popularly known and read than his narrative works. Such are his *Ganga-Prarthana*, '*Kashi-Stuti*' and others. But the best among these shorter poems are his '*Kekavali*' and '*Sanshaya-Ratnamala*'. They evince even a lyricism of a high order. They are much simpler and chaste in style, though possessed with the poet's characteristic ingenuity. They are his personal prayer and invocation of God. Generations of modern Marathi minds have been brought up in their childhood on the poetical works of Moropant. His Arya has resounded in every well-versed middle-class Marathi house. He has built up the language by giving it a new stature and dignity, a new range and subtlety of expression.

Moropant was naturally surrounded and followed by a plethora of poets using the Arya-metre and imitating him in other ways.

The rise of the Peshwas brought about a fresh efflorescence of Powadas and Lavnees too. A host of Shaheers arose to celebrate the exploits of Bajirao and Madhaorao and later the tragedy of Narayanrao. Honaji Bala, Sagan Bhau, Anant Phandi, Ram Joshi, Prabhakar and so many others form this galaxy. They gave vent to

the thrill of the Marathas in the reborn glory of the Peshwa court in choice and rich diction. They presented vivid pictures of the Maratha Sardar in his war glory and in the Lavnees they gave a free and robust expression to his love of pleasure. They developed a fine craftsmanship in music and colourfulness of words. The stream of orthodox, philosophic and erudite poetry continued steadily in this age too. It kept up the classical tradition. It even yielded a richer harvest than ever before in the works of Moropant. But the Shaheers were the poets of the people. They sang of the loves and longings of the Sardar's lady, of the rich preparations that she made for her lover or her husband, of her anxiety at his departure on campaigns after dasera, of her pleadings with him. They sang not only of the rich enjoyments of the Sardar, but also of his refusal to be tempted into delaying his departure, of his pride and his loyalty to his lord and master's cause.

As is natural with the Indian mind, Shaheer poetry was also used for Vedanta and allegorical presentation of philosophic problems in the later days of the Peshwas. Metaphysical riddles, exposition of the relation of Atma, the individual soul and Paramatma, the Universal Soul or the devotee and God in the amorous fashion of the Lavani, became very common. It was obvious that degeneration had set in. Metaphysical acumen was getting blunt. Devotional urge was on the wane and the nerve and vigour of a soldier's life was also getting lost. Literature was settling down to the leisurely luxuriousness and erudite ornateness of the later days of the Peshwas.

Marathi biographical verse dates back to the days of Jnanadeva. It centres chiefly round the lives of saints in the early days. Prose works of this kind date back to the beginning of Mahanubhava literature. In verse, the life of Jnanadeva written by Sachchidananda Baba, a contemporary of Jnanadeva, is the first noteworthy attempt of the kind. It was followed by the lives of Namdeva, Eknath, Dasopant, Ramdas, Tukaram and others, written by various writers. There are a few autobiographies also. Most of the attempts are rudimentary. They do not show much care or authenticity in material. Many also verge on the marvellous. However, this type of writing acquired a literary form and flavour only with the works

of Mahipati, a poet of the days of the Peshwas. In his life of Tukaram, he took the trouble of reading original sources and collecting information from the relatives of the saint. He also wrote the lives of a number of other saints. His *Bhakta-leelamrita* is still read very widely in simple orthodox Marathi homes. These works, simple to imitate, brought forth a crop of followers.

Peshwa prose continued and developed the patterns of the early Marathi prose. The Peshwas had Bakharkars in their employ. Well-written accounts of various contemporary events, narratives of historical events of the days of Shivaji and collection and re-writing of old bakhars continued. The first of the bakhars of the days of the Peshwas is one known as 'Shiv-Digvijaya' written in 1718. There are five bakhars on the tragic event of the Battle of Panipat. The best of them is known as the "*Bakhar of Bhausaheb*". It was written in chaste, poignant prose, with a vividness of description and great emotive power. The autobiography of Nana Phadnavis is the first of its kind and a gem of the prose of this period. Many bakhars were written under the auspices of the various Maratha Sardars like the Bhonslas.

A bird's eyeview of the long period from the beginnings of Marathi literature in the Yadav period to the Peshwa period would easily reveal that like most other Indian literatures, it was mainly concerned with the propagation of religious ideas and philosophical exposition. Poetry devoted itself solely to this. It was the only armour for the Marathi mind during the onslaught of Muslim rulers and their religion. When kings and warriors failed to protect them, when the administrators went over to the conquerors, the morale of the people was maintained in this religious and metaphysical poetry. It was the only power which not only maintained the traditions of the language but also enriched it. It was the sole repository of their thought and culture. When better days dawned, it spread itself out with greater assurance and embraced the material life of the people in the poetry of erudite pandits and the shaheers. Saints, pandits and shaheers are, thus the three major types of poets till the days of the Peshwas. Marathi prose began as early as the days of the Mahanubhavas. It soon acquired a good power of description

and exposition. In the Bahamani Period, the language underwent a strong Persian influence. The vocabulary, especially administrative, became predominantly Persian but a chastening took place during the period of Shivaji. Prose of the period of the Peshwas as found in Bakhars, informative books on astronomy, medicine, horse-lore, administration and other such subjects reveals its growing power. All these trends, however, suffered a great set-back with the third battle of Panipat.

The Modern Period.

Part I	...	1818-1874
Part II	...	1874-1920
Part III	...	1920-1947

The decay of the Maratha power set in with the battle of Panipat (1761). The process was completed by the Treaty of Bassein, with the British (1818). The vitality of the people had been completely drained off during this long process of decline ranging over fifty years. Society disintegrated, no centre of devotion and loyalty remained. Traditions were lost and all the currents of literature dried up. It was a lifeless Maharashtra that fell into the hands of the British.

It must be said to the credit of the early British administrators that they followed a culturally benevolent and educationally sound policy from 1818-1854. Men with a fairly humanistic approach and rare acumen like Elphinstone and Malcolm were at the helm of affairs in the Bombay Presidency. They believed in the vital importance of the language of the people even to the extent of urging its use as the medium of instruction. Elphinstone encouraged the old-fashioned pundits and shastris, and got them together under his patronage. The first Marathi grammar and the first Marathi dictionary were compiled by them in 1829. The Bombay Native Education Society and the Dakshina Prize Committee were formed. A stream of translations of books of various kinds and on various subjects followed. It was a new kind of Marathi no doubt. It had broken away from its rich ancient tradition. Indeed, all traditions were forgotten. The Englishmen laboured

under the impression that they were for the first time giving a systematic basis to an undeveloped language, and the Marathi people themselves were still too benumbed to remind themselves of their heritage. Yet, the credit of correct educational perspective must be given to these early administrators. The history of education and literature in India would perhaps have been very different if this policy had continued. But what is known as Macaulay's Minute of 1854, brought about a great change and a new system of education was established in India. It made it still more difficult for the Marathi people to revive their traditions or remind themselves of their heritage. They ploughed the barren furrough of imitation and translation of tenth rate English works. The Christian missionaries contributed a good deal to this kind of literature. Under their influence, new forms of literature, characteristic of the West, were created in Marathi and the older forms underwent a metamorphosis. The form and nature of poetry changed. The Novel and the Essay came into existence.

In the long run, however, even this process of the spread of education had its own beneficial effect. A new consciousness was created at least among some of those educated in the new fashion. A keen sense of self-respect, love for their literature and pride in their own tradition was created in the minds of these very persons who were sought to be fed upon a foreign lore and foreign literature. Such were the pioneers who established various periodicals round about 1840 and made great efforts to re-orient the Marathi minds. Balshastri Jambhekar started the daily paper '*Darpan*' and a periodical '*Digdarshan*' in 1840 ; Mahajan started '*Prabhakar*'; Joshi, the '*Jnan Chadrodaya*'. These writers gave a new turn to thought, roused public opinion to a new consciousness of their heritage, warned people about the true import of missionary activities and tried to direct all efforts towards reform and revival of their own culture. Krishnashastri Chiplunkar, who started the paper '*Vichar-Lahari*' in 1852 and Viṣhnuboa Brahmachari, a spirited defender of Hinduism, Lok Hitavadi or Gopal Hari Deshmukh, a keen critic of the ignorance and lethargy of his people, enriched this trend further. These writers laid the foundations of Marathi journalism

very securely. Their keen sense of self-respect and awareness of their heritage, the devotion to learning, their zeal for reform combined with a consciousness of the failings of their people made them eminently capable of not only laying the foundation of journalism, but of heralding a new age in Maharashtra. It will be convenient to consider the literature of this age according to different forms.

MODERN MARATHI PROSE

The Essay

Pioneers of Modern Maharashtra, like Jambhekar, Agarkar, Chiplunkar, Lok-Hitvadi, used the essay as their chief instrument of a social change. They made the beginnings of a new prose and brought the essay in Marathi. Their efforts yielded rich fruit in the writings of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar. His '*Nibandh-Mala*' started publication in 1874. He saw that the urgent need of the hour was to rouse the people to a sense of self-respect. The fledgeling graduates that the new anglicised universities were turning out, were left totally in darkness of their own traditions. They imbibed a great admiration for all that was Western, learnt to look down upon all Hindu ways and ideas and took pride in imitating the British. Vishnushastri launched a severe and persistent attack upon these tendencies. Sometimes he was one-sided and irrational, sometimes he was harshly unfair to keen reformers like Lok Hitvadi, who stressed only the ignorance and superstition into which our people had fallen and directed their attention to the great things that had to be urgently learnt from the rulers. But Chiplunkar's satire and invective, the learned dignity of his style, the fund of information and thorough knowledge of Sanskrit and Marathi literature thrilled the contemporary reader. His articles were like a clarion call to somnolent orthodoxy and also to the newly educated minds, which were slipping unawares into a deep servitude to the foreigners. Krishnashastri, his father, wrote in a quiet and restrained style. But the articles of Vishnushastri are full of a militant vigour and urgency. Vishnushastri, however, was in no way a reactionary or obscurantist. He urged the adoption of a scientific attitude, wrote on the development of language and literature, about a proper perspective regard-

ing religion, and almost every problem confronting contemporary cultural life. He ceased publishing the *Nibandhmala* after a few years, when he founded the *Kesari* and Maratha newspapers which later attained all-India importance in the hands of Lokmanya Tilak. But, in its life of a few years, *Nibandhmala* rendered such service that the modern period of Marathi literature is considered to begin from the date of its publication. It richly deserves to be known as the corner-stone of modern Marathi prose. The versatility of thought and variety of style ranging from a rich sonorousness to scathing sarcasm and rapier-like wit, the purity of diction and finely-welded structure of the essays in it have naturally accorded to it that important place.

Chiplunkar's great contemporary Agarkar was not less militant and patriotic but he was more deeply influenced by the best in Western liberalism. He imbibed its spirit of individualism and especially dominant ideas of the emancipation of women. He directed his energies towards social reform rather than towards the creation of consciousness of cultural slavery. He was equally a master of invective, but his approach was always rational and progressive. He wrote fearlessly on the need of sweeping away untouchability, on the spread of education, especially among women, on widow-remarriage, on reformed ways of dress and even on socialism and birth-control in those days of ignorance and prejudice. He had to suffer intensely for this, but he did not flinch from his mission. All that he wrote is characterised by a crystal-clear sincerity and reasoned emotion. His style is chaste and dignified. His thought is fearlessly original but always weighed and seasoned with the knowledge of philosophy. He was the first of a brilliant line of rationalist social reformers and intellectuals of Maharashtra—a group consisting of stalwarts like Justice Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Jyotiba Phule, the first of the non-Brahman writers of the modern age, belongs to the group of social reformers, but is a class by himself. He was a great advocate of the equality of classes, of the education of women, of the need of a re-orientation of scriptures and religious customs. He was the first to raise his voice for the

emancipation of the depressed classes and began his efforts as early as 1841. He wrote in a style of his own, which was not as chastened and seasoned as that of Chiplunkar or Agarkar, but which could equal their power of invective and satire.

Chiplunkar founded a powerful school of thought and a group of essayists and treatise writers followed him, consisting of writers like Gole, V.K. Rajwade, S.M. Paranjpe, C. V. Vaidya. Each had his own individuality, style of expression, and even choice of subjects. Rajwade and Vaidya, for instance, concentrated on historical research, S.M. Paranjpe on spirited political writing. They also turned their attention towards literary criticism. All the strains of essays found in the essays of Chiplunkar were developed by these writers in the decades that followed.

The greatest of this line was Lokmanya Tilak. He was the greatest in the sweep and depth of thought, in his versatility, his closely reasoned style, even in the comprehensiveness and volume of his writings. His leading articles in the *Kesari* were written for the hour but are a lasting treasure of Marathi literature. They gave a power and a seasoned form to the essay. He wrote in a direct, unornamented style which vividly reflects his integrity and straightforwardness. This was indeed the Golden Age of Marathi Prose.

This type of informative and argumentative essay continues upto date. Sawarkar's impassioned prose, N.C. Kelkar's versatility, V.M. Joshi's philosophical equipoise have nourished and developed its trend. Jawadekar, Laxmanshastri Joshi and a host of other learned writers weild this powerful organ of thought with great effect and usefulness. Some Gandhian thinkers like Acharya Vinobaji and Dada Dharmadhikari have given it a different depth and simplicity.

A new trend in this old type of essays was created by S. K. Kolhatkar in the early years of the twentieth century. He began writing humorous articles under the caption 'Sudamayache Pohe' which were later collected in a volume called "*Sahitya Battishi*". In their skilful synthesis of rollicking humour, and keen social satire, they are the first of their kind in Marathi. Kolhatkar seems to have learnt a good deal from the Addisonian method of creation of

humorous characters and placing them in comic situations. But his *Sudama* and *Bandunana* and others are by no means a mere imitation of the Addisonian Roger De Coverley. His criticism of Hindu festivities and rituals is much too keen and effective for the Addisonian pattern. He wrote in a free and hearty and keenly intellectual style. These essays laid securely the foundations of Marathi humour, which was till then balancing itself hesitatingly on either stories from ancient sources of folk-lore or translations from English. With the advent of Kolhatkar's humorous essays a stream of humour was opened up, which has become an outstanding characteristic of Marathi literature. The tradition was more than maintained by his successor Ram Ganesh Gadkari in similar essays, and is being carried on in those of C.V. Joshi, Limaye, Tamhankar and others upto date. The youngest of these humorists is P. L. Deshpande with a couple of volumes already to his credit.

The post-Tilak age in Maharashtra is in many ways the age of mediocrity. But it is also an age of fine craftsmanship, sophistication and delicate emotionalism. It is the age of the creation of many new and delicate varieties of older forms. The short literary essay and the short story are the most outstanding of these. Although the old type of informative essay continues upto date round about 1925, the short essay or the literary essay came into being. The sweep and nerve of thought found in the essay of the days of Chiplunkar, Agarkar, Tilak is attenuated in a witty personalness, a cultivation of grace and lucidity and the choice of common subjects of everyday middle-class life. N. S. Phadke and V. S. Khandekar are the first writers of this kind of modern essay, cast in the mould of English essayists like A. G. Gardiner, Chesterton and others. Wit and humour, delicacy of sentiment, a feeling for Nature, an insight into the significance of common things characterise this essay. The older essay sought to convince, to propagate ideas, to establish theories. It considered the pros and cons, it sought to be comprehensive and conclusive. The modern essay is different in its interest, nature and objective. It reflects only a whim, expresses a mood. It seeks to surprise by the revelation of the uncommon in the commonplace. Some of the modern

writers depend on sheer playful fancy, others reach a deeper level of sympathetic interpretation of the apparently commonplace. But they are all graceful and delicate in style, rich in the expression of personality and yet wide in appeal. Along with Phadke and Khandekar, many others like Anant Kanekar, Dandekar, Sant, Joshi, Dodke, Shantaram have enriched this form. It is one of the most popular and also the most modernised forms. The humorous essay of P. L. Deshpande and others is a contemporary to this type and belongs to it in technique and approach.

Other forms of Prose

The Essay, however, is only one of the forms of Marathi prose. Philosophical treatises, books on social and physical sciences, literary and historical research, biography and auto-biography, are being written in good numbers and with improving quality throughout the period. Lokmanya Tilak's *Gita-Rahasya* may be described as one of the best representatives of such books. Different series of publications in various parts of Maharashtra, like the *Sulabh Grantha Mala*, in which some of the seasoned books of Acharya Jawadekar have been published, the *Nava Bharat Granthamala*, which extends over subjects like Ancient Indian Educational System, Rajya-Shastra, the History of the Rajputs, the Development of Child Mind and others—such series together with the large number of private publishers are rendering great service to the spread of this "Literature of Knowledge". Historical writing is a forte of the Marathi mind. It began with the translation of Grant Duff's *Maratha Bakhar* by Capin and Sane. But the first original work is to be found in 1867 in the critical articles of young Nilkantrao Kirtane, on Grant Duff's treatment of Maratha History. Kirtane continued his work in editing and publishing the *Chitnis Bakhar*. Justice Ranade and Dr. Sir R. G. Bhandarkar were great and thorough students of history. Their writings are in English, but they greatly helped the progress and interest in history and historical research. A good deal of historical material in the form of old records and letters were collected in the years that followed and published in a series running into more than a dozen volumes called "*Marathyanchya Itihasachi Sadhane*." The

prince of Marathi historical writings is G. S. Sardesai with his volumes of work on the Moghul, the Maratha and the British periods. Many young writers are straining themselves to keep up his tradition.

Biography

Biographical writing in prose, as we have seen before, was as ancient as the earliest Mahanubhav texts. In verse, it is as old as Mahipati, to say nothing of the tentative efforts of his predecessors. But like many other branches of Modern Marathi prose, biographical writings in the British period began with the establishment of the Dakshina Prize Committee and its efforts for getting new types of educative books published. These early biographical sketches were mostly elementary. Many were about foreign worthies, written with a view of educating the Marathi people and hence rather crudely didactic. They hardly aimed at creating a central figure or giving an idea of the personality of the subject. But some of them like *Ramdas Swami* by Choubal and *Vishnuboa Brahmachari* by Ajrekar are noteworthy. After this, biographies of various types came to be written. These were the very short and simple sketches, mostly of foreign worthies by Vinayak Kondev Oka, the patriotic sketches of Maratha heroes by Dhanurdhari or Tikekar. But the life of Dr. Johnson written by Vishnushastri Chiplunkar set up a different standard. The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 gave a further fillip to development of political thought and interest in freedom movements elsewhere. *Garibaldi* by N. C. Kelkar and *Mazzini* by Sawarkar are illustrious examples of lives of such political heroes. Lives of literary men and saints also became the order of the day. These reveal a growing consciousness of the need of evaluating facts and sifting them from superstition. The same was the case with historical biographies. Some skill in character portrayal and creation of personality was also palpable. The biographies were no longer merely informative and moralistic. B. A. Bhide, Pangarkar and Ajgaonkar rendered great service in the line of lives of saints. This work is being carried on, on a more rationalistic and scienti-

fically historical basis by writers of today like N. R. Phatak, Dr. Pendse and Dr. Kolte. The biographies of the earlier years of the twentieth century show a distinct progress in the handling of historical material. The attention of biographers was also directed towards contemporary figures. Lokmanya Tilak naturally proved a worthy and favourite subject. The voluminous and well-documented biography written by N. C. Kelkar, the great lieutenant and follower of Lokmanya, is a monument to the greatness of the leader, as well as to the thorough knowledge of contemporary affairs of the writer. It is almost a history of the time of which Lokmanya Tilak was the central figure.

With the widening of the horizons of thought in the twentieth century, the range of subjects of biography has increased. The vision of the biographers now reaches all lands and all times. Its informative scope has increased but, it cannot be said that the art has reached greater heights or depths. Attempts have also been made towards a new type of biography of modern literary men as for instance in Khanolkar's book on Madhaorao Patwardhan. But nothing has yet been achieved of the kind or the level of the biographical writing of an Emil Ludwig or Lytton Strachey or Andre Maurois.

The field of auto-biography has been less productive in quantity, but has reached a higher quality. Even during the Peshwa period, Nana Phadanavis wrote his auto-biography which is known to be remarkable in its frankness and self-criticism. In the early days of the British, Vishnuboa Brahmachari affixed an auto-biographical sketch to his book '*Vedokta Dharma Prakash*'. Baba Padamanji, the author of the first Marathi social novel, has also written his own life-story upto the time of his conversion to Christianity. Dadoba Pandurang, a lover of literature and a grammarian of the early British days, wrote his biography which has been re-published now with a very comprehensive introduction by a present-day renowned research-worker Priyolkar. But the finest of this species is to be found in Ramabai Ranade's '*Some memories of our life*'. This book still stands unequalled in its crystalline reflection of a rare personality, in the

subtle expression of the supreme devotion of a wife to her husband, suggested in the description of various incidents and in the approach of the whole book, in the utter simplicity and spontaneity of its style. Notable men of modern times like Maharshi Karve and Dharmarand Kosambi have added worthily to this form. But again the next high watermark comes from a woman writer, Laxmibai Tilak, the wife of the poet Narayan Waman Tilak. With its expanse of four graceful volumes, Laxmibai ranges over their life full of the orthodoxy of the older generation, the eccentricities of her husband gifted with a genius, a generosity, and extreme impracticalness, and the saving grace of her own wonderful sense of humour and patience. Of a very different type are the autobiography of Sawarkar and his '*Life Sentence*' (*Janma-Thep*) with their powerful style, rare experience and dispassionate yet poignant attitude. Kelkar's own life-story '*Gata-Goshti*' is in many respects a better work than his *Tilak-Charitra*. His daughter Dr. Kamalabai Deshpande has also written about her own life—with its first part as delicate as a dream and its latter half clouded over by the conflicts and worries of an institution. A number of literary autobiographical sketches, like '*Don Tape*' by Madkholkar, '*Our Eleven Years*' by Mrs. Patwardhan, '*Prison Walls*' by Gore have also enriched the form. However, it must be admitted that much remains to be done, especially in the line of biography.

The Novel and the Short Story

The Novel. The Marathi Novel may be said to have just completed a century of growth. Its beginnings are to be found in the translations published before 1850 of English novels like *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels* during the period of anglicised neo-Marathi. The first original attempt was made by Baba Padmanji in his '*Yamuna Paryatan*' (1857) or the '*Journeys of Yamuna*'. This deals with the social problem of the condition of widows in Hindu society. It shows a fair amount of skill in characterisation and depiction of social background and in its simple and racy style. But the Marathi readers of its day do not seem to have taken very kindly to it. This may have been due to the fact that the latter

half of the book is burdened with Christian propaganda and the language too savours of the strange anglicised dialect by the early Christian missionaries.

A different trend, more deep-rooted in Marathi literary traditions was started by a school of Pandits like Halbe and Risbud. Their novels '*Muktamala*', '*Manju-Ghosha*', '*Ratna-Prabha*', '*Vasant-Kokila*' and others follow the pattern of Banbhattacha's Sanskrit novel '*Kadambari*' from which the species of Marathi novel has also taken its name. The style of these novels is highly Sanskritised. Their approach is didactic and the stories are romantic. There is little attempt at characterisation. It amounts to portrayal in sheer monochrome. The 'good' are purely good and the 'bad' are abnormally bad. The main appeal lies in a rich Sanskritised style, romantic description and didactic sermons. These stories rendered an invaluable service to the Marathi language in maintaining its literary heritage during an age of onslaught from a hybrid, anglicised, neo-Marathi. This trend cannot, however, be called a narrow puristic trend for it incorporated within it a stream of Persian influence. Translations of Persian and Arabic stories like the '*Bakhtyarnama*', '*Hatimtai*', '*Arabian Nights*' had already appeared and influenced the taste of the Marathi reader. The craving for romantic improbabilities evinced in novels like '*Manjughosha*', '*Ratna-prabha*' may be traced to such influence.

The two currents of the realism and the sincerity of Padmanji, and the highbrow but rich and unrealistic didacticism of the Pandit school were enriched by the additional one of the historical novel in 1870. '*Mochangad*', a novel about the early days of Shivaji was written by Gunjekar in 1871. It is remarkably vivid and effective in its simplicity. But both the historical and social novel was yet awaiting the masterly touch of a truly creative artist. They found one in Hari Narayan Apte.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was, as we have seen, an era of a great awakening in Maharashtra. It was the age of the generous liberalism of Gokhale and Agarkar. It was also the age of the ardent nationalism of Lokmanya Tilak. The genius of Hari Narayan Apte synthesised these two powerful trends in his

creative work. He wrote historical novels like '*Ushah Kal*', '*Gad Ala Pan Sinha Gela*', '*Surya Graham*' and others, which are based on the history of the Marathas and are inspired with their sense of loyalty, their daring and unity. He made skilful use of whatever historical material was available to him in those days and transmuted it into a living monument of the Maharashtra of those days. At the same time, for about 40 years during 1880 to 1917, he poured forth a series of social novels that present the various aspects of Marathi middle-class life of his own generation. The joys and sorrows of family life, its complexities and its simple varieties, the narrowness that besets it, the selfless love and grace which redeems it are vividly portrayed in his novels like '*Pan Lakshat Kon Gheta*', '*Mee*', '*Yeshwant-rao Khare*', '*Mayecha Bajar*' and others. This series which he called '*Aj-Kalchya Goshti*' (Stories of Today and Yesterday) consists of about fifteen novels. These stories do not only portray Marathi social life of the day ; they are infused with a social idealism which has played a significant part in moulding Marathi thought and life. Hari Narayan also contributed richly to the development of chaste and simple Marathi style.

There arose many imitators of the Apte manner and attitude. Warerkar is one of the most eminent. His novels continue the tradition of clear picturisation of social trends and a synthesis of realism and idealism. His problems and his heroines have a modernity that is natural in most cases. But their level was not maintained by other writers of the school. They only helped this type of novel to disintegration. The deep sympathy and social insight of Hari Narayan dwindled into sentimentalism, his idealism degenerated into didacticism. A new vision, however, arose again in the field of Marathi novel with '*Ragini*', the first novel of Waman Malhar Joshi. It made a fresh attempt, not only to portray and interpret the changed pattern of Marathi family life, and the new social status of women, but it infused a strain of intellectuality and dignity of thought. Joshi's other two well-known novels '*Sushilecha Dev*' and '*Indu Kale*' and '*Sarala Bhole*' are as much experiments in interpreting the idealism, the philosophic beliefs and social revolution of a generation as experiments in the technique

of novel-writing. Dr. Kelkar was a worthy contemporary of Waman Malhar. He treated the craft of novel-writing very lightly and took to it only as a pastime. But he used the medium successfully to place before Marathi readers many structural and inherent problems of Indian society. His early novels suffer from a heaviness and strange alienness of style. His characters too are unnatural and stiff. But he achieved a vividness of characterisation and naturalness of style in '*Brahman Kanya*' without sacrificing his intellectuality or social analysis.

Round about 1920, there was great growth in the Marathi reading public. Periodicals of many kinds and of varied intellectual levels came into being and the field of fiction was also enlarged. Narayan Hari Apte—who, incidentally is neither a son nor the literary heir of Hari Narayan,—Nath Madhav, Hadap, Altekar, Tuljapurkar and a number of others swelled the tide of the Marathi novel. Some enriched its variety and purposefulness, others added to its power of entertainment and popularity.

The demands of the extended reading public were supplied by a rich stream of translations too. This stream as we saw was in existence since the beginning of the Marathi novel. It has continued throughout the decades. During the earlier stages, the choice usually fell upon didactic stories in English. Later, with a growing consciousness of the other Indian languages and the beginnings of novel in Gujarati with *Karan Ghelo* in 1868 and in Bengali with Bakimchandra's *Durgeshnandini* in 1864, the attention of Marathi writers was turned towards these also. The first translation of *Saraswati Chandra* By Govardhan Ram appeared in 1892 and the first of '*Anand Math*' by Bankimchandra in 1898. After these writers like Wasudeo Govind Apte, Vithal Sitaram Gurjar, K. R. Mitra, have kept a steady flow of such works in Marathi. The field of choice has expanded with the widening of the horizon in modern times. It has stretched to most of the major Indian languages and many European ones, chiefly through English. The greatest achievement in the field of translation from another Indian language is Warerkar's translation of all the novels of Sharatchandra.

In the way of influence too the Bengali novel seems to have exerted the most. Round about 1925, a good number of more or less mediocre writers came under it. The short story was perhaps influenced more than the novel. But the major stream of Marathi novel has gone its own way.

The writers who stand foremost and set their distinctive stamp upon the Marathi novel during 1925-40 are Phadke, Deshpande, Khandekar, Madkholkar. Phadke believes that pleasure is the prime objective of all art. He has been a consistent upholder of the principle of 'Art for Art's sake' and has applied himself steadily and successfully to the refinement of the technique of Marathi novel. His novels like '*Jadugar*' created a new standard of technical skill. He has facility of style and considerable skill of character-portrayal. He has kept a steady flow of novels since the 1920s and has by now written about thirty. He has created a variety of upper middle class characters enveloped in a romantic atmosphere. In some novels like '*Pravasi*', '*Uddhar*' '*Jhelum*' there is a shadow of political or psychological problems. But it is never more than a shadow. He has created an almost overwhelming taste for escapism.

The novels of Khandekar present a contrast to those of Phadke in many respects. If Phadke has always been a conscious craftsman, aiming at pleasing his readers, Khandekar's work has been inspired by an idealism that is usually too heavy for characterisation. His style is also burdened by an artificiality and decorativeness. But he has kept abreast of the modern trends of thought and is keenly conscious of their effect on contemporary Marathi life. This may be said to be his forte. His novels like '*Ulka*', '*Krauncha-Vadh*' are landmarks in the history of modern Marathi novel.

Madkholkar's first novel '*Muktama*' is said to be the first political novel in Marathi, though, actually the type dates back to '*Ajach*' or '*Karma-Yog*' by Hari Narayan Apte. Madkholkar has been well-acquainted as a journalist with current political events and forces and personalities connected with them. He has made a profuse use of these in his stories, but his work lacks in a consistent or positive political ideology which could have vitalised these

events in the novels. An urbane Sanskritised style is his outstanding achievement. His best novel '*Chandanvadi*' presents a finely sympathetic portrait of a harijan girl from the industrial areas of Nagpur.

Purushottam Yashwant Deshpande's novels strike a somewhat different note from most of these. They are characterised by a strongly individualistic note. They are intense in emotion and reach deeper into the recesses of individual experience. His first novel '*Bandhanachya Palikade*' affords a portrayal of idealistic love and the urge for individual freedom. It created quite a sensation when it was published. His later novel '*Vishal-Jeevan*' gives an analysis of the effects of political trends and events on the individual mind. This analysis in the first-half of the novel is more skilful and true than that found in most Marathi novels. An individualistic attitude and intensity of feeling is at once the strength and weakness of Deshpande's work.

Besides these, writers like Raghuvir Samant, Sane, Bokil, Kawathekar have swelled the tide of the Marathi novel. They may not have gained as much critical notice as the former class, but they have a large class of readers. Samant is well-known for a quiet portrayal of domestic life. The writings of Sane—popularly known as Sane Guruji—have become a byword for softness, sentimentalism and a humanity that is usually too sugary. He is very widely read by the adolescent. Bokil strikes a different vein by his humour and satire. Most of these writers, and especially Bokil, make for a reaction against the Phadke school. This novel breaks away from the romantic tradition presenting the hero and heroine with a halo of noble virtues or aristocratic affluence. It also turns away from the easy and superficial idealism of Khandekar. These novels do not always maintain a high level of characterisation; they are often vitiated by an exaggerated light-heartedness or a distorted view of life. But attempt at a return towards realism is a welcome change.

Two women writers, Vibhavari Shirurkar and Geeta Sane contributed richly to this vein. The contribution of women to the Marathi novel dates back to the 1870s. Salubai Tambwekar wrote

‘Chandraprabha Viraha Varnan’—a novel of the Pandit school of *‘Mukta Mala’*. Most of the work of women novelists suffers from imitation of the traditions set up by men, but almost every novel, also shows traces of feeling and observation which only a woman’s heart and a woman’s eye is capable of. These form the vital parts of their work. They grow with the emancipation and education of women. The first part of Kashibai Kanetkar’s *‘Palkhicha Gonda’* gives a vivid example of how truly and how simply a woman who had come into her own could write. Work of this kind has not been plentiful but its tradition has been maintained upto date. The spontaneous sincerity of most of these was enriched by an intellectuality and an analytical realism by Vibhavari Shirurkar and Geeta Sane. Vibhavari Shirurkar’s *‘Bali’* (1950) ventures out boldly beyond the field of women’s life. It may safely be described as the finest novel of the last five years. It affords a finely sensitive portrayal of a young lad of a criminal tribe against the background of the conflict of values and ideologies in modern life.

The Marathi novel has gained in scope and variety during the last ten years. Rural life, with depiction of the life of aboriginals like Bhils, is a special feature of the novels of R. W. Dighe. His description of monsoons and harvests, floods and mountain life together with the unsophisticated emotions of tribal people have given a new flavour to the novel. Shreedhar Deshpande belongs to the Phadke school in technique, but he has also expanded the scope of the novel by locating many of his stories beyond Maharashtra. Bedekar wrote only one novel—*‘Ranangana’*, but it has a place by itself on account of its international canvas and skilful technique. Its sincerity and deep humanism are unmistakable. Thokal is well-known for his portrayal of rural life. The events of 1942 have provided vital material for some fairly successful novels. Shirwadkar’s *‘Vaishnava’* uses these as a background for the portrait of a simple, diffident school-teacher. After 1940, a growing strain of socio-economic thought is visible in portrayal of character and background. But this new element has yet to be assimilated in the novel. It often proves too heavy for technical excellence.

1950 may be taken as the latest landmark. It saw the publica-

tion of Vibhawari Shirurkar's '*Bali*', Biwalkars' '*Suneeta*'—a story of Noakhali, written with a rare degree of experience, sympathy and technical skill, has also made history. S. N. Pendse is producing novels like '*Elgar*', '*Haddapar*', '*Garambicha Babu*' which seem to be growing in power and maturity. His stories are located in Konkan and are steeped with a rich knowledge and a feeling for the land and its people. His sole and deepest concern, however, is the simple, lonely individual man.

The Marathi novel has thus a history of a century. It had a varied course. It stormed through the rocks of didacticism and decorativeness to reach the expanse and profundity of the work of Apte. Writers of the twenties and thirties gave it a grace of form and expression, experimented with topics and content and added to its rich significance. It appears to be moving towards greater depth and expanse in the fifties.

The Short Story. The trends in the short story of the early days and the influences that operated upon it, are almost of the same kind as those in the field of the novel. It was ushered in on a stream of translations ; it was didactic in its nonage, and gradually acquired a form during the days of Hari Narayan Apte. But even Apte's stories cannot be properly called short stories. They are novelettes or short narratives, rather than 'short stories' in the precise modern sense. They were known as 'Sphuta Goshti' and not 'Laghu Katha' as the modern short story is now called. They used to consist of a longish narrative of a series of events concerning some persons. Or, sometimes they gave a depiction of certain memorable circumstances and events as in Apte's portrayal of the days of plague and famine. Many of his successors like Paranjpe, Kolhatkar, Kelkar, Joshi tried their hands at this form. But the truly modern short story came into existence only with the work of Phadke. Although he began writing in the old fashion, he gradually moved towards the new pattern with a precise and single core, neat construction and a polished style. Khandekar's stories added to the emotional richness and variety of canvas. He introduced the use of a poetic symbolism too, but it is perhaps a doubtful gain, for it inculcated a strain of artificiality. A different turn was given to the form by

Diwakar Krishna with his introspective emotionalism. The inner life of the characters concerned acquired a greater delicacy and importance. Round about 1930 this introspective delicacy was further enriched by the women-writers Kamalabai Tilak, Krishnabai and Vibhavari Shirurkar. Shirurkar introduced a strong vein of social revolt too. The field of the short story has since widened and deepened in many ways with the regionalism of Laxmanrao Sardesai, the simple domesticity of Y. G. Joshi, the varied humanism of Samant or the sentimental didacticism of N. H. Apte and others. A new turn, however, was again given to the form by Chorghade, Prabhakar, Padhye and others. Their story stands out by its poetic quality, its subjectivity and its synthesis of portrayal and analysis. It eliminates the narrative element to a very great extent. It catches a situation and unravels the skeins of thought and feeling. This is done by Chorghade by means of symbolism and suggestivity, by Padhye and others by analysis and poetic description.

Since the forties, a further 'change has come over the form. The short story of today has acquired a deeper psychological vein. It is almost a varied stream of consciousness woven around a situation. Sometimes, as in Arvind Gokhale's stories, it reveals a delicacy of emotion and humanism, a gossamer like feeling for Nature. Sometimes, as in Gangadhar Gadgil's stories, it turns a keenly observant eye on the details of metropolitan life with its inhibitions and temptations, its complexities and bitterness. In Bhave's work, it acquires a passionate freedom and a profusion of expression. Madgulkar specialises in the depiction of village life, where he moves with a rare ease, and knowledge and penetrative power: Each one of these has a style of his own. Gokhale's is significant and chaste, delicate in its precision. Gadgil's is somewhat profuse and analytical with an aptitude for a crowd of significant images. Bhave loves words, often for themselves, but at other times uses them with a good deal of emotive power. He and Gadgil are inclined to be cynical in their attempts to expose the hypocrisy and degenerateness of modern times. The short story of today has certainly developed into a powerful weapon for

the quick and sharp depiction of the shams and shackles of contemporary life. Such a large number of writers with a point of view, a chosen field of observation and a noticeable skill in portraiture have taken to this form that it is not easy to map out all the trends. It is growing in its variety and dynamic power.

The Drama

Like English Drama, Marathi drama has its origin in a certain kind of religious celebration. The 'Gondhalis' and 'Bahurupis' used to present semi-dramatic or crudely dramatic performances based on myths and stories from *Puranas*. They were called 'Lalit'. This type gradually crystallised into a slightly more dramatic form. The earliest examples of this type are found not in Maharashtra proper, but in Tanjore, a small Maratha kingdom which had developed from a Jehagir of Shahaji, the father of Shivaji. Shivaji's step-brother Vyankoji and his successors are well-known for their patronage of arts and letters. Some stories of Sanskrit plays written for the benefit of these kings are extant. At a later date, Pauranik plays like '*Ganesh Leelarnava*', '*Ganga-Kaveri*' and others were composed by several authors, who remained unknown, and whose plays, it appears passed off under the names of the kings themselves. These plays are in a mixture of prose and verse and also contain songs known as 'Darawu', on account of the influence of the Tamil dramatic tradition. There are two types of a humorous dramatic Tamil form called 'Daur' and 'Korwaji' also found in these Tanjore plays.¹ Tamil plays have deeply influenced Marathi drama in its early stage. The tradition of these Tanjore plays seems to have travelled northwards towards Maharashtra proper, through Karnatak. A peripatetic group from North Karnatak known as Bhagwat Mandali visited the State of Sangli in 1843. It inspired Vishnudas Bhawe, who was till then engaged in puppet-shows illustrating Pauranic stories, to write the first Pauranic play. This was the origin of the modern Marathi Pauranic Play.

1 Tulpule : Supplement to Maharashtra Saraswat by Bhawe, p. 1006.

The first period of Marathi drama is almost wholly Pauranic. Vishnudas Bhave alone wrote about fifty such *Akhyanas*. The dramatist usually contented himself with writing the songs and verses and dialogue was made up impromptu or in rehearsals. Many companies sprang up, although the vocation of an actor was socially taboo. Soon these Pauranic plays were supplemented by a kind of prose playlet wrongly named a 'farce'. These had a wildly romantic or often a historical theme. Conditions changed rapidly with the spread of education, with the establishment of the Bombay University and its affiliated colleges, which became the home of the study of Sanskrit and English drama. A wave of translation of Sanskrit plays followed and about a decade after, of the translation of English plays, especially those of Shakespeare like *Othello*, (1861) *Tempest* and *Julius Caesar* (1872). Both these types of plays have wielded a very great influence over the Marathi play. This new learning, together with the growing consciousness of Indian tradition and history, led to the creation of the first full-fledged original play '*The Death of Madharao Peshwa*' (1861). It was written by Kirtane, the brother of the young writer who had distinguished himself by boldly challenging various points in the History of the Marathas written by Grant Duff. Kirtane had not only a historical acumen, but a dramatic talent. His feeling for Maratha history was as deep as his knowledge about it was. His play makes effective reading even now. His second play '*Jaypal*' is the prototype of the romantic comedy. The currents of both historical tragedy and romantic comedy thus originate in the work of Kirtane. The first social play '*Manorama*' was written by Bhajekar in 1871. '*Manorama*' by Mahadeo Balkrishna Chitale, alias Bhajekar, reveals a good deal of improvement in technique¹.

Marathi drama, however, came into its own with the days of Balwant Pandurang or Annasaheb Kirloskar. He began his dramatic experiments at the age of 23. He learnt all that there was to learn from the old Pauranic play, the 'farces' and also Urdu drama, and then he fashioned anew the modern Marathi play. He wrote only

¹ S.N. Banhatti : Marathi Drama and its Development. Pradakshina p. 165.

two-and-a-half plays, *Shakuntala* (1880), *Saubhadra* (1882), and *Ram Rajya Vijaya* (1884), but they not only laid the foundation of Marathi drama, they are a high watermark of its achievements. The themes of Kirloskar are obviously borrowed, one from Kalidas and the other two from the *Puranas*. The first is even a close rendering of Kalidasa's play. But Kirloskar has been very successful in his Marathi rendering. An additional source of beauty lies in his songs. *Saubhadra* stands at the very top of all Pauranic plays, in its delineation of character and its dramatic skill, in its synthesis of Pauranic atmosphere and romantic sentiment, in its intrigue and humour, in its refined artistry of structure. The beauty of songs is also there. It has been on the Marathi stage for the last seventy years and yet it suffers from no staleness or satiety. *Saubhadra* presents a remarkable synthesis of the Pauranic atmosphere and an almost modern content with its depiction of domestic relations. *Ramrajya Vijaya* remained incomplete, but yet has been staged often.

It is often believed that the main achievement of Kirloskar is the introduction of music on the stage. This is, however, a misconception. Marathi drama has had music in its veins since its birth for its origin is traced back to the '*Lalit*'. In the early days of the imitation and adaptation of Sanskrit plays the songs were monopolised by the Sutradhar alone. The '*Sangeet Natak*' came into being with the plays of Trilokekar in 1879. He even distributed the songs among most of the major characters. But Kirloskar raised the level and variety of music; his songs are more apt and delicate. This together with his other great dramatic qualities have earned him the title of the Father of the Marathi Drama.

The success of the '*Sangeet*' plays of Kirloskar created a craze. Many minor dramatists produced cheap and exaggerated imitations of Kirloskar plays. But the tradition was nourished by a gifted disciple of Kirloskar—G. B. Deval. He produced adaptations of three English plays, two of Sanskrit plays, another one based on *Kadambari*, but the most outstanding of the lot was '*Sharada*' his only original play which also happens to be the first full-fledged social play. His '*Sanshaya-Kallol*' a marvellous adaptation of an

English version of Moliere's play, has held the Marathi Stage upto date. His '*Mritchakatik*', a rendering of the Sanskrit classic is equally skilful and popular. But '*Sharada*' has given him a place of particular eminence in Marathi drama. Its theme is the vital one of the marriage of convenience of the young daughter of an avaricious man to an old tottering man ; its brilliantly-drawn characters have become proverbial for their social types. With its chaste homely style and lucid songs, Deval's *Sharada* is yet a great favourite of the Marathi play-goers. Not only that. The play brought about a change in the social role of drama. Unwittingly perhaps, it revealed the great power of the theatre as a means of progress and illumination ; it was no longer a source of merely refined collective amusement ; it became an organ of public opinion and also a powerful moulder of it. This power was richly utilized by K.P. Khadilkar, a few years later. Deval was immediately followed by S.K. Kolhatkar who also tried to interest himself in social problems, but did not quite succeed in it. He was cast in a more academic and imaginative mould. He was more deeply influenced by the Shakespearean play and the adaptation of Moliere than any of his predecessors. He raised dramatic humour to a level of intellectuality and refinement. His songs are carefully composed with a classical quality in their diction and musical setting. He wrote as many as twelve plays. His first one '*Vir-Tanaya*' was a prize-winner. But only two of these plays are occasionally revived now. His work is characterised by an original and imaginative plot and an imaginative treatment of characters, easy and witty dialogue and a sprinkling of liberal social ideas. His two tragedies '*Prem-Shodhan*' and '*Janma-Rahasya*' are perhaps the most successful of all his plays.

Khadilkar was a disciple of Tilak and a journalist. He had already acquired a name in extremist political writing before he turned his hand to play-writing. He was influenced by the Shakespearean play even more profoundly than Kolhatkar was. The Marathi stage of this time (1900-1905) was ringing with the great tragedies of Shakespeare. '*Vikar-Vilasit*', Agarkar's adaptation of *Hamlet* was the most successful of these. It was being presented, before thrilled audiences by an actor like Ganpatrao Joshi, who

had fascinated even Western critics. Khadilkar's mental set up was eminently fitted to imbibe the heroic grandeur, the idealism and deep emotion of those tragedies. His first play, '*The Death of Sawai Madhaorao*' reflects this refined influence. But, above all, he had a wonderful capacity of using Pauranic stories to symbolise a modern political or social context. '*Keechak-Wadh*' has a deep under-current of the political context of the bitter days of Lord Curzon. '*Bhaubandki*' symbolises and warns against internal schism, by the use of the story of the Peshwas. It is at once a historical and political play. '*Vidya-Haran*' depicts the very human struggle between love and honour in the story of Kacha and Devayani, but it holds the subtle suggestion of the temptations that lay in wait for the young mind venturing upon Western civilization or even the Western world. His '*Manapman*' is perhaps the only play which is purely romantic, but it is also characterised by idealism and deep feeling. Deep feeling and idealism are indeed the most outstanding qualities of Khadilkar. In his later days, he overdid his knack of using a Pauranic story to symbolise modern context. His plays became artificial. They were also weighed down by their music. They were written obviously and solely with the idea of giving full play to the musical gift of the celebrated actor of the times, Bal Gandharva. All the dramatic artistry of Khadilkar was sacrificed for this. But at his best, Khadilkar is one of the greatest creators of modern Marathi drama.

Kolhatkar and Khadilkar began their play-writing almost simultaneously. Khadilkar ruled over the stage for a longer period. But the next great dramatist, Ram Ganesh Gadkari draws more from the heritage of Kolhatkar's achievement than from that of Khadilkar. Gadkari, as a matter of fact, acknowledges Kolhatkar to be his Guru, in drama. He carries on the trend of original and imaginative plot-construction, an intellectual treatment of character, a style full of high conceit and poeticness. He develops the element of humour to a degree not yet found in Marathi drama. Gadkari's humour is both verbal and situational. It also often arises out of character-portrayal, and is sometimes based on natural short-comings of characters. His rich style, often alliterative, as much capable of

wit and sarcasm as a high poetic emotionalism is one of the achievements of the Marathi stage. It was very much overdone in his early stage and in a different way in his last incomplete historical play '*Raj-Sanyas*'. It is also felt that this style is not dramatic according to the true concept of a dramatic style, for it is not adapted to the needs of character-portrayal. But the best of Gadkari is characterised by a rich creativeness of language. His songs are worthy of the tradition of Kolhatkar.

Gadkari's dramatic work consists of four plays and a fifth incomplete one. His career was unfortunately cut short by an untimely death in 1920. His plays try to present social and moral problems. His plots and character-portrayal are, therefore, characterised by a psychological treatment. '*Prem-Sanyas*' or '*Renunciation of Love*' touches upon certain problems regarding marriage, like widow-remarriage and love-marriage. '*Punya-Prabhav*' tries to portray the effect of unflinching feminine chastity upon a villainous mind. '*Ekach Pyala*' is supposed to depict the ruin of a happy family by drink, but is more devoted to an idealistic portrayal of the loyalty of Sindhu to Sudhakar, in spite of his becoming a hard drunkard. Mere statement of the themes of Gadkari proves to be totally inadequate as an introduction to his plays, for they are essentially psychological and idealistic in grain. This basic conception and its powerful execution in a rich poetic and impassioned manner lend a grandeur and loftiness to both the characters and the plays. This impassioned quality is strong enough to cover the faults of construction, of the lack of verisimilitude and sense of proportion. His subplots and minor characters are inspired and saved by the quality of humour, even when they suffer from artificiality or even from a lack of *raison-de-etre*. Gadkari's plays are strongly individualistic in their approach towards life. Individualism is at once his strength and weakness. It gives him a deeper glimpse in the minds of his characters, but at the same time, one misses the broad social significance, the appeal of a broader and more vital context of life that one finds in Khadilkar's plays. This was the beginning of the decline of Marathi drama.

The years between 1915-1920 were those of the heyday of Marathi drama. It was a period of spirited idealism in all fields of life, learning and arts. The peak of this manifold idealism is represented in the plays of Khadilkar. The plays of his contemporaries Kolhatkar and Gadkari were also on the boards during this period. At the same time, a number of lesser dramatists of a more popular vein were also playing to thousands. Maharashtra had, as a matter of fact, become extremely play-minded during these years. Plays on the lives of saints, like '*Sant Sakhubai*' by H. N. Apte or '*Sant Bhanudas*' by N. C. Kelkar, fine historical plays like '*Shiv-Sambhava*' by Wasudeo Shastri Khare, '*Chandra-Grahan*' and '*Shah-Shivaji*' by Tipnis, '*Bebandshahi*' by Aundhkar and so many other social or romantic plays were being performed by various companies. The status of the actor and his social and intellectual level had also improved considerably. The Maharashtra Natak Mandali, which restricted itself to prose plays only as a matter of principle, rendered a specially noteworthy service in this matter. The Gandharva and Lalitkala companies, especially the former, came to be known for their enthralling music, luxurious equipment and almost aristocratic way of life. This was indeed the day of the glory of Marathi drama in all its aspects.

But, as always, this was also the beginning of its downfall. Excessive music in the plays led to a deterioration in dramatic taste and opened the path for the light-hearted and heterogenous entertainment of the film-world. The aristocratic ways of some companies led to their impoverishment. In the general wane of idealism in the post-Tilak age, the dignified repertory of the Maharashtra Natak Mandali ceased to appeal both to new talent and the new generation of audience. The Marathi stage fell on evil days.

The main prop of this stage during this period was the renewal of realism by Mama Warerkar. He began his career in the orthodox Pauranic fashion, with his '*Kunj-Vihari*'. But he was soon drawn to the realistic approach towards social problems in the tradition of '*Sharada*' of Deval. Even as in the novel, he picked up the thread of the social realism of Apte. He brought to this tradition a gift of humour which compensated to some extent for the lack of

a complete grip over reality. His '*Hach Mulacha Bap*' based on the satirical and hilariously humorous description of the contrast between a Rao Bahadur's respective attitudes as the father of a son and that of a girl opened up a series of plays depicting the current social and economic and industrial problems like his '*Satteche Gulam*', '*Sonyacha Kalas*', '*Jagati Jyot*', '*Swayam Sewak*'. Warerkar has remained in the vanguard of such dramatic portrayal of current problems. He has often proved incapable of probing to the full depths of such problems ; his realism has often dwindled away into sentimentality and romanticism but he has greatly helped in keeping up the morale of the Marathi stage by fixing its attention on realistic plays when it was sinking deeper and deeper into the marshes of mere music and unreal plots.

Warerkar also brought about considerable change in dramatic technique and the production of plays. He gradually reduced the number of songs, improved the structure of plays by reducing the number of scenes in an act and making it better bound, and later, by adopting a number of characteristics of Ibsenian drama. He also modernised stage-equipment. He has not been gifted with the poignant imaginative power of Gadkari or the large-hearted acumen of Kirloskar. But he has used his talent well and purposively. '*Saraswat*', one of his recent plays, with its maturity of experience and poignancy of expression is one of the most noteworthy plays.

The process of modernisation of the stage begun by Warerkar was taken up whole-heartedly by a band of enlightened artists called Natya-Manvantar under the leadership of Vartak (1933). One of the greatest innovations was that the roles of women were played by women-actors of a good social status and intellectual calibre. The tradition has already become deep-rooted. But beyond his '*Andhalyanchi Shala*' a play that is still popular, it did not achieve much in the line of production of plays as such. A greater source of strength to Marathi drama has been the work of P.K. Atre, who came to the foreground just about this time. His plays have the modernity of Warerkar's plays, the style of Natya-Manvantar, and they have a much greater vitality of spirit and expression. They may be divided into three types—the light comedy or burlesque,

the grave social play and the problem play or ideational play. He came to the stage with a burlesque, hilariously satirising some dominant topics in Marathi contemporary life. He showed all the skill of a Gadkari in word-play and humour. His humour often runs away with him ; his characters become caricatures. These traits, which are not only permissible but even characteristic in burlesque, become defects in a grave social play. Exuberant wit and exaggerated feeling lead to unnaturalness, both of character and situation. But, in spite of all this, this exuberance and exaggeration, themselves as it were, lend a force and a vitality to his plays. His burlesque '*Sashtang Namaskar*' and his social plays '*Ghara-Baheer*' and '*Udyacha Sansar*' have been some of the major successes of the stage of today.

As was seen before, Marathi drama in its first flush, turned a good deal towards the plays of Shakespeare. Many of them were translated and adopted to the Marathi stage. Shakespearean tragedies, like *Hamlet* and *Othello* contributed richly to the nurture of Marathi histrionic art and dramatic writing. Kolhatkar imbibed a good deal of the spirit of romantic comedy, whereas Gadkari's plays were not a little influenced by the tragedies. With Warerkar, the norm changed. Ibsenian thought and Ibsenian dramatic form became a more active force, but however active it may have been, it was a pretty far off call from the true Ibsenian pattern, and all vestige of it except the modernity of stage equipment disappeared in the plays and productions of Rangnekar. His plays are neat and pretty with delightful snappy conversation, conventional and easily palatable situations and pretty songs. Like the Natya Manvantar, his band of artists, known as Natya-Niketan consists of refined art-lovers like Jyotsna Bhole who is the main support of his venture. He has helped much in maintaining the appeal of the theatre in the very difficult times of the competition with the Film.

A new wave of idealism and greater ambition in dramatic writing can be noticed during the last few years. There is a richer stream of translations and adaptations from foreign plays. Writers are ranging over a wider field now for their originals, in Manohar's adaptation of *Carl Kapek's Mother*, Shirwakar's adaptation of *Monna*

Vanna, P.L. Deshpande's adaptation of *Inspector General*, or Vakil's of the *Inspector Calls*. Shirwadkar has attempted a couple of historical and Pauranic themes in a modernistic style, with more of the poetic in it, however, than the dramatic. Another writer of promise is Jog, with three plays to his credit, two of which have been on the stage. So far, he seems to be one of the most original of the present-day play-wrights, with a positive social context to vitalize his plays with. His presentation, however, even if it be of the rough and bold vein, needs maturity and finish of its own kind.

The Marathi 'Natika' or short play began as an undergrowth of drama and has by now become a great support of the stage. The audience tired out with the professional long play which had more music than drama in it and which dragged on till the early hours of the morning, took eagerly to the short play, often presented by amateurs and semi-professionals. It proved one of the greatest, perhaps the sole, force against the appeal of the Films. N. D. Tamhankar, Rangnekar, Bokil, V.S. Vakil, and others have experimented in this field. The one-Act Play is also gradually taking root.

A novel idea in dramatic writing called 'Natya-Chata' was introduced by Diwakar Krishna, somewhat on the pattern of Browning's Dramatic Monologues but in prose. They are in a variety of veins, poetic, satirical, cynical, emotional. They reveal a sensitive keen-eyed personality. The type found a good many followers.

Poetry

Unlike Marathi prose of the early years of the modern period, Marathi poetry did not have to make a new beginning. The traditions of Waman and Moropant were yet alive. Poets imitated their technique and style and the eldest of these, Parasuramtatya Godbole rendered a great service by editing an anthology of select pieces from old Marathi poetry. This '*Nawaneet*' (1854) has run into several editions and was very much in use until recently. It is a clear index of the preservation of poetic tradition, and presents fine representative passages from all the leading poets and poetic types. Godbole also wrote a good deal of didactic and devotional verse after the patterns of Moropant. The poets of these early

years can be divided into two classes. The first were the pandit poets, like Krishnashastry Chiplunkar, Lele, Parakhi. They carried on the Sanskritistic traditions of Moropant in technique and style but showed originality in the choice of subjects even in their translations of Sanskrit pieces. They preferred descriptive Sanskrit poetry like '*Ritu-Samhar*' or the great classical epics like '*Raghu-Vamsa*' to the Pauranic stories. They introduced to Marathi readers the classical works of Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, Shudrak and others. The second class of the poets of these times was of those who turned towards English poetry. They translated or adapted English poems and introduced a variety of thought, approach, subject and style. Milton, Dryden, Scott, Pope, Grey, Goldsmith, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Shelley—these were the patterns they held before themselves. Pradhan translated and adapted Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. Kirtikar treated Tennyson's *Princess* in the same way; Mahajani, Kirtikar and others turned towards English lyrics and wrote some original ones in a similar vein. The most original of these poets was M. M. Kunte who tried his hand at a new type of epic poem, *Raja Shivaji*. Like Wordsworth, he advocated the use of the language of every day life in poetry and the need of bridging the gulf between the erudite and the common folk. He practised what he preached, sometimes with success, but more often to the detriment of poetic values. His '*Raja Shivaji*' remained incomplete, but it brought about a great change in poetic outlook. A marked tendency towards simplicity in diction grew. A good number of historical poems were also produced. The inculcation of the spirit of English poetry made this neo-Marathi poetry more thoughtful, direct and individualistic. The personal feelings and experiences of the poets acquired significance. A number of elegies were written and a few attempts were also made at satire. The lyric, the satire, the elegy, the long narrative poem were some of the new forms adopted and popularised by these precursors of modern Marathi poetry.

Although the seeds of this poetic renaissance were laid so carefully and consciously, the harvest that followed was so sudden and rich that it was almost of the nature of a revolution rather than a gradual growth. Keshavsut, Tilak, Vinayak, Chandrashekhar,

Bee, Tambe wrote with such originality and individuality that in comparison with it, the poetry of the preceding age seems only a halting imitation of foreign or Sanskrit patterns. The greatest and foremost of these was Keshavsut or Krishnaji Keshav Damle. He is known not only as the maker of his age but also as one whose influence continues to permeate Marathi poetry upto date.

Keshavsut began writing in about 1885, in a style similar to that of the pandit poets preceding him. But very soon he cast off the fetters of an external traditional norm. He began to write in a free subjective vein intense in its lyrical beauty and impassioned thought. He looked deep within his own personality, which was already well-developed under the influence of his concentrated, if not very wide, reading of English works. He had acquired a feeling for Nature, a radicalism in social and political thought and also a strong vein of melancholy that often over-shadowed his dynamism and broad social interest. He gave deep thought to the problems of poetic life, like the objectives of poetry, the relation between thought and expression, the impact of environment upon the individual. Poetry occupied an extremely vital place in his life. Never before in Marathi poetry were strains of intense experience and poetic expression so intertwined together. His lines to a flower (पुष्पा प्रत), his poem on hearing the strains on a Sitar during his nightly wanderings, his expression of yearning after an elusive idealism in his poem 'Harapale-Shreya' (हरपलें श्रेय) rise to an exquisite synthesis of subjectivity and universality, of delicacy and poignancy. He struck the path of true social thought and progressiveness in poetry. He shows a keen awareness of the political thought of the day. He was as much a lover of the child-mind as Wordsworth was. His diction is simple and powerful, often it is considered to verge on crudeness, but it can acquire a delicacy and suggestivity according to the poetic need as it does in so many of his poems. He invented some new forms of lyrical verse, and also used old forms in a new manner. For instance, he used the old Sanskrit metre of Shardul-Vikreedit for the structure of a sonnet and introduced a form in Marathi poetry which had a Sanskrit metre and

English structure. A generation later this sonnet form became a craze in Marathi.

The genius of Rev. N.V. Tilak was of a quieter vein. The beauty of Nature and the innocence and lovability of children, a deep, unquestioning devotion to God are the main streams of his work. He wrote in a simple and chaste style, in a serene and even verse. He wrote a number of long poems, some meditative like '*Wanwasi Phool*' and some narrative like '*Susheela*'. He was older than Keshavsut, but was deeply influenced by the latter's work. His lyricism is of the same kind, though not so intense and powerful. He also began an epic poem on Christ [रिब्रस्तायन] but could not complete it. Tilak is perhaps the last of the old Marathi tradition of Saint-poets.

Vinayak, Madhawanuj and Dutt—three other contemporaries of Keshavsut, did not rise to similar heights. Vinayak has a greater individuality. His muse was pre-occupied mainly with historical narratives, some of which are fairly powerful and capable of suggesting the contrast with current times. These are acknowledged to be the origin of modern Marathi patriotic poetry.

The influence of English on Marathi minds is obvious in the nom-de-plume 'Bee' adopted by N. M. Gupte. But his poetry is written in a chaste, even highly Sanskritised style. It is imbued with Indian philosophy, and a feeling for nature, which often leads to a mystic vein. He has a feeling for history which has been crystallised in a fine narrative poem. His poem on the tearful humour of a poor father at the childlike sorrows of his daughter is very well-known. His love-lyric '*Chapha*' (Champak) is a rare expression of the ethereality and aloofness of idealistic love. His '*Ved-Gane*' (वेदगानें) reveals at once the intense intoxication of inspiration and its star-gazing sweep. The diction of 'Bee' is finely chiselled, his imagery rich and varied. He was also influenced by the social progressivism of the day. He lived upto the forties, but wrote very little in his later days.

Chandrashekhar remained aloof from the main currents of contemporary poetry. His subjects and style belong to a bygone day. He did not approve of much self-expression in poetry either.

But his highly-cultivated style and smooth verse have given him a place in modern Marathi poetry. He was particularly good at adaptation. His best narrative poem 'What a miracle.' (काय हो चमत्कार !) is an adaptation of an English one. He also adapted Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Chandrashekhar hardly seems to have influenced any poets of his time or later. But Tambe, who also struck a note different from that of the dominant one of Keshavsut, found a number of followers. Tambe was an artistic and philosophic dreamer. His imagery is drawn from the world of chivalric romance ; his thought is moulded by strains of Indian philosophy. He writes in a richly musical and decorative style. He did not approve of making his muse a vehicle of social progressivism. There is a strain of eroticism even in his mysticism. He wrote some child-poems and dramatic lyrics of a high order and also introduced many new patterns of verse rhythm.

Ram Ganesh Gadkari, or Govindagraj as he preferred to be known in the field of poetry, and Thomre alias 'Balkavi' were the chief heirs of Keshavsut in the next generation. Gadkari was proud to call himself the true disciple (सच्चा चेला) of Keshavsut. He was inspired by the same kind of emotionalism, individualism, social progressivism and such other tendencies of Keshavsut. He had an even greater command over diction and verse, music and rhythm. He has added richly to the armoury of Marathi poetry in sentiment and artistry. And yet, he cannot very aptly be thought of as a true disciple of Keshavsut. They were temperamentally different. Gadkari was an extrovert, always conscious of his audience. He had already acquired a name in the sphere of drama and humorous essay. One cannot help feeling that he wrote to impress rather than to express. He wrote in a richly decorative style, loaded with fanciful conceits rather than one lit up with imaginative or emotional truth.

Balkavi was endowed with a truer lyrical vein. There is a rare delicacy in his depiction of the beauty of nature. His playful fancy hovering round a flower-bud, dancing with the streamlet, buzzing with the bee make his *nom-de-plume* richly significant. But

a deep melancholy over-clouded all these very soon. Some of the poignant poems he wrote under its influence are as unforgettable as his early ones were fascinating. He died very young, but has left enough poetic work to earn him a place in the history of Marathi poetry.

The strain of heroic poetry found in old Marathi poetry, in the form of Powadas, is not totally missing in modern poetry. Apart from occasional patriotic poetry, a number of Powadas also were written by modern poets. Govindagraj wrote one on '*Panipat*'. Sawarkar, the hero of '*Life-Sentence*' and a radical political worker from his early days has poured out his intense ardour for freedom in his two powadas on '*Baji Prabhu*' and '*Tanaji*'. His patriotic ardour is, as a matter of fact, the main current in his sonorous, grim poetry. Sometimes he wrote lyrics, sometimes a long poem like '*Gomantak*' inspired by militant Hinduism. Occasionally, his muse could strike the louder, picturesque note too, as in his narrative poem *Kamala*. His friend Govind also wrote in an ardent patriotic vein.

The work of two generations from Keshavsut to Balkavi, spreads over the period from 1885 to 1920. As we have seen, in tracing the growth of prose, the nineteen-twenties saw a great change in spirit and outlook in Maharashtra. An age of a love of craftsmanship, of polish and finish set in. At the same time, it was also the age of the expansion of the reading public and the audience of poetry. Art and culture, literature and poetry were brought to the door-steps of the common man, by various organs of public opinion and of education. The emotions of the common man, with his struggle for existence, his domesticity, his limited appreciation of beauty and his moderate range of emotion, became the food for poetry as well as for fiction. In place of the lonesome individuality and radicalism of Keshavsut or the eagle vigour of Sawarkar, or even the gossamer lyricism of Balkavi, there arose the group-consciousness and middle-class sentimentalism of Ravi Kiran Mandal. The leading poets of this group, Yeshwant and Girish gave poetry recitals, a vogue which was already made popular by a few other minor poets like Tekade. The poetry of the Ravi Kiran Mandal

in a way popularised many traditions of simple Marathi poetry and also invented new patterns of prosody and content. These poets are not without distinctive personalities. Yeshwant, the most successful of them all has a vigour of feeling and directness of style. His range is also wider than that of most of his colleagues. Some of his poems soar to a good lyrical height. Girish is more chastened and sophisticated, less powerful in sentiment and sweep. Patwardhan or Madhav Julian in his early days the most unorthodox and explicit became the most erudite virtuoso in his later days. He was a scholar of Persian and a lover of English poetry. His style was imbued with the first influence and his muse tried to learn something of the abandon of Persian poetry too. Just sometimes it revealed the lyricism of the second influence. Most of these poets are prolific writers. They have done a good deal in the line of the long narrative poem—some of them being full of a mild and sentimental social progressivism, others like 'Shudharak' by Patwardhan being in a satirical vein. Technically, the best achievement of these poets was to adjust the poetic vein to the taste and level of the middle class reader. They do not reveal the daring ardour and keen introspection of Keshavsut, or the subtle suggestivity and beauty of words of Balkavi. Nor can they rise to the rich sensuousness and philosophical eroticism of Tambe. But they wrote in a style that dovetails itself into common speech. They composed in a verse that could linger on the lips of the middle class. They certainly helped in giving a grace and awareness to its feelings. Its greatest success was in its true portrayal of these feelings. The mother and child, the wife waiting for her husband, the flower dropped on the road, a patriot behind prison walls, the dying child of a poor man—such are the themes they deal with, with considerable emotional ardour and lucidity of phrase, but always with their feet on the solid ground of reality. With a growing freedom for women, there had come about shift in their social position and in the general outlook towards them. They were no longer either objects of worship or of mere pleasure. They had acquired a human quality and the position of comrades in life. Without sermonising about this change, the poetry of Ravi Kiran Mandal accepts

it with a naturalness and urbanity. Their love-lyrics are a tacit admission of this. They may not be very profound. But they are graceful, chaste and full of restraint. Some, like those of Madhav Julian, are sometimes high-strong and extravagant. The Ravi Kiran Mandal made poetry more broad-based than it ever had been in the modern age. Naturally poetry-recitals became extremely popular.

Contemporaneous with the Ravi Kiran Mandal, but quite apart from their stream of poetry, were some younger poets writing in their own individual way. One of those was Anant Kanekar, whose love-lyrics sometimes spoke of a deep enchantment, sometimes of cynicism arising out of the threat of disappointment. He wrote a few poems of radical thought. But Kanekar discarded the lyre very soon. Borkar, another noteworthy poet, is a remarkable artist in words. A feeling of the picturesque in Nature, a sense of the music of words are his outstanding gifts. There are many others of the same age and time, like B. S. Pandit, W. N. and G. H. Deshpande, Patil, Pathak, N. G. Joshi and others who are following their own bent and putting in good work. In some there is a trend of mysticism, in some word-craft and a sense of beauty, in still others, a reflective turn. A. R. Deshpande or Anil writes in a manner more individual, subtle and delicate especially in his love-lyrics. These range over all the subtle shades of the agony of suspense to the thrill of fulfilment. In them is found a rare synthesis of the awareness of the beauty of Nature and the depth of personal feeling rising to a level of mysticism. The music and imagery of these lyrics is distinctive in its delicacy and serenity. A still more noteworthy point about Anil is that this early individualistic love of his has widened into a social consciousness and a true humanity. It has enlarged his poetic horizon and given a vigour to his later lyrics and especially to his long poems, in free-verse. "*Mukta-Chhanda*" as free verse is known in Marathi was invented and propagated by Anil. It has now become a greatly used vehicle of longer verse and also the reflective lyric. To Anil goes the credit of bringing about a change in the concept of *Khanda-Kavya*, or the longer poem. He holds that with the development

of the short story and the short novel, both of which have by now grown deeply psychological and emotional, the major field for the long poem should now be that of emotive thought or meditative feeling, and that Mukta Chhanda or a verse which would be free enough to follow the turns and subtleties of such thought is, therefore, necessary. His own long poems, '*Bhagna-Murti*' (The Broken Image), '*Prem ani Jeevan*' (Love and Life), '*Nirwasit Chinee Mulas*' (To the Refugee Chinese Child) follow this norm. The poetic thought and achievement of Anil have made him the fountain-head of one dominant trend of the poetry of today.

Kusumagraj, Kant, and a few others strike another trend. They have a deep lyrical vein, have also been stirred deeply by the freedom movement. There is a political ardour in their poems, not only a consciousness but a note of experience of political struggle, with its shades of unflinching sacrifice and wistful sentiment, its righteous indignation and protest against injustice. Kusumagraj is a master of word-picture. Indeed his poetry is multi-dimensional. He has not yet written anything in the line of longer verse and his lyrics too are now not too frequent. But what he has written has a power and a chiselled beauty, a delicacy and a resilience which have reached a high watermark of modern Marathi poetry.

A good number of women-poets have risen to a high level during the last two decades. Their line has been maintained since the days of yore but the women-poets of today have achieved a rare height of lyricism, a subtlety of feeling and directness of expression. Such are Sanjeevani Marathe, with her playful frankness, her domesticity, her genuine love of poetry; or Padma with her delicate, often wistful sentiment and perhaps, best of all, Indira Sant, with the delicacy of love in her happy days, with a poignant restraint and sensitive imagery in her days of sorrow.

The most-discussed tendency of today, however, is that of extreme realism, which is known as *Nava-Kavya*. B. S. Mardhekar was its chief exponent. His poems seek to communicate the feeling of the disintegration of human personality which overpowers the modern mind. They are very realistic and representative in as much as they are a cry of the thwarted mind and the hungry soul.

They also reveal a keen consciousness of the malaise of the modern world, but bat-like, it only flaps its wings in the dark. More than these fundamental qualities of his work Mardhekar's poems have caught the attention because of the unusual imagery and diction. He is not an experimenter in form, but he uses strange combinations of images, drawn from the world of machines, physiology and biology. He adds to this the strangeness of diction in which is thrown an assortment of foreign technical words and Marathi slang. Much of his verse is therefore found unreadable and unpalatable by the orthodox, but, its power can hardly be denied. He has already found a good number of followers and imitators, some of whom are well on the way of a true and judicious modernity in poetry.

When one thinks of the poetry of today, one thinks of Vasant Bapat and Mangesh Padgaonkar, of Muktibodh and Bhavé and Karandikar. It is not easy to map out precisely the trends in Marathi poetry of today. It is said to draw a good deal upon the forms in the work of Anil and Mardhekar. The poetry of today is indeed very varied, multi-dimensional. A generation of young poets has arisen, which is working out a wonderful synthesis of full-blooded romanticism with keen-eyed realism. It is throbbing with the love of beauty and is also brave enough to face the ugliness of life. It has the sophistry of satire and the naivete of a wondering child. It has sufficient philosophic background to assert confidently the glory of earthliness, but it does so in words ringing with music and resplendent with beauty. In its despair it describes the lifeless corpses that people the earth, the greed and avarice that stalk over it, but it is also far-sighted enough to look ahead towards the dawn that is almost there. It is conscious of tradition and makes full use of it, but it is also boldly experimental. It sometimes lapses into prose or obscurity, or jingling sounds, but so much more frequently it rises to a poignant lyricism, a suave urbanity or a sonorous hymn-like note. The rising poets of today have their own individuality, their special aptitudes and their weaknesses, but together they give a vigorous vision of life, in its scintillating variety. They are worthy heirs of a rich tradition.

Literary Criticism

In the early periods of Marathi literature there was hardly any effort at the formation of literary theory. Traditions of Sanskrit '*Sahitya Shastra*' were maintained studiously by the pundits, but even efforts to render those principles in Marathi were few and far between. The only examples extant are a chapter each on '*Rasa Manjari*' by Nagesh and Vithal. But if there was no effort at the formation of a theory, there is a wealth of incidental but very fundamental thought about the vital problems regarding poetry like the nature and objective of poetry, the relation of the poet with his audience or the qualities of good poetry, in the works of all the saints, from Jnaneshwar to Tukaram and Ramdas. Their attitude towards these problems is distinct enough to be remarkable. It differs from the old classical attitude in the same way as their poetry differed from classical poetry. Just as an intensity of feeling, and a personal approach were the mainsprings of Bhakti-marg they were also the basis of the poets' attitude towards poetry. Dr. Ketkar, the encyclopaedic genius of modern Maharashtra, was the first to point out that these Marathi saints had new principles of poetics, that these stood manifest in their works, and that they even propounded them in their works incidentally, though they did not lay these down systematically in a well-marshalled poetic theory. Had they done this, it would have given a new turn to the old *Sahitya-Shastra* and redeemed it from its stagnation. A greater awareness of the contribution of the saints to poetic theory is found in recent Marathi criticism.

Modern Marathi criticism began with the rise of the early periodicals. The early critics naturally wrote in an appreciative and amplificatory manner. They aimed at introducing Sanskrit or old Marathi works to their readers. Some, like Justice Ranade, undertook the labours of providing occasional lists of publications with encouraging comments. When the epoch-making periodical of Chiplunkar, *Nibandh-Mala* started publication, a new age in criticism was inaugurated as it was in other aspects of literature too. Criticism became more comprehensive and penetrating,

more studied and valuational. Chiplunkar's own articles on various works, Sanskrit, Marathi and English provided the best examples of these. Agarkar and Tilak also contributed richly, though only occasionally, to this current. Their criticism, even like that of Chiplunkar to some extent, was motivated more by a consciousness of social and national values than by what are known as pure literary values. The age of these values was ushered with the advent of Kolhatkar.

Kolhatkar can, to a great extent, be called the founder of modern Marathi Literary Criticism. He lifted it into a class, distinct from that of the periodical review. He probed into theoretical problems of literary forms with a considerable thoroughness and depth and also a wealth of literary training. Often he brought his sense of humour to lend a charm and a distinctive flavour to his attacks upon mediocrity and literary fatuousness. Kelkar, his great contemporary and friend, wrote elegantly and good-naturedly, sometimes even profoundly, on various forms. His writings were mostly occasioned by the demand for forewords or speeches. The presidential speeches of various literary organisations, especially those of the Maharashtra Sahitya Sammelan, have added notably to critical writing. Such speeches had supplied periodical reviews of Marathi literature as a whole and have also treated of various fundamental theoretical problems. One of the most astute, balanced and professional critics of the nineteen-twenties was Waman Malhar Joshi.

Round about 1930, a keen controversy about the objectives of literature was initiated. N. S. Phadke, the well-known protagonist of art for art's sake propagated his views with a seductive persuasiveness and nicety of argument. Many writers and critics of ability joined issue, the chief of them being V. S. Khandekar and Jawadekar. Phadke represents a fairly large section of writers and perhaps a larger section of readers, who believe the end of literature to be only to delight. The others, perhaps a still larger section, are of course neither as adolescent nor as antiquated to think of the end being instruction, but look for a more vital relation with life, a greater integrity, and social consciousness on the part of the author.

With the development of the research departments of universities, and the improvement in the status of Indian languages and literature, a great impetus has been received by the study of *Sanskrit Sahitya Shastra*. The three major aspects of this Shastra, Alankar, Dhvani and Rasa, have all received great attention at the hands of Marathi scholars since the thirties. Thorough and scholarly efforts at the presentation of Sanskrit theories, of their evaluation and often at a synthesis of such theories and modern science like psychology have been made by scholars like D. K. Kelkar, R. S. Jog, Watwe, G.T. Deshpande and others.

English criticism and critical methods have wielded perhaps an even greater influence upon Marathi criticism. The review in periodicals was obviously adopted from English. But Marathi acquaintance with English literary criticism and literary biographies has grown steadily throughout the generation and has brought about changes and developments which are far from being merely mechanical or imitative. Methods of poetic appreciation, character-analysis, analysis of the objectives of various modern forms of literature have grown much along the lines of such methods in English literature. Critical histories of various forms, like Modern poetry, drama, novel have been written upto date and a new line has been struck in literary biography and autobiography. Marxism and socialism have not been without their effect upon critical thinking. In the early thirties, Lalji Pendse tried to evaluate and analyse certain Marathi trends and works in the light of Marxism. But his grasp over neither of these two proved adequate. His books only provoked a series of articles from P. Y. Deshpande, which sought to establish the vital principle of subjectivity and personal realisation of the artist, of the conflict between the artist's personality and environment being the true source of art. This exposition has been much discussed, supplemented and enriched by various writers. Just as controversy about literary theory was polarised between the schools of art for art's sake group or the 'Anandwadis' and its opposite camp, the 'Jeevanwadis', in the twenties, the literary thought in the forties was polarised between the points of subjective realisation of the artist and the demands of social consciousness. Many

versatile critics like Padhye, W. L. Kulkarni, Mardhekar, Kshirsagar, D. K. Bedekar and others have contributed richly to the development of the issues.

The modern Marathi critic is thus a keen-minded writer, well accustomed to the tools of his task. He is as a rule deeply imbued with the awareness of his literary heritage. He combines historicity with vision. He is conscious of the urgent need of an equipoise regarding the subjective and the objective in literature. He has not only realised the changeability of forms of literature but knows that their vitality rests in their dynamic quality. He does not therefore seek to judge them by a stereotyped or lifeless foot-rule. He seeks for their inner pattern and considers it his duty to interpret and communicate an experience of the beauty of literature rather than correct or judge it. He seeks to do this all the more earnestly because he believes that great literature also seeks to interpret what is most significant in life and to communicate the beauty of it. He knows that in this lies the power of literature to rouse and to console, to entertain and also to expand the vision of mankind.

GUJARATI

Growth of Gujarati

Gujarati is a modern Indo-Aryan language like Hindi, Bengali and Marathi. It is derived from a late form of Apabhramsa and appears in its distinctive form in the twelfth century. Upto the close of the fifteenth century a fairly common form of speech was in use in a large part of Western India now covered by Gujarat, Saurashtra, Marwar and considerable tracts of land to the East and South of modern Gujarat inhabited by the Bhils and other aboriginal tribes of India. In fact Shauraseni Prakrit, which was an early derivation of Sanskrit, developed into Apabhramsa in the fifth century or later through an assimilation of the native speech of the Abhiras and Gurjaras, the nomadic but rich and powerful tribes of Western India. At the Courts it developed into a literary speech and outside in the country it became the lingua franca of northern India embracing various regional peculiarities in pronunciation, grammatical forms and vocabulary. The popular speech showed provincial divergences while the literary tended to preserve older forms of Prakrit and Apabhramsa and periodically derived new strength from Sanskrit. All along, Sanskrit had remained the language of learned poetry and learned discussion. Hemachandra's grammar of Apabhramsa clearly reveals these traits. On one hand it represents the last stage of development of Apabhramsa and on the other it shows anticipations of modern Indo-Aryan vernaculars such as Hindi and Gujarati. Hemachandra gives it no distinctive name ; he calls it simply Apabhramsa, a Prakrit like the others, for he follows tradition and largely bases his grammar on popular or cultivated Apabhramsa literature. The Apabhramsa he treats had ceased to exist by 900 A. D.

The verses of wisdom, valour and love given by Hemachandra in illustration of the rules are very striking and often moving, and

apart from their literary and linguistic merit give us a glimpse of the inner life of the people during the last phase of Hindu rule.

A 'duha' defines the true beauty of a city :

सरिहि न सरेहि न सरवरेहि नवि उज्जाण-वणेहि ।
देस रवण्णा ह्यन्ति वढ निवसन्तेहि सु-अणेहि ॥

"Oh simple man, countries are rendered beautiful not by rivers, not by lakes or ponds, nor by gardens and parks, but by the good people living there."

A vignette of love describes how a lady in love will greet her lord when she meets him. She will do a wondrous thing. She will enter into the person of her lover as water is absorbed in a new clay pot.

जइ केवइ पावीसु पिउ अकिआ कुहु करीसु ।
पाणीउ नवइ सरावि जिबे सव्वङ्गे पइसीसु ॥

"If somehow I meet my lover I shall do a wondrous thing never done before : I shall enter into him with my entire body as water into a new earthen pot."

Such passion was united with superb heroism. A lady declares that if the enemy has fled it must be due to her lover's valour. If his army is beaten, that is a sure indication that he is dead. For only after his death could his army be routed.

जइ भग्गा पारक्कडा तो सहि मज्झु पिएण ।
अह भग्गा अम्हंतणा तो ते मारिअडेण ॥

"If the others (the enemy) are routed, then, dear friend, it must be the work of my lover. If our men are routed, it must have happened after his being killed."

The phonology of Apabhramsa is not basically different from the Sanskrit or Prakrit one. It is a further development, its vocabulary has drawn upon many words called Deshya, a considerable number of which have been found to be of Dravidian origin. In syntax and idiom it reveals remarkable kinship with Gujarati, Rajasthani and Hindi. Its grammatical forms show innovations as also general phonetic deterioration.

Retention of **र** in conjuncts when **र** is the posterior member, the interpolation of **र**, the change of **क** to **ग**, the change of **म** to **वै** and **स** to **ह** and the shortening of the final long syllable are the more important of the phonetic changes in Apabhramsa. **क** and **ड** are attached to nouns. Gender shows many deviations from Sanskrit. Case distinctions are weakened and there is a general levelling of nominal declension. As the older terminations get weakened or lost, post-positions come to be employed. It is a movement away from the synthetical stage of Sanskrit.

The following representative table of nominal and verbal forms will show the proximity of Apabhramsa to Gujarati.

DECLENSION

	Sing.	Plur.
Nom. Acc.	पुत्तु	पुत्त
Ins.	पुत्ते	पुत्तहि, पुत्तहिं
Abl.	पुत्तहे, पुत्तहु	पुत्तहै
Gen.	पुत्तस्स, पुत्तहु, पुत्तह	पुत्तहं
Loc.	पुत्ति, पुत्तहि	पुत्तहि

CONJUGATION

Sing.	I	Plur.	I
	पुच्छउँ		पुच्छहै
	II पुच्छसि-हि		II पुच्छहु
	III पुच्छइ		III पुच्छहि

The years 900-1150 A.D. may be regarded as the period of the disintegration of Apabhramsa. Old tradition was dying and provincial peculiarities were getting more pronounced. Perhaps that gave some warrant for giving different names to dialectal variations of Apabhramsa, as Markandeya did in the fifteenth century and as Grierson and Gune do in our times. While the dialectal differences, though significant, are meagre, there is no harm in holding that a kind of Apabhramsa was growing in the time of Hemachandra himself which we can call 'Gurjara Apabhramsa.' This Gurjara Apabhramsa later becomes what Dr. Tessitori calls Old Western Rajasthani and what we should now properly call Old Gujarati. We should fix 1150 A.D. to 1450 A.D. as the period of Old Gujarati.

It is possible to study Old Gujarati and Middle Gujarati in all their strata, for, first, the tradition of writing poetry was maintained throughout these centuries and, secondly, old manuscripts of many important works are luckily available in very good condition. In the case of the older period there is a further advantage. Between the tenth and the fifteenth century learning flourished in Gujarat, especially in the bigger cities, thanks to the patronage of the Court and Jainas. There is a general love of correctness and elegance, and writers show care both in writing and copying. The learned Jain monk seems to be particularly abroad. He extols his patrons, he celebrates religious events, and it is his mission to inculcate the Jain doctrine into the minds of the young and the illiterate. The Jain writers select the language spoken round about them and introduce the ignorant to higher literature and higher values through their own idiom. They write their more serious or ambitious works in a language and a form more or less sanctified by time, but they explain and expound in the contemporary vernacular. Among such works designed for the simple and the uninitiated, grammars are the most noteworthy. One Sangramasinha wrote in 1280 an introduction to Sanskrit called *Bala-siksha*. In 1394 Kulamandana wrote an easy grammar of Sanskrit for Gujarati students and called it *Mugdhavabodha Auktika*. Between these two works we have incidentally a full map of grammatical forms and peculiarities of Gujarati as it emerged as an independent language from Apabhramsa.

The following nominal and verbal forms taken from the *Bala-siksha*, *Mugdhavabodh Auktika* and the parables of *Tarunaprabha*, will give an idea of the structure of Old Gujarati :—

Present Tense Active.	Present Tense Passive.	Potential.	Imperative.
करइ; लियइ	कीजइ; दीजइ	करीजे; लेजे	करि
Past Tense	Conditional Active.	Conditional Passive.	
कीषउं; दीषउं	जइ करत	जइ कीजत	

Future Active. करिसिई	Future Passive. कीजिसई	Causal. करावई; कराचिसई; करावत कराविबउ; कराविवा.
Participles :—	Present Active :— करतउ; देतउ Present Passive :— कीजतउ; लीजतउ	
Verbal noun :—		करणाहरु; लेणाहरु
Past Participle :—		कीषउं; दीषउं
Indeclinable Past Participle :—		करीउ; लेउ
Infinitive of Purpose :—		करिवा; देवा
Infinitive :—		करिपउ; लेवु

DECLENSIONS

Nom. चन्द्र; कथानकु

Acc. कटु; संचायु

Inst. धमिई; जीणई; नामि; कर्मिहि

Dative and Genitive : मोक्षनई; सुखनई; गुणरहई; तेहरहई; लोकहंतणा;
चैत्रतणउं; गुरुतणउं; हारनउ; महात्पातणा

Locative : ग्रामि; जंबूद्वीप-माहि; अनेरइ दिवसि.

Pronouns (Taken from वसन्तविलास)

Nom. तू

Nom. तू; तुच

Dative. मू

Dative. तू

Genitive. मू; मुळ

Genitive. तुळ

Pl. अम्हे; अम्ह

Pl. तुम्हे; तुम्ह

ते; ती; ति—Nom. Sing. & Pl.

तीणि—Instr. Sing.

तहि—Loc. Sing.

जि; जी; ति; तीं—Relative pronouns

इहां; कीहां; जिहां; तिहां—Loc. Sing.

जिस्या—Pronominal adjective—(nom. Pl.)

ए; इ Nom. Sing इहाँ Loc. Sing.

इणि Instr. Sing. जिमजिम Pronominal adverb from जि

सवि Nom. Plural इम Pronominal adverb from इ; ए

कोइ Nom. Sing. जेतलु; तेतलु; एतलु; केतलु Pronominal
adjectives.

Adverbial forms. आबु; कालि; हिएडां; लिगइ; पाखइ; जहिचं-तहिचं; ओरउ; परउ; पाखलि; बाहरि.

Characteristic words :—मसाहणी; अच्छइ; बुहारइ; संघूषइ; प्रासुइ; फाडइ; ताडइ; पोअइ; द्रउडइ; आंबइ; उगटइ; पालटइ; ओलंभइ; ओहटइ; वज्जरइ; नत्थी; ऊबाहुल; कने; उताणु; राडभेड; रक्कीडी; भडिवाउ; पाखर.

The following are representative explanatory sentences from 'Mugdhavabodh Auktik' of Kulamandana; they will also give some idea of old Gujarati syntax :—

- (१) जिहां उकित मांहि कर्तानी अपेक्षां क्रिया आगलि अर्थ अनइ वचन हुई ते उकित पाछरी कहीयइ ।
- (२) जिहां कर्मनी अपेक्षां क्रिया आगलि अर्थ अबइ वचन हुई अनइ जिहां क्रियावई छेहि वर्तमान कालि 'ईयउ', 'ईजात' बासोई ते कर्म उकित 'वांकुडी' कहीयइ ।
- (३) अनई जिहां वांकुडी उक्ति मांहि कर्म न हुई ते लावि उक्ति कहीयइ ।
- (४) मैत्रु गामि गिउ (भूत कृदन्तनो कर्तरि प्रयोग)
- (५) श्रावकिई देवु पूजिउ (भूत कृदन्तनो कर्मणि प्रयोग)
- (६) ए ग्रन्थ सुखि पढायई (वर्तमानकाल भावे प्रयोग)
- (७) मेघि वरसतई मोर नाचई (Locative absolute)
- (८) तू दिहाडी प्रति ५० श्लोक व्याख्यानि लगतउ*
- (९) ईणिइ पुरुखइ दस ग्राम पाम्यां* (Past Passive Participle)
- (१०) स्मरं हो संघु सायइ श्री शत्रुंजई श्रीगुरु चालिआ ।*

Among literary works it is possible to discover standard old Gujarati in works like *Vasanta Vilasa*, the famous phagu by Gunavanta (?) (C. 1375 A.D) and *Prithvichandra Charitra* of Manikyasundara, dated 1422 A.D.

The stage of Middle Gujarati is reached about 1450 and continues upto 1650. Although this period marks a Pauranik revival, the standard of learning and elegance seems to decay. There are no grammars directly revealing the Gujarati forms. But an adequate

*From *क्रियारत्नसमुच्चय* of Gunaratnasuri (A. D. 1410)

picture of this linguistic stage can be reconstructed from the works of Padmanabha and Nakara.

The **अइ** slowly changes to **इ** in this stage, but they are often retained as separate. The **अउ**, **अउ'** become more steadily **उ**, **ऊ'** and **स** under the influence of palatal **च** becomes palatal **ज्ञ**.

Imperative second person singular ends in **ए**. Nominative plural often ends in **ओ**. For the dative the terminations **नइ**, **नइ'**, **नि** are used or the post-positions **माटइ**—**माटइ'**—**माटि**. The genitive terminations are slowly reduced, and for the locative **मां** becomes normal.

PRESENT TENSE

	Sing.	Plural.
1st Person	वीनवू'	वीनवीइ—वीनवीइं
2nd Person.	वीनवि—वीनवे	आपु, कर,
3rd Person.	स्तवइ, थाइ, छइ, कहइ	वीनवइ, वीनवि

PAST PARTICIPLES (IN PAST TENSE)

निकन्दीउ (Mas.) आविआ (Mas. Pl.) गाहीउं (Neuter) दुहुविआं,
ऊपनां (Neuter Pl.)

FUTURE TENSE

Sing.	Pl.
कहेस	करीसूं
करीशि, करेस	देशु, करशु
रिहिशि	भांजशि

Other Participles :—प्रणामी, करीनइं, शोभतो, ऊगरतूं, ज्यमिवा, किहिवा,
लिहिबु, करिबु.

NOMINAL FORMS

Nominative	विवहारीआ, सगां, इ'धणां,
Instrumental	महितइ, लोभि, हाथि,
Dative	विप्रनइ. कविनइं
Ablative	सरग लोग थी, नयणोथूं
Genitive	सोनगिरातणी, गूजरतिनूं, नीचतणी, इन्द्रह
Locative	अवसरि, दिवसि, राजंगणि, तेणि समि, त्रैलोकमांहां

PRONOUNS

જે, જિણિ, જેણે, તિણિ, અસી, અહ્યતણઈ તિહાં, સવિ, મુઝનિ, તાસતણા, એહનિ, અહ્મારો, હૈ, અહ્યો, અમ્યો, તમ્યો, તેહનો, તહ્મો, કો, તું, તાહરૂં, માહ્રા, તમ્હારહ તિહાં, આપણુ, જુ, જેહનઈ, તેહનઈ તેહ્વું, મઈ, મુહનઈ, અહ્યથુ ।

As the language of the 15th century develops into modern Gujarati of the 17th and 18th centuries it is marked by the following characteristics :—

- (a) Simplification of the conjunct together with the lengthening of the preceding vowel, the principle operating on a wider field.
- (b) Softening of the nasal, with the lengthening of the preceding short vowel.
- (c) Dropping of the unaccented initial syllable.
- (d) The use of છે to denote the sense of the present tense indicative mood.
- (e) The change of અહ-અહ to એ-ઓ respectively.
- (f) The change of હ-હ to અ.
- (g) The change of સ to શ, when it is in contact with હ, એ or ય.
- (h) The change of intervocalic લ to કં.
- (i) The substitution of આય for ઇયઈ in the formation of the passive voice*.

The following passages from the *Virata Parva* of Nāṭak will give an idea of standard Gujarati of the 16th century:—

તાહર પૂઠઈ હૂં આઘૂં છૂં, અન્વારા ગૃહ માંહિ જી;
તિ હૂં તાં વિચાતુ લીધુ, લક્ષ્મીઈ સાહ્યુ બાંહિજી.

મઝ ઘરિ જૈ પટરાણી પ્રેમદા, તેહ કરૂં તુઝ દાસીજી;
જેહ વિતાં દેશુ તે ફરશિ; રહિશિ તમારહ પાશિજી.
હીંડોલા-ઝાટિ બઢિઠાં કરુ લીલા, મણિમય મુઝ અવાસજી;
હરજી અર્ધાં વલ્યા તે પાછા; પુહતી સઘલી આસ જી.

*N.B. Divatia, "Gujarati Language and Literature", Vol. II, pp. 52-53.

पछइ कैह मन्दिर सज कीधुं; चूआ चन्दन छटका वीजी;
 चन्द्रआ बांध्या; च्युहु दिशि, चमरफूल लटका वीजी.
 अबीर, पुष्प, गुलाल पथराव्यां; मोती चुक खडका वीजी;
 अगर धूप उवेखी मांहि; गया बार अड का वीजी;
 राति पडी, भड भीम सज थया; वीणइ सेल घलावीजी;
 स्त्रील्यां पटकल पिहिरवा पोति, मागी सूआर सवि ल्यावीजी.
 चोली चीर चरणा किम पहुचइ ? अनेक वस्त्र चलावीजी;
 बहु पटकलइ खभा ढंकाणा; हशी शीश हलावीजी.

× × ×

हवइ भीम सज यै नोकल्या, ते कैआ कैचक काजि रे;
 रीसभरि पग भूमि मूकइ, ते द्रुपदीनी दाह्मि रे.
 शनै शनै संचर्या; जै पुहुता मन्दिर पाशि रे;
 अगर फूल अबीर महिकइ, चूआ-चन्दन-वास रे.

× × ×

“आज भाइग माहरू”, भोग करसुं क्याहरइ आवशि नाथ रि;
 पंचाली अति प्रभव्यां ते हवडां चडशि हाथि रे.

असूर थाइ आवतां, हूँ सूइ रहूँ लगा ररे;
 शीश पछीतइ देइ पुढ्या; चरणे चांप्यां द्वार रे.

(“*Virata Parva*” by Nakar, pp. 174-176)

It is needless to give a grammatical sketch of Gujarati. A few phonological characteristics of Gujarati may be noted. In addition to अ there is the अ which being unaccented is rapidly pronounced. It is *drta* अ. In a word like बेसतो the स has *drta* अ. It cannot be written as *besto*. There is विवृत अे as in बेँण, the अे being pronounced as in *hat*; there is विवृत ओँ as in कोँठी, the ओँ being pronounced as in *hot*. There are two यs and two वs, one distinct and the other indistinct. There are softer sounds of ड and ढ. There are also fricatives of palatal च, छ, ज, झ. But these are not separately shown in orthography. The cerebral ए and क are distinctly present.

The basic vocabulary of Gujarati is derived from Sanskrit through Prakrit. The last hundred years have seen a revival of Sanskrit and hundreds of Sanskrit words have enriched the vocabulary of the average speaker. Besides Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, Portuguese and English have contributed considerably to the corpus of Gujarati words. Perso-Arabic words have passed into Gujarati since the 15th century but they did not affect the structure of the language. English, on the other hand, has influenced Gujarati syntax, idiom and style generally.

GUJARATI LITERATURE

I

When we look back on a body of literature we discover at once that it is as much the expression of the soul of a people as of the individual author. It is a continuity in which we see the pulsating life, its motive force and movement and also the innovations introduced by individual talent. All literary work is expression in a social context and has the background of particular literary tradition. It takes the form of reflection or resistance and ultimately merges into the broad stream of national consciousness. Gujarati literature received its inspiration and values from the fountainhead of Sanskrit and Prakrit; it reflects the stimulating effect of English literature and western civilization, and at the same time it reveals a particular regional character in taste and form imbued by its special culture and the bent of its writers of genius.

The history of Gujarati literature falls into four broad periods : (1) 1250-1456; (2) 1456-1650; (3) 1650-1825 and (4) 1825-1950. The last phase of Apabhramsa (950-1250) synchronizes with the formation of Gujarata as an independent political unit and its emergence as an all-India centre of learning and culture. Mularaja had invited learned Brahmans to settle in Gujarat. They carried on the tradition of Sanskrit studies associated with the ancient Valabhipura and Bhinnamala. Uvvata wrote a commentary on the 'Pratisakhyas' and the 'Vajasaneyi Samhita' and Soddhala wrote a Sanskrit romance called '*Udayasundarikatha*'. Apabhramsa was drawing heavily upon Sanskrit and the learned pundits under the

Chalukyas contributed greatly to Sanskrit literature. The revival of Sanskrit slowly fashioned the language of the people as a fit vehicle for literary expression; and Sanskrit provided models of fine workmanship and finish.

The geographical limits of modern Gujarat were not its limits in old days. The Gurjara Bhumi not only included Kaccha and Saurashtra but also Maravada and large tracts of land to the east and south of modern Gujarat (Anyway, upto about the end of the fifteenth century the form of language spoken in this area was identical and may be now called old Gujarati or old Western Rajasthani. The reader therefore need not be intrigued when he finds some old Gujarati works like *Prithvichandra-Charitra* (1422) reviewed in a history of Rajasthani literature as well. The foundation of modern Gujarat was laid in the middle of the 10th century by Mularaja, a Chalukya conqueror, statesman and patron of learning, and it was thoroughly consolidated and unified by the Chalukya kings that followed. Under Jayasinha Siddharaja (1094-1143), Kumarapala (1143-1174) and the great Vaghelas (1200-1250) Gujarat became a distinct and powerful political entity with remarkable achievement in art and literature to its credit. Sanskrit was cultivated. Great libraries were set up in the monasteries. Painting was indulged. And the most fascinating temples, such as those on Mount Abu, were erected. Shaivism was strong and the name of Somanath could rouse feelings both of piety and heroism. It was the duty of all, particularly the Kshatriyas to protect Somanath against foreigners and fanatics. Somanath was still continuing as a centre of the Pashupata cult and a home of traditional learning and dance. The form of worship must have been in a state of decadence with a network of ceremony and ritual, but the name of Somanath was great and for warriors it was a call to battle. Along with Shaivism came Jainism as a fresh and potent force. The rulers were strongly under its influence. Even though they were not Jains themselves, their ministers and counsellors were often Jains and Jainism under the influence of the great scholar Hemachandracharya was more catholic than ever before. He identified Mahavira with Shiva, and Vastupala of the next century worshipped both Keshav and Shankar.

In fact the most potent influence outside the court was that of Hemachandra (1089-1173), who as leader of learning and Jainism won the favour of Siddharaja (1138) and acquired greater authority in the reign of Kumarapala. Though an ardent Jain, he adored Aryan culture. His literary achievement together with the achievements of his disciples, especially of Ramachandra, the dramatist, raised the status of Jains in the cultural life of the province and put Patana besides Ujjayini and Dhara as a seat of learning. Kumara-pala himself had perhaps not embraced Jainism, but he accepted its ethical tenets. His social legislation against the eating of meat and drinking of wine has left an unmistakably deep impression on the moral make-up of Gujarat. Even so, it was a heroic age. Its poetry is ringing with battle and romance. The Rajput women played their traditional role both at Court and on the battlefield. The ministers and statesmen, whether Vanika and Jain or Brahman and Shaiv, were men of noble ambition, and besides being generous patrons of art and learning, led armies to the battlefield. In a contemporary play the poet puts the following words in the mouth of Vastupala:—

दूत रे रेणुगहं रणहृद्रे विश्रुतोऽसितुलया कलयामि ।

मौलीभाणुपटलानि रिपूणां स्वर्गवेत्तनमथो वितरामि ॥

"Oh messenger, I buy the heads of enemies and weigh them in the balance of swords. I pay the price in the form of Heaven".

The social system was not rigid. Caste provided an easy assimilation of groups in the ample social structure. Widow remarriage was not unknown even among the advanced communities. Trade and commerce and maritime activity had brought fabulous wealth. No community was denied cultural advancement. Learned men and poets came from all communities; and that characteristic flexibility in cultural relations came down through the ages to our own times. Political security, economic prosperity, Sanskrit revival, devotion to the Courts of Patana and *Dholaka* and the blend of Hindu and Jain tenets with a pronounced ethical bias made Gujarat a social entity.

Siddhahemachandra, Hemachandra's famous text book of grammar, deals not only with Sanskrit but also with the Prakrits including Apabhramsas. Its treatment of Apabhramsa provides a very important link in the understanding of the development of modern north Indian languages. The *Dvyasraya Mahakavya* illustrates the rules of Sanskrit grammar while recounting the glorious achievements of his patron and his ancestors. Ramachandra (1093-1174) showed originality as a poet and a critic. In collaboration with one Gunachandra, he prepared a treatise on dramaturgy, *Natya-darpana*, wherein he recognizes two kinds of *rasas*, the pleasurable and the painful. He also wrote two noteworthy dramas viz. *Nalavilasa* and *Kaumudimitranandam*. Though several plays were staged in this period of Sanskrit revival their influence on the popular taste was faint and only indirect, for the obvious reason that the language of the people was many removes away from Sanskrit.

Under the patronage of Vastupala (1180 (?)—1250), a great statesman and patron of the arts, the tradition of *mahakavya* and drama established by Hemachandra and Ramachandra was continued, producing several Sanskrit writers, chief among whom were, besides Vastupala himself, Someshvara and Prahladana. Someshvara's *Kirtikaumaudi* is a panegyric of the glorious deeds of Vastupala. Prahladana was a notable dramatist, who attempted the Vyayoga form of Sanskrit drama. Vastupala composed the *Naranarayanananda*, a *mahakavya* in 16 cantos. But on the whole, Sanskrit writings of the period were imitative and decorative rather than truly inspired.

Apabhramsa was a literary idiom of Gujarat more nearly allied to the spoken vernacular. Like the Hindi of modern times it was the lingua franca of the whole of North India. But in its spoken form it was fast breaking up into different languages which take their rise between 1000 and 1300 A. D. Dhanapala wrote a social *dharmakatha*, *Bhavisayattakatha*, in the 10th century. It mingled romance with ethical indoctrination. The pithy verses selected by Hemchandra to illustrate rules of Apabhramsa grammar are good poetry. They express the sentiments of love and heroism in a charming manner.

पुत्तें जाएं कवरु गुगु अवगुगु कवरु मुएण ।

जा बप्पी की भू'हडी चम्पिज्जइ अपरेण ॥

What advantage if a son be born, and what loss if he dies, (if) the land of the fathers is occupied by another ?

जहि कप्पिज्जइ सरेण सरु छिज्जइ खगिण खग्गु ।

तहि तेइह भडवडणिवहि कंतु पचासइ मग्गु ॥

Where arrow cuts arrow and sword cuts sword, in that meet of warriors my lover shows the way.

पिअसंगमि कउ णिइडी पिअहो परोक्खहों केवं ।

मइं बिण्णि वि विण्णासिआ णिइ ण एवं न तेवं ॥

I do not get sleep when the lover is with me. Nor can I get it when he is away. Both are lost to me. Neither this way nor that can I get sleep.

II

1250—1456

In 1297 Ulughkhan, the brother of Alla-ud-din, invaded Gujarat and sacked the great cities of Patana, Dholaka, Khambhata, Bharucha, Surat, and destroyed the holy idol of Somanath. He spread carnage in the prosperous land. Temples were desecrated, cities were burnt, and men, women and children were taken captive. It was the first holocaust that Gujarat experienced for many centuries. Patana now became the camp of the enemy. The Viceroy stationed there ruled and plundered as he chose and forcible conversion was the order of the day. There was no stability and security. All social life was disorganised. People migrated to distant parts of the country for safety. Many noble men either died in battle or embraced Islam. The traditional learning lost all support from court. The merchant community lost political influence and probably bought with money whatever protection it got. Learning and poetry sought patronage from the people. Gujarati (Old Western Rajasthan) emerged as a distinct language from the rather fluid state of late Apabhramsa. The new literature, though losing much of the dignity and formal correctness of tradition, flowed in new

channels and evolved and enriched new forms. It adopted and modified the Apabhramsa metres to make them suitable for singing in the Upasraya, the Court of the Courtyard. It looks upon the heroic past with thrill and sorrow, and also shows a contact with the life of the people. But it has all the inhibitions of a society thrown into confusion for over a century from the fall of Patana in 1297 to the rise of Ahmedshah as an independent Sultan in 1411.

We have a very correct picture of the growth of Gujarati in the grammars of Sanskrit intended for the beginner such as the *Balasiksha* of Sangramasinha (1280) and the *Mugdhavabodha Auktika* of Kulamandana (1394). And the same could be constructed from the literary works. The early phase is revealed in the *Revantagiri Rasa* of Vijayasena (1232) and the mature literary phase in *Kanhadade Prabandha* of Padmanabha (1456). Heroic romance, historical chronicle and the romantic tale are the principal narrative forms cultivated. The shorter forms, *fagu*, *baramasi* and *Chappo* strike a lyrical or moral note. The heroic romance best expresses the spirit and tone of the age, its failing struggle against the Muslim, its weakness, its faith and also its anguish. The *fagu* indulges the gentler sentiments of love and separation in the background of nature and is still reminiscent of a free and joyous social life of men and women of the golden age of the Chalukyas and the Vaghelas.

Ranamallachanda of Sridhara is a panegyric of the heroic deeds of Ranamalla of Idara. This hero of the Rathod family routed the Mussalmans under the Viceroy of Patana, Zafar Khan. The metre is specially suited for court recitation and the language is artificial and euphonious, sometimes cacophonous also, a characteristic assiduously cultivated in bardic poetry.

Kanhadade Prabandha of Padmanabha is a classic of heroic poetry. It narrates in moving verse the last grim struggle of Gujarat for maintaining independence against the hordes of Allaiddin under Ulughkhan, the fall of Somanath, and the great exploits of the ancestor of Akheraja, king of Jhalor and patron of the poet. Kanhadade would not allow the enemy of the Hindus and the breakers of shrines to pass through his territory. Ulughkhan pierces into Gujarat through the eastern path, captures Patana

and destroys Somanath. The lament of the poet is very moving :—

विरूढ़ बात वरतेवा लागी, कलिजुग करइ विलास ।
पृथवी तणउं पीठ मेल्हीनइ, देव गया कैलास ॥

अलूखानि एहवुं फुरमायूं, मढ रहावउ सूनउ ।
ढीली भणी भूत चलावउ, तिहां करेस्युं चूनउ ॥

× × ×

बाल्यां गाम देस ऊजाडचा, घणां नगर विध्वस्यां ।
सोरठ मांहि कोलाहल कीघउ, लोक तणां धन लूस्यां ॥
साहिया लोक बंभ नइ बालक, नारी वर्ण अढार ।
आले वाघ्रे हालरां कीघां, बान न लाभइ पार ॥

Proud and elated Ulughkhan now resolved to punish Kanhadade and attacked Jhalora, but the indomitable hero routed the Turks and secured the idol. Victory is celebrated. But the attacks on Jhalora are repeated till the Rajput army is worn out. The queen and princesses and other women of court perform Jauhar and the warriors fight their last battle of death. Kanhadade is killed and so is his son Virama.

In this historical story of war and heroic exploits elements of fiction are skilfully mingled. Piroja, a daughter of Allauddin had fallen in love with Virama. She tries to bring about peace but Virama is unresponsive. When he falls in battle she commits suicide, sending up to the lover her poignant cry :—

पूरव प्रेम संभारीउ, आंसूडे भीनउ हार जी ।
गुण फीटी अवगुण थया, अम्ह कहि कारणि सिणगार जी ॥

सगुण सलूणा राउल रूसणूं किम्युं ।

हूं ता प्रेम गहेलडी, तूं सोनगिरउ चहूआण जी ॥

तूं तां प्राणव माहरउ, हुं ताहरडी धरि नारि जी ।

जनम एक अंतरि गयउ, सो नेहलु म विसारि जी ॥

हीयड लूं घणूं गहिबरिउं तुं सुणि न अम्हारा नाथ जी ।

तुं अमरापुरि संचरचउ, हूं मरणि न मेल्हूं साथ जी ॥

The *rasa* was a very popular form of Apabhramsa literature. It was a composition like the ballad to be performed in dance. Originally derived from folk dance, it became elaborate and the lyric to accompany it was made more sophisticated by the elite of society. It became a *rupaka* of graceful rhythm, in which men and women in couples danced. In tone it was animated or delicate, the *tala* being given by clap or short sticks. Later it was stereotyped as a religious-cum-historical narrative and took as its theme either a myth or an act of beneficence of a devout Jain. Numerous *rasas* of quasi-mythological narrative are extant. They provide valuable data for the history of Gujarat.

Bharata Bahubali Rasa of Shalibhadra (1185), describing the war of two brothers who were ruling kings of antiquity, is regarded by some as the first specimen of writing that could be distinctly called Gujarati. *Revantagiri Rasa* of Vijayasena celebrates Vastupala's pilgrimage to Girnara and Abu. *Rasa* of Palhanaputra describes his building of temples on Mt. Abu. Description of nature in *Revantagiri Rasa* as also in *Gautama Swami Rasa* of Vinayaprabha (1356) is noteworthy. It is historically significant that a merchant prince Samarasimha, who installed the idol of Rishabhadeva on Mt. Shatrunjaya, had won the favour of Ulughkhan, the Viceroy of Gujarat. Ambadeva who celebrates the event in *Samara Raso* (1315) notes it with particular satisfaction. Vastupala and Tejpala long continue to be the heroes of the *Rasas*.

The *fagu* is a shorter and more lyrical poem. As in *Rasa*, the hero is a mythical or semi-mythical personage but the incidents are few and relate to the gay sports and joyous dances of spring. It probably represents the original nature, spirit and purpose of the *rasa*. The heroine bewails her lot in the flowering spring, for her husband is away and other women are making merry with their lovers. But joy returns to her when the husband arrives and amorous sports replace the sorrow. The tragic love of Rajula for Neminatha is the popular theme for the *fagu*. The *Fagus* are the sweetest poetry of the period.

Shthulibhadra Fagu (1334) of Jinapadma and *Neminatha Fagu* (1344) of Rajasekhara, *Neminatha Fagu* (1375) of Jayasekhara,

Rangasagara Neminatha Fagu (1400) by Somasundara and a poem identical in spirit and allied in form, *Neminatha Chatushpadika* (1269) by Vinayachandra are the representative poems. They are all beautiful but the best is *Vasanta Vilasa*. It has no religious bias. It was written in the fourteenth century by an unknown author. He describes the women preparing for amorous sport :—

अभिनव परि सिणगारीय नारीय मिलइं विसेसि ।
 चंदन भरइं कचोलीय चोलीय मंडनरेसि ॥
 चंदनवन अवगाहीय नाहीय सरोवर नीर ।
 मंदसुरभिहिमलक्षण दक्षण वाइं समीर ॥
 नयर निरोपीय ती वनु जीवनु तणउं युवान ।
 वासभुवनि तिहां विलसइं जलसइं अलीअलआण ॥
 नव यौवन अभिराम ति रामति करइं सुरंगि ।
 स्वर्गि जिस्वा सुर भासुर रासु रमइं वर अंगि ॥

Their beauty is captivating—

मुख आगलि तूं मलिन रे नलिन जई जलि नाहि ।
 दंतह बीज दिखाडिम दाडिम तूं जि तमाहि ॥
 तिल कुसुमोपम नाकु रे लांकु रे लीजइ मूठि ।
 किशलय कोमल पाणि रे जाणि रे चोल मंजीठ ।
 कुच बि अमीयकलसा पाणि थापणि तणीअ अनंग ।
 तीहनु राखणहार रे हार कि धवल भूअंग ॥
 अलविहि लोचन मींचइं हींचइ दोलिहिं एकि ।
 एकि हणइं प्रियु कमलि रे रमलि करइं जलि एकि ॥

Romantic tales in verse had also their vogue. Their origins may be traced in the old Prakrit stories of Gunadhya, Somadeva and Kshemendra and they continued to inspire poets of the coming ages. They provided some escape from the monotony or sorrow of life. Their heroes and heroines made their way through perilous adventure ultimately to happiness. Of those tales *Vidyavilasa Pavado* (1429) of Hiranand and *Sadayavatsa Katha* (1410) of Bhim are interesting examples. But they lack the vitality and beauty of

the historical *rasa*, the lyrical *fagu* or the *baramasi* (the cycle of months).

The Jain Sadhus were keen scholars and indefatigable preachers. They made their ethical doctrines acceptable through simple stories and delectable dharmakathas and wrote explanatory commentaries. They took to writing prose and, indeed, a good beginning of simple, elegant prose was made in the elementary books (*balavabodhas*) and stories by Tarunaprabh and Somasundara in the 14th century. In the 15th century we have a fine specimen of elaborate and poetical prose in *Prithvichandra Charitra*, a religious romance written by Manikyachandra (1422). The skeleton of the story is old but is modified to suit the author's needs and taste. Prithvichandra, king of Paithana, sees the captivating beauty of Ratnamanjari, the daughter of the king of Koshal, in a dream. He proceeds to attend a Svayamvara at which she would be given away. Through many vicissitudes of fortune he is able to marry her. They have every bliss. In the end, however, as always happens in a dharmakatha the hero takes the Jain vows.

The work gives some vivid descriptions of court life and of nature. Its style has the specific name of "boli" and the alternative name of the work is *Vagvilasa*. It is artificial, often consisting of short, balanced and rhymed clauses. It is also poetical and has a very pleasing rhythm.

તિસિઈ આવિઝ વસંત, હૂઝ શીતતણઝ અંત । દક્ષિણ દિસિતણઝ શીતલ વાઝ
વાઈ, વિહસઈ વણસઈ ।

સઘ્વે મલ્લા માસડા પણ વહસાહ ન તુલ્લ ।

જે દવિ દાધાં રૂઝડાં તીંહ માયઈ ફુલ્લ ॥

મઝરિયા સહકાર, ચંપક ઉદાર, વેઝલ બકુલ, ભ્રમરકુલ સંકુલ. કલરવ કરઈ કોકિલ-
તણાં કુલ. પ્રવર પ્રિયંગુ પાડલ, નિર્મલ જલ, વિકસિત કમલ । રાતા પલાસ, સેવંત્રી
વાસ । કુંદ મુચકુંદ મહમહઈ, નાગ પુન્નાગ ગહગહઈ । સારસતણી શ્રેણિ, દિસિ વાસીઈ
કુસુમરેણિ । લોકતણે હાથિ વીણા, વસ્ત્રાડંબર ઝીણા । ધવલ શૃંગાર સાર,
મુક્તાફલતણા હાર । સર્વાંગસુન્દર, વનમાહિ રમઈ ભોગ પુરંદર । એકિ ગીત ગવારઈ,
દાન દિવારઈ । વિચિત્ર વાદિત્ર વાજઈ, રમલિતણાં રંગ છાજઈ । એકિ વાદિઈ ફૂલ
જૂંટઈ, વૃક્ષતણાં પલ્લવ જૂંટઈ । હીંડોલઈ હીંચઈ, ઝીલતાં વાદિઈ જલિઈ સીંચઈ ।

It is the most striking example of elaborate prose of the fifteenth century, reminiscent of *Kadambari* in style and narrative. It scarcely found any imitator in the succeeding ages and creative prose remains barren until we come to British times.

III

(1456-1656)

Politically Gujarat enters (1411) into an era of subjection and distress. But culturally it is vital. The language steadily breaks away from the Rajasthani idiom and preserving the genius of classical Apabhramsa, evolves a simple and supple form. Puranic Hinduism takes the place of Jainism as the source of literary inspiration. The bhakti of the *Bhagavata*, the classical stories of the epic and the *Puranas* and the episodes in the lives of the bhaktas give solace and spiritual encouragement to the masses. They provide a source of purposefulness. Learning, which flourished under the Jain aristocracy and the Jain church decayed, but the treasure of the classical epics was now broadcast in a musical and somewhat dramatic form. Religion and literature have a new phase and they advance on new lines under the stress of circumstances.

The great poets of the period are Narasinha and Mirabai. Bhalana takes up the classical story and from the formal material available then develops the *akhyana*. Devotion often touching philosophical heights is visible in Narasinha. In *Akho* it is subordinated to the metaphysical-cum-satirical poetry. Narasinha was a poet of luxurious imagination and fancy and apart from his great lyrical genius wrote *pada* sequences showing a talent for narration. Bhalana, taking hints from former poets, virtually created the *akhyana*, which in the setting of a large and religious audience, became a powerful instrument of instruction and pleasure. Through all the centuries from the fifteenth to the nineteenth, the *akhyana* had a wide-spread vogue. As a literary form it had an uneven career, it was replenished by Nakara and Vishnudas in the 16th century and raised to perfection by Premanand in the 17th century, but before the advent of the British rule it had already deteriorated in substance and quality.

The bhajan was another mode of emotive address. And it is interesting to note that it continues as a form of expression though the general attitude to life and to God has changed and the *milieu* in which it flourished is transformed. From the fifteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century the bhajan in the pada form enjoyed a tremendous vogue and every poet essayed it. The poet had got to be a man of religious piety and without bhajan he would have no caste and no recognition. In weak hands, however, it became trite, and even able poets were very repetitive. But taken all in all the bhajans give full and pointed expression to personal sentiment, devotional passion and moral fervour. But even so, its reach was limited, for life was circumscribed, ambition thwarted, and outlook narrow. Literature had not much freedom of movement. The beauty of the classics was presented in a rather crude form. The Puranic revival did not bring, except in the case of Bhalana, the classical concentration and dignity. Premanand gets a glimpse of it but it soon vanishes in the reciter's immediate purpose of evoking *rasa*.

Narasinha Mehta (1414-1480) is not chronologically the first Gujarati poet, though popularly he is esteemed to be the father of Gujarati poetry. That is significant. There were indeed many poets before him but none of them had Narasinha's genius and artistic achievement. He fashioned the language as an instrument of sentiment and imagination and created channels in which poetry flowed for generations. Mira and Narasinha have become thrilling words. Their songs have for centuries been on people's lips and the stories of their lives are living history.

Narasinha's power of narration and characterisation is evident in his *Govinda-gamana*, *Surata-sangrama* and especially in his small masterpiece, *Sudama-Charitra*. Radha's heroism in an erotic war with Krishna and the cowherds is protracted in one pada:—

મર્યાદા ને લોપી ને દુઃખકરી ગોપી ને, ઘોઝી ને, ઘાઘ રણ બીચ રાધે,
હાગ-અસિ સજ કરી, ઢાલ ઝરની ઘરી ઝ્રુવ શરાસન બીચ શરને સાધે ।

The economic difficulty and the inner conflict in the heart of a true bhakta, his vacillations between the ordinary and the righteous course, the humour of situation in the court of Krishna when a

pauper friend is physically served by the Lord to the astonishment of the queens, and the rapidity of movement make the *Sudama-Charitra* a little classic. Sudama is returning home apparently without getting anything from Krishna :—

बाल गोपाल जे वाट जोतां हसे तेहने जोइ अमे शुं य कहेशुं,
मित्र मोहन तरुं हेत ज्यारे पूछसे कामिनी ने उत्तर केम देशुं ?
ऐम चिंता करे, नेत्रथी निरभरे कर्मनी बात मनमांही घारी,
वरसैनो नाथनो अति घणो लोभियो पीताम्बरी पण लीघी उतारी ।

Narasinha loves nature, and the background of nature that he delineates in the description of the *lila* of Krishna conveys the impression of reality. His sense of rhythm and language is poetic, always making his feeling intense and his descriptions vivid. There is a poem describing young Krishna helping the maids in breaking the curds.

माकेलो जशोदा जी कुंवर तमारो, अम घरे महिडां बलोववा रे जो
तमारा कानजीने घूमतां रे आवडे, तेउवाने मसे आवी हुं य रे जो
सात समुद्रनी गोली रे कीधी, मेरु कीघो रवैयो रे जो,
वासुकि नागनां नेतरां रे कीघां चांदा सूरज बे सखैया रे जो
एक पास कान्हजी कालो रे घूमे, बीजि पास राधिका गोरी रे जो
खमके छे कंकणी, लपके छे बेलिया, लटके ते नेतरानी दोरी रे जो ।

Narasinha's fancy knows no restraint in what may be called erotic-mystical poetry, but in the purely ethical or mystical poetry he is a master. The description of the true Vaishnava is now a hallowed poem of nation-wide celebrity. His metaphysical faith is that of a Vedantin. He has woven this faith in a poetic vision, the imaginative out-burst of which should rank it among the best mystical poems of the world.

नीरखने गगन मां कोन घूमी रह्यो ? तेज हुं तेज हुं शब्द बोले
श्यामना चरणमां इच्छुं छुं मरणरें अहींयां कोई न थी कृष्ण तोले
श्याम शोभा घणी बुद्धि ना शके कली अनंत ओच्छव मां पंथ भूली
जड अने ऐनन रस करी जणायो पकडी प्रेम संजीवन मूली
भलहल ज्योति उद्योत रविकोटमां, हेमनी कोर ज्यां नीसरे तोले
सच्चिदानंद आनन्द क्रीडा करे सोनाना पारणां माहि भूले—

बत्ती बिन तेल बिण सूत्र बिण जो बली अचप भलके सदा अनल दीवो
नेत्र बिण नीरखवो रूप बिण परखवो बिण जिह्वाए रस सरस पीवो
अकल अविनाशी एम ना ज जीए कलयो अरघ ऊरघ नी मांहे महाले
नरसैयाचो स्वामी सकल व्यापी रह्यो प्रेमना तंत मां सन्त भाले ।

It seems in his early life Narasinha assimilated himself to the character of the gopis and sang his religious feelings as a gopi. But later his religious sentiment grew richer with philosophical insight. In the above poem he sees "the entire universe transfigured by the spirit of God, and he saw God flaming in and through and over all the Universe."

"Sachchidananda is sporting in joy,
Swinging in a cradle of gold."

Narasinha's association with "untouchables" for spiritual fellowship is a heroic marvel for those times.

Mirabai (1499-1547) is the most celebrated woman poetess of India. Gujarat legitimately claims her as one of her own. According to tradition she had spent the later years of her life in Gujarat. Besides, and that is more pertinent, the language of Rajasthan in the early sixteenth century was in many essentials the same as Gujarati. Philologically it would not be incorrect to call it Gujarati.

Mira's bridal devotion to her Lord Krishna is pure, graceful and noble. Like the true Hindu lady she avoided the lascivious but her ardour is manifest in all her lyrics. Her simplicity and tenderness are captivating. The face of the Lord fascinates her :—

मुखड़ानी माया लागी रे मोहन प्यारा ।

मुखड़ानी माया लागी रे ।

मुखडुं में जोयुं तारुं सर्व जग थयुं खारुं

मन मारुं रह्युं न्यारुं रे मोहन प्यारा ।

She has not the creative imagination or variety of Narasinha but her love for the Lord has lent a sweetness all her own. "She is one of those few persons in the entire range of human history, in whom sublimation of the sex-element and its transmutation into sex-mysticism are seen in their noblest form*."

*M. C. Parekh : "Sri Vallabhacharya".

The impulse of bhakti and the Puranic revival produced minor poets such as Bhim who wrote *Harilashodasakala* (1485) and Keshavadas Kayastha who wrote *Shri Krishnalila Kavya* (1473).

The spiritual impulse in Bhalana (1434-1514) is of course bhakti but it is bhakti of an eclectic character. He sings of Krishna, Rama and the Mother Goddess with equal devotion. Perhaps his faith leaned to Ramananda. (Indeed, it would be wrong to classify even Narasinha and Mira as bhaktas of the Vallabha sect). But he is a great artist. He was a scholar of Sanskrit. He could transmit to his language the meaning and dignity of the classics. He evolved a poetical form for sustained narration. The *akhyana* could give a scope to fullness of episodic treatment, variety of character and conflict, and richness of sentiment. And yet the narration could be so regulated and spaced that the parts could have the interest of separate poems and their popularity assured.

Kadambari, *Dasama-skandha*, *Nalakhya* and *Ramabala-charita* are Bhalana's outstanding works. He shows the art of omitting and expansion, and in both he is revealed as an artist. He is particularly successful in the delineation of parental affection. *Kadambari* is his greatest work and deserves the rank of an Indian classic. Perhaps his experiment in giving a versified story from the original *Kadambari* of Bana, preserving the main elements, is a unique achievement in mediaeval literary history of India. His genius has pruned the luxuriance of Bana, and added some pictures and sentiments of local significance, and yet, somehow, we feel we are reading the great Bana :

अच्छोद नामि सरोवर प्रूढ एटलि दीठु अश्वारूढ
उपरि तरुवर ताल तमाल छाह्या छत्राकार रसाल
भणशिलसिला दली गजदन्ति पीतरेणु दीसि तटप्रान्त
पाषाण भेद तरणी मंजरी ठामि ठामि जाणी कोतरी
हंस कारंडव चक्री बहु आनन्दि क्रीडि पंखी सहू
जाणीसुं सिमजानुं हास्यु सरोवर रुपि परकासि
अतिशि निर्मलता शी भणू? जाणी मंन महामणि तणुं ।

Both Nakara (1500-1575) and Vishnudasa (1564-1632) enriched the *akhyana* literature. They exploited the rich heritage of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, especially the *Bhagavata*. They adopted the general technique of Bhalana and tried to evoke *rasa* by assimilating contemporary atmosphere and sentiments. Occasionally they indulge in moral exhortation. Though their work is copious, they lack the taste of Bhalana and the genius of Premanand who came later. But there is no denying that Premanand made wholesale use of both Nakara and Vishnudasa.

The tradition of Jain *rasa* had not died. Lavanyasamaya wrote *Vimala Prabandh* in 1512 and Nayasundara wrote *Rupachanda-Kunvar Rasa* (1581) and *Nala-Damayanti Rasa* (1609), but many Jain writers who were followed by non-Jain poets, wrote romantic tales in verse. Moral and satirical verse may have its origins in old narrative poetry where the poet relaxed himself in ethical teaching. But it came to be independently cultivated by Mandana in *Prabodha-Battisi* (C. 1480) and raised to chiselled perfection by Akho.

In the whole range of Gujarati literature there is no poet who has written Vedantic poetry with such understanding and fervour as did Akho of Ahmedabad (1591-1656). He was an untutored goldsmith but he had kept his eyes and ears open and therefore thoroughly knew the life about him with all its social evils. He had a sharp tongue and he indulged the idiom of central Gujarat to the utmost advantage. He had widely travelled and must have sat at the feet of many gurus and sannyasis, patiently hearing and deeply meditating on the expositions of the intricacies of the Vedanta. And no poet found a more homely phrase or a more appropriate simile or image to convey his thought. It is this understanding and this wisdom that made Akho a poet. He is not a cold reasoner. His reason is woven into imagery. And the gusto and conviction and authority with which he speaks lend his poetry a justification and an individual character. In a twinkle of the eye he sees through pretension and humbug, and like a proper goldsmith turns on it the tongue of his scorching wit with pointed concentration.

Chittavicara-Samvada, *Anubhavabindu* and *Akho-gita* are the more important among his works expounding the Advaita philosophy.

The true and ultimate guru for Akho is one's own self. The Samkhya Cosmogony, the concept of maya, the ultimate unity of self and Brahman, a synthesis of renunciation, bhakti and knowledge as the way to realization, the unreasonableness of other doctrines, are the main topics discussed in these works. The treatment is not strictly argumentative and the topics as such do not admit of sentiment. But Akho carries with his bold and homely way of expression. The pictures of life that his quaint comparisons call up make up for want of *rasa*. The energy with which the verse moves, almost like a stallion, is infectious. Here he describes the relation of self to Brahman :—

वारिधि केहं वारि चार दिशि मध्ये आले,
 पृथ्वी पर पथराय वनराजि फूले फाले
 ऊगरतुं रहे अंबु सर्व ढली आली ढाले
 ते नदी नाप घराय न्हाय सहुबटु मरिमा लेहे
 गर्व भरी गाजे अस्त्रा शर न जुए सरिता सही
 जेम सागर तेम श्रीहरि वरसे जीव नदी वही ।
 जेम पामे खेरीने खाटकी तेने भक्ष्य भोज्य आपे घरणुं
 पछी वध करे वारू करीने ए लक्षण अजातणुं
 ते मेंढो जाणो माहरो पालक पोषक छे घणी
 तेने आप जाय अर्पवा माटेम मनमां अतिघणी
 वात्सल्य जाणी वाम दक्षिण पण वार्यो केडे फरे
 तेने महाजन मुकावा करे तोय ते जवन केडे संचरे

Occasionally he describes the joy of mystic apprehension :—

आज आनन्द मारा अंगमां उपज्यो
 परिब्रह्मानी पुण्ये भाल लार्हीं
 गूंगानी सानमां सामो समजे नहीं
 अदबद मूठडी रही रे बांधी
 हूँ टल्यो तुं ठर्यो करतार करुणा करी
 सुख दुख बुझनी मूली दाभी
 सपन समाई गयुं ज्यम हतुं त्यम थयुं
 अखो आ लखीसूतो सुखनी गादी ।

Akho wrote over seven-hundred chhappas (six-lined verses) on a variety of subjects, religious, philosophical and social. They were written in the satirical vein generally and were very popular. In pithy, rhymed and balanced lines he gave pointed expression to his faith and criticism.

He shows how dualism is false :—

बेल न दीसे, दीसे पान, दीसे कीर्ण, न दीसे भान
प्रवाह न दीसे, दीसे तरंग, तेम चिन्ह न दीसे दीसे अंग
अक्खा देखणहारो ह्वैन टळते रहे ते सर्वातीत ।

No one can realize God without a keen desire :—

आरत बिना न उपजे हेत, आरत बिना पूजारो प्रेत
पूछली भेंस न मांडे पग, जोर करीने थाक्या ठग
उपाडे घणा पण ऊभी न थाय, अक्खा जोर करवारा पाछा जाये ।

The charlatan deceives himself and his followers :—

घणुं पंडित डाह्या गुणपान न्याये पारखुं संगीत गान
अष्टावधानी पिंगळ कवि मन्त्रभेद औषध अनुभवी
अक्खा एटले जो हरि नव सख्यो तो भोळपणथी आषो शो बख्यो ?
वैष्णव भेल धारीने फरे परसाद टाणो पत्रावळां भरे,
रांघ्यां घान वखाणता जाय जेम परसे तेम भाभां खाय,
कीर्तन गायने तोडे तोर, अखो कहे ज्वानीनुं जोर ।

IV

Gujarati Literature (1656-1825)

In 1573 Akbar formed the province of Gujarat and its separation from Marvad was finalised. For over one hundred years Gujarat enjoyed a settled life, and though there was no room for political ambition, social life under the caste system was autonomous. Literary inspiration had an outlet. Devotional, didactic and quasi-metaphysical poetry grew along with what for all practical purposes may be regarded secular literature. The fanaticism of Aurangzeb, when he came into power, and the raids of the Marathas must have caused great distress. Even the occupation of the province by the Marathas after the Moghul decline meant no relief. It neither meant any literary advance nor impulse. Life was decadent from 1700 until the advent of the British.

Premanand (1636-1734) was the finest literary product of the period and was destined to be the greatest poet of old Gujarat. He carried on the Puranic tradition as a reciter of narrative poetry—*gagara bhatta*—and developed the technique of the *akhyana* to perfection. Son of a Brahman, Krishna, of Baroda, he sang his poems to large audiences of cultured and uncultured men and women of Gujarat in Surat, Nandurbar, Baroda and other rich towns. The streets echoed with his musical voice, the swaying *raga* and the ringing *tala*. No poet's memory seems so fresh and green in men's minds in Gujarat. No poet had given Gujarat such volume of deep delight and pleasure.

He was following a popular tradition. He was exponent of an art that was in vogue in the whole province for centuries. He had to address audiences of varying levels of culture. And in the same sitting the demand of some particular pleasure had got to be satisfied. That is the reason why, though the range of his *akhyanas* is wide, the quality of workmanship is unequal. He has used to the full his predecessors in the art, Nakara, Vishnudas and Visvanatha Jani. Nevertheless his individual touch, especially in the delineation of the humorous and the pathetic, is unmistakable.

Of the forty authentic works of Premanand *Ranayajna*, *Nalakhya*, *Abhimanyu-akhyana*, *Dashama Skandha*, *Okhaharana*, *Sudama-Charitra*, *Sudhanvakhyana*, and the *akhyanas* based on the life of Narasinha Mamerun, Hundi and Sraddha are the most memorable. His portrayal of characters is vivid, and though their features and sentiments have contemporary traits, they provide a world of deep human interest. The pictures have a realistic appeal. And yet the sentiments generally have an ideality in which the audience must have loved to cast their feelings. The aspiring devotee regarded Sudama or Narasinha as his model and hoped for God's intervention in time of worldly trouble; the wife in separation supported her spirit by the example of Sita and Damyanti; the young wife in a joint family felt for her parent like Kunvarbai; brotherly love was idealized in Ravan and Kumbhakarna as well as in Ram and Lakshman; the eternal mother was presented in Jasoda, while Krishna was the eternal child, playful and frolicsome.

Kunvarbai is pregnant and her father must make rich gifts to the husband's family. The grand mother-in-law had given a formidable list and the trembling poor girl now approaches the father Narasinha :—

कागळ लई कुंभरबाई आव्यां पिताजीनी पासे रे
बड सासुए विपरीत लखाव्युं, कही हवे खुं थासे ?
लखेशरीथी न पडे पूरूं एवुं एवुं लखाव्युं रे
साधू पिताने दुःख देवाने मारे सीमन्त शाने आव्युं ?

In the *Nalakhya* Damyanti declares her resolve to marry Nala and no one but Nala, not even Brahma, Vishnu or Shiv.

उत्कृष्ट अमर निकृष्ट नल, में तम थी जाण्युं आज,
पण नैषधपति ने पिंड सौंप्यो, अन्यतर्गुं नव काज ।
अकल, अजने अनंग अरि जो, वरवा आवे त्राण,
तोहे पण मूकूं नहिं चित्त, चोहोट्युं नळने चरण ।

And yet the noble lady, discarded and forlorn, feels happy when in the forest she learns that Nala is alive and happy :—

मुनि कहे, नळ ने छे क्षेम, पण उतारयो तुजथी प्रेम,
नळ नारी शोषे छे अन्य, तूं करजे जे ऊपजे मन
तब हरख्यो प्रेमदानो प्राण, मारा प्रभु ने छे कल्याण,
लक्ष नारी करो राजन, पण म्हारे नळनुं ध्यान ।

Jasoda bewails her lot on the disappearance of Krishna in the waters of the Jamuna :—

कालिन्दीनुं काळूं पाणी, माहे वसे कालो काळी,
हवे आशा ते शीमळवानी, केम आवे वनवासी रे ।
काने कुण्डळ, मुखमां मोरली, सांजे गोकुळ आवे,
भुख्यो छों कही पेट देखाडे, मां कहीने बोलावे रे ।
पीत पछोडी काछ कछे, मुज कने नेतरूं मागे,
है घरडी माने थाकी जाणी कौण वलोववा लागे रे ।

Premanand's portraits are vivid. Here is Krishna in the guise of a cloth-merchant ; and you see the typical rich bania of only yesterday :

चौद लोक तणो महाराज रे, महता माटे थया बजाज रे ।
 वागो शोभे केशर छांटे रे, बांधि पागडी अचळे छांटे रे ।
 काने कुंडळ हीर जडियां रे, नेत्र प्रलम्ब अचणे अडियां रे ।
 एक लेखण काने खोसी रे, धरयुं नाम दामोदर दोषी रे ।
 भीणा जामा ने पटका भारे रे, हरि हळवे हळवे पचारे रे ।
 खांवे पछेडी ओढी नाथे रे बेऊ छेड़ा गृहि आछे हाथे रे ।

The young Chandrahasa has lost his foster-mother and is consoled by the neighbours :

वहाणुं वाते जाग्यो बाळक, मुखे बोलतो वाणी
 आस्थो चोळतो ने अन्न मागतो माता मुई न जाणी ।
 सूनू मुवन ज्यारे पुत्रे ठीठुं नेत्र भरीने रोय
 आकुळ-व्याकुळ थावा लाग्यो उत्तर न आपे कोय ।
 सांभडी आवीं सर्वश्यामा पासे ना पाडोसा,
 को बाळक ने पहुंआ आपे घणां वर्षनी डोसी ।
 को कुंवर ने केडे चढावी लागी आसना-वासना करवा
 ओ आवी जनेता तारी ओ गई छे पाणी भरवा ।

The unknown prince, Chandrahasa, is discovered by Vishaya who falls in love with him :

एवुं कहेती आवी चतुरा, चंचल नयणे जोय
 रखे सखी सहियरी आपणीं छूपी रहिने जोय ।
 मूपुर भांभर अणवट्ट विछिआ, सोनीए आभरण घडियां,
 प्रथम वाजता रूडां लागतां, आज शत्रु थई नीवडियां ।
 एवं कहि मन हठकरी चाली भांभर ऊंचा चढावी
 मरमे भरती डग जेम जडमां बग एम श्यामा समीपे आवी
 चन्द्रहासनी पासे अति उल्लासे, हरिवादनी हरखे बैठी,
 मुजश्वास लागे साधू जागे चिंता ए चितमां पेठी ।

Premanand is not a thinker. There is not much depth in his poems, though his best works have a valued ethical significance. But he is a great artist, exactly knowing how to rouse emotions. He is a master of verse-rhythms and words, and when we read him we feel we are in his hands. The rich tapestry of the romantic and the realistic as in *Okhaharana*, or of the divine and earthly as in

Nalakhyana or *Sudama-charitra* is fascinating. Structurally also the chief *akhyanas* are well designed. The structure, the amplitude, the variety of situations, the pathos and the purport make Premanand's *Nalakhyana* the most noteworthy achievement of mediaeval Gujarati literature. Moving emotion and living character are the two perennial sources of pleasure in Premananda.

The romantic tale in verse and its Jain counterpart, the social romance, have their sources in the misty past, in the *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya, the *Jatakas* and the *Panchatantra*. Then come the Sanskrit romances of Padalipta, Dandin and Bana. There is always a class of people taking child-like delight in the stories in which the most miraculous thing can happen and the hearer transported to a land of wonder. Vikrama, Vatsaraja, Bhoja and Siddharaja are the typical heroes of these tales. Love is the principal sentiment and the end is morally satisfying. There are also verses of moral teaching. But in between the writer takes great freedom in depicting sentiment, situation and character. Women here are free, bold, educated and accomplished. They include Ganikas. Lovers are men of wit and adventure. Love is spontaneous but its career is tortuous. The dead are revived, memory of past lives recalled; bodies are transformed, birds can speak, horses and men can fly. Naturally the romantic tales are all variations on the same theme, without much life or variety. In the social romances of the Jains the romantic is subdued and the approach is more realistic, but they suffer from religious emphasis.

The sixteenth century had been particularly rich in romantic tales. They were written by Jain and non-Jain poets alike. In old Gujarati Asayata wrote *Hansavali* (1371) and Bhima wrote *Sadayavatsa-Katha* (1410) and Hirananda *Vidyavilasano Pavado* (1429). Then came Narapati (*Nandabattisi* and *Pancadanda*), Ganapati (*Madhavanala-Kamakandala Dogdhaka* 1528), Madhusudana Vyasa (*Hansavati-Vikrama Charita Vivaha* 1560), Kuslalalabha (*Maru-Dhola Chopai* 1561), Lavaṇyasamaya (*Vimala Prabandha*, purporting to be history but essentially a social romance, 1512) and Nayasundara (*Rupachandra Kunvara Rasa* 1581). Similar romances were written by Nemivijaya and Gangavijaya in the following century.

The social romances of the Jains give a glimpse of contemporary manners of the upper middle class and betray the flickering flame of the Jaina classical style and scholarship. Of the non-Jain writers Madhusudana Vyasa has made an attempt at originality by making the heroine a princess of Khambhata. And they all express the love of the romantic which had also invaded the akhyana (as in the *Okha-harana*) and the historical prabandha. There was also an interaction in the technique of these literary forms.

This rich heritage of wondrous romances, slightly social and more slightly historical, was utilized by Samala (1699-1769) of Ahemdabad like Akho, but better read in Sanskrit and Persian, he found the proper vehicle for his talents in the romantic tale. His clientele belonged to the unsophisticated strata of society and the lotus-eaters of petty courts. He had a large fund of stories and the gift of simple rapid narration interspersed with riddles and commonplace maxims of worldly wisdom for relaxation. He did not create new characters or situations and could not have moved his audience deeply, but he made available for all the alluring vision of forlorn maidens, beautiful women making their own choice in love, accomplished courtesans turning men into parrots or showing unusual constancy in their affections, desperate warriors, difficult journeys and perilous adventures in distant lands.

Batrisa-putali, *Padmavati* (1718), *Sudabahoteri* (1765), *Nanda-Batrasi*, *Vinecata-ni-barta*, *Madana Mohana* are the more important of Samala's many stories.

In *Madana-Mohana*, Samala takes up the threads of the old romantic story of Bilhana and his imitators, in which a princess falls in love with her tutor and gets into trouble. Here the lover is Madana, the son of the minister, and the priest-tutor has to solemnize the marriage. When the secret is revealed, Madana and Mohana are banished, Mohana accompanying her lord in the garb of a man. Through the machinations of a courtesan they were separated, and each wandered alone. Mohana's cleverness won her the gifts of princesses from kings, for she was playing the man. Before she is compelled to reveal her identity, Madana discovers her. All these and several other princesses Madana receives as his wives and the couple is reconciled to their parents. Madana had shown

that he could win by his personal gifts not one but a dozen princesses.

Samala is famous for his chhappas. The one in which he extols the farmer and his ox may be found particularly noteworthy today :

વાઘથી બલિયો વલ્લદ, પૃથ્વીનો ભાર ઉપાડે
વાગહણે છે જીવ, વલ્લદ તો જગત જિવાડે
સ્રષ્ટાણે રચી સૃષ્ટિ પ્રથમ તો કરાવી કીધો,
ધોરી સરજ્યો ધીર બન્નેને ત્યાં બરદીધો,
ઊપાડો ભાર અવનીતનો, કરો કામ, સ્વદ અન્ન જમો,
છત્રપતિ આદી સૌ છોકરા, મામા થઈ ભૂતલ ભમો ।

The farmer and his ox are the real inheritors of the earth; even the prince and the merchant are his children who should respect him as their true father.

In one story, which is a story within a story, the choice of a beautiful princess for a husband has fallen on a poor Brahman. He declares to her the inequality of the match :

હું કુશકા તું શાલ, શિયાલ હું તો તું સહિં યે,
હું પડતર તું ક્ષેત્ર, પટન્ટર એવો કહિયે,
હું કથિર તું કનક, કૂપ હું તો તું સિન્ધુ,
હું આગિયો તું અરુણ, હું તો તારક તું હિન્દુ ।
હું કીઢી કુંજર તુલ્ય તું ક્યાં પાષાણ ભવેરડી ?
ફટફટ રાજકુમારિકા દીપક લઈ કૂવે પડી ।

Poetry of metaphysical knowledge, moral exhortation and social criticism had its high-priests as well as admirers in the eighteenth century. The Vallabha school of devotion was firmly entrenched in Gujarat, and as a healthy reaction against its growing evils as a sect another school of bhakti with emphasis on puritanic morals was established by Sahajananda (1781-1830).

Pritamadas was a respectable poet in the literary tradition of Akho. His verses are well-tuned and are daily sung by the devout in some parts of Gujarat. There is a verse beginning with the letter Zh.

ਭਭ੍ਭਾ ਭਾਭੀ ਜੋਨੇ ਤੇਹੁ ਬਯਾਦਾਢ ਜ੍ਯਾ ਵਰਸੇ ਮੇਹੁ,
 ਵਿਨਾ ਸਰੋਵਰ ਭ੍ਰਮ੍ਭੁਜ ਸਾਰ, ਵਿਨਾ ਭ੍ਰਮਰ ਊਠੇ ਗੁੰਜਾਰ,
 ਵਿਨਾ ਭ੍ਰਕ ਭ੍ਰਜਵਾਯੁੰ ਜੇਹੁ, ਭਭ੍ਭਾ ਭਾਭੀ ਜੋਨੇ ਤੇਹੁ

Elsewhere in a mood of genuine inspiration he describes the path of the bhakta as a hero. The true devotee is a warrior and must be ready to lay down his life for his faith :—

ਹਰਿਨੋ ਮਾਰਗ ਢੇ ਸ਼ਰਾਨੋ, ਨਹਿ ਕਾਯਰਨੁੰ ਕਾਮ ਜੋਨੇ,
 ਪਰਥਮ ਪਹਿਲੁੰ ਮਸਤਕ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ, ਬਢਨ੍ਤੀ ਲੇਵੁ ਨਾਮ ਜੋਨੇ ।
 ਸੁਤ ਬਿਤ ਦਾਰਾ ਸ਼ੀਸ਼ ਸਮਰਪੇ, ਤੇ ਪਾਮੇ ਰਸ ਪੀਵਾ ਜੋਨੇ,
 ਸਿਨ੍ਧੁ ਮਢ੍ਯੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਲੇਵਾ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਢ੍ਯਾ ਸਰਜੀਵਾ ਜੋਨੇ ।
 ਪ੍ਰੇਮਪੰਥ ਪਾਵਕਨੀ ਜਵਾਢਾ ਭਾਡੀ ਪਾਹੁਢ ਭਾਗੇ ਜੋਨੇ,
 ਮਾਹਿ ਪਢ੍ਯਾ ਤੇ ਮਹਾ ਸੁਖ ਪਾਨੇ ਦੇਖਨਾਰਾ ਦਾਭੇ ਜੋਨੇ ।

There is a pronounced other-worldly feeling in Dhiro and Bhojo. Like Akho they chastise the false gurus and like him propound the monistic doctrine. Dhiro is a more polished writer than Bhojo. Even today there are narrow sects, and cheats in the guise of gurus and bavas. Their exposure by these poets has an aptness for our times as well. Says Bhojo—

ਜੋਭਲੋ ਜਗਤਮਾਂ ਬਾਵਾ ਰੇ, ਭ੍ਰਯਾ ਮੇਖ ਧ੍ਰੁਤੀਨੇ ਲਾਵਾ,
 ਜ੍ਯਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੇਮਦਾ ਭ੍ਰਯੀ ਪਾਯੀ ਭ੍ਰੇ ਤ੍ਯਾਂ ਜਾਭੀ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਨਾਵਾ,
 ਗ੍ਰਹਸ੍ਥਨੀਂ ਲ੍ਰੀ ਰਿਸਾਭੀ ਜਾਯ ਤ੍ਯਾਰੇ, ਬਾਵੋਜੀ ਜਾਯ ਮਨਾਵਾ ਰੇ ।

In a happier vein Dhiro condemns the narrow sects as unnecessary, for the omni-present Supreme is too vast to be contained in a shed.

ਬਾਡੋ ਬਾਢੀ ਬੈਠੋ ਰੇ ਪੋਤਾਨੋ ਪੰਥ ਕਰਵਾ ਨੇ,
 ਨਵਾ ਲੇਲ ਉਠਾਵੇ ਰੇ, ਉਪਾਯ ਉਦਰ ਭਰਵਾ ਨੇ ।
 ਰਾਮਾਨੰਡੀ ਨੇ ਨੀਮਾਨੰਡੀ, ਵਲ੍ਲਭ ਸੇਜਾਨੰਦ ਸਮਜਾਵੇ,
 ਕਬੀਰਪੰਥੀ ਨੇ ਤਾਰਜਤੁੰਬੀ, ਭ੍ਰਯੀ-ਭ੍ਰਯੀ ਨੇ ਭੁਲਾਵੇ ।
 ਗੁਰੁਥੰਨੇ ਗਾਯੇ ਰੇ ਪਾਰਵੂ ਭਨ ਹਰਵਾ ਨੇ ।

And in the enigmatic manner of Kabira's technique Bhojo dreams of the Ultimate which is identical with the Self of the individual if properly realized. The One is in all and all is in the One. If you realize the Brahman there is a magical transmutation of earthly things :—

અલસ લેઈ લાગી રે જાગી ને જોયું આ ઘટમાં,
 અમણા તો ભાગી રે સોહાગી મેઢ્યા ઝલટમાં ।
 અમ્બાડીને ગજરાજ ગઢીઓ, ઘોડાને ગલી ગયું જીણ,
 વસ્ત્ર ઉપર વાઢ સુકાણી, સમુદ્રાને ગઢી ગયું ફીણ,
 શશલો તો શાણો થઈને રે, શારદૂલને નાલે પટમાં ।
 આલે તો ધીફલ લાગ્યાં, કદઢીએ કેરીઓની સુમ્બ,
 નાગર વેલે દ્રાક્ષ બિજોરાં એવી સૂબી બની છે સૂબ,
 ગગન દોહિયો ઘટમાં રે દૂષ પીઘું છદ છટ્માં ।

It is interesting to note that in literary currents and their rhythmic changes in Gujarat, religious movements (and in modern times social and political movements also) have been followed by a classical reinforcement in diction and manner induced by a revival of Sanskrit studies. Such literary movements encouraging refinement in style and adequacy in expression gather the popular elements and employ them to a new purpose. The *Rasa*, the *phagu*, the *bhajan*, the *akhyana*, the romantic tale, the *chhappa* and the *garabi*, all tell the same tale of popular channels of literary expression and popular idiom galvanised or transformed under the direct or indirect influence of Sanskrit revival. It is not as if the poetry of monistic doctrine of Akho, Bhanadas, Pritamadas, Sivanand, Dhiro, Niranta, Bapu Saheb, Bhojo and Manohar was fortuitous. Though there is no record, it must have been preceded by the teachings of learned sannayasis who were always on the move.

The sentiment encouraged and sanctified by the Pushtimarga (the path of grace) of Vallabhacharya and his philosophy termed pure non-dualism (Suddha advaita) was somewhat late in flowering as beautiful poetry. Not so the impulse derived from Sahajanand, which immediately became creative in the imagination of craftsmen and others who were culturally regarded as very backward. The yearning for the beloved God—the eternal lover—is sung by both traditions, with equal ardour, but it is voluptuous in Dayarama, the Vallabhite poet, and subdued by moral fervour in the Svaminarayan poets. These last therefore give what may be regarded as the finest poetry of the *Shanta rasa*. The poetry of parental love that we find in Bhalana of the fifteenth century and the poetry of the

sadhus of the Svaminarayan sect of the early nineteenth century are two of the most striking phases of mediaeval Gujarati poetry.

Sahajanand of Ayodhya was a pupil of one Ramanand. He founded the Svaminarayan sect in Gujarat, emphasized purity of conduct and opened the doors of bhakti practically to all. His tenets were those of Ramanujacharya but he accepted the Vallabhite technique of devotion and service of God, the beloved lord. He worked for the moral uplift of men in Gujarat and Saurashtra. Brahmananda (originally a bhata, a bard), Nishkulanand (a carpenter) and Premanand (Premasakhi) were the outstanding poets from among his disciples.

Nishkulanand says very expressively that renouncing the world without inner non-attachment is worse than useless :—

त्याग न टके रे बैराग बिना, करीए कोटी उपाय जी

अन्तर ऊंझी इच्छा रहे, ते केम करीने तजाये रे ।

उष्ण रते भवनी विशे बीज नवदिशे बहारजी,

घन वरसे वन पांगरे, इन्द्रिय विषय आकार जी ।

With equal adequacy of expression Brahmanand declares that the true devotee, the bride of the lord, must be heroic in constancy:—

रे शिर साटे नटवर ने वरिए,

रे पाछुं ते पगलुं नव भरिए ।

रे पहिलूँ ज मनमां भेवड़िए,

रे होडे-होडे जुद्धे नव चड़िए,

रे जो चड़िए तो कटका थई पड़िए

रे शिर साटे नटवरने वरिए ।

Mother-worship or devotion to Amba, the protecting and loving mother, has been widely prevalent in Gujarat from ancient times, and even today in the Navaratra ('the nine nights' in the first half of Asvin) garabis and garabas are sung in every street to the accompaniment of dance in a circle and clapping of hands. But in Gujarat it is not seen as a system or dogma. It has not been a strong literary inspiration. Vallabha Bhatta (Mevado) is the chief literary exponent of this religious attitude. Sometimes his fancy takes wing as in the picture of the mighty Goddess supporting and moving the universe :—

गगन मंडळ करी गागरी रे मां, सुन्दर सकळ शोभा भरी रे मां
नद ग्रहे मां सहृषी वडी रे मां, आदित्य ग्रखंड कर्यो दीवडो रे मां

The heaven is the pot on the head of the Mother while she moves on in the dance. There are the splendid orbs of the sun and the moon and there is also the clay lamp of this earth. The three gods dwell in this beautiful pot on her head. And the oceans provide the oil for the lights.

Poets who had accepted the creed of non-dualism often yielded to the vogue of the poetry of love of Krishna and the Gopis. But it was against their grain. In Dayaram, however, we have the authentic voice. There is a foretaste of it in the lyrical *bara-masi* (cycle of months describing separation of Radha from Krishna) of Ratnesvara, a pupil of Premanand and native of Dhaboi, and of Ratano, a dyer of Kheda. Their pictures of nature are true and vivid, and are surcharged with feeling. Ratnesvara (1650-1720) and Girdhara (1787-1852) were scholars of Sanskrit and they were the last of those who tried to preserve the tradition of the *akhyana*. Ratnesvara translated the *Bhagavata*, and Girdhara wrote the *Ramayana*. The *Ramayana*, giving a substantial amount of the epic story in the desis, was popular for nearly a century. The whole history of translations from Sanskrit and of the *akhyana* based on the epics and the Puranas shows that again and again attempts were made by men of literary aptitude and social awareness to educate the people in our ancient heritage through a medium they could enjoy.

In felicity of language, charm of cadence and the flow of emotion sanctified by the *bhaktas*, especially of the Vallabha sect, Dayarama (1777-1852) excels all his contemporaries. In fact, if a list of half-a-dozen of the most worthy poets of Gujarat were to be made, Dayarama should find a place in it.

Born at Chandoda on the beautiful Narmada, Dayarama was very handsome and had an incontinent and unruly youth. He travelled widely, met learned men and gurus, studied Sanskrit, Vraja, Hindi and the old Gujarati poets, and accepted the creed of Vallabhite Vaishnavism. He had a musical talent and must have early started weaving verses.

His chief works are *Bhaktiposhana*, *Rasikavallabha*, *Ajamilakhyana*. didactic and devotional padas, and garabis. *Rasikavallabha* is an exposition of the doctrine of grace according to Vallabha and Dayarama is at pains in it to combat the argument of Akhegita. The elegance of language and purity of style are in evidence everywhere, but Dayarama's forte is the garabi. It maintains its old popularity and though its sentiment may be regarded old-world, its fleeting beauty, freedom and gusto are captivating. The garabis need not be regarded mystical. Their essential quality is human, very human, and it is possible to enter into them with sympathy and bathe in their beauty. The form of the garabi was suited to the poet's genius. He employed the popular melodies and made new and striking departures in rhythm to portray in a delicious manner the various phases in the gopi's career of love for Krishna. The clever and sly manner of the beloved's address, her simulations, conceits and dissimulations, the naughty lover's pranks and the slighted gopi's jealousy, thirst and rapture are rendered with exquisite skill.

The damsel proceeds for the garaba dance. When she claps to keep time the anklets resound musically. When she pronounces the word "lola" the red lips display their lustrous beauty :—

गरबे रमवाने गोरी नीसर्यां रे लोल
 राधिका रंगीली जैमू नाम
 अभिराम ब्रजवासणी रे लोल
 ताळी देतां वागे झांझर झूमखां रे लोल
 'लोल' कहतां ग्रहण ग्रघर ओपतां रे लोल
 लटके नमी मेळवे सहतान, ब्रजवासणी रे लोल
 ताली देतां वागे झांझर झूमखां रे लोल ।

The feelings of youthful passion when the maiden hardly realizes what it is are conveyed in a picturesque and direct manner :—

हं शुं जाणुं जे वाहले मुजमां शुं डीठुं ?
 बारें बारें सामुं भालुं, मुख लागे मीठुं ।
 हं जाडं जळभरवा त्यां पूंठे-पूंठे भावे,
 बगर बोलाव्यो बहाली वेडळुं चढावे ।

ज्यां-ज्यां जाती जाणे त्यां-त्यां ए आडी आवी ठूंकें,
बहिनी, दयानो प्रीतम मारी केड नव मूके ।

And we know that she loves Krishna's attentions, no matter what her protests may be. In another song the gopi, now perhaps bolder, takes the initiative and invites her lover by a dance of her eye :—

वळतां वंहालमां रे, नचाव्यां ललचाव्यां लोचन,
परखी आखंडी रे एजू हरि मळवानुं छे मन ।
नयणें नोतर्या रे साने समजाव्या सौयेर,
रमिशुं रातडीरे आवजो, आवजो, अलबेला जी ! घेर ।

In yet another *garabi* the *gopi* instructs the lord of her heart how to win her by hoodwinking the people. They must move very cautiously and not be very loud in their affections.

मारग मूको नी कहुं छुं कहाना, कयारनी जो,
मने रोक्री राखी छे, कौण वारनी जो ।
आहुं अवळुं हेरो छो ते हुं जाणुं सहु जो,
में तो तम सरखा ठगणां दीठा छे धणुं जो ।
लाडकबाया हशो तो तमारा नंदने जो,
अहीं को सांखशे नहीं तमारा फंद ने जो ।
प्रगट प्रीत न करीए आ संसार मां जो,
वात करवी ते तो आंख ना अणसारमा जो ।

All this is plain, understandable language of the heart. It is indeed delightful. But to invest it with the glamour of religious philosophy or mysticism is worse than useless. Dayaram, however, would ground it in a philosophy of religion which he explains at length in *Rasikavallabha*. The supreme reality is to him a personal God and the final union with him must have the ecstasies of bridal passion. Controverting Shankar's tenet, Dayaram, in a ringing *pada*, pours out his conviction :—

नंद नंदन प्रगट स्वामी समभूयाबिना
ब्रह्म निज मान्ये सुख शुं ? विचार्यो,
निरजी निज रूप जेम हरखे कामिनी
तेने सुख केवुं होय ? मनमां धारो,

सजल घन समरके आनन्द शो सृष्टि ने ?

अन्न नीपजे नहि विना वृष्टि,

एम अन्तर्यामी ओलख्ये शुं सयुं ?

प्रकट अनुभव विना सुख शुं दृष्टि ?

Dayaram notwithstanding, his was an age of decadence. When that last eminent poet passed away, Gujarata was in the pangs of regeneration with its contact of a civilization utterly new.

Modern Gujarati Literature 1825-1953

(1825-1885 & 1885-1920)

I

In 1818 Gujarat passed into the hands of the British and entered into a new era. It had a rich literary tradition of scholarship of the days of Hemachandra. It was the home of many Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsa works. Gujarati was periodically replenished with Sanskrit words and the indigenous forms of song and narration were chiselled into classical shapes by Jain and non-Jain writers. So were developed the Rasa, the romantic tale, the akhyana, the lyric, the garabi, the chhappa, the bhajan etc. Stylish prose was not unknown. Grammars, parables, fables and commentaries in simple prose and old manuscripts furnish a clear view of the development of Gujarati as a language from the days of Hemachandra (1089-1173).

Dayaram, the last eminent poet of old Gujarat, died in 1852. But his was an age of decadence, general ignorance and superstition. There was political uncertainty and travail since Aurangzeb and the Marathas had done nothing to win the confidence of the people or secure a stable administration. Naturally the new regime was hailed as promising peace and prosperity. In 1825 a branch of the Bombay Education Society was formed as the Native Education Society. It secured the services of Ranchhodbhai Girdharbhai who organized education in the province. Two teachers trained by the Society, Durgaram Mehtaji and Tuljaram Sukhrum were sent to Surat and Ahmedabad, and they helped the authorities in preparing text books.

Durgaram was the first ray of the new awakening. In 1844 he started the Manava Dharma Sabha at Surat. Its objective was to discuss problems of religious and social reform. In 1848 Forbes founded the Gujarat Vernacular Society at Ahmedabad and secured the services of Dalpatram Kavi to help in its work of publishing literature and spreading knowledge. In Bombay the Elphinstone Institute was started in 1827 and Dadabhai Nauroji, Narmadashanker and Karsondas Mulji who had studied there, started institutions and periodicals with social and educational aims. They derived inspiration from their English teachers and were fascinated by the beauty of English literature and the growth of political, social and intellectual freedom in the West. The literary activity of the age was motivated by social and ethical rather than aesthetic aims. Literature was an instrument of knowledge and social reform.

Dalpatram Kavi (1820-1898) and Narmadashanker (1833-1886) were the leaders of the new age in literature. Dalpatram helped in moulding Gujarati to a standard form. By making Sanskrit metres familiar and popular he facilitated the progress of poetry written in the classical style. He possessed a literary fancy and wit and exercised them for educating the people. His humorous verses are memorable. *Forbes-Viraha*, an elegiac poem on his noble English friend, is instinct with genuine emotion. *Venacharitra* is a narrative poem recommending widow-remarriage.

The aims of Kavi Narmadashankar in his literary labours were identical but he was more energetic, far-sighted and fruitful. Inspired by English romantic literature from Burke to Byron and the more congenial atmosphere of Bombay, he became a lover and advocate of freedom in every sphere and also an egotist with a Byronic weakness. His poetry is vigorous but, being the outpouring of a troubled spirit, it does not achieve beauty. He attempted an epic on the fall of the Hindus and initiated lyrical poetry of personal passion, love of the country, freedom, heroism and of Nature. He broke new ground in versification. His poems on the Beauty of Evening, Kabirvad, The Lost Glory of Surat and Victory of Gujarat have the poetic quality of rapture.

He can justly be called the father of modern Gujarati prose.

conceived as art. He wrote many essays and addresses and some plays ; and he has left a fragment of his autobiography. They are marked by a style, racy and vigorous and bold, though very uneven. He wrote on education, industry, morality, civilization, conditions of Gujaratis, the concept of nationhood, classical poets of Gujarat, literary criticism, heroes of history etc. 1865 to 1875 was his most mature period and it shows him as a man of vision. His *Narmakosa*, a dictionary of Gujarati, was his heroic achievement in scholarship. He prepared it single-handed, and without any monetary assistance from Government or the public. It was indeed the work of a hero in letters.

Prose was further developed by Navalram Pandya and Nandashanker Mehta both of whom were masters of style. Navalram (1836-1888) was an educationist, poet and playwright, but he is chiefly remembered as the greatest critic of the age. He reviewed books with enthusiasm but without snobbery or bitterness and tried to discover first principles on their basis. His dramatic criticism is invaluable. Nandashankar (1835-1905) is the first novelist in Gujarati. His *Karana Ghelo* (1866) is based on the historical and traditional accounts of the fall of Gujarat under Karan Vaghelo in 1297. As a pioneering attempt at historical fiction it is very remarkable in the entire history of modern Indian literatures. Mahipatram, Hargovindadas Kantawala, Jehangir Talyarkhan were other notable writers of prose fiction.

Court drama had disappeared with the Muslim conquest of Gujarat. Rasalila and Bhavai, popular but crude forms of plays, continued upto the nineteenth century. Parsis took the lead in starting theatrical companies and staging plays of modern motive and technique. They were followed by Gujarati Hindus. Ranchhodbhai Udayram (1838-1923), a reformer of the moderate school, wrote the first literary significant plays. *Jayakumari* and *Lalita-Dukha-Darsaka* made a sensation when they were first staged and are historically a landmark.

Between 1865 and 1880 the Indian mood of ignorant fascination for the Western ideology and way of life had abated and a reorientation begun. The scale in values was slowly turning in favour of the

East. The directions of social and religious reform were becoming clearer. Signs of Hindu renaissance were in evidence. Dayanand appeared on the horizon in 1863 and his Aryasamaj was established in 1875. The Theosophical Society was established the same year. In 1867 Prarthana Samaj was formed in Bombay and it was followed in 1871 by a similar Samaj in Gujarat established by Mahipatram and Bholanath. Its tenets were similar to the tenets of the Brahmo Samaj but it refused to be merged in it and, what is more significant, refused to be separated from the vast Hindu community.

Bholanath (1822—1886) was the sage and poet of the Prarthana Samaj of Gujarat. He wrote poems, songs and sermons extolling the wondrous greatness of God and praying for his grace and help in the moral crises of life. There is no idolatry here, no sensuality, no deification of a guru or a historical personality, no mediation of a prophet. It is simple dedication before the formless and inexpressible divine. The *Ishvara Prarthana Mala* (1872), as the collection of these poems and sermons was named, became a religious book for many even outside the fold and its general popularity for many years left an indelible impression on the spirit of Gujarat.

II

(1885—1920)

The Indian Rebellion of 1857 had left Gujarat almost unmoved because there was no political authority in Gujarat before 1818 for which the people had any real sympathy. Although Narmada-shankar later hailed it as a struggle for national independence, at the time, the people wanted peace for their social and economic life, which the British authority assured. In 1857 the University of Bombay was established. In 1856 the Elphinstone Institute grew into the Elphinstone College and in the following decades Colleges were started in Baroda, Ahmedabad, Bhavnagar and Junagadh. The graduates who came out were zealous patriots in a deeper sense. They loved and admired the culture of the land. They were learned students of English literature, Sanskrit literature and philosophy and European history. Sanskrit studies in Europe had overwhelmed the savants with astonishment and their fascina-

tion awakened and deepened a sense of national dignity and destiny. The Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, Swami Vivekanand, Tilak, Mrs. Annie Besant and Aravind Ghose worked for a transformation of old Hinduism into Hindu nationalism, Hinduism with a social purpose. The mother-land became the symbol of the *Supreme Mother*, the spirit of God conceived as the kind and sometimes fearful mother. The Bhagavadgita became the Book for it taught the gospel of heroic action. The influence of the Arya Samaj, though Dayanand, was born in Gujarat, was restricted to the Delhi and Punjab areas. For the rest the philosophical basis of Hindu renaissance was discovered in the Vedanta and the message 'work without attachment' was given by the Gita.

This meant a fundamental change in attitude, if not in aims, in methods if not in ultimate ends. Criticism yielded place to sympathetic understanding. Tradition came to be respected. A historical and philosophical basis was sought for the examination of every question. The mood of Swadeshism in culture was associated with the *liberalism* and *humanism* of the West. The new patriotism born of the Universities, thanks also to some noble English teachers and missionaries, was directed in intellectual and imaginative channels. The University men were teachers and leaders of thought, not organisers of popular movements.

In some respects, and especially in the quality of high seriousness and variety of style, this age was richer than the age of Narmad which preceded it. Govardhanram was the presiding genius of the age. Apostle of synthesis, man of vision and a great artist, he created a world of ideals that have gone into the web of Gujarati character. Manilal Dwivedi, Ramanbhai Nilkanth and Anandshankar Dhruva were the thinkers of the age; Narsimharao Divatia, Manishankar Bhatt (Kanta), Sursinhji, Prince of Lathi (Kalapi), Nanalal Khabardar and Prof. B. K. Thakore were the poets of the age; Keshavlal Dhruva and Kamalashankar Trivedi were the eminent pundits. In fact scholarship was the most striking element in the intellectual make-up of most of these writers.

Acceptance, assimilation, synthesis, eclecticism is the key-note of

the age. Govardhanram discovers the element of beauty and ideality hidden in contemporary concepts, customs and institutions and relates them for comparison and correction with the relevant elements in the west and in the glorious past of India. Manilal and Anandshankar search for a philosophical foundation for social reform, ethical behaviour, law, literature, education and institutions. Philosophical truth and sympathy are their beacon lights. In Ramanbhai we have the advocacy of European enlightenment together with a religious philosophy based on the Upanishads. In Kanta we have a poet's response to the first glamour of Christianity. Narsimharao and Kalapi came under the spell of Wordsworth; Nanalal was deeply influenced by Tennyson and Keats; and Browning probably moulded the style of Thakore. They all represent poetical flowering of the Gujarati genius.

Govardhanram (1855—1907) wrote essays, poems, biographies, a dissertation on the qualities and mission of the man of letters and the great novel *Sarasvatichandra* in four parts, which were published between 1887 and 1901. It took the literary world by storm when its first part was published and it remains today as the greatest classic Gujarat has so far produced. It is one of the great classics of modern India.

It is a prose epic portraying the life, character and aspiration of three generations from 1820 to 1900. It represents the new intellectual attitude and the new aspiration of the University man, *Sarasvatichandra*, the sensitive and sensational hero, in the context of traditional home life of a wealthy Gujarati in Bombay, his reactions of sympathy and antipathy in the world of statecraft and diplomacy of petty states as of Kathiawar, his imaginative response and final rehabilitation of the spirit in the hermitage of Sadhus where the old Indian ideals are truly lived in a changing pattern of life and where practical asceticism is the law of life. Here is the vision of Govardhanram, the India of the future when all the best of her through her long history is gathered and integrated, when she is politically one and free and happy, and when the intellectual of the type of *Sarasvatichandra* will have a definite role to play. We have in this great book the tragedy of a woman, Kumud,

knowing love and finding her lover but not being able to marry him. She finds her life's fulfilment in a platonic attachment to Sarasvatchandra. The greatness of the book does not lie merely in its vision and philosophy. Its art is great. There is a variety of characters ranging from the most ignoble to the most saintly. The sentiments are delineated with deep imaginative insight into human nature. There is a superb blending of the real and the ideal for, so to say, all strata of life and all conditions of being. The aim is comprehensive and the imaginative sweep is epical. If truly assessed, *Sarasvatchandra*, I feel, will be found to be the greatest novel of modern India.

Manilal Dwivedi (1858—1898) is read and remembered as a forceful advocate of the spirit of tradition, a philosopher and an essayist. He also wrote poems, one beautiful play, *Kanta*, and a novel *Gulabsinha* (1887) in which he adapted *Zanoni* of Lord Lytton to suit his social and philosophical purpose.

Narsimharao Bholanath Divatia (1859—1937), besides being a formidable scholar, philologist and critic, wrote musical lyrics of *perfect finish* on nature, puranic episodes, and social tragedies. The mood of contemplation in most of them is Wordsworthian. His greatest poem is "*Smarana Samhita*, an elegy on the death of his son, in which he meditates like Tennyson in his *In Memoriam* and finds ultimate solace in voluntary resignation to the will of God. Of his copious prose work, his book of portraits of his relatives and contemporaries, *Smarana mukur*, is most remarkable for its style and vivid portrayal of men. The essay here is of the most personal and rambling sort, giving as much insight into Narasimharao himself as into his subjects. Stern, humorous and tender, he will go down in literary history as a guardian of chaste language and taste.

Ramanbhai Nilkantha (1868—1928) was a powerful influence as a critic. He regarded the personal and lyrical element as essential to all poetry. In that serious age he was the only man who could laugh in sympathy or sarcasm. His *Bhadram-bhadra*, a rambling sort of novel, satirizes orthodoxy. *Rai-no-Parvat*, a drama that will be long remembered, is well constructed, though the motive of Ramanbhai is obviously that of social reform. Its humour is very

refreshing, though the drama as a whole borders on tragedy. The hero, Rai, represents a characteristic attitude of the age. He is noble, meditative and God-fearing.

Anandshankar Dhruva (1869—1942) was a great teacher of Sanskrit and philosophy. As a clear and far-sighted interpreter of Hinduism, he continued the work of Manilal. His manner is so self-possessed and accommodating that he gave offence to nobody. He cultivated a style that is the very symbol of good manners and inner harmony. It is placid and rich in suggestion. A man of vast learning, he steadied the wavering faith of men in religion and the fundamental values of life and synthesized the western and eastern concepts of literary beauty.

Manishankar Bhatt (1867—1923) presented his inward spiritual struggle and the irony of life in very beautiful poems of situation based on old themes. Kalapi (1874—1900) was a poet of high native genius. His lyrical, narrative or episodic poems betray the personal suffering of a very sensitive man thrown into quite uncongenial surroundings. His best poems show wisdom as well as craftsmanship. Before Nanalal took the field he was the most popular poet of the age and is still read with delight. Nanalal D., Kavi (1877—1946) was immediately hailed as a man of genius. The large amount of work he produced, the variety of the themes he attempted, a comprehensiveness of outlook and love of idealism, the extent of imaginative reach and the novelty of bold experiment in rhythm, metre, alankara word-formation and construction, studious workmanship as of a classical sculptor and the general achievement of beauty in the song, the bhajan, the lyric, the ode, the narrative poem, the drama, the novel, the short story, the essay and the biography make Nanalal the greatest poet of the British period. He published his first poem Vasantotsava, a love-poem, in a near-verse style (rhythmic form which is popularly known as *apadyagadya*) and developed it to suit his purposes both narrative and dramatic. No one else has successfully attempted that style after him, but it answered his needs quite well. His songs are exquisite with their refined emotion, moving cadence and delicacy. Some of them have the sparkle of pearls and the freshness

of dew on flowers. He has rendered in the indistinct but overpowering mood of maidenly love, ripe passion, patriotism, heroism and dedication. But even apart from the songs, his plays are worthy of study. They are artistic interpretations of phases of life or history by a poet who loved harmony and all that his country stood for. In *Indu-Kumar* he discusses and tries to resolve the problem of love and marriage. *Jaya-Jayanta*, his immortal lyrical drama, presents platonic love as possible. In *Visva-gita* he debates in a dramatic manner the ethical and religious problems of life and tries to give an answer to the question of questions—What is evil? Why is there evil? In all those dramas we see the poet instead of the characters. And that is, in spite of their great beauty and significance, their shortcoming. It is not that the characters have no distinctive qualities and manner, but they are rather airy and do not create the impression of familiarity. But his greatest merit is that he is a poet, a great poet, able to create a world of beauty with the magic of his words, a world of vision to which we are transferred the moment we read him. And here he is like Shelley and Tagore.

Poet, critic, scholar and writer of very sinewy prose, Prof. B. K. Thakore (1869—1952) appeared first to be an adventurer without caste. As an artist he seemed to be a law unto himself. As a thinker he was a positivist and realist in an age of romantic idealism. He raised his voice against cheap sentiment and easy music, and advocated rigorous construction and strength and vividness of meaning in poetry. The subject did not matter; what the writer means and thinks and really feels mattered. No wonder, Thakore's was a lonely voice. But when the reaction came about 1920, he became the literary law-giver and enjoyed until he died the position that Narasimharao held for the previous generation. Thakore is, therefore, essentially a *neo-modern*, connecting the age of political and social movements inspired by Gandhiji.

His most significant and valued work is *Bhanakara*, in which all his poems have been collected. He is at his best in the sonnet. In fact, by precept and example he has established the normal form of the sonnet in Gujarati in the Prithvi metre. Without seeking

spiritual beauty or sermons in Nature, he delights in producing the full sensation of the contemplation of natural beauty. His treatment of the phases of love and the experiences of old age reflect an original strain in his personality and the depth and range of his thought. In the final analysis, his poetry will be found to be the product of sensitive judgment and learned talent, not of original genius. It lacks spontaneity. It often moves awkwardly and is even prosaic. But in his best poems, and they are a good number, he gives the most classical shape to his moods and thoughts. The perfect fusion of symbol and spiritual experience in the poem *Arohana* makes it a masterpiece.

The other notable poets of the age were Lalit, Botadkar and Khabardar. Ardeshir Faramji Khabardar (1882—1953) was inspired chiefly by Dalpatram, Malbari and Francis Thompson. He also experimented with a view to creating verse-forms as mobile and ample as the blank verse. He will be remembered for his patriotic and devotional verse, and his long love poem *Kalika* and a philosophical poem *Darsanika*.

III

(1920—1947)

The inspiration of the new age was primarily political though in essence it was a continuation of the search of the national self, the integration of its various elements and its assertion. The Indian National Congress had been founded in 1885 and even before that, in Gujarat men like Narmad and Ichchharam Suryaram had thought of political freedom and expressed their opinion sometimes boldly, but more often guardedly. In the Indian States the political ideal was that of a benevolent ruler, and indeed, a ruler like Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad answered that ideal quite well. No movement touched the masses. The elite were fascinated by English liberalism and a concept of divine purpose in the association of India and England. Most of the men of letters were well placed in life and hugged their ivory isolation. The only significant institution they had founded was the Gujarat Sahitya Parishad in 1905 under the guidance of Ranjitram and Govardhanram. The limit of explicit political awareness is to be found in the two Liberals, Ramanbhai Nilkanth

and Ambalal Sakarlal. The trading community was finding new avenues of commerce and industrial enterprise and was generally self-satisfied. And yet the sympathy with national aspirations was not negligible. The political life of Bombay with Pheroze Shah Mehta as leader and the advanced political opinions of the weekly 'Gujarati' were educating the Gujarati mind in a subtle way. It must have been agitated by the sufferings of Tilak and by the Congress of Ahmedabad held in 1901. The partition of Bengal in 1905 and the movement of Swadeshi that followed it exercised the imagination of all. But the extremists failed at Surat in 1907 and in spite of sympathy with Tilak, Ghose and Lajpatrai leaders in literature acknowledged Pheroze Shah Mehta and Gokhale as their political gurus. Outside Bombay political activity in Gujarat was negligible. There was some underground revolutionary activity, but it was easily suppressed.

But with the appearance of Gandhiji (1869—1948) this easy liberalism and cultured *isolation* were to end. Inspired and controlled by him Gujarat won political importance and leadership never enjoyed by her before. It was a superb spiritual experience. The mental attitude for a mass movement was created by Tilak, and the Home Rule movement of Annie Besant had been made popular in Gujarat by men like Indulal Yajnik and Chandrashekhar Pandya. Yajnik had already started a movement through his magazine '*Naujivan and Satya*' for popular awakening, but it was only a streamlet which merged into the vast movement of Gandhiji.

Gandhiji returned to India from Africa in 1914 with the newly perfected technique of passive resistance and the experience of leadership of the Indian community, that is, of India in a nutshell. His political career from 1919 until he died in 1948 is now *history*. It roused enthusiasm and pent-up energies and, when it had setbacks, caused not a little feeling of frustration. All this is reflected in the literary output of the generation and especially in poetry. The Gandhian ideology of *active Truth*, dynamic non-violence, Swadeshimism in every sphere of use and expression, simplicity, bread labour (yajna), communal harmony and humanism as expressed in his economic programme and in his love and care for the down-trodden

and the so-called untouchables, was soon to mingle with or combat the philosophies of socialism and communism coming from the West. Gandhiji generated and controlled mass energies and movements which staggered the old liberals and well-meaning intellectual aristocrats as well as the British. He became greater and greater personally until he laid down his life in the cause of communal peace and humanity.

Gandhiji's vision, his energy, organization and personal magnetism gave a new direction to every intellectual activity in Gujarat. He was born to present India and therefore tried to win for his ideas and movements men and activities which were doing some good work somewhere. In the very first struggle he founded a national college, the Gujarat Vidyapith, and drew to it learned men from all parts of the country. In its short career as a purely academic institution it stimulated intellectual life in the province. It edited and translated some Jain and Buddhist works. The *Jodani Kosa*, which is now the standard Gujarati dictionary, is an achievement in corporate scholarship inspired by Gandhiji.

The *Gujarati*, founded by Ichchharam, stood for political advance and social conservation and tradition. The *Nav Jivan* of Gandhiji started in 1919 stood for reform in every direction but in the light of Truth which was the essence of every religion. The simple and direct utterance of Gandhiji on every moral issue touched the heart of the reader and carried the paper practically to every home. The aims of the *Nav Jivan* were supported in a more colourful style by the journalists of the *Saurashtra group*, who helped rouse the sleeping heroism of that romantic land. The researches of *Meghani* into the folklore of Saurashtra and creative way in which he made them common property helped cultural life in several ways. In Bombay, there was a literary movement led by Munshi in his magazine *Gujarat* against the standard set by Govardhanram, and in favour of realism, humour, simplicity and directness. Among the monthly magazines, *Vasanta* and *Sahitya* were upholding literary ideals of which Anandshankar, Ramanbhai, Narsimharao and Matubhai Kantawala were the exponents. The aims of *Sahitya* had a certain kinship with the ideals of the new era.

The chief contribution of Gandhiji to literature was the development of an elegant prose style suitable for persuasion and exposition and characterised by a striking economy of expression. The articles, statements, essays and addresses of Gandhiji published in the *Nav Jivan*, if collected in entirety, would run into many volumes. Many such writings of lasting significance have been collected. They move and persuade and rouse men to action on account of their utter sincerity, earnestness and love. The impression on the reader of grace and humility joined to resoluteness remains indelible.

Gandhiji's two great works, *Dakshina Africana Satyagrah-no Itihasa* and *Atmakatha* should rank among the great books of the world, not because they have a literary charm comparable to that of other classics in autobiography but because they unravel the mystery of a common man of ordinary intelligence and learning moving from truth to truth, from love to greater love, from duty to higher duty and becoming a true mahatma in whom composure and fervour, selfless action and friendliness are incarnated. They are classics because they constitute an honest history of a great man, who used old-world sentiments and ideals of society, loosely held together, for the urgent political and economic objectives of today. The record of inner conflict and the conflict with the British as also with the age-long prejudices of the people and the victorious emergence of the spirit through anguish and disappointment makes them literature of eternal moral splendour. Gandhiji's search for universality in religion, without breaking with any particular religion, is a challenge to narrowness and dogmatism of every shape.

The close associates of Gandhiji have also plied the pen with great effect. Kaka Kalelkar (b. 1886) is the outstanding essayist of the age. The scholar, the poet, the patriot, the educationist and the playful wanderer are all combined in him. In his familiar essays he is witty without being crude or rancorous and learned without being pedantic. His love of nature is infectious. His criticism of art and literature is based on principles of beauty not divorced from moral truth. *Himalaya-no Pravasa*, *Smarana Yatra*,

Otarati Divalo, *Loka-mata* and *Jivan-no Anand* are among his more popular works.

Of the other literary workers with Gandhiji, Kishorlal Mashruwala was a seeker of Truth. A keen thinker on education and the ultimate end of life he wrote in a correct, exact style, somewhat prosaic. In independence of thought, clarity and rigorous rationality he is unrivalled. Mahadev Desai is known for his beautiful translations especially from Gandhiji's writings. The volumes of his Diary, which are being lately published, are invaluable as source books of recent Indian history as also for the pictures of incidents and personalities of which he was a daily witness as secretary of Gandhiji. The other writers of the group, Narhari Parikh, Maganbhai Desai, to mention only two, have produced work of the same general ethical and national stamp. They are guardians of the heritage.

From the purely aesthetic view Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (b. 1887) is the greatest creative writer after Nanalal. Art and joy are his twin motives. Modelling his stories on the technique of Dumas, he has grown into a versatile writer of great power. He has written novels and short stories, plays, biographies and autobiography and essays. His writings in English are also considerable, the most notable of them being his interesting history of Gujarati literature (*Gujarat and its Literature*) and his interpretation of the Gita (*Bhagwatgita and Modern Life*). He considers ideality of every phase of life and situation the surce of *rasa* and the perfect adequacy of expression as the condition of evocation. The idea of superman, the hero, the man above the common run appeals to him greatly and perhaps, therefore, the conquest of brilliant or glamorous women by men of personality and power becomes with him a constant theme. Moral endeavour and spirituality appeal to him not in themselves but as the education of personality. Else they are effect and he would scoff at them. He looks at the past as the creation of heroes and not as the march of humanity.

Munshi is a master of structure. His stories in all his fiction are well constructed and his characters are vivid. This is so natural to him that even his biographical writings read like stories. His

dialogues are smart and essential to the progress of the story. His style is agile and playful, but also capable of rendering in immortal prose visions of beauty and sublimity. His technique is essentially dramatic.

Among his novels the most popular are *Gujarat-no Nath*, *Prithvi Vallabh*, *Jay Somanath*, *Bhagavan Parshurama* and *Vera-ni Vasulat*; and of his plays the most arresting are *Tarpana*, *Kaka-ni Sasi* and *Dhruvaswamini Devi*. He allows his characters a freedom of development, though it could be said with some justice that they are sometimes projections of his own temperament or aspiration. Indeed, personal equation plays a vital part in his judgments of history, life and literature, and this makes his entire literary work so different in tone from the writings of the Gandhian inspiration.

In the novel Munshi has very few rivals, though some of these are read with more avidity today. Indeed, of contemporary life Ramlal Desai and Meghani are greater novelists and it is difficult to surpass the charm of some scenes in *Dhumketu*. In historical novels Chunilal Shah is more faithful to facts. *Kokila*, *Divyachakshu*, *Bharelo Agni*, *Grama Laxmi* are the more significant of Ramlal's novels. The range of his sympathies, the carefree ease with which the story moves, the sweetness of his approach, the gentle smile and the quickness with which he gives habitation to the time-spirit are the secret of his art and popularity. Delineation of dynamic goodness in the midst of misery and injustice, and an easy style are the captivating features in Meghani's novels. The novels of *Dhumketu* are characterised by ideals suffused in beauty of art, sentiment and romance. Contemporary life in Saurashtra, Gujarat and Bombay and the colourful history of western India provide themes to these novelists and they have succeeded in evoking a patriotic sentiment for the glory of Gurjara Desha. Among later novelists Gunvantrai Acharya, 'Sopan' and Pannalal Patel are noteworthy. Pannalal Patel has a genius for story-telling and his pictures of rural life in local idiom have already won wide recognition. "*Ame Badhan*", a story of life in Surat a generation ago, is a classic in its own way, written in collaboration by Dhansunkhlal Mehta and Jyotindra Dave.

In spite of great out-put the Gujarati novel cannot be said to

have developed a standard classical form. But in the short story formal beauty has been long achieved. The greatest exponent of that form is "Dhumketu" (Gaurishankar Joshi) followed by another conscientious artist Ramnarayan Pathak. Munshi and Dhansukhlal Mehta had already written successful short stories in a realistic and humorous manner, but their scope and significance were remarkably increased by Dhumketu. Dhumketu was the first prose artist to turn to the common man and discover beauty of sentiment and action in mean surroundings. The charm of style, the variety of theme, the moving sentiment, the romantic atmosphere in which the real is bathed, and the deep humanity and the poetry of them have already won for him a place among the great story writers of modern India. Ramnarayan Pathak is a more quiet artist, more deliberate and circumspect. He does not attempt stylish beauty but is keen on motive and significance. Zaverchand Meghani (1897-1947) and Sundaram are other artists in the form. They have initiated new tendencies in several directions.

Drama in Gujarat has been slow in growing. Men of letters after Ranchhodhbhai were averse to the theatre. And only a few playwrights since the days of Dahyabhai Dholshaji could show literary merit. Dazzling scenery, vehement acting and bombast had nearly killed drama. Literary drama in the shape of one-act play with some sense of stage representation was introduced by Batubhai Umarwadia. He takes a social or psychological problem and weaves round it a catching or shocking plot in the manner of Ibsen or Wilde. His dialogue has both naturalness and grace. *Lomaharshini* is the most characteristic of his plays.

But the full credit of bridging the gulf between popular stage and literary drama must go to Chandravadan Mehta (b. 1901). A poet, an actor who had his lessons in acting in school and college, and a man of quaint humour, Chandravadan wrote literary plays fit for the stage. He reduced the stage paraphernalia and brought the presentation nearer reality. Of his plays the most ambitious and popular is *Agagadi* which treats of the tragic sequence in a railway labourer's life. For his subjects he has sometimes drawn upon history as in *Sandhyakala* or biography as in *Akho*, or sometimes he

is thoroughly fanciful as in *Dhara Gurjari*. He has made bold experiments in dramatic technique, some of which have been carried further by recent playwrights.

The spirit of the age in its vicissitudes is broadly reflected in prose fiction, but its subtle light and shade, its enthusiasm and—depression, heroism and frustration, sympathy with the disinherited and escapism, moral fervour and physical passion, realism and mysticism are best seen in poetry. And in poetry Gujarati literature can compare well with any provincial literature in India—in the value of the motive and significance as well as formal beauty. It has produced songs, lyrics, sonnets and short episodic poems of perennial charm. The influence of the Sanskrit poets, of Nanalal and Tagore, of Kalelkar and Ramnarayan and lately of Shri Aurobindo has saved it from cynicism as well as banality. And Prof. B.K. Thakore always warned against sentimentalism and meaningless music.

Keshav Sheth, "Jyotsna" Shukla, Deshalji Parmar and Indulal Gandhi adopt a manner reminiscent of the age of Narsimharao and Nanalal. Sundaram (b. 1908), Umashankar Joshi (b. 1911), Mansukhlal Jhaveri (b. 1907), Zaverchand Meghani (1897-1947), Ramnarayan Pathak (1887-1957), Pujalal (b. 1901), Sneharashmi (b. 1903) and Sunderji Betai (b. 1904) are the representative poets of the age. The songs of Umashankar, Sneharashmi and Betai, the bhajans of Betai and Sundaram, the episodic or narrative poems of Mansukhlal, Betai, Umashankar and Ramnarayan, the sonnets of Umashankar, Sundaram and Pujalal reveal delicate sensibility, ardour for what is noble, grasp of the real and command of suggestive language and image. They achieve the beautiful by the perfect adequacy of language, rhythm and composition to the content of meaning. Umashankar and Sundaram have shot into fame on account of their insight and depth, the versatility of their genius, the variety of treatment and expression and the intensity of appeal. They have given poems of interpretation of life and history, of intimations of a life beyond and distant, as well as songs of fleeting sensation, light as air.

The pre-eminent essayist of the age is Kaka Kalelkar. A few other writers also have cultivated the form with success. The essays

of Ratilal Trivedi have the fragrance of Sanskrit scholarship. Those of Lilavati Munshi, Jyotindra Dave, Jayendrarai Durkal and Ramnarayan Pathak are gleaming with humour. The abundance of fun and wit and humour and nonsense in Jyotindra Dave (b. 1901) has marked him out as the greatest living humorist of Gujarat. His essay has a serious import conveyed in the most acceptable mood of laughter. All the essayists have distinctive styles reflecting friendliness and culture.

Equally notable is the essay in criticism developed by Vijayrai Vaidya (b. 1897), Vishvanath Bhatt (b. 1891) and Vishnuprasad Trivedi. They have tried to maintain standards of criticism and synthesize eastern and western principles. They express romantic enthusiasm in the appreciation of the beautiful and attempt individual styles. Literary criticism of Ramnarayan Pathak has a better poise and a conversational expression. The study of Akho by Umashankar Joshi is a model in assessment of an individual author.

Towards the end of the period a general depression of the spirit was noticeable. The forces created by Gandhiji were exhausted. Economic hardships had nearly overpowered the middle class. The peasant and the labourer, certainly not happy, were looking for rights rather than pity and favour. The rich and the trading community were exasperating society by their cupidity and dishonesty. The Hindu-Muslim tensions had reached a maddening point. The inner distress was too great for any humanism to survive. There was a universal shaking of faith in the true values of life and the door had opened in art and literature for the immediately pleasing and profitable. But the nation was fortunately saved from a spiritual catastrophe by the achievement of political freedom, by the martyrdom of Gandhiji, the statesmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel, and the revival of comprehensive mysticism and moral endeavour in various spheres.

IV

(1947—1953)

Conclusion.

The joy and enthusiasm of independence was not unmixed with a deep sense of sorrow and frustration. The country was partitioned

and the forces of partition resulted in carnage on the very eve of Independence. A foreign invasion could not have wrought such woe and damage, spiritual and economic. Men, women and children were killed, women were ravished and dragged away, and thousands of families were uprooted from native soil. Freedom and security were at peril. But Nehru and Patel rose to their supreme height and saved the country from what might have been the worst calamity in history. They handled the problems of defence and of migration of population from the east and the west with firmness and sagacity. And the nation realized that it was free.

Another catastrophe occurred when Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated, but again the statesmanship of Nehru and Patel led the country out of fire and a tragedy of the proportions of a civil war was averted.

On the positive side the country was consolidated into one political unity, the "native states" merging into the wider and greater unity. All schemes and plans for social and economic reconstruction could now be contemplated and implemented on a country-wide scale. Similarly plans of education, research and scientific training, or training the youth for the three wings of the Defence army were executed with an eye to the welfare of the country as a whole. Untouchability was abolished by Law. In the councils of nations the stature of India rose to unexpected heights, because India pursued a dynamic policy of neutrality, supported the cause of freedom everywhere, and refused to join either of the power blocks.

In a recent speech Mr. Munshi neatly summarised the progress made by the country in these years. "The food crisis was over, controls were almost lifted, a rapid transformation of land was taking place owing to the community projects, the Government had evolved a technique of fighting scarcity on a thorough basis, subversive activities were under control, laboratories of science had sprung up in large numbers, far-reaching social legislations were being enacted, large-scale industries had been established and new experiments in basic education were being tried and higher education sought to be remodelled to suit new conditions....A vast wave of enthusiasm for building the country was in evidence."

There is yet a feeling of frustration and tension. The Kashmir issue is a hanging sword and it is worsened by the existing Pak-American military pact. Linguistic patriotism is becoming aggressive and fanatical. The peasant and the labourer have not attained the blessings they thought were promised. The well-to-do, who also represent the vested interests, are not defiant, but are inwardly most critical of Government policy. Vices of corruption and nepotism cannot be denied. And the Congress being in an unshakeable position, is becoming self-righteous and immobile. The pattern of life that is in store for the present youth appears precarious if not depressing. Perhaps it is the same the world over since peace is in jeopardy everywhere.

Luckily forces within and outside the Congress have exerted a salutary influence on the Government as well as the people. Shree K. G. Mashruvala, the great interpreter of Gandhian ideology, examined in the pages of the "*Harijan*" every public question in a dispassionate way. Vinoba Bhave's campaign of 'bhumidan' has been very fruitful. And in Western India Kedarnathji and Ravishanker Maharaj continue with missionary zeal their efforts for achieving greater purity in social behaviour and dealings. All this has checked the tidal waves of communism. It might completely absorb its shock and prepare the country for peaceful reconstruction.

During these years Gujarat lost many heroes, social workers and men of letters. Gandhiji, Sardar Patel and Thakkar Bapa among the nation-builders ; Nanalal, Thakore, Khabardar, Meghani and Mashruvala among men of letters and thinkers ; Durgashankar Shastri and Ramlal Modi among antiquarians and scholars. It would appear the age of Nanalal and Gandhi was over. Both represented renaissance: Nanalal stimulated Sanskrit revival and synthetical approach to life ; Gandhiji brought universality in subject matter and simplicity and directness in style ; the one showed the capacity of language for poetical charm, the other its adequacy for literature of persuasion.

The establishment of two Universities in Gujarat, The Gujarat University in 1950 and the City University of Baroda in 1949, is a

major event for the intellectual life of the people. The regional culture of Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kaccha has now a centre and a focus, and Gujarati as a language is expected to prosper. Already the Gujarat University has taken steps to introduce by stages Gujarati as the medium of instruction in the Colleges. The dawn of great intellectual life is indicated by clusters of new colleges in the whole of Gujarat. Besides the arts colleges, institutes for instruction and research in science, agriculture, medicine, commerce, technology have been set up. It is too early to claim distinct achievement. But the growth speaks for enthusiasm and aspiration and provides the necessary environment and apparatus. Association with the life and business of the people, especially of the folk, is entering more and more as an element of education. Basic education, despite its drawbacks and failings, is an attempt to give to students work for hands and to arrest the drift to urban ways of easy life. Very significant is the establishment of the "Lokabharati" (people's University) in Saurashtra by Nanabhai Bhatta and Manubhai Pancholi with a view to giving all education including the highest with this central objective.

Dr. Bhogilal Sandesara of the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda is a very promising scholar of Prakrit and Old Gujarati. His study of Vastupala and his literary circle is very illuminating. Of the older scholars late Shri Ramnarayan Pathak formulated afresh new principles for the proper understanding of traditional metres (deshis). The research theses of some graduates merit notice. Dr. P. N. Vakil and Dr. Dhirubhai Thakar have produced excellent studies in Premananda and Manilal respectively. Dr. Ratan Marshall has written a history of Gujarati Journalism and Dr. R. I. Patel a history of the Gujarati novel. Both reveal able scholarship. Prof. K. B. Vyas, Prof. K.K. Shastri, Shri Umshankar Joshi and Dr. Sandesara have published critical editions of Padmanabha's *Kanhadade Prabandha*, Bhalana's "*Kadambari*", the "*Haramala*" attributed to Narasinha, the Chappas of Akho and other classics of mediaeval and old Gujarati. The Forbes Sabha and the Gujarat Vidya Sabha continue to work in this field.

It was expected that the basic fact of partition being religious

difference, orthodoxy would be accentuated after independence. And as there is a certain rivalry among religions, orthodoxy has bred orthodoxy though all the outward veneer of unity and equality is maintained. It has brought back in its train superstition and obscurantism against which social reformers had fought in the last century. Gatulal Dhruva in his 'Jyotirdhara' constantly argues against irrational opinion and custom as Mashruwala did in the pages of the '*Harijan*' every week. Mashruwala's little work '*Samuli Kranti*' is a classic succinctly expressing his well reasoned thought—ethical, religious and social—for the complete regeneration of the country. He is of the opinion that all religions are imperfect and infallibility should not be claimed for any prophet or Guru. No prophet or Guru should be equated with God. Welfare of the whole race from the positive point should be the test for every ideology or way of life, Man errs and falls when he thinks simply of his individual salvation. Mashruwala is supported in this social and positive attitude to life by two other thinkers who have been influencing the mind of Gujarat. They are Kedarnath and Vinoba Bhave.

Idealistic faith and religion and a comprehensive system of thought coming from Shri Aurobindo have begun to capture the imagination of the rising generation of poets and of many men who are in search of a faith amidst a world becoming more and more earthly every day. Ambalal Purani and Sundaram through translations of Aurobindo's writings and expositions of his tenets in the quarterly '*Dakshina*' have reinforced the natural leanings of our people towards an idealistic faith. Shri Aurobindo's fascinating philosophy is a call to every yearning soul to reach out to the Supreme and, receiving light and energy therefrom, to transform the lower physical and physical instruments into the perfect vehicles of the Divine. This philosophy has the broadest basis possible and there is in it no denial of life here below as Chimera. But it wants every aspect of life to be transformed for an ultimate spiritual end wherein man would partake of the Supreme in all its joy and movement. In effect, however, this philosophy, contrary to its clear aims has encouraged the credulity of people, and is fast becoming doctrinaire, sectarian and mystifying. For literature it

has served as a two-fold force. The later new verse of Sundaram is entirely inspired by it. Pujalal has always been a poet of Shri Aurobindo's school. And in the poetry of Prajaram Rawal, Pinakin Thakore, Jayanta Pathak, Ushanas and several others, the same aspiration is noticed. The development of reflective prose under this influence is perhaps a greater advantage. Both Purani and Sundaram have translated into supple Gujarati some of the magnificent English prose of Shri Aurobindo. As philosophical prose it is more sinewy and beautiful than the rather plain prose of Gandhiji and Mashruwala.

Periodicals have always been doing good work in Gujarati. '*Sanskriti*' has made a mark by its literary standard, catholic outlook, and varied aims. Its editor, Umashankar Joshi, has written sympathetic appreciations of many young poets. '*Kumar*', the best Gujarati magazine for the youth, encourages good poetry and its right appreciation. '*Shikshana ane Sahitya*' interprets Gandhism and tackles problems of education. The literary notes and reviews published weekly in the '*Janmabhumi*' the '*Prajabandhu*', the '*Sandesh*' and the '*Gujarat Mitra*' try to bridge the gulf between the lay reader and the literary specialist. The radio has particularly encouraged poetry that could be sung, though that has meant some loss, for the emphasis has shifted from true poetry to mere singability. The radio has been a considerable influence in the flowering of drama and the adaptation of its technique for production through sound.

Literary talent has turned to drama with success. The cultural climate seems to be particularly favourable to it. In all the big cities of Gujarat there are dramatic associations of amateurs, and young men and women freely take part in them. In the College and elsewhere also full-length plays as well as one-act plays are staged with remarkable success. In Ahmedabad and Baroda schools have been opened to give instruction in stage-craft and dramatic interpretation. Dhansukhlal Mehta, Jaswant Thakar, Jayshankar 'Sundari', and Dina Gandhi have been doing their best to help foster the art. The centenary celebrations of the Gujarati theatre in Bombay, Surat and Ahmedabad also gave a fillip to this activity.

An academy of drama is established in Bombay. It publishes a monthly magazine called '*Gujarati Natya*' under the editorship of Madhukar Randeria. A quarterly of one-act plays is edited by Gulabdas Broker.

In spite of all the apparent scope in freedom and opportunity high achievement in creation and criticism is lacking. Great art, large design, forceful passion, original thought are not conspicuous. The tendency to translate and imitate is obvious. Criticism has been more sympathetic than judicious and corrective. There is little effort at perfect order and correctness in composition and beauty and force in style. Perhaps vigorous and sustained inspiration is absent. It is an indication of frustration and social distraction. Perhaps it reveals a lack of faith in the writer's own mission. There is certainly a tremendous disturbance in the traditional values of life, inducing bizarreness in concept and construction.

BENGALI

Early Period

It is difficult to ascertain with any degree of certitude when the history of a literature begins. The question of its origin is associated with the evolution of the language, and as we all know, a language does not evolve all at once. We have no document to be sure when our language cast off the old Prakritic characteristics and assumed a distinctive form in phonology and morphology. Some fifty mystic songs, popularly known as the *Charya-padas*, or simply the *Charyas*, composed by the Buddhist Siddhacharyas, form the first literary specimens in our language. These songs were discovered in Nepal, along with the *Doha-kosas* of Saraha and Kanha and another Apabhramsha text, entitled the *Dakarnava*. Some more Apabhramsha *Dohas* were discovered later on. The *Dohas* and the *Dakarnava* are composed in Western Apabhramsha, while the *Charya*-songs, as has been convincingly demonstrated by Dr. S. K. Chatterjee, represent Bengali at its formative period both in phonology and morphology. The anomaly why the poets composing songs in Bengali should again compose the *Dohas* in Western Apabhramsha may be explained with reference to the fact that, so far as these Bengali poets were concerned, the Doha was, to some extent, a borrowed literary form and the popular language of the time was employed in adopting that popular form. That the Doha was a popular literary form of that time, embodying the preachings of religious heterodoxy, may be demonstrated with reference to the contemporary Jain *Dohas* representing almost a similar linguistic as well as literary character.

It is well-known that the Eastern Prakrit or the Magadhi Prakrit was never a popular literary dialect. It was never employed in any literary work except in a few scenes in some Sanskrit dramas where it represents the spoken language of the vulgar. The Magadhi Apabhramsha, which is the direct descendant of the Magadhi Prakrit, could not, therefore, be expected to have the honour of being emp-

loyed as a literary medium and as a matter of fact it was not. In the *Prakrit-Paṅgala*, an anthology of Prakrit or rather Apabhramsha poems, illustrative of the various Prakrit metres, we find a number of poems where the theme betrays Bengali authorship and the language also contains a few unmistakable Bengali forms; but it cannot be said that the essential linguistic structure of the poems is Magadhi Apabhramsha.

The *Charyas* are all short poems extending over some four to eight couplets composed in the *Padakulaka* metre (every foot containing eight moras). They are essentially songs and in the fairly old manuscript which contains them the tune (*raga*) of each of the poems is clearly indicated. The poems embody the doctrines of a particular phase of the later Tantric Buddhists—popularly known as Sahajiya Buddhism. The adherents of this *esoteric* cult were styled as Sahajiyas mainly for two reasons. Firstly because, the final aim of their *Sadhana*, or religious endeavour, was the realisation of the *Sahaja* by which they meant the true self of each being and non-being—the self which is innate or which every being or non-being possesses by virtue of his or its very existence. Secondly, they were Sahajiyas because they advocated the most *Sahaja* (natural, straight, easy) path for the realisation of the true self. They were, therefore, vehemently opposed to all sorts of recondite scholarship—much reading and philosophising; they disliked all sorts of austerities, rigid rules and regulations, which they took to be entirely opposed to the very nature of beings, and they hated the paraphernalia of orthodox religious ceremonies and practices. According to them, the ultimate truth is to be realised within—within this physical body, which is the epitome of the universe—a microcosm in relation to the macrocosm; and for this purpose they advocated a particular form of esoteric *Sadhana*. Later Mahayanic ideas supplied the philosophical background against which the practical esoteric doctrines were preached.

Though primarily derived from a strong religious inspiration, the Charya-poems are not devoid of literary excellence. To make them acceptable to the society for which they were meant, the abstract philosophical ideas and religious sentiments had to be given a concrete shape and that could be done by resorting to the exten-

sive use of allegories, similes and metaphors. These were naturally taken from the life and environment of the time. Over and above their singular beauty and appropriateness as a literary device they also serve as a semi-transparent veil through which, behind a mesh of philosophical ideas and esoteric doctrines, we have glimpses of Bengal—the geography—and the life of the people in all its phases—its daily round of duties, its social ties and its religious yearnings and aspirations.

The diction of a number of poems present another poetic feature which deserves more than a passing remark. It is the enigmatic style employed with the purpose either of hiding the secrets of Sadhana from the uninitiates or with a view to make the reader dive deep behind the surface of the words and try to catch at the real meaning hidden and heightened by the epigram. The language employed in such cases is generally called the 'intentional language' (*Sandha bhasa*)—a language conveying an ordinary meaning on the surface, but intended to convey a deeper meaning beneath. It has also been explained as the 'twilight language' (*sandhya bhasa*) pointing to its dim mystic character. The importance of this enigmatic diction of the Charya songs lies in the fact that it stands as the prototype of a similar popular diction largely employed by the poets dealing with the mediaeval minor religious sects all over India, and its skilful use is still to be found in the religious folk-literature of the day. It may be pointed out in this connection that the Charya songs were not an isolated phenomenon in the history of Bengali literature. They have had a marked influence in spirit as well as in form on the later religious literature not only of Bengal but also of some of the neighbouring provinces, particularly on the literature of the Vaishnava Sahajiyas and the Bauls of Bengal and the Sufi and Sant poets of northern and upper India. It may also be noted that some pointed lines of the Charya songs have come down to us as proverbs.

The Charya songs were composed most probably during a time between the tenth and the twelfth century A.C. This period of our literature has been styled by pioneer historians of Bengali literature like Dr. D.C. Sen as the Hindu-Buddhist period. The naming seems to be correct, but not exactly in the sense in which it was

meant by the author. The period between the tenth and the twelfth century of our literature may be called the Hindu-Buddhist age in view of the fact that the Charya songs, which are the only authentic literary product of the period, represent a happy fusion of the then Hindu and Buddhist religions and cultures of Bengal—a fusion which resulted from a long process of popular synthesis. The art and sculpture of the period will lend support to the same theory. During the period the Palas were reigning supreme in Bengal, particularly in the Northern and Western parts of the State ; and though the avowed religion of the ruling dynasty was Buddhism, the kings evinced a marked *prédilection* towards Hinduism. All these contributed to the formation of a synthetic culture which was naturally reflected in the literature of the day.

Dr. D. C. Sen mentions some types of literature as belonging to this earliest period, by which he meant the period roughly between the eighth and the twelfth century A. C. . Among these are (1) two liturgical works, viz., *Shunya-puran* and *Dharma-puja-vidhan*, belonging to the *crypto-Buddhist Dharma-cult* to which we shall refer later on ; (2) some old proverbs ascribed traditionally to Khana and Dak ; (3) some verse-stories forming part of our old folk-literature or associated with some popular religious ceremonies of womenfolk (*vrata-katha*) ; (4) Nath literature. But results of later researches in the field do not warrant this theory of early origin for anyone of these types. As for the *Dharma-puja-vidhan*, it is a curious amalgam of Bengali verses with pseudo-Sanskritic verses both of which are of very uncertain origin. The first text, *i.e.*, the *Shunya-puran*, often bears the *bhanita* (lines indicating the authorship) of Ramai Pandit, the first priest of Dharma in the Kali age ; but it does not seem to be a well-planned text composed by any single poet at any particular point of time. It seems to be a random collection of verses some of which were composed near about the sixteenth century, or even later, on some topics related to the paraphernalia of Dharma worship. As for the sayings ascribed to Khana and Dak, it seems that they represent the proverbial wisdom of Bengal of which every country has a rich stock. They are old no doubt, but how old nobody can say. These sayings are based on the experience and

wisdom of the people of old days and pertain to agriculture, house-planning, astronomy and astrology, social qualities and human character, particularly that of the womenfolk. As compared with the *Charya-padas* they must be of a much later origin as the wisdom born of experience embodied in them can only have emanated from the long pursuit of the traditional vocations and professions of a settled well-ordered society cultivating the arts of peace and reaping the harvest of a long accumulated insight into men and things. The skeleton of the verse-stories and the *vrata-katha* referred to above may be very old, but, in this case also, how old nobody can say with any degree of historical certitude. The antiquity of the religious practice does not always provide a guarantee of a similar antiquity for the written form in which it has been transcribed and transmitted.

The question of the Bengali Nath literature gives us a pause. As a religious cult, the Nath cult seems to be synchronous with the Buddhist Sahajiya cult and as a matter of fact in the time-honoured list of the eighty-four Siddhas (men who have attained perfection through their religious endeavour) we find the names of the Buddhist Siddhacharyas and the Nath Siddhacharyas confusedly mixed up and sometimes there is even the identification of some of the Buddhist Siddhacharyas with the corresponding Nath Siddhacharyas. Though the origin and growth of the Nath cult, which was and still is a living religious movement in many parts of India, is shrouded in legends and mythologies of wild type, the scanty historical indications that can be culled point to the same period as that of the Charyapadas. This may induce a belief that the theme of our Nath literature belongs to a period not later than the twelfth century A.C., but the form in which we have collected them or discovered them does not bear the stamp of linguistic antiquity. They might have taken their present form sometime during the seventeenth or even the eighteenth century.

In view, however, of the prevailing uncertainty as to the exact period of Nath literature and of its undoubted affinity with the literature of the Buddhist Siddhacharyas, this seems to be proper place for a brief treatment of the topic. Bengali Nath literature breathes a spirit of folk literature, having more in common with oral

recitation than with written composition ; and all efforts on the part of scholars to date and identify the authors of the different versions, who were both Hindus and Muslims, the problem retains much of its original obscurity. These are long narrative poems with flashes of religious sentiments and patches of yogic esoterism and the whole thing is meant more to be sung than to be read. Our Nath literature comprises mainly of two cycles of stories, one is the story of the curse of the Primordial Lord (Adinath or Shiva) to Mina-nath or Matsyendra-nath, the first of the Nath Gurus (preceptors), his (Mina-nath's) consequent fall in the land of Kadali in the company of licentious women and his ultimate recovery through the yogic power and persuasion of his great disciple Gorakh-nath. The second is the story of the young king Gopichandra's or Govindachandra's renunciation of the worldly life and taking the vow of a Nath yogin in quest of life eternal. The pathos involved in the young king's renouncing the kingdom and his beautiful wives at the insistence of his mother made the story of Gopichandra or Govindachandra popular beyond the geographical limits of Bengal and, coupled with an almost similar story relating to king Bhartrihari of Ujjain, it served as a popular literary theme in many parts of India.

As for the religious approach of the Nath Siddhas, which may be culled from the fragmentary discourses and dialogues that have been preserved, it may be said that their final aim was the attainment of immortality in a perfect divine immutable body which is Shiva-hood itself. They hated the idea of post-mortem liberation ; according to them, liberation is the attainment of perfection in an absolutely immutable body. How then to achieve such a perfection? It can be achieved by a complete transformation of this physical body by a long process of transubstantiation with the help of yoga. The quintessence of the body is deposited through a continual process of distillation in the form of *Amrita* (nectar) to the moon situated in the head ; ordinarily it trickles down and is eaten up by the all-destructive sun situated in the navel region ; this *Amrita* or *Maharasa* (great flow) has to be saved from the sun and the body transubstantiated with its help. The Nath yogins were Hathayogins, but all

their yogic discipline aimed at the attainment of immortality in that immutable divine body.

The Charya songs, we have seen, were composed during the Pala period. Signs of disintegration in the Pala empire were manifest even by the second half of the eleventh century and the later kings of the Pala dynasty ruled over a gradually shrinking territory comprising only Bengal and later portion thereof, upto the third quarter of the twelfth century A.C. In the meantime, a Brahma-Ksatriya family, known as the Sena dynasty, hailing from Karnāta succeeded in founding an empire comprising a large portion of Northern and South-Western Bengal. It is assumed by some, though not on sufficient historical data, that there was something like a 'Hindu Revival' in Bengal during the reign of the Senas. What we are sure of is that Laksmana Sena, the last Sena king of Bengal, who reigned during the last quarter of the twelfth century, was a devout Vaishnava, a poet himself and a great patron of learning and literature. He had the honour of having a galaxy of poets round him including Umapatidhar, Govardhanacharya, Saran, Dhoyi and Jayadeva, the celebrated poet of the *Gita-govinda*. Sanskrit being still the literary language of the people of the higher circle, these poets composed their literary works and a large number of stray poems in Sanskrit. Of these, the exquisite lyric *Gita-govinda* of Jayadeva, dealing with the love-dalliances of Radha and Krishna in Vrindavana, gained extensive celebrity both for the theme and the rare appeal of its poetic execution. The Vaishnava cult, which was the theme of Jayadeva, seems to have enjoyed a wide currency during the period largely through the inspiration and personal example of king *Laksmana Sen* himself. Evidences are ample to show that an under-current of Radha-Krishna love-poetry had been flowing through Prakritic and Sanskrit literature from as early a time as at least the sixth century A.C. This under-current seems to have received a great momentum by the end of the twelfth century bubbling forth in the form of numerous lyrical poems, composed by all the poets of the royal court, the King himself and even his sons.

Though a poetic work in Sanskrit the *Gita-govinda* of Jayadeva

deserves particular mention in the history of Bengali literature for reasons more than one. To be brief, it may be said that the *Gita-govinda* marked the beginning of the Vaishnava lyric poetry of Bengal of which we find a luxuriant growth in later times. It served as the prototype not only in theme, but in the manner of expression also. Further, the language of the *Gita-govinda*, inspite of being Sanskrit pure and simple, bears a peculiar affinity with the genius of the Bengali language as used by the later Vaishnava poets. This has led some scholars to postulate, though on very unconvincing grounds, that the work might have originally been composed in some Prakritic dialect from which it was Sanskritised later to meet the demand of the intelligentsia. It may again be noted that the metre of the work—the rhyme and the rhythm—betray Prakritic tendencies which were extensively at work in the evolution of Bengali poetry. Further, the *Gita-govinda*, though a lyric par excellence, possesses also a dramatic element in the germ rather the character of an opera and even in this respect it may be regarded as a prototype of the Bengali opera to come.

Middle Period

Early Middle Bengali : The twelfth century ended with the conquest of Bengal by the Muslims. The Muslims succeeded in capturing the Capital but could not establish any consolidated sovereignty over any substantial portion of Bengal even after a century and a half of their conquest. A period of confusion prevailed and amidst political turmoil, social and cultural depression and intellectual bewilderment the nation could produce nothing worth the name in any sphere of art and literature. Things, however, began to settle down by the middle of the fourteenth century when Elias Khan became the Sultan, and, as a matter of fact, considering the literary data available hitherto, it can be surmised that literary production started once more by the second half of the fourteenth century.

It is indeed a fact that the sudden invasion of Bengal by the Muslims dealt a great blow to the social and intellectual life of the Province; but the curse seems to have proved a boon in the long run. The blow was felt more on the upper stratum of society and as a result Sanskritic culture and tradition ceased to have their old pres-

tige and influence. Naturally, the lower substrata of the society got a freer scope to be active and the indigenous culture and tradition, new themes and literary forms came to the forefront. This seems to have supplied to our literature a fresh vitality that had helped a good deal the development of our literary history.

(A) VAISHANAVA POETRY

For all practical purposes, the middle period of Bengali literature begins from the middle of the fourteenth century and the first and the foremost poet who comes in for discussion is Chandidas, the great Vaishnava poet of Radha-Krishna lyrics. Chandidas was acclaimed as a great genius for the lucidity and sweetness of his poems by many reputed Vaishnava poets who succeeded him. There are mentions in the early biographies of Sri-Chaitanya that he (Chaitanya) himself was very fond of the poems of Chandidas and appreciated them along with the poems of Jayadeva and Vidyapati with great religious fervour. Upto the time before the year 1916 Chandidas was known to us by a volume of about a thousand poems that bore his name as the author, but great confusion and controversy started with the discovery of a fairly old manuscript of a text, henceforth entitled *Sri-Krishna-Kirtan* (songs in praise of Sri-Krishna), bearing colophons mentioning Badu Chandidas or Ananta Badu Chandidas as the author. The manuscript itself has been declared by some calligraphists as old as the fifteenth century—and none assigns it to a period later than the sixteenth century. The language of the *Sri-Krishna-Kirtan* has also been accepted by linguistic experts as belonging to a period near about the latter half of the fourteenth century or the first half of the fifteenth century—and this date accords fairly well with the popular view of the period in which the poet flourished. Traditions, confused by later fabrications, have practically veiled the historical figure of Chandidas and what can be gathered from the text of the *Sri-Krishna-Kirtan* is that he gives his name as Chandidas or Ananta Badu Chandidas and calls himself a devotee of the village goddess Basuli (Basali) who is referred to by him at the end of every section of his poem as the source and fountain of his poetic inspiration.

The manuscript of the *Sri-Krishna-Kirtan* is incomplete. It is

something like a planned *Kavya* of the indigenous type containing more than five hundred lyrics divided into thirteen cantos (*Khandas*). It begins with the birth of Krishna and ends with the lamentations of Radha on her separation from Krishna. Opinions very widely as to the poetic value of the work embodying the spiritual love between the eternal Lover and the Beloved—Krishna and Radha. Judging without any religious bias, it can be said that love in the *Sri-Krishna-Kirtan* has not always soared very high so as to transcend the plane of carnal desire and attain a sublime spiritual height. Refinement and sublimation are manifest only in the latter part of the book when love has been purged of its grossness through pangs of separation. Here and there we find lines like—

“O my grand old woman, that Kanha, for whose sake I have turned my mind away from everything else, and cared not for anybody superior or inferior, methinks, has left me through indifference and in anger and is enjoying the company of other damsels in Vrindavan. O my grand old woman, how much of it can I relate to you—the story of my grief! I took it to be a lake and plunged headlong—but alas for me, it has dried up!—a very unfortunate woman I am indeed.”

Or,—

“Hear ye, this is my humble submission to thy feet,—dear Kanhai of my heart,—don’t treat me as someone different from you. The two minds—yours and mine—have been tied into one by cupid,—the truth of it is manifest in Vrindavan,—I shall never disobey your words in future. Providence has made our love such that we are one mind and soul in two bodies; that love tolerates no third—that indeed is not a fault of mine!”

Or again,—

“Who is he, O my grand old woman, that plays on the flute on the bank of the river Kalini (Kalindi), who is he, that plays on the flute in the pasture lands of Gokula? Disturbed is my body in eagerness—agitated is my mind in solicitation,—the sound of the flute has turned all my cooking topsy-turvy. Who is he that plays on the flute—who that person may be!—I

must serve him as his slave-woman and cast myself to his feet.
 Tear rolls on incessantly from my eyes—I have
 lost my life because of the sound of the flute.”

These strike a note which admits of higher interpretation—theological or psychological.

The literary devices of the *Sri-Krishna-Kirtan* are noteworthy—particularly in consideration of the age when they were employed. Chandidas had no fancy for embellishments, but happy use of similes and metaphors added a special quality to his presentation of things. Though essentially a collection of lyric poems the work possesses a dramatic quality not only in the manipulation of episodes which were mainly of his own invention, but also in the development of the plot producing an effect of dramatic action, and also in the manner in which the poet has managed the dialogue in verse.

Now, what about the large number of lyrics which are widely popular in Bengal as the poems of Chandidas? Avoiding the volleys of controversies that have gathered round the question, the following facts may be mentioned as indicating a possible solution of the problem. Besides composing the *Sri-Krishna-Kirtan*, Chandidas might have composed a good number of stray Vaishnava love poems which might have been handed down to us with some changes made by later singers. Again, there is no doubt about the fact that a minor poet of the name of Chandidas belonging to the post-Chaitanya period composed poems, a good number of which have confusedly got mixed with the poems of the older Chandidas. Again, it has also happened that because of the outstanding celebrity of Chandidas as the Vaishnava poet many good poems composed by known and unknown authors of later times have been carelessly taken to be the poems of Chandidas and the colophon bearing the statement on authorship has been changed knowingly or unknowingly.

Whoever might have been the author of the poems, it has to be admitted that a large number of these poems possess a special quality—a quality not only of poignant intensity but also of lucidity, and sincerity, frankness and directness. The other noticeable factor is that there is a large number of poems where the sentiment of love has transformed itself into an eternal mutual yearning between the

Divine Bridegroom and his Bride and yet Radha in those very poems is a lovely Bengali maiden at her best. There are lines that sparkle, there are lines that penetrate deeply but softly—there are again lines that arouse in us infinite sympathy—human or divine we do not know. It has often been rightly remarked of Chandidas that his love lyrics have bridged the gulf between the human and the divine.

Inseparably connected with the name of Chandidas is the name of another great Vaishnava poet—Vidyapati of Mithila. They were most probably contemporaries and there is the story of the two meeting together in rapture, and poems were composed by later poets to celebrate the rare occasion. The story of their meeting in the corporeal form may or may not be true, but they were made to meet in spirit through the religious fervour of Sri-Chaitanya, the great Vaishnava apostle of the sixteenth century. He and his followers popularised the songs of Vidyapati along with those of Chandidas so much so that most of the later Vaishnava poets of Bengal, fascinated with the rare sweetness of the poetic language coined by Vidyapati, tried to accept it in their own poetic diction and in doing so they have evolved a new poetic language out of a mixture of mediaeval Bengali and Maithili—known as *Braja-boli* (the dialect of Braja) which possesses a special charm of its own. Vidyapati's dexterity in poetic embellishments also captured the imagination of a section of the Bengali Vaishnava poets among whom Govindadas of the sixteenth century deserves special mention.

We have in Bengal a collection of a large number of poems ascribed to the authorship of Vidyapati and it is pretty difficult now to ascertain how many of them were actually composed by Vidyapati of Mithila. Even some of the genuine poems of Vidyapati have undergone change beyond recognition, on the other hand there are reasons to believe that good number of poems ascribed to Vidyapati, including a few best known ones, were composed by different Bengali poets at different periods.

(B) TRANSLATIONS OR RATHER ADAPTATIONS FROM CLASSICAL SANSKRIT

An important poet of the fifteenth century is Krittivas Ojha, who was the first and decidedly the best poet of the Bengali Rama-

yanic literature. Seldom has any mediaeval or modern text enjoyed the wide popularity with all classes of the people of Bengal as this *Ramayana* of Krittivas. It is doubtful if the text of the present popular editions preserves the original version of the text and attempts of scholars to reconstruct the text have not yet produced the desired effect for paucity of reliable old manuscript. It appears from an autobiographical sketch of the poet (the authenticity of which is not beyond question) that he was warmly received and his composition highly appreciated in the court of a 'King of Gauda' (probably some Hindu King of Bengal) and the *Ramayana* was composed by the poet under the royal patronage. It is customary to speak of the *Ramayana* of Krittivas as a translation of the Sanskrit *Ramayana* by Valmiki, which is not the fact. It is rather an adaptation of the Sanskrit *Ramayana*, or rather the Sanskrit *Ramayanas*, in free Bengali verse where the imagination of the poet was comparatively untrammelled by the influence of the original. In compressing the incidents, inventing new ones, in the delineation of characters and in infusing into the whole thing an avowedly religious sentiment peculiar to Bengal of the mediaeval period, the poet has practically given it a shape of his own and this perhaps has endeared the work to all sections of the Bengali readers. But it has to be remembered that though Ramachandra has been depicted by Krittivas as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu Himself and a religious sentiment permeates the work as a whole, the *Ramayana* of Krittivas is not viewed with the same scriptural reverence by the Bengalis as the *Ramacharita-manasa* of Tulsidas by the people of Northern India. As a matter of fact, the mediaeval Vaishnava devotional movement of Northern India got itself bifurcated into the Rama cult and the Krishna cult; but in Bengal the Rama cult could never thrive as a distinct religious cult because of the predominance of the Krishna cult. The appeal of the *Ramayana* of Krittivas is more human than spiritual; it was and still is a source of enjoyment and inspiration in the society at large because of the living examples of the sweet but lofty social ideals that are found in the work. The transparence and lucidity of the poetic diction serve as an additional attraction to the masses.

Krittivas, as we have said, composed his *Ramayana* most pro-

bably under the patronage of a Hindu King, but another renowned poet of the latter half of the fifteenth century, Maladhar Basu of Kulin-gram (near Burdwan), composed his poetical work *Shri krishna-vijaya* or *Govinda-vijaya* under the royal patronage of a Muslim King of Bengal, Ruknuddin Barbak Shah. The fact is of great historical significance. The Muslims came to the country first as conquerers; but soon after their settling down as the ruling race they felt the necessity of coming in closer contact with the people through an acquaintance with their thoughts and ideas—social, religious and cultural. With this end in view, some of them extended their patronage to the Hindu poets to translate into Bengali their cultural heritage stocked in Sanskrit. It will not, however, be doing justice to Maladhar Basu to hold that he derived all his inspiration from the royal patronage. Kulin-gram, his native place, was a recognised centre of Vaishnava culture in the fifteenth century and Maladhar himself seems to have worked with a missionary zeal to propagate the Bhagavata religion among the masses by making the *Bhagavata Purana* accessible to them through popular Bengali poetry. As a matter of fact, he is taken to be one of the precursors of the love-religion of Chaitanya which gave a new stir to the religious, social and literary life of Bengal in the following century.

(C) MANGALA-KAVYA

We have hinted before that the Muslim conquest of Bengal indirectly helped the growth of Bengali literature to a certain extent in as much as it gave an opportunity to the indigenous literary themes and forms to come into prominence. There were indigenous deities of various types, both gods and goddesses, who could not have themselves accepted by the people and their worship widely introduced in the society. Later Tantric Buddhism also left some goddesses who were associated and indiscriminately mixed up with the indigenous ones. These deities, mainly goddesses, began now to make a headway and the history of their recognition in the province of Hinduism is recorded in a type of literature, well-known as the *Mangala-kavyas*, which, as a type, may be said to be peculiar to Bengali. The *Mangala-kavyas* are long narrative poems, often of a voluminous nature, where the main theme is the struggle of a god

or a goddess trying to establish himself or herself against all rivals in the religious field. This the deity could do only by giving a variety of demonstration of sovereign power by a lavish shower of blessings on his or her chosen ones and by a merciless persecution of those who dared to defy this new-born authority. This naturally brings in a cycle of long stories of human struggle of defiance, punishment, defeat and ultimate submission with which the *Mangala-kavyas* abound.

Apparently, religious propaganda seems to be the *raison d'être* of the *Mangala-kavyas*, but that is not the whole truth of it. In our estimate the poets of the *Mangala-kavyas* were poets first and then religious propagandists, if they were propagandists at all. At a time when the cup of misery of the masses was full because of the political and economic disorder, and when, to add to it, there was oppression on the helpless masses by greedy and capricious rulers or their representatives, it was a psychological necessity with the people to think of and sing of mightier supernatural beings reflecting the capriciousness of human ruler on the divine plane, who if propitiated by worship and prayer could redress the evils of real life and guarantee worldly success and prosperity to their devotees. The *Mangala-kavyas* might have originated in a spirit of genuine religious devotion in the earlier poets but before long, with a multitude of sectional deities competing for human homage, devotion must have been diluted into a compliance with convention. Moreover, the minuteness, the abounding sympathy and throbbing vitality with which the stories of human vicissitudes are related divert the interest of the reader or rather the audience (for these poems were not written to be read, they were composed to be sung before a vast rural audience) from the benevolent or malevolent deities and focussed on the human factor in the story. In spite of supernatural intervention at every step the realistic touches, which are found in the *Mangala-kavyas*, make them literature in the true sense of the term. They give us vivid pen-pictures of the contemporary society and serve also as important historical documents supplying us with informations—religious, social, political, economic and even geographical.

Fragments of the stories of the *Mangala-kavyas* seem to have been floating in the air from the thirteenth century A.C., but a full-fledged *Mangala-kavya* is found only in the fifteenth century. Of the various types of the *Mangala-kavyas*, three are the most important, viz., *Manasa-mangala* (with the Serpent-goddess Manasa at the centre), *Chandi-mangala* (with the great Mother-goddess Chandi) and *Dhgrma-mangala* (with Dharma-thakur, a local god of South-Western Bengal). The *Manasa-mangala* seems to be the earliest of the three types. The *Manasa-mangala* or *Padma-purana* (Manasa herself is called Padma as she had her birth in a lotus-pond) of Bijay Gupta, a poet flourishing most probably by the second half of the fifteenth century during the reign of the popular Muslim ruler Hussain Shah, seems to be the earliest available text on the subject. He, of course, mentions the name of his predecessor Kana Haridatta of whose work we know nothing but that it was defective in many respects. Bipradas Pipilai has again been supposed by some scholars as the earliest *Manasa-mangal* poet, but on unconvincing grounds.

The theme of the *Manasa-mangala* is practically the same in the works of the poets of different periods, and it is the story of the Serpent-goddess Manasa winning over as her devotee Chanda Sadagar, a great merchant and a man of a high social status who was originally a staunch devotee of Shiva and who at first refused stoutly to worship Manasa for whom he had nothing but contempt. Manasa left no stone unturned and moved heaven and earth to win Chanda over to her side, but in vain. She destroyed his gardens, drowned his merchandise ships, had his six sons killed through snake poison, but Chanda was a man of towering personality. The last stroke of Manasa was her heinous manoeuvre to have the last remaining son of Chanda Sadagar, Lakhindar by name, killed through snake-bite on the nuptial bed. Herein comes the most pathetic portion of the story. Behula (or Bipula), the young wife of Lakhindar, had a raft constructed and went out on a voyage with the dead body of her husband to have him revived; this she succeeded in doing by propitiating the gods in heaven by her songs and dance. The story of Behula's voyage, popularly known as *Bhasan* (floating), is one of the most popular stories in Bengali literature because of the

pathos it arouses and the light it throws on the resolute and resourceful character of Behula. The story of Chanda Sadagar and Behula is widespread in some portions of Bihar also and it is difficult to ascertain now wherefrom the story started originally.

Narayana-deva, probably of the first half of the sixteenth century, was another famous writer of the *Manasa-mangal* and of those who handled the story on later days the name of Ketaka-das Kshema-nanda (Ketaka-das implying his devotedness to Ketaka, another name of Manasa) of the seventeenth century deserves special mention. The nucleus of the story of the *Chandi-mangal* originated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but no poet of the Chandi-cult, worth the name, is found before the sixteenth century.

(II) SECOND MIDDLE PERIOD OR THE CHAITANYA PERIOD

The advent of Sri-Chaitanya (1486-1533) was indeed an epoch-making event not only in the history of Bengali literature, but also in the cultural history of the province. It was indeed a phenomenon which stirred the life of the people of Bengal as well as of those in the sister provinces more than any other contemporary event, political or social. There is hardly any literature of Bengal produced during the period between the second half of the sixteenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century which does not bear the influence of Chaitanya or Chaitanyaism in some form or other. Navadvip or Nadia where Sri-Chaitanya flourished was at that time practically the centre of Bengali culture. It was not only the centre of Vaishnavism; it was a great centre of Sanskrit learning; again, the New School of Indian Logic, well-known as the *Navya-nyaya*, said to have been founded by Vasudeva Sarvabhauma and perfected by Raghunath Shiromani, flourished in Nadia at about the same time. Raghunandan Bhattacharya, the great authority on jurisprudence, also hailed from Nadia. Chaitanya in his early life was himself a great scholar and teacher of grammar and he is supposed to have himself composed a great work on it.

Vaishnavism, both as a religious and a literary movement, had been flowing on in Bengal for a long time before the advent of Chaitanya, but the life and teachings of Chaitanya made it a living faith and they were again a source of never-ending inspiration to

a host of poets. On the religious and theological side Vaishnavism became codified and standardised by the six great followers of Chaitanya in Vrindavana, well-known as the six Gosvamins, who were the immediate followers of Chaitanya and received both instruction and inspiration from the master. On the literary side a band of contemporary poets and a good number of poets following them in the next century composed thousands of poems on the life and Lila (divine sport) of Chaitanya and also on the Lila of Radha-Krishna as revealed to these devoted poets in and through the life and teachings of Chaitanya. Of the six Gosvamis in Vrindavana, Sanatana and Rupa and their nephew Jiva wrote poetical works, theological discourses and rhetorical treatises in Sanskrit both in prose and poetry to propagate the view point of Chaitanyaism, better known as the school of Bengal Vaishnavism. These were supplemented by the Sanskrit works of Paramananda Sen (well-known as Kavi-karnapura), Krishna-das Kaviraj, Baladeva Vidyabhusan and, last but not the least, Vishvanath Chakravarti of the eighteenth century.

(A) VAISHNAVA LITERATURE

Vaishnava literature in Bengali that was composed directly under the influence of Chaitanyaism during the sixteenth century, and the century and half that followed, may be broadly divided into two classes, viz., lyric poetry and biographical works. Of the lyric poets, who were contemporary and followers of Chaitanya, Murari Gupta, Narahari Sarkar, Vasudev Ghosh and Ramananda Basu deserve special mention. Of the galaxy of poets who followed, Jnana-das, Govinda-das, Lochan-das, Balaram-das and Sekhar (Kavi-sekhar, Ray-sekhar) occupy high position because of both the quantity and quality of the poems they composed. The number of poets who composed Vaishnava lyrics during the period in question will be about one hundred and seventy and it is interesting to note that the list includes the name of a good number of Muslim poets also. It was not the fact that these Muslim poets were themselves converted into Vaishnavism; but so widespread was the popularity of these Radha-Krishna love-songs among all

classes of the people of Bengal that a good number of Muslims also did not hesitate to compose a few songs on the theme.

It is not possible within the short space we have at our disposal to deal with the individual performances of this large number of poets. It is, therefore, better to attempt at taking a bird's eyeview. Lyrics of this period include poems both on Krishna (in all phases of his divine sport), and Chaitanya or Gauranga, as he was called by his followers. Poems on Gauranga can conveniently be classified under three heads. In the first place, there are poems which deal with the different stages and phases of the life and activities of Gauranga with a particular stress on his renunciation of the worldly life leaving behind his young wife and the old widowed mother. In the second type of poems Gauranga is accepted as the most perfect incarnation of Krishna himself and is depicted as indulging in some sports and dalliances in Nadia similar to those indulged in by Krishna in Vrindavana. In the third type of poems he is generally depicted as possessed of or absorbed in some divine emotion, representing some deep emotional experience either of Radha or of Krishna. It is imperative on the *Kirtana*-singers (singers of divine praise) of Bengal to sing some such songs on Gauranga before they proceed to sing any particular aspect of the *Lila* (sports) of Krishna, and such songs are generally known as *Gaura-chandrikas*. These songs serve as an introduction to the deep significance of the various sports and dalliances of Krishna, for, the devotees of Gauranga believe that the life and activities of Gauranga were a clue to the mystery of the divine sports in Vrindavana.

Vaishnava poems on Krishna are mainly poems on the love between Radha and Krishna, though, of course, some excellent poems on the boyhood of Krishna are also noticeable. One striking point in these poems or songs is the fundamental attitude of the Bengali Vaishnava poets as a whole. According to the belief of the Bengali Vaishnavas, the highest ambition and, as a matter of fact, the highest limit to the spiritual power of a devotee is to have an entrance into the supra-natural (*a-prakṛta*) Vrindavana (which itself is nothing but a sportive expansion and transforma-

tion of the essential nature of the Lord Himself) and there to witness and enjoy eternally from a little distance the eternal sports of Krishna with his inner associates (*parikara*) of whom Radha is the best and the dearest. Consistent with this general belief the Vaishnava poets of Bengal always put themselves, either consciously or traditionally, in the position of one witnessing and enjoying the blissful *Lila* of the Divine Pair the eternal Lover and the Beloved. It is sacrilegious on the part of a Bengal Vaishnava poet even to think of having union with Krishna and that often makes the poetic attitude of the Bengali Vaishnava poets sharply different from the attitude of the Vaishnava poets of the other parts of India. Mirabai was a celebrated Vaishnava poetess in Hindi literature, and she thought of herself as the maiden of Krishna ; but the humility of the Bengal Vaishnavas never allowed them to claim this exalted or privileged position for themselves.

Of course, the Vaishnava poets song of divine love ; but how can man know or even imagine anything of divine love except on the analogy of human love ? The Vaishnava poets had therefore to draw largely from their human experiences. It is because of this that though a religious motive runs through all the poems the human side has not suffered in any way. Moreover, one can hardly be sure that all or even most of the Vaishnava poets were Vaishnava first and then poets ; to us the truth seems sometimes to be the reverse. In any case, if we are to describe the true nature of these Vaishnava poems, we should say that they are a novel device to bridge the gulf between the human and the divine. As on the one hand, even to a mind free from any religious predisposition, these poems, because of the intensity and suggestiveness of emotions, will bring sometimes a message of the infinity which is the other name for divinity ; on the other hand, because of the human basis, they represent the tenderest, the subtlest and the best in human emotions. As a large number of poets composed poems on the same theme, they had to create variety and novelty by creating new situations of love for this purpose they had to invent innumerable episodes. Only a portion of these episodes was drawn from the Puranic literature, the rest were poetic inventions.

Not only rich in emotions, the Bengali Vaishnava poems are, in a large number of cases, the best specimen of fine artistic workmanship. The metre presents an enjoyable variety and some of the poets, particularly Govinda-das of the sixteenth century, seem to have had a perfect mastery over it. Decoration and embellishment have certainly added to their charm, but there have been cases of excess also. The best Vaishnava poems are concise in form, embodying a condensed emotion ; but there is again a large number of poems with unnecessary dilation which thins and dilutes the poetic effect.

Apparently as an off-shoot of standard Vaishnavism but really as a legacy from the earlier Sahajiya cult, there grew a Vaisnava Sahajiya school with love as both the end and the means of the religious endeavour. According to them, every man possesses within his corporeal form (*rupa*) an essential nature (*svarupa*) which in fact is Krishnahood; similar is the case with every woman who is an embodiment of Radha ; the *Sadhana* consists first in the realisation of the self as Krishna or Radha and then in the realisation of infinite love and bliss through the union of the two. These *Sahajiyas* have got a considerable amount of literature consisting both of lyrics and doctrinal treatises both in prose and poetry.

The next type of Vaishnava literature written from the sixteenth century onwards is the biographical literature. In our literature produced before the sixteenth century man could seldom have any recognition unless he was in some way associated with the gods and goddesses. But in Chaitanya we found an individual where humanity and divinity were harmoniously blended, or we may prefer to say that divinity revealed itself in and through man. Chaitanya was recognised by his devotees as the incarnation of Krishna long before his demise. All these inspired a large number of poets to compose long biographies of Chaitanya in verse. The first biography of Chaitanya was in Sanskrit by Chaitanya's companion Murari-Gupta. Two other Sanskrit works were composed on Chaitanya in sixteenth century, one was a Kavya, entitled *Chaitanya-charitamrita*, and the other a drama, entitled *Chaitanya-chandrodaya* and both were from the pen of Paramananda Sen, better known as Kavi-karnapura. But the first Bengali biography was *Chaitanya-bhagavata* by Vrindavan-das, which

was followed by *Chaitanya-mangal* by Lochandas, and *Chaitanya-mangal* also by Jayananda. The most important, however, was the *Chaitanya-charitamrita*, written by Krishna das Kaviraj, a faithful follower of the revered Gosvamins of Vrindavana. These Bengali biographical works are rather voluminous in size consisting of several parts, each again divided into several chapters. They are all written in verse mainly in the most popular *payar* metre. It is a fact that all these biographers worked with the idea that Chaitanya was the incarnation of Krishna himself, and narrated some incidents of Chaitanya's boyhood in Nadia as something like a replica of the incidents of Krishna's boyhood in Vrindavana ; yet it is not true to say that no historical data either of Chaitanya the man or of his age, are to be found in them. *Chaitanya-bhagavata* of Vrindavandas given us a good idea of the age and the society when and where Chaitanya made his appearance. Again, inspite of the religious tone, these biographies possess at places flashes of genuine poetry in narration and description and sometimes also in the sincere outpouring of heart of the devoted poets. The *Chaitanya-charitamrita* by Krishnadas Kaviraj is a stupendous work important both as a biography of Chaitanya and as a compendium of his doctrines and philosophy. The author is a good poet and an erudite scholar at the same time and as a result the work has been an admirable blending of poetry with philosophy. There were other smaller works on Chaitanya which need not be specifically mentioned.

Besides the biographies of Chaitanya, there were several biographical works also on Advaitacharya, who is said to have brought Chaitanya down on earth from heaven through his austere penances. The most important names in the second phase of Bengal Vaishnavism in the seventeenth century are those of Shrinivas, Narottam and Shyamananda, and of the works dealing with the life and activities of these apostles in Bengal and Orissa particular mention may be made of the *Prem-vilas* of Nityanandadas and the *Narottam-vilas* and *Bhakti-ratnakar* of Narahari Chakravarti.

(B) TRANSLATIONS OR RATHER ADAPTATIONS

The period of Bengali literature comprising the life-time of Sri-Chaitanya and the two centuries that followed was in no way a

period of Vaishnava literature exclusively. The other types of literature that were growing simultaneously may conveniently be classified under two broad heads, *viz.*, translation literature and *Mangala-kavyas*. The translation literature in Bengali consists, as has already been hinted, mainly of the translation of the two famous epics of India, *viz.*, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and of the most of popular Purana in Bengal, *viz.*, the *Bhagavata-Purana*. These so-called translation literatures are not translation in the true sense of the term ; they are often, if not always, adaptations, and in the case of various *Ramayanas* and the *Mahabharatas* that were composed in Bengali at different times the poets drew their episodes freely from the different Sanskrit versions and added to them the ones they themselves invented or could pick out from the society in which they lived and moved. Krittivas, we have seen, was the first and the best poet of the Ramayanic literature. Of those who followed in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mention may be made of the poetess Chandravali, of poet Adbhutacharya, Sasthivar Sen and his son Gangadas Sen and of Kavichandra, some of those writings got intermixed with the writings of Krttivas. Of the poets of the *Mahabharata*, none seems to have flourished before the end of the fifteenth century or early in the sixteenth century. By this time, Kavindra Parameshvar wrote his *Pandava-vijay* or *Vijay-pandava-katha* under the patronage of a Muslim general Paragal Khan, who was a Deputy of Hussain Shah in Chittagong. Srikar Nandi made a Bengali version of the chapter on *Ashvamedha* of the *Mahabharata* by Jaimini under the patronage of Chuti Khan son of Paragal Khan. More than thirty other versions of the *Mahabharata* followed in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries but the most important and the most popular of all the Bengali *Mahabharatas* was the one composed by Kashiram-das probably in the first part of the seventeenth century. There is a suggestion, though not on sure grounds, that he did not live to finish his work and the concluding parts were written by his son. Kashiram's *Mahabharata*, because of its immense popularity, has exerted a tremendous influence on Bengali culture and it is still a living force with the masses and in this respect it can be compared with the *Ramayana* of Krittivas, but is not exactly equal

to it. The translation of the *Bhagavata* by Maladhara Basu in the fifteenth century was followed by similar translations of or adaptations from the *Bhagavata* in the sixteenth century by Madhava Acharya, Raghunath Pandit, Shyamadas and others.

(C) MANGALA-KAVYA

Of the Mangala-kavyas we have already spoken of the Manasa-mangala which seems to claim the highest antiquity. Next come the Chandi-mangala, the theme of which seems to have been floating in fragments as stories associated with the religious vows of the women folk. Manik Datta of the last quarter of the fifteenth century seems to have been the first poet of the Chandi-mangala. He was followed in the second half of the sixteenth century by two great poets, Madhavacharya and Mukunda Ram Chakravarti. Mukunda Ram was followed by a host of others in the seventeenth century, but he remains decidedly the best poet of the Chandi-mangala literature. Mukunda Ram had sad vicissitudes in life and was compelled to leave his hearth and home due to the oppression of the then collector of the range, Mahmud Sharif. Eventually he took shelter under the Brahmin king Bankuda Ray of Adara (in Midnapore) and composed his semi-epic poems under the patronage of Raghunath Ray, his pupil and son of Bankuda Ray. The poets of almost all the *Mangala-kavyas* resorted to a common device in introducing their work—it was the conventional device of receiving a special message in dream from a god or a goddess for composing a literary work to eulogise his or her power and glory. It may not be a fact that Mukunda Ram, the best poet of the *Chandi-mangalas* was himself a particular devotee of the goddess Chandi; as the internal evidences will go to prove, the poet might have been a devout Vaishnava as well. So it appears that though Mukunda Ram dealt professedly with gods and goddesses, religious propaganda might not have been his main inspiration.

Goddess Chandi, as depicted in the *Chandi-mangalas*, is not exactly the Puranic Chandi with whom we are well acquainted through the *Markandeya Purana*. She is more of an indigenous forest goddess of Bengal with whom the Puranic episodes and attributes seem to have got associated in course of time. The theme begins with the problem

of introducing the worship of the goddess on earth and for the purpose two cycles of stories were invented, the one is the story of the Vyadha Kalaketu, a professional hunter, and the other is the story of the merchant Dhanapati Sadagar and his son Shripati Sadagar. In the first story we find Kalaketu, a young hunter of low birth living in peace with his young beautiful and faithful wife Phullara. The couple somehow chanced to obtain the favour of the goddess Chandi who decided to proclaim her glory and greatness through this poor but virtuous couple. She first assumed the form of a golden lizard whom Kalaketu captured in course of hunting and brought home. There she changed herself to a divine damsel to the utter astonishment of the couple and being satisfied of their moral virtue disclosed her identity and gave them immense riches with the help of which Kalaketu built a great town and founded a kingdom. He was then challenged by the neighbouring King of Kalinga who invaded his kingdom and made Kalaketu a captive. Here the goddess intervened and through her agency Kalaketu was released and vouchsafed long years of happiness on earth and peace in heaven afterwards.

In the second story the goddess selected a rich merchant, Dhanapati Sadagar, whom she compelled to be one of her devotees after long years of trials and tribulations. It is a long story with ramifications including love-making, jealousy of co-wives, and sea-voyage with merchandise. The story reached its climax with a miracle. In course of his voyage to Simhala (ceylon), Dhanapati saw on the waves of the sea a young lady of superb beauty standing on a lotus and swallowing and disgorging an elephant in a playful mood. The merchant related the story to the King of Simhala, but not being able to substantiate it, was condemned to prison. Exactly the same was the fate also of his son, who came in search of the father, and who was condemned not to prison but to death. At this stage the goddess intervened and being propitiated by the hymns and prayers of Shripati, whose mother Lahana was also a particular devotee of Chandi, rescued both the father and the son. Dhanapati

then returned home not only with his son but also with his daughter-in-law who was none but the princess of Ceylon.

Mukunda Ram was described by the early critics of Bengali literature as the Chaucer of Bengal. Putting aside that questionable comparison, it has to be admitted that he was really a great poet, great because of his handling of the theme, his art of narration enriched by masterly dramatic touches, his skill in characterisation, his sense of humour and last but not the least—his realistic sense. Of the characters we find a large variety representing various classes and shades of the then society and they are real often to the extent of being living. Rarely do we find a poet of his type in the whole range of middle Bengali literature with so much of social consciousness. Even in describing the oppressed beasts of the forest who gathered round the goddess in deputation, the poet describes with an arch humour the political oppression and the consequent economic depression of the time. As there are lyrical touches where the poet describes nature, there are places where the poet shows the fine qualities of a good novelist in describing the minutest details of domestic life. As on the one hand the monotony of the narrative art is broken at intervals by introduction of the dramatic technique, the strain of action is relieved on the other by the enjoyable humour produced with the help of situations and characters.

The other type of *Mangala-kavya*, viz., the *Dharma-mangala*, was late in origin, and none of the extant texts seem to have been composed earlier than the seventeenth century. The *Dharma-mangalas* form the major part of the literature that grew round the godhead of Lord Dharma, a local god of South-West Bengal, worshipped mostly by the low class Hindus. The other type of Dharma literature is the liturgical works of which the *Shunya-purana*, referred to before, is the most important. Dharma Thakur practically represents a popular hotchpotch of religious ideas. He represents something of the primordial Lord of the Tantric Buddhists, something of the old sun-god, something of Shiva, and something of Vishnu or his incarnation Rama ; with this godhead a host of indigenous religious ceremonies of the locality got confusedly associated. Dharma literature grew among a particular class of the masses of South-West

Bengal and the caste-Hindu poets would always fight shy to compose any Kavya on him as there was the possibility of one's being excommunicated by the orthodox Hindus. It is for this reason that, compared with the *Manasa-mangalas* and the *Chandi-mangalas*, *Dharma-mangala* could not enjoy wide popularity. The *Dharma-mangalas* have therefore very aptly been described as the national epic of Radha, i. e., roughly South-West Bengal.

Mayurabhatta is eulogised by the later poets as the first poet of the *Dharma-mangala Kavyas*, but no authentic manuscript of his work has yet been traced. Khelaram perhaps wrote a *Dharma-mangal* in the sixteenth century. Of the poets who composed *Dharma-Mangalas* in the seventeenth century, Rup-ram Chakravarti, Ram-das Adak and Sitaram deserve mention. In our estimate, however, Ghanaram Chakravati of the early eighteenth century was the best poet of the *Dharma-mangalas*.

The *Dharma-mangalas* relate the history of Dharma-worship in Bengal, particularly with reference to the heroic and often Super-human exploits of Lausen, the chosen one of Lord Dharma. He was the son of a feudal chief Karna-sen by his wife Ranjavati who was a siter-in-law of King of Gauda (a Pala King) and was herself very much devoted to Lord Dharma. Besides performing wonderful feats of various types even from his boyhood, Lausen had to subdue another feudal chief Ichai-ghos who was a devotee of Shakti and was protected by her. Lausen always succeeded in life only through the mercy and agency of Dharma and thus established the glory of the Lord. The *Dharma-mangala* of Ghanaram is a fairly long narrative poem and a series of episodes as plots and subplots are inter-related into a compact whole mainly through the character of Lausen. It gives us an idea of the religious, political and social history of a part of South-West Bengal of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Allied to the *Mangala-kavyas* is another type of Shaivite poetry, known as the *Shivayana*, which, comparatively scanty in extent, had its growth by the end of the seventeenth century, Rameshvar, the best poet in the line thriving sometime about the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Shaivite ballads in the form of doggerel verses

seem to have been floating in Bengal from the fourteenth century and fragments of such verses are still to be found among the masses in connection with some Shaivite or crypto-Shaivite religious ceremonies that are generally celebrated in various parts of Bengal during the last few days of the year. An early specimen of such Shaivite verses is to be found in the *Shunya-purana* (referred to before) of the Dharma-literature. Some Shaivite lyrics are still prevalent among the masses of North Bengal. Far from being identical with the Vedic Rudra or even the Puranic Shiv, lord Shiv of Bengal, at least as he is depicted in the popular literature, assumes a novel character, the main traits being derived from the rural social life of Bengal controlled by a predominantly agricultural economy. Shiv is generally depicted as a peculiarly wayward type of an old man hailing from the lower middle class living on agriculture supplemented by begging. His domestic life is disturbed every now and then by poverty causing vulgar quarrels with a young wife, desperate in her strenuous efforts for running her family which include four children—two daughters and two sons. Shiv's moral character is not also always depicted as unimpeachable, he having his occasional love-making with the low women belonging to the aboriginal *Koch* tribe. Yet there are scenes of reconciliation and family peace which strike a higher note. Up to the sixteenth century Shiv-poetry formed an integral part of the preliminary chapters of the *Manasa-mangalas* and the *Chandi-mangalas*, where Shiv retains some of the early Puranic traits of his character; but in the Shivayanas and other doggerel verses the indigenous character predominates making him more homely to the rural people. On the whole, it will strike one that Shiv in Bengali literature has been depicted more as an object of humour than an object of deep respect and devotion.

(D) THE EASTERN BENGAL BALLADS

The Eastern Bengal ballads, collected and published through the zeal of Dr. D. C. Sen and some of his research assistants, seem to be compositions of unlettered rural poets of East Bengal, sometime during the late seventeenth century or the eighteenth century. The theme of some of the ballads might have been of considerably older origin, but there is not much in the language of these ballads,

in which they are presented to us, to show that they are of older origin. The themes of the poems are love-stories of various types in the peculiar rural situations of Bengal and they are conspicuous by their purely secular character. They were, and still are, sung in the interiors of Bengal and the fact corresponds truly to the genuine balladic nature of these longer narrative poems. The poets include the Hindus and the Muslims alike and the characters are also freely drawn from both the communities. Directness of human appeal, lucidity and spontaneity of the emotional diction and a sweet note of pathos characterise the really poetic quality of the poems.

(III) LATE MIDDLE BENGALI

The eighteenth century may, with an amount of justification, be said to be a period of decadence in Bengali poetry. Seldom is there any fresh attempt either in theme or in the form of poetry; in many spheres, on the other hand, there seems to be a colourless dragging on of the old pattern both in subject-matter and form. Politically the period marks the disintegration of the Muslim regime and political chaos prevailed once more due to the absence of any strong central power. It can be marked in the history of every literature that with the decadence of poetry a tendency becomes manifest to resort to a studied ornate style which serves something like a compensation. Bengali Vaishnava poetry of the later period at times betrays an inherent weakness of that type. We find in Bharat Chandra of the second half of the eighteenth century a remarkable example of this ornate style of poetry. The most popular theme of this period, so far as Kavya poetry was concerned was the Vidya-sundar story, a story originally found in Sanskrit, but transformed substantially in the eighteenth century, partly due to the influence of Persian love-stories, imported with the Muslim infiltration, and partly due to the demand of the then court-patrons of literature with depraved taste and temperament. Quite a number of poets tried their hand on this Vidya-sundar story, of whom Bharat Chandra was decidedly the best. The Vidya-sundar story forms but a part of the *Annada-mangala* (Annada being an aspect of the Great Mother herself) Kavya which was composed just after the pattern of the early Mangala Kavyas; but as history was no longer in favour of

a revival of the Mangala Kavya pattern, it served only as a conventional structure which had to be vitalised by the Vidya-sundar story. The Vidya-sundar story, in a nut-shell, is the story of a foreign prince Sundar making love with the princess Vidya of uncommon beauty, learning and wit through the intermediary of an elderly woman who used to supply flower to the royal family. Their intimacy was discovered only when the princess was found carrying ; the prince was arrested and condemned to death. But a devotee of Kalika as the prince was, he was saved through the mercy of the Mother and eventually the King himself gave his daughter in marriage to the prince. In handling the theme Bharat Chandra proved himself a master magician both in the skilful employment of variety of metres (including some Sanskrit metres which were introduced in Bengali poetry for the first time) and in the employment of rhetorical devices. Ingenious and witty use of alliterations, puns and onomatopoeic words, happy use of similes and metaphors, the piquant and pointed way of saying things made him unrivalled in his age. Some of his lines, or fragments therefrom, have come down to us as idioms or proverbs. The other redeeming feature of Bharat Chandra's poetry is the modern tendencies that manifest themselves in it. He has very aptly been described as the poet of transition, as, inspite of being an heir to mediaeval literary heritage he heralded the advent of a new age by his realistic touches and by his bringing into prominence the human values which suffered much in the past by the prominence given to gods and goddesses.

Another poet, contemporary to Bharat Chandra, and handling the same Vidya-sundar story as part of his *Kalika-mangala* and working under the patronage of the same King Krishnachandra of Nadia, was Ramaprasad Sen. But his celebrity as a poet rests more on his devotional songs pertaining to the Divine Mother and the Shakta cult in general. Ramaprasad is known as a great Sadhaka of Shakti cult and his poems appeal to us as the spontaneous outburst of the emotional experiences of a true devotee of the Mother and in this respect he is often exalted as the forerunner of Sri Ramakrishna. Ramaprasad can, in a sense, be said to be the introducer of a new type of devotional lyrics on Shakti and her cult, and a host of poets

followed him in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the quantity and quality of the poems composed by these poets are in no way negligible in the history of our literature. A particular type of these devotional songs is well-known as *Agamani Sangita* (songs on the coming) and *Vijaya-Sangita* (songs on departure). These songs deal with the coming of Uma (or Parvati) to her mother's (Menaka) house from Kailash (the abode of Shiv, her husband) just for three days after an interval of full one year. Like the best Vaishnava lyrics these poems also have, in a remarkably unsophisticated manner, bridged the gulf between the human and the divine. Shiv, as we have already hinted, was an old and wayward type of a husband, poor and a vagabond; naturally in the estimate of the mother of Uma he was no match for her daughter who was tender in age, matchless in beauty, and accomplished in all respects. But alas, the poor parents had no other alternative than to give their darling in marriage to such a husband. The cares and anxieties of the mother under the circumstances, the pathetic eagerness of the maid to come to her mother's house—and all the sweet and sorrowful domestic scenes and problems connected with her married life constitute the theme of the *Agamani* songs and the pathos that waits upon the departure of a darling from her parent's house is the theme for the *Vijaya* songs. Though Uma and Shiv on the one hand and Menaka and Himalaya (king of the mountains and father of Uma) on the other hand are the characters dealt with in these songs, they represent the loving tenderness of human parents in relation to their absent children, and this accounts for the special charm and appeal of these songs.

Before we finish our brief survey of middle Bengali literature, we think it necessary to say a few words about the contribution of the Muslims to Bengali literature. We have mentioned before how some of the translations or rather adaptations from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavata* were made under the patronage of some of the Muslim rulers. We have also mentioned that some good Vaishnava lyrics were composed by the Muslim poets during the seventeenth century. Besides these, the other fact that deserves particular mention is that the court of the ruler of Arakan (in Chitta-

gong) was a seat of learning in the seventeenth century and a considerable amount of literature in Bengali grew under the royal patronage and the patronage of a minister, Magan Thakur. Of the poets who flourished in the Arakan court, Seyad Alaol was the best. He made a free Bengali version of the famous *Padmavat Kavya* of the Hindi poet Malik Muhammed Jayasi. With a sincere leaning towards Sufi-istic faith Seyad Alaol not only did justice to the original, but he showed high poetic power of a distinctly original kind. There are some of other important poetical works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which bear the fruits of a happy cultural and religious synthesis of Islam and Hinduism. These were composed by the Muslim poets under a deep Sufi-istic influence and the poets were well acquainted with the faith and ideas of their Hindu brethren. The Baul songs, composed by a section of saint-poets of rural Bengal, who had renounced the world and repudiated the ordinary social etiquettes under a sort of divine intoxication, also sometimes testify to a similar popular synthesis of the religious faith and doctrines of the Hindus and the Muslims.

Modern Period. (1) DEVELOPMENT OF PROSE

The modern period of Bengali literature begins practically with the nineteenth century. It is customary to regard the Battle of Plassey (1757) as the epoch-making event not only in the political sphere, but also in the cultural and literary spheres. But the defeat and death of Nawab Siraj-ud-daula and the triumph of Lord Clive did not at once usher in a new era in our national life. Chaos prevailed for a long time accentuated by an unprecedented physical calamity, the famine of 1770, till at last things began to settle down by the end of the century under the full-fledged British regime. From the side of literary history, the first noteworthy phenomenon in the new era was the development of prose style. As we have already seen, Bengali literature before the nineteenth century was practically Bengali poetry. There must have been a prose style side by side with poetry even from the early period of the history of our language a style in which the people used to conduct their every day business, but not being used for the literary purpose it is almost lost to us except for a

few negligible prose fragments of uncertain dates. Prose specimens of the eighteenth century consist of a number of letters and legal documents, a few treatises on astrology and medicine and some catechism on Sahajiya practices. It is an interesting fact that the zeal of the European missionaries in propagating Christianity in the land was to some extent responsible for the development of early Bengali prose. The Portuguese missionaries, who came first, wrote some tracts in Bengali prose probably in the seventeenth century; of these only one is now available to us, *Brahman Roman Kathalik Samvad*, or a dialogue between an orthodox Hindu Brahmin and a Roman Catholic missionary on the superiority of Christianity to Hinduism. The text was written by Dom Antonio, originally a Bengali, but converted into Roman Catholicism. Another Portuguese missionary named Manoel da Assampcam, head of the Portuguese mission near Dacca, translated a catechism of the Roman Catholic religion under the caption *Crepar Xaxtrer Orthbhed* in the first half of the eighteenth century. It was he who for the first time wrote a grammar of the Bengali language. Both of his works were printed in Roman type from Lisbon along with a Bengali-Portuguese lexicon. By the second half of the eighteenth century the English and Scottish missionaries took up the work begun by the Portuguese missionaries. A *Grammar of the Bengali Language* was published in 1778 by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, a Government officer. It was the first book printed in Bengali type at the Government Press in Hooghly, the type founts being cut by Charles Wilkins, another civil servant. Panchanan Karmakar, a blacksmith of Serampore learnt the art of cutting type founts from Wilkins, and cut the type for the early printing presses that were set in Calcutta and Serampore. The establishment of this printing press was another important factor that facilitated the development of Bengali prose.

The establishment of the Fort William College of Calcutta in 1800 was really an epoch-making event in the history of Bengali prose. The College was started by the Government to educate the European civilians and William Carey, a missionary of Serampore and a revered name in Bengal for the genuine love he

had for the Bengali language and the people of Bengal, was put in charge of the department of oriental learning. Carey himself wrote a Bengali grammar, an English-Bengali dictionary, a book of colloquial Bengali dialogue, and a semi-historical story-book. Besides his missionary colleagues, Carey succeeded in collecting round him a band of native Pandits and Munshis (Scholars) who put forward their combined effort in writing Bengali text-books of various types. Of these Pandits the name of Mrityunjay Vidyalkar deserves special mention ; for his writings were praiseworthy not merely as text books, but showed at places commendable literary qualities. The activities of the teachers of the Fort William College, among whom there was a good number of Europeans and native scholars, were confined to the writing of school books ; this was again supplemented by the activities of the School Book Society, founded in 1817, having a membership of distinguished Englishmen and Bengalis including William Carey, Ramkamal Sen and Radhakanta Dev. The number of Bengali books produced under the auspices of these two organisations was indeed great, but the quality was not naturally as appreciable as the quantity. Yet it has to be admitted that the foundation was laid by these pioneers, the edifice being constructed on it by those who succeeded.

Another organisation of the early nineteenth century that supplemented the activities of the Fort William College from other directions was the Mission at Serampore, William Carey being the moving spirit here also. The Mission founded a good printing press and published a Bengali translation of the Bible. It printed most of the text-books written in the Fort William College, and besides printed classical texts like the *Ramayana* of Krittivas, the *Mahabharata* of Kasiramdas and the *Annada-mangala* of Bharat Chandra. The success of the printing press yielded good results in another direction—in the development of Bengali journalism and Bengali prose began to acquire literary qualities in and through the journals. The first journal was the *Dig-darshan*, an educational magazine of small size which came out from the Serampore Mission in 1818, edited by John Clark Marshman. It came out monthly for three years and then

stopped. This was followed by the weekly *Samachar Darpan* under the same management but contributed mainly by the native Pandits. The first Bengali periodical organised by the Bengalis was the *Bangal Gejeti* (i. e. the Bengal Gazette) edited and published by Gangakisor Bhattacharya, perhaps a little earlier to the *Samachar Darpan*. *Samachar Darpan* being a journal of the Christian Missionaries, published articles eulogising Christianity and criticising Hinduism often uncharitably. This led to the publication of the *Samvad Kaumudi* in 1821, which was actively patronised by Raja Rammohan Ray. This was followed by *Samachar Chandrika* (1822), another weekly edited by Bhavani Charan Bandyopadhyay, the *Vangadut* (1896) of Nilratan Halder and then by the *Samvad Prabhakar* of Ishwar Gupta of which we shall speak later on. These periodicals contained stray articles on topics of various interest and discourses and discussions on religious and social subjects. These contributed much more to the advancement of a literary prose-style than the large number of text books that were written by the different authors. Bhavani Charan, the editor to the *Samachar Chandrika* was himself a man of literary taste and power and his humorous sketch *Nava Babu Vilas* (1821) is noteworthy both for the style and the contents, giving the first satirical sketch of a typical product of the age, the Babu who utilised English education for acquiring social dignity and indulging in luxurious tastes of a questionable kind.

It is difficult to speak of any prose style with regard to the literature that was produced during the first decade of the nineteenth century. So far as the vocabulary was concerned, some were inclined towards Sanskrit, some had leaning towards Persian, some again acted like dictaphones in making use of colloquial words. The syntax was loose, sometimes with a wavering between the Sanskrit and the English construction. The style of discursive essays developed in the second decade and it took a definite shape in the hands of Raja Rammohan Ray—a landmark not only in Bengali prose, but also in Indian Renaissance of the nineteenth century. Rammohan brought with him a revolutionary message—a clarion call for a thorough overhauling of our religious faith and ideas, for a radical change in our social outlook, for a healthier life

on the whole. This message could reach the people of Bengal only through literature and Bengali prose had to be rejuvenated for the purpose. He made Bengali prose powerful enough to convey long and subtle discourses and argumentation,—social, religious and philosophical.

The religious reformation advocated by Rammohan took a definite shape in the form of Brahmo-ism and the cause was sincerely and seriously taken up by Maharsi Debendranath Tagore, the father of Poet Rabindranath Tagore. Debendranath started a journal called *Tattva-bodhini-patrika*, which, though primarily an organ of Brahmo-ism, served the cause of literature well. Aksay Kumar Datta was an important writer in the *Tattva-bodhini-patrika*, who, besides writing text books in good style, wrote treatises long and short on different subjects, cultural and scientific. But the most outstanding writer of Bengali prose of the period was Pandit Ishvar Chandra Vidyasagar, a man universally revered and loved in Bengal as a man whose character presented a rare blending of extraordinary strength and tenderness. He was a social reformer of dogged tenacity and wrote several long discursive essays. But his reputation as a prose writer rests on a number of adaptations from Sanskrit. Though translations, these works show a marked originality of style. In spite of being Sanskritic, the style often requires the charm of lucidity and a rhythmic balance and harmony which he was the first to infuse into Bengali prose-style.

Maharsi Debendranath himself was a writer of no less importance. His religious discourses and sermons, faithfully recorded and published, present a style marked by sincerity, simple dignity and elegance. His auto-biography, first of the type in Bengali, is an asset in our prose literature both for its literary style and its theme—recording his spiritual experiences, mystic communion with God and a delicate sensitiveness to the beauty of nature—qualities which left their mark upon his great son—Rabindranath Tagore. Bhudev Mukherjee was a well-known prose writer of the period on social and domestic subjects. Rajnarayan Basu deserves mention for his introduction of light humour in Bengali prose. Tarashankar Tarkaratna became famous at the time for his abridged translation of the

great Sanskrit prose work *Kadambari*. The *Vividhartha-samgraha*, a periodical devoted to the advancement of science, history and other allied miscellaneous subjects gave an impetus to researches in Bengali. Various other serious and sincere writers wielded their pen and through the joint effort of them all Bengali prose, by the middle of the nineteenth century, attained its maturity as a suitable medium for expressing the most abstruse and recondite thoughts and also a mild ripple of sentiments and emotions.

(II) POETRY

Modern Bengali poetry dates practically from the forties of the nineteenth century. Between Bharat Chandra of the third quarter of the eighteenth century and Ishvar Gupta of the second quarter of the nineteenth century there is a big gap. The fact is that the contact, conflict and the compromise with the Europeans brought about new conditions of life which took some time to shed their somewhat alien traits and therefore could not inspire fresh poetic creation ; on the other hand the nation seems to have been roused from its stale and traditional efforts to a realism of life that demanded quick expression through the development of an alert and resourceful prose style. The gap, however, was not, and could not be, an absolute vacuum ; there might not have been poets, but surely there were poetasters, as the general name *Kaviwala* by which a heterogeneous class of poets were denoted, will indicate. These minor poets, some of whom seem to have flourished as early as the second quarter of the eighteenth century, were mostly illiterate, or half-literate, and the audience for whom their compositions were meant were not cultured people of refined taste. Verses composed by the poets do not therefore always convey fine shades of sentiments, neither was the language they used suited for that ; their songs served more often than not as something like a poetico-musical entertainment for the common run of people on festive occasions. The verses of this period were, as we have said, of a heterogeneous nature, some are known as *Kavi-songs*, some as *Tappa* some as *Panchali* where generally the theme was religious, pertaining to some aspects of the life and activities of Krishna, Ram or Shiv. The *Kavi-song*, with its more

popular or rather vulgarised forms Kheud, Tarja, Hap Akhdai, etc. was the more important. The *Kavi* song was really a free and extempore wit-combat between two opposing parties, who would go on putting questions to each other and answering them in verses which were composed extempore on the very spot. But inspite of the cleverness of quick repartees and excitement produced through class of witticism, such hurried composition, meant to please the mob, could not be expected to possess literary finish or artistic grace, or fineness of sentiments of any high order. As a result, most of these ephemeral compositions were lost even at the time of Ishwar Gupta who for the first time collected and published these poems with some critical appreciation. Be it said to the credit of these songs that inspite of their shortcomings some of them embody a condensed presentation of sentiment ; with occasional flashes of genuine poetry or psychological insight.

One thing has to be particularly noticed with reference to the songs of the host of heterogeneous composers of the time that the theme of the songs available to us is invariably love and that also secular love in most of the cases. Divine love was not entirely discarded, but the secular tone predominates. That was in a way heralding the advent of a new age—the age of humanism. Even in cases where Puranic themes pertaining to Krishna, Ram or Shiv were adopted, the human interest in the characters and their activities much outweighs that of the divine. It shows that man's attention was turning round from heaven above to the earth below and humanity in its infinite mystery and interest was replacing divinity as a subject of poetry.

Ishvar Gupta occupies important place in the history of modern poetry in as much as he stands as the last representative of mediæval poetry with his leaning towards the alliteration and punning of Bharat Chandra and the coarseness and scurrility of the Kaviwalas, but at the same time he embodies modern tendencies in the selection of themes which speak of the alert social consciousness of a transitional age. His conservative attitude manifests itself in the form of an uncharitable reaction against everything that was there in the then newly anglicized society, and that explains the element

of satire and banter in a good number of his poems. A journalist as he was, his poems share the merits and demerits of journalism to a large extent. He was typically topical in the choice of subjects and in the details of their delineation, that made his poems promptly and piquantly popular, but not always intrinsically valuable. The sincere patriotic tone that is manifest in some of his poems is indeed an innovation in Bengali poetry, and not being an offshoot of any fixed partisan bias it had a wider appeal and freshness.

The historical importance of Ishvar Gupta is due not solely to the intrinsic value of his poems or his prose-writings; it is due to the fortunate fact that he succeeded in organising, mainly through his journal *Samvad Prabhakar*, a literary society where almost all the would-be great poets and prose-writers received their first training and initiation. Promising youngsters like Rangalal Banerjee, Madhusuhan Datta, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee clustered round Ishvar Gupta and served their literary apprenticeship in the *Samvad Prabhakar*. One of the most faithful disciples of Ishvar Gupta was Rangalal Banerjee who began his literary career as a stray writer of poems and prose articles, but established his reputation by his composition of four narrative poems *Padmini Upakhyān*, *Karma-devi*, *Sura-sundari* and *Kanchi-kaveri*. The first has for its theme the well-known story of Padmini, the queen of Chitore and Alauddin Khilji, emperor of Delhi; the theme of the second and third is also taken from the history of the Rajputs; the fourth deals with an old episode connected with a queen of Orissa. The first thing that strikes in these narrative poems is the spirit of patriotism. Whatever might have been the themes, the newly aroused love of freedom animated and elevated them all and it was perhaps this love of freedom that indeed the poet to hunt stirring tales of heroism generally from the storehouse of Rajput chivalry. Rangalal was an assiduous student of both Sanskrit and English and the influence of English poets like Byron, Scott and Tom Moore is at places evident in his poems.

The most outstanding poet of the mid-nineteenth century was Madhusudan Datta, who dived deep in Western literature and culture and brought precious gems with which he succeeded in

adorning his own mother tongue. Madhusudan may be taken as a typical example of the *Young Bengal*—an epithet particularly coined to denote a batch of young students who got intoxicated with westernism and could ill-digest the western education and culture which they were receiving from the Hindu College, the premier seat of western learning at the time, as well as from the environment that was surcharged with the novelty of anglicism. Madhusudan seems to have drunk a bit more than was healthy for him for which he had to pay a lot throughout his life. He was a great but a wild genius—a man of limitless and insatiable ambition. He studied Bengali and Sanskrit and something of some other oriental languages also but his mind revelled in the study of the western classics in English, Latin, Greek and even Hebrew, French, German and Italian. He took to writing English at first, but he came to his senses very soon and returned to his mother-land and literature with sincere apology for his erstwhile truancy. His sudden advent in the field of Bengali literature was really like a ‘meteoric rise’ as he himself described it in his letters to his friends, of whom Gaurdas Basak and Rajnarayan Basu figured prominently. The tenure of Madhusudan’s career as an active writer in Bengali did not extend practically for more than four years, *i. e.* from 1859 to 1862, but he could leave his indelible mark even within this short span of time. Madhusudan’s appearance in the field of Bengali literature was first as a dramatist in 1859 when he wrote his drama *Sarmistha* practically as a challenge to the old-fashioned dramas of Ram-narayan ; but the most fruitful years of his poetic career were 1861 and 1862. Unbelievably rapid and versatile was his production at the time ; as he himself said in a letter to Rajnarayan Basu, “How you are, old boy ! A Tragedy, a volume of Odes, and one half of a real Epic poem ! All in the course of one year ; and that year only half old ! If I deserve credit for nothing else, you must allow that I am, at least, an industrious dog.....You may take my word for it, friend Raj, that I shall come out like a tremendous comet and no mistake !”

Madhusudan wrote three dramas one of which was after the

pattern of Greek tragedy, a volume of poetic epistles *Virangana-kavya* after the Heroic Epistles of Ovid, a long love-lyric, *Brajangana*, on the Radha-Krishna theme, two epics and a good number of sonnets after the Italian pattern. Every branch of literature that he touched shows marked originality of style and treatment and a rare promise of greatness. But his real greatness rests primarily on his Epic work, the *Meghanad Badh Kavya* and a number of lyrical sonnets, which were at places sincere outpourings of a really poetic heart.

The *Meghanad Badh Kavya* is the first epic poem in Bengali in the western sense of the term. Inspiration was derived from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* of India but more from the works of Homer, Virgil, Tasso, Dante and, last but not the least, Milton, who to Madhusudan was 'divine'. He was painfully conscious of the inherent weakness of the Bengali *payar* metre and the time-honoured custom of rhiming, which appeared to him like fetters restraining artificially the free movement of the goddess of poesy. His spirit revolted against the convention, the shackles of rhyme were broken with robust and sinewy hands and the *payar* metre with its variants was replaced by the *Blank verse* built closely on the model of Milton. This introduction of *Blank verse*, which revolutionised Bengali poetry and had very far-reaching effects in poetry and drama, was not an act of mere imitation, it was there to meet the demand of an heroic age. We style the mid-nineteenth century 'a heroic age' because it marks the awakening of our true national consciousness. This national consciousness was naturally associated with a revolt against foreign subjugation and a dream of freedom; and a dream of freedom naturally inspires a nation with heroic ideas. Heroism was thus a craze of the age which is therefore fitly designated as the heroic age.

It has been marked by all students of history that a nation as a whole is not always conscious of the social forces that are acting behind and moulding its history. It is only the poets and other writers, who, with their keenly receptive mind and deep and prophetic insight anticipate things to come. They are always the harbingers of a new era, which is not only anticipated but often precipitated.

Rangalal, Madhusudan, Hem Chandra and Nabin Chandra were the pillars of this heroic age in poetry and they were supplemented by Bankim Candra, the great novelist and essayist. As a matter of fact, the history of the freedom movement of Bengal starts practically from here, for this was the period for preparing the ground. So far as the themes of the epics or other narrative poems of this period were concerned, the poets fell back upon either the heroic episodes from the annals of the country or episodes from the national epics of India, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, or from the *Puranas*. Rangalal, we have seen, drew freely from the past annals and episodes; Madhusudan took his theme from the *Ramayana*, the story of the valiant fight of Meghanad or Indrajit, son of Ravan, in defence of his homeland Lanka (Ceylon) and his death at the hands of Lakshman through a low and dastardly intrigue in which the 'Rascal Bibhisan' (as Madhusudan was prone to call him), the fifth columnist, was the prime-mover. The *Vritra-samhar Kavya*, the most representative of Hem Chandra's literary works, was based on the Puranic tradition of the killing of the demon Vritra by the gods, once defeated and driven away from heaven, their homeland,—the most appealing episode in the whole of the story being the self-sacrifice of the sage Dadhici with whose bone a bolt was made to kill the demon. Nabin Sen composed his ballad-cum-narrative poem *Palasir Yuddha* (the Battle of Plassey)—a poem, forceful even in its emotional diction, to commemorate the glorious fight the combined force of the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal put up against the British in their last attempt at defending the honour of their motherland. In his trilogy on Krishna—*Raivatak*, *Kurukshetra* and *Prabhas*, the poet depicted Krishna as a perfect 'Divine-man'—lofty in his wisdom, valour and vision and at the same time tenderest in love and sympathy—who had a mission in life—to create a 'Great India' (Mahabharat) out of the chaos that prevailed in his time in the shattered political life, in the lamentable religious controversies and in the unhealthy social inequities. Even a casual generalisation warrants the belief that whatever might have been the theme adopted, the poetic inspiration was largely nourished by the patriotism and freedom-mindedness of the poets and the themes were reorien-

ted, often beyond recognition, in conformity with the pressing objective conditions.

Hem Chandra made his appearance as a warm admirer of Madhusudan, but the theme he chose for his epic *Vritra-samhar* was, in some respects, better suited to the epic purpose than the one chosen by his master ; but he could not rival the glory of his master because of the inherent weakness of an uninspired prosaic diction and unimpressiveness of the total execution. Nabin Chandra was a man of more poetic imagination, but of less artistic discipline. His descriptions and emotional rhapsodies are enjoyable at places, but they suffer from an inartistic excess.

Some other general observations will not be out of place with regard to the nature of this poetry of the mid-nineteenth century. As all these poets had first-hand acquaintance with western literature, influence was pronounced on their composition. As for Madhusudan, he once boasted in writing to a friend of his that three-fourths of his writings were Greek. Rangalal confessed in a place, "I have studied English poetry considerably, most of all, and it has been long my practice to compose Bengali verses in that pure mould." In addition to the influence of Milton, the influence of English romantic poetry was palpable on the various compositions of these poets. The next point to note is that the Renaissance of the early nineteenth century brought along with it almost a craze for rationalism. It is because of this that poets of the mid-nineteenth century often show a tendency towards remoulding the classical or the Puranic episodes on a rational basis. The third point to note is the humanistic spirit manifest in the poetry of the period. The wonder and awe with which the mediæval gods and goddesses were viewed was practically gone and divinity was defined in terms of man.

The epic poem of Madhusudan was followed by a large number of pseudo-epics by powerless imitators none of which could make any mark. The next noteworthy poet of the period was Biharilal Chakravarti, who was a lyric poet of subtlety and delicacy with romantic yearnings verging on mysticism. Apparently, however, Biharilal seems to be an anomaly as, contrary to the vogue

of the day, he had no charm for heroic tales, but was absorbed in the sweet and sad tune of his lyre. But a little analysis and insight will reveal the fact that romantic lyricism was flowing in the mid-nineteenth century like an under-current side by side with the epic strain. Apart from the fact that even the epic poetry of at least Madhusudan and Nabin Chandra betray at places the lyrical leaning of the poets, all the four important poets of the period, we mean Madhusudan, Rangalal, Hem Chandra and Nabin Chandra, composed a good number of lyric poems. Some of the sonnets of Madhusudan are exquisite lyrics embodying a sincere love for his country—for the physical nature as well as the social and cultural life of the nation for which he had a soft and secret corner in his heart. Hem Chandra's patriotic poems provoked much enthusiasm among his contemporaries and they helped a good deal in fostering the national spirit. His nature poems struck a new note, but they lacked artistic finish and the literary appeal suffered a good deal because of the didactic excess. Nabin Sen was not a writer of good short lyric poems, but essentially he was a lyric poet; his narrative poems are sometimes dilated lyrics linked together by a loose narrative bond.

This lyrical under-current manifested itself in a simple and pure form in the poems of Biharilal. A romantic note of return to nature characterises his earlier poems; but in his poems of maturity his love of nature and love of man acquired a wider and deeper connotation, in which beauty, love and knowledge merged in a harmonious blending. The poet in his ecstatic visions realised the Muse of his poems—*Sharada* as he used to call her, who was a mysterious power permeating the cosmic manifestation with attributes of infinite beauty, love and knowledge. His heart was in quest of a communion with this goddess in and through all his poetic experiences. Biharilal was not on the whole a finished artist; he sparkles in lines and reaches brilliant elevations which he cannot sustain. In ascertaining his proper place in the history of the nineteenth century poetry, he has been rightly described by some of his admirers as the bird of the morning who by his sweet lyrical notes heralded the approach of the rising sun hinting at the emergence of Poet Tagore. Biharilal

has sometimes been held as the preceptor of Poet Tagore; allowing an amount of exaggeration in the statement, what we are sure of is that Biharilal anticipated Tagore in as much as some striking similarity in the fundamental ideology of the two poets can easily be detected.

(iii) Drama

The history of the development of Bengali drama is a bit complicated. First there was the time-honoured indigenous form of dramatic representation—the popular *yatra*, which was originally a musical performance, with the accessories of miming and dancing. Bits of dialogue were improvised here and there in course of time either to make it more impressive or to meet the popular demand for a better understanding of the plot which was necessary for enjoying the whole performance. Gradually, however, the *yatra* developed a full dramatic form with plots, characters and dialogues, but the predominance of music was always there. There was no regular stage, such as scenery or curtain, and the whole performance took place in a square-shaped arena, surrounded on all sides by a big gathering of audience, represented mostly by the masses as opposed to the elite of the country. This indigenous form of dramatic representation could hardly satisfy the dramatic taste of the newly enlightened intelligentsia whose mind was already attracted by the performances of some English dramas on some of the stages which were temporarily erected in some places in and around Calcutta. A memorable fact in the early history of Bengali drama was the establishment of a Bengali theatre in Calcutta in 1795 by an anglicised Russian adventurer, Herasim Lebedoff, where the Bengali versions of an English comedy—*Disguise* and an English farce *Love is the Best Doctor* were staged. The plays were acted by Bengali actors and actresses and some lines from Bharat Chandra were set to tune. After a long interval we find a private stage built by a Bengali, Prasanna Kumar Thakur, in 1831; but the plays staged were all English. Another stage was built in 1835 in Shyambazar, Calcutta, in the house of Nabin Chandra Basu where the story of Vidya-sundar was dramatised. By the fifties of the nineteenth century some dramas were written by Yogendra Chandra Gupta, Tarachand

Sikdar, Hara Chandra Ghosh and others, but none of them deserve mention except as pioneers in the field.

By this time, however, Bengali drama attracted the fancy of wealthy persons like Maharaja Yatindramohan Thakur of Pathuriyaghata and Rajas Ishvar Chandra Sinha and Pratap Chandra Sinha of Paikpara. Ramnarayan Tarkaratna, a Brahman Pundit of the Sanskritic school, stole a march on his predecessors and contemporaries by the publication of his social dramas, particularly the *Kulina-Kula-Sarvasva* which, because of the novelty of the theme as well as the new mode of presentation, made quite a stir. Ramnarayan adopted in Bengali some Sanskrit dramas which also were staged with success. But the inferior quality of his dramas and the great acclamation with which they were hailed by the audience disgusted Madhusudan Datta, who with a stout resolution to improve the quality of Bengali drama, wrote his first drama *Sarmistha* on the European model, though the theme was taken from the *Mahabharata*. This was followed by *Padmavati*, an adaptation from the Greek legend, and *Krishna-Kumari Natak*, a tragedy after the Greek model with a plot taken from Rajput history. Madhusudan was not, however, as great a dramatist as he was a poet; but his *Krishna-kumari-Natak* did make a mark as a piece of tragedy. His other two small social farces received appreciation both for their dramatic skill and the skill in depicting aspects of contemporary society.

Dinabandhu Mitra seems to have had a better dramatic instinct. His first politico-social drama *Nil-darpan*, drawing just a pen-picture of the inhuman oppression perpetrated on the peasantry of Bengal by the European Indigo-planters, received the most widespread and tumultuous ovation. But it has to be admitted that the unprecedented ovation was probably more due to the stirring popularity of theme than to skilful dramatic execution. Besides writing two other social dramas, he wrote three social farces, where, inspite of his occasional indulgence in crude and scurrilous mirth, he achieved considerable success. As a dramatist, Dinabandhu will be remembered and appreciated in scenes and characters—in the superb efficacy of dialogue he could employ at places,—but none of his dramas is likely to have any permanent appeal as a whole.

The most important figure in the history of Bengali drama of the nineteenth century is Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844-1911) who deserves credit for more than one reason. He was not only a voluminous playwright with varieties of theme; he was a first rate actor himself, a successful organiser and stage-manager and a producer. His has the glorious credit of bringing about a happy synthesis between the two main divergent currents of the drama of the day. The dramas written by the educated playwrights followed mainly the Western pattern and had nothing to do with the techniques of the *yatra*, which, inspite of their crudity and banality, had a tremendous appeal to the people of the country. The new dramas which were meant for the urban coterie could not, therefore, create a large number of theatre-going public without whose interest and co-operation the possibility of a permanent public stage could not materialise. The dramatic genius of Girish Chandra was characterised by a rare combination of the indigenous and the imported—the *yatra* and the theatre. He had first-hand acquaintance with some of the English dramas, particularly those of Shakespeare, one of whose dramas Girish Chandra translated into Bengali with great success, and he learnt the English technique well; at the same time he cherished sincere love and regard for the indigenous form and learnt well the secret of its appeal to the masses. He combined the two in his plays, staged them with tremendous success with the help of a band of actors and actresses whom he trained himself. All these made it possible for him to popularise the Bengali drama beyond expectation and put the stage on a permanent and profitable footing. The latter fact was itself an achievement of great magnitude in view of the fact that it had a very far-reaching effect on the future development of Bengali drama.

Girish Chandra wrote more than eighty plays, large and small, serious and light, tragic and comic,—and conforming to the *yatra* pattern which exerted a great influence on him, these plays contain several hundred songs, including love-songs, devotional songs as well as comical songs meant for cheap entertainment. His plays cover a wide range of types, social, historical, Puranic or mythological, religious, musical comedies and farces. Partly because of his *yatra* ten-

dencies, partly due to the influence of Sri Ramakrishna Deva, devotional sentiment was the dominant note of his plays as a whole. In many of his dramas Girish Chandra used a metrical prose, which was a variant of the *Blank Verse* used by Madhusudan with a modification to make it better suited to the dramatic purpose. His mastery in the use of colloquial dialogue remains still unsurpassed. His characters also present almost an inexhaustible variety, but generally there is stamp of mediocrity in the handling of the plot and the execution of technique as also in characterisation.

Another popular playwright of the day was Amritlal Basu who is better known as a comedian or rather a writer of farces, though he wrote serious dramas also. With due regard for the skill he has shown in this respect, it has to be regretted that his aim at gaining popularity has at times led him to the border of vulgarity. Kshirod Prasad Vidyavinod was another popular dramatist of the early twentieth century and some of his dramas brought him wide reputation.

Dwijendralal Ray deserves more than a passing remark as a dramatist as well as a composer of some nice poems and songs (including a number of comic songs) of the early twentieth century. He wrote a few social dramas and a few farces too, but his reputation rests on a number of historical dramas, some of which may better be styled as patriotic dramas. A refreshing heroic sentiment and a forceful elegance of style characterises his dramas, which unfortunately suffer from an excess, excess in melodramatic sentimentality and unwarranted verbosity. A looseness in the construction of plots sometimes detracts much from the exalted effect produced by the dignity of his character.

When we are dealing with the drama of the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century we are not oblivious of the contribution of Poet Tagore even in this direction. That point will be better discussed when we deal with him as a whole separately afterwards.

(iv) Novel

The Bengali novel is a thing of the mid-nineteenth century, it has no history behind it. In the whole history of ancient Indian

literature only two Sanskrit works can be styled as precursors of Indian novels, viz., *Kadambari* of Bana Bhatta and *Svapna-vasavadatta* of Subandhu ; but though there were translations of these books, the first being rendered into Bengali prose by Tarashankar Tarkaratna in 1854 and the second into verse by Madanmohan Tarkalankar, these do not seem to have anything to do directly with the origin and development of the Bengali novel. The stories, tales and fables that were popular at the time might have paved the way, but none of them can be said to have served as a prototype. The rapid progress of the prose style together with the growth and popularity of journalism made the appearance of the novel a thing quite in keeping with the march of events. *Nava-babu-vilas*, a humorous sketch of the character and behaviour of the 'Babus' or the anglicised fops of Calcutta gives us the first but faint indications of a novel by the thirties. This was followed by the *Alaler Gharer Dulal* (the Spoiled Child of the Rich Family) of Pyaricharan Mitra, *alias* Tek Chand Thakur in 1858. The book, which was modelled on the *Tom Jones* of Fielding, was not a regular novel ; but it had some elements of novel in it in having a sort of plot-element, characters and dialogues. The whole book, though commendable as an adventurous experiment in the colloquial style of Calcutta, had its defects in what may be described as its cockneyism. *Hutom Pyancar Naksa* of Kaliprasanna Simha (1862) was a collection of humorous sketches in a much improved colloquial style.

The novel was introduced in Bengali practically by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay whose first romantic novel *Durgeshnandini* came out in the pages of Bankim's much esteemed journal *Vangdarsan* in 1865. Its publication was a great surprise—a surprise in the thrilling romance, the complicated love adventures, the rapidity of action, the dexterity of characterisation, and in addition, the unexpected grandeur of style. Bengali prose-style reached a fixed elegant literary standard in the writings of Bankim Chandra. Before him there were currents and cross-currents, some following the highly Sanskritised verbosity, some leaning towards a Persianised vocabulary, some preferring the colloquial—others often taking to a graceless hotch-potch. Bankim Chandra was keenly conscious

of these conflicts and controversies, which could be reconciled only by a touch of the artistic wand of a genius like him.

Bankim Chandra was great not only as a novelist, but also as an essayist. In addition to his literary essays and humorous sketches, he left for us articles on literature, history and science, discussions and dissertations bearing fruits of his scholarly researches in the field of ancient Indian history and culture. His expositions of the *Gita*, his long treatise on the exposition of Sri Krishna's character, his original book on theology (*Dharmatattva*) are remarkable for his bold attempt at reconciling the eastern and western ideas and chalking out a new course which would be in conformity with the rising tendency towards rationalism and humanism. But the greatness of Bankim Chandra in these respects has practically been overshadowed by his greatness as a novelist. He was not only a novelist himself, his journal *Vanga-darsan* was literally an epoch-making phenomenon in as much as it succeeded in rousing a new enthusiasm among the writers, creating a wider circle of readers and co-ordinating the literary activities of the day.

The distinction that is generally made between a romance and novel proper is tenable in the case of the novels of Bankim Chandra, and if a classification of his novels is made on this basis, the majority of his novels will come under the category of romance. These romances have an apparent air of an historical novel, for, some historical or pseudo-historical elements are introduced in all of them ; but as Bankim Chandra himself confessed, he had written only one novel which is an historical novel in the true sense of the term—and that was his *Raj-sinha*. The introduction of the historical or pseudo-historical element in other novels was really a conscious technique, may be, under the direct influence of the English romances, where the history, whether apparent or real, served only as a large canvas on which the mystery of individual life could be painted with an added glamour. As a great artist, Bankim Chandra conscious of the fact that a romantic novel, to be a novel at all, must not be divested of reality ; the imaginary and the real must be wedded together like a happy pair inseparable in natural harmony. Bankim Chandra's mastery lies in bringing

about a harmonious blending of the two ; but his novels are not without defects—defects in disharmony caused by an excess of the romance at the cost of the realities of life.

Some of the romantic novels of Bankim Chandra together with his historical novel *Raj-sinha* are characterised by an intense feeling of patriotism—an all-absorbing love for freedom. Of these, however, his *Ananda-math* deserves special mention ; it contains the national anthem of India, the *Vande-mataram* (Hail to thee, my Mother) song, and its occurrence in the novel is no accident ; the book as a whole breathes the spirit that is contained in the song in a nut-shell. As the national aspiration expressed itself in its struggle against the Muslim rule in some of his novels, he has wrongly been interpreted in some quarters as a communal representative of the Hindu bourgeoisie ; the Muslims were there accidentally or incidentally as a symbol of foreign domination rather than as a realistic historical transcript.

The social novels of Bankim Chandra are practically four in number, and among them *Bisa-vriksa* and *Krisnakanter Uil* (will) are the best. They introduce a wide range of problems—social and psychological—and naturally the pivot round which the plots evolve is love. In his handling of the problems of love, Bankim Chandra has often been charged with an excess of puritan idealism leading to judicial diadacticism. To us the charge seems to be misconceived. An author, if of course he does not take to writing merely as a superficial pastime, must be an idealist in the sense that he must have a philosophy of life. Bankim Chandra dealt with love as a real passion, but its higher idealistic implications also formed an essential part of his philosophy of life. Moreover, in the age of Bankim, love was always bound up with social obligations and inhibitions : the modern ideal of free, unfettered love, a purely individualistic urge and impulse had not yet come into vogue. And a novelist, above all, must faithfully portray the social environment.

The novels of Bankim Chandra gave a great impetus to many of his contemporaries to write novels which they did with varying degrees of success. As it is not possible for us to deal with the individual characteristics of this host of writers, it is no use making a

long catalogue of authors and books. The novel on the whole, it seems, captured our imagination and it became well-established as a form of literary art. The age of Bankim Chandra was followed by the age of Rabindranath and the two most outstanding writers of the latter age were Rabindranath himself and Sharat Chandra Chatterjee. In these two writers we mark a definite change, though of course the change was not exactly in the same direction. Though writers of the same age, Rabindranath and Sharat Chandra had their own ways—in the choice of plots, in ideas as well as in expression. The first thing that strikes one about Sharat Chandra is that though he came after Bankim Chandra and was junior to Rabindranath and was an ardent admirer of Rabindranath's novels, he owed very little to any one of them ; he was refreshingly original as a writer of social novels for which he had a special knack. Story-telling was an innate power with him where he excelled even without much reading. Instituting a comparison between Bankim Chandra and Sharat Chandra as novelists, it is customary with a section of critics to point out a great contrast between the two—the one as a romantic idealist—the other as the realist. Sharat Chandra had a wonderful knack of making his stories interesting and convincing by indulging into minute details which he could always supply as if he were an eye-witness. Moreover, Sharat Chandra had infinite sympathy for men and women in any substratum of the society who were the victims of adverse fate or a rigidly unsympathetic society or tormented by their own yearnings and passions which were denied an ordinary healthy outlet by artificial restrictions or the inner resistance of their own conscience. This has endeared him to all. Nevertheless, Sharat Chandra's method was never that of the photographic realist. He had his own ideals which regulated his treatment of real life, though he did not preach them about as some other novelists are apt to do. But the simple fact about Sharat Chandra is that he was fundamentally opposed to the time-honoured practice of viewing life always through a stereotyped social convention, or to a principle of judging the human values always with reference to a set of moral codes, which, in their avowedly relative character, were incapable of setting an absolute standard for humanity.

(v) Rabindranath

Bengali literature has reached the summit of its glory through the life-long *Sadhana* of Rabindranath, whose advent in our literature is a rare phenomenon. *Sadhana* we call it, for artistic creation was not with him a thing of worldly enjoyment, or a sojourn to the land of 'Lotus-eaters', or idle dalliances in fancy, fantasy and dreams; it was a life-long spiritual endeavour resulting in continual self-realisation through self-creation. But the striking feature of Rabindranath's philosophy of life is that spiritualism did not mean to him complete denial of the physical. He had a strong belief that the whole cosmic process in time is nothing but a continual process of manifestation of some 'eternal dream' which

"is born on the wings of ageless Light
that rends the veil of the vague
and goes across Time
weaving ceaseless patterns of Being."

The cosmic rhythm marks the endless attempt of the Infinite for being defined in finitude and the Infinite comes close to the finite so as to need its love and co-operation for its self-realisation. This idea of the poet helped him immensely in finding an easy solution of the problem of the so-called 'Real' and the spiritual. The gulf was bridged by a unity of the poetic vision. It is because of this unity of vision that the poet could never distinguish between the poet in him and the religious man in him and he did not believe that the two can be separated at all. Fortunately for us all, Tagore was vouchsafed a long life every part of which was properly and fruitfully utilised. He took to writing poems early from his boyhood and continued it until the pen was snatched away by death. Even death after eighty was a premature death, for Rabindranath did not altogether cease to grow even at that time. His was the life of a great spreading tree which shoots up from the seed and then grows on with ever-extending branches decorated with leaves and buds—changing in years—and even in seasons and days and nights—yet the whole life-process presenting a continuous flow which convincingly testifies to the truth that the last and the first are but two poles of one process of continuous growth. The analogy of a tree is signifi-

cant also from another point of view ; as a transplanted tree often shows a new variety of blossoms due to the change of soil, the poetic genius of Rabindranath fared well in the English language both in original and translation.

Rabindranath represents almost a century of our literature. To a future historian he will be important not only intrinsically but historically also. One main aspect of his historical importance is that, as a poet, he perhaps is the last representative of Indian culture. His was a large cultural inheritance, enormously enriched by acquisition and assimilation. Apart from his inexplicable in-born poetic power, which correlated all the elements of his mind so as to make a dynamic whole out of them, the elements of his mental texture came from various other interesting sources. First, he was steeped in Upanishadic culture of which his father was a living embodiment ; he drew from Sanskrit literature as a sapling draws from the earth where it is sown ; his acquaintance with old and mediaeval Bengali literature, particularly the Vaishnava lyrics, was as intimate as it could be ; he felt specially attracted towards the Sant literature of mediaeval Hindi and almost a similar type of literature of rural Bengal, we mean the songs of the Bauls (literally, the mad saints) ; in addition to these all, he came in direct touch with western literature, thoughts and culture from the very prime of his life which yielded fruitful results. The combination of the power and the resources, inherited and accumulated, has been responsible for a literary output which strikes one almost as fabulous in its copiousness as well as variety. Thousands of lyric poems, short and long, thousands of songs, of which he was the composer both of the words and the music, about a dozen of novels and volumes of short stories, nearly three dozen plays and playlets (including his dramatic poems), a mass of prose literature of various types including purely literary essays, essays on literary criticism and principles of literary art, articles and treatises on topics and problems, social, religious, political and cultural. To these may be added his memoirs and autobiographical sketches, his tour-diaries in Europe, America and Asia, including the Pacific islands, his almost inexhaustible stock of letters, his juvenile text-books. Again

to these may be added his English writings both original and translations. This, we hope, will give the reader an idea of the quantity of his literary output, apart from the question of its quality. Rabindranath is well-known to the outside world as the author of his '*Offering of Songs*', which, however, should not be confused as a faithful translation of his Bengali book of poems *Gitanjali*; it was a collection of songs and poems selected from some of his books of poems rendered into a free and poetic English version. But the peculiar truth about Rabindranath is that seldom did another man wield his pen in prose as in poetry—seldom is to be found another man who was as great a critic of art as a creative artist—seldom did another man set his hands to all the main branches of art—literature, music and painting and could make his indelible mark in every sphere he trod.

But judging from a deeper point of view, and as Rabindranath himself put it repeatedly in different contexts, the most correct description of Rabindranath is that he was a 'poet', all his activities, artistic or not, were manifestations in parts of one great poetry for which, he believed, his life was meant. As a matter of fact, a little insight into the literary activities of Rabindranath in the creative side will reveal the truth that poetic inspiration was the dynamic force behind all the patterns of his creative art, and not only that, they fed largely on his poetic instincts even in the process of evolution.

As the English version of the *Gitanjali* earned for Rabindranath the much honoured and world-recognised Nobel Prize, to a large section of people, who are not acquainted with much of his poems either in the original or in translation, Rabindranath is known as a poet of some exquisite devotional lyrics with a mystic trend. To the next circle of his readers he is known as a poet always transcendental in his ethereal flights of imagination. Even it has sometimes been complained about him that he could not love the world as the world or man as man—everything was to him a symbol of something else. Misconceptions of this type are not based so much on a misunderstanding of his poems as on the ignorance about the extent and variety of his poems. The fact is that his love poems

and songs, which themselves are of a large number, leave no chord of the human heart untouched and even in his old age he composed fresh and bold love-poems where love is based on the stern realities of life. Tagore composed a large number of nature poems and perhaps the largest number of Bengali patriotic poems. He wrote metaphysical poems and we think that his book of poems *Balaka* is a record of how much of metaphysics can be introduced in poetry without in any way detracting from its intrinsic poetic character ; he composed didactic poems, and at the same time stories in poems, juvenile poems and even nursery rhymes of various types. As there are songs and poems simple in style but intense in their emotional depth, there are again poems which rush out in their spontaneity but are full of the choicest similes and metaphors from the beginning to the end. There are poems where there is a magic of metaphors but where there is nothing studied or strained.

So far as the metrical experiments of Tagore are concerned, we have an endless variety including all the metres that have been handled by our old and mediaeval poets, and his ever-inventive instincts infused new strength and charm into all old and worn out patterns. The Blank verse of Madhusudan underwent new transformations and in his poems of the latter days he made plenty of use of the free verse and the prose-rhythm. His varied experiments in prose-poetry have sometimes been described as a sort of literary pastime on the part of a master-magician in prosody ; but the fact remains that this prose-verse has been the vehicle of a good number of his immortal poems. With Tagore, prose-poetry was no shortcut to poesy, it evolved from a deep and subtle knowledge of the nature and function of rhythm and an extraordinary confidence in making use of them.

It may be objected that this estimate is no unbiassed assessment of his poetic achievements, but in this short survey there is no attempt at a final assessment, our primary concern here being to give the reader just an idea of the nature and extent of the poetic activities of this Titanic man.

We have said that in the case of Rabindranath poetic inspiration was the main spring wherefrom gushed forth the other

forms of his literary activities, i. e. the dramas, the novels and stories—and even most of his other prose works. As a matter of fact, a good number of his dramas may be better described as dramatic poetry than as drama proper; not only that the form is poetic—they are poetry in spirit or rather poetry in dialogue. A dominant lyrical vein runs through even his prose dramas which belong to a class of their own. It may be said on the whole that his dramas lack in that objective attitude so essential to a drama in a portrayal of living characters. It is not always the inevitable turn of action that determines the development of the plot; the nucleus of all dramatic action and characterisation is often to be found in a dominant lyrical mood of the poet. Tagore's mind was not perturbed by 'isms' including cynicism; and so it is not exactly correct to say of his dramatic characters that they are mainly patterns of personified ideas; it will be more correct to say that they are sometimes personified sentiments—sentiments not in the superficial sense of the term, but sentiments as representing the fundamental traits of his emotional nature.

Tagore wrote a good number of symbolic dramas of which *Dak-ghar* (the Post office), *Raja* (The King of the Dark Chamber) and *Rakta-karabi* (the Red Oleanders) have earned him reputation all over the world. In this, however, some influence of the contemporary Belgian symbolic dramatist Maeterlink has been considered probable; but the probability has to be discounted in view of the fact that a poet like Rabindranath whose whole life was devoted to realising the sport of the infinite in the finite cannot but possess a symbolic make up of mind; symbolism is naturally a dominant feature of Tagore's poetry which seems to have been extended to his dramatic performance. It has also to be noted that Tagore had begun to write symbolic dramas even before Maeterlink made himself famous by his symbolic dramas. Tagore has given us a few good comedies of our literature. Some of them are the vehicles of innocent mirth, some are characterised by a palpable satirical vein, levelled mainly against all sorts of rigidity and conventionalism in our social and religious life. Tagore's dramas, particularly the dominantly

lyrical and symbolic ones, are punctuated with a large number of songs which is in keeping with not only his own literary tradition, but also with the literary tradition of Bengali dramas as a whole.

Rabindranath has shown decidedly a more objective attitude in his novels than in his dramas which have more pronounced affiliation with his poetry than with his novels. The first two novels of his early age followed the historical pattern, the rest were all social with admixture of political elements in a few of them. It may be said of his social novels that only some earlier novels introduce problems which are really social, the problems in the rest are more psychological than social, and these psychological novels naturally have an atmosphere of intellectualism around them. This stress on the psychological element with its necessary intellectual accessories made his novels distinct from those of his predecessors. The most outstanding of his novels are *Gora* and *Ghare Baire*, and they are outstanding not only among the novels of Rabindranath, they are outstanding as novels. *Gora* is the only epic novel in our literature and perhaps the only one even in Indian literature. The characters, bold in their individual traits, are set against a vast canvas of the national life and the theme represents an aspect of the social evolution. There is an elegance in the style which befits a literary work of an epic character. *Ghare Baire* is a marvellous study in intricate psychological problems. The whole book is introduced in the form of confessions of the characters and the style resorted to demonstrates the highest strength and charm of the colloquial style, with similes and metaphors coming almost in a non-stop series, with an ingenious twisting of the syntax to make it more pointed and effective, and with witticism sparkling every now and then.

The characters of Rabindranath's novels are mostly taken from the upper middle-class life of Bengal with which he was closely associated. But his wider acquaintance with the different classes of the people of Bengal, particularly of rural Bengal, manifested itself in his short stories. He took to writing these stories first when he was in a rural part of Bengal to supervise the management of his ancestral estates; this gave him a chance to come in close contact with various types of people of Bengal and his varied experiences

have found brilliant expression in his stories. Though with a general preponderance of a lyrical tone, the stories do not lack in interesting incidents, which by their short and momentary flashes illumine aspects of human life too delicate to be expressed otherwise.

It will be clear from the brief outline of the prose work of Rabindranath given at the very outset that his prose presents no less a variety than his poetry. What strikes one in the mass of his prose works is his creative instinct. Apart from his literary essays which are generally of a deeply personal type like his poems, and where he is naturally a creative artist, his creative genius is palpably manifest in his criticism of old poetry where he practically recreates the works he deals with. Even in discussing the nursery rhymes and the lullabies of Bengal he seems to have infused something more charming in them in course of his discussion than they originally possessed. His autobiographical sketches are something like beholding one's own life from a distance of time and creating oneself anew.

It is naturally expected that after Rabindranath we should deal with Bengali literature of the Post-Rabindranath period. But it is doubtful if anything like the Post-Rabindranath period has already begun in our literature, for Rabindranath is still a living force. It has also to be remembered that a literary epoch never begins or ends at a particular point of time with any sharp line of demarcation. New tendencies manifest themselves long before a particular era actually makes itself unmistakably felt with its dominant feature. Concentrating our attention on Bengali poetry of the last twenty-five years, we find that the main current was dominated by Rabindranath; most of the poets of his time followed this main current with some recognisable individual traits; but there were some who brought in some cross-currents in their anti-transcendental and anti-Romantic attitude. They were well-read in Rabindranath, yet they were not completely overpowered by him because either of their different mental set-up, or of the different objective conditions in which their minds were nurtured.

Bengali poets of the present day can conveniently be divided into different schools. First there is a school which may be said to

follow Rabindranath and imitate his diction with some of their special individual traits. There is a second school which is romantic but anti-transcendental. The world around and man have charm for them not as symbols of some unknown and unknowable infinite truth, but in their native untransfigured reality. Some of these poets may be described as neo-romantics in the sense that they try to harmonise their romanticism with the trends and tendencies of the age they live in, and they choose a form of expression which has a semblance of realism because of its novel and unconventional nature ; moreover, the imageries they frequently make use of are so connected with our ordinary life and the things around that they are least suspected to be romantics at all. There is still another school which counts much on the stunts and jerks its members produce often, if not always, by a conscious effort, and on their device of compensating for the absence of romantic dream by an intellectual glow. The last school, i.e., the materialistic school of writers from the rising generation, takes to poetry with an entirely different approach, an approach dictated by a new political philosophy, which has often been claimed as a new philosophy of life. This includes mainly the Marxist writers who believe that an artist, be he a poet or a painter or a musician, is as much a representative of the social unit as a soldier in the army is, and he is to contribute to the advancement of social evolution just in the same way as any other man of any other profession in the society. It is no special privilege of a poet to chalk out, an isolated course of life with the absurd plea of 'Art for Art's sake'; a poem must be as sharp a party weapon to fight for the well-being of humanity (which, according to them, is the establishment of a classless society absolutely bereft of any kind of exploitation) as the edge of a bayonet is. There are indeed a promising few who have been able to assimilate Marxism as a life-philosophy—an ideal worth pursuing at any cost and they are sincerely employing their muse, with what success to be judged in future, for heralding the dawn of a new era; but in a majority of cases poetry has transformed itself, if not degenerated, into sheer political propaganda; and yet there is another array of pseudo-Marxists with whom Marxism is

more or less a Utopian dream which gives a man sufficient food for neo-romanticism.

Bengali poetry of the last two decades may be more called poetry of experiments than finished execution based on conviction and confidence. The reasons are many. Firstly, the poets of the new generation have felt that however great and graceful the ideal and pattern followed by Rabindranath may be any fresh attempt in the direction is bound to be of the nature of a lifeless and colourless repetition. Secondly, there are the rapidly changing objective conditions that are guiding the destiny of the nation through ceaseless upheavals—social, economic and political; there are the world wars which leave the people not only with amputated hands and legs, but worst of all, with amputated beliefs. The old structure is tottering, but is not yet gone out of the picture; the new light flickers or flashes, but is not yet strong enough to serve as a steady illumination of life : the result is an uncertainty—an unsteady restlessness which induces a mood to catch at life and poetry only in fragments. Add to it the influence of the continental literature—particularly the influence of all the experiment in European poetry beginning with the end of the first world-war—and that will complete the list of reasons that are working behind the vigorous experiments that are being carried on in the field of Bengali poetry. The effect has not yet manifested itself in the form of another towering personality like Tagore (and we think, history does not repeat Tagores very frequently), but it is definitely felt in the virility which has a future promise, if no present positive achievement.

Achievement in Bengali drama has not been anything spectacular during the last two decades, though some progress has been made. The reason seems to be twofold. First, there is not yet a serious reading public of the drama in addition to the theatre-going public. There is, therefore, no scope for the drama developing purely as a branch of literary art independent of the stage. So far as the public stages are concerned, they are in many cases dragging their existence against a keen competition with the Cinema, which, of late, has been growing tremendously in popularity. It will not be correct to say that the public stages are not making experiments in

new directions; stage-craft has improved considerably both from the artistic and mechanical point of view and serious attempts are being made to dramatise modern plays depicting aspects of national life, social problems and psychological conflicts. But dramas of this type are not thriving well for want of sufficient response on the side of the public. The cinema, the most popular form of dramatic art of the day, is not making any substantial contribution to the development of any serious dramatic literature, for, the commercial side of it, which much outweighs its artistic side, is transforming its nature rapidly from dramatic art to some sort of cheap popular entertainment. Some amateur clubs and parties of power and taste seem to have been rendering better service to the cause, for they have successfully dramatised some of the up-to-date dramas, giving thereby a better incentive to the growth of a type of drama that embodies the spirit of the age.

The only branch of literature where definite progress has been made during the last two decades is the branch of novels and short stories. Even when Rabindranath and Sharat Chandra were shining in dazzling glory there were some junior writers who made their appearance felt by their new themes and technique. Some of them have grown and made some real contribution. A rising generation of power and promise is marching forward and the tempo seems to be gaining in acceleration.

Realism is the craze or rather the catchword of the day in novels and short stories, but to us the word has often seemed a misnomer. It seems to be a term used loosely to denote a mass of tendencies which emerge from the conflicts of social evolution. That realism does not mean a photographic representation of aspects of our daily life will be admitted by any one who is in the know of the essential nature of literary art. The next attempt is to negatively describe it as a fundamental attitude opposed to idealism. But idealism in the truest sense of the term, proceeds from our philosophy of life as a strong tenacious attachment to our higher value-sense. It will be illogical to say in the same breath that our literature of the day should come in the closest contact with our life and yet be farthest from expressing our attachment towards our value-sense. More

critical thinkers have suggested still another interpretation where realism is defined as showing a mental attitude of the writer diametrically opposite to the mental attitude called romantic. But, curiously enough, it is clear to us that the modern writers of novels and short stories are romantic in a modernised manner, without generally being detected, or in cases even without being suspected to be so. With the Marxists, it has appeared to us, realism on the part of an artist, practically means his implicit faith in Marxism; it urges one to be closest to the social life—to feel the social forces that are at work in moulding the social structure and to influence their working in such a way as to make them direct the course of evolution in the line of Marxian ideal of a classless society. Unfortunately, few of our modern novels will conform to this norm if they are to stand an impartial test.

The fact is that the modern novels and short stories—nay, modern literature as a whole seems to us to be realistic in the sense that they are generally, if not invariably, closely associated with our social life as a whole. They deal with our ideals and aspirations in the same way as they deal with our weal and woe. Reality of the social life never excludes the ideals, the offspring of our value-sense; it excludes not even the romantic dreams which are also part and parcel of our life. Faithfulness to life seems to be the broad feature of the realism of our literature to-day—and it has brought in its wake another dominant trend—love and regard for humanity as a whole—particularly for the toiling masses—the oppressed, the exploited, the down-trodden—the victims of social inequality and injustice.

Modern Bengali prose is rich in critical literature—both on principles of literary art and on literary products. Articles, dissertations and researches on history, philosophy and even on science are indeed encouraging features. From the literary point of view, a noticeable feature is the development of short sketches and literary essays of a familiar style. As associated with the journals of the day, they have a journalistic character no doubt; but though written in a comparatively light vein, they are not always ephemeral journalism—some of them are sure to last.

Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua
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ASSAMESE

I

Assamese Language

The modern name of the province, Assam, is actually of quite recent origin. It is connected with the Shan invaders who entered the Brahmaputra valley in the beginning of the thirteenth century A. D., and who were known as Ahoms. The tradition of the Ahoms, themselves, is that the present name is derived from *Asama* in the sense of "unequalled" or "peerless". They say that this was the term applied to them at the time of their invasion of the valley by the local tribes, in token of their admiration of the way in which the Ahom king first conquered and then conciliated them. Dr. Banikanta Kakati suggests that *Asama*, "peerless", may be a latter-day Sanskritisation of an earlier form *Acham*. In Tai language *Cham* means 'to be defeated'. With the Assamese prefix 'a', *Asam* would mean "undefeated", "conquerors". If this is its origin, from the people, the name was subsequently applied to the country. However, another derivation has been suggested. "The name (Asam), observed Baden Powell "is most probably traceable to (the Boro) *Ha-com* the low or level country. In this case, it was the country which gave its name to the people.

The language is called *Asamiya* from the name of the province Assam. Assamese should not however be taken as a Tibeto-Burman language. It is a full-fledged modern Indo-Aryan language both in respect of grammatical structure and vocables.

Like Bengali and Oriya, Assamese also originated from the *Prachya Apabhramsa* (*Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 125-126).

The antiquity of the Assamese language goes back to the seventh century of the Christian era. During the first-half of the seventh century A. D., on the invitation of Bhaskara Varman, king

of Kamarupa (earlier name of Assam) the Chinese pilgrim Hieun Tsang visited the province. In course of his reference to various aspects of the kingdom of Kamarupa he spoke of the language as "slightly differing" from that of Mid-India. From this account of Hieun Tsang, it can be known that by the seventh century the Indo-Aryan language had penetrated into Assam and that this Aryan language spoken in the province differed to a certain extent from the Magadhi dialects then current in Mid-India. The earlier specimens of the Assamese language are discoverable in the place-names and proper-names occurring in the old inscriptions. Other specimens of the language of its formative period are noticeable in the songs and aphorisms composed by the Tantric Buddhist *acharyas* between the 8th and the 12th centuries A. D. and commonly known as *charyas*. The Bengali scholars consider these *charyas* to be the specimens of early Bengali language. But on examination it appears that their language represents the latest phase of the Magadhi Apabhramsa, and as such it presumes to a considerable extent the earliest forms of the eastern New Indo-Aryan languages namely Bengali, Assamese and Oriya. Dr. Banikanta Kakati has ably shown how certain phonological and morphological peculiarities registered in these songs have come down in unbroken continuity to modern Assamese.

A glance on the map of Assam will show that Assamese has been placed in midst of speakers of Austric and Tibeto-Chinese languages. It is, therefore, natural that these languages would greatly influence the phonological and morphological traits of Assamese. Dr. Kakati traced Austric influences in Assamese to three languages, namely, Khasi, Kolarian, and Malayan. He states, further that Austric elements constitute an essential substratum of Assamese vocabulary. The vocables that are regarded in Assamese as indigenous have mostly been taken over from the Austric speakers. The slang words denoting sex-life and sex-organs, the terms that denote closest family relationship according to varied grades of life, the names of various descriptions of animals seem to go back to Austric sources. So, too, do the names of places such as Kamarupa, Kamakhya, Pragjyotisa, Tezpur etc. Austric end-

ings are easily recognised in the names of villages ; the most distinctive are—*ta* (Chamata) and—*tul* (Dharam-tul). Of the other languages, the Bodo or Kachari and the Ahom contributed a large number of vocables to Assamese. The Bodo speakers and the Ahoms, both ruled over Assam at different historical periods and this led largely to the influences on the Assamese. Assamese has received from these languages a large number of words relating to the names of places, rivers, hills and objects of nature, of all the new Indo-Aryan language ; Assamese has had most contact with these languages.

It should however be noted that the extent of non-Aryan influences does not appear to be as great to change the entire Aryan structure of the language. This seems, as pointed out by Dr. Kakati, due to two outstanding historical facts. Assam always lay on the highway for emigrants for all parts of India to the Far East, and this kept Assam in constant contact with the rest of Aryan-speaking India, and checked non-Aryan tendencies from making any radical changes in the structure of Assamese. Then, there was the rise of a standard literature in the early part of the fourteenth century that exercised a stabilizing influence upon the speech and resisted the inroads of non-Aryan idioms to a considerable extent.

Vocabulary in Assamese is greatly derived from the Sanskrit ; its morphological structure is also based on Sanskrit grammar. In spoken dialect, however, the original Sanskrit word is sparingly used, and they are mostly replaced by *tadbhava* or *ardhatatsama* words. For instead of *Satya*, *Shloka*, *Swada*, an Assamese villager will say *Sait*, *Soloka*, *Sovada*. The derived words often betray a good deal of semantic variations. For *Gar* from Sanskrit *Ganda* in Assamese means *rhino* ; *xah* from *sasya* means kernel of a fruit, *yatara* from *yantra* (apparatus) means as pinning wheel, *chereki* from *chakra* (wheel) means a thread-turning apparatus.

Assamese is all along a borrowing language and as such it has been borrowing a great number of words from other New Indo-Aryan languages also. Homely Assamese words, often with slight alterations in meaning, show parallel equivalents in Oriya, Bengali, Bihari, Hindustani and other western languages. These might have

descended as observed by Dr. Kakati from common sources, and in some cases might also have been due to migration and inter-provincial contacts. Certain Assamese words have parallel formations in western languages like Marathi and Gujarati, which the other modern northern Indian languages do not seem to possess. For example, *Beji* (needle), *barangani* (subscription), *khbabani* (scraper), *tangaran* (edition of a book), and so on and so forth.

Assamese has received also Persian and Arabic words, chiefly administrative terms and legal phraseologies. English words, in recent years are making heavy inroad into Assamese. The intrusions of Persian-Arabic, and English words lead to the formation of hybrids. We have such hybrid compounds as *lebera-hata* (left hand), *Kala-dila* (flower of banana tree), *heda-pandita* (Head-master) etc. Generally, Assamese endings are added to foreign forms ; but certain words are created with foreign affixes also as in *nalicha* (tube of hooka), *bagicha* (garden), *bajikar* (magician), *daktarakhana* (dispensary), *maujadar* (revenue collector of a mouza), *rangin* (colourful) etc.

All these have led to the development of an enormous vocabulary and a large number of synonyms from various languages contributed towards creation of another noteworthy feature in its vocables. In Assamese different words are used with reference to the same relation according as he or she is senior or junior in age to the person with whom relationship is indicated. Thus the elder brother is *Kakai* ; the younger brother is *Bhai*, the elder sister is *Bai* ; the younger sister is *Bhani*, elder sister's husband is *Bhinihi* ; younger sister's husband is *Bainai* etc. . In these words used to denote a senior or junior, one is often of non-Aryan origin and the other Aryan : e.g., *Kakai* as non-Aryan, and *Bhai*, an Aryan. Sometimes, however, both the words are of Aryan origin but artificial distinction is drawn in their uses : e. g. *Bhinihi* (*Bhaginikassis*) and *Bainai* (*Bhaginika pati*) both are derived from Sanskrit.

The nouns of relationship led to the origin of another strange morphological phenomenon. Assamese shows a trait of affixing personal endings to nouns of relationship on the model of verbs. In this respect Assamese seems to stand out alone amongst all New Indo-Aryan languages. Words of relationship take on different per-

sonal affixes according as the relationship indicated is with the first, the second or the third person. In the case of the second person, the rank of person also is taken into consideration, for example, "my father" is *mora bopai*; "your father" is *tomara bapera* (Honoric) or *tora bapera* (Inferior), etc. Dr. Kakati, therefore, observes that other morphological phenomena may be shared in one or another respect by other New Indo-Aryan languages also, but this peculiarity marks out a form as distinctly Assamese. Assamese also stands isolated in the Eastern group of New Indo-Aryan languages in prefixing the negative as an integral part of the conjugated verb-root as in *neyao* (*na yao*=not going); *nakaro* (*na Karo*=not doing) etc.

Due to race mixture original Indo-Aryan sounds in Assamese have undergone various transformations. The old Indo-Aryan cerebrals and dentals have been changed to alveolars; the three sibilants have lost their original character and developed peculiar sound trait. The process of spontaneous nasalisation, an active phenomenon in Non-Aryan languages, greatly operates in the Assamese sound system. Other special phonological peculiarities of the language are less use of conjunct consonants, preponderance of vowel-sounds, and abundant use of fondling endings. Original conjoint consonants are generally mutilated by insertion of vowel sounds.

As the language does not possess very many hard words to express strong likes and dislikes, its speakers have consequently resort to certain intonation in expressing such emotions. All these traits turned the language no doubt vigourless and forceless, but on the other hand they brought in politeness and delicate musical quality. In rendering politeness to the language, the Vaishnavite religion has had no small influence. The Vaishnavite scriptures had been studied by the Assamese writers in all periods of our literary history and great many Vaishnavite phrases, and terminology have been coined in the vocabulary of Assamese. The Vaishnavite religion, further, tabued the employment of many normal words. Words concerning unpleasant and disagreeable affairs, indecent or ill-omened incidents, fear-inspiring ideas are either replaced or altered. Interesting words, from these points of view, are those which have

bearings on daily evacuation, sexual intercourse, menstruation, pregnancy, dangerous beasts, disease, and death. Instead of the normal words *Haga* (evacuation) a villager will even resort to *Bahir Phura* (going out for a walk); for *maril* (died), he will often say *dhukal* (ended).

Today, the Assamese language has attained full-fledged development, and is capable of expressing everything that a modern man desires to express through the medium of language.

II

Early Period

(I) LITERATURE UNDER VAISHNAVITE INFLUENCE (1300 A.D. TO 1600 A.D)

Apart from folksongs which psychologically should precede any account of all literature but which being always found in a comparatively modern linguistic garb cannot be placed early, the earliest recorded specimens of Assamese literature have to be traced to about the end of the thirteenth century A. D. These specimens are religious or rather derived from Sanskrit *Puranas* and foreshadow the trend of the literature for several centuries.

Hem Saraswati's *Prahlada Charit*, based on an episode from the *Bamana Purana*, is taken to be the first work in the language. The language of the *kavya* is a Sanskritic Assamese, dignified, but not difficult, and the versification is competent, suggesting a tradition behind. A more voluminous work of Hema Saraswati titled *Haragauri-Samvada* containing about 900 verses has recently been discovered. The book in *pada* metres describes the stories of Hiranya Kashipu's death, burning down of Kamadeva at Shiva's wrath and birth of Kartikeya. Another contemporary of this writer is Harihar Vipra who wrote *Vabruvahanar Yuddha*, and *Lavakushar Yuddha*. The theme of the *Vabruvahanar Yuddha* is derived from the *Mahabharata* but the descriptions and dramatic situations owe a great deal to the fertility of the poet. The story has special interest for the Assamese as the scene is laid in Manipur where the sacrificial horse of Yudhisthira comes, followed by Arjun. The horse is secured by Vabruvahan, the king of Manipur. Learning from his mother Chitrangada that Arjun is his father he makes advances to the latter. But Arjun disclaims any relationship with Chitrangada and casts aspersions

on her virtue. This inflames Vabruvahan and the war which ensues is bitter and prolonged. Arjun loses his life, to be revived by Krishna who reminds him that he had indeed married Chit-rangada on a former occasion when he was sojourning in Manipur. Arjun returns with the homage of his son as well as the horse.

Hem Saraswati and Harihar Vipra both record that they were patronised by king Durlabhnarayan, a potentate who ruled in western Assam including parts of Cooch Behar, now West Bengal, during the latter part of the 13th century A.D. Rudra Kandali another poet of the period makes mention of king Tamraddhwaj, probably belonging to the fourteenth century A.D. Rudra Kandali translated an episode from the Dronaparva of the *Mahabharata* relating to the powers of Satyaki, son of Siva of the Yadu race. Kaviratna Sarasvati was probably their contemporary. He wrote *Jayadratha Vadha* from the Dronaparva of the *Mahabharata*.

In about the fourteenth century the cultural centre of the land seems to have moved eastwards, to the court of the Kachari king Mahamanikya who patronised the chief poet of the time, Madhava Kandali. Sankardeva, the leading Vaishnavite writer of the fifteenth century, refers to Madhava Kandali as "that preceding poet who did not make blunders." It is indeed a high compliment paid by one poet to another.

Madhava Kandali translated *Ramayana* into Assamese, as he records, at the request of the king Mahamanikya, a convert to Hinduism, it may be noted. Of all the early Assamese writers Madhava Kandali is distinguished by the attitude he brought to bear upon his work. He was conscious that his work was meant for the people. As he writes with reference to his own work :

Poets write in the idiom of the people,
Some of the things their own, others derived ;
This is not the voice of God, but a popular story,
Do not, therefore, be too much fault-finding.

A strange creed from a reputed Sanskritist out to render a religious epic ! The poet indeed wrote in a language which bears traces of Assamese in its formative stage, interspersed with popular usages and reference to customs and rituals obtaining at the time.

Because he wrote unhampered by the prestige of the Sanskrit language he could be true to him and he rendered the *Ramayana* tale elaborating it when it was necessary and condensing it when he felt it needed condensation, and further infusing the narration with a poetic flavour all his own. The simplicity of the diction, the poetic Bargit class of hymns which are set to classical *ragas*. These Bargits resemble very much the *dohas* of Kabir and the *bhajans* of Meera. Madhavadeva further added to *Kirtana* with his thousand *ghosa* hymns (known as *Hojari ghosa* or *Nama ghosa*) and the combined *Kirtana Ghosa* came to be accepted as the Bible of Assamese Vaishnavities. Its versions found on the lips of even the illiterate villager. The *Nama Ghosa* or *Hojari Ghosa* contains a large number of hymns on repentance and entreaty, self-instruction, and self-reproach. In each of them the lyric cry is predominant and passionate. The last few sections of the book serve as a litany, consisting of an enumeration of names, praises, and laudatory epithets of Krishna. Profundity of thought, unity of outlook and music of expression make the *Nama Ghosa* a foremost work of art. At his master's request Madhavadeva translated Vishnupuri Sannyasi's *Bhakti-Ratnavali*, a text-book of the Bhakti cult. He also made a metrical rendering of a Sanskrit anthology titled *Namamalika*, which extols the merits of holy name. While Shankaradeva rewrote the first canto of Madhava Kandali's *Ramayana* he added the last canto. In this rewriting, probably the older *Ramayana* was retouched in to suit the Vaishnavite objective. He wrote a fine *Kavya Rajasuya Tajna* on the episode of the Rajasuya sacrifice of the Pandavas as in the *Mahabharata*. Here he extolled the superiority of Krishna over all other Kings. The *Kavya* is full of descriptions and battle scenes, and shows traces of Maghas influence. Madhavadeva was drawn to the conception of child Krishna and in his plays like *Bhumi-letowa* and *Pipara guchuwa*, Krishna's childhood is attractively portrayed. He was an able writer and musician and his work evinces the sincerity of his personality. The history of Assamese drama and music will be incomplete if his interest in the spectacular art and the *Bargit* songs are not taken into account. The three topics that form the main theme of Madhava Deva's

Bargits are this enviable human life as affording fullest scope for spiritual realisation, its uncertain nature and fitful progress through this illusive world, where *Hari Bhakti* alone is the guiding star. Some of his *Bargits*, however, depict the disportive childhood of Krishna, the cowherd. The conception of Sri Krishna as a child in his manifold solicitations of caresses from his mother is a distinctive feature of Assam Vaishnavism and it has been very poetically depicted in the devotional songs and plays of Madhavadeva. Madhavadeva's *Bargits* manifest almost the same spirit as the songs of the Hindi poet Surdasa. Each of Madhavadeva's *Bargits* is a miniature picture of Krishna's child life. Their sweet language and harmonious melody, and Madhava Deva's beautifully musical voice all conspired to make them pre-eminently attractive in the Vaishnavite movement during his life-time. Written in so called Brajbuli they are most valued songs even now.

The example of these two masters was taken up by writers who moved in their orbit. The Koch King Naranarayan at Shankaradeva's suggestion "sent cartloads of manuscripts" to Ramasaraswati that he might translate the *Mahabharata*. Equality of the narration—occasionally taking on a lyrical fervour, as when Hanuman's journey to Lanka is described—and the self-confidence of the poet make of Madhava Kandali's *Ramayana* a landmark in early Assamese literature. The book was highly influential later on and regarded as a standard to which all other writings of the later poets were to conform which, although not written with any religious objective in view, was looked upon as sacred. Two cantos of it which got lost during some political turmoil were, however, rendered from the Sanskrit by the neo-Vaishnavite saints Shankaradeva and Madhavadeva towards the end of the fifteenth century A. D.

In another of Madhava Kandali's works, *Devajit*, there is a foreshadowing of the neo-Vaishnavite movement which was to come a century later, for in this poem the poet established the superiority of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu over all other gods.

Though Madhava Kandali endeavoured to write in the "idiom of the people" there were other poets who approached the populace closer in songs which described episodes from the *Puranas*. Of

these, Durgabar, Pitambar and Mankara probably flourished in the century following that of Madhava Kandali. Durgabar's *Giti-Ramayana*, Pitambar's *Usha-Parinaya*, the marriage of Usha with Anjruddha, and Mankara's *Behula-Lakhindar*, around the theme of Behula's revitalization of her dead husband—both supposed to have belonged to Assam, are all in songs prefixed with names of their melodies. These are dominated by the erotic sentiments and popular even now. That they were not looked on with an eye of toleration by the neo-Vaishnavite movement is seen in the story that Shankardeva on one occasion snubbed a follower of his for reciting from *Usha-Parinaya*.

These earlier works in the language were derived from the Sanskrit *Puranas* and the writers themselves were more or less versed in the classical language, but they were not weighed down by any religious zeal and could indeed be realistic in a relative sense. The metre used was mainly the rhymed couplet and the figures of speech were derived from the Sanskrit, though in the metaphors things in existence were not ignored. The poets were to a certain extent conventional, in the manner of folk poets. When the primary purpose is narration the folk poet cannot stress over much on his diction; he must have certain expressions and turns of speech ready to hand, otherwise he cannot maintain the continuity of his tale. These early poets were not as much individualized as modern writers. This conventionality would be seen in the crop of poets which comes in the wake of the neo-Vaishnavite movement on the turn of the fifteenth century A.D.

The Ahom invaders from across the Patkai Range had entered the land early in the thirteenth century A.D. and the three centuries that followed saw their expansion and consolidation. It took the Ahoms sometime to get accustomed to the culture and religion of the land and, therefore, the central and western Assam were probably better places for cultural activity than farther east. In the sixteenth century King Naranarayan of Cooch Behar, an enlightened ruler, attracted to his court much of the literary and academic activity of the time.

The new Vaishnavite movement, in the fifteenth century A. D., gave an impetus to the vernacular literature as to artistic activity in general. Shankaradeva, born in 1449 at Bardowa in the Nowgong district, led the new movement. He and his chief apostle Madhavadeva were powerful writers and could inspire others. Secondly, the importation of fresh ideas from other parts of India as from Sanskrit sources brought about an enrichment of the outlook of the writers.

Shankaradeva lived for 119 years and his long life in a way spans the new artistic activities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He was well-educated in the classical lore of the time and had developed spiritual cravings which got a stimulus when he lost his wife and daughter in the prime of his life. He went abroad and roamed about for twelve years in Puri, Banaras and other religious centres both of Northern and Southern India, and probably came in contact with Kabir and Vishnupuri Sannyasi. When he returned home he again entered domestic life, but took upon himself seriously the mission of propagating the Bhagavata religion, known in Assam as the *Ekasaraniya*, as it insisted on surrender to the One. He took to writing poems and songs and plays as means of drawing the people to his way of thinking. In a way, he confined in his personality the various strands of the artistic revival which ran parallel to the course of the new faith. Besides, being a poet and playwright he was a musician, actor and painter of note.

The first play that he put over is *Chihna-yatra*, not extant, but as his biographies record, he painted scenes to represent the seven Vaikunthas, carved masks and trained the actors for the staging of the play. It is probable that the play was not written at all but was a series of pictures of the *Jama-pattika* type which were explained by actors in different roles. His other plays were *Rukmini-haran*, *Kali-daman*, *Rasa Krida*, *Patri Prasada*, *Parijata Harana*, *Ramavijay*, etc., all on Puranic episodes. All are in a Brajbuli-leavened Assamese prose, and in one act, interspersed with songs. He is thus the first north-Indian to use vernacular prose in plays. Because they are in one act they are known as *Ankiya-Nat*; the term *Anka* in later times often connoting a play. The plays are distinctly musical and poetic.

Another feature of them is the *Sutradhar* who not only conducts the show but stars on the stage to explain every stage of the play. As their purpose is religious there is not much scope for characterization in the plays but they are relieved by a variety of moods—love, adoration, sense of frustration, pathos, violence and humour.

Shankaradeva tapped the Vaishnavite *Puranas* for materials to be transmuted in to the forms suitable to his creative personality. Besides, translating in attractive and easy verse the most of the *Bhagavata Purana* he made an attempt to put certain Puranic episodes into a form suitable for recitation. The result was the poems found in the anthology *Kirtana*. The date of composition of the *Kirtana* is not known. Some biographers say that Shankaradeva did not write the book during one particular period, and that the composition was spread over several years. From the methodical arrangement of the chapters, it may be said that though the book was written at different periods, the entire work however was planned and it was certainly not a work of his early years. Furthermore, the *Kirtana* is not a single poem but a selective collection of twenty-six poems composing about 2261 couplets in diverse metres. Most of the poems are, however, adaptations from the *Bhagavata Purana*. Two of its poems *Sahasra Nama Vrittanta* and *Ghunucha* were contributions by other writers. They were written respectively by two of his disciples Ananta Kandali and Sridhar Kandali and were incorporated in the anthology at the desire of the authors. Each poem included in the *Kirtana* is of the nature of an independent Kavya modelled after Sanskrit prototypes and illuminative of many didactic doctrinal points. The very name *Kirtana* is suggestive of the fact that the poems were recited in religious congregations and services. Each poem bears a *ghosa*, a refrain. More serious attempts by the poet in the Kavya form are seen in *Rukamini-haran* and *Harishchandra Upakhyana*, the first noted for its poetic flavour, sweetness of language and echos of Assamese social life and the second for an able handling of an intensely human theme. It is recorded that Shankaradeva's disciples secured larger alms if they recited from *Harishchandra Upakhyana*.

Shankaradev's literary activities cannot be summed up without any reference to his lieutenant the celebrate Madhavadev (1489-1596). Madhavadev cooperated with this master in composing. This immense work was done into Assamese mostly by Ramasaraswati, the rest being by others. Ramasaraswati had a rich imagination and he freely introduced into the translation episode and images not found in the original. His *Vanaparva* (in about 25,000 couplets), which is not to be considered as a translation, is a storehouse of adventure and romance, all in a vivid and virile style. Ramasaraswati further utilized *Mahabharata* episodes in certain independent *Kavyas* called *Vadha Kavyas* in which the Pandava brothers (chiefly Bhim) fought and slew the demons. It seems in Ramasaraswati the desire to please grew stronger than the desire to serve a religious cause. In his *Bhim-Charita*, dealing with Bhim's service as a cowherd under Shiv, he could present a humorous picture of Assamese rural life. Ramasaraswati records in his *Kulachalbadha Kavya* how the orthodox section of Brahmanas did not countenance the activities of the Shudra saint Shankaradev and how they tried to poison the ear of king Narayana against the latter. Ramasaraswati himself being brahmana, assisted the saint by translating a considerable portion of the *Bhagavata*.

Ananta Kandali's *Sahasra-nama brittanta* found a place in *Kirtana*. He is well-known for his *Kavya Kumar-harana*, around the theme of Usha and Aniruddha. Probably some of his major *Kavyas* have been lost. He collaborated with Shankaradev in rendering *Bhagavata Purana* into Assamese and himself translated some portions of the IV, V, VI, IX, X cantoes of the *Bhagavata*. Ananta Kandali made an abridged edition of the *Ramayana*, and profusely packed it up with Vaishnava materials. He, under the name of Sri Chandra Bharati, wrote another *Kavya Mahiravana Vadha* describing Ravana's solicitations to his brother Mahiravana, the lord of the nether region, to fight Rama.

One of the then writers, Shridhar Kandali, took the bogey—the Ear-eater from the nursery and wove around it the metaphysical topic of Krishna's incarnations; but the poem *Kankhowa* became so popular that it came to be used as a lullaby. Shridhar Kandali's

sense of humour is seen further in *Ghunucha* included now in *Kirtana*. The *Ghunucha Kavya* deals with the story of Krishna's visit to the house of Ghunucha, daughter of king Indradyumna. Ghunucha was married to Krishna, and Krishna, thereupon, without the approval of his other wife Rukmini paid a visit to Ghunucha's residence. This annoyed Rukmini and she prevented Krishna and his companions to re-enter the residence of Rukmini. Krishna, for winning the love of Rukmini, had to pacify her with ample compensation. Though the episode has been taken from the *Jagannatha Purana*, the writer makes it more amusing by introducing local colour, and homely scenes.

Another major writer of the time is Bhattadev (1558-1638), an outstanding scholar and the father of Assamese prose. At the directive of Damodaradev, a Brahman follower of Shankaradev who later started out on his own, Bhattadev undertook the task of translating in prose the *Bhagavata*, "so that women and Shudras all can grasp the work". But when Bhattadev set about the work in a regular academic style, armed as he was with his own scholarship and a number of Sanskrit commentaries, his inspirer Damodaradev pointed that the plan was unwieldy and would take considerable time, so it was better to make a condensed version. Bhattadev took the hint and completed the work in about four years in 1597 A.D. The second translation that he undertook was that of the *Gita*. The language of Bhattadev is dignified, but expository, and a little burdened by a Sanskrit syntax. Assamese prose was still at a formative stage and the writer did not have any model before him. The prose that was found in the plays of Shankaradev was poetic and influenced by the Brajabuli diction, and the later prose of the *Buranji* chronicles easier and more set, was not yet to be seen. Bhattadev's work is really significant as not only making a beginning but as having covered a considerable distance in the formation of a new genre. He further compiled three manuals on Bhakti cult, namely, *Bhakti Viveka* (in Sanskrit), *Sarana Samgraha* and *Prasangamala*. In *Bhakti Viveka*, the nature of Bhakti has been treated at length with appropriate citations from various Sanskrit scriptures. In the other two texts,

the author describes the procedure of Vaishnavite initiation and various forms of devotional services (*Prasanga*). Other theological texts worth mentioning are Shankaradev's *Bhakti Ratnakara* (Sanskrit) and *Bhakti Pradīpa*, Madhavadev's translation of Visupuri Sannyasi's *Bhakti Ratnavali*, Ramcharan Thakur's *Bhakti Ratnakara* and Narottam Thakur's *Bhakti Premavali* both in subjects and its treatment.

We stated before that the Vaishnavite poets made systematic endeavour to make accessible in Assamese the Sanskrit texts for the use of the common people. To that end in view several scholars joined hands with Shankaradev to produce *Bhagavata Purana* into Assamese verse. Other writers who undertook the translation of different sections of the *Bhagavata* were Ananta Kandali, Kesha-vacharan, Gopalacharan, Kalapachandra, Vishnu Bharat, Ratnakar Misra, Sri Chandra Deva, Aniruddha Kayastha and Hari. *Vishnu Purana* was translated by Bhagavati Misra, who also rendered into verse *Śatvata Tantra*.

Of the other writers who worked at the time, rather towards the end of the sixteenth century A. D. or later still, the most significant are those who started the vogue of the *Charit Puthi*, biographies of the Vaishnavite masters who have just passed away. Most of these biographies are in verse, often pretty detailed, and conserve a living tradition. Perhaps the biography of Shankaradev and Madhavadev written by Madhavadev's nephew Ramcharan Thakur (1520-1600) is the most detailed. Ramcharan Thakur is also the author of a play *Kansa-Vadh*. His son Daityari Thakur also wrote a biography of Shankaradev and Madhavadev. This seems to be a more reasoned out work than his father's. The picture of Madhavadev, his early poverty and struggles, his meeting with Shankaradev, etc., have been attractively presented in the book. Daityari Thakur wrote the *Nrisimha-yatra*. Other early biographers are Bhusana Dvija, Vaikunthnath Dviji and Ramnanda Dviji who wrote important biography of Shankaradev and another of Gopaldev. Of all the verified biographies of Shankaradev, probably Bhusana Dvija's *Guru Charit* neat, condensed and rational, is the least vulnerable to the critical eyes. Damodaradev,

a follower of Shankaradeva but who later broke away from the master's camp had his biographies in Ramaraya (17th century A.D.) and Nilakantha Das (18th century A.D.) The most voluminous prose biography of Shankaradev, Madhavadev and Gopal Dev—*Kathaguru Charita*—was compiled sometime in the latter part of the 17th century A.D. In all the *Charita Puthis* the day-to-day experiences and incidents of the saints' lives personally witnessed by the monk compilers or handed down by sacred traditions have been laid down without sifting the importance from the insignificant and accepting legends and myths without any historical scrutiny. Be that as it may, these *Charita Puthis* are the first attempts in Assamese at writing biographies. In addition they contain pictures of contemporary Assamese religious life, record of customs and manners current at the time, and accounts of religious institutions.

The Vaishnavite age saw the production of non-religious works also, like Bakul Kayastha's *Kitapat Manjari*, on mathematics, the translation of *Lilavati* and of Chanakya's aphorisms.

It was an age when Sanskrit scholarship was at its highest in the land. Purushottom Thakur's *Ratnamala Vyakarana* is still used as a text-book. There were besides compilations of a religious character, like Bhattadev's *Bhakti-Viveka-Ratna* and works on astrology and *Smriti*. A few Sanskrit plays have also been found but these probably belong to a later period.

It is true that the bulk of the literature of this period is made up of translations, adaptations, and compilations and in main it was religious. But it should also be not forgotten that it was the Vaishnava writers who set the example of appealing to the popular intellect, with the result that the Assamese literature, even now, is markedly simple in its expressions and not weighed down with an ornamented and heavy style. Further, Vaishnavite writers took cognizance of the popular lore of people and idiomatic expressions, and proverbs as well as folk-tales, if not folk-songs as such, came to be absorbed into the corpus of the literature. On the other hand, the popular songs associated with the Spring festival (Bihu) or with marriage come to take on a sublime or genteel character by incor-

porating the themes of Rama and Sita, Krishna and Rukmini, Hara and Gauri.

(ii) LITERATURE UNDER COURT'S PATRONAGE (1600-1800 A. D.)

From the seventeenth century A. D. onwards the court of the Ahom Kings in the Sibsagar district became a centre for cultural activities. The Ahom Kings patronised greatly the development of art, architecture, literature, music and painting. They introduced Assamese in state papers, files and documents and this very much widened the scope of the Assamese language. Assamese prose became the vehicle of expression in diplomatic letters, state records, and grants and medium for the law courts. Under the King's patronage many Sanskrit books other than religious were translated into Assamese prose. These books relate to medicine, astronomy, rules of Arithmetic, grammar, dancing, architecture, road and building constructions and so on and so forth. The result was that prose expanded in different directions, developing different techniques and forms and getting enriched in its vocabulary.

But the greatest development in Assamese prose literature of the period is found in the *Buranjis*, the *chronicles of the Ahom court*. The *Buranjis* were compiled under the orders of kings and of the high dignitaries of the state, for they alone could grant access to state documents on which the chronicles had invariably to be based. These documents were principally the periodic reports transmitted to the court by military commanders and frontier governors, diplomatic epistles sent to and received from foreign rulers and allies, judicial and revenue papers submitted to the kings and ministers for their final orders and the day-to-day annals of the court which incorporated all the transactions done, important utterances made, and significant occurrences reported by reliable eye-witnesses (*Assam Buranji*, Introduction, p. xxxvi). These *Buranjis* were at first written in Ahom, the language of the rulers. Later, however, they came to be compiled in the Assamese language. The *Buranjis* constitute an unprecedented and glorious chapter in Assamese literature. It will not be an exaggeration to remark that it is through these *Buranjis* that the modern Assamese prose emerges.

The Ahom kings on their conversion to Hinduism took lively interest in popularising Hindu religious ideas and beliefs. To that end they patronised poets either to translate *Shastras* from the Sanskrit or to compose Kavyas from materials adopted from the religious texts. Kaviraj Chakravarty, who was a court poet of king Shiva Simha (1714-1744 A.D.) made a partial rendering of the *Brahmavai-varta Purana* under the orders of the king. Under the joint inspiration of Shiva Simha, and Ugra Simha, of the Ahom royal dynasty, Kavi Chandra Dvija composed the Assamese version of the *Dharma Purana*. Kavi Shekhar received patronage of the princess Premada, consort of prince Charu Simha son of king Rajeshwar Simha (1751-1769 A. D.) in his translation of the Vishnu Parvan of *Harivams*. *Kalki Purana* was produced by an Ahom officer Khargariya Phukan (1795-1880). Other potentates also assisted in the production of the vernacular versions of the *Puranas*. The Kachari king Tamradhvaja's (1706-1708 A.D.) consort patronised Bhuvaneshvar Vachaspati Misra to render the entire *Brhadnaradiya Purana*. A complete translation of the entire *Brahmavaivarata Purana* was completed by four scholars, Ratikant Dvija, Nandeshvar Dvija, Narottam Dviji, and Khargeshvara Dvija under the patronage of the Koch prince Hayanarayana of Darrang. The poets in *Bharita* highly eulogise this patron king and state that king Hayanarayana, a great devotee of Narayana, directed to render the Puranic texts so that the illiterate persons could understand them better in their own tongue.

In the seventeenth century A.D. the literary activity set on foot by the Vaishnavite masters tended to lose its religious elevation and further to break out into various secular channels. The romantic element in Ramsaraswati is carried on in a work like Ram Dviji's *Mrigavati Charita*. An attractive romance which narrates the love of a prince for a princess. It seems to have certain resemblances to the sixteenth century Hindi kavya *Mrigavati*. A later romance of this popular type is *Adrasta Purana* by Shiva Sarma which narrates how the servant of a prince makes an attempt to foil the love of a prince and princess. A third work of this type is Madhunarayan's *Agni-Purana* which describes the discomfiture of Yama who has brought a mortal to his kingdom that his wife may see him. It is amusing to

note that the man shakes his rattan Yama, sits at the latter's throne and gathers round himself "the blind, the hump-backed and the cripple", declaring it as their government from now onwards. The eighteenth century work *Sial Gosain* by Kaviraj Misra describes how a human baby was adopted by foxes. It is inspired by folklore.

One of the foremost poet of the Ahom age was Kabiraj Chakravarty who during the reign of king Rudra Simha (1696-1714) translated Jaydeva's *Gita Govinda* and wrote the *Shakuntala* of Kalidas in a Kavya form. The latter work incorporates a fairy tale in which a parrot comes to the aid of king and his separated wife. Chakravarty is also ascribed as the writer of the Kavyas *Samkhasura Vadha* and *Madhava Sulochana*, the latter which describes the love of Madhava and Sulochana. The story is an adaptation from the *Padma Purana*.

During this period Raghunath Mahanta brought out a prose version of the *Ramayana*. His *Katha Ramayana* is not a literal translation of the Sanskrit epic. The Adi, Ayodhya, Aranya, Kiskindha cantos have been abridged. There is a dramatic setting about the whole book. The influence of *Ankiya Natas* is specially to be noticed in the language of *Katha Ramayana*. The same author has to his credit the metrical compositions, *Satrunjaya* and *Adbhuta Ramayana*. In *Satrunjaya* the poet describes the various exploits and expeditions led by Bali the king of the monkeys. The story of the *Adbhuta Ramayana* is somewhat different from the original Sanskrit. Another poet Dhananjaya was responsible in compiling a small kavya on *Ramayana* materials. His work *Ganaka Charit* describes Hanuman as an astrologer who confounded Ravana by wrong predictions, during the latter's hostility with Ravana.

The work done under the patronage of the Ahom court was of diverse character, and had further a predominantly secular tone. Erotic and panegerical verses, drama and music produced even by non-Vaishnavite writers for entertainment of the reigning kings and their consorts, greatly liberalized the literary tradition issuing out of the neo-Vaishnavite renaissance. This was a flowing time for songs of diverse kinds. Even kings like Rudra Simha and Siva Simha handled soft quill to produce musical verses. In the *Satras*

(Vaishnavite monasteries) also in the lips of their numerous devotees songs blossom forth like flowers in the spring time, Sriram Sharma, Bar Jadumani, Aniruddha Bhuyan, of Mayamara Satra, Purushottam Thakur, Narayan Thakur, and a host of devotees composed songs for various religious services. Among them women writers also come into picture.

As noted before there were besides books on the science of elephantology, dance, medicine, magical practices. The book on elephantology is illuminated with pictures in three colours, red, blue, and yellow ochre. *Samkhachura-Vadha* of Kaviraj Chakravarty similarly has splendid pictures (about 1714 A.D.). The husband of the patron of this poet king Shivsimha himself could compose songs. The work on dance, Subhankar Kayastha's *Srihasta-Muktavali*, in prose, is probably an adaptation of a Maithili work. The Vaishnavite monasteries founded by Madhavadev and others have maintained a vital tradition of the dance. So long the Assamese Vaishnavite tradition had encouraged chiefly works suited to the *Dasya* and *Vatsalya* modes of Bhakti, but in the Ahom court there was a sort of revival of the *Sakti* tradition as of the *Madhura* (eratic) mode of Bhakti. So works like Kalpachandra's *Radha-charita*, Ananta Acharya's *Ananta-Lahari*, about the goddess Durga, Rachinath's *Markandeya Chandi*, Ratnakar Misra's *Brahma Gita* adopted from the Suta Sampata of *Skanda Purana*, came to be written.

The literature of this period, though developed in many directions, lost much of the intensity of religious fervour of the preceding period. The shaping influence of the monastic and religious elements also gradually became less and less powerful in the face of a growing sense of objective conditions. But the verse models, in *payar*, *tripadi*, etc., as well as the use of Sanskrit figures of speech came to be accepted as necessary. The lasting effects of the Vaishnavite tradition were also not effaced out.

III

Modern Period.

MODERN ASSAMESE LITERATURE

The last three quarters of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth were on the whole a dull period for the

Assamese people. Culturally, the neo-Vaishnavite influence was on the wane, Sanskrit scholarship was at a low ebb, and the tradition of indigenous learning was on its last legs. This gloomy picture was framed by an uninspiring political situation. Civil dissensions, the Burmese invasions, wide use of opium—all these had tended to disorganize social and political life, and when the British took over charge of Assam (of the whole area in 1854) they found a people who were proud but disillusioned. When some sort of social stability was restored the minds of the more advanced stirred with new ideas and a realization of the state into which the land had fallen. Psychologically the atmosphere was ready for the absorption of new ideas but then at this moment a fresh misfortune overtook the Assamese. It was the imposition of an alien tongue on the schools and courts. When the British set up their administrative machinery they had to import Bengali assistants and these were later (1836) instrumental in persuading the English officers that Bengali was the main language while Assamese was but a patois with no literature. The Bengali language remained officially for some forty years (1836-1872) but the bogey of the Bengali text-book did not disappear till the first decade of the present century.

The same year that Assamese thus lost its rightful place in the scheme of things two remarkable members of the American Baptist Mission, the Rev. Nathan Brown and O. T. Cotter, set foot on Assamese soil. Among other things a printing press was part of their missionary equipment. Desiring to hand out the messages of Christ in the tongue of the people the missionaries set about learning it and within three months of their arrival produced the first Assamese primer for use in the schools which they began establishing.

Even before their arrival the English missionaries had started work on the same line from Serampore, near Calcutta, and in collaboration with an Assamese scholar, Atmaram Sarma of the Nowgong district, they had translated the whole *Bible* into Assamese in 1813. This translation was the first Assamese book to be in print. The English missionaries studied the language so thoroughly that one of them, W. Robinson, brought out in 1840 a Grammar—the first of its kind in Assamese.

In 1846 the American missionaries founded a monthly magazine, *Orunodai Sambada Patra*, at Sibsagar. The pages of the magazine were filled with articles on various subjects, literary, historical, scientific, religious, and some of them had touches of wit and humour. The magazine utilized illustrations adapted from the *Illustrated London News*, the blocks being locally produced. The medium of speech that was encouraged was that current around Sibsagar which had affinity to the idiom of *Buranjis*. So long the dialectal stamp of western Assam was the characteristic of the main body of the literature, but henceforward the Sibsagar dialect of eastern Assam came to be recognized as the model for all literary endeavour. The missionaries themselves wrote a prose homely and naive, simple in sentence structure and reminding one of the manner of the *Buranjis*, but with an amusing disregard for the Sanskrit spelling of the language.

In 1845 the Rev. N. Brown published in two parts Bakul Kayastha's *Kitabat Manjari*, a work on mathematics and the first of the old manuscripts of the land to come out in print. Between 1840 and 1850 Brown succeeded in collecting some forty old manuscripts. In 1867 the Rev. M. Bronson published his *Assamese English Dictionary* with fourteen thousand words.

The missionaries realized that the imposition of Bengali in Assam was a great injustice and one of them, A. H. Danforth, wrote in 1853 in this manner: "We might as well think of creating a love of knowledge in the mind of a stupid English boy by attempting to teach him French before he knew anything of the rudiments of English. To my mind, this feature of the educational policy pursued in Assam is not only absurd, but destructive of the highest motives of education, and must necessarily cripple the advancement of the schools, as well as separate them from the sympathies of the people."

The efforts of the missionaries backed by the opinion of such Assamese as Anandaram Dhekial Phukan (1829-59) bore fruit and Assamese was restored to its rightful status in 1872. The indebtedness of modern Assamese literature to the missionaries cannot be over-emphasized. It was through the missionaries that the Assamese came to have a view of the large world of western ideas and senti-

ments. It was on the pages of the *Orunodai* that the modern Assamese writer came to have a grasp of newer modes of expression—the lyric, the essay, the biography, the history, the short story, and the novel.

The missionaries were active in bringing out translations from English. An earliest fiction *Kaminikanta*, story of conversion to Christianity of a Hindu young man and glorification of the Christian faith was published as early as in 1877 A. D. (*Sibsagar*). Another story book *Phulmani Aru Karuna* was also written to eulogise the Christian religion. In 1848 Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* was translated in the pages of the *Orunodai* under the title *Jatrikara Jatra*. The missionaries were, further, responsible for preparing text-books for schools and books of information and knowledge both for the students and general readers alike. The Baptist Mission, through their writings, revived not only the intellectual life of the province but also greatly regenerated the literary activities of the people. More than that, the writings of text-books and compilation of a Dictionary and a Grammar laid the foundation of Assamese prose on a firm footing. It has been mentioned elsewhere that the missionaries picked up the Assamese language from the mouth of the common man and they modelled their writing after the plain and direct style of the *Bible*. These two factors contributed towards the development of simple prose style in Assamese. With the writings of the missionaries, came into our language a host of English words and expressions. Moreover, to some of our old words, they imparted new meaning and to some newly translated idioms, they brought comic effect.

The history of modern Assamese literature could be woven around the theme of the effort of the missionaries and Assamese to reinstate the local language in its rightful place and the sad realization by the more advanced of the loss of independence and the consequent social and economic deterioration into which the land was passing. The national consciousness that was felt took time to flower into good literature, some years having been spent in laying the foundation for the future. One of the most brilliant young man of the time, Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, a contemporary of

Ram Mohan Roy, exhorted his countrymen to be national-minded, enlightened and shake off their torpor. He felt that his countrymen should be as industrious and enlightened as the English. A detailed criticism of British occupation of Assam was made by Maniram Dewan in 1853 in a memorandum in which the patriot pointed out how irresponsible government had been instrumental in worsening the conditions of the people. These symptoms of national consciousness secured literary expression in the lyrics and essays of poet-patriot Kamalakanta Bhattacharaya. In the preface to his *Chintanala* (1890) Bhattacharya wrote : "What could be more manly than that the Assamese should be able to keep his morsel of food to himself? Alas ! when would these people learn to unite ?" In one of his poems he felt the architectural relics of old Assam would one day rouse the people to achieve greatness once again :

That day would be born a hundred Mazzinis
Even from this insignificant block of stone,
A hundred Garibaldis would be born
And make bright this land of Bharat.

The patriotic note had a fuller and more varied expression in the hands of certain writers who bridged the last and the present century. But this early national consciousness was not at all barren from the standpoint of literary creation. In fact, later writers only followed the path laid by such persons as Hemchandra Barua and Gunabhiram Barua. Hemchandra Barua (1836-1896), a contemporary of Anandaram Dhekial Phukan, wrote a neat play *Kaniya Kirtana* (The Revels of the Opium-addict) to show how the use of opium was devitalizing the landed gentry, while in a novelette *Bahire Rangchang Bhitare Kowabhatari* (All is not gold that glitters) he made an attempt to expose the hypocrisy of the typical religious pontiff of Assamese society. This compiler of the best Assamese dictionary (Hemakosh) and a Grammar was master of prose and his mock-serious style in the novelette was later imitated by a more powerful writer Lakshminath Bezbarua. Hemchandra Barua's realistic observation of social conditions and his satirical vein were also seen in a social play like Gunabhiram Barua's *Rama-Navami*. Gunabhiram Barua (1837-94) wrote a pleasant biography of Dhekial

Phukan (1880) and a systematic and sober history of Assam (*Purani Assam Buranji*.) **Gunabhiram Barua** was also responsible for introducing humorous sketches into our literature. He was ably followed by **Hemchandra Barua** in his novel and play, *Satyanath Baruah* in his essays now included in *Kendra Sabha*, **Dandinath Kalita** in his satirical verses in *Ragara* and *Rahghara* and **Laxminath Bezbarua** in his sketches. In *Bezbarua*, it reached the highest development.

The mid-nineteenth century prose was fairly mature, for the Assamese writers had mostly followed the spoken language and besides had the model of the *Buranjis*. The tendency of the writers was to free themselves from the Sanskritic vocabulary as well as Sanskritic ornamentation. Only in cases where they had to introduce abstract and philosophical ideas or concepts, they drew upon the resources of the Sanskrit language. In poetry this early period was rather imitative, the poets either continuing the tradition or making an attempt to imitate from Bengali or English. In 1875 **Ramakanta Chowdhury** wrote *Abhimanyu Vadha Kavya* in blank verse on the model set by **Michael Madhusudan Dutta**. This was followed by **Bholanath Das's** *Sitaharana Kavya* (1888) in the same metre. These were the first attempts at blank verse in the language and the result was not very happy.

These early attempts at new modes of writing were accompanied by the publication of old religious classics like *Kirtana* and *Ratnavali*. It was thus on the whole a regular cultural revival and a many-sided endeavour to rebuild the intellectual and social life on the foundations of a new age.

The literature came to its own in the hand of the trio: **Chandrakumar Agarwalla** (1858-1938), **Lakshminath Bezbarua** (1867-1938) and **Hemchandra Goswami** (1872-1928). While studying in Calcutta these three friends founded in 1889 the monthly *Jonaki* (Glow-worm) and this magazine ushered in some of the notes which had characterized the English Romantic Movement—concern with love and mystical sympathy for nature. The national consciousness which has been said to be the source of the renaissance of modern Assamese literature found in the hands of these three writers and

others who moved within their orbit a many-sided expression. These writers not only composed tender lyrics, inspiring patriotic verses, vigorous descriptive poems, essays touching on a variety of subjects—literary, social, and religious, and short stories, plays and novels, but also took interest in such activities as historical research and the collection of folksongs and folktales.

The most versatile writer of the early twentieth century is Bezbarua. Bezbarua passed most of his life at Howrah (West Bengal) and Sambalpur (Orissa) and “wherever he was, his heart was in the highlands of Assam.” His *Baragi Aru Vina* (The Minstrel and the Lute) is perhaps the most exquisite patriotic poem in the language :

Play, O Minstrel,
though the world you have renounced
the praise of the world—
sweet and soothing ! ;
at every stroke on your lute
let my heart be cooled.
I do not follow your words
but know the melody—
heard from life to life :
the memory of that other world
you are arousing ;
O you tender lute.

The “memory of that other world”—that of Assam, was his prime inspiration. This led him to write several plays on historical themes, two of them being *Belimara* (The Sunset of Assam’s Independence), and *Chakradhwaja Simha*, the later on theme of Raja Rama Simha’s defeat near Gauhati in the seventeenth century (1670 A.D.) and two dissertations on the lives of Shankaradev and Madhavadev the great religious and social reformers of the sixteenth century A.D. One of his lyrics, *Mora Desa*, has been accepted as the national anthem of the Assamese people. Bezbarua set the vogue of the modern short story and recorded folktales, and further, in the fictitious character of Kripavar Barbarua—a combination of Sir Roger

de Coverley and Dean Swift—he proved himself to be a satirist and humourist of ability.

Bezbarua succeeded immensely in inventing a form half-way between the essay and the short story. It is this that gives his essays and skits their exquisitely amusing quality, turning a multitude of homely topics and daily trifles into matters for laughter. The delightful series of essays under the captions *Kripabar Barbaruar Kakatar Tapola* (Bundle of papers of Kripabar Barbarua), *Kripabar Barbaruar Obhotani* (counter-current thoughts of Barbarua) and *Barbaruar Bhabar Burburani* (Barbarua's Bubbles of Thought) are very well-known in our literature. They touch upon topical themes for the most part, making fun of the hollow men and institutions of the country. As they are flavoured with superior humour, a keen power of observation is brought to bear on contemporary life and problems and written in a witty style, they are amusingly appealing. He had a genius for nicknames, and his creation of nicknames such as Malak Guin Guin, Bhookendra Barua, Lambai Sarma Kripabar are still remembered with laughter. Through these essays, Bezbarua brought to our prose variety, freshness and modernity. Further, he is one of our eccentric word-makers, and invented many words not for any necessity but for the sake of novelty and oddness.

The genius of Laxminath Bezbarua, however, lay in his understanding of the folk-mind and his deep sympathy with the common people. His humour and language both were influenced by his observation of folk-life. He is an example of Assamese author whom the common people can understand because he is theirs, because his language is their daily speech, his humour is their every day humour; he has their morals and manners. In his two small playlets *Nomala* and *Pachani* he has very ably portrayed the unsophisticated Assamese folk-mind, full of superstitions but also of spiritual striving, and honest in the little range of village life.

Hemchandra Goswami, besides writing some good sonnets, set the model for serious historical research and pointed to Assam's past political achievements in splendid prose. As a historical essayist, Goswami laid much emphasis on research and disregarded

imagination. His account of the battle of Saraighat when the Ahom General Lachit Phukan routed the Moghul army under Raja Ram Singh shows how it is possible to be literary and accurate in the treatment of historical facts. Chandra Kumar Agarwalla founded the weekly paper *Assamiya* (1918). He wrote a number of delicate verses now included in *Pratima* (Image) and *Vina Baragi* which reveal influences of the French philosopher Auguste Comte and of the Vaishnav idea of worship of humanity. His long lyric *Vina Baragi*. (The Minstrel with the lute) struck notes of deep humanity. The minstrel is in search of the true man and, if sad with the awareness of his mission, he is not a pessimist, having plenty of faith in man. Could he only wash away from the mind of man, vices like hypocrisy, jealousy, possessiveness, tyranny ! —he bursts out in prophetic fury :—

Could I finger my lute—strings well
 I would pull down the Himalayan peaks,
 Cover them with the churned up sea,
 Scatter down the stars of the sky—
 Lakhs in each handful,
 Throw away the planets in clusters,
 The floor of sin immerse
 In the bottomless sea ;
 The vestige of the Universe would then
 Only in the expanse of the ocean remain !

It would be seen that these writers knew how to blend a folk idiom with the new themes they were handling : the *baragi*, the mendicant who goes about singing songs of renunciation, is harnessed to a new job, and in his speech there is no needless literary affection, as was found in modern Bengali poetry.

The leading novelists of the nineteenth century, were Padmanath Gohain Barua, and Rajanikanta Bardaloi (1867-1939). Gohain Barua wrote two historical novels *Bhannumati* (1893), and *Lahari* (1890). Besides, his novels and plays, Gohain Barua produced three thick volumes in prose on *Sri Krishna*, compiled a book of short lives of famous men and women (*Jivani Samgraha*)

and a series of wellwritten text-books. He successfully edited a monthly magazine *Usha* (The Morning) and weekly *Banti* (The Light) for several years. Gohain Barua is one of our best prose writers. He wrote in a standard language and in a well-ordered, clear meaning, and correct style. Rajani Kant Bardaloi wrote several novels, and his last novel was published as late as 1930. Influenced by the revivalist spirit of the contemporaries like Gohain Barua and Bezbarua, Rajani Kant Bardaloi tapped themes found in the *Buranjis* of the land, but his first novel *Miri-jiyari* (Miri Maid) written in 1895 is not historical. The novel recounts the love of a Miri lad and a Miri girl and the action is set on the bank of the Sovansiri river which is not a passive background to the tragic human story but an active participator in it. This concern for tribal life and the enlivening of objects of nature seem to be unusual in early modern Indian literatures. Two other novels of Bardaloi, again centering on a love motif, are *Manomati* (1900), *Rahdai Ligiri* (1900), both set against the background of the Burmese invasions of Assam. A third work, *Danduwa Droha* (1909) is woven around a political movement of the eighteenth century. Bardaloi admits in the preface to this novel that the works of Walter Scott and Bankimchandra Chatterjee moved him to appreciate the beauty of the hills and dales of his own land and to write novels on themes culled from Assam's history. A concern for the heroism of the people in days gone by and the merits of the Vaishnavism current in the land gives occasionally to Bardaloi's work a tract-like tone, but story-telling is the author's prime objective and the novels have been able to retain their hold on the public.

The writers who may be called old or who have only recently passed away, trace their lineage to the *Jonaki* atmosphere. Of these, the essayist Satyanath Bara (d. 1925) is notable for his aphoristic style : Satyanath, no doubt, takes the form from Bacon, but fills it with materials drawn from his own experience and wisdom. His themes are various and he writes both on abstract and philosophical subjects, and even writes a book on mystery of the sky (*Akasha Rahasya*). Although his style is unadorned, he writes with well chiselled out sentences laden with concentrated experiences of

weighty thought. Benudhar Rajkhowa is well-known for a few plays on social themes ; Durgeswar Sarma for philosophical poems in a limpid style and two plays on mythological subjects ; Hiteswar Barbarua and Chandradhar Barua for good blank verse in *kavyas* and plays ; Saratchandra Goswami (d. 1945) for specializing in the short-story after Bezbarua.

The contribution of Hiteswar Barbarua is significant. Unlike the playwright Chandradhar Barua (*Meghanada Vadha* 1904, *Bhagya-pariksha*, 1915), he went for models for blank verse beyond the examples of Michael Madhusudan Dutta and tapped Shakesperian resources. Among his *kavyas* are the historical *Kamatapur Dhwamsa* (1912) and the Shakespearian *Desdemona* (1917). He also composed some sonnets of merit. The most significant poet of this period is, however, Raghunath Chowdhary. Chowdhary's *Keteki* (1923) is a long lyric inspired by the Indian nightingale, the bird's notes being the symbol of the joy felt in nature's creative activity. *Keteki* led the Oriya poet Lakshinarayan Sahu to imitate it in his own language. After Hiteswar Barbarua, Chowdhary is also the best writer of blank verse in the language. Some of the lyrics in *Sadari* (1910) are filled with a note of deep suffering, perhaps suggestive of the misfortunes this celibate has had in his early life. Chowdhary is primarily a poet of the countryside, the sights and sounds of nature having in him a splendid interpreter. Another interesting poet of this generation and who is still going strong is Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhary. Roy Chowdhary has made himself known as a poet, a singer, a musical composer, a journalist, political agitator and a patriot. In a recent poem (*I am a rebel, I am an anarch*) published in the Assamese periodical *Ramdhenu* (Rainbow), the sexagenarian calls himself a rebel and an anarch and enumerates the plague-spots in life and society against which he would strike the note of disapproval and denunciation. In his younger days, he composed exquisitely delicate love lyrics. His symbolic *Kavya Tumi* (Thou) first published in 1915 and couched in ten-syllabled tripping lines, is a poem of unsurpassed delicate cadence and soft music. In content, *Tumi* is the poet's vision of the Beautiful in sensuous and supersensuous images. During his

political imprisonments, and inside the jail, RoyChowdhury composed a number of stirring political poems not, however, in the soft delicate style of *Tumi* and *Vina* (another book of verse) but in accompaniment to the clangour of the hammer with which he had to break stones as a prisoner. Some of these songs have since been translated into English and published in a book-form under the title "*Songs of the Cell*". The opening lines furnish the Key-note to the collection :

Mine is not a song of laughter and
 revelry, cooling weary limbs ;
 Mine is a stroke on the harp of fire,
 that unifies the dead and the quick."

The lyricism which had such an efflorescence from about the end of the last century continued in full vigour in the hands of such twentieth century poets as Hiteswar Barbarua, Raghunath Chowdhury and Ambikagiri RoyChowdhury till we approach a comparatively younger generation. The leading personalities of this younger generation are Jatindranath Dowerah, Sailadhar Rajkhowa, Laxminath Phukan, Suryakumar Bhuyan, Nalinibala Devi, Dharmeswari Devi, Dimbeswar Neog, Binandachandra Barua, Atul Chandra Hazarika and Ganeschandra Gogoi (d. 1939).

In Jatindranath, the Romantic morbidity of a non-ethical pessimism finds the fullest expression and his poems have had wide influence on youthful imitators who have not possessed the prestige of his distinct lyricism. One of the earliest works of Jatindranath was *Omara-tirtha* (1926), a splendid translation of Khayyam's *Rubayyats*, the work being based not only on the English translations available, but also on a knowledge of the original obtained through lessons the poet had had under Muslim friends. Jatindranath is also well-known for his prose-poems (*Katha-Kavita*) in which genre he seems to be the only successful writer in the language.

Binandachandra Barua and Dimbeswar Neog wrote some vigorous poems, the former more patriotic and the latter more descriptive and nostalgic. Sailadhar Rajkhowa also wrote a few good patriotic poems ; his lyrics have a distinct musical quality.

Suryakumar Bhuyan's *Apon-sura*, a glorification of love, is a notable ode. The religious note of mediaeval Assamese poetry seems to be caught up in the mystical lyrics of Nalinibala and Dharmesvari Devi. Nalinibala has to some extent been influenced by the poetical ideas and the metre of Tagore. Ganeshchandra Gogoi who was cut off untimely had a rich imagery and is popular for his touching love lyrics, *Papari* (Petals) being the longest.

The poetry of this period is primarily individual and though there had been a little successful translation from the English and even English influence on writers like Hiteswar Barbarua, Jatindranath Dowerah and Devakant Barua, the poets struck out on their own and did not lose their individuality. For example, though Dowerah is often compared to Shelley, the Assamese poet does not have the aspiration and rebelliousness and the rich imagery of the English one, but possesses a world-weariness peculiar to himself and a simple poetic style which is traditional rather than derived. Again there were some imitations from the great Tagore, but the naivete and straight-forwardness of the Assamese poets could not stand the subtlety and tenuousness of the ideas and the ornamentation of the style of the Bengali poet. Only one poet—Ratnakant Barkakati—seems to have benefited a little from a study of Tagore and this also primarily in the field of metre. Metrical experimentation had been already seen in the colloquial rhythm of Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury, and he was followed, during this period by Surjya Kumar Bhuyan, Prasannalal Chowdhury, the musician Jyotiprasad Agarwala, and Devakant Barua, the last attempting to absorb the vigour of Browning. Devakant Barua has a unique power of manipulating conversational rhythms and the word of ordinary speech into poetry.

In the sphere of fiction, this period saw the publications of Daibychandra Talukdar and Dandinath Kalita, both the writers made an attempt to explore the relationship of man and woman and in this respect they went a little further than Rajanikant Bardaloi. Talukdar, the more prolific of the two, held up Gandhian ideas in *Adarshapitha* (The Ideal land). In Kalita's *Sadhana* also a similar idealistic note is felt. This novel created considerable excitement when it appeared (1928) as it was supposed to have been based

on a true story. Among women writers, Snehadata Bhattacharya contributed to the novel by her *Vina* and Suprabha Goswami by her *Pachowa Batah*, modelled on Pearl Buck's *East-Wind : West-Wind*. The latter work is a sensitive picture of middle-class family life. About this period also was published *Jivanara Batata* (On the high road of life) by Beena Barua and this novel reveals wide an intimate acquaintance with all phases and features of Assamese social life in their light and shade. It is full with passions, prejudices and superstitions of country life. In its quiet humour and subdued pathos it may very well be placed beside the early fiction of George Eliot. The author has couched the conversations of the common people in their own local idioms.

The pre-war period was rather formative than original and successful in respect of fiction. The writers told stories and though their concern for social life was undeniable, they failed to explore the recesses of the human mind. A noted feature of this period is, however, the translation of foreign novels. Grazzia Deledda's *Mother*, Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii*, Gorky's *Mother*, Hamsun's *Pan*, Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Charles Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth* were some of the notable translations and adaptations. The thirties and forties saw more activity in the short story than in the novel and this was considerably helped by the founding of the magazines *Awahana* and *Jayanti*, the first from Calcutta and the second from Gauhati.

The genre of the short-story came with the impact of the West. It began in the pages of the *Orunodoi* in a form peculiarly adapted to suit Christian atmosphere. It was, at first, of the nature of a moral tale blended with an expository essay. But the growth of journalism and publications of annuals soon led the short-story to the path of perfection and from didactic essay, it in no time developed into especial artistic production. Bezbarua was the first to raise the short story into higher realm of art. He was an editor all his life and so he learned to view the story from the standpoint of the editor. He who has but a little space at his disposal must condense the size and wordings of the tale. All Bezbarua's stories (now collected in three books : *Sadhukathar Kuki* ; *Jonabiri* ; *Surabhi*), therefore, depict

fragments of life, offer snatches of experience and momentary impressions. He and Sharat Chandra Goswami had woven local colours in their tales and realism became chief characteristic in them. They further were inhibited in their expression by middle class complexes, though the deep human feelings like pathos and humour were not beyond their range. In the stories of Laxmidhar Sarma (*Byarthatara Dan*) characterisation became defter and love for the first time came out into the open as a free and independent passion. One of Sarma's stories, *Shiraz*, has been successfully filmed. Other writers like Ram Das, Beena Barua, Krishna Bhuyan, followed in the footsteps of Sarma and made an attempt to elaborate on the love motif and unfold the working of the feminine heart. A deep social consciousness was seen in the work of Nagendranarayan Chowdhury and Trailokyanath Goswami. In Mahi Bara's and Laxminath Phukan's stories, Assamese humour came out in its best and in Haliram Dekha's stories an ironical vein was a distinctive feature. Pre-occupation with sex sustained the bulk of these short stories and till the war, the range of the subject-matter was rather limited, though a happy model in this direction had been shown by Bezbarua, whose stories covered life in three states—Assam, Bengal, and Orissa. 'Short story writing is a youngman's game' says H. G. Wells and this remark has been well illustrated in the present state of short-story writing in Assamese. A large number of the stories of today are especially written by the youthful writers. They mostly limited themselves to the narration of fleeting passions of college students. The historical story, considering the rich heritage of incidents in the *Buranjis*, and the story of atmosphere did not have successful exponents. But, on the whole, the genre had considerable patronage from all and sundry.

In the drama right from the beginning, two broad types could be observed: the social-realistic and the mythological-historical. The tradition of Hemchandra Barua's *Kaniya Kirtana* and Gunabhiram Barua's *Rama-Navami* had been maintained in plays like Benudhar Rajkhowa's *Tini-ghaini* (Three wives) and Gohain Barua's *Gaon-burah* (Village Headman), Bezbarua's *Chikarpati Nikarpati*, Brindaban Chandra Goswami's *Thanu Bapu*, and Durgaprasad Majin-

dar Barua's *Mahari*, the last two having been based on tea-garden conditions and have exposed the vices leased by European manager and his Indian employees. Gohain Barua's *Gaonburah* resembles to certain extent Bengali drama *Niladarpana* by Dinabandhu. The play was about the oppressive system of rendering free service and supply of free rations to European Collectors during their tour in villages by poor Headman. The other tradition had flowed from Ramakant Chowdhury's *Sitaharana Nata*, Bezbarua's *Chakradhwaja Simha* and *Belimara*, Durgaprasad Majindar Barua's *Brishaketu* and such early plays. Somchow in the twenties and thirties the mythological and historical plays came to have greater prominence for the mythological play. The older tradition of Vaishnavite *Ankiya* plays might have been suggestive, while the influence of Bengali *Yatras* was also not unimportant. For the historical play in a period of pan-Indian national consciousness the episodes from Assam's *Buranjis* proved a ready and rich store for themes. Kamalananda Bhattacharya's *Avasana*, Daibychandra Talukdar's *Assampratibha* (The glory of Assam), Prasannalal Chowdhury's *Nilambara*, Nakulchandra Bhuyan's *Badan Barphukana* are a few of the notable plays of this period. Probably mythological plays out-numbered historical ones and in this field Atulchandra Hazarika made a name with such works as *Sriramachandra*, *Kurukhsetra* and *Beula*. Sri Hazarika has written large numbers of plays both on historical and mythological subjects suitable for our amateur dramatic clubs. The social-realistic tradition was sponsored by writers like Mitraddev Mahant and, has had a revival in the hands of Pravin Phukan and Kumudchandra Barua. Plays of a romantic, but superior, type were written by Joytiprasad Agarwalla (*Karengara Ligiri*, The Palace Maid) and Kamalananda Bhattacharya (*Naga Kowara*). The plays of Jyotiprasad repay perusal even as closet drama because of their suggestiveness and poetic quality. Another exponent of the poetic play was Kirtinath Sarma Bardaloi (*Basantira Abhishek*). A note must be added here on the Shakesperian adaptations which began right in the nineteenth century with *Bhramaranga* (*The Comedy of Errors*), *Bhimadarpa* (*Macbeth*), and *Amarlila* (*Romeo and Juliet*). The earlier adaptations might not have done justice to the cramped imagery and the intense lyricism of

Shakespeare but the work was done with conscientiousness, and possibly with more respect to the author than in certain recent adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Lear*. As stage plays several of the Shakespearian adaptations seem to have been much successful, though their influence on the Assamese drama is not obvious.

The prose which was fairly mature when the missionaries settled in Assam developed into the essay. The genre, of a personal type, was established by Bezbaruā and later considerable historical writing and religious and political controversy came to find expression in it. The personal type of the essay seems to have found its best votary in Haliram Deka; the historical in Suryakumar Bhuyan, Sonaram Chowdhury, a distinguished antiquary whose learned and historical contributions are still lying scattered in magazine and newspapers, and Benudhar Sarma; the literary in Krishnakanta Handiqui, Banikant Kakati and Birinchi Kumar Barua. The style of these writers is typically Assamese, unadorned and unornamented, but with all idiomatic, and occasionally condensed and highly suggestive. Of the historical essayist Surya Kumar Bhuyan is by far the richest and profoundest. His essays mainly collected in *Ahomara Din* (Ahom Days), *Assama Jiyari* (Maids of Assam), *Buranjira Vani* (Messages of History) are critical, historical, biographical and have gone very deeply into the by-ways of Ahom history. Surya Kumar is also our noted word-reviewer. In his historical writings many old and obsolete words and expressions from the Buranjis are ably used. Among the literary essayists of the period, Banikant Kakati's (d-1952) name stands pre-eminently as a real critic of literature and for his exquisitely chiselled prose style. For many years he served as Professor of English and wrote a scientific treatise on *Assamese, its Formation and Development*. As a man of wide knowledge, interest, and scholarship, Kakati became a brilliant mind of the province. His pen was as keen and hard as his intellect. His series of criticism on early and modern Assamese literature will ever remain enjoyable reading. Nilamani Phukan has been both a journalist and a poet. As a journalist Shri Phukan contributed to newspapers and magazines from his college days. He was the editor of the daily *Batori*, and the magazines *Alochani* and *Na-jon*.

His poetical themes are both philosophical and historical. Hem Kant Barua's main interest is politics, he writes in ornamental style scholarly criticisms mostly of modern Assamese and English literatures. Another writer of political prose, is Ambikagiri Roy Chowdhury. His prose style in his journalistic writings has all the convulsions of twisted irons when the steam-engine goes off the rails. He frets and foams till all the available vocables of praise or blame are strung together in a cast iron mould. His angry denunciations often descend with the velocity of showery hails and leave his opponent prostrated. Kamalakanta Bhattacharya's interest in religion and philosophy, revealed in his series of essays *Guti Diyek Chintar Dhau* (Waves of Thought) were presented gracefully and with great force. Jnananath Bora's essays on the various present day problems of the province, are full of original thought. He writes firm prose and has deep respect for pure Assamese vocables.

This prose was fruitful in another direction, in the biography. Models for biographical writings were not lacking in old Assamese literature, there being works both in prose and verse, but the modern vogue of the genre was established by such pioneers as Hemchandra Barua who had written an autobiographical fragment and Gunabhiram Barua who had recorded the life of Anandaram Dhekial Phukan. Bezbarua and Padmanath Gohain Barua had also written their autobiographies. In the years that followed, a large number of biographies of figures of Assamese, Indian, or world importance came to be written. Of these, the composite effort *Manikchandra Barua* (1917), Dandinath Kalita's *Chandranath Sarma* (1924), Kamakhyaacharan Bhattacharya's *Dhireswaracharya* (1928) were works based on personal knowledge. Suryakumar Bhuyan's *Anandaram Barua* (1920), based on the life of the nineteenth century Sanskritist, and Benudhar Sarma's *Maniram Dewan* on the life of a nineteenth century patriotic man, claimed considerable research on the part of the authors. There were a few translations also, like *Booker T. Washington*. But considering the fact that earlier writers like Hemchandra Barua and Bezbarua had set the model for autobiographical writing, later writers do not seem to have taken to this type of literature.

A word is to be said about children's literature. Our first

juvenile books were produced by the American Baptist Mission. They published many stories from the Bible and translated *Pilgrim's Progress* (*Yatrikara Yatra*). Story-books on natural science and history were also written by American clergymen. With the publication of Children's magazine, the first of which *Lara Bandhu* (Friend of Boys) appeared in 1888, books to entertain and instruct began to appear. Folk-tales, fairy-tales and fables were first handled by the writers. Bezbarua had recorded the Assam's folk-tales in his *Burhi Aira Sadhu* (Grand-mother's Tales) and *Kakadeuta Aru Nati Lara* (Grand Father and Grand Sons) and later his lead was taken by such writers as Trailokeshvari Devi and Sri Ramchandra Das. Special credit must be given to a few writers who wrote in an exquisite style meant for children. One is Jnandabhiram Barua who described London in *Bilatara Chithi* and in *Dadaira Paja* (abridged Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), the others are Mahesh Chandra Sarma Kakati, Benudhar Sarma who in *Rangpata*, tapped the historical resources of the land, Birinchi Kumar Barua who wrote informative travel book *Swijerland Bhraman*. There are also translations of folk-tales, myths and legends of other countries. The stories of *Jatakas*, *Panch Tantra*, *Hitopadesha* and *Puranas*, are also reduced to Assamese and the Indian epics are adopted and re-adopted frequently. Compositions of Childrens' verse have not lagged behind, although most of them are tinged with didactic note. Anandchandra Agarwalla rendered into Assamese many poems of Longfellow making them admirably suitable for juvenile readers. Baladeva Mahant's verse rendering of a few stories of Aesops still remains unexcelled, as a joyous narrative poem for children. Bisaya Biswasi's narrative poems are full of fun. Mahommad Suleiman Khan, Ratneshwar, Mahant Durgaprasad, Majindar Barua, Dhanai Bora, wrote easily memorable didactic poems, which even to-day find honourable access into the standard text-books. In recent years, Atul Chandra Hazarika has given attention in producing verse books for children. Non-sense verses came to be written particularly by Jyotiprasad Agarwalla and Navakant Barua. *Rang-ghara*, now a defunct children magazine, was responsible for this innovation.

The War which made itself felt by about 1942 came as a dark

storm-cloud threatening the normal activity of the people. Literary expression tended to get stifled ; publication of books became difficult, the magazines became irregular ; many writers found the social and economic atmosphere uncertain and uncongenial for creative work. It was, further, a period of ideological turmoil for younger writers and some of those who probably did not produce much though promising considerably, made themselves felt before long and seemed to give a lead to those older writers who had not been able to decide which way to go—to go the way or the art of the leisured class or to follow in the van of changing world.

The war years and especially the August Movement of 1942 gave to the thought of the people a socialistic bias and younger writers became acquainted with Marxian doctrines. There was no regimentation of thought, but the changes in the outlook could not be denied. As a result of this changed outlook, the note of national consciousness which had been felt in the modern literature of Assam and which occasionally had tended to ring out in a cry of the oppressed in general, became less sentimental and indeed underwent a transformation in the face of the sterner realities, storming the consciousness of sensitive persons. Most of the poems in the anthology *Adhunik Asamiya Kavita* (1946) record on the part of younger writers an awareness of capitalist exploitation, class conflict, and the need for a quick change in the order of things. How the same poet turned from a patriotic stand to an anti-imperialist fighter could be seen in the later work of Jyotiprasad Agarwalla (d. 1951), who composed poems and songs of a revolutionary character. One of the most promising of the younger poets, Amulya Barua, lost his life in the Great Calcutta Killing. The general note of the new poetry is strong confidence and a determination to fight the battle of life :

.....O you band of death-conquering immortals,
 Writers of new histories for new days,
 None of you do die.
 None of you have died till this day,
 Striding over death age after age
 Have you upheld the great torch of life...
 —Keshav Mahant.

Most of the new poetry seems little futile, for it has not only freed itself from the restraint of rhyme and logic, but has tended to lose all sense of rhyme and the light that never was on sea or land. The younger poets are critics in verse rather than creators, using new forms to advertise new doctrines, and to attack what went before. Moreover, they are all intellectuals, most of them under-graduates, and their efforts also are not sustained. It is undeniable, that the range of subjects has expended and the move towards absorbing fresh ideas is legitimate, yet an occasional happy image or two do not balance the loss the poetry has sustained in imaginative quality.

In fiction, the last few years have seen a revitalizing of the novel. A better understanding of life, a deeper awareness of character, and the courage to express more freely have tended to lend a slightly heavier tone to the narrative recounted. Instead of weaving the narrative around unconvincing flat idealistic characters, the writer is making attempts to produce men and women who react to ideas, a fact which lends the novel a philosophical significance. For example, Mathura Deka's *Humuniah* (Sigh) has as its motif the unnecessary tragic suffering that is sometimes the lot of man. Praphulla-datta Goswami's *Kecha Patar Kapani* (Quivering Foliage) makes an attempt to work out the passional, economic and ideological unrest of young people, Radhikamohan Goswami's *Chakniya* (The Vortex) is a detailed record of the failure of a well-meaning young man to adjust himself with society. On the whole, in the recent novels, a deeper note has been struck, and the writer's concern now is no longer to recount a story as such, but to reveal the inner working of character in conflict with ideas or the social conditions. The personality of women is also more boldly presented. Detective fiction had its beginning before the war, but in the hand of Premnarayan Datta it has had an able exponent. Romantic idealism has not disappeared, for example, in Suresh Goswami's *Sata Rangara Natuna Kareng* (The Palace of Seven Colours), which purports to depict the vision of national reconstruction through the revival of indigenous art forms. A greater depth of vision and a better understanding of the shades of psychological action have made claims upon the capa-

city of the novelist as a prose writer, and considerable experimentation in prose is seen in such a work as *Kecha Patar Kapani*.

The short story, like the new poetry, has suffered a little in respect of formlessness. The range of subject-matter is varied, and humbler people have drawn the attention of writers, still somehow the genre does not seem to be as full-blooded as before the war. Formlessness and an undue intrusion of personal sentiment mar the stories of even Abdul Malik (*Parasmani*, 1946) who is considered to be a notable story writer of the day. Among recent writers, though they have produced since before the war, Umakant Sarma, and Dinanath Sarma have concerned themselves with character ; in Joges Das's condensed art a feeling for atmosphere is noticed ; Birendrachandra Bhattacharya in *Kalang Ajiyo Baya* (The Kalang still Flows) wrote one of the most moving long stories of the last few years. In *Kalang Ajiyo Baya* the writer has drawn a convincing picture of the changing times, the economic and social disintegration brought about by them, and the village people's attempt to rise equal to them by organizing themselves and raising the standard of revolt. The vein of irony and humour often seen in the stories of the thirties has tended to evaporate.

The war atmosphere does not seem to have been adequately tapped by the writers both of novels and stories and whole range of experience remains unutilized for literary purposes. Better knowledge of the tribal areas and the Assam-Burma frontier, widescale social upheaval caused by the advancing armies and the Burma evacuation, and unusual personal adventures could have added richness to the literature. It was not possible to create during the war or immediately after, but possibly, by now, the war material should have been sufficiently utilized. The outlook of the writers, however, is not indifferent to the heritage of the West. There had been translation of Western stories before the war. Maupassant has been an old favourite and years back even stories from Conan Doyle and Wagner had been rendered into the language. In recent times, stories from other quarters have drawn the attention of the translator. Gorky is a new favourite, but Pirandello, Tikhonov, Katharine Mansfield, and such writers have also been drawn upon.

These translations have mostly appeared in magazines and not in systematic anthologies. Along with stories, foreign novels have also been translated, and here, John Boyer, perhaps because of the simplicity of his language and the kinship he has with the Eastern mind, and Knut Hamsun, because of his deep humanity, seem to remain steady favourites with the translators.

In the drama, a revitalization has taken place as in the novel. The tendency has been towards the social play, as in the work of Pravin Phukan. The Assamese stage is not professional, hence in the towns there is not much demand for good plays, the cinema making a greater claim on the interest of the educated. Even then in 1950, two historical plays made stage history by drawing full houses and holding the audiences down. Pravin Phukan's *Maniram Dewan* and Chandranath Phukan and others' *Piyali Phukana* held up to the public, the inspiring lives of two nineteenth century patriots who had attempted to drive out the British. The plays were well written; the characterisation was sharp and clear, the dialogue crisp, and the plots had considerable suspense. Pravin Phukan's *Kala-Parinaya* (The Tragic Marriage) and Sarada Bardaloi's *Magriban Ajan*—on Hindu-Muslim relations—are two important plays of the social-realistic type. Of late, the Radio has come to help the development of one-act plays, but none seems to take it seriously.

The war and the August movement which gave such a shaking to the social and economic life of the Assamese people, immensely broadened the intellectual horizon of writers and the younger ones have evinced an outlook which is wider and bolder than that of the older generation. But, as it seems, it may take several years more to see fuller results of the literary experimentation that has been going on for some time. Publication difficulties and a small reading public have often stood in the way of the Assamese writer's self-expression, though in recent years there have been persons who have volunteered to invest money even in works of academic interest.

ORIYA

The Territory of the Language

Oriya, one of the fourteen main languages of the Indian Republic, is spoken by about fifteen million people, residing inside the present state of Orissa, and also outside it in the territories of the neighbouring states. There are tens of thousands of Oriya-speaking population living in compact areas with all their racial traditions and characteristics still intact in the eastern districts of Madhya Pradesh, the southern districts of Bihar, the south-western corner of West Bengal and the northern tip of the recently formed Andhra State. In the border districts between Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, though the non-Oriya population generally speak the unwritten dialect of Chhatisgadi—a mixture of Hindi and Oriya and the aboriginal speech called 'Laria' in common parlance, the cultural influence of Oriya literature over these masses is incredibly widespread. As Educational Adviser to the now-defunct Eastern States Agency, the author had to pass through these areas several times and each time he felt astonished at the picture of simple Chhatisgarh working-class people who could not speak one sentence in the common Oriya language,—reciting in perfect Oriya accent and intonation, portions of Oriya *Bhagbat* and other poems with the ease and fluency of those born to that language. This is, perhaps, due to the simple, impassioned, spontaneous, musical and stirring quality of the Oriya scriptures,—features which continue in Oriya poetry down to modern times. If Oriya as a literature is still alive and vigorous, it is certainly not through the printing press or state patronage or the amateurish efforts of a cultured and leisured middle class, but through the poor wandering minstrels, the reciters of epics, the itinerant players of mystery-plays and the strolling story-tellers. The authors of Oriya songs and ballads always wrote for the mass. The vast mass literature in Oriya does not wait to be deciphered by the trained mind of the readers. It is readily

absorbed through the ears of the uneducated. That indeed explains the deep influence exercised by Oriya even over those Chhatisgadi masses in Madhya Pradesh, who have no formal knowledge of the language.

Its Purity and Ancientness

Orissa, the homeland of the Oriya language, became a separate state on April 1, in the year of grace 1936. Till then the Oriyas lay scattered in four different neighbouring provinces, a small minority everywhere and not only neglected through excusable indifference, but deliberately suppressed politically, culturally, and linguistically like a conquered and inferior people by the major communities, dominating the administration. It is not, therefore, surprising that in those dark days when Orissa was an administrative division of the Presidency of Bengal, there was a vigorous attempt by certain Bengalee officials to replace the Oriya language by the Bengali, in Orissa. If Oriya language and literature could survive in spite of many set-backs, it is due to its ancientness and continued vitality. In point of age and achievement, both in old and modern times, the Oriya literature can stand comparison with any other literature of India. As to her ancientness and amazing purity and continuity, this is what Mr. John Beams, the author of *"The Comparative Grammar of four Indian Languages,"* says (Vol. I pp. 119/120) : "Oriya language used at the time of Upendra Bhanja continues to be used now, while Bidyapati's (contemporary of Bhanja) language is different from the present Bengali".

"At a period when Oriya was already a fixed and settled language, Bengali did not exist. The Bengalis spoke a vast variety of corrupt forms of Eastern Hindi. It is not till quite recent times that we find anything that can with propriety be called Bengali language. We may place Hindi with its subsidiary forms, Gujrati and Punjabi, first fixing their rise and establishment as modern languages, distinct from their previous existence as Prakrit, till the 12th or 13th century. Oriya must have quite completed its transformation by the end of the 14th century. Bengali was no separate independent language, but a maze of dialects without distinct national or provincial type till the 17th or beginning of the

18th century. It was not till the gradual decay of the central Mahomedan power of Delhi which enabled the provincial Governors to assume an independent position that Bengali severed itself from Hindi and assumed characteristics which now vindicate for it a right to be considered a separate language."

Origin and History of the Language

The anglicised 'Orissa' is only a corrupt pronunciation of the word 'Ordissa' which again is derived from 'Odra-Desa' or the land of the Odras. The Odras were an aboriginal tribe, who along with the mythological Savaras were, in the dim past, the original settlers in this State. Both the tribes still exist in the State as Odos and Saoras. The Odos probably pushed the Saoras into the mountain fastnesses of the south-western possession of the rich deltaic districts themselves. But the entire cultural tradition of the State is closely associated with these two tribes, now incredibly fallen low in social status and living conditions, like the original Egyptians in the Nile Valley. The famous Hindu deity of Jagannath, the very epitome of Orissan culture, is now indisputedly accepted to be a deity of the savaras in its origin. And the land and the people and the language are now known through the eponymous Odra tribe, that still exists in the deltaic districts, taking to its traditional vocation of cultivation completely oblivious of its history (The word 'Odo' or 'Odissa' is supposed to mean a 'tiller' in the Dravidian tongues).

The substratum of the Oriya language might have been in the beginning the limited and undeveloped speech of those aboriginal Odras. But what exactly it was in its pristine condition nobody can say. Waves of Aryan settlers from the north and military invasions from the south and west have changed the entire face and character of the country and of the people beyond all recognition. The present-day Oriya, inspite of his aboriginal origin and Dravidian associations in the early centuries, is now a member of the family of Indo-Aryan languages of North India. Although there are references to the Odra speech in such authoritative works as Bharata's *Natya Shastra* and even in work much earlier in date, and that too invariably in the 'Dravidian' groups, these have no meaning now to a student of language, except as a chronological

curiosity. The Oriya language that emerges in an inchoate manner by the 8th or 9th century and takes the modern regular shape by the 13th, is without doubt, a derivative of Prakrit, particularly that of Eastern Magadhi, which now is accepted to be the parental stock of the sister languages of Assamese and Bengali also. But that this language has at least some roots very deep in the Dravidian languages is also admitted by all at present. Some of the most familiar words in the language have Telugu, Tamil or Kannad origin. But the entire super-structure is nothing but Indo-Aryan. Of all the North Indian languages of the Indo-Aryan family Oriya is undoubtedly the purest. Due to the historic fact that Orissa was conquered and ruled by the Mohammedans nearly three hundred years after the whole of North India came under the Muslim sway,—even now the Mohammedan population in this country is not more than 2%. Oriya, of all North Indian languages, happens to be the least affected by the Perso-Arabic influences. Of all Indian languages it is nearest to the original Sanskrit. In the speech of an average Oriya about 90% of the words are pure Sanskrit or only so slightly corrupted forms of Sanskrit as to be easily recognisable. It is closer to Sanskrit also than other North Indian languages in phonetics. The Sanskrit 'Rama' remains 'Rama' in Oriya, unlike in Hindi or Bengali where it becomes 'Ram'. In some of its verbal formations the original classical or even the Vedic Sanskrit forms survive almost intact.

Unlike other Indian languages Oriya has no dialect so to say, except one variation in vogue in the district of Sambalpur and the neighbouring areas among the illiterate. But those very simple folks can speak and understand chastest Oriya as is found in the standard books or as is expected to be spoken by a high class educated Brahman of Puri. The standard Oriya is spoken and understood as the one language throughout the length and breadth of this fairly big state. There are many aboriginal tribes in Orissa, each having a language of its own, but Oriya is their lingua franca, being understood by all.

The Literature of the Proletariat

Hemmed in on one side by the sea and on the other by ex-

tensive forests, mountain ranges and rivers, Orissa has developed in her splendid isolation, a distinct national existence of her own. In keeping with the extraordinary loveliness with which the State has been graced by Nature, the Oriyas have bejewelled their mother-country with such magnificent architecture and sculpture as are found in no other state in India. Shivaji, the great Marhatta leader, while fleeing from the court of Aurangzeb in disguise, is reported to have cried out in ecstasy, "Oh, this land is fit indeed for the habitation of Gods!", when he first saw from a distance, the innumerable pinnacles of the towers and temples gracefully tapering to the blue heavens with the background of charming landscape below, at a little distance from Bhubaneswar, the present capital of Orissa. Orissa is indeed the land of Gods in the eyes of the Hindu masses all over India.

And Oriya, the language of this holy and artistic land of Orissa, possesses a literature that is pre-eminently one of the masses. Bengali literature was practically born in the courts of the Muslim Nawabs of Bengal. In the Andhra country, Orissa's southern neighbour, poets and potentates seem to have been born for one another and Telugu has flourished like a pampered child of such magnificent royal court as those of Warrangal and Vijaynagar. In other Indian languages vernacular literatures were ushered into existence by persons who were seasoned scholars in Sanskrit. But poor Oriya language cannot boast of either noble birth or social prestige. The Oriya literature was born in and has been surviving and thriving in the unseen but a powerful urge of an isolated and neglected people to see its thoughts, experiences and dreams reflected, as in a mirror, in the speech of their daily existence. No Maharaja ever helped her poets. Except in a few cases down in the mediaeval period, no great work of this literature has ever been dedicated to any crowned head. The poets, at least in the initial pioneering stages, were essentially men of the proletariat, ignorant not only of Sanskrit but also of any other language excepting their own.

The beginnings of this literature are now definitely fixed round about the 8th and the 9th centuries. This has been possible because of the chance discovery in Nepal by late M. M. Haraprasad Shastri

of Bengal an anthology of *Buddhist Psalms* written in a language of mixed Pali. This is unjustifiably claimed by Bengali scholars to be an ancient treasure of the Bengali language, twisting in many cases the meaning of words and imagining things. But on an unbiassed linguistic scrutiny no impartial scholar will deny that those psalms were written by Oriyas. There is a large number of words and expressions in the body of the different poems which are even now current in modern Oriya and cannot be of either Bengali or any other language of India. What is more important, there is no word used in them which cannot be found in the old or modern Oriya in some form or other.

But two centuries later we find that the Oriya as understood to-day is slowly emerging with a definite shape and character and manifest on the scattered temple inscriptions. And a century later, i. e., by the 13th, the language gradually flowers forth into regular poetry in satires and folk-songs. And it is an additional proof of the proletariat character of this literature that as we proceed, we find the literature that is to be created in the next four hundred years, being deeply coloured by the changing religious faiths of the people, period after period. First it was Buddhistic as we have seen above, which was natural as Orissa or Kalinga, ever since the famous Kalinga war of Ashoka, became an important stronghold of Buddha's noble religion for centuries. After Buddhism we find Shaivism finding utterance in literature. Shaktism comes closely after. Last to appear and the most lasting of all these and capable of leaving the deepest impression on the mind of the nation and on its literature is, Vaishnavism in its twin branches of Rama-cult and Krishna-cult.

Sarala Das, the Vyas of Orissa

After a century or so of short songs and satires in genuine Oriya which are still considered archaic according to modern standards, the man who licked the new-born baby into a respectable and dignified shape and enabled it to move about on its own with a consciousness of its independent existence was Sarala Das in the 14th century. He was a 'Chasa' or Kisan by caste who was absolutely innocent of Sanskrit, our great classical language. To take out

a living, he had actually to put his hands to the plough in his small ancestral fields and sweat under the sun like his illiterate or semi-literate brother Kisans. Strangely enough this semi-literate kisan while ploughing the fields felt inspired like the ploughman-poet Burns of Scotland to write poetry; and he attempted not a song or a ballad like Burns in keeping with his scanty education and low social status, but he undertook a stupendous literary task, that is, the writing in an yet untried language the great epic *Mahabharat*, to the original Sanskrit version of which he had no direct access. Most probably he had heard the main stories of the famous epic from the Brahman priests. That was all the preparation that this semi-literate Kisan had for writing the epic of *Mahabharat* in a language in which there was nothing till his times except a few songs. He is all humility on every page of his great book. He calls himself a shudra and believes that it is not he, the illiterate fool, but the inspiration from the local deity known as goddess Sarala that really wrote the grand story of the Pandavas and Kauravas through him. As a matter of fact the poet's ancestral name was Siddheswar Parida. His descendants are still living in his small little village of Tentulipada in Puri District and the poet's deity Sarala resides in the neighbouring village of Kanakpur. The poet Siddheswar Parida, in his inimitable humility, has tried to efface himself completely from his grand achievements by merely calling himself Sarala Das or the Servant of Sarala, thus attributing all the credit and glory of authorship to the inspiration of that goddess.

Not having any direct knowledge of the original *Mahabharat*, what came out of Saraladas's iron style on bulky collections of palm leaves four centuries ago under the village banyan tree, was more or less an original book so to speak. It is so deeply tinged with the local colour of Orissa and with the aura of the Kisan poet's own imagination that the original story is recognised only in broad outlines. The order of the 18 books of the original *Mahabharat* does not exist in Saraladas's work. Some parts of the original epic are also missing and new ones have been substituted in their place. The well-known heroes and heroines of the famous epic that are pictured in the original and accepted by the millions of Indian readers as demi-gods

and goddesses of virtue, are rightly changed in the hands of our Kisan poet into ordinary human beings with their concomitant human frailties. As a matter of fact they are no more than the distinguished Oriyas of the contemporary world whom the poet knew. Royal wives who quarrel like village women and men-folk in Sarala's epic are presented like a bunch of egotistic, quarrelsome, jealous, selfish and uncouth people with severe mental limitations as the poet knew them in the villages. The spy sent by Duryodhan to scout the existence of the exiled Pandavas in a particular forest is no other than Arjun Panda, a typical Oriya priest. And the patriotic poet of Orissa not only brings the Pandavas to holy Orissa on their way to Heaven but makes the ever-obliging good old Yudhisthira marry the daughter of one Hari Sahu, an Oriya merchant, to save her from a curse during that Orissa itinerary. In short, the epic in the hands of Sarala Das has become a grand national book of the Oriya, a lively picture-gallery of the men and women of that land whose truth will never become out of date and whose beauty will never fade in the eyes of the masses in Orissa. Sarala Das, being untutored in Sanskrit, wrote in the vigorous though ungrammatical speech of the peasants. That is an additional attraction of his work for the masses in Orissa. There have been in the meantime more than one true translation of the Sanskrit *Mahabharata* in Oriya, but the masses in Orissa have always preferred the falsehood, inaccuracies and inconsistencies of the Kisan poet to the rigid truth of Pandits, because the words of this great poet of the soil are very close to the life and heart of the masses themselves and it is still more surprising and gratifying to know that this semi-literate Kisan poet has influenced more poets and writers down to modern times than any other poet in the Oriya language. Innumerable poems have been written by other poets in the succeeding ages on episodes borrowed from Sarala Das's magnificent Oriya *Mahabharat*, some of which are absolutely original and worthy to find a place in any literature for their excellent humour and poignant pathos.

Sarala Das wrote two other books also. His *Mahabharat* is dedicated to the goddess Sarala as said above. In his '*Vilanta Ramayan*' he gets the one-thousand-headed Mahiravana, a relation

of the Ten-headed hero of Valmiki's epic, killed by Sita, after Rama, her heroic husband and all his brothers were defeated by the powerful monster,—thus proving the superiority of the silent exploits of the virtuous female to the noisy adventures of the male. His third book is '*Chandi-purana*'. All his three books clearly indicate that he was not only a worshipper of the Female Energy, the 'Shakti' as it is known in the common ecclesiastical code, but a feminist in the true modern sense.

Sarala Das was not a mere author, great or small, he was the founder of a saga and a father of a whole literature, though he, in his kisan humility, was never conscious of it. By the creation of his *Mahabharat*, Oriya had come to stay in the land of the Oriyas which was then lying mute under the iron tyranny of Sanskrit in the hands of decadent Brahmans,—an absolutely foreign lot in the land, having no living contact with the actual life of the people. But inspired by the grand achievement of the semi-literate Sarala Das, the native language, in the teeth of taunts and manoeuvres of the Pandits and the contemptuous indifference of the Royal Court dominated by the Brahmans, declared now an open revolt and boldly asserted its position by the time we come to the next landmark in Oriya literature, about a century after Sarla Das. We find now a group of scholars deliberately determined to give up Sanskrit and take to Oriya in their noble desire to serve the masses who were steeped in dark ignorance and for whom the only intelligible language was Oriya. This really reminds one of England's Elizabethan poets and dramatists who were consciously working to raise their mother language, English, to the level of Greek and Latin. This period in Oriya literature is often described as that of Pancha Sakha or five friends. These five were Balaram Das, Jagannath Das, Anant Das, Yosovant Das and Achyutanand Das. Each one of this glorious band has left behind considerable literature that is read and enjoyed by millions in Orissa, even to-day.

Balaram Das and his Ramayana

Of these Balaram Das wrote the first Oriya *Ramayana*,—the most popular of more than a dozen versions of this epic story of Rama and Sita that we have in Oriya. Like Sarala Das's *Maha-*

Bharat, Balaram's *Ramayana*, also is thoroughly dyed with the local colour of Orissa. He sends battalions of native soldiers from the various ex-Orissa states like Bonai and Nilgiri to support Prince Rama's invasion of Lanka; and just for such local colouring his *Ramayana* is as popular with the masses in Orissa as Sarala's *Mahabharat*. Of the other 'associates' Achyutananda Das, the youngest of this group, seems to have produced the most extensive literature that is possible to come out of a single man. Research scholars have come across thousands of copies of his books scattered all over the land in the villages and the private collections, and a very large number of his works have just come to notice and still remain unpublished. The literature of the five Dases is mostly sacred. There was an attempt to bring down to the Oriya masses the religious truths that were available only to Brahmans through Sanskrit. So they deliberately got themselves busy in producing vast quantities of *Mahatmyas*, *Sanhitas*, *Gitas* and *Puranas*. And one of them now stands shoulder to shoulder with Sarala Das as builder not only of the Oriya language, but of the Oriya nation, through his masterly translation of the Sanskrit *Bhagwat Purana*. The greatest in this brilliant literary band of 'Five Comrades' is Jagannath Das.

Jagannath Das and his Oriya Bhagwat

Jagannath Das, being a Brahman, was a thorough scholar in Sanskrit and born in affluent circumstances, in bold contrast to the semi-literate Kisan poet Sarala Das, his great predecessor. But to the great luck of the race, this intellectual and social aristocrat determined in early youth to abandon the pride and prejudices of his task and make his life and learning a complete dedication to his God and to his people. Defying the contempt of the Royal Court and friends and critics, Jagannath started writing the '*Bhagwat Purana*' in the language of the masses to show them a clear path of faith and virtue, which is difficult for an Indian to find out with any sense of certainty without a fair knowledge of Sanskrit of which the masses of India, even then, more than at present, were completely ignorant. Jagannath Das not only wrote the *Bhagwat* in Oriya but wrote it in the most elegant mellifluous and lucid diction as yet possible in that language. In simple dignity and unadorned beauty

his language reminds one of the authorised version of the *English Bible*. As a matter of fact Jagannath's '*Bhagwat*' is generally described in the literary world of Orissa as the Bible of the Oriya masses. It is said that Jagannath went into the translation of this work into Oriya just to enable his illiterate mother to know the story of Lord Krishna as revealed in the original Sanskrit and millions of Oriya, men and women, are eternally grateful to that pious lady as they have found their only spiritual delight and guide in the book that her son wrote on her request.

For translating the Sanskrit *Bhagwat* into Oriya, Jagannath invented a new metre of nine letters which, known now as '*Bhagwat metre*', has turned out to be the handiest instrument of versification in Oriya.

It is said that while young Jagannath was busy translating the *Bhagwat* canto after canto he, as a test of his success, used to sit under the famous banyan tree in the precincts of the Jagannath temple and recite the verses to the crowds of pilgrims who daily visited this shrine. The pilgrims from all corners of Orissa heard spell-bound this new religious poetry, so long sealed to them but now presented to them in the very language they themselves spoke but with the magic touch of a poet and a saint added to it. The fame of Jagannath's *Bhagwat* spread far and wide through the pilgrims in a short while. Scribes started copying it as holy labour and villages vied with one another for possessing a complete set of Jagannath's *Bhagwat* with a house of its own where the village elders could assemble in the evenings after the day's toils to listen to it being recited by the village priest. So, almost each village in Orissa began having a '*Bhagwat Ghar*' which turned out to be a multi-purpose institution combining in it the village assembly hall, the village school, the village library and the village church.

Influence of this book on the masses of Orissa can never be over-estimated. Whenever a bunch of Oriya labourers is found in the city or jungle it may be presumed that the single book that is to be found with them as the companion of their leisure hours is the *Bhagwat* of Jagannath. Not long after Jagannath passed away, the dark night descended on the prosperous and independent king-

dom of Orissa, which had defied repeated Moslem and non-Moslem invasions for centuries. The state was attacked and conquered bit by bit from the north, the south and the west. The Moghuls, the Marhattas, the Pathans and the British over-ran the country one after another. The kingdom was dismembered and in the ugly internecine quarrels that followed foreign conquests, brothers killed brothers and through misrule, extortion, famine and the ever-shifting battles of the war lords, the peasantry,—the very backbone of the race,—was almost dehumanised. These dark days continued from the middle of the sixteenth up to the beginnings of the second quarter of the twentieth century when the state of Orissa was recreated, though much truncated, under the British in 1936. But in those dark days when the Oriyas lay scattered in several neighbouring states for centuries, crushed not only politically and economically but also linguistically and culturally by the powerful neighbours, it was this great book, this *Bhagwat* of Jagannath that spiritually knit them together, keeping alive the consciousness of belonging to one family. Through all these centuries the *Bhagwat Ghar* has been continuing to be the rallying point of the masses in Orissa's fifty thousand villages. It is still the simple literary ambition of the average unsophisticated Oriya peasant to be able to read and recite the *Bhagwat* in his old age or listen to it being read and recited by his children. In fact Jagannath's *Bhagwat* has so far been the greatest incentive to literacy in rural Orissa. The soft-moving metre, the easy-flowing diction and the profound truths expressed in simple vocabulary make the recitation of this book a never-failing charm not only to Orissa's millions, but also to hundreds of thousands of other people in the border areas of other states as I have stated before in describing my experiences in Chhatisgarh States. Any visitor, even to an interior village in Orissa, even now, is sure to hear, as the dark night settles on the world and the tiny lamps illuminate the peasant huts in the peaceful hamlet, these words, known to every Oriya like the names of his parents, being wafted in the evening air from individual peasant homes or from the *Bhagwat Ghar* of the village at the end of each recited chapter.

Thus says the Brahman Jagannath
In this Bhagwat Purana,
In the language of the people.

A poet of the people indeed, if there was any, a proletariat poet par excellence, like his predecessor the great Sarala Das. Indeed these two with Fakir Mohan of the 20th century may be said to be three great builders of not only the Oriya language, but also of the Oriya culture and the Oriya people.

THE MEDIAEVAL PERIOD—INFLUENCE OF CHAITANYA AND JAYADEVA

The Age of Erotic and Ornamental Verses

It is about the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century, by the time the last of the five associates passed off the stage. In the meantime tremendous events had happened outside the political borders of Orissa. The Mohammedans had appeared at the gates of Delhi and before the end of the 12th century, had conquered the whole of the Northern India. For three centuries and more, Orissa was the only state in Northern India that was able to preserve her independence by not only warding off innumerable Moslem invasions into her territory; but also chasing the enemy to the very heart of his own, like Warrangul in Hyderabad in South West and Lakhnawati in Central Bengal in North East. By the latter half of the 14th century, however, the Bengali Saint Chaitanya came from the Moslem-ruled Bengal to the independent Hindu Orissa on pilgrimage to Puri and started settling down there. Saints have come to Puri from all parts of India in all periods of history in an unending stream before and after Chaitanya. But this particular person has had such deep and lasting influence on the history and national character of the Oriyas as cannot be said of any other outsider. He was intimate with the great five literary and religious associates mentioned above. But while the latter had tried to guide the nation through the discipline of Yoga and the more psychological surrender to the Divinity, Chaitanya promised untold religious merits through the effeminate Kirtan and ecstatic dancing and through imagining and behaving oneself as the devoted wife of God as represented in Krishna. This spelled disaster in politics and in

the ethical and religious world of Orissa. High officials of Government left off jobs and spent their time and energy in training dancing boys to enact the affairs between Krishna and the maids of Vrindaban to please the master. Later on even the Gajapati Emperor of Orissa fell a victim to this fallacious though attractive faith of Chaitanya. Orissa lost vast territories in the Southern India which she had been ruling for more than seven centuries and the land was prepared for the Moslem invasion and occupation from the North. In the words of no less an authority than Vivekananda : "The whole of Orissa has turned into a land of cowards and Bengal, running after that Radha-prema (as preached by Chaitanya) these past four-hundred years, has almost lost all sense of manliness."* To this vicious spiritual and religious influence of Chaitanya on the character of the people, I would add a literary one, no less powerful, being much more subtle which also started deteriorating values of life to the erstwhile sturdy simple Oriyas. That is the deceptively decorated over-erotic songs of Jayadeva, an Oriya by all means, though claimed to be a Bengali by the Bengalis. His '*Gita Govinda*' has not had such deep influence on any other Indian language or linguistic region as on Oriya or Orissa. According to the orders of a Gajapati of Orissa it is being daily recited in the temple of Jagannath as a matter of ceremonial routine even to-day, and this practice has been in vogue for the last several centuries. Its enchanting music is known all over India, but the spell-bound listeners forget to realise how much the poet sacrificed ideas and ideals by pinning all his faith and love on words and words only and on voluptuous situations.

All this preliminary is indispensably necessary to understand the enormous new type of literature that we come across in Oriya for the next three centuries. It is absolutely different from the simple strong straightforward utterances of Sarala Das, Balaram Das, and Jagannath Das, whose works were consciously tuned to the mental level of the mass. But Orissa soon after lost her political independence. The country was divided into small principalities

* Talks with Swami Vivekananda pp. 389.

under little chiefs whose only occupation now was harem and hunting. While harem-cult received an indirect fillip from the effeminate philosophy of Chaitanaya and his school, Jayadeva's poetry supplied the right pattern of versification to paint gross voluptuousness in a presentable form through jingling rhymes and alliterative diction. Well, this is in a nutshell what Oriya poetry is in the entire mediaeval period.

Upendra Bhanj—the Best-known of the Mediaevalists

The poets in this period are lefion, vying with one another in loading their verses with puns, conceits, dictional gymnastics and erotic effusions. The man to dominate the whole scene, however, is Upendra Bhanj, a scion of the royal house of Ghumusar in the Ganjam district, which was traditionally devoted to literature. Upendra's father and grandfather were poets and had done pioneering work in the line in which he was destined to excel all others. This line was one of pedantry, play on words, voluptuous sex-love and all that a parasitic corrupt court life means. In Upendra we get the best and worst of all the characteristics of this artificial court poetry. His output is indeed prodigious. If jugglery of words be considered as vital to the art of poetry, and excess of it be taken as artistic embellishment, Upendra Bhanj of Orissa will top the whole list of poets in any language specialising in that particular poetic style. He wrote entire epics all lines of which start with one letter of the alphabet all through. He wrote entire cantos describing three Indian seasons in the same stanzas each line taking a different meaning pertaining to a different season by the elimination of one letter. He utilised all the metres in the Oriya literature and used a good quantity of his own invention. For two things, erotic descriptions and play on words,—Upendra stands supreme. At times he is enchantingly simple and musical, that is, when he maintains proper balance between sound and sense, and on such occasions one feels like conceding him the grandiloquent title of Kavi-Samrat or the 'Emperor of Poets', as his admirers often call him. All things considered, Upendra reached the very acme of craftsmanship in word-jugglery. He may have no parallel in this respect in any other literature. No poet could excel him also in creating that dreamland

of youthful romance overflowing with voluptuous sex-love. The extraordinary power of verbal jugglery in him has exercised a spell over the masses and classes of Orissa, which is not warranted by his achievements in genuine poetry. His followers and imitators in Oriya are not only numerous, but their line continues even up to modern times.

The Vaishnavas

But the upsurge of Vaishnavism with which Chaitanya and his school overwhelmed the masses in Orissa was not altogether without some welcome results in the Oriya literature. While Upendra Bhanj and his line busied themselves with presenting **secular tales** in arabesque pattern, there was a parallel line of poets starting with **Dinakrushna Das**,—almost a contemporary of Upendra in the 17th century, **down** to Gopalkrushna in the 19th century,—who, being devout worshippers of Krishna-Radha, have left behind a rich store of Vaishnava lyrics and songs which compare favourably with any similar stuff in any other Indian language. The most enchanting singers in this lovable groups are Dinakrushna Das, Abhimanyu Samantasinghar and Kavisurya Baladeva, who, **inspite** of their infatuation for tentacled diction, pretentious displays of lexicographic power and conventional verbal fire-work, have left behind a store of poetry throbbing with deep emotion and presented in tastefully alliterative diction that still keeps the masses in Orissa enthralled. The craze for Sanskritisation of Oriya and morbid imitation of the conventionalities of decadent Sanskrit kavya-style had gone so far indeed in those days that even such simple themes as the adolescent love of Radha and Krishna are over-burdened with all sorts of verbal contortions to explain which commentators are now breaking their teeth and breaking lances with one another.

Kavisurya Baladeva Rath

So Kavisurya Baladeva Rath,—a fine lyrical poet indeed,—taking pedantry in the spirit of the times to be an integral part of poetry, wrote his celebrated '*Kishore Chandranada Champu*' half in Sanskrit and half in Oriya, the Oriya part being the real source now of his immortality and celebrity in Orissa. This '*Champu*' is an excellent musical drama in Oriya literature. It is written in

Chautisa pattern, that is, in the order of the 34 letters of the Oriya alphabet. All lines of the first song according to this pattern begin with 'Ka', the first letter of the alphabet and the lines of the second song begin with 'Kha', the second letter of the alphabet and so on and so forth till we reach the letter 'Kshya'. The plot is the tryst of Radha and Krishna through the pleasantly mischievous go-between Lalita who, before she unites the two young impetuous love-lorn souls, works havoc on the mind of either by deceptive threats, scoldings and deliberate wrong statements just for mere fun. The rise and fall of the lovers' hopes, their psychological reactions to each other, situations and words, their yearnings and despairs and their final meeting and the beatific consummation of their mutual passions are beautifully portrayed by this master-craftsman through the successive songs of this romantic musical drama. And in and through the development of their sentiments, there moves in charmingly grotesque difference, the impish personality of the naughty go-between Lalita, who treats their passionate love as a child would treat his toys. In the whole range of Oriya literature the character of Lalita in Kavisurya Baldeva's *Champu* stands unique as a well-meaning but pleasantly mischievous messenger. The same character in Jayadeva's *Gita-govinda* appears absolutely non-descript and insignificant compared to Kavisurya's creation which is so full of life, realism and humour.

These songs of Kavisurya's *Champu* are also unique from another standpoint. These are written to such musical patterns as to form the very norm of Orissan style of music. These are held in the highest respect by musical experts and provide the very test of musical ability for the students of music.

Both Dinakrushna Das and Abhimanyu Samantasinghar of the same group, preceding Kavisurya have written intricate kavyas on the story of Krishna and Radha, on the model of the Bhanjas, who had taken up the story of Sita and Rama for the same purpose. The patterns and details in execution are just the same,—the same conventional descriptions of seasons and physical charms of the hero and the heroine, the same metres and the same attempts at decorative diction and puns and conceits. But in some cantos both these

poets throw away the suffocating caparisons and burst into lyrics in the natural language of their hearts resulting in soul-stirring pieces of musical poetry. These lyrics of both Abhimanyu and Dina Krushna are among the finest specimens of Oriya poetry, still charming to millions in Orissa both for the beauty of expression and the sentiments expressed.

The Samar Tarang of Brajanath Badajena

Unique not only in this period, but in the entire Oriya literature and worthy to be counted among the very few that exist in all Indian literature in the same category, and standing all by itself is the *Samar Tarang* or 'Waves of War' by Brajanath Badajena. The poet belonged to the native state of Dhenkanal and perhaps participated in action against the Marhatta invaders on his homeland. The Marhattas were repulsed and the poet took up this contemporary topical subject for writing a stirring war poem. He has given minute descriptions of militaristic details, preparations of war and the conduct of soldiers before the battle. At one stage a section of the army hinted at an honourable surrender. That made the local raja, the poet's patron and the general of the state-army, burst into a spirited warlike address to the cowardly and the hesitant in the vigorous and uncouth phraseology of a genuine soldier. The various cantos of Badajena's *Samar Tarang* are written in different heroic metres suiting to situations, and where Oriya has proved inadequate for his purpose, he has freely used Hindusthani and Marathi.

Reaction to over-Ornamentation

Towards the end of the 18th century there is visible a healthy reaction against the artificialities in poetry that entered the Oriya language through the Bhanj poet and had unchallenged sway for over three centuries. The Oriya muse, perhaps sick by now of the suffocating and unnecessary trappings, was trying to show herself again in simpler and more natural habiliment. The harbingers and symbols of this very desirable reaction were an epic poetry of very high stature and a lyrical poet of first rate excellence and also an Adibasi singer of great spiritual force. They were all devout people in their own ways and while the works of the first two are dedicated to and saturated with the life, love and philosophy of Krishna-Radha,

those of the 'last stand unique for its iconoclastic heresies, strict monotheism and dark prophecies and exhortations to the people for a higher life.

Bhaktacharan

The older of the two Vaishnava poets, Bhaktacharan Das, develops the true nature of Bhakti in his famous *Mathura Mangal*, through the behaviour of the sorrowing ladies of Vrindaban when Krishna left that village of which he had been the cynosure, for the city of Mathura. The chapters that describe the departure of Krishna, the darling of the village, with his elder brother Balram, and the immediate reactions in the minds of the simple, sentimental folk of the village, after their departure, throb with pathos and despair of lost love. Krishna's battles with Kansa's wrestlers are also narrated with realistic vigour. The finest canto in this charming book written in the spontaneous language of a highly sensitive and illuminated soul is that in which Uddhav, Krishna's messenger, comes to Vrindaban at the behest of his young master to console the *gopies* in their mental sufferings. In this canto the wise Uddhav is made to expound the profound Advaita Philosophy in the simplest terms so as to make it intelligible to the illiterate village ladies, but owns defeat at last in the presence of the deep, all-embracing concrete Mother-love of sorrowing Yasoda and the warm, self-effacing, all-consuming adolescent passion of the other ladies of Vrindaban. This canto in the *Mathura Mangal* of Bhaktacharan Das could be taken as a gem in any literature.

But more than for this *Mathura-Mangal*, Bhaktacharan is celebrated and popular all over Orissa for his soul-stirring ode '*Manabodh Chautisa*'. There are Chautisas in Oriya by the score; but the best known among them all, the most popular and the most excellent from the literary standpoint is this *Manabodh Chautisa* of Bhaktacharan. In contrast to his *Mathura Mangal*, this poem inculcates mainly asceticism and renunciation, but renunciation of the flesh and the devil and the world only to acquire the far richer experience of God-realisation. But the essence of this famous poem lies in the subtle manner in which the poet tears our attachments centred in this perishable body of ours and the ever-vanishing phenomenal world

to bits, through suave words and tell-tale imageries. Couplets like these of this poem are household words in Orissa :

Like a painting you look so nice,
But rip it and see what stinking chaos lies
underneath.

(Or)

How long will you stay, you think ?
And what shall you take with you, when the zero
hour strikes

But imagine that dogs and jackals
Shall be tearing your rib-bones for food,
one from another !

This *Manabodh Chautisa* of Bhaktacharan in Oriya is like the Ecclesiastics of the English *Bible*.

Gopalkrishna

The other poet, Gopalkrishna is the greatest lyrical singer in Oriya. He too was a devout Vaishnava and he pours out his own heart in hundreds of enchanting songs describing the Lila of Radha and Krishna. In these songs the poet reveals himself amazingly free from many conventionalities and brings down the up-country lovers and Radha and Krishna to the familiar grounds of Orissa villages. But all the same he keeps the speeches and affairs of these divine lovers on a plane that is not only singularly free from all grossness and vulgarity that has corrupted the Radha-Krishna story not only in Oriya, but in all other literatures, but has acquired an ethereal, spiritual and idealistic quality that is rare to come across in all our literatures. His Radha says in one of her songs in a mood of charmingly profound self-effacement :

What if He proves unkind ?

I am no more than an humble servant !

Can Radha ever be happy wounding Krishna's feelings

I would rather be the serving maid to her

Who gains His heart

Than sulk in pride,

Or quarrel in jealousy ?

He may belong to anyone else;

What I need indeed for once in the day
 Just a chance to see Him,
 Close at hand or from a distance.
 Through Yashoda's virtues let Him live a blissful life,
 That indeed is all the Treasure my heart yearns for !

In and through his innumerable songs we find also that Radha, a timid slip of a girl to start with, slowly develops into a fine, realistic personality of flesh and blood. From first meetings and apprehensive yearnings of her heart, and the fear of the world and the elders to the final madness of uncontrolled romance and the spiritual abandon, from the initial misgivings and the love-tests to the final dissolution of one's little self in and for that of the loved one, we find in Gopalkrishna's lyrics a vivid, colourful and glorious picture of the course and consummation of love, both human and divine. All told, Gopalkrishna is the finest Vaishnava poet of Orissa and is of the same rank as Vidyapati and Chandidas. The poet was born and died in Parlakemedi in the district of Ganjam and his direct descendants are still living in the same house where the poet lived in comparative prosperity. The poet is now worshipped as a saint by many of his Vaishnava admirers.

Bhima Bhoi—the great Kondh Poet

The third man in this group is a unique personality in Oriya literature as he was not only blind, but also an unlettered Adibasi,—a Kondh,— of the tribe once notorious for human sacrifices in their turmeric fields. This man Bhima Bhoi symbolises in his personality many aspects of the Orissan culture, besides being a mass poet of a high order. In him we see the greatful synthesization of the Adibasi and the Aryan in Orissa, the outburst of the basic religious spirit of the Orissan masses through the lips of one of them, and the demonstration of the singularly democratic and proletariat character of the Oriya literature, the glorious picture of an unlettered blind Adibasi thrilling millions of his countrymen through his colourful monotheistic Bhajans written (rather spoken out) in the elegant speech of the cultivated,—though being extempore composition, they, at times, lack consistency, sequence and clarity. But all the

same, this unique personality and his contributions to Oriya literature deserve a little more detailed narration which is given below.

For students of ethnology, religion and culture, the historic state of Orissa provides a very interesting field where one comes across the harmonious synthesis of various opposing forces which in other places have either resulted in conflicts that still continue or have settled down in mutual exclusiveness. Nowhere in India except perhaps in Orissa, traits of Adibasi life and culture have so unobtrusively got intermingled with and become an integral part of the entire national life of the people supposed to be of Aryan texture. The very Hindu God Jagannath at Puri that attracts millions of Hindus from all over India to the state of Orissa, was originally a Deity of the Adibasis as said before. Orissa's most universally observed festival, the 'Raja' or the festival of fecundity, is peculiar to Orissa alone and has been taken over from the aborigines of the state. And the most remarkable of all, ever since the fourteenth century down to modern times the Adibasis have all along figured in Oriya literature both as a subject of romantic description or more important still, as poets and writers in the language. The greatest Adibasi poet of Orissa, the subject of this essay, flourished in the last half of the last century and through his life and creation has turned out to be one of the most remarkable writers in the entire Indian letters.

This poet, Bhima Bhoi, was a Kondh,—a tribe that was once notorious for human sacrifices in their turmeric fields. He was born in one of the interior native states of Orissa and is said to have lost his eye-sight in early childhood after an attack of small-pox. Young Bhima, thus blinded, probably wandered from place to place as a beggar and without any chance of learning letters. In his early youth or a little later, he is supposed to have come in contact with another remarkable personality during his wanderings in those forest lands. That man was the prophet of a new religion, whose followers now are numbered in thousands in and outside Orissa. This heretical new faith inspired the blind, unlettered, homeless Kondh youth to burst into poetry. Throughout a long life he preached in hundreds of Bhajans the truths that he had imbibed from

his master with all the zeal and conviction of a convert and a missionary. These Bhajans are now sung and listened to by tens of thousands in Orissa, particularly in the rural areas.

We cannot understand our poet unless we know a little more of his spiritual master. Less is known about the details of his life than the little of his poet-disciple. The master had his spiritual realisation, it is said, after long penances on a hill in the wilds of Keonjhar State; and almost the same time as Raja Ram Mohan Roy was preaching pure Monotheism of the Vedanta and denouncing the popular idolatry and other superstitions of the Hindus, this remarkable man in the wilds of Orissa unknown so far to history, was doing just the same thing. The religion he preached was known as Mahima Dharma or the Religion of Glory, that is, the glory of the God who cannot be expressed in pictures or idols. The prophet is thus popularly known as Mahima Gosain or the 'Master who preached the Glory'.

This Mahima or Alekh religion does not believe in the caste system of the Hindus and is severely iconoclastic. It asks people to have faith only in the One Invisible Power, who created this world and worship Him and Him only. It has no ceremonies, but it emphasises the observance of a few simple moral principles like honesty, truthfulness, non-adultery etc. It is remarkable also that unlike all the multitude of sects in the Hindu faith, it does not put a premium on asceticism but assures its followers of all religious merits in an honestly-lived family life. Except in his faith in a personal God, the tenets of this new religion have a remarkable resemblance to Buddhism. Many scholars indeed think that his Alekh religion is nothing but a revival of Buddhism in Orissa in a new garb. As a matter of fact, in 1875 Bhima Bhoi is said to have tried with his followers to claim Jagannath at Puri as their own God, the Buddha. But they were molested and driven away by the Raja of Puri, the hereditary protector of the temple of Jagannath, the Hindu Deity. The master has left no writings of his own; he too perhaps was unlettered like Mohammed. It was left to the blind Kondh disciple of his to preach his master's faith to millions through inspired poetry. This great blind-visionary, however, appears to

have suffered a lot in his life for carrying the mantle of his master on his shoulders. He lived his poetry unlike most poets and suffered social persecution and ostracisation for preaching heresies. In a caste-ridden society his very birth as a Kondh was not a small handicap to start with. Then cruel Fate made him blind at an early age. Financially, he was not much above a mendicant Sannyasi, though perhaps late in life when he himself got a large number of disciples, he married and had a home. Then he added to his troubles by accepting a heretical faith and boldly preaching it wherever he went. In many a poem of his the deep tragedy of his hunted, persecuted and unappreciated life finds poignant expression. In one such he says :—

“Oh my Lord, why don't you help me ? For preaching your Glory mine own reputation is broken to pieces. For preaching You as the Unknown One, they taunt me as a ‘Christian’ (i. e., heretical) and put me to untold sufferings. They are covered with sin as with air, but denounce me if I talk to them the religion of Truth. They say, ‘Drive him away,!’ ‘Drive him away ! Let us see how his Master will protect him !’ ‘He is a sinner !’ they say, ‘do not give him shelter !’ and when I preach of equality they retaliate by treating me like a dog. My Lord, this is my fate wherever I go. I feel like not going anywhere, henceforth. In the face of these tyrannies what shall I do ?”

But in the inmost recesses of his soul the poet had nothing but the strongest conviction that the sinful times would very soon end and that the establishment of the kingdom of Heaven was not far off. This idea gets expressed in almost every one of his innumerable Bhajans and seems to have sustained the blind poet in and through all the misfortunes of the outside world. The following lines are typical of his dark prophecy reminding one of the righteous indignation of the Hebrew prophets:

“These tyrannies will end. The great Master will break their egotism. The time is not far. He, without being direct and visible, will get things done in subtle ways and they (the sinners) will be disappearing one by one without others being conscious of it. They are merged in sins and illegalities and involved in all sorts of hypoc-

ris. Which religion indeed will save them and in what way ? Some will be burnt in fire, some will be drowned in water and some will die falling from trees ! Some also will be stung to death by serpents and others will die with halters round their necks ! They will suffer from diseases, their bodies will be shaking with palsy and those that will survive will be lacking all power”.

The poet's pity, on the other hand, for the suffering humanity, was unbounded. In a magnificent couplet he says “Who indeed can bear to see such misery of the world's creatures ? Let my life be in hell for ever, but the world be saved !”

His critical attitude to idolatry finds vivid expression in the following lines :—

“It is in utter ignorance that people offer puja to various Gods and prostrate themselves before the idols offering delicacies and appealing to them for mercy. But these are mere idols, lacking life, how can they grant boons to the votaries ? People bewildered in Maya do not see this. They have not learnt to surrender themselves to the One who created their bodies and souls, but run to wooden figures and say ‘Oh, save my life !’ Why do they refuse to know the One who created them out of nothing !”

The unlettered, blind, poverty-stricken, wandering Adibasi poet had no pretensions to any kind of scholarship. He has poured out his feelings in the language that he daily spoke or heard others speak. As a result his poetry, while being full of vigour and power, lacks artistry ; the words also lack precision. His basic ideas also sometimes appear blurred. For instance, he often mixes up his Master, the Mahima Gosain, with the ‘Unwritten One’ that his Master had preached about. This is quite understandable, however, in a country where the idea of God descending on earth as an Avatar to uplift humanity, is an integral part of the people's concepts about life. But in spite of this confusion the poet's conception of God is free from all dogma, all narrowness and is positively humanistic. At one place he says :—

“He has no resting place, and in summer, and rains, and all seasons He is ceaselessly working. God indeed is Himself suffering to save our world”.

The Twilight

Gopal Krishna died in 1862, and Bhima Bhoi in 1895. Orissa was occupied by the British in 1803. So, by the time these great mediaeval figures passed away, Orissa had already known British rule with its concomitant English education for more than a quarter of a century. Bhima Bhoi talks of Christian missionaries, the harbingers and integral parts of European Imperialism. And Kavisurya Baladev actually served under British District Collectors in the Ganjam district as an able revenue officer. Gopal Krishna too worked as a revenue officer in the Parlakimedi Estate under British Magistrates. But though flourishing in the peak of British rule in India, these great mediaeval sons, Gopal Krishna, Baladev or Bhima Bhoi, were completely ignorant of the English language and absolutely untouched by anything of Western culture. In the very midst of dazzling Western influences they blossomed and died as pure, uncontaminated oriental flowers. Living chronologically in modern times, artistically and spiritually they all belonged to mediaeval times.

At the same time all unknown to these old guards the heroes of modern Oriya literature had already ushered in the new literature long before the former passed away. The two types were almost contemporaneous but never met or knew each other. Such an anomaly has, perhaps, not happened in any other Indian language. But as a matter of fact the past in Oriya literature has never died; it lingers on even in these ultra-modern times. Marxism and Vaishnavism walk hand in hand and the literary descendants of Upendra Bhanj and Kavisurya Baladev are no less vigorous even to-day in the arena of Oriya literature than Sachi Routroys and Kalindi Panigrahis,—the supposed vociferous progressives. Even as I pen these lines I have gifts of books on my table from authors of different parts of Orissa that are written in the right Bhanjean style of more than two centuries back, caring little for Shelly or Tagore or Whitman.

The Modern Period

The process of development of all the modern Indian languages after the British conquest of the various Indian states is almost alike.

The contact of the fertile Indian mind with the West through the English language and literature resulted in an unprecedented Renaissance in all branches of Indian culture. In literature in particular, prose was practically born during the British period and developed with amazing rapidity so as to be the main vehicle of the Indian regeneration and political freedom through essays, orations, debates and countless articles in the daily press and periodicals. Drama and novel, though not unknown in old Indian literature, appeared in the much more pleasant and acceptable garb of living realism trying to get into literature the Indian life as it is with all its shortcomings and problems. Poetry, on the other hand, found new ways of expression, the political, social and patriotic sentiments making it blossom and vibrate with a charm and vitality as was never found in Indian poetry before. All these revolutions have taken place in Oriya also as in other Indian languages.

This new literature has, however, to depend on a book-loving public or moneyed patrons. Formerly book-production cost almost nothing except the poet's or scribe's labour. But now it meant capital investment for the producer and cash for the consumer, who in olden days got it almost free through recitals at the temples and village assemblies and Yatras and musical performances at rich men's courtyards. All these happy and healthy features of mediaeval intellectual life disappeared as soon as the colossus of the printing press entered the holy precincts of the Goddess Saraswati. In these so-called progressive modern times, literature has become costly and has become highly commercialised with the background of a rich, leisured middle class as its mainstay. Such a background existed in its perfection in Bengal under the British. For over a century Calcutta, the Bengali city, remained the capital of the Indian Empire. Through trade and services and investments in other parts of India, money poured into Bengal from all parts of India. It is the class of zamindars and high officials in Bengal who practically have built up the modern Bengali literature. And that explains not only the phenomenal growth of Bengali literature in modern times, but also of those other regional languages that are luckily found round other big Indian cities like Madras and Bombay. The recent rapid strides

of Hindi after the political centre of India was shifted from the east to the north, clearly signifies the deep relation of literature with political and economic factors.

Nothing of these favourable conditions, however, existed in Orissa all through the British period. She became a state only the other day. Till then the Oriyas lay scattered in four different provinces as said before. Orissa's middle class was practically wiped out through the new tenancy laws, particularly the 'Sunset Law' introduced by the British, and through the exploitation of the intermediary officers from the neighbouring provinces in the north or the south, who came as camp-followers of the foreign power. The spark of freedom and the revolt against the tyranny that was still alive in the peasant militia of Orissa, burned itself into ashes in the glorious last flicker of the Paik rebellion in 1818 after which the British clipped the wings of the martial Oriya race and the entire race was dehumanised through demilitarisation, exploitation, dismemberment and criminal official neglect.

The modern Oriya literature was born and has struggled for growth and survival, so far, under these highly unfavourable political, economic and social conditions. But when the darkness appeared to be the thickest, the morning star appeared on the horizons, heralding the dawn and the day. While in other languages the new literatures just grew like healthy plants getting all the light and nutrition they needed, in Orissa, because of the strangling disadvantages narrated above, the modern literature is the pathetic story of Orissa's literary and intellectual heroes fighting continuous battles against unpropitious conditions, the forces of neglect, apathy, exploitation and of frustration. The resultant victories, however, considering the magnitude of the opposing forces, are such as any language or people could feel justifiably proud of. The whole story may be best told through short sketches of the lives and achievements of the three great builders of the modern literature, the famous Trio, Fakirmohan, Radhanath and Madhusudan,—who, in spite of wide gaps in their minds and characters, were bound to one another by deep enduring friendship till separated by death and who, each in his own way, felt an incessant urge to help, enlarge and enrich his much-

neglected mother-tongue. And each one of them has added immortal wealth to the sum-total of the possessions of the Oriya language. We begin now with Fakirmohan Senapati, the brightest and the greatest of the three.

Fakir Mohan Senapati—a Unique Indian writer

In the fifties of the last century a semi-literate, sickly-looking, long-necked lad of twelve or so with a quill-pen tucked on his right ear would be found walking up and down the quay-side at Balasore which in those days of the sailing ships of the East India Company was an important port and trading centre in the east coast of India. Orphaned at the age of one and a half years, the lad, an impecunious scion of a once noble family, whose fortunes had changed with the political eclipse of the Marhattas and the advent of the British in Orissa, was being looked after by his devotedly loving grandmother. Early in life he had to discontinue his study in the village primary school due to extreme poverty and had to work for a living. He was made to oversee the repairs of sails and other riggings of ships on behalf of his uncle who was one of the petty contractors for such jobs on the quay-side.

This penniless, orphaned, unpromising, semi-literate sickly lad born in 1847, is now accepted as the Father of Modern Oriya Literature and who, as poet, novelist, administrator, soldier, social reformer, printer, journalist, businessman and patriot, has blazed a romantic career solely depending on his native genius and self-efforts that appears literally stranger than fiction with which he has so gloriously adorned his mother-tongue, the Oriya language. This boy, Fakirmohan Senapati, who had only about two years' formal education to his credit, became later on an erudite scholar in at least four Indian languages and acquired also an excellent working knowledge of English. He had no letters to tack to his name, but through his mental brilliance and other outstanding abilities he became a friend to the British civil officers of the highest rank and through their good offices was appointed Dewan of several ex-states of Orissa, big and small, making his mark as an administrator wherever he was posted. The boy who was looking after the repair of sails of media-

oval sailing ships became later on a pioneer in ushering in the modern era in Orissa.

Born and brought up in a mediaeval environment, he was wonderfully receptive to new ideas. When the wave of religious reforms began to flow from Bengal to other parts of India under the auspices of the Brahmo Samaj in the last quarter of the last century, he was among the first in backward Orissa to accept the new faith giving up the ancestral religion encrusted with castes, idols and priests, and all through his life he courageously campaigned against the social evils through his stories, novels and satires. Fakirmohan was among the first to sponsor and propagate in popular verse the ideas of the co-operative movement just reaching this country that time from Europe. He was the first among the Oriyas to set up a printing press as a private enterprise and to start and run a newspaper in Oriya on modern joint stock lines, taking the then British District Magistrate of Balasore, Mr. John Beams and Mr. T. E. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner of Orissa Division, among the shareholders. He says in his autobiography that on the day it was announced in the town of Balasore that a printing press would start operating, the entire bazar closed down and half the government officials took casual leave to see the miracle. The entire machine had been brought all the way from Calcutta to Balasore,—a distance of more than a hundred miles, in bullock carts, as the present railway line running all along the east coast of India, was still a far cry. The transport took twenty-two days, now a matter of a few hours only. Rich folk from distant countryside came in palanquins to see Senapati's printing press in operation.

The Oriyas were passing through a very dark period those days. The present state of Orissa was created only the other day. For almost the whole period of the British rule, the Oriyas lived scattered in four different provinces, the largest group being tacked to the tail of the then Bengal Presidency for nearly more than a century. Taking advantage of the political backwardness of the Oriyas and their administrative and political insignificance, some over-imaginative Bengali officials tried to wipe Oriya out of existence and plant their language in its place. Justifying his name Senapati (general) Fakir-

mohan,—that time no bigger than a primary school teacher,—became the spear-head of the agitation of the Oriyas against this sinister move. Thanks to the support of Mr. John Beames, the celebrated British civilian and linguist referred to above and posted as the District Magistrate of Balasore that time, the British Administration declared Oriya as an independent language and not a mere dialect of a sister language as it was being attempted to be proved. Young Fakirmohan thus saved his mother-tongue spoken by fifteen million people from practically a political assassination. But for him the modern state of Orissa would not have been in existence at all.

Fakirmohan has not only saved his language from an impending death but has adorned it as none else have done so far. With a view to removing the stigma of its backwardness he went on writing and publishing almost incessantly all through his long life on all manner of topics with amazing versatility. He wrote poems by the hundred including tell-tale satires, lyrics of all varieties and poems for the children. Single-handed, he undertook a literal translation into Oriya of the immense epics of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat*. He wrote text-books on history, mathematics and other subjects for the new-fangled schools opened by the British and got rewards for that from the Government. He wrote articles on all matters of public importance in the contemporary press and wrote also an excellent epic on the life of Buddha.

But the most significant and valuable of his contributions to his language and people are his unique short stories and novels. He is the first writer of modern short stories in Oriya, which are now available to the reading public in two volumes under the title *Galpa-Swalpa* (a few stories). The earliest of his stories '*Lachhmania*' was published in 1868 and is supposed by some to be perhaps the first modern short story in modern Indian languages. These stories, no less than his celebrated novels, are a lively picture-gallery of contemporary Orissa touching almost all the salient aspects of the social set-up of those days. His novel '*Chhama Athaguntha*' is a masterpiece of realistic fiction depicting the sad victimisation of an innocent couple of weavers by the sordid ambitions of a village money-lender and a wily unscrupulous woman,—

his accomplice and concubine. His novel '*Prayaschitta*' is a picture of the tragedy of the non-chalant defiance of youth against the old order which the great writer saw in his own life-time,—probably in his own family (his only son turning to be a declared atheist), as a result of the impact of English education on Indian society. His '*Lachama*' is a realistic historical novel bringing to life the horrors of guerilla warfare between the Marhattas and the Pathans over Bengal and Orissa in the 18th century. Through the ever-shifting military exploits and political manoeuvres the character of Lachama, the heroine,—an up-country lady, who on her way to Puri on pilgrimage lost her whole family in one of such skirmishes of the war-lords,—fills the readers' mind not only with compassion, righteous indignation and sympathy but also admiration when at a strategic moment at the end of the story, she avenges the death of her near and dear ones helping in the murder of the notorious Bargee-leader, Bhaskar Pundit. His other major novel '*Mamu*' (the maternal uncle) is also another social picture-gallery illustrating the battle of good and evil and the redemption on the fallen human soul through repentance.

All these novels of Senapati are unique in character for many reasons, the chief among which are that these major creations in the right Western style were written by a man who had no English education to his credit, and strangely contradicting his mediaeval upbringing these were written, not in the Sanskritised prose of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee—almost his contemporaries in Bengali,—but in the till then contemptible common speech of the masses and drew all his characters from the great store-house of Life which alone he knew so intimately. Hence both his style and characters vibrate with rough rustic vitality of the common man. Tinged with humour and criticism of contemporary life and illuminated by a broad non-sectarian idealism, these novels of his have remained unequalled in Oriya language so far. And for taking the common man as his subject and giving the common man's rough but racy speech the dignity of literature, Fakirmohan may be taken as the first proletariat author of India. His novels do not preach anything except teaching through the exhilarating delight of an

inimitable art, the need of a balanced ethical life. On the other hand, his fiction represents the life in rural Orissa in flesh and blood, picturesque with its very shortcomings, as any would meet within rural Orissa even to-day, although more than half a century has passed away since Senapati's books were written. He has left behind characters that have become part of the national consciousness in Orissa.

Fakirmohan proved himself an able administrator also. For some years he was the assistant Dewan of Keonjhar State, at present getting celebrity for its rich mineral resources including gold. During Fakirmohan's tenure of office the Bhuyans of the State rose in rebellion on some sentimental grounds. The Raja fled to Cuttack leaving his family, to shift for themselves, at the State Capital. But Fakirmohan remained at the spot to protect the Rani and other ladies in the palace; and while he was marching at the head of the small militia of the state into the rebels' hide-outs, he was overpowered by the enemy's numerical superiority and was taken as a hostage to their jungle headquarters. Giving out that he would help the rebel leader in administration when he won victory and got the Gadi, Fakirmohan soon however, won the rebels' confidence and through an ingeniously worded letter supposed to be addressed and sent to his personal servant for sending some betel leaves and nuts, got the Government forces on the rebels all unawares and thus helped to quell the rebellion all over the State.

Much of this uniquely romantic and exciting career would have remained unknown to posterity had not Fakirmohan cared to write down his own eventful life in his retiring years at Balasore. This book, full of exciting incidents, is as interesting as any book of fiction. It may be one of the few really fine autobiographies in the entire Indian literature. Here is an extract from an early chapter describing life in Orissa in the early fifties of the last century that is apt to make our thoughts wistful and stir up nostalgic feelings in us for the golden age that is never to come back. So Senapati says :

'At that time the pay of the officers in the Revenue Department ranged from three to ten rupees. The Superintendents alone enjoyed the salaries of Rs. 10/—. But with these small amounts of

money people lived happily. Goods of daily use were cheap indeed. Here are some samples—rice $1\frac{1}{2}$ maunds per rupee, moong dal annas ten per maund, oil seven seers per rupee, and fish one to two seers for a pice. Only the upper class officers and rich folk wore fine cloth manufactured at Balasore. But all the people in the mofussil used their hand-made rough cloth spinning their own yarn. Only those who had not ladies in the family to spin, purchased clothes from the market. In the countryside everybody had a small cotton plantation at the back of his house and every lady in the family owned a Charkha. The yarn was handed over to the local weaver who wove the cloth at the rate of a pice per cubit.

Fakirmohan lived upto the good old age of eighty, honoured by all sections of people in his land. As a mark of gratitude for his contributions to the national life of the Oriyas and their language, he was elected President of the All Orissa Political Union Conference in 1904, which is rather an unusual and unique honour for a man of letters. His well-planned garden-house at Balasore is now a place of pilgrimage for the Oriyas. He died in 1918.

Radhanath, the National Poet

Orissa is richly and abundantly endowed by nature. It is one of the picturesque states in the Indian Republic. A land with a long sea-board with famous health and pleasure resorts like Puri, Chandipur and Gopalpur, it is decoratively intersected also with well-wooded mountain ranges and mighty rivers whose wide valleys are covered with rich and extensive forests or intensively cultivated orchards and paddy fields. These colourful and peaceful areas of hills and dales, so long noted for jungle products and utterly unsophisticated simple folk living off the jungle, are now turning into the Ruhr of the Indian Republic for possessing one of the richest mineral belts in the world. In the deltaic coastal strips of Orissa, on the other hand, with the endless chains of blue mountains standing in serrated rows all along the Western border on one side, and smiling cultivated fields extending uninterruptedly upto the sky-line on the other except for the little villages dotted all over, nestling inside evergreen belts of giant tropical trees, with innumerable rivers, big and small, meandering their capricious courses down to the sea, and

the enchanting Chilka lake studded with thousand and one blue, grey and emerald islands and hills swarming with aquatic fowls, and picturesque with primitive little boats sailing in all directions with oblong sails of stripped bamboo, set like a lovely gem in this long loose colourful garland of nature, the travellers on the South-Eastern Railway get a kaleidoscopic glimpse of Lady Orissa's charms that is not easily to be forgotten.

To the colour and contour of nature charming by themselves, magnificent temples, historic events and legends of a bewildering galaxy of gods and goddesses and of mythical heroes and heroines have lent additional flavour to many a beauty spot in Orissa.

But all these nature's charms and romantic associations had, strangely and surprisingly enough, made no impression on the minds of the long line of Orissa's poets from the 13th up to the 19th centuries. Nature's description at the hands of these writers of epics, *Puranas* and ornamented tales, was stereotyped, stilted and lacking personal appreciation or observation. One gets only the conventional narration of seasons with their erotic reactions on the sentimental heroes and heroines and boring puns and quips out of conventional phrases.

But in the last quarter of the 19th century a poet started singing in whose well-chiselled, well-chosen diction, the mute land and nature of Orissa immediately got the long-awaited release of outspoken expression. That poet is Radhanath Roy, whose poems have turned out to be the greatest single factor in making Orissa cease to be a mere political or geographical term and in being enshrined in the hearts of the Oriyas with the charm of a dear living personality.

Radhanath was born of cultured parents in 1848 in the village of Kedarpur in North Balasore District. He was sickly all through his life and for that reason could not have the university education for which he was mentally so pre-eminently equipped. It may not be out of place to say that he was one of the few in Orissa who first sat for the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University and in his year he was the only boy who passed the test in the whole district of Balasore. Fakirmohan Senapati says in his autobio-

graphy that when the news reached the Collectorate of Balasore that the sickly child of Sundar Baboo (Radhanath's father who was serving as a clerk in the Collectorate there) had passed the Matriculation Examination, the clerks were heard remarking that passing Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University (that time newly established) was not a very extraordinary feat after all !

Radhanath studied up to the Junior degree examination at Calcutta but had to stop there due to bad health. He then became a teacher and on account of his efficiency and brilliance retired as a Divisional Inspector of Schools.

In spite of a haphazard education Radhanath was, however, taken to be a profound scholar of his times in Sanskrit and a person well-read in English with deep and extensive acquaintance with Oriya, Bengali and Hindi. His deep scholarship in no small way complemented his poetic talents for the type of literary creations with which he enriched his language.

Radhanath is pre-eminently a narrative poet and a great poet at that. Ancient and mediaeval Oriya literature teem with narrative poetry of many varieties ; but Radhanath broke a new path freeing the tale of unnecessary verbiage, irrelevant side-issues, the mere conventionalities and the crude ambition of most of the mediaeval metrical romancers to show off their talents in verbal juggleries in versification. Radhanath introduced the style of telling a story in the direct, forthright manner, not forgetting however, the indispensable linguistic embellishments such as alliterations, assonances and pretty rhymes which he used with a masterly restraint and elegance. But he also meticulously maintained the precision of the words and phrases he used, with apt adjectives and the most telling epithets. This, I think, he absorbed from his extensive reading of Sanskrit, particularly the works of Kalidas whose famous work *Meghduta* he has translated into Oriya,—the best translation so far, as those who know have told me, of that famous Sanskrit masterpiece in any Indian vernacular.

But as in the simple but elegant and soothing narrative style which he adopted, Radhanath is unique in Oriya language in other ways also for which he is taken to be, besides being the first national

poet of Orissa, the father of a new age in Oriya poetry. He, for the first time in Oriya language made Orissa's picturesque landscape the background of his romances and transplanted Greek and Roman myths on to that background so dexterously that places, monuments and temples in Orissa have begun to be known and explained according to what Radhanath has said about them in his poems. Indeed Radhanath may be said to have Hellenised Oriya literature by bringing into its circle all the local gods and goddesses of Orissa and by building up stories with the flesh and blood of Orissan history and legends of these local gods and goddesses on Greek and Roman frameworks. I shall try to illustrate his process by describing here one of his earliest and smallest and most charming pieces, the little-long poem called '*Chandrabhaga*'.

In this poem Radhanath tries to give a poetic explanation for the ruin of the famous Sun-temple of Konarka. In broad outlines it is nothing but the story of Apollo and Daphne of the European classics. Radhanath has turned this Greek mythological pair into the Hindu god Surya and the shy maiden Chandrabhaga, the pretty daughter of a hermit named Sumanyu who had his hermitage not far from the Sun-temple of Konarka. The story starts with a full-moon festival in the temple of Jagannath at Puri, on which occasion all the terrestrial and heavenly gods and goddesses are expected to visit that famous shrine to pay their respects to the Lord of the Universe. The Goddess Samalai from Sambalpur has come along with Kalijai from the Chilika lake and so on and so forth. They all found, however, Kamadeva, the Hindu Cupid waiting at the gates and they all bowed to Him before they went inside, for who was not afraid of the pranks of that mischievous person? But the last to arrive was the Sun-god Surya with his nine planets and ignoring the existence of Kamadeva at the gates, went straight towards the *sanctum sanctorum*. This infuriated Kamadeva who decided on having vengeance on the haughty Surya who thought he was free of Kama's powers. And so, not long after, the pretty Chandrabhaga who used to play non-chalantly on the sandy beaches, was found one day being pursued by an extraordinarily handsome youngman with appeals for her love. He was no other than Surya in human guise

to get the love of this earthly damsel under the intoxicating influence of Kama's arrows. The girl, unused to male contacts so far, except that of her father, started running from the impetuous lover. She ran and ran until she was exhausted and then plunged into the billows of the sea and disappeared. Disappointed and repentant, when Surya returned to his temple, he was aghast to find his magnificent shrine in ruins, which he came to know was the consequence of the curse on him of the sage Sumanyu, Chandrabhaga's father for the latter's sin.

Actually the river named Chandrabhaga falls into the sea close to the Sun-temple of Konarka. That indicates the power of Radhanath's imagination in naturalising myths of distant lands and times in Orissa's national set-up.

While in most of his metrical romances Radhanath uses Orissa's nature as the fitting background of his characters, in his poem '*Chilika*' on the famous picturesque lake of that name, he appears as the lover and worshipper of nature par excellence. The abandon with which he describes his ecstatic feelings over the charms of this lake, the lively pen-pictures he gives of the surrounding hills, isles, the monuments and images, the way he stirs up historic associations imagining the part the lovely lake-lady played in the history of Orissa, and his predictions of the glories that are bound to grow up all along her shores, the mellifluous, suave and elegant couplets in which the whole poem is written—all that makes this '*Chilika*' of Radhanath a unique poem perhaps in the whole Indian literature. I have yet to know of an entire *kavya* written on a geographical entity such as this Radhanath's '*Chilika*' in any other Indian literature.

Radhanath's *magnum opus*, however, is supposed to be the epic '*Mahayatra*' or 'the journey's end' which is written in blank verse on Miltonic lines, describing the last journey of the Pandavas towards the upper Himalayas. But the poet puts Orissa in their circumambulatory itinerary like his predecessor Sarala Das, during which at Puri the Pandavas meet the Fire-god who thenceforth becomes their guide. The Fire-god takes the great heroes to the Western ghats and there unfolds to them the vast panorama of the

future that was to happen over India, in the style of Archangel Gabriel showing the coming events to our first ancestors in Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

But the poet could not finish this grand work. Planned to be finished in twenty-one cantos, only seven are now available which brings India's story to the fateful first battle of Panipat. But though unfinished, like the ruins of Konarka, this epic too, written in majestic sonorous stirring blank verse, is a magnificent work, both in its conception and execution.

No review of the works of Radhanath will be complete without special mention of his '*Durbar*', a verse-satire on the feudatory chiefs of Orissa attending the durbar of their British overlords, and of his incomplete kavya '*Parvati*' which sounds Sophoclean depths by dealing in a gripping and poignantly pathetic manner the legendary tale of incestuous love supposed to have taken place in the family of a certain king of Orissa with the most tragic consequences. Radhanath died in 1908, leaving behind a rich literary legacy for the Oriyas.

Madhusudan Rao—the Poet-Saint

The third hero of modern Oriya literature is Madhusudan Rao. If a traveller just happens to be present in an evening in any school in any part of Orissa, he is sure to listen to hymns being recited by the boys sitting cross-legged in rows in the school halls after they have lighted their meagre oil-lamps, and without fail, one of those religious recitations will be ending as below :

Lead me on the path of Truth and piety,
Bathe me with the showers of Thy love,
Be my great refuge
And accept the complete surrender of this
life of mine at Thine feet.

That is from Madhusudan Rao, the great modern devotional poet of Orissa, whose songs, lyrics, odes, sonnets and essays have been exercising a deep ethical and spiritual influence on the mind of the young generations in Orissa for the last one-hundred years or so for their lofty idealism and of life divine that they breathe. His poems are taught in every school in Orissa and a very considerable

portion of his lines in poetry and prose get into the very mental make-up of the average cultivated Oriya. Whatever Madhusudan wrote from couplets and quatrains in childrens' primers in which he was pre-eminently successful to much more serious literary and patriotic odes and hymns, there is in them an atmosphere of purity and high thinking that can never be missed by any reader. In his Oriya '*ABC*' book which is the best of its kind written so far and which has been in use for almost a century initiating millions of Oriya children into the mysteries of letters and words, the God-intoxicated poet-teacher makes his little readers carol as below :

It is morning, how sweetly sing the birds !

The heart dances with the rhythm of their music.

Ye boys, sing in chorus with the birds,

Remembering God, the cause of this creation and Father
of us all.

Madhusudan was born in 1853 in a devout Hindu family in Puri. But later on he got converted into Brahmoism and became for nearly half a century the spear-head of all social and religious reforms in Orissa. He studied up to the First Arts Examination of those days and started life as a teacher. He retired as a Divisional Inspector of Schools like his Guru Radhanath, whom he first met as his teacher in the Government High School at Puri. The intimacy that grew up between these two intellectuals in spite of differences in years has become legendary in Orissa.

In the year 1873 Radhanath, Madhusudan and Fakirmohan, the inseparable literary trio of Orissa who have built up the modern Oriya literature, happened to be together in Balasore,—Radhanath as the District Inspector of Schools, Madhusudan as an Assistant Teacher of the local Government High School, and Fakirmohan as the editor of *Sambadbahika*, a weekly news-cum-views paper. For the Oriya literature this was like a combination of benignant planets. These three, in the prime of their youth at that time, frequently met and planned to usher in the new era in Orissa which was already fruitfully established in the neighbouring provinces. In response to the Government call for text-books of the modern varieties, while Fakirmohan wrote books on history, mathematics and geome-

try in Oriya, Radhanath and Madhusudan published combinedly a collection of modern lyrics named '*Chhandamala*' or A Garland of Ballads. This publication took the whole country by storm ; it became like the Lyrical ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge, the harbinger of a new age of poetry in Orissa. Entire poems of this collection were on the lips of newly educated Oriyas. The majority of the poems, however, were from the pen of Madhusudan.

Madhusudan was essentially a preacher and teacher, utilising the literary vehicles for the propagation of his ideas. He appears truly inspired only occasionally. But with the genuinely devotional and ascetic character of his daily existence and the high ethical standards that he maintained in his day-to-day conduct, the altitude of his thought-level was generally sufficiently high so as to make whatever he wrote strikingly clean and noble in contrast to what generally went by the name of literature at that time in Orissa. Now he is more or less honoured in Orissa not so much as a poet of high order according to the real literary standard, but as a poet-saint or poet-teacher. His reputation also as a professional teacher and educationist and creator of teachers is as undying in Orissa as that as a psalmist. As the Principal of the Secondary Teachers' Training School at Cuttack for nearly two decades, Madhusudan set the stamp of his noble personality on hundreds of teachers in Orissa's rural areas, whose thoroughness of the subjects they taught and their moral qualities as teachers are nostalgically remembered by both the public and the Government authorities even to-day. That entire class of mostly Madhusudan's creation is dead to the great detriment of Orissa's educational standards ; but it is a happy thing that the memories of the great educationist are still alive and honoured in the whole land, and that his poems, the real deathless teachers of his people, are still taught in all the schools in Orissa.

At times we do find Madhusudan profoundly stirred by his deep religious sentiments and the products of these moments; though few and far between, are genuinely inspired. These are his celebrated poems such as '*The Festival of the Dawn in the Himalayas*'. In these pieces the teacher or the puritanic preacher has just evaporated in the boiling heat of sublime emotions, the lines have the natural and

sonorous ring of the inspired utterances of the Vedic hymns. They present to the mental vision of sympathetic and understanding readers, the picture of the human soul either absorbed in the world-soul by a beatific expansion of his consciousness or losing his little entity in that of the Creator through the vision of Nature's magnificence. The diction is dignified like that in the classical Sanskrit literature and vibrates like religious chants and the imageries are such as to lift the reader into a rarefied level.

Thus as a teacher, educationist, poet and religious leader, Madhusudan Rao has been occupying a unique place in the national heritage of the Oriyas. As the outlook of the people in Orissa, as in the other parts of the world, is getting more and more scientific and materialistic, he may happen to be Orissa's last great mystic poet, speaking of a merciful Father in heaven, whom even he perhaps had never seen; he, like many others in that galaxy, perhaps just imagined. But all the same, in spite of our emphasis on secularity and materialism, poets like Madhusudan will continue, like beacon lights, indicating the existence of the unseen worlds and the unearthly joys.

But Madhusudan was no mere rider of the clouds. Living in the Victorian period he strongly believed in the New Age of Man bringing in universal brotherhood among the ever-warring peoples and endless prosperity through science. His words uttered at the start of this century still ring in our ears as the clarion call to bungling humanity :

Ye Humanity, listen to the New Message that
 The new Age is coming in the chain of Lord's Law ;
 And also listen to with gladness that the worlds talk
 Of One Great Creator and His one Human Family,—
 Asia and Europe and Africa are being linked with America,
 Forming the Assembly of Man in accordance with laws of love
 of our Lord,
 And are now beginning to utter the nectar-sweet words—
 Love and amity.

How fitting these words are to the world-situation to-day even after more than half-a-century. Madhusudan died in 1912.

The Followers of these three Masters

These three masters of modern Oriya literature had each a host of imitators. But two of them are recognised on all hands to have had the true poetic genius and to have contributed accordingly books and poems that have been given honoured niches in the nation's temple of glory. They filled up very important gaps in the cultural life of the Oriyas.

Nandkishore Bal, the Poet of the Village

Sri Nandkishore Bal, one of these two, was an officer of the Education Department, well-educated in English and Sanskrit and like Sarala Das came of that social class in Orissa that is deeply rooted to the soil. This and his early upbringing in his native village made such an indelible impression upon the sensitive soul of the poet as not even his long education on Western lines could affect. For the first time in Oriya literature this country-bred poet, inspite of his university education and residence in urban areas for the most of his official life, sang of the village and the village-folk and wrote lyrics, lullabies, odes and ballads in the line of much-neglected folk songs of Orissa. His '*Palli-chitra*' or 'The pictures of the village' is a genuine show of Orissan village life enchantingly and nostalgically put in a fittingly narrative metre and in simple elegant diction. As we read this small volume of great merits, the procession of the hard-hearted village school teacher,—the terror of the children, the talkative village barber, the village minstrel begging alms and bringing tears in the eyes of the soft-hearted housewives by singing the ballad of prince,—Govinda Chandra, who left his home to become a Yogi,—to the accompaniment of the mono-stringed guitar, and also the village haberdasher, the village priest and all those familiar scenes of any village,—pass along before our mind's eye with such a vividness, creating situations of humour and pathos as it proceeds, that make this little poem a treasure in the memory of any cultured Oriya. Nandkishore wrote innumerable poems and a few kavyas on the lines of Radhanath. But all that is now considered as no more than second-rate imitation and he is slowly gaining immortality in Oriya literature for his children's

poems written in the spirit of Orissan folk-lore and his simple and lively descriptions of village life.

Gangadhar Meher—the Classic Star

The other poet Gangadhar Meher is a class by himself. Meher are the hereditary producers of the famous Sambalpur textiles. Poet Gangadhar was born to one of these poor Meher families at Barapalli in the District of Sambalpur. Though he had very little formal education, he had managed to have an excellent knowledge of Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali and some amount of English also through self-study. For a living he, till very late in life, had to follow the hereditary vocation of weaving clothes and personally selling these in the local 'Hat'. He became famous all over Orissa after the publication of his very first book and thereafter his life became a little more comfortable mainly for having in the patriotic zamindar of Borasambar, living not far from his village, his life-long patron.

What distinguishes Meher from all other poets in Orissa is his super-excellent craftsmanship. He turned whatever base metal he touched into finest gold through his alchemic touch. He was not very original in his plots and patterns and followed the usual forms of his predecessors ; but what marked off this poor semi-educated weaver from all other fellow writers was a way he excelled them all in the singular and unprecedented beauty and excellence in the very execution. The way he tackled the old metres and made them serve modern needs, the elegance and charm of his diction, his apt and faultless rhymings, the serene classical dignity that ran through his entire performance and above all the rare insight he displays into the minds of his characters, make him stand out from the whole galaxy of poets in Orissa. All aspects considered, Gangadhar may be taken as a miniature Kalidas in Oriya literature. As Kalidas borrowed not only the characters, but also similes, metaphors and descriptions from many of his predecessors and yet turned all that borrowed material into pictures of wondrous beauty that was not there before, exactly the same process is discernible in the working of the poetic genius of this simple weaver of Sambalpur. An enormous quantity of poetry has been produced in Oriya on the portrayal of Sita, the ideal woman ; but nothing in the whole Oriya

Is it necessary for Thine worship
 To count beads on a rosary ?
 Who indeed can tell Thine rosary
 The beads of which comprise myriads of stars ?
 And have I also the strength even to take the dust
 Off Thine feet on my pate ?
 For are not millions of solar worlds
 In those specks of dust ?

x x x x

What I shall worship Thee with
 Is the problem of problems,
 As what is there in this whole world
 Which is not Thine ?
 The I-ness that I have, is the only thing that alone is
 absolutely mine ?
 And I venture to surrender that at Thine feet,
 Ye Monarch of the worlds !

Meher, though classical in his mental make-up, was also keenly alive to the problems of current life. In '*Bharati-Bhabana*' or Musings of Mother India, he has bitterly attacked the British Government as any political leader of that time. In 'They too pass as Right Honourables' ! he has caustically satirised the corrupt dignitaries of the officialdom. He has written an excellent poem on such a drab subject as 'Panchayat' and in his '*Krushak Sangeet*' or 'Songs for the farmers' one finds the agricultural and social reformer in the poet, the messenger of new life in his New Age of Science through a garland of exquisite little ballads on such poetically contemptible subjects as 'groundnuts' and 'sugarcane', 'How to eradicate plant diseases', 'Cow-keeping', 'Cauliflower', 'Jerusalem Artichoke' etc., etc.

Meher, because of his lack of good education and poverty, was prevented from talking of a wider world. He knew only his district and the people living there and their problems. And he knew the classical Indian literature through books. The only source of his materials was his limited world ; but the little that he knew, he knew most intimately, and saw that little world with the third eye of a genuine poet. What Jane Austen has done in the English

novels, he has done in poetry, a miniature but highly finished filligree work of the ant-hill in which he lived. He has sung of the natural beauties of Sambalpur as was never done before. The small hill of Budharaja that overlooks the Sambalpur city, and under whose shadow I am now penning these humble lines trying my level best to give a pen-picture of the great poet, the famous river Mahanadi that flows by this city, the Hirakud Island now celebrated for the enormous hydro-electric project established there by the Government of India,—all these, besides most other notable places of interest of Orissa, have been immortalised by the pen of Poet Meher. Like a true poet he has charmed us with exquisite music of his lines and the high idealism that saturates all his works. No subject was contemptible for his pen, if it was likely to do any little good for the common man. He protested against and satirised the contemporary wrongs and tyrannies of the officials and of the foreign government with a fearlessness in spite of his poor conditions, that is found only in men of real genius. In many a poem he daringly exposes the shortcomings of the Oriyas, his fallen compatriots, and exhorts them to rise and march ahead following the footsteps of the more progressive nations. Thus by any criterion this poor semi-educated simple weaver of Sambalpur, comes out triumphant as a great poet endowed with poetic talents not very common in any country.

In private life the poet was genuinely humble, ever anxious to do a good turn to others, feared by the corrupt and loved and respected by all. He never appealed to any Raja or rich man to get his book published. Manuscripts of his works lay with him for years together on that account and were rescued only by his friends and admirers from the ravages of white ants from his dingy ancestral cottage. He refused point blank a request from the Raja of Bamra State to be his court poet.

All told Gangadhar Meher is one of the rarest personalities and poets in the whole range of Oriya literature.

Gopal Chandra Praharaj—the Satirist

The third notable figure among the camp followers of the Trio is Sri Gopal Chandra Praharaj, the great prose satirist. Praharaj,

a lawyer by profession and inspired mostly by his friend Biswanath Kar, the famous editor, wrote numerous satirical pieces on current topics mostly in the columns of his friend's journal, the famous '*Utkal Sahitya*'. Only a few of these periodical writings have been published in book form, as '*Evenings in the Bhagbat Cottage*', '*Father's File*' and the '*Almanac of Mr. Bai Mohanty*'. As the subjects were mostly topical, the satires are now gradually losing edge to modern readers ; but some at least will retain their charm for ever for the way Praharaj treats his materials. The character of Bai Mohanty, an old world personality, sceptical of the modern ways, making caustic and satiristic comments on the new-fangled manners when the occasion arises, is already deathless. He is Sir Roger De Coverly in Oriya literature.

Praharaj had an amazingly fluent style. He is supposed to be the literary heir of Fakirmohan so far as his prose style is concerned. He wrote in the colloquial speech of the Cuttack district with a good sprinkling of legal court jargons with which he was closely familiar, being a lawyer himself. Enlivened with precious arguments, facile wit and broad humour, Praharaja's prose is highly racy and entertaining.

Towards the end of his life, however, Praharaj busied himself with the compilation of a quadrilingual dictionary—the biggest in Oriya so far, consisting of seven ponderous volumes. But lacking genuine scholarship and deep study this enormous work has not received the unstinted admiration of the intellectuals in the state. However, his collections of the folk-tales and the folk-sayings of Orissa are valuable contributions towards the Oriya literature.

The Satyavadi School

Though Praharaj and Meher and others of Radhanath-Fakirmohan period continued to write till the end of the first quarter of the present century, they were gradually being over-shadowed by the rise of another galaxy in the literary and political sky of Orissa from the sylvan academy in the Bokul groves of Sakhigopal near Puri, round the magnetic personality of Pandit Gopabandhu Das of hallowed memory. Gopabandhu Das is to Orissa in many more ways what Chittaranjan Das was to Bengal. He is, so to say, the builder

of modern Orissa. There was no aspect of national life in Orissa which was not touched by him and greatly improved thereby. He attracted round him a band of highly educated intellectuals, who inspired by his personality and character, unhesitatingly burned all their boats with him. This band consisting of Pandit Nilakanth Das, Godavaris Misra and Krupasindhu Misra and others with the moving spirit of Gopabandhu in the centre, gave a new turn to many social and educational aspects of Orissa's national life. But whereas most of the activities of this band have been buried in oblivion, they have survived through the works that they produced during the brief spell of their literary career. Soon they, except the master, drifted into active politics and lost their artistic soul in its whirlpool.

Sri Gopabandhu Das, the moving spirit of the Satyabadi group, is to-day looked upon more as a national institution than a saintly individual with the lofty ideals of service and sacrifice. He is the most inspiring orator, the noblest politico-social worker and the most far-sighted and clear-minded educationist of modern Orissa. He is essentially a noble servant of the humanity. The spoken word was his most natural vehicle of expression as being the easiest means of communication with the masses. An inspired and inspiring speaker, the silver-tongued oratory of this Orissan Messiah moved vast crowds to tears, the author of this survey passing through the same experience on several occasions.

He started writing poetry in his schoolboy days as an adolescent pastime, but the little that he produced was so stamped with individuality as to force recognition from no less a personality than Radhanath Roy, the supreme figure in Oriya literature in those days. But soon after his student career Gopabandhu plunged into various nation-building works of which the founding of the Gurukul at Sakhigopal is only one. The Academy was started to train up the younger generations in Orissa according to the age-old ideal of plain living and high thinking, of the forest universities of ancient India and to pick out from the learners able and worthy social and political workers. For two decades or so the School became the very intellectual and spiritual centre of Orissa. To educate the

classes in the ways of regeneration and to rouse among them a consciousness of the greatness of their own culture, Gopabandhu started a monthly journal called '*Satyavadi*' and a weekly review called the '*Samaj*'. In the columns of these periodicals he poured out his soul, his ideas and his spiritual agonies. The prose that he wrote with an inimitable blend of the colloquial and the classical, easy-flowing and sonorous and rhythmic, was a revelation of the grand beauty of the Oriya prose which the touch of a master hand can lend to it. In response to the call of the motherland's freedom movement led by the Mahatma Gopabandhu did not even hesitate to sacrifice his school and the periodicals and make himself and his colleagues the spear-head of the national agitation in Orissa. Gopabandhu was imprisoned in the Hazaribag Jail for two years from 1924 to 1926. In the lonely leisure of those two years Gopabandhu took to his old love poetry after several decades since he ceased to be a student.

He wrote two small books inside the Jail ; one is '*Bandir Atmakatha*' or the Soliloquy of a prisoner. In this book he gives his reactions to men, things and events, as the train that carries him to the Hazaribag Jail passes swiftly through one tract after another of his motherland, each of which was familiar to him being the scene of his patriotic and benevolent activities.

The other book is '*Dharmapada*', the story of the magnificent sacrifice of a boy of that name in the building of the famous temple of Konarka. These two little books have turned out to be just like folk poetry in Orissa. The following extracts from the '*Bandir Atmakatha*' will reveal the sincerity of a noble soul crying in agony for service of the suffering millions :

"The train that carries me has come to Jenapur.

How well the people their I know !

Three years back did I visit the place

When it was all under flood-waters ?

And incalculable damages were done to cattle and houses
and crops,

And tears were flowing down from thousand eyes !

Ah, the very remembrance of those scenes

Agonises my whole soul.

The train is already signalled to leave,
 The last bell rings and the green flag is wavering,—
 Oh, how I wish I were free to get down here
 To meet the dear people of Jenapur once more,
 And to speak a word, before parting,
 To everybody, going from village to village.
 On the banks of the river Brahmani
 My heart yearns to see how my people fare
 Patiently bearing the tyrannies of both Man and Nature,
 And I would like to pour out my unspoken feelings
 Before an assembly of theirs on the sands of the Brahmani.

In the other book *Dharmapada*, Gopabandhu has symbolised the heroic boy-mason who sacrificed his life for the sake of his class engaged in constructing the Konarka temple, as the modern ideal for the individual citizen to forget his own interests for those of the state, the community and the nation. There was a legend before, but it has gained literary glory through Gopabandhu. As a matter of fact the unknown boy of the legend is now eulogised by the name given to him by Gopabandhu.

Gopabandhu's Colleagues

Of the colleagues of Gopabandhu, Pandit Nilakanth Das has won celebrity in Orissa for his excellent historical kavyas known respectively as '*Mayadevi*', '*Konarke*' and '*Kharavela*'. In these he breaks new ground not only in the conception but also in the entire treatment—in trying new metre and rhymes, in coining new words and expressions and in creating new similis and metaphors. He is well-known also for his high-brow pedantic prose which is marked by deep but lop-sided scholarship. Among the rest Pandit Godavarish Misra is now famous for his unique ballads, though his historical plays and songs were quite a rage in their times; and Pandit Krupasindhu Misra specialised in historical research and left behind him the finest historical literature in Orissa in three monumental works—'*Konarke*', '*Barabati*' and '*Utkal Itihas*.'

The Gandhian Movement

The Gandhian movement, so welcome for political reasons, cast a spell of intellectual barrenness in Orissa. The continuity of

literary culture in the land from Fakirmohan to Pandit Gopabandhu and his band was suddenly snapped. Gopabandhu's unique Academy at Sakhigopal was disbanded with criminal short-sightedness, though Tagore's Shantiniketan and Malviya's Hindu University continued to flourish as national institutions; and he and his highly educated and highly cultured colleagues were now to spend their time, not in the pursuit of knowledge and culture, but in jails or with spinning wheels. It was a tragic metamorphosis. This created a very regrettable gap in the cultural history of modern Orissa. The band that started life idealistically devoted to culture, got irretrievably lost in the quagmire of politics.

The Gandhian movement on the whole has thus proved amazingly barren in the mental level of the people. It failed to produce any great poem or prose or play in the contemporary literature. Long after the passions arising out of the movement died down, attempts were made by some to recapitulate the reactions of the non-co-operation and the salt campaigns on the people. Notable in this line are the novels by Sri Hare Krushna Mahatab, who himself was ever in the thick of the fight against the British, and the kavya of '*Kamalayana*' by the present writer himself, who had only watched the struggle from outside. During the operational period of the different Gandhian movements, the participants in Orissa were kept inspired by the songs of Sri Birakishore Das and Sri Banchhanidhi Mohanty,—both Gandhian soldiers. None of these songs have sufficient literary worth for survival. And this is all that the great Gandhian movement has produced in Oriya literature, while on the other hand, the regional movement for the unification of the Oriya-speaking tracts in one state, has a record to be really proud of. That movement had inspired almost every Oriya poet for nearly fifty years into writing plays, lyrics, ballads and poems and kavyas,—all harping on Orissa's ancient glories,—some of which are sure to live for ever. A large mass of poetry has been produced in Oriya, however, on the personality of the great Bapuji himself, as in all other Indian languages. But the Mahatma does not belong to one particular time. He will be inspiring poets and artists in all coming genera-

tions like Buddha and Jesus Christ. Perhaps the best ode or song on him is still in the womb of the future.

The Sabuja group

In the meantime Rabindranath Tagore of Bengal had won the Nobel Prize for literature. The Satyavadi group, though not unfamiliar with Bengali or Tagore's works, had successfully resisted all through the soft effeminate Bengali influence getting into Oriya. But this valiant group was now outside the pales of literature, wandering in the barren wilderness of politics; and taking advantage of this void, a group of college students, thoroughly saturated with Tagore, began to call themselves 'Sabuja' or the green group, emulating the activities of the poet under the same nomenclature at one time. It is difficult to explain now what was really 'Green' about them. They did not add anything basically new to Oriya literature; they, of course, wrote poems prolifically with the easy fecundity of imitation. However, in a few poems of Annadasankar Roy,—a Bengali long domiciled in Orissa,—and many of Sri Baikuntha Patnaik and in the stories and novels of Sri Kalindicharan Panigrahi, this group has left a mark in literature. In Roy's and Sri Patnaik's lyrics we get a new tilt and rhythm in diction and some fresh imageries that were not there before, but unfortunately these look almost like Oriya translation of some Bengali prototype, though nobody dares accuse them of direct plagiarism.

Ever since the rise of those Sabujites, there have been attempts to create sensation by transplanting into Oriya novel patterns and ideologies from the Bengali literature. The Sabujites shone in the light borrowed from Tagore. By the thirties Tagore's influence in Bengal was a little over-powered by the quick onrush of socialistic and communistic ideas in literature and we get the overflow in Orissa also, almost simultaneously, brought in by poets like Sachi Routray and others. And soon after the broken recondite though deeply metaphorical speech of T. S. Eliot, is hailed as the new sensation in literature. The 'Progressives' in Bengal start trying the fashion and without delay their smaller cousins in Orissa also adopt this pattern claiming that to be the last word in poetic expression.

That is where we stand at present. But as I said before, while the 'Progressives', without any root in the soil, without any relation whatsoever with either the age-old peculiar traditions of the Oriya literature or even the contemporary conditions which they claim to represent, clamour for recognition as representing world-trends, the ancients and mediaevalists, not to be beaten by the modernists, also continue to push forward their claims with equal or more vigour. A pandit in the district of Ganjam is even now busy writing and publishing an enormous Puran on the life of Mahatma Gandhi in the right mediaeval style of Sarala Das or Balaram Das. Under the auspices of the Kalinga Sahitya Samaj of Sri Bichhanda Charan Patnaik, the traditions of Upendra Bhanja have had an appreciable revival. And along with them the admirers of Radhanath, Fakirmohan and Madhusudan, too carry on still the traditions of their respective masters. So, in the midst of all these strands of literature, all alive and vigorously woven together, the claim of these so-called 'Moderners' or 'Progressives' to call themselves as 'peoples' poets' just because their stuff is dyed deep with the noisy call for a new age and a relentless class war, sounds absolutely hollow to all else except themselves. As a matter of fact their poetry, bereft of traditions, rhymes, consistency and clarity of expression, is unintelligible, not to speak of to the illiterate masses, but even to the highly educated college teachers and other intellectuals. The entire production is a pile of political and literary jargon, heard these days from Peru to Peking with their roots in Moscow.

Out of this daily accumulating pile, not only in the monthly journals but even in the daily papers, a few poems of Sachi Routray stand out as excellent with the stamp of true and poignant aspects of modern life. Some of Sachi's short stories are also genuinely outstanding. As leader of the socialistic, communistic and progressive trends, Sachi has written a lot, in prose and in poetry, but I feel that his reputation as a real creative talent is likely to stand on those few poems and stories wherein there is no reference to class-war or Stalins or Lenins, but in which he has unwittingly

let his muse sing or speak spontaneously of the eternal human feelings.

Of the other outstanding contemporaries, a few more deserve special mention. One is Sri Gopinath Mohanty, who, through his enormous novels on the life of the neglected Adibasis in Orissa—the Kondhas, the Parajas and the Savaras has broken new ground. He has developed a peculiar prose style of his own, unusual, unsoft, perhaps a little uncouth and unpolished, but highly expressive and significant. He has got the award of Rs. 5,000 this year from the Sahitya Akademi for his novel '*Amrutar Santan*'.

Sri Gopinath Mohanty's brother, Sri Kanhu Charan Mohanty, is also a prolific author of novels. His thirtieth novel, I believe, came out this year and he is still in the full vigour of his creative faculties. He generally takes up rural and social problems for his themes and holds out solutions through the behaviour of his characters in an idealistic pattern. For this reason the characters look mostly unrealistic. His '*Sasti*' or '*Punishment*' appears to be his masterpiece, having combined in itself a proper balance of realism and idealistic conduct.

Both Mohantys are highly placed Government officials in Orissa.

Mention must be made also of Sri Godavarish Mohapatra, the satirist. His satirical magazine '*Niankhunta*' or '*The Poker*' has created history in journalism in Orissa. This is the one magazine that is read with gusto and delight by all classes of people in Orissa from top-ranking leaders and high officials to motor drivers and village Sarpanchas. Mohapatra spares nobody. There is none who is anybody in the State and who has not been hit hard by Godavarish Mohapatra's devastating wit and venomous pen. It is true he often stoops to vulgarities, but there is no gainsaying his powers as a first-rate humorist and satirist. He has an unusual felicity of expression both in prose and verse, and most of his admirers regret that he never attempts at more permanent things. But Mohapatra has fulfilled a contemporary need,—the need of exposing the corrupt, the hypocrite and the enemies of the law in a scathingly sarcastic manner that none else could even

partly do as successfully as he has done. Though irony, satire and lampoonery are his tools, Mohapatra has also written some of the finest short stories in Oriya and is the only litterateur in Orissa who lives comfortably by literature as a profession.

I cannot resist the temptation of offering to the readers of this survey a classic example of Mohapatra's humour, before going over to other topics.

A certain congress worker had a dispute with a tough neighbour who was not afraid of the police or the magistrate and absolutely impervious to the Gandhian methods of approach. The desperate disciple of Gandhi came to the conclusion at last that 'lathi' was the only method to which alone, his neighbour would respond. But with his professed faith in non-violence he could not openly resort to it. So, perplexed, he came to Sri Biswanath Das, the President of the P. C. C. for counsel and guidance. Sri Das heard his story, realised the poor worker's difficulties and told him that there was no shame in a Congress worker using a 'lathi', provided the 'lathi', before use, was properly wrapped in Khadi :

Of other contemporaries four more names come out as outstanding. Sri Radhamohan Gadanayak has earned well-deserved celebrity for his ballads and lyrics written in rhymes of unquestioned perfection and Sri Kunjabehari Das has become popular through patriotic poetry and as a specialist in folkpoetry of Orissa. Sri Surendranath Mohanty, M. P. and Sri Raj Kishore Roy, Oriya Lecturer, have established their reputations as writers of excellent short stories and as critics.

That is where the current Oriya literature stands,—not very much different, I believe, from other Indian literatures. The difference is only in degree and quantity and not in quality or character. I have tried myself to know as much of other Indian languages as possible through translations and accounts of them given by different writers. My impression is that Orissa's only drawback is the late start in modernism for political reasons and her very much restricted world of letters. Monthly magazines are still far from being financially successful, contributors are not paid at all and book-trade is still far from satisfactory. While a successful

book in Hindi or Bengali may mean a fortune to an author, the same in Oriya may not fetch its author more than a few hundred rupees. But the works that are already produced and are being produced even now, need have no fear for a qualitative comparison with their opposite numbers in other Indian languages. But things are moving, though slowly. After the formation of the Orissa State in 1936, schools and colleges have multiplied in this backward state, and with the rapid spread of education, literature is bound to grow. Translation has been a conspicuous lack in Oriya literature. The average Oriya intellectual hates translations; he would love to have anything from any part of the world, provided it is presented to him only in genuine Oriya garb. But the national taste is slowly changing and at present one notable publisher at Cuttack has taken it on himself, to specialise in translating books of international importance. Book sales are also coming up. A Hungarian indologist friend of mine, who was touring Orissa's artistic monuments with me last summer, was surprised to see the large number of bookshops in a town of the size of Cuttack.

Drama

Drama was another lack in Oriya literature, as Orissa is without any big city of the size of even Poona or Nagpur, not to speak of Calcutta or Bombay. But in this sphere also matters appear now to be very hopeful. In spite of the diversions of the ubiquitous cinema, Orissa has now three permanent theatres, running successfully on professional and business lines. The histrionic performances on these stages are definitely of a high order, though the managers have to deliberately stoop to lower levels in the plays presented, to cater to the majority of their clientele whose tastes cry for dances and horse-play in every performance.

The modern drama in Orissa was inaugurated by the late Ramasanker Roy in the seventies of the last century. The second stage was dominated by Sri Aswini Kumar Ghosh in the first quarter of the present century. Ghosh's successor is Sri Kalicharan Patnaik, who owned a theatre of his own and is, so to say, the father of all the existing theatres in Orissa and the Guru of all actors and actresses at present. He is practically retired.

But through his plays numbering about two dozens, Kali Baboo,—as he is popularly known,—has given a new orientation to the histrionic art, to stage management, to songs and dances, and the general atmosphere of the theatres in Orissa that have an individuality of their own, though being a musician, he has loaded his plays with the Jatra-tradition of songs and dances, losing sight of character developments. At present the Kali Baboo tradition is just being carried on by a number of young playwrights.

A few words about women writers of Orissa and I shall finish this survey.

Orissa has a number of women poets and writers since ancient times. Madhabi Dasi of Puri was a contemporary and devotee of Chaitanya and to please her Master wrote Vaishnava songs in Bengali which are accepted as treasures of Bengali literature. Srimati Brundabati Dasi, belonging to a highly cultured Karan family in the district of Puri, wrote '*Purnatama Chandrodaya Kavya*' in the last part of the 17th century. She indeed found herself in a family of poets,—her father-in-law, her husband, her son and grandson also having left behind poetical works. The queen of Raja Nisankadevo, a chieftain in the Ganjam district, wrote '*Padmavati Abhilasha Kavya*' in the 18th century. Names of Sulakhya Devi and Aparna Devi were well-known in the literary circles in Orissa in the 19th century, though they are now quite forgotten.

In modern times the most notable name, however, is that of Kuntala Kumari Sabat, who, born a Christian, got herself converted to Arya Samaj and after a brilliant medical career, settled down in Delhi as a private practitioner and died there. She was a prolific writer and has written quite a considerable amount of poetry and some novels also. She was aflame with patriotism and late in life felt the urge to write mystic poems dedicated to her God. But on the whole her writings lack restraint and polish and little of her works stand a chance of survival, though in her times she was quite a rage in Orissa.

At present, Srimati Bidyutprava Devi happens to be the only notable feminine figure in Oriya literature, she being of genuine poetic talents of a high order. Her felicity of expression and

rhyming niceties are remarkable. Her poetry has passion, and a romantic aroma that only comes from really gifted pen. But she too, suffers like Kuntala Kumari, from prolificality and repetitions and lack of signs of further growth. But she is still young, though now sunk deep in the worries of domesticity, and holds out hopes of new creations to be born out of new experiences of life.

PANJABI

The Land and its People

A look at any map can show that the Panjab once covered the entire area between Kabul and Peshawar to Delhi and from Kangra or Nagarkot & Sialkot to Kahrur and Multan and Uchh Harappa. The six rivers now called Sind (Attock-Panjnad), Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej formed its natural cultural-linguistic boundaries. The forests and deserts between the rivers formed another group of language-culture units, as did the mountains and the valleys and yet there were frequent physical and mental contacts. When talking of dialects we must take into consideration these barriers. At different times the limits of our state or Suba changed. In the earliest Hindu period there were many republics ; just before the Muslim invasion Peshawar, Lahore, Nagarkot or Kangra-Bhatinda were prominent and were ruled by one king while Multan formed another unit. Later, Delhi was added and the capital shifted to Delhi in 1206 A. D. Under the Sikh king Ranjit Singh, the Panjab was again reduced and now it has been truncated almost into equal halves. Prof. D. R. Mankad in his '*Date of Rig-veda*' says : Harappa is Hariyupiya. The battle of Hariyupiya took place like the battle on the banks of the Ravi. Harappa was a flourishing settlement of Varasikha Asuras at Rama period.

Let us study some ancient town-names. Harappa can be split into Hara (or Hari)+Pa. Philologically, it is related to another town name, Tappa. Hara refers to Shiv and Pa is either a short form of Pura or equivalent to 'wala'. We have even today a village called Harial in Rawalpindi District in which there are two villages, Devi and Gorakhpur. The remains of Mohenjo-Daro culture have also been found in Rupar District. Rupar (Ropar) is Rudrapur and Rudra again refers to Shiv. Peshawar and Lahore are corruptions of Purushpura and Lavapura. Sutlej and Bias are Shatadru and Vipasha. Kurukhetra on the Sutlej

is Kuru-Kshetra. Mundian, Mandhara, Vahali-Dhakva, and Murinda, Maur, Dasuha, derive from Munda, Madra, Valhika-Dhakas and Morinda, and Maurya, Dasyu, which are all names of tribes mentioned in Mahabharat, as are the tribes Sal and Nagara, which have left their names in Sialkot and Nagarkot. Then there is Multan from Mulsthan. Further, we have in three rivers Ravi or Irawati, Chandrabhaga (Chenab) and Saraswati three more God-names, of the Sun, the Moon and the Goddess of Learning. We have also among name-ends of villages and towns the Sanskrit words, besides Alaya-Al, Pura, Nagara and Kota, Kunda, Kund, Kanda and Pinda-Pind, Pindi which remind us of the Aryan sacrificial offerings.

Jihlam (Jhelum) was Vitasta and Chanab (Chenab) or Jhana was in the Veda, Asikni. Many Mahabharat heroes, major and minor, hailed from or came to the Panjab.¹

When, therefore, we think of the Panjab, we think of the land where Usinara, his son Sibi Ausinara (Rigvedic Risi) ruled, where Rigvedic hymns were composed, where Vishvamitra and Agastya fought; where Vashistha prayed for the abatement of the flood in the Ravi, where the Asuras—Daitya-Danava Kings Hiranya Kashipu and Prahlad lived and Narsimha (Man-Lion)—incarnation of God—appeared; where Yudhisthira met Yam at Katas; where Jalpa or Jalandhari goddess resides at Kangra; where Panini wrote his grammar, Kautilya his *Arthashastra*, and Valmiki his *Ramayan* and Gunadhya his *Vadd-Kaha* (in Bhut Bhaka)—called in Sanskrit translation *Brihat Katha*; where the *Bhagwad Gita* was uttered by Sri Krishna at Kurukshetra, the site of the carnage of Mahabharat, where Lava and Kush, two sons of Sri Rama passed their early

"In the Hymns of the *Rigveda* the names of about 25 rivers are mentioned; and these many rivers all belong to the system of the Indus, the earliest Aryan invaders made their home partly to the west and partly to the east of the Indus". That explains the presence of the largest element of Vedic vocabulary and mentality in the districts of Attock, Campbellpur, Rawalpindi and Jhelum. One wonders if Arya is preserved in Aria and Arai, which mean a cutter, and the land-tiller, specially the vegetable-grower and cow-tender. Afghanistan was known as Ariana and Persia as Aria. It must, however, be added that in the *Rigveda* both the Yamuna and the Ganges are mentioned (V. 52 17; X. 15,5; and III, 58, 6; VI, 45, 31)

days and later fought a battle against their father; where the Buddhist University of Taxila thrived at Shaha-di-dheri (Dheri being the same word as the Sindhi word Daro) and the Kanishka Vihar at Peshawar, where Darius and Xerxes came, where Alexander fought the last but one battle of his young life; where Chandragupta first exploited his opportunity; where Gorakh Nath and Ratna Nath taught; whereto came three of the earliest Arab and Persian Muslim saints, Ghazi Mian or Salar Mian, Ali Hijveri and Al-Hallaj-ibn Mansur. Through this land passed the two Chinese travellers, one of whom Hiuen Tsang received instructions from Chandra Varma, a scholar at the Nagaradhana Vihara in the Jalandhara country, and many Muslim saints and divines on their way to Gujerat, the Deccan and the U. P. Chand Bardai, the court poet of Prithviraj Chauhan of Ajmer and Delhi, was born at Lahore. Ours is further the land of Shalivahan who defeated Vikramaditya and whose son defeated at the game of Chopar, the Greek Ruler Sirkap of West Panjab and killed a Dom King of Sind; of Jaipal and Anandpal who had their capital at Bhatinda: Bhatti-pinda. Sri Shankaracharya passed through this land on his way to Kashmir. From the south also came to us representatives of the Manbhau (Mahanubhava) sects of the Maharashtra. Swami Dayanand came to us from the Gujerat (Kathiawar) in the 19th century.

For 200 years this land was ruled in part by the Persians, descendants of Darius I, and then for another 200 years by the descendants or governors of Greek Alexander; for still another 200 years by the Turks or the Ghaznavis. From the south-west and south-east came to this land the Rajputs and the Jats (Yadavas) to settle down in its plains and forests and oust the Gypsies, Janglis, Ods, etc., while the native Brahmans sought shelter in the hills bordering the north. The Huns, the Kushans, the Turks, the Mongols had their own contribution to make to the life and culture and language of this essentially Aryan land—the Aryavart.

Geography plays a dominant role in the religion, social organization and language and literature of a country. Geography underlies and underlines history. Language epitomizes and ensh-

and all of them,—geography, history, religion, the social system. One has only to look at names of places, persons, things, to get at the basic things and ideas and languages as well as the superstructures raised over the bases. When a person from Rawalpindi district swears by Dharma instead of by God or the Lord God we know that we are face to face with Buddhistic influences. We are reminded of the Muslim period when we see the map of the same district and read place-names like Turkwal, Moghul, Sayyid, Dhok Mian Wahab, as we are reminded of the Aryan period by such place names (Sanskrit words) as Devi, Gorasian, Sarja, Jhangi, Tavi, and the Hindu period (Pre-Muslim) by Dhok Gujran, Ahiran di Dhok, Rawalpindi. The following very ancient words figuring as end—or second—words designating the village or town settlement of, point to Aryan days : Pur, Dheri, Nagar, Dhok, Thatta, Jhok, al, ala, wala, chakk, pindi, pind. The Malwa area of the Panjab today refers us back to Malwa in Rajasthan.

Even the names of persons have significant tales to tell. As foreigners came, the names changed over from Sanskrit to an amalgam of Arabic-Persian with Sanskrit. Further, once there were single word names, then came the common end-words like Datt, Rac, Raj, Das, Mal, Chand, Ram, Nath, Singh, meaning Godgiven, Ruler, King, Slave (of a God or an incarnation), wrestler, Moon, Devoted to the Divine incarnations—Rama, Master and Lion respectively. The name Nanak is of great import as it traces from Nanak, the original home of maternal Grand-mother or Nani which certainly has something vital to do with Nana, the Egyptian Female Mother Goddess. Many problems of morphology are solved completely by reference to names of persons and places, how they get corrupted from original sounds and words and grammatical signs & usages. It is here in the names that the phonetic and linguistic genius of a race or country dominantly asserts itself as the musical and story-telling genius reflects itself in folksongs, lullabies, riddles, weather-sayings, etc.

The Language

The name Panjabi derives from Panj-ab, a Persian compound, which means the land of five rivers as Doab or Doaba means the

area bounded by two rivers. Where the Panjab rivers meet banks a town called Panchnada corrupted into Panj-nad. Obviously, the word Panjabi as the name of a language dates from the first "Persian" period. The Persians coined linguistic appellations by adding 'i' or 'wi' to the name of the city or province or country, or people. In this way were formed the language-names of Hindwi or Hindi & Lahauri (the language of the province of Lahore).

We give below about 500 basic Panjabi words, duly classified. A comparison with their Sanskrit originals gives us the exact character of this secondary language, which has evolved on the tongues of the mixed population under well-marked morphological and grammatical tendencies, out of the Prakrit speech of earlier days. Being a vernacularized form we called it an Apabhramsha. Apabhramsha as a general term covered the language spoken at one time over the entire territory formed of Rajasthan, Malwa, Gujerat, Sind and West Punjab. Later it specified the speech of Abhir and other related tribes.

Apabhramsha or Avahatta, was divided into Upnagar, Abhira and Gramya ; or Nagara, Upanagar & Brachar, the standard being Nagara, but as it is purely a regional phenomenon we call the language Desi or Desa Bhakha,¹ the regional speech. As this corruption or vernacularization was executed by people eating flesh who are contemptuously called Bhutas (disembodied spirits dwelling in forests) and Pishachas (eaters of flesh) the language was also called 'Bhut Bhakha' and/or 'Paishachi'. As the people dwelling in the Punjab plains were at first mostly horse-raisers, cow-tenders, goat-graziers, camel-drivers, of the same tribe as Sri Krishna, called Ahirs or Abhirs and Gujjars or Gurjars, the language was called Abhiri² and Gujri (still called so). Later the Ahirs & Gujars were

1 In contrast with Dev Bani. Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 A. D.) gives this contrast and also mentions under languages, Arbi, Torki, Parsi, Pahlawi, Pastawi, Sanskriti, Des Bhakhia, Dev Bani, Pingula-Charani (for Gits), Malechha.

2 The main Indian regional speeches (Des Bhakhas) were : Magadhi, Avanti, Prachya, Shaurseni, Ardhamagadhi, Valhika, Dakshinatya; the sub-languages were those spoken by the tribes or classes (low) Shabara, Abhira, Chandala, Sachara, Drara, Udrara and Vanchara, all appellations signifying occupation, tribe or caste or place of residence.

subjugated or eclipsed by the Jats or Jatts (Yadus or Yadavas) and so the language came to be known as Jatki.

1. Parts of the human body :—

सिर, बाल, टेढणी, गेज, लिट, मेढ़ी, चूँडी, जूँ, लीख, बख्त, पट्टी, मध्या, कस, नह्क, अख्त, हथ्य, पैर, मास, नहूँ, चीची, भंगूठा, बीलीं, बाँह, झारक, गिट्टा, पट्ट, भूँही, डूँह, फिमली, परांवी, गुट्ट, मियली, बीरी, तुमकला, बोड़ी, कछ्छ, बीण, गल्ह, गला, हंघ, दंद, होठ, पेपड़ी, सल्ल, घांवर, डिह, भंगल, लह, रत्त, मिस्स, गोहा, लत्त, टंग, पुड़पुड़ी, कंह, बोदी, मुक्का, सींद, गिड, चूची, बण, दुष, झड़ी, हड, हड़ी, पसली, पलसेटा, पासा, मोठा, मगर (मीर), तल्ली, मोच, मरोड़, पीड़, बेंदकीड़ बुल्लह, गुल्ल, पिट्ट, परसेडो, तरेली, जंघ, टुह, ठोडी, नाड़, नाडूभा, नहूँवर, जिज्जा, खुरंक, चुत्तड़, टट्टे, लक्क, फुल्लो, बिल्लो, झूझ ।

2. Actions of the bodily organs :—

बकण, दुरना, वैहण, बोलण, हसण, रोण, सुणना, चखण, वेखण, छोहण, सुंभण, भलाण, बण, हासा, खाण, टरकण, पदण, मारण, उठण बीड़ना, चुटण, फुटण, तरोड़ना, भन्नण, भजण, भजण, मुड़ना, सड़ीकण, चोण, वटण, फरकण, भंडना, लिसिभाण, मरोड़नां, थुकण, भकड़ना, दिलकण, छडण, छिकण, पडुछ्छण, छपण, डेगण, ढाहण, पीण, गुडण, चंडण, बल्हेटण, चुणना, चुकण, चुमण, परोण, सीण, अथरूँ वगाँण, वगण, छुटण, झपीडना, फुल्लण, छीछी करना, मूतरना, दगण, लिफण, फिसण, चरना, खाण, चह मारना, डफण, छंडण, छुडकण, तिडकण, तिल्हकण, दुरना, तरना, भडुण, भक्कड़ा, उडना, उछ्छलण, मरूकण, चबण, चिबण, चीकण, डीकलाण, (डीकलाण), चूसण, चुरकण, छरना करीचण, पड़ना, सुकण, सुम्भण, सोचण, कलपण, खप्पण, करिभण, बुड़बुड़ करना, बडाण, भउंभलण, भवांटी खाण, मल्लण, दब्बण, मोह निकलण, बड़ना, भुसड़ना, चुम्भण, चट्टण, सैहण, सैहसना, नहाण, बोण, बुल्लण, जप्की मारना, जंभण, कडवल्ल पैण, मरूंडण, पडुछ्छण, पुणना, बसीटी (बीसी) करना, पूंभण, बीटण, बहूँछरना, मछ्छरना, मुसकण, हफण, हुत्सड़ना, हुलसण, पंवरना, बरचण, परचाण, डकार मारना, हिडकी भाउणी, छी छी करनी ।

3. Family Relations :—

पिम्हो, पीक, माँ, माऊँ, भरा, भैण, ताइभा, चाचा, भाह्नी (भाबी), भाईभा, मासी, मसेर, फुकेर, फुफ्फी, भूभा, फुफकड़, मासड़, मजर, मलिहीहरा, भतरीभा, भतरिहूहरा, पोतरा, दोहतरा, पड़तोतरा, पड़बोहतरा, पड़बाबा, लकड़

दादा, नकड़दादा, दादी, चाची, फुफिहस्त, साला, ससिहाज, साली, पड़नानी, नाना, नानका, दादका, सहरेज, सहुरा, कुड़म, धी, जणा, जनानी, रन, खसम, वहुटी, गम्भरू, नूँह, मांवाँ, भणेश, पेका, साहरा, शरीक, सक्का, साकदार, साक नाता, टब्बर टोर, टबरी, सुभाणी, मुँडा, जातक, काका, भिभा, बापू, बाबा, बच्चू ।

4. Professions & Occupations :—

लुहार, सुनिभारा, कुम्हार (धुमार, कुम्हहार, धुमिहार), मलिभार, मोची, हाली, बाणीभां, हटवाणीभा, वणजारा, लड़ाका, तरसाण, नाई, हूम, भंड, कंजरी, मंगला, साध, भोड, भाजड़ी, गुमाला, गहीर, मांही (माभी), बककरवाल, मुनिभार, कामां, कंमीं, पहाडे वाला, ठठिभार, छींवा, घन्वा, नट्ट, रासधारीभा, बाहमण, परोहत, भचारजी, भाटड़ा, भुगीभां वाले, धुधिभां गलोजिभां वाले, छिक्के वेचणी, पेरनी, फफेकुटणी, पेरनी, ढाढी, मसल्ली, मसल्लण, चूहड़ा, कंजर, कसाई, तेली, दरजी, कासबी, जुलाहिभा, पातणी, चौर, तिरिभाकल, चौधरी, उचक्का, लुण्डा, लुच्चा, पांडी, भाई, धरमसालीभा, कनमैलीभा, कलाल, वैद, जोतकी (जोतगी), विचोला, नैण, भराई, गुज्जर, चारजी, पांधा, जोइसी, सलोतरी, भलवाण, मैहरा, मैहरी, मिसतरी, राज, मासकी, मुञ्जकुट्ट, वाणवट्ट, सूद, काइय, भावड़े, हलवाई, भड़भूजे, पंखीए, ताइफे, बाजीगर, बरूपीए, कलौत, ढाढी, जमकू, सुयरे ।

5. Animals, Birds, Reptiles, Trees¹, Plants :—

खोता, घोड़ा, खच्चर, टटू, वछ्छा, कट्टा, कट्टी, उट्ट, टोडा, कुत्ता, कतूरा, हिरन, गिहड़, भगिभाड़, गां, मझ, बकरी, बकरोटी, लेला, छतरा, दांद, भेड़, भेड, बैहतर, कां, चिड़, घुष्पी, उल्लू, कलचीट, कलबूतर, टटीहरी, तित्तर, बटेरा, कुक्कड़, लमडींग, इल्ल, नीलकंठ, लालड़ी, शिकरा, बतख, सप्प, लूहाँ, कोहड़, किल्ली, कीड़ी, दुर्मुही, फिस्सी, छज्जलहप, बीरबहुटी ।

6. Fruits and Vegetables :—

कलक, जौं, जमांह साग, सरिहों, करीं, कंडा, दरहेक, तूत, जंड, किककर, कुमांह, जंडड, बैर, फलाही, टाहली, हरनौली, सखड़ी, घंज, तर, खीरा, गन्ना, कमाद, तरेड़, तरेहड़ी, हदवाणा, तोरी, बताऊँ, करेला, निबू, खट्टी, अमार, खोड़, सेऊबेर, सेऊ, (से) नाखां, अमचूर, छोले, डहुँ, छल्ली, मकई, बाइरा, जुभार, तिल्ल, अलसी, सुहांजणा, तरेल, चोटे, सिट्टा, रूँ, डोडा, कपाह, फुट्टी ।

I wonder if Bodhi is the Bodhi-tree, the tree of wisdom, or the village council-tree mentioned by Havell as existent among the Panjab Aryans, is still preserved in the Panjab word Bohr for the very tree as also its use as the *Gra Panchaita* or Council-tree.

7. Eatables :—

दुग्ध, चिन्नी, मैदा, सूजी, छाण, छिट्ट, लस्सी, दलीया, पापड़, बड़ीयाँ, दाल, पराठे, बड़े, अन्न, ढोडी, दुप्पड़, फुलक, टुक्कर, रोटी, रोट, खिचड़ी, सक्कर, मलाई, खोपा, गिरी, मरच, लूण, हरदल, निशासता, पिन्नी, गुड़, पतासा, गुलगुले, फूलपतासे, जलेबी, छाह, खीर, खन्नी, ढाणे, सत्तू ।

8. Utensils, Implements & Armour :—

कटोरा, बाटी, बालटी, कड़ाही, कड़ाह, कस्स, कैह, घड़ा, घड़ोली, तवा, परात, कड़खी, बलटोही, बलटोहा, गागर, गंगासागरी, सरिटक, छाणनी, चिमटा, चमचा, कासक, भांडा टिहुर, लोह, चुल्ला, भट्टी, छूणी, ढक्कण, भांवां ।

9. Reading & Writing :—

पढ़ना, वाचणा, देखणा, पोथी, लेखा, लेखनी, लिखारी, लिखतम, कानी, बलोकणी, मस, मसवाणी, फड़का, अख्खर, पट्टी, फट्टी, लीक, मेसणा, पूंभणा, चीच मचोले, दाँदभूतरनी, टाकरे, लंडे, महाजनी, चाटसाल, पाठ, चाटड़ा, चाटकड़ा, पांघा, वही, पेती, बालबोध, गुटका, गरंध ।

10. Clothes & Ornaments :—

पग, चोला, कुड़ता, तंबी, घुटभा, फतूही, दुपट्टा, लांगड़, लुंगी, लाचा, लैहंगा, तंबा, भोखण, अंगी, बिड्डी, टोपी, लंगार, लीर, टोप, कनटोप, जत्ती, मौजा, पौला, जोड़ा, झुल्ल, जुल्ला, जुल्ली, लेफ, तलाई, चद्दर, लीडा, कपड़ा, लत्ता, खेस, दुतही, चुतही, सिरहाणा, उछाड़, पट्टू, कंबल, लोई, पोणा, परना, कछ्छ, कछैहरा, लंगोट, लंगोटा, लंगोटी, कुपीन, कुड़ती, चुन्नी, पल्ला, धोती, सुप्पणा, तरेवर, मुन्दरी, चौक, फुल्ल, तरीतड़ी, छाप, छल्ला, वाली, वाला, मुरकी, हार, पंजेब, हसीरी कड़ा, लींग, बंग, झुमका, डंडी, तत्ती, नथ्य, हमेल, भांभर, बिंदी, माला, अनंती, अनंत, चूड़ी, चूड़ा, गिटकड़े, तड़ागी, बांक ।

11. House & Household Effects :

बलिमो, परत, मंजी, पीहड़ी, सेरू, बाही, हींह, दाउण, पावा, दीवा, घड़वंजी, बलेवा, चरखा, तरक्कला, मुद्दा, फिरनी, बाइड़, खम्भ, मुन्ना, माहल, वट्टी, दरहोखा, दीवट, भुंजे, सिणी वाण, दरी, बोरी, टाकी, सलीता, छट्ट, हप्ता, कुनाली, चौकी, तरड़ा, फूहड़ी, फूहड़, फंडी, बिड्डा, घोटणा, सोटा, लंगरी, कूंडी, डण्डा, कुप्पा, कुप्पी, टल्ली, टल्ल, टिहु, तंदूर, छज्ज, चक्की, हथ्या, गाला, गट्टी, लेपण, टंगणी, किल्ली, किल्ला, नाड़ापाणी, चाकू, काचू, छुरी, करद, नहेरन, कट्टी, माम-बसता, खुरपा, दातरी, टोका, टास, मुंज, तरामी, गडवी, बूहा, बट्टा, ठीहकर, फीता, कच्च, मसटी, कोठा, सुफा, मोरी, परनाला, वेहड़ा, बनेरा, शतीर,

हेठ, उप्पर, टोम्रा, छत्त, बुन्नह, तरेड़, मोघा, चौका, गली, गुआंठ, घार, पडछत्ती, टीसी, सिरबर, फीहकर ।

12. Diseases & Cures and the diseased (deprived of an organ) :—

कस्स, खुरक, खंघ, पां, चेहरे, दसत, मरोड़, माता, खसरा, छपाकी, ठंडीआं, काकड़ा, लाकड़ा, सुबड़ा, उलटीआं, पीड़, सन्न, कुकरे, बालभड़, पड़वाल, कड़वल्ल, कछलाड़ी, गूहतड़िकी, फुलबंहरा, कोहड़, फिनसी, फोड़ा, अघरंग, सूखा, हजीरा, गिलटी, जुआन, बुढा, अघखड़, गुंगा, लूहला, टुंडा, डोरा, छांगा, फिडा, मुस्सा, मधरा, नकफिथ्या, सिरघस्सा, सिरमुआ, खुसरा, खोदा, गींठा, मुरा, चुप्पू, रोड़ा, होछा, भदरो, लंगा, लंगड़ा, काणा, भंगा, ढिड्डल, बौणा, लम्मा, गिठमुठीआ, पड़िगली, चिम्भड़, चुच्चा, आलसी, पैरोवाहणा, सिरों नंगा, मलंगा, निलज्जा, डीठ, दुबांजरा, तरेड़ा, भैड़भड़थ्या, बोलीबाज, बड़बोला, डिंगफड़िंगा, चुगल, लाईलग, लूतीआं-लाण वाला, लोला, बोला, घुआ, खोजा ।

13. Sports & Games :—

कोड़ी, छप्पण छोट, अड्डीतरप्पा, चींहजो, किरनमकिरनी, इट्टीडंडा, गुथी, खंडूरीटल्ला फीहकर, लम्मीकोड़ी, जपफलकोड़ी, गुड्डी पटोहला, किरकली, कोलड़ा छपाकी (छपाण), जपफी, घोल, तूतनखां का घोड़ा, सींह बकरी, चोपट ।

14. Numbers :—

हिवक, दो (डो), तरै, चार, पंज, छे, सत्त, अट्ट, नौ, दाह, याहरां, बाहरां, तेहरां, चौहदां, पंहदरां, सोहलां, सताहरां, अठाहरां, उन्नी, बीह, इक्की, बाई, (बावी), तरेई, चौव्वी, पंभी, छब्बी, सताई, अठाई, उनत्तरी, तरीह, इकतरी, बतरी, तेतरी ।

15. Colours :—

काला, चिट्टा, हरा, नीला, पीला, सूहा, सावा, कासनी, भगवा, ऊदा, मोंगीआं, तोरीआ, लाला, मोतीआ, लाखा, नसबारी, मिटीरंगा, चितकबरा, तेतरा मेतरा, असमानी,

16. Times, Stars, etc. :—

अज्ज, कल्ह, दिहां, अतरिआं, चौथ, पंजीथ, छिआथ, सतीथ, अठोथ, साता, पंदराखा, सोम, मंगल, बुद्ध, वीर, सुक्कर, छनिछ्छर, ऐत, घड़ी, पल, वरहा, वरीहणा, महीनां, अठहारा, वसाख, जेठ, हाड़ह, साउण, भादरे, अस्से, कत्ते, मध्वर, पोह, मांह, फगण, चैतर, चंन, तारे, दिहूँ (दिहों), धरूह, किरकटीआं, बोदीबाला तारा, लोईबाला तारा, लो, मुआखरा, तिरकालां, मूंहन्हेरा, बड्डा बेला, नदुदा बेला, लौड़ा पैहर ।

17. Measures :—

झुहा, चुक्का, लप्प, पड़ोपी, हय्य, कदम, करम, घुमां, मरला, गज, गिराह, गिठ्ठ, सेर, जटाकी, सिरसाही, तोला, पंजसेरी, घड़ी, पाई, बेला, पैसा, टगा, डब्बल, अघानी, दुआनी, चुआनी, पोली, बेली, अठानी, रुपईआ, पा, अघपाई, मण, बट्टा, तरकड़ी, तोल, भार, सलीता, गंदू, तोला, मासा, रक्तक, मुठ्ठ, टोपा ।

18. Feelings & Emotions :—

पिमार, राह, चोहल, टिचकर, छेड़, टोक, चोम्भ, छिक्क, दाबा, कांबा, तरिख्त, भुख्त, तरेह, बट्ट, नउली ।

All these words have Sanskrit originals. The common people softened, simplified, shortened, slurred or in some cases hardened the originals because they looked out for ease, speed, simplicity and naturalness to their utterance.

In the case of syntax and word-formations, the common people did what they have done all over the world in all ages. They gave up its synthetic character and made their language analytic, disjunctive in syntax ; used plural postpositions and plural adjectives for plural nouns ; freely coined verbs from nouns and nouns from verbs, adjectives from nouns and nouns from adjectives, and adjectives from verbs as verbs from adjectives ; joined together words of different languages ; and formed double or treble verbs.

In syntax the signs of the first, second and third persons joined to the verb were gradually dropped ; the conjoined signs of the nominative and the objective were separated from the subject and the object (nouns or pronouns), the neuter gender was given up and the signs of male and female were fixed as ā and i or u and u and universally and regularly enforced.

The general sound changes responsible for ultimately changing Sanskrit into Panjabi were :

(a) Substituting	s for h	y for j	ḍ for d
	h for s	r for l	sh for s
	v for b	l for r	s for sh
	b for v		
	k for gh	t for ṭ	h for a
	gh for k	ṭ for t	ḍ for st

u	for	v			th	for	st
m	for	v & u	d	for	dh		
ṇ	for	n	ḍ	for	ḍ		
t	for	d	ḍ	for	t		
j	for	y	d	for	ḍ		

(b) doubling the consonants

(c) separating the conjoint sounds and/or dropping one of the three conjoint sounds and doubling the sound retained

and (d) slurring over harsh sounds.

The language has been further enriched by countless idioms and idiomatic usages, by compound formations, by loan words, by further coinages of nouns and verbs and adjectives, coined on Sanskrit, Persian and native methods.

Four examples would do : here are four Sanskrit words—

(A) Kathan, (B) Vāk, (C) Aksh, (D) Hast. From these we have the following in Panjabi :

A. Kaihnā; Kaih; Kahāut; Kahāni; Kaih; Kaih; Kaihni; Kaihan.

B. Baknā; Bakwās; Bakwād; Bak Bak; Buknā; Bak Bakā,

C. Akhkh; Akhkh āunā; Akh Mārṇā; Akh senkā; Akh dukhnā; ik-akhkhā; Sanakhkhā Chuakhkhā.

D. Hathth; Hathaurā; Hathiār; Hathiānā; ik-haththā; Do-haththar; Hathauri; Haththal; Haththi; Hath-garole; Haththo-pāi; Hath-kande; Hath-pāni karnā; Hath-chalāki; Hathlā; Hathras; Hatheli; Pith te hath; hath-panjā; hath-dena; hath te hath mārṇā; hath watānā; Hath dhonā; Hath malnā; hath jorṇā; hathe charhnā; hath bharnā; hath āunā; Hath-khichnā;

The Gurmukhi Alphabet and its writing

As with basic Panjabi vocabulary and syntax prosody so with basic Panjabi alphabet and the script.

The Panjabi alphabet is the same as the Nagari except for the fact that the two last consonants *s* and *h* are re-arranged with the

three vowels *u*, *a* and *i* to form the first group of five letters. Why should the three vowels have been treated as consonants? Because they replace the consonants in the process of Panjabization; and as *s* and *h* are interchangeable and as *h* replaces most mid-consonants and end-consonants in two-letter and three-letter words, *s* and *h* are brought up with *u*, *a* and *i*. Another peculiarity is that *u*, *a*, *i* remain pure vowels, that is they do not give any sound until the first has the vowel sign [˘] or [˙] or [˚] the second the vowel-signs [˘] and [˙], and the third, the vowel signs [˘] or [˙].

As regards the script, the Nagari script forms the base. Nagari was stripped of its vowels and rounded off and lopped to make an easily and quickly writeable script which was at the same time a secret code. This was called Lande (plural of Landa, truncated) or Takre (plural of Takra). This script was improved, vowels restored and further beautified and called Gurmukhi, what was used by the Sikh Gurus to indite their own utterances. To write the Gurmukhi letters you have the least to change your direction and lift your hand. The double vowels prevent any mistakes in reading. Further the difficulty involved in Sanskrit [˘] or [˙] is removed by making the one fuller [˘] and the other double of it [˙]. The sound of [˘] in Sanskrit is reduced from *aiya* to *ai*, [˙] is changed to [˘] and [˙] to [˘], so that there is no confusing of them with [˘] and [˙] one has not to change the direction twice, to lift the hand twice. The Sanskrit dot to distinguish [˘] from [˙] and [˙] from [˙] is dropped and the letters are re-shaped, [˘] into [˘], [˙] into [˙], [˙] into [˙]. [˙] and [˙] are changed into [˙] and [˙], being simplified as both are still difficult to write; in practice they are not used, being substituted by [˙] and [˙]. The process of conjoining of letters is altogether done away with except for 'r' usually coming with 't', and the nasal sounds are represented by [˙] and [˙]. [˙] ([˙]) and [˙] ([˙]) are also dropped.

A careful scrutiny will show that the Sikh Guru, responsible for the Gurmukhi script, looked at the actual shape of letters as written quickly by an expert. He found the shapes different, easier and he accepted them as the better choice. Here are some illustrations;

He reduced	क to ख
	ख to घ
	र to व
	अ to ञ
	छ to छ
	ण to ण

It will be seen that all the six Panjabi letters can be finished with one stroke, without lifting the hand, except for the ॱ of the घ. रा used to get confused with ण or गा। ण was changed to ण। There has been further simplification and beautification of the script since Nanak and the spellings of words have been divested of their original vowel-signs indicative of origin or of Grammatical-syntactical relations. We now write as we speak, just as we use Sanskrit, Persian, English loan words duly Panjabized in speech and in writing.

Semantics.

The meanings of many words have been not only extended or restricted but have in some cases been reversed. For example, Sanskrit Vāk (speech) has given us Baknā, which means 'to talk rot' Sanskrit 'Hast' has given us 'Haththal' which instead of meaning 'with hands', means 'without any instrument' which can be used by the hand, or without any help.

Here are cases of restricted meaning. Sanskrit 'Pranali' means 'tradition', 'the old way'; in Panjabi it is changed to 'Parnala' to mean the small wooden aqueduct for the roof rain-water to flow into the street. 'Chhanda' (Sanskrit) or 'Chhandas', harmony, poetic music, is only used in Panjabi for the couplets the bridegroom is required to recite before his bride's relations, full of wit and sarcasm and humour and fun, on the marriage night.

A case of extension of meaning is provided by Panjabi 'nakk' from Sanskrit 'Nasika.' 'Nakk' is elongated to 'Nakka' and means the 'eye' of the needle; the promontary; the top of a hillock. 'Nakki' means 'odd'. 'Nakku' means one who has lost his reputation. 'Nakel' means the lead-string. Another derivation from 'Nasika' is 'Nas', which is only used with *pharkana* or *marna*, to mean sniff.

The Main Dialects.

With rivers, forests and deserts intervening, with rare means of transport, with dangers attendant on travel, with shifting populations, with variety of sects, tribes, races, and religions, it was but natural that five main dialects should have arisen, representing in the main the five more or less closed regions in those early days : 1. Upper half of the region between the Indus and the Jhelum; 2. the lower half of the Indus valley; 3. the region between the Jhelum and the Sutlej; 4. the region beyond the Sutlej; and 5. the region lying at the base of the Himalayas; extending from Murree & Jammu to Kangra, Kullu, Simla. The five respective dialects are : 1. Hindko or Puthohari, 2. Multani, 3. Lahauri, 4. Sirhindi-Thanesari, and 5. Pahari or Kohi.

The main differences are more of sound and accent and less of syntax and least of vocabulary and semantics. Minor differences exist of post-positions, of nominative signs, and of the indications of persons and moods in the verb.

In literature all the dialects have coalesced and given rise to a standard literary speech which, though in some respects artificial, remains common and commonly intelligible except for certain hard sounds in Multani. It may seem strange but the language of the area between the Indus and the Ravi shows the greatest stock of Aryan vocabulary duly vernacularised, even though this area suffered most from the inroads of the foreigners. It is in this area that even to-day we hear Sanskrit verb forms and basic words in common use among Brahmans, Gujjars, Gakhkhars and Khatri (not Rajputs).

A peep into the nature and extent of dialectal differences, so far as phonology, morphology and syntax are concerned, will be provided by the following table :

	Mine	To you
Jatt	Merā	Tainī, Tuhānī, Thuānī
Rajput	Mhārā	Tukī, Tusāki, Tughi
Gujjar	Māihdā	Tudhdhāh
Khatri	Māihdā, Mainhā	Tusā nī
	Māinhā	Tudhdhāh

	Whose
Jatt	Kihdā
Rajput	Kindā
Gujjar	Kisdā
Khatri	Kisnā, Kusnā
	Kainḍhā, Kāihnā

It will be seen that there are four distinct signs of nominative, possessive, *rā*, *ḍā*, *kā*, and *nā*; and four of objective, *ā*, *nū*, *ki* or *kū*. The differentiating prepositions are *dā*, *r*.

In Multani, besides the use of harsher sounds, there is almost a preference for elongation of *a* into *e*, *i* into *ī*, *u* into *ū*; in Puthohāri we say *marus* (Beat him), in Multani *Maresu*; *sundā* becomes *sunaīdā* in Multani. The passive voice is very common to Puthohari and Multani but is almost absent in Lahauri and Hariani. *Mārsāus*, I tell you I will thrash him, is a good example of old synthetic Panjabi, still extant in Puthohari and Multani.

Orthography

Panjabi is people's speech; it is, therefore, written phonetically. The oldest manuscript for a study of spellings is a copy of the *Adi Granth*, the writing of which was completed in 1604 A. D. There is another Panjabi manuscript dated 1701 A. D. A study of these together with the earliest manuscripts available of the poems (Vars) of Bhai Gurdas (1555-1620 A. D.) who is said to have caligraphed in 1604 A.D. the first manuscript of *Adi Granth*, shows that 1. side by side with the enforcement of the general principle of writing Panjabi as it was spoken, there is a feeble attempt to keep near the Sanskrit originals of uncommon words, 2. to make writing indicative of grammatical relations, and 3. to keep up the Apabhransha Duha spelling tradition of the Kanphate Nath-jogis and the Jains and the Rajasthani or Bhatt-Charanas. Bhai Gurdas while caligraphing the *Adi Granth* bowed to the wishes of Guru Arjuna Deva and of the tradition the Guru represented, but in caligraphing his own original poetry (Vars, Kabits and Savaiyas) he, without any deviation, just wrote phonetically, keeping in view the standard spoken word of an average educated person hailing from the area between Peshawar

and Sirhind-Bhatinda along the well-known Grand-Trunk Road route.

Almost all the Panjabi words given elsewhere as basic for a study of the origin of the language and its phonology, morphology and word-formations, are present exactly in those forms in this standard poet, linguist, interpreter, prosodist; in short, encyclopaedist.

Literature—Old

As Panjabi language naturally stemmed from Sanskrit and got crossed by Arabic-Persian and Marwari, the neighbouring vernaculars (apabhraṃśas), similarly Panjabi literature was the natural successor to Vedic and Arabic-Persian literatures and Apabhraṃśa literature which contained Natakas, Kathas and Asaras, plays (prose and verse), stories (prose) and narrative poems. The love of fable, riddle, romantic and martial ballad glowed as strong in the mind of the Gujjar and Ahir in the 9th. and 10th. centuries A. D. as in 3500 B. C. when Sri Krishna tended the cows in Vrindavan or taught Arjun at the battle-field of Kurukshetra. Similarly, the Panjab Khatri in the 15th. and 16th. centuries A.D. was as much fond of Upasana in Suktas, as much devoted to dialectics and eclecticism as he was in the time of the Vedic hymns, the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagwad-Gita*. The Arabic and Persian literature gave the Panjabi writers, specially poets, a few points in romances and fairy tales, the charm of the Ghazal, the Musaddas—their structures as well as the miscellaneousness of the one and the force and effectiveness of the other, and some *raginis* or new harmonies in music.

Although the parent Sanskrit-Prakrit literature was there with all its richness, although Arabic and Persian provided excellent models, the political and social atmosphere was too blood-shot and hate-charged for the Panjabi writers to achieve excellence in any branch of literature on an epic scale. And how little of what they did achieve has come down to us saved *providentially* from the all-destructive hands of religious frenzy, sexual lust and racial cruelty?

And yet, what have the brave, hardened, simple, Advaitic-cum-Bhakta Panjabi literatures not achieved? They have transla-

ted, they have imbibed, they have expanded ; they have created new forms and evolved new styles, employed new imagery, fashioned new patterns of thought, emotion and music, reached new levels of self-discovery, self-dedication and self-sacrifice, and altogether continued to please, instruct, represent their masters, the people. What was not achieved on the physical plane, in social and political life, and what was intended to be achieved, are both reflected in literature which provides a running commentary often caustic and sardonic on the deeper as well as superficial ill-humours of the day.

Periods

Old literature produced between say 900 A. D. and 1846 A. D. can be divided into three periods:—¹

The Rajput or the Nath-jogi period, 900 to 1200 A. D.

The Muslim or the Bardic period, 1200 to 1500 A. D.

The Guru-Sikh Period, 1500 to 1846 A. D.

This is a fresh division and classification, different from those that I initiated in my previous works.

We must not forget the previous rulers of the Panjab for every age left some impress in some form both on language and literature. After the epic age of Ram and Krishna both of whom came to the Panjab, there came into the Panjab, during the age of Prakrits, the Persians and the Greeks whose literary men must have left traces. This was between 500 B. C. and 321 B. C. Thereafter the Panjab became a part of the Maurya Empire and influences literary and religious flowed into our province from Bihar and U P. Those were the influences of Jainism and Buddhism, of Prakrit and Pali. The Buddhist age continued from 300 B.C. to 300 A.D. There had come in the Scythians, the Shaks, the Kushans. Kanishka, the Kushan King, ruled over the Panjab, Kashmir and Sindh, Turkistan and Afghanistan with his capital at Purushpura or Peshawar. He was a Buddhist. The Shaivite Guptas succeeded him and influences began to flow from Central India under Vikramaditya (375 A. D. to 413 A. D.) of Ujjain and replaced the Shaks in the valley of the Indus, the Panjab, Sindh, Gujerat and Malwa. The Mongols, called Huns came to the Panjab about 450 A. D. and settled there. The Hun King Toraman made himself king of Malwa about 500 A. D. His son Mihirgula was defeated at Kahrur near Multan about 528 A. D., by a Gupta king. The Guptas went on reigning at Thaneshwar or Kurukshetra in the Panjab for about 200 years. Harsha, the greatest among them ruled from 606 to 648 A. D. over the country between the Jumna and the Sutlej. He later subdued the kingdoms in the valleys of the Indus and the Ganges, from the Panjab to Assam. From 700 to 1200 A. D. is the period of the Rajputs and others. For the second time influences from southern and central India and from Rajasthan and Gujerat (Anhilwara) flowed into the Panjab.

Further, Islam entered India through Sind in 712 A.D. and in the same year the Arab Muhammad Ibn Kasim's victory at Brahmanabad following his victory at Dajbul (Dewal), opened the way to Multan which after an ex-

The literary man everywhere in the world is a chronicler, an interpreter between God and man, and an inspirer ; if he is a poet he is a magician too. A folk-poet is essentially an amuser.

In Prakrits we have had reflective poetry, narrative poetry or true martial ballad and the romantic ballad, and folk verse.

haustive siege surrendered. With the fall of Multan the entire Indus valley passed under Muslim rule, which lasted for several centuries. Mahmud captured it in 1005-6 A. D. and Ghori in 1175 A. D., and Taimur's general over-ran and plundered it in 1398 A. D. The Sind local tribes of Jats and Mevs helped the Muslim Arabs against the Hindus. These very Jats later harassed Mahmud of Ghazni on return from Somnath. To punish the Jats in the neighbourhood of Multan Mahmud led his last expedition to India in 1027 A. D.

The Rajputs are the tribes and clans who live in the deserts, mountain ranges and valleys that lie between the Indus and the Ganges. Their country reaches southward almost as far as the Narmada. Some of their clans may be descended from the Scythian and Hun invaders, while others again are probably Dravidian tribesmen. They are said to have been created on Mount Abu. The Guhilas had the country of Mewar with their capital at Chitor (Chittaur). The large clan of Gurjaras at one time held much of Gujerat and the Panjab. One branch of their kings ruled at Kanauj till the eleventh century. Then it was displaced by the Gaharwars who came from the south. Delhi was founded by Anangpala, the Tomara. The Chauhans of Ajmer under Vishaldev captured it from the Tomaras. To the south-east of Delhi lay the country of the Chandels. The Panwars or Paramars occupied Malwa. Their most famous king was the learned Bhoj (1020-1060 A. D.), who ruled at the capital of Dhara. We come to Prithviraj, the Chauhan, who ruled Ajmer and Delhi from 1170 to 1192 A. D.

Almost all these names are preserved, from Darius and Alexander to Bharthri of Dhara, in the tales of *Women's Wiles* versified in 1697 A.D. in a language which appears to be Braj but which is fully Panjabized Hindi in Panjabi and Non-Panjabi meters, and are included as a separate work in the *Dasam Granth*.

More about this work is said elsewhere. Many Rajputs in the Panjab embraced Islam between 1000 and 1500 A. D. Among such tribes mentioned in Martial—or love-ballads written or composed but not written down were (with changed or corrupted names) :

Sials	Ghebas
Rajhas	Tiwanas
Nahars	Chauhans
Kheras	Raths
Bhattis	Varaichs
Gakhkhars	
Khokhars	
Awans	
Chadhdhars	
Sanbals	

Bhai Gurdas, a poet who wrote in the first quarter of the seventeenth century gives the following names of Rajputs and Jat tribes : Rewat, Puar, Gaur, Pawar, Malantras, Chauhan, Kachhwaha, Rathaur, Baghela, Bundela, Bharti, Bhadsuri.

In the second Hindu period or the Rajput period there was a revival of Hinduism but such Hinduism was different from both Vedic and Puranic Hinduism ; it had become impregnated by Buddhism, Jainism and Islam, and other influences. On revival it took the eclectic shape of Shaivism or Vaishnavism plus Yoga plus Bhakti. Shaivism and Vaishnavism appealed to the masses, the householders, while Yoga appealed to the ascetics, who accepted it as a concomitant of Vedanta or Sankhya.

The ascetics after Shankar felt that society under the Rajputs had gone over to luxury and indulgence. They took it upon themselves to preach against self-indulgence. Many kings and princes are said to have been won over. As Guru Govind Singh has pointed out for the first time in the history of Indian religious thought, Rudra-conception of Divinity is the basis of all Yogic thought and practice. Rudra means the 'roarer' and refers to Shabda and Shabda-brahman. Put popularly it reads that God incarnated as 'रुद्र' to destroy the lust for life (sexual enjoyment) and to instal Yoga or self-control. The words of the Guru are :

सु कहो जो तुम रुद्र सरूप धरो । जग जीवन को चलि नास करो ॥

तब ही तिहि रुद्र सरूप धर्जो । जग जंत संहार कै जोग कर्जो ॥

(तोटक छन्द)

Similarly, according to the Satguru the Arhant conception of God is the basis of अहिंसा as a historical reaction in Jainism. The earlier Muslim teachers were also of ascetic tendencies, and one has only to think of Ghazi Mian Salar, Ali Hijveri (Data Ganj Bakhsh), Bakhtyar Kaki, Masud Farid-ud-Din, Shakar Ganj, Sheikh-ul-Islam, Muin-ud-Din Chishti, Nizam-ud-Din, to feel convinced. The Muslim period was further a period of fights and chronicles of those fights.

It was in the age of the Sikh Gurus and after, that Bhakti got the upper hand and made common cause with Sufism to give man a dignity, free him from interiorism as well as exterior idol-worship and bring man nearer to man as well as to a kind, forgiving, gracious God, who was at once Father, Mother, Brother, Husband, King and Guide or Teacher. Fighting went on in this period also but the literary men concentrated on Prema-Bhakti, giving birth not only

to hymns in the praise of the Lord, but also songs in praise of love of the Lord, and love of woman or man, love of the land, love of the language, love even of the enemies, love of traditional thought and wisdom embodied in Sanskrit and Arabic-Persian literatures. Creative work went on side by side with translation and adaptation. The language was enriched and the masses were duly catered to fully by poetry and prose of love, human and love divine, wars physical and wars mental-psychological with the Evil within.

And through all these periods folk-songs, riddles, weather-verses, lullabies multiplied amusing, teaching, surprising, chronicling, commenting, lamenting.

Old poetry throughout the period continued to employ Shlok or Sakhi or Doha; Bishanpada in Ragas and Raginis and Var or Sadd, as meters, together with chhant or chhand, Sawayya, Kabitt, and a new longer metrical form evolved from Jhulana chhand or imitated from Persian during the sixteenth century called, Baint.

Old prose had only two styles, the biographical-narrative-dialogic, and the exegetical-reflective. Its content was biographies of saints, tales—imaginary or real, and imaginary dialogues, translations, commentaries, diaries, and some travel accounts. The rise and development of prose came about almost entirely under the sway of Persian prose. Persian was being employed as the court language as well as the language of polite society and the upper classes. There has come down to us Panjabi prose of considerable bulk in manuscript copies which bear the dates 1701, 1711, 1719, 1748, 1772, 1782, 1787 A. D.

So far as literature, specially poetry, of the fundamentals of human-divine relationship (of love and surrender, contemplation and wonder) and of ethical behaviour, is concerned one might say that we have had it to the best and the fullest in Guru Nanak Dev (1469—1538), Guru Arjuna Dev (1555—1606), Shah Husain, Gurdas, Gharib Das and Waris Shah.

The best in Sanskrit literature was also imbibed through translations, spread over a period of 200 years, roughly from 1600 to 1800 A. D., and covering the *Bhagwad Gita*, the *Upanishads*, the

Vishnu Purana, the *Yoga Vasishtha*, the *Baital Pachisi*, the *Singhasana Battisi*, *Aparokshanubhava*, the *Mahabharat*, the *Ramayan*, *Koka Sara*, *Astabakra Gita*, *Bhagvata Purana*, *Devi Bhagwat*, *Padma Purana*, *Hingal Purana*, *Markandeya Purana*, *Vairagya Shatak*. Al Ghazali's *Kimiya-e-Saadat* (Persian Prose) was rendered into beautiful, model Panjabi prose about the middle of the 18th. century and Abul Fazal's *Akbar-Nama* (Persian Prose) was translated in parts under Ranjit Singh in the first half of the 19th. century A. D. There were produced Persian-Panjabi, Sanskrit-Panjabi glossaries also—general as well as medical. Some Sanskrit and Persian works on music, prosody, magic, medicine, astronomy and astrology were also translated into Panjabi verse in old metres.

Literature—Modern (1850 A. D.—onwards)

While in Hindi (Hindustani) and Urdu the modern period started with the dawn of the 19th century, that is, with British patronage, both political and linguistic, to the two languages and literatures in the shape of madarastas, anjumans, journals, translations and publication staffs. Persian continued to be the court language of the Panjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who died in 1846, and the introduction of Panjabi by the British was stoutly opposed successfully amongst others by one S. C. Gangulee. One must not fail to record the signal service done and the initial push given to our language and literature by Sir Attar Singh, a Jat¹ chief, of Bhadaur, near Patiala, who was a wide-awake scholar, a munificent patron of learning, and a very much respected friend of both the Muslims and the British. He did for Panjabi what Sir Saiyad Ahmad did for Urdu or Raja Shiv Prasad for Hindi. Three movements were initiated by Sir Attar Singh, to make known our literature through Urdu and English renderings of our important works and to enrich our literature not only by creative educative writings, by translations, but also by transliterations. He himself translated the *Vichitra Natak* (verse) of Guru Gobind Singh into English; he himself translated the same Guru's *Jap* into Urdu, and he himself transliterated the Urdu poetical romance of Nau Nihal

1 Bhai Gurdas (1555—1620 A. D.) mentions this.

and Gul Badan into Panjabi Gurmukhi script in 1848. Thirdly, he helped to found the Oriental College at Lahore and endowed it with several scholarships from the fund to which he contributed himself and got contributions from other Sikh Chiefs and Sirdars.

The Ludhiana Christian Mission was founded at Ludhiana about 1850 A. D.; the Mission brought out a translation of the *Bible* in Panjabi with Malwai bias in 1852 and a dictionary of the Panjabi language in 1854.

The Panjabi writers had their eyes on the progress being made by Urdu and Hindi writers; proof of it is the increasing number of transliterations, *e. g.*, of *Bagh-o-Bahar*, *Prem Sagar*, *Tota Kahani*, and of translations *Alif Laila*, *Chandra Kanta*, *Gulistan* and *Bostan*.

The real effective urge to modernize our literature came from the need to have a Panjabi press about the year 1890 A. D., not only to voice the grievances of the Sikh religious-political group, not only to give the masses reformist ideas, but to serve the common readers with the same fare as the Urdu dailies and weeklies provided. The Panjabi paper, *Khalsa Samachar* was started from Amritsar. It had been preceded by *Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, but the predecessor had more to do with propaganda.

This urge got strength from the desire of the Panjabi poets to emulate the Urdu Mushairas which has come into being and into prominence in 1867 and 1874 A. D. under the Panjab Education Department's patronage. The foundation of the modern Natural School of Poetry and Romantic criticism and Romantic prose in Urdu were being laid by Azad, Hali, Mihr, Ashob, Ram Chandra and Chiranji Lal.

It was not till after the end of the first world war that the Panjabis became conscious of a common duty towards their common heritage from the past and conscious also of the common vehicle for future mental progress. The new consciousness also utilized the two old media, the press and the symposium. A new Panjabi monthly magazine in Urdu script was started from Lyallpur by a young Christian whose father had renounced Islam and embraced Christianity. The new type of symposium was initiated at Simla through

the efforts of S. Charan Singh Shahid, a journalist and Dhani Ram Chatrik, Maula Bakhsh Kushta, and others in 1928.

All this was not enough even as urge or inspiration. Urdu, the Panjab court language and the national language of Muslims, overshadowed Panjabi, which was not needed much by anybody. The patriotic Congress movement used Urdu as its medium for work among the masses. Then about 1924 or 1926 arose a movement which was the first effective force for strengthening, enriching, modernizing, democratizing, popularising Panjabi language and literature. This was the Kirti-Kisan (Labour-Farmer Movement), a sort of ally of socialism. Its protagonists were mostly Sikhs and they wanted to approach the masses in the rural areas. They, too, sought the aid of the printing machine and the periodical. We thus got our pioneer journalist-writers: Hira Singh Dard, Sohan Singh Josh, Awtar Singh Azad and others. The next push to Panjabi came from the need for school and college books of the modern type, and to fulfil that need almost all Sikh and Hindu teachers who had taken the Masters' Degree in any class, and in any of the subjects, English, Persian, Sanskrit, Economics and Politics turned, as if overnight into Panjabi writers. The number of writers was swelled by M.A. degree-holding employees of the All India Radio and the Government Information and Publication Services and free-lance Journalists. The University and Government Education Department men, the editors, the public relation officers, all held positions of vantage and it was not long before they got themselves acknowledged by each other as standard writers and got their books circulated officially and departmentally. The editors did their own trumpeting. If I am not seriously mistaken this is what has happened in other Indian literatures too. In any case, any serious student of literary history and literary appreciation and evaluation cannot claim that beginning with 1927 A. D., *i. e.*, only three decades ago, we have achieved anything which has a finality of achievement or even purpose about it. We have tried our hands at many things and perhaps most successfully at intellectual poetry, actable plays and the psychological-realistic short story mostly by persons unconnected with university, press and Government Publicity and by men and

women un-wedded to any religious movements, political isms, economic-sensual programmes or other counter-active or reactionary tendencies. They are independents, whether traditionalists or new-path finders.

The tradition of the short mystico-lyric poem and of the all-inclusive romantic narrative is still strong and these two are the only things of genuine worth that the old period of about a thousand years passed on to us of this day.

Gharib Das, Sahib Jai Singh and Sadhu Jan wrote as splendid lyrics as did Charpat and Farid, and Maghmum and Mastan and Miran and Ishar Das penned as delicious lyrics as Husain and Bulha. Similarly, the narrative verse of Kalidas and Tir is as artistic and inclusive as that of Waris or Damodar. Neither in quality nor in quantity has there been a decline. We miss the epic grandeur and the creative magic of Guru Gobind Singh and Krishan Lal but then Santokh Singh has gone quite a long distance on that path. Kishan Singh Arif and Awtar Singh Azad do not lag far behind Bhai Gurdas in the masterly use of the Var metre and in assemblage of similes and metaphors.

Major Writers—Old and Modern

Gorakh [(Guru, Nath, Siddha, Pir, Baba) 940-1030 A.D. (Sic)].

Whether Gorakh was born in Raval-pindi (the town of Rauls or Ravals-Jogis) district at a village later named Gorakhpur or he was born outside the Panjab, it is certain that he resided at various places in the Panjab including Gorakh-Hatri, Tilla Balnath, Khuh (Puran da), Achal Vatala in the districts of Peshawar, Jhelum, Sialkot and Gurdaspur and was the greatest literary-religious influence in the entire old period, having been replaced by Nanak in the minds of the householders only but not in those of the ascetics. Behind Gorakh is Shankaracharya (with the *Upanishads*) and in the foreground of Gorakh is Nanak, who too was given the same honorifics as was Gorakh—Baba, Pir, Zinda Pir, Zahir Pir, Guru, and the *Adi Granth* with its prema-Bhakti and Sharnagati and Nishkama Karma, reminding us of the integral realism of the *Bhagwad-Gita*.

From the Panjab's literary and oral tradition we gather just a few facts about Gorakh. He became very early a disciple of

Machhandar, who was a house-holder, and in the Guru's service Gorakh lost one eye. Gorakh used to serve in the common kitchen for the Kanphate Jogis of his order. Among his contemporaries were Kanhapa, Jalandhar, Charpat, Chanba, Chaurangi, Ishvara, Loharipa, Ratan. He may have been a contemporary of Gopichand Bhartrihari, Ajaipal, Salvahan or Salvan but their dates somehow do not agree with the dates of Gorakh, based partly on the presence of Arabic-Persian words like Sultan and on the dates of Charpat and Sahil-Varma and Ratan Nath (Haji, Baba, Pir), which are 900 A. D. to 980 A. D. It is certain that Gorakh and Ratan, who both lived at Peshawar and the second of whom lived and taught at Ghazni, Kandhar and Jalalabad, had passed away not long after Mahmud started his invasions. The word Sultan occurs in Gorakh. The date of Ratan's death as given by an Arab Muslim historian is obviously wrong by two centuries, though he in a way covers up the error by adding that Ratan was believed to have enjoyed a lease of 500 years before he died in 1199 A. D.

Gorakh's use of the language of the kingdom of Lahore which extended from Peshawar to Bhatinda lent to the language a certain dignity and sanctity. Further, his particular poetic use gave those three or four poetic forms, that free and frank poetic style, that poetic mixed Panjabized vocabulary, that simple, popular, close-at-hand imagery, the position of a norm. The provincial languages of all the states he visited show direct influence of Gorakh and his band, just as their language itself shows traces in verb-forms of Maharashtra, Rajasthani and Purbi verb-endings.

One need not insist that Gorakh wrote in Sanskrit-Prakrit alone or only in the regional Apabhramsha or Desh Bhakha. What has come down to us of his vernacular writings even in its naturally time-and-tongue modified forms, still bears ample affinities in word, syntax, and idea to Jain* Apabhramsha poetry written in the 9th., 10th and

* *Pahud Dohas* by Ram Singh (between 933 & 1100 A. D.); *Vilasawati Katha and Kavya Mimansa* by Raja Shekhar (880-920 A. D)

Vishnu Dharmottara.

Sudassana Charlu—by Nayanandi

11th. centuries to persuade us to accept Gorakh's work as genuine belonging really and truly to the 10th. century, there being no improbability about it. In fact as Mr. K.P. Jayaswal inferred, the Indian vernaculars must have risen in the Gupta period.

A closer scrutiny of the ideas of Gorakh and his school as preserved in the Panjab representatives of the sect of Kanphate Jogis convinced me quite early that Sgn. Tessitorie's view was perfectly right. Nathism is a link between Shankaracharya and Ramanand and this link appeared and worked almost simultaneously in the South among the Alvars and Munis as among the singers and saints in the North, and, secondly that the Jogi-Avadhut-pierced-ear order was pre-existent; it might have preceded even the Vedic *Shramana* order or may have come into being with the conception of Shiv-Rudra, and then developed further with the idea of the Dhyani Buddha; Gorakh in any case, was only a reformer and not the founder.

It is the critical, satirical attitude towards customs, traditions, institutions, the very sympathetic humane treatment of social and religious problems, and the spiritual re-valuation of Man, both as the Teacher and the Disciple, which replaced the old overvaluation of the Avatar and the undervaluation of man, that are the chief legacy of Gorakh, Charpat and Ratan to literature in the Panjab

(Continued from last page)

Deshi Nama Mala—by Hem Chandra.

Nayakumara Chariu—by Nemi Sadhu (10th. cent).

Pauma Chariu

Harivansh Purana } by Svayambhu

Neminah Chariu—by Lakhmaev 10th. cent.

Dohas—by Deva Sain 10th. cent.

Dasha Rupak—by Dhananjaya 10th. cent.

Jamahar Chariu—by Vararuchi.

Sabhayadhamm Doha—by Deva Sain (about 943 A.D. in Dhara).

Paiyalachhi Nama Mala—by Dhanpal (972 A.D. in Dhara).

Apabhhranshas Katha Sangrah—by Pushpa Danta

Yogsar

Parmatma Prakash

Karkand Chariu

} —by Prabha Chandra (about 1055 A.D. in Dhara)

Apabhhransha Prakash—by Devendra Kumar.

and other Indian states. This attitude culminated in the 18th. century in the astounding sarcasm of Guru Gobind Singh & Bulhe Shah.

Charpat Nath [890-990 A.D. (Sic)]

Charpat Nath is said to have visited Chamba, then newly founded capital city of the hill state later named after the capital Chamba sometime in the middle of the tenth century A. D. and converted the ruler Sahil Verma to his views and admitted him into Nath Jogi Order. In the famous Panjabi ballad of Gopichand, Charpat is mentioned as contemporary of Chamba Nath and Gorakh Nath. Manuscript copies of Charpat's Sakhis and Shloks are found in the Panjab both in Nagari and Gurmukhi scripts.

Charpat occupies the place of honour in the long native Panjabi tradition of frank exposure, humorous approach, and disarming, baffling simplification, which tradition continued in Guru Nanak Dev, Husain, Jalhan, Sutha, Guru Gobind Singh, Waris, and continues in our own day. The basic vocabulary and imagery used by the Naths and later by Sikh and Muslim writers like Gurdas, Muqbil, Waris, prevents their poetic utterances from getting dated. They have still such a modern accent and ring about them. Their down-right sincerity and their grip of the basic human urges and perversities make their comments both universal, and prophetic. This is true of all our saint-poets specially.

**Masud (Furid-ud-Din, Sheikhal Islam, Ganj-i-Shakar)
1173-1265 A. D.**

An aristocratic Afghan, living the life of an ascetical divine, chose to write a few poems and about 200 couplets in the regional language, more with a view to please and instruct his many new Jat and Rajput followers, converts to Islam from Hinduism. A great scholar of Arabic and Persian, a wide traveller, a worthy occupier of Gaddi (a house of spiritual instruction), a devoted son of a saintly mother, widowed very early in her married life, Masud in his later days—may be about his sixtieth year—gave to

our language and province a very praiseworthy approach to life and literature, not altogether new but deservedly timely underlined.

As the Naths had imbibed Arabic-Persian words and themselves used basic words and ideas and ways so that they may fly close to the land and the masses, so Sheikh Farid, the poetic pen-name of Masud, imbibed many technical Hindu words and conceptions and wrote specifically for the masses, with the result that his pictures of love, nature, divinity woven round the river, the tree, the hearth, the bed, the grave, are still fresh and redolent and carry a tremendous popular appeal. His approach was what we may call reconciliatory and at the same time ascetic. That was just what was needed. While we must mix freely in the Vanity Fair, we must never forget that it is only a Fair. It is somewhat strange to see the Sakhi or Patni attitude in an early 13th. century Muslim ascetic; we do not have any evidence of this erotic mysticism in early sufism and yet it can perhaps be satisfactorily explained by Indian influence and by the personal attitude of Qutb-ud-Din Bakhtyar Kaki, an Afghan poet whom Sheikh Farid accepted as his spiritual preceptor.

Some Persian verses of Qutb deserve to be woven into every historical pattern of Indian Sufi poetry for it was he who through his spiritual successors, Farid, Nizam-ud-Din, Khusro, and others influenced greatly the course of Sufism in India. Farid and his Panjabi poetry lay before Kabir and Jayasi both of whom profitted as much from Farid as from the Naths.

Some doubt has been cast on the authorship of the poetry going under the name of Farid or Sheikh Farid first occurring in the *Adi Granth* anthology completed in 1604 A. D. There is absolutely no doubt that this author's work was known to Guru Amar Das (B. 1479 A. D.). The only person who became famous in the Panjab and who bore the name or title of Sheikh Farid was a Bokhara-born divine to whom Sayyid Ahmad Sirhindi wrote several Persian letters.

Masud died in 1265 A. D. Even if it is not Shakar Ganj or Ganj-i-Shakar, we have some one here who was a very catholic Muslim, very sensitive poet, and very persuasive preacher.

There is no serious obstacle to our belief in the tradition that

Sheikh Farid Shakar Ganj was conversant with the story of Gopi Chand whom his own mother Mainawati had inspired to change the Jogi's loin-cloth for the King's robe and sceptre. If he had read or heard some ballads connected with Gopi Chand or Bhartrihari, he would have used Hindu religious words in popular poetic usage. That is what we actually find. Here is some Muslim preacher between 13th and 15th centuries who has no hesitation to use :

Man, Mukh, Nam, Apar, Agam, Dharm, Gur, Pir, Pritam, Birha, Kripal, Prabhu, Sadh, Sang, Mareg, Panth, Vedan, Piala, Jag, Neh, Kant, Dohagan, Sohagan, Athah, Masan, Lekha, Kanthar, Mandap, Gun, Jug, Rit, Sajjan, Bhag, As, Dhir, Vikar, Jiu, Karam.

It is the presence of these many words that sometimes becomes difficult to reconcile with a Muslim of the thirteenth century although we have all these and more in Kabir of the 15th. century and Jayasi and Bayazid of the 16th century. These Hindu words should surprise us as little as Arabic-Persian words in Gorakh or Ratan even in the 10th century, in a work like *Risala-e-suluk*.

Guru Nanak Dev (1469—1538 A.D.).

It is a pity that the founder of Sikhism, Nanak, has still to find a competent biographer and an expert scholiast and interpreter-translator. As I recently showed, even his most important doctrinal key-poem *Japu* has not been correctly understood in important words and statements all through the last 400 years. The infinite significance and richness of Nanak's poetic content and personal influence can only be understood and appreciated in the light of historical and biographical facts which have still to be ascertained, assembled in an order, and underlined.

Nanak Rae was born in 1469 A. D. as the second child and first son to Kalu Rae Mehta, Khatri, Bedi, a petty state officer at Talwandi. Nanak lived under five rulers, Bahlol Lodi, Sikandar Lodi, Ibrahim Lodi the Moghul Babar and the Moghul Humayun. The Lodis were Afghans; the bigotry and destructive cruelty of Sikandar Lodi (1488—1517 A. D.) is known too well. To talk of any schools and schooling in relation to Nanak's youth is absurd.

Whatever he acquired was done at home and later at Sultanpur near Kapurthala at the house of his elder sister Nanaki and her husband, Jai Ram. All writers on Nanak have erred both in respect of Nanak's education and travels as also on the subject of Nanak's foundation of the Panth. Nanak could only have met Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of the Panjab, between 1517 and 1524, in which later year Daulat Khan invited Babar of Kabul, to invade India. Nanak could only have contacted Babar's hosts in 1524-25 A. D. This means that during the first fifty years of his life Nanak did nothing but think and travel as a Sadhu in various garbs. It was during his last 15 to 19 years, specially between 1528 and 1538 A. D. that he organised his followers and gave them a way of life through his own example, gave them also a routine, a book, a national home, and a corporate code. It was then that he founded the town of Kartarpur and composed most of his poetry.

So far as his travels are concerned the places definitely mentioned by Bhai Gurdas are in this order :—a place not far from his birth place where he practiced austerities, many Hindu and Muslim places of pilgrimage : the Sumeru mountain; Mecca; Medina; Baghdad; Garh; Kartarpur; Achal Vatala; Multan. He may have visited some places in east India or in the Deccan but we have no record or reference.

There are other references to Nanak's followers who received instruction from Nanak himself, and from those we infer that Nanak contacted all classes, creeds and professions and occupations. When Nanak left for Baghdad he took with him Mardana, a Muslim Mirasi who was an expert player on the rebec (Arabic-Rabab). Nanak had two sons, Lakhmi Das and (Baba) Siri Chand. The latter founded the ascetic order of Sikh Udasis.

Guru Nanak Dev's poetry is remarkable both for quality and quantity. He composed over 50,000 lines, employed 31 Ragas and Raginis and wrote in almost all known forms of verse and kinds of poetry. He poetized in many styles and gave indications of his knowledge of some peculiar feature or other of all North-Indian vernaculars. He instances Persian, Sanskrit and Prakrit also. There is hardly any walk of life he has not drawn upon for poetic

imagery; he refers to all known creeds and sects; he uses up almost the entire Panjabi vocabulary as it was in use in the province of Multan, Lahore, Peshawar, Kangra, Thanesar and Delhi. He was able to endear himself to all for adopting the 'middle' path, middle in the sense of integral, cardinal, central. He interrelated law (Dharma), wisdom (Jnana), surrender (Sharm), grace (Karm) and made them all, steps to the realization of Truth, one and universal. His was the tone of an humble, sweet singer, who would persuade you to look inwards deep down and to look out at the whole play. In a small informative literary guide-book like the present, one can only sample his poems of human interest, addressed to the farmer, the brewer, the gardener, the pedlar.....and show how the main objective of mediaeval literary men was to restore their humanity and their God to the poor, the enslaved, the downtrodden, the benighted. Let it be accepted now finally 1. that there is no mention in any poem of Nanak, of Jaidev, Nam Dev, Kabir or Ravidas; 2. that their names first appear in the verses of the third Sikh Guru, Amar Das (b. 1479. A. D.); 3. that there was no meeting between Kabir and Nanak as Kabir had died before Nanak was born (1469 A. D.); 4. that Nanak was not "a follower of Ravidas" nor was Miranbai a disciple of Ravidas; 5. that Namdev whose miracles etc. are given in the poetry of Guru Amar Das and Bhai Gurdas was the Maratha Chhipa Namdev and not another Panjabi Namdev; and 6. that there is a world of difference in the literary and spiritual approaches of Kabir and Nanak, whose grip on Hindu literary and spiritual tradition was far more thorough.

Guru Arjun Dev (1565—1605 A. D.)

The *Adi Granth* was compiled by Guru Arjun Dev. The anthology finished in 1604. A. D. In it he included the authentic work of several poets outside the home of Nanak and the Panjab. Some verses of such poets had been legacied to him by the second Guru, Angad Dev, and the third Guru, Amar Das. It is one of the greatest ironies of literary history that Guru Arjun Dev, who wrote the longest and greatest mediaeval mystic poem, called *Sukhwani*, the crest-jewel of transcendent Peace-Bliss and who gave an equal status to the inspired writings of Muslims and Hindus, should have been so

brutally martyred under the orders of Jehangir. But even the great tyrants and despots of history are not really what they take themselves to be and are perhaps to be pitied more than blamed.

The *Sukhwani* has about 60,000 lines; it is in 24 Ashtpadis, with 24 introductory Shloks. The Guru also composed three other most masterly expositions of Sikh mysticism, *Bavan Akhri* (The Garland of fifty-two letters), *Bara Mah* (The Twelve months), and *Gatha*.

Bhai Gurdas [1551—1629 (or 1627 ?) A. D.]

Bhai Gurdas was a near relative of the fourth Guru, Ram Das, who founded the city of Amritsar and first built the Hari Mandir (temple of Hari) with its huge surrounding Sarovar (tank). He travelled to Benares in the east and Kabul in the northwest. He wrote poetry but confined himself deliberately to the metres and the language of the masses and avoided scrupulously any competition in form and content with the Gurus. As an ideal scholarly 'Sikh' or disciple, he concentrated on popularising, annotating, illustrating the truths taught by the great Gurus. He succeeded so well in this objective that his 39 Vars and some hundred of Kabits and Sawaiyas soon began to be accepted as the key to the Divine Treasury of the *Adi Granth*. The greatest things about this excellent artist were his artistic scrupulousness, incessant creative urge and profound humility and sincerity. He kept on the right side of discipleship and still keeps millions of his readers on the right side, preventing them from lapsing into "isms" through misunderstanding or lack of faith or sheer listlessness. Bhai Gurdas is unique from the point of view of simile, metaphor, linguistic development and lexicography. Here are some examples :—

सतिगुर नानक प्रगटिआ मिटी धुन्ध जग चानण होआ
 बिजिउँ कर सूरज निकलिआ तारे छपे अँवेरे पलोआ
 सिंघ बुके मिरगावली मंत्री जाइ न धीर धरोआ
 जिथ्यै बाबा पैर धरै पूजा आसण चापण सोआ
 चरि चरि अंदर धरमसाल होवै कीरतन सदाविसोआ
 बाबे तारे चार चक्क नौ खंड पिरथमी सच्च ढोआ ।

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ध्रू हसदा घर आइआ कर पिआर पिउ कुछछड़ लीता
 बाहहुं पकड़ उठालिआ मन बिच रोष मतरेई कीता
 उडहुल्लिका मां पुछे तूँ सावाणी हैं कि सरीता
 सावाणी हाँ मैं जनमदी नाम न भगती करम द्विडीता
 किस उद्म ते राज मिलै शत्रू ते सम होवन मीता
 परमेशर आराधीए जिछूँ होईए पतित पुनीता
 बाहर चलिआ करन तप मन वैरागी होई अतीता
 नारद मुनि उपदेशिआ नाम निधान अमिउ रस पीता
 पिछहुँ राजे सहिआ अब चल राज करहु नित नीता
 हार चले गुरमुख जग जीता ।

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दरशन देखण नामदेव भलके उठठ त्रिलोचन आवै
 भगति करन मिल दोइ जणो नामदेव हरचलित सुणावै
 मेरी भी कर बेनती दरशन देखां जे तिस भावै
 ठाकुरजी ने पुछिछ ओस दरशन किवें त्रिलोचन पावै
 हस कै ठाकुर बोलिआ नामदेव नों कहि समझावै
 हथ्य न आवै भेट सो तुस्सि त्रिलोचन मैं मुहि लावै
 हउं अधीन हां भगत दे पहुँच न हंघां भगती दावै
 होइ बिचोला आण मिलावै

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होइ विरकत बनारसी रहिदा रामानन्द गुसाईं
 अंभित बेले उठठ के जांदा गंगा न्हावण ताई
 अगों ही दे जाइके लम्भा पिआ कबीर तिथाई
 पैरी टुंभ उठालिआ बोलहु राम सिख समझाई
 जिउं लोहा पारस छुहे चन्दन वास निम्म महिकाई
 पसू परेतहुं देवकर पूरे सतिगुर दी वडिआई
 अचरज नो अचरज मिलै विसमादै विसमाद मिलाई
 भरणा भरदा निभ्रभरहुं गुरमुख बाणी अघड़ घड़ाई
 राम कबीरै भेद न भाई ।

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शीह पजूती बकरी मरदी होइ खिड़खिड़ हस्सी
 शीह पुछ्छै विसमाद होइ इत अओसर कित रहस रहस्सी

बिनमो करेदी बकरी पुत असाड़े कीचन खस्सी
 अक धतूरा खाधियाँ कुहि कुहि खल्ल उखल्ल बिणस्सी
 मास खान गल वढ्ढकै हाल तिनाड़ा कौसा होवस्सी
 गरब गरीबी देह खेह खाज अखाज अकाज करस्सी
 जग आइया सम कोई मरस्सी ।

× × ×

बहुतीं घरीं पराहुणां जिउं रहिदा भुख्खा
 सांभे बब्बु न रोईए चित चित न चुख्खा
 बाहलीं डूमी ढड्ड जिउं मोहु किसे न धुख्खा
 वण वण क्यउं न सोहई किउं भाणै सुख्खा
 जिउं बहु मिथी वेसिया तन वेदन दुख्खा
 बिण गुर पूजन होर नां बरने वेमुख्खा ।

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 A. D.)

Guru Gobind Singh was born in 1666 A. D. at Patna in Bihar where his parents had stopped during a pilgrimage tour. He came to the East Panjab at the age of 11 and spent his youth in hunting and practice-at-arms in the hill state of Nahan at a place called Paunta. From there he returned in 1698 to Anandpur only to be engaged by the Hindu Raja Fateh Chand in a small battle. He remained at Anandpur till 1703 when he was compelled to flee for his safety. He wandered about till he reached Nander (now called Abchal Nagar) in Hyderabad Deccan and passed away there in 1708.

The one Bharatiya-Hindwi poet who deserves most to be studied in full detail is the poet who is least read by us out of our sheer regional, credal ignorance or prejudice.

No one has written in Hindwi martial and metaphysical poetry of his quantity or quality—words, images, metres, style, sincerity, fervour, allusiveness. It would be no exaggeration to say that he combines the best in Surdas, Tulsidas and Chand Bardai and the proof lies in the *Krishna Katha* (1688 A. D.), *Ram Katha* (1695), *Tiria Charitra* (1696), *Vichitra Natak-Jap and Chandi di Var* (between 1698 and 1703 A. D.). Before he founded the Khalsa he used the two poetic pen-names Rama and Shyama, but after that he used no pen-name,

not even Nanak in his *Sawaiyas* and *Kavittas* and *Shabdas*. His verse translation and commentary of the *Bhagwad Gita* as well as his *Premabodha* (verse biographies of some saints) were completed in 1693 A. D.

Literature in the hands of this tenth Sikh Guru and of his 'Sikhs' became a positive inspiration to creative activity for it was being used by men of action for creative purposes. These warrior saints looked back to the *Veda*, the *Upanishad* and the *Purana*, and looked forward to the tales of private romance, to the epic of suffering and sacrifice offered at the altar of freedom, and to the drama of search, social enjoyment, reminiscence, self-analysis, self-discovery. Let the following lines of the great hero-prophet be made the motto of secular India ;

जाते छूटि गयो भ्रम उर का । तिह आगे हिन्दू किआ तुरका ॥
 इक तसबी इक माला घरही । एक कुरान-पुरान उच्चरही ॥
 करत बिरुद्धि गये मर मूड़ा । प्रेम को रंग न लागा गूड़ा ॥
 आदि पुरुख जिन एक पछाना । दुतीआ भाव न मन महि आना ॥
 जो इहु पेट न काऊ होता । राव रंक काहू को कहता ॥
 जिन प्रभु एक वहै ठहिराजो । खक कर डिंभन किसू दिखाजो ॥

The Guru makes his goal quite obvious. In life he wants not only to protect and help the good but to punish the evil in a detached spirit; and he maintains that good, the basic and ever-active unity, cannot be attained via gods and incarnations. The Lord God should be approached direct in a spirit of surrender and seeking of His grace. In literature, he insisted on artistic perfection, variety, sincerity, fearlessness, and wealth of metaphor and simile and showed that we cannot give or receive Joy (Anand) if we are out to exploit or see exploited any one idea or theme, any one side or angle.

In bulk the Guru's work exceeds *Ramayan* and *Prithviraj Raso* put together. No one has employed as many metres—old or self-coined as he has. The number of words he has used or has coined far exceeds the number used or coined by all the other Panjabi writers. Here are names of about a hundred Chhandas used by him in the *Dasam Granth* :

Kabit Bhujang Prayat
Swayya Chachari

Kulak Utbhuj
Padhistaka Bijai

Dohara Chaupai	Bhagwati Rasa val	Hansa Malati Atmalati	Manohar Sangit Bhujangprayat Var
Soratha	Tomar	Samanaka	Var
Arill	Laghu Naraj	Abhir	Biraj
Tarnaraj	Padhari	Bharthua	Kalas
Kumarlalat	Totak	Anupniraj	Baihr-i-Tavil
Nagsarupi	Naraj	Kripankrit	Paschami
Raman	Akwa	Bhagavati	Ruamal
Somraji	Dirgh	Tribhangi	Apurab
Pria	Bhavani	Kumam	Bachitra
Gaha Chhand Duja	Charani	Haribolmana	Jhula
Chaturpadi	Beli Bindram	Jhulana	Madho
Ela	Rekhta	Pankaj Batika	Anhad
Ghatta	Chhapai	Supria	Sundri
Navpadi	Tiloki	Mohan	Mathan
Padmavati	Madhubhar	Bisekh	Tarka
Kilka	Ek Achhri	Chanchala	Gita Malti
Harigita	Tribhangi	Bidhupnaraj	Trirka
Sangit Chhapai	Sirkhindi	Hoha	Agli
Bahar	Anad	Makra	Aruna
Astar	Medak	Sujanta	Dodhak
Kundalian (Kundaria)		Sukhda	Ravanbad
Hir		Sukhdabrid	

Many a poet was inspired by the great example of the Guru; among them may be mentioned Krishna Lal, a Khatri, who rendered the whole of *Mahabharat* into Panjab Hindwi verse in 1748 A.D.; Senapati, who transported into verse *Chanakya Niti*; and Prahlad, who put the Persian version of the *Upanishads* executed under Darashikoh, into Dihlawi prose. Some specimens of his poetic creations are reproduced here :

नमो अम्बका जंभहा जोत रूपा ।

नमो चंड मुंडारनी भूपि भूषा ॥

नमो चामरं चौरणी चित्ररूपं ।

नमो परम प्रग्या बिराजै अनूपं ॥

नमो परम रूपा नमो क्रूर करमा ।
 नमो राजसा साकता परम बरमा ॥
 नमो महिषासुर दईत कौ अन्त करणी ।
 नमो तोखणी, सोखणी, सरब इरणी ॥
 बिडालाछ हंती करूराछ घाया ।
 दिजगि दियारदनीअं नमो जोगमाया ॥
 नमो भईरवी भारगवीअं भवानी ।
 नमो जोग ज्वालं घरी सरबमानी ॥
 अघी उरधवी आपरूपा अपारी ।
 रमा रसटरी कामरूपा कुमारी ॥
 भदी भवानी भईरवी भीमरूपा ।
 नमो हिंगुला पिंगुलायं अमृपा ॥
 नमो जुधनी क्रुधनी क्रूर करमा ।
 महांबुधनी सिधनी सुध करमा ॥
 परी पद्मनी पारबती परम रूपा ।
 सिरी बासवी ब्राह्मी रिध कूपा ॥
 मिडा मारजनी सूरतवी मोह करता ।
 पर पसटणी पारबती दुषट हरता ॥
 नमो हिंगुला पिंगुला तोतलायं ।
 नमो करतिकयानी सिवा सीतलायं ॥
 नमो दुषट-पुसटारदनी छेम करनी ।
 नमो दाड्हा गाड्हा घरी दुख्खिय हरणी ॥
 नमो सास्त्रवेता नमो सस्त्रगामी ।
 नमो जछ्छ बिदियाघरी पूर्ण कामी ॥

×

×

×

सणवत बीज हकारे रहवे सूरमे ।
 जोषे जेड मुनारे दिस्सव खेत विधि ॥
 सभनी दसत उभारे तेगां धूहि कै ।
 मारो मार पुकारे आये सामणे ॥
 संजां ते ठणकारे तेगीं उम्भरे ।
 घाट घणन ठठियारे जागु बणाइ कै ॥

सट्ट पाई जमघाणी दलां मुकाबला ।
 घूमर बरगसताणी दलविधि घत्तीओ ॥
 सण्णे तुरा तलाणी डिग्ग सूरमे ।
 उठि उठि मंगनि पाणी धाइल घूमदे ॥
 एवहु मार विहाणी उप्पर राकसां ।
 बिज्जुल जिउं भरलाणी उठ्ठी देवता ॥

× × ×

काम को कुनिंदा खैरखूबी को दिहंदा
 गज गाजी को गजंदा सो कुनिंदा कै बताइए ।
 चाप को चलिंदा घाउ घाम ते बचिंदा
 छत्र छौनी के छलिंदा सो दिहंदा कै मनाइए ॥
 जर को दिहंदा जान माल को जनिंदा
 जोत जेब को गजिंदा जाना मानजान गाइए ।
 दोख को चलिंदा दीन दानस दिहंदा
 दोख दुरजन दलिंदा ध्याइ दूजे कौन ध्याइए ॥

× × ×

आतम प्रधान जाइ सिद्धता सरूप ताह
 बुद्धता बिभूत जाइ सिद्धता सुभाउ है ।
 राग भी न रंग ताहि रूप भी न देख जाहि
 अंग भी सुरंग ताह रंग के सुभाउ है ॥
 चित्र सो बचित्र है परमता पवित्र है
 सुमित्र हूँ के मित्र है विभूति को उपाउ है ।
 देवन के देव है कि साहन के साह है
 कि राजन को राजु है कि रावन को राउ है ॥

× × ×

Anonymous Prose

The one dated (1701 A.D.) manuscript copy of a prose anthology that has come down to us saved from the ravages of cruelty and prejudice is large enough to prove many things, among them, that Panjabi prose was a well-formed, well-developed instrument as early as the 15th century and that both Urdu and Khari Boli are in a way off-shoots of Panjabi. This manuscript contains best chaste

Hindustani or Khari Boli in the form of 'Goshts' or dialogues between Guru Nanak Dev and a seeker from Uttar Pradesh area. Further, it includes a Panjabi prose episode read out to Akbar (1556—1605 A. D.) and many Panjabi passages which report in exact words conversations between Nanak and others in the second half of the 15th century.

There are four types of Panjabi prose in this manuscript : the biographical ; the expository or reflective; the dramatic; and the descriptive. In the light of the considerable specimens no one can say that Panjabi prose came later than Panjabi poetry or that prose did not receive the polish and acquire the power of poetry.

With this 1701 A. D. manuscript copy should be studied the manuscript copy of a dialogue between Baba Lal, a Khatri saint of Gurdaspur Dt. Punja, and Prince Dara Shikoh, and a Panjabi translation of Imam Ghazali's Persian *Kimaya-e-Saadat*, stated to have been carried out by Addan Shah; we shall then get a full idea of how Panjabi prose developed from Apabhramsha prose under the influence of Persian prose, how it gradually changed from synthetic to analytic in verbs and cases, how Panjabization of loan words was consistently carried out, and how new word-formations went on steadily and increasingly.

Narrative Poetry of Love and War and Mystico-Lyrical Verse

Literature very rightly respects no regional and credal boundaries. Poets of the Panjab drew their material, their style, their motifs, their imagery to begin with from as many languages and provinces and countries as were accessible to them. One way of illustrating this is to give a list of love-stories which Hindu, Muslim and Sikh poets have treated in Panjabi verse between 1556 A. D., when Akbar ascended the throne, and 1856 A. D. when the Panjab was annexed by the British :

Yusuf Zulekha

Sassi Punnu

Hir Ranjha

Dhol Sammi

Shiri Farhad

Gopi Chand

Chandar Bhaga

Singhasan Battisi

Baital Pachisi

Sorath Bija

<i>Laila Majnu</i>	<i>Padmni</i>
<i>Rup Basant</i>	<i>Salbahan</i>
<i>Kamrup Kamlata</i>	<i>Urvasi</i>
<i>Madhavanal Kamkandala</i>	<i>Tilotama</i>
<i>Bahram Gor</i>	<i>Ukha</i>
<i>Chandar Badan-Mear</i>	<i>Bharthri</i>
<i>Hatim Tai</i>	<i>Devayani</i>
<i>Puran Bhagat-Sundra</i>	<i>Bazmati</i>
<i>Nala Damyanti</i>	<i>Mrigavati</i>
<i>Rasalu Kokila</i>	<i>Sakhi Sarwar</i>
<i>Saif-ul-Mulk</i>	<i>Sohni Mahiwal</i>
<i>Mirza Sahib</i>	<i>Suleman Balqis</i>
<i>Khaira Sammi</i>	<i>Chitravali</i>

In the treatment of these love stories the Panjabi poet has not lagged behind, if not actually excelled, his compeers in the field of Hindi, like Qutban, Jayasi, Alam, Usman. Although each major Panjabi love-poet has his own special virtues, in actual appeal to the masses by his idiom, level and miscellaneousness Waris with his 5,000 lines of *Hir* has outstripped all others. Places of honour have all the same to be found for Damodar and Muqbil his predecessors and Hamid, Abdul Hakim, Mohammad Muslim, Budh Singh, Ahmed Yar, Hasham, his successors.

It must be confessed that the Muslim poet (at least in the Panjab) had a distinct advantage over the Hindu poet, so far as inheriting or imbibing the Persian tradition in romantic and mystico-lyric poetry was concerned. It is natural, therefore, that in both these fields Muslim poets dominated, although such Hindu and Sikh poets did not much lag behind, as had acquired a deeper knowledge of Persian. Of the mystico-lyrical singers, most noteworthy have been in the old period under review, after Sheikh Farid Husain, Bahu, Sharaf, Vajid, Bulha, Dana, Fard and Faqir among the Muslims and Chhajju, Baba Lal, Kanha, Wali Ram, Budh Singh, Nehar Singh Chhibbar among the Hindus and Sikhs.

These lyricists rendered real service to the cause of inter-credal amity, inter-class harmony, and inter-provincial linguistic exchange.

Their songs became the common property of all creeds and classes, and crossed the provincial bounds. Such songs from outside crossed into the Panjab. They were sung at religious and erotic gatherings ; they were sung also by women at the spinning wheel; they were sung from door to door by itinerant beggars and ascetics. There is a tone of acceptance as opposed to disaffection and rebellion, but then even this escapist attitude of surrender to life at times becomes indispensable for peace of mind. Whatever national opposition could be mustered, had been spent out from thirteenth to seventeenth century; there was no spine left for fighting against still more of Nadirism and Ahmadism. One should try to imagine the poignance, the extreme frustration that lay behind the couplet that passed from lip to lip about the middle of the 18th. century.

Khada pita lahe da.

Raihda Aihmad Shahe da.

Eat and drink what you can now and here ; what is left over goes to Ahmad Shah (Abdali). If men in such an age of uncertainty, insecurity and ever-impending, ever-repeating doom seek solace with eyes shut in romance and religion, why blame poor, weak, human nature a prey to its own insanity and ignorance and bigotry ?

What could the Hindu and Muslim poets sing of by way of martial poetry ? Nothing, except hark back to the Karbala or the Mahabharat. Only the Sikhs steeled by prosecution and silent suffering, provided material for war-poetry. Sikh poets began to chronicle in verse the fights of Guru Gobind Singh and of the Sikh heroes of the time. It must be confessed that during the last one thousand years we have had no war-poetry of extent or merit except for Guru Gobind Singh's poetization of the myth of Goddess Chandi, and of his own skirmishes with the Hindu Hill Chief aided by Muslim Governors.

Some consideration has all the same to be paid to the historical poetry written by Sikh poets between 1780 and 1856 A. D. The language is Panjab Hindwi because the metres are Hindwi metres, but the stamp of Panjabi phonology, Panjabi culture, and Panjabi

alankarika tradition is there in full impress. We have to bow to Santokh Singh (1788), the author of '*Suraj Prakash*' and '*Panth Prakash*'.

Vir Singh (1872—1956 A. D.)

Since the new political and scientific set-up, literature all over the world has shed its serious role ; the individual writer has not necessarily first to acquire a purposiveness and an equipment in experience and meditation, before he purveys food for good to the human heart and the human brain ; literature is now a means, a career and one that has many levels—high and low, many purposes from commercial to sexual, from political to credal. We may not look out now for integrated specimens of Music, Architechtonics, Ecstasy, Wisdom, and other ingredients which went to the making of Greek, Iranian and Bhartian epics, dramas, mystical-lyrics. We have now things in minor key on a mean scale for the masses produced as imitation or invention and not as brewed and inspired.

The present world civilization has as its hall-marks co-mingling, utility and self-trumpeting ; everything is made to subserve comfort and prosperity ; man's cruelty to man, his ignorance and neglect, his wiliness and craftiness have not decreased, only they have taken on subtler and sharper and more effective forms. There is, in fact, little concealing of the real motives behind politics or literature. We want to extend the sphere of our enjoyment of self, of sex, of material plenty on many planes.

The older generation which took upon itself to imitate English literature directly or through Hindi and Urdu and to introduce its forms and ideas into Panjabi in the measure of the author's own educational and artistic equipment is represented by Mohan Singh Vaid and by Dhani Ram Chatrik, Maula Bakhsh Kusta and Vir Singh. Between them they gave us first short stories, first novels, first longer and shorter poems, first plays, first biographies, essays and pieces of journalism.

A second generation has also come and gone (figuratively), represented by I.C. Nanda—a playwright; Nanak Singh—novelist and storyteller; Charan Singh Shahid—humourist, novelist and essayist; Sewa

Singh—essayist; Hira Singh Dard—journalist; Sohan Singh Josh—essayist; Joshua Fazal Din—fictionist; Awtar Singh Azad—poet and essayist; Firoz Din Sharaf—poet; Dr. Faqir Mohd.—poet and essayist. Amongst the playwrights of the new generation Gurdial Singh Khosla (Buhe Baithee dhe, mar mittan wale and beghare) for profundity of purpose and all-round knowledge of the stage; Sant Singh Sekhon (waris) for the Psychological touch that he imparts to his play; Harcharan Singh for his adeptness in the choice of dramatic themes and dramatic situations and in the execution thereof; Gurdial Phulla for his simple and direct language and the emotional content deserve special mention.

Similarly amongst the notable fictionists we might make mention of Gurbakhsh Singh (b. 1895), Kartar Singh Dugal (b. 1918), Gurmukh Singh Musafir (b. 1899), Kulwant Singh Vark and Prakash Madhok. Nanak Singh stands out as one of Panjab's leading novelists who has given us excellent literature in plenty. Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid (1881—1936) was his predecessor. Both of them have a special inclination for simple and fluent prose-style.

It is not possible nor desirable to look at our contemporaries too closely but as a matter of personal preference characterized by a regard for nobler purpose, a spiritual valuation, a music-cum-picture pattern, a flare for the good style of presentation, one should like to hold up to the rest of Bharat as in the best old and new Indian tradition biographies by Vir Singh, lyrics by Dhani Ram and Sharaf and Faqir, skits by Charan Singh, short stories by Joshua and Major Madhok and Harcharan Singh, plays by Khosla and Tir, essays by the present writer and Awtar Singh Azad, and intellectual and mystic poetry in blank verse, free verse, and old metres by the present writer.

A number of progressives or socialists are using literature to disseminate their political ideas and reactions among the masses. Whether they will survive is for time to declare. At the moment among those whom patronage by the Panjab University has thrown up are :—

Poets— Mohan Singh Mahir.

Dramatists— Sujan Singh.

and essayists— Gurbakhsh Singh, Sahib Singh, Harinder Singh.

Our greatest scholar so far was Pandit Tara Singh Narottama, whose knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian and Panjabi religious and secular literature was simply marvellous. He was a Nirmala Sadhu. Several monumental works bear witness to his greatness, e. g., *Mokh Panth* (1865), *Surtaru Kosh* (1876), *Akal murat Pradarshan* and *Guru-Vansh Taru Darpan* (1878), *Bhagatan di Bani* (1832), *Gur Tirth Sangraih* (1883), *Gurmat Nirnai Sagar* (1887), *Sri Rag* and *Gurgirarth Kosh* (1889).

I do not believe in bolstering up one's literature ; one may overvalue one's religion or politics or race-horse to one's gain or loss, if one is so inclined. It may appear to protagonists of other Indian literatures that Panjabi is not so rich or no high claims have been put forward for it. This will be a wrong impression. Panjabi is rich with the inexhaustible personalities of its Saints—Hindu, Muslim and Sikh, and it is rich with the exhaustless courage, humour, humanity of its peasantry reflected in folk-songs and written and unwritten stories.

We are still in a transitional stage and we have hardly had time to plan our national life. Rightly has Phyllis M. Jones remarked—

“When a generation arises that knows quite surely what it is looking for in life, so soon will it know what it wants in literature and just as soon, probably, will it get it.....”

URDU

Origin

The origin of Urdu must be ascribed to the development of modern Indo-Aryan languages which came into existence somewhere about A. D. 1000. The Indo-Aryan language was spoken by the Indo-Aryans who came into India. Scholars are divided on the homeland of the Aryans. Many theories have been advanced. The one which is generally accepted is that they lived somewhere near the borderland of Europe and Asia and spoke the original language from which modern Indo-Aryan languages have been derived. Their migration into India was a slow process and was spread over centuries. At the time when the Aryans started moving eastward from the valley of the Kabul to the Sind basin, their language showed an admixture of non-Aryan words. Dravidian words like kala (art), kal (time), neela (blue), Ratri (night), Pahala (Fruit), for instance, are woven into the texture of our Indo-Aryan languages. This influx of new words which was the result of the Aryan expansion and contact with the indigenous Indian peoples, necessitated the standardisation of the Indo-Aryan languages. Considered chaste and pure, this polished language was known as Sanskrit and amply served the needs of religion and literature. But owing to over-emphasis on artificial purity and religious exclusiveness, Sanskrit became circumscribed, it stagnated and lost touch with the common people. The protestant movements of Buddhism and Jainism, rising out of the Hindu fold, gave an impetus to the provincial languages and ordinary speech of the masses, in opposition to the hegemony of Sanskrit. This resulted in the bifurcation of Sanskrit into Literary Sanskrit which dwindled into a fixed and rigid language, confined to a small religious group, and Vedic Sanskrit which continued to flow over an ever-widening area and assimilate words of common usage. Shaurseni Prakrit branched off from this Vedic

Sanskrit and blossomed in Doab. It was in the first century of the Christian era that Shaurseni Prakrit developed into a thoroughly expressive literary language. Owing to the vastness of the country this language also lost its vitality and was abandoned by the masses, thus catering only to a literary aristocracy. A reaction against this restricted language soon set in and as a result "Apabhramsha" or the broken or corrupted language came into vogue in the 6th century A. D. This profoundly influenced the languages of the Doab and Rajputana. During this period of the dominance of the Rajputs in the Gangetic basin, the Apabhramsha of Shursen Desh received an impetus and became the acknowledged literary language of the North (800-1000 A. D.)

History was repeated about 1000 A. D. when Shurseni Apabhramsha, too, withered away owing to the puritanism and obscurantism of its intellectual leaders and from it there arose Western Hindi or the modern Indo-Aryan language of northern Hindustan. As it had deep roots in the soil of the plains of the Ganges and was simple and cosmopolitan in character, it soon spread over a vast area. Any language that spreads over vast areas, with scanty means of communication, is bound to form splinter languages or dialects with their own local shade of meaning and colour. This Indo-Aryan language of northern India, therefore, broke up into a group of dialects consisting of Bundeli, Haryani, Brij Bhasha and Khadi Boli or Hindustani or Zubane Dehalvi. This Western Hindi has formed the basis of Urdu, which still retains its grammar, idioms and its several thousand Hindi words. They all clearly indicate its Indian parentage, its underlying dialect being particularly Khadi Boli, the dialect of Delhi and its neighbourhood.

The expansion of the Muslims in India in early mediaeval times is an event of vast lingual significance. In their wake came a new religion, a new philosophy and a new culture. Persian, a language of pure Aryan extraction, with a strong admixture of Arabic and Turkish words, was the state language, which naturally influenced the entire language group of Western Hindi. This influence can be traced in the incorporation of many loan words from Persian and Arabic. This borrowing continued till the time of Kabir

(1440—1518) and Guru Nanak (1469—1538), which proves that the inheritance of Shaurseni Apabhhransha was being slowly transferred to Khadiboli or Zubane Dehlavi under the influence of Muslims. Persian, too, was not immune from the reciprocal influence of North Indian languages, for Alberuni, Manuchehri, Sinai and Farrukhi unblushingly use Hindi words.

For obvious historical reasons, Urdu, when it began to develop into a literary language, incorporated many words from Persian which was in ascendance as the sovereign language of India, and through the Persian many words from Arabic and Turkish came in. As the Muslims intended to stay, they established their capital at Delhi (1206) which is situated at the juncture of the areas speaking Brij, Khadi Boli and Haryani. Mutual intercourse between the newcomers and the Indian people, and the many new things which the Muslims had brought with them, necessitated the use of a mixed vocabulary which could be understood by both. Thus, a new language was born, Urdu.

When the Muslims appeared on the scene the languages in Madhya Desh (Western U.P. and Eastern Punjab) were in a state of flux and ferment. Shaurseni Apabhhransha had become insipid and bloodless, and Western Hindi was undergoing changes that ultimately resulted in modern Indo-Aryan languages. A change was taking place imperceptibly and slowly. The Muslims only quickened the process of change, which had been continuous from the advent of the Aryans, this time by influencing and enriching Khadi boli.

The Beginning

The earliest and the most authentic specimens of the Urdu language are rare and scarce. We know on the authority of Mohd. Aufr (Lubbul Albab, Volume 2, Page 246) and Amir Khusru (Gharatul Kalam, page 66) that Khwaja Masood Sa'd Salman (died between 1125 and 1130 A. D.) wrote verse in "Hindavi". It is almost impossible now to ascertain the exact nature of this language in view of the complete absence of written records. Amir Khusru (1255—1325) also wrote a great deal in Hindavi and Wajhi and Mir Taqi Mir (1722—1810) accepted as genuine some of his verses

which were commonly known in their day. In the early stages the development of Urdu was a two-pronged movement. Firstly, the saints and mystics made it a vehicle for the propagation of their ideas of unity and compromise. The utterances attributed to Baba Farid (1186—1265 A. D.), Shaikh Hamiduddin Nagouri, Shah Bu Ali Qalandar (d. 1324), Shaikh Bahauddin Bajan (d. 1506) indicate an important step in the development of Urdu. Secondly, Hindu saints of the Bhakti movement, which under the influence of Islamic thought encouraged the ideas of oneness, also gave impetus to the linguistic compromise—Urdu—which was then emerging.

The campaigns of Alauddin Khilji (1296—1316) and Malik Kafur in the Deccan, the change of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad in the time of Mohd.-bin-Tughlaq (1325—1351), the establishment of the Bahmani kingdom in 1347 A. D. with a desire to emphasise their own independent life and modes of thought as opposed to Delhi, and the conquest of the Deccan and the establishment of a secondary capital at Aurangabad (9 miles from Mohd. bin-Tughlaq's Daulatabad) by Aurangzeb are events of supreme importance in the spread and development of Urdu in the South, which was nothing but the plastic khadiboli of the North gradually being turned into a literary form.

The Urdu of Northern India was also exposed to many changes. Akbar (1556—1605) established his capital at Agra, which was the stronghold of Brij Bhasha. This fact was responsible for the influence of Brij Bhasha on Urdu. The addition of many Sanskrit words to Urdu, the change in the language, idiom and pronunciation, which reached its culmination in Lucknow at a later stage, was started in Agra under the influence of Brij Bhasha. Shahjehan (a. 1628) moved his capital to Delhi and with this, the emphasis also shifted to "Zabane-Urdu-e-Shahjahanabad" which now became fully crystallized and assumed a standardised form.

The Name "Urdu"

The word 'Urdu' meaning 'army' occurs for the first time in 1150 in *Tarikhe Jahankusha* of Javaini. Babar (a. 1526) also calls his army "Urdue Nasrat She-ar" or the Victorious Army. But the use of the word "Urdu" by itself and meaning the Urdu language

is not very old. The earliest examples of the word "Urdu" meaning language are in Mir's *Nikatus Shura* (1752), in *Tarkirah-e-Gulzare Ibrahim* (1783), in *Nama-e-Murad*, a poem by Murad Shah of Lahore of 1788, in Maulana Baqar Agah's prose introduction to his religious poems (1791) and in Mushafi's *Tazkirah-Shurao-Hindi* (1794). In this title we must note the use of the word Hindi, meaning Urdu. This usage of the word Hindi implying that Urdu was a product of the soil continued down to the time of Mirza Ghalib (d. 1869). The language as spoken was generally called "Hindi", when employed for poetical purposes it was known as "Rekhta", or scattered, a term for "patch music"¹ was applied also to the mixed language and was commonly used by Hatim, Sauda, Mir, Shefta, and Ghalib. Amir Khusru and Shaikh Bajan (d. 1506 A. D.) speak of Zubane Dihlavi. Wajhi calls it Zubane Hindustani (1634). The earliest writers in India, Terry and Fryer, called Urdu, as then prevalent, "Indostan". Dr. John Gilchrist preferred the word "Hindustani".

Development of Urdu in the Deccan

Like its sister Indo-Aryan languages, Urdu was derived from Shaurseni Prakrit. The speech of the Punjab and the adjoining districts of Delhi saw the admixture and grafting of non-Indian phonetic elements and words (resulting in the birth of Urdu) at the most significant turning point of Indian history when there was a tremendous influx of Turks, Afghans and Persians into India.

The earliest sproutings of the modern Aryan languages can be traced to the 11th century A. D. but their literature came into being after the Muslims had been firmly settled in the North. Not only did they sometimes write in these languages, but they encouraged the writers of these languages. Of these the Khadiboli, which is the oldest of them all, transformed and led to the introduction of new verse forms and a "new" Indianised script of Persian, owing to the pressure of certain historical forces at this juncture. The earliest specimens of this language have already been described and these are few and very scarce. But in the South, long before the North, hundreds of books were produced in Urdu prose and poetry.

1 A composition consisting of alternate lines of Persian and Hindi,

The literary precedence of the South over the North can be understood only in its historical context. Sultan Alauddin Khilji invaded the South during 1294-1311 A. D. and conquered a large part of it. His army consisted mostly of the hardy people from Ambala, Karnal, Hissar and Delhi. They carried along with them to the Deccan their new and fluid language, which took root in the soil. In 1326 Mohd. bin Tughlaq transferred the entire population of Delhi, which owing to social exigencies, spoke this infant language, to Daulatabad which is 9 or 10 miles from modern Aurangabad. Twenty-one years after the transfer of the capital, an officer of Mohd. bin Tughlaq, Hasan Bahmani revolted against Delhi and established the rule of the Bahmanis which continued till 1526. With the weakening of the Bahmani rule, Golconda and Bijapur developed as important centres of Urdu and produced literature which is peculiarly true to the soil. There are reasons for its strong Indian character. The Bahmani rule was established in opposition to and independent of Delhi and it naturally laid stress on the element of Indian culture. During the three-hundred years of independence of Golconda and Bijapur, relations between the Hindus and Muslims had been most cordial (Gribbe's *History of the Deccan*, Vol. 1, page 294). The employment of a large number of Hindus in the State Services, the use of "Hindovy"¹ in the keeping of accounts, the teachings of the Sufis who preached the tolerance of ideas and the unity of the peoples, and intercommunal marriages, all these factors contributed to the rapid growth of Urdu literature in the South. It does differ from that of the North, however, in that it is affected by its own geographical and physical environment.

The earliest known writer in Deccani Urdu is Shaikh Ganjulilm (d. 1393) but his religious pamphlets have disappeared. The next notable figure is Khwaja Banda-nawaz-Gesu-daraz who was born in Delhi in 1320 A. D. and was a disciple of Hazrat Khwaja Naseeruddin Chiragh of Delhi. Khwaja Bande Nawaz came to Gulbarga in 1412 and died there in 1422 A. D. He is the author of *Mirajul-Ashiqeen*, a Sufistic treatise in prose, which has been published. His

"*Hidayatnama*" and "*Sehbara*" have not been published. Towards the end of the 14th century, his grandson, Abdullah Husaini, translated Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani's *Nishatul-Ishaq* into Deccani Urdu. A copy of this work was kept at the library of Tipu Sultan (see Stewart's catalogue) but is no longer extant. Nizami, a court poet of Sultan Ahmad Shah Bahmani, composed a masnavi "*Kidam Rao and Padam*" but its language is too archaic to be understood. These details clearly indicate that Urdu was already a vehicle for literary expression in the South, but it gained further impetus with the establishment of the independent kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda. The period synchronises with the period of Malik Mohd. Jaisi (flourished about 1540), Kabir (d. 1518), Tulsi Das (d. 1624) and Sur Das (d. probably 1563) in Northern India, whose medium was Avadhi and Brij. At this moment of history, Khadiboli was making rapid progress in the Deccan, far from its birthplace and amid the Maharashtrian and the Dravidian languages. The phenomenon arising from historical and cultural causes has already been explained.

With the dismemberment of the Bahmani Kingdom, the Adil Shahi dynasty was established in 1490 in Bijapur, which was annexed to the Moghal Empire by Aurangzeb in 1686. The majority of the kings of Bijapur were men of refinement and patrons of letters. Ibrahim Adil Shah I (1534—1558) and Ibrahim Adil Shah II were greatly interested in Urdu and gave it a position of eminence.

Among the writers of this period Shamsul-ushshaq Shah-Miranji (d. 1496) deserves mention. His prose pamphlets *Sharah Marghoobul Qulub*, *Jaltarang* and *Gulbas* are extant but unpublished. His two poems are important: *Khush-nama*, in which a girl of 17 renounces the world and adopts the sufi path of divine love and *Khush-Nagz*, in which the same girl puts mystical questions and Miranji answers them.

Burhanuddin Janum (d. 1582) and Shahameenuddin Ala were the sons of Shamsul-ushshaq. Both were perfect in the worldly and spiritual sciences and have left behind versified compositions on mysticism. Here special mention may be made of *Jannatul-Baqa* by Burhanuddin Janam, which consists of 1610 verses, and reveals

Gujrati influences. This sort of influence can also be seen in the poetic compositions of Qazi Mahmud-Daryai (d. 1534), Shah Ali Jau Ahmadabadi (d. 1515 A. D.) and Shaikh Khub Mohd. Ahmadabadi (d. 1614 A. D.). These influences indicate that Urdu was spreading over vast areas and was absorbing native traits. The metres employed are mostly Hindi and the style is not without Hindu mythological allusions and references. Here Khaliq rhymes with Malik as Hindi made no distinction between Q and K. These works are of little literary value as the purpose of the writers is merely to communicate their mystical ideas, but philologically they are highly significant.

The most important poets of this period are Shahi, Muqceemi, Khushnood, Rustami, Sanati, Nusrati, Hashmi, Seva, Momin Madrasi. Qadir Rustami's epic *Khawarnama*, Nusrati's masnavi *Gulshane Ishaq* and *Alinama*, and Hashmi's *Rekhtis* are also interesting in that they employ all forms of poetry and thus exhibit their power of diction and versification.

The Qutab Shahi dynasty of Golconda was established in 1510 and was overthrown by Aurangzeb in 1687. The rulers were both patrons and poets. Mohd. Quli Qutab Shah (1590—1611), fourth ruler of the dynasty is one of the most outstanding Urdu poets whose works are extant. Hitherto only mystical literature had been produced. Quli Qutab Shah turned to the purely literary. His *Kulliyat*, consisting of more than 1,00,000 verses has been published. His poetry is full of local colour and includes many poems on Indian fruits, vegetables, birds, customs and festivals. He Urduizes many Persian words and constructions, uses Hindi epithets in praise of God and celebrates the love of woman for man. He has borrowed prosody and forms of composition from Persian and grafted them on to Urdu.

Mulla Wajhi is a great literary figure of this period. His masnavi *Qutab mushatari* (1609) and his rhyming prose allegory on Sufism *Sub-ras* (1634 A. D.) are the gems of Urdu literature produced in the Deccan and are widely read.

Ghawwasi is a contemporary of Sultan Mohd. Qutab Shah. His two masnavis, *Saifulmulk* and *Badiul Jamal* (a romance calligra-

phed in 1616 A.D.) and *Tutinama* (1639), Tales of a Parrot, ultimately derived from the Sanskrit *Shuk Saptati*, are the most famous. He has also employed the *ghazal* and *marsia* forms of poetry and wielded them with ease. Like Wajhi, his compositions are full of Indianisms.

Ibne Nishati flourished during the time of Sultan Abdullah Qutab Shah (1625—1674). He is the author of a fairy tale "*Phulban*" consisting of 130 pages in verse, which has been preserved in India Office. At the end of this masnavi, he gives an account of the important poets of his time, which is most useful to a historian.

Golconda and Bijapur were the resorts of intellectual and literary men. It is almost impossible to mention here all the outstanding poets and prose writers, who emerged in the congenial surroundings of the South. Their writings are not without significance as here we can recognise the literary form of khadiboli of the North. A new composite and syncretic culture was being evolved in the North, which was repeated in the South specially in the domain of Urdu language and literature. The latter received patronage from the court but never became the lackey of the Darbar. This literature has freshness and freedom, emanating from its mystical trends. It bears a strong Indian stamp inspite of the Persian influence of the court and the Persian savants who collected there. The language of this period is in its infancy, heavy and uncouth, sand-wiched as it were between two powerful influences, Persian and Deccani.

The 17th century had hardly come to a close when Urdu spread to Gujerat, Arcot, Madras, and Mysore. In the North, Persian still held sway and it was even considered disrespectful to correspond in Urdu, which, on the whole, was the language of conversation rather than culture.

Although the Deccan remained under Persian-speaking Moghals from 1687 to 1730 but this domination made little difference to the progress of Urdu, which continued as usual, to flourish mainly with the help of the people, and their life was the least affected by a change of masters. During this period, we find such great masters of poesy as Wali, Bahri, Siraj, Wajdi, Wali Vellori, and Uzlat, who have made valuable contributions to Urdu.

Wali (1667-1741) is the Chaucer of Urdu poetry and his work could not have been produced in a literary vacuum. Judged in this light, Wali's poetry depicts the last stage of that evolutionary process that Urdu language had been undergoing from the time of Mohd. bin Tughlaq. Wali influenced not only the poets of the South but also those of the North. He came to Delhi in 1700 A. D. and was advised by Shah Sadullah Gulshan, the well-known Sufi and Persian poet of the time to imitate the manner of the Persian poets, and substitute Urdu idioms (Mahavarai Shah Jhanabad) for Dakhini. He followed the advice with the result that his *diwan* leapt into fame and his ghazals became the craze of the city. They were sung in all possible centres of Urdu, at the courts, in the bazars and at mystic assemblies. The appearance of Wali on the literary scene of Delhi was a historical necessity. The poets of Delhi wanted to write in the language of the home and the market place but they had no model. In Wali they found their model. Hence there was universal enthusiasm for his spontaneous poems and he richly deserves the title of Babae-rekhta or Father of Urdu poetry. It is interesting to note how very modern is the language of his later writings, the result of his contact with and the advice he received from Shah Gulshan.

An account of this period would be incomplete if no mention were made of Bahri's *Man Lagan* and Wajdi's *Tuhfa Ashiqan* or *Panchhi Baja*. The latter is the translation of Shaikh Fariduddin Attar's *Mantaqut-tair* or the "Discourse of the Birds". Wali of Vellore also composed masnavis, *Ratan-o-Padam* being the most important as the romance of Raja Ratansen and Padmavati.

Siraj (1714-1763)'s poetry is characterised by loftiness of ideas and freshness of themes. His *diwan* contains 10,000 verses, the language of which is very similar to the language of today.

Among the prose writers of this period, mention may be made of Syed Shah Mohd. Qadri, Shah Waliullah Qadri (d. 1744), Syed Shah Mir, Mohd. Baqar Agha (d. 1805), Maulana Mohd. Ghaus (d. 1823) and Qazi Badruddaula (b. 1793) whose style is easy, direct and not overlaid with excessive ornament.

Development of Urdu Literature in Northern India

In the North, Urdu literature came to its flowering towards the beginning of the 18th century. The Diwan of Wali Aurangabadi brought to Delhi in 1700 A. D. created quite a sensation. It was difficult to believe that the language of the home and the market place could be so finely moulded and polished as to mirror the variegated hues of life. The impetus given by Wali to the poets of Delhi did not exhaust itself and was taken up by a generation of poets, who nursed the Urdu language and got rid of the archaic and uncouth loan words of the Deccan. With the weakening of Moghul authority at the Centre, Persian gradually lost ground and Urdu grew in popularity. Even the distinguished Persian poets like Bedil, Omeed, Khane Arzoo and Fitrat tried to compose in a kind of pedestrian Urdu, which had still to acquire a distinct literary style.

This was essentially a period of unrest and decline. After the death of Aurangzeb (1707) the Moghul empire crumbled and tottered. Mohammad Shah ruled from 1719 to 1748, when the country was rudely shaken by the invasion of the Persian warrior in 1739. The main steps in the decline—the sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah, the raids of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1748-1761), the disruption caused by Jats, Marathas, and Rohillas and the civil wars of the Omrah or the nobles and the vicissitudes which accompanied these events, the ebb and flow of changing fortune, the alternating hopes and deepening gloom—are too well-known to need elaboration. Delhi was the scene of bloody conflicts and carnage and was captured by Persians in 1739, by Afghans in 1756, by Marhattas in 1760, by Rohillas in 1788 and lastly by General Lake in 1803. The mass exodus of poets from Delhi to Avadh can only be understood in this historical situation.

Most curiously this period of political unrest saw the great consolidation of Urdu in the North. Amid the feudal fights at the top, the language of the people continued to prosper. Abru (d. 1747), Hatim (d. 1791), Naji (d. 1754), Mazmun (d. about 1745), and Mazhar (d. 1781) all contemporaries of Wali, rendered yeomen service to Urdu poetry. Hatim was the founder of the Delhi School

of poets, who directed all his attention to the purification of the language and the exclusion of the inelegant words of the South. Mirza Mazhar (d. 1781), the celebrated mystic, is one of the early fathers of rekhta, who expelled 'eeham' or double meaning from Urdu poetry and filled it with unusual spiritual passion and mystic poignancy.

Sauda (1713—80) is one of the pillars of Urdu. He lived in Delhi till life became almost intolerable. This was the lot of all classes of people, who lived in Delhi, tossed about by every wind of fortune.

Sauda used his artillery for criticising the shams and insincerities of life. The maladministration and incompetence of the later Moghuls, the intrigues of the nobles, the corruption of the officers and the lot of the common people, have been most ruthlessly and slashingly criticised by Sauda. His qasida '*On Ridiculing the Age*' is a beautiful satire on the utter decay of the military administration. There is no fiercer satire in Urdu Literature than *Shaher Ashoab* or "Disturbed Times" in which the distressing condition of the nobles, poets, theologians, craftsmen and businessmen has been most skilfully analysed. As an ironic exposure of the infirmities and weaknesses of the age this poem is a masterpiece.

Sauda disliked Shidi Foland Khan Kotwal and pilloried him. He starts his satirical onslaught against an individual but at the end of it, the entire police structure is in ruins. In spite of its unrelieved bitterness, it makes interesting reading for the Kotwal is a symbol of incompetence and deceit.

Sauda was a wild beast who baited all mankind. Even pious men like Hazrat Shah Waliullah, perhaps the greatest scholar of Indo-Muslim times, did not escape his wrath. His satires which smack of personal differences make oppressive reading.

On the critical side, Sauda is supremely great, none could despise the world of decadent Moghuls with such brilliant fury.

Sauda is also a master of panegyrics. Actuated by classical methods, he compels comparison with Anwari and Khaqani of Persian literature. He imitated them and equalled them, if not surpassed them.

Sauda has tried all forms of poetry, *ghazal* also. It is said that he wrote *ghazal* better than *qasida* and *qasida* better than *ghazal*. In fact, he wrote both with confidence and ease.

Mir Taqi Mir (1724—1810) is known as the “god of poesy”. He was born in Agra but lived in Delhi which was the scene of bloody wars till 1783. When he forsook it, he went by invitation to Avadh where he died in 1810. He was self-respecting to a fault, intensely proud and sensitive. His life was one of appalling distress and frustration but he did not compromise with the dwindling and decadent virtues. His fame chiefly rests on his *ghazals* and *masnavis*. But in the domain of *ghazal* in which he protests against the injustices of the time, he is unrivalled. He has a fondness for self-revelation which makes of him a universal genius in lyricism. It is aptly said of him that he did not write *ghazals*, but wrote “elegies of his heart and hearth”. There is an air of sadness in his *ghazals* which lends peculiar charm and sweetness to his verses. His subjective poetry symbolises the tragedy of common man, toiling under feudal fatalism. Mir also was not a silent spectator of the ebb and flow of changing fortune. He had to face many trials and troubles. He suffered and starved but refused to bend even in the darkest hour. His verses are, therefore, poignant and invested with an indescribable charm and pathos. The beauty and ardour with which he expresses his injured sentiments and the anguish of his soul, is unequalled in Urdu literature. He is sensitive to cadence and amazingly prolific in imagery, which is mainly based on the sub-soil of his surroundings and cultural traditions. His ‘real language of men’ is chiselled Khadi Boli, free from affectations. In conversational naturalness and fine artistry he is superb. He employs words of common usage but with keenest consciousness of their magic.

Mir's poetry has a tradition of humanism. To give a quotation: ‘A moth does not distinguish between the lamp of the mosque and the temple’. From it flows his concept of love, which served as an escape from the dreary tragic facts of life around him. Mir was a prolific writer and has left behind a *Kulliyat* of 1000 pages, an autobiography and a *tazakirah*.

Mysticism was the dominating ideological force at this impor-

tant moment of our history. The mystic poetry of Mirza Mazhar and Mir Taqi Mir, who was exposed to mystic influences at an early age, has the stamp of Vedantic lyricism, a pointer to the presence of strong syncretic trends in our daily life.

Khwaja Mir Dard (1719—1785) wrote only mystic *ghazals*. He gave up soldiering to become a *dervish* and did not leave Delhi even during the most stormy days. His *ghazals* are strongly tinged with divine love and are full of fire and pathos. He is at his best in short metres. As a proponent of sublimity and simplicity, he gave a corrective to Urdu poetry. Mir, Mazhar, Sauda and Dard rendered great service to the Urdu language and enriched it by drawing from Persian sources. But their language has deep roots in the soil; it does not overstep the borderline between Urdu and Persian.

Mir Hasan of Delhi (d. 1786) who also migrated to Avadh is the greatest *masnavi* writer in Urdu. His *Seharul-Bayan* (Sorcery of Eloquence) is an immortal production. Mir also composed fine *masnavis* but Mir Hasan is pre-eminent. He is sonorous and sweet.

This period is important as it produced three most remarkable poets, Mir, Sauda and Mir Hasan, who set standards for posterity in *ghazal*, *qasida* and *masnavi*. The lyrics of Mirza Mazhar and Dard are occupied with divine love and represent the best and highest traditions of mystic poetry in Urdu. Mir, Mir Hasan and Mushafi wrote *tazkiras* or biographical anthologies which do indicate the literary criterions of the age. Many poetic symposia or *mushairas* were held which contributed to the spread of the language and right standard of speech. Qaim (d. between 1787 and 1795), Soz (1720—98), Kalim (flourished 1750), Bayan (d. 1798) are other notable poets who flourished during this period.

As Delhi was ruled by Shah Alam II, a blind and poverty-stricken figure-head and as it was ravaged by incessant wars and ceaseless turmoil, resulting in utter economic ruin, there was a general exodus of poets in search of fortune from Delhi to Farrukhabad, Tenda, Avadh, Azeemabad and Hyderabad. Avadh was the most opulent state in the north, which tried to excel Delhi in extending patronage to men of letters. Hence the seat of belle-letters was

shifted from Delhi to Lucknow, the Isphihaan of India. Sauda, Mir, Hasan, Mushafi, Insha, Juraat and many others left for Lucknow and occupied positions of respect.

The ruin of Delhi was the glory of Lucknow. In the beginning these emigres were proud of their connections with Delhi which was till now the most important town from Canton to Constantinople and the seat of Moghul culture. As Lucknow drifted away from Delhi in the political field and became sovereign, so in literature it became independent and developed its own peculiar standards and traditions.

Avadh is situated in an area which is far away from the area of Khadi Boli. Therefore, the literary productions of Lucknow are almost devoid of the native simplicity and lucidity of Khadi Boli. In order to emphasise its independent character, the literary school of Lucknow freely borrowed from Persian words, metres and forms and made Urdu almost a replica of Persian. What they lost in simplicity and naturalness they made up in artificiality and ornamentation.

In Delhi poetry was linked with spiritual piety. In Lucknow it was linked to the dissolute court and pandered to the passions of its degenerate patrons. There were compositions in the dialect of women (rekhti), profligacy versified. There was a scramble for court favours, poetic combats turning into filthy lampoons. The poetic quarrels of Insha and Mushafi, which are notorious, are nothing better than ribald vituperations. There were poems which showed off perfect literary skill but were barren of all emotional content. The poets were completely under the spell of the court, which was the model of coarse sensuality and pompous artificiality. Their frigid conventionality reached its high watermark in the time of Nasikh.

Mushafi (1750—1824) tried his best to continue the traditions of Mir and Soz but seldom sounded the very depth of their emotions. The best verses of Mushafi are those where he combines in his own way the styles of several masters. He also wrote two tazkiras of Urdu poets in Persian which have been published. Insha (d. 1817) was a versatile genius and a master craftsman, who prostituted his talents to please his patrons. Betab has aptly said of him "Poetry

spoiled Insha and his poetry was spoiled by Nawab (Saadat Ali Khan)". Insha is also the author of '*Rani Ketki ki Kahani*', a prose tale in 'pure Hindi idiom' and *Darya-e-Latefi* or the ocean of Eloquence (1802), the first grammar in Persian of Urdu by an Indian.

Juraat (d. 1810) also tried to imitate Mir but lacked his genuine pathos. The latter once remarked of him : "You know nothing about true poetry : you only describe kissing and hugging". There is no denying the fact that his love is licentious and bizarre and this found expression in his most fluent and amatory verses.

Rangin (d. 1835) wrote rekhti poetry which reflected the debased society of Lucknow. This sort of poetry culminated in the works of Jan Sahab (d. 1897) who used to dress himself and recite as woman.

At this juncture of literary history when Urdu poetry was becoming more effeminate, conventional and soulless, Nazir Akbarabadi (d. 1830) appeared as a lone star, who represented in his poetry the life of the common people and their aspirations. He was democratic in his approach and wrote poems on Indian subjects in popular language. He was a poet of the people in the real sense of the word and cemented the bonds of friendship between Hindus and Muslims by projecting the points of similarity in their culture. He can well be described as the morning star of Modern Urdu Poetry. Ignored and hushed up by his age, he was nevertheless its major spokesman.

But in the midst of general contemporary trends, he remained an isolated figure and handicapped by aristocratic historiography. Nasikh (d. 1838) and his innumerable followers laid stress on the correctness of idiom and outward form with the result that Urdu poetry was rendered ineffective and laboured. The formulation of poetic rules by Nasikh had their own merit but he overhit the target, and sacrificed thought to diction and emotion to ornamental hyperbole. There is no throb in his verses, they are icy cold. Atish has a greater claim to poetry than Nasikh. There are occasional finds in his diwan which have a pictorial effect and poignant suggestiveness.

Perhaps the most interesting product of the time is a *masnavi* by Pt. Daya Shankar Naseem, characterised by terseness and the profusion of similes. But the greatest contribution of Lucknow is in the domain of *marsia*. Mir Anis (1802-74) and Mirza Dabeer (1803-75) are the two most outstanding *marsia* poets who have excelled in this form of poetry by transcending frigid artificiality and have exalted it with lofty emotions and the felicity of their idioms. Anis combined the epic element with the tragic and thus struck a new and healthy note in Urdu poetry. As far as his landscape painting, and description of battlefields is concerned, he compells comparison with some of the greatest poets of the world.

Drama also showed its first flowering in the form of opera and *Indar Sabha* by Amanat (1815-58) is an instance in point. In the field of *masnavi*, Mirza Shauq though he lacks the auroral light of the highest poetry, is superb in painting the gaiety and sensualism of the age.

The cult of the Lucknow school received a rude shock in 1856 when Jane Alam Wajid Ali Shah, the last Avadh king, was deposed and transported to Calcutta. He was a prolific writer and a patron of Urdu poets. With the annexation of Avadh, Lucknow poets tried to catch up the tune of Delhi as their moribund culture was evaporating in thin air.

After the establishment of the British residency in Delhi, the capital enjoyed some respite (of peace) before the great national upheaval in 1857. The Moghul authority was flickering but it gave dazzling light before it finally extinguished. It was during this time that Delhi saw the emergence of distinguished poets like Momim (1800-1851), Naseem (1794-1864), Zauq (1789-1854), Majruh, Azurda (d. 1868) and Shefta but the great luminary is, of course, Mirza Ghalib (1796-1869) who "sings of life and all phases of life" and is perhaps the most human, cosmopolitan and original poets in Urdu. He has become part of the cultural constitution of our countrymen. He was strongly tinged with romanticism which served as a corrective to the age of Nasikh by virtue of its emphasis on emotional truth, expressed in exquisite language and with rare intimate charm.

In music and metre he was extraordinarily versatile and inventive and is particularly effective in moments of *ghazals*.

Ghalib is already a legendary figure. His appeal is universal because he is human and so suggestive. He has a sort of imagination which gives wings to words. He exhibits all the travail of his spirit in a style which touches a responsive chord in our hearts. Ghalib intellectualised the vision of human life; he had recourse to philosophy to distract his mind from the tragic gloom of the environment and deaden his pain. But his poems are occasionally lit up by the sunshine of his awareness of the approaching dawn and by a sort of philosophic indifference to the ugly circumstances beyond his control.

Ghalib's claim to greatness lies in his humane approach, cosmopolitan outlook and love for life and mankind. He is strikingly fresh in thought and expression. A whole generation of poets has grown up in his all-enveloping shade. As a 'thinking' poet and consummate artist he has left an indelible mark on the later-day poetry. He widened the frontiers of language and invested it with a rich culture.

Zauq had a tendency to over-rate the value of mere words but he supplied his odes with a lucidity of idiom peculiar to Delhi. Momin gave a concept of worldly love and poetic fire to his Urdu *ghazals*. But he is obscure and excessively Persianised.

The period which marks the departure of Wajid Ali Shah to Calcutta (1856) is a period of stagnation in Lucknow poetry. The poets became soulless because the source of inspiration dried up in the changed atmosphere. Amir (1828-1900) ennobled the style of Nasikh but haunting quality of great poetry is still missing here. Jalal tried to catch up the tune of Delhi with occasional success. In Delhi, Dagh (1831-1905) started a new type of lyricism, which has common emotions, but no pathos, and sensuality but no ornamentation. In smoothness, and polish of diction, he has no rival.

Modern Period

Poetry : It was in this period of decadence, characterised by the artificiality and bombast of the Lucknow school that Hali appeared on the literary scene and laid the foundations of modern Urdu poetry.

He was, however, not an accident of history. The nationalist upheaval of 1857 is an event of vast significance, which not only changed the map of India but also literary standards. The Moghul empire was finished and the cultural values which it had tried to foster during the three centuries of its rule, crumbled to dust. The British, who had all the resources of the Industrial Revolution and New Sciences at their command, established themselves firmly in India and exploited her for their capitalistic ends. This alien order was not devoid of merit. It brought us closer to Western learning and sciences, which, in turn, impacted all our social life and our mental attitudes. Urdu literature, too, was deeply influenced by the contact of English literature. Poets, like Dagh and Amir, who could not adjust themselves to the new conditions, had to leave their cosy haunts of Delhi and Lucknow and take shelter in the secluded coteries of Hyderabad and Rampur. Hali, the harbinger of the new movement, did not try to escape from the realities of the situation; he faced them.

At the instigation of Col. Holroyd, Azad and Hali, the pioneers of the new poetry, started in Lahore in 1874 poetical gatherings in which the new type of poems were recited and applauded. Hali (1837-1914) wrote "*Barkharut*", "*Ummeed*", "*Insaf*", and "*Hubbe Watan*", which represent a conscious new trend in Urdu poetry. His '*mussaddas*' on the fallen condition of the Muslims, written under the influence of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, father of Aligarh Movement, is the greatest Urdu poem which has left a mark on the era.

Hali was animated by a spirit of reform, not of revolt. He avoided exaggerated Westernisation and condemned artificial insincerity. He gave a blow to the traditional conventional style; he is at once literary, simple and direct. He inaugurated a new era in Urdu literature.

Ismail (1844-1917) wrote for children, avoiding the defects of the old school and adhering strictly to nature. Akbar (1846-1921) is famous for his subtle and witty verses, which record a protest against the aping of the West and which inculcate a love for things oriental. Shauq Qidwai, Durgasahai Suroor, Chakbast and Benazir Shah are eminent landscape poets who discovered their own country anew and sang about it with patriotic fervour.

Iqbal (1875-1938) is one of the immortals of Urdu poetry. He is a seer and a humanist, who has pondered over all the important problems facing the East and examined them in the light of his Quranic ideology. He lays special stress on the development of the individual, through the training of the 'Self', on the high position of man in the cosmic world, and the enormous potentialities of the human soul. Iqbal is absolutely sure that no material progress can be built up on the quicksands of uninspired materialism. He has warned the nations of the West that if they pursue the material and "this world" conception, their civilization will break up and smash. He exhorts the people of the orient to aspire to the leadership of the world and he wants to inculcate in them a desire for spiritual eminence.

Iqbal developed a distinctive style. He is a consummate artist and has astonishing power and felicity of expression. There is hardly a single living poet who has not been influenced by him in one way or the other. By the Midas touch of his genius, he turned to gold all that he wrote and enlarged the frontiers of poetic expression by suggestiveness.

Josh Malihabadi is known as Shair-e-Inqilab or the poet of Revolution. The two wars, the non-cooperation movement of 1921, the economic distress of 1929-30, the political disobedience movement of 1931, the conflict between labour and capital and the onrush of socialist ideas, have deeply influenced Urdu literature and produced a spirit of revolt. Josh symbolises the revolt. But he is a very uneven poet, who seldom probes deep into a problem. He only touches the surface and hides his superficiality under a glittering cloak of polished diction. His poetry is loud and sensual, not sublime and serious. It has a frigid ardour which is occasionally disgusting.

After World War I, *ghazal* had undergone very many changes. The poets no longer write about the moving locks, the down on the cheek, the mole on the face and the toilette of the beloved. They concentrate on expressing the 'voice of the soul' and refrain from involved and complicated constructions. Their love is real and genuine. The mystic element is diminishing and the study of the universe

and man is more in vogue. These trends are exhibited in the *ghazals* of Hali and Shad. Hasrat Mohani and Mohd. Ali 'Jauhar' shine best in amatory verses, with a blend of the subjective and the autobiographical. Urdu *ghazal* gained social consciousness through the efforts of Iqbal. Like his predecessor, Hali, he made *ghazal* an instrument for stirring the slumbering people. He gave it a purposive direction and made it a tool of his philosophical ideas.

Fani is a front rank *ghazal* writer. His verses are poignant, winged with pathos and pain. Asghar is influenced by Ghalib who packed his *ghazal* with thoughts, presented with delicacy. Jigar is a minstrel of love who can express the subtleties of emotion with perfect ease and fluency. Firaq and Faiz are the leading *ghazal*-writers, always trying to catch up fancies, which break through language and escape. Asar, Ravish, Arsh and Azad, too, have claims to be remembered as *ghazal* writers.

The period beginning with 1920 may be called a period of translation, changes in material and stanzaic form, experimentation and sonnet or song writing. In the latter field, Azmatullah Khan, Akhtar Shirani and Hafeez are the most distinguished. In 1935 the Progressive Movement was started with all the fanaticism and the propagandist zeal of a new crusade. In spite of its exaggerated emphasis on a certain political ideology, this movement has given Urdu literature a new vigour, and a new consciousness. Josh, Faiz, Firaq, Jazbi, Makhdoom, Jan Nisar and Jafri, are some of its major spokesmen.

Judged as a whole the Urdu poetry of today is stimulating. But it has to maintain that balance and collaboration of emotion and intellect, necessary for true creation in poetic art. Sometimes, too, it is obvious and 'platitudinous' for contemporary taste and fails to take advantage of the dialectic of emotion, its windings and shadings.

Nevertheless, present-day Urdu poetry is fraught with immense possibilities. It has most faithfully mirrored over-patriotic fire, secular outlook, struggle for independence, the anguish of the riot-torn country, the appalling distress of the refugees and the huge problem of their rehabilitation. Now the poets of to-day are trying

to catch up the vision of New India, with a range and reference that is wide and stimulating.

Prose : The beginning of Urdu prose has been traced in the foregoing pages. Among the earliest works, *Mirajul Ashiqeen* (1422), *Sabras* (1635) and *Rani Ketki Ki Kahani* (before 1817) are noteworthy. In Northern India, Urdu prose did not make much headway as it was eclipsed by the preponderating glitter of Persian, the language of the court and culture. The prose style of Persian writers was copied and balanced structures and double rhythms were freely indulged in by Fazli in '*Deh Majhis*' (1732). Mir Ata Husain Tehsin in '*Nau Tarze Murrassa*' (1798) and Rajab Ali Begg Suroor in '*Fasanae Ajaib*' (1824). This prose is very near to poetry and is unfit for daily communication.

The establishment of British supremacy in Bengal effected the old order of things in Urdu literature. In 1800, Fort William College was established at Calcutta. To this college "we owe the elaborations of the Vernacular as an official speech and the possibility of substituting it for the previously current Persian as the language of court and the Government." Mir Amman, Afsos (1735—1809), Husaini, Haidari (d. about 1833), Nihal Chand, Beni Narain, Vila and Tapish presented models of simple and elegant Urdu prose. But this movement was rather localised in character as it had no popular backing. It gained however, a strong impetus from the emergence of new forces. The Europeans who came to India contributed their share to the study of Urdu. The first Hindustani grammar was compiled in 1715 by John Joshua Ketelaer. Benjamin Schuttze published a translation of the *Bible* in 1745 (*Linguistic Survey of India* by Dr. Grierson Vol. IX pp. 40-41). Dr. John Gilchrist rendered memorable services to Urdu by compiling several lexicons, grammars and vocabularies. The missionaries at Serampore reached the common man by fostering Urdu and employing it as their medium. The Urdu translations of the *Holy Quran* by Shaikh Refinuddin and Shah Abdul Qadir also pointed to the waning influence of Persian and the popularity of Urdu. The politico-religious movement of Syed Ahmad Brelvi did much

to foster the growth of Urdu prose. The press gave further encouragement to Urdu prose. A type press was started in Lucknow in the time of Nawab Ghaziuddin Hyder. In Kanpur, a lithograph press was established in 1830 and in Delhi in 1835. Molvi Mohd. Boqar started an Urdu daily in 1836 under the name "*Delhi Urdu Akhbar*", copies of which are preserved even to-day in the National Archives of India. Urdu prose thus became a vehicle for social and political subjects. By 1849, the number of Urdu papers in the North West Frontier Province alone swelled to twenty-three.

The Delhi College, which started English classes in 1827, brought about a literary renaissance and encouraged the study of scientific subjects in and through Urdu. In 1842 a Vernacular Translation Society was started, which made Urdu prose simple and direct and opened the gates of Western learning to the Urdu-knowing people. In 1864 a Society was formed at Delhi, which paved the way for a new era in Urdu prose and poetry.

Mirza Ghalib flourished in the age which saw the beginning of a scientific renaissance brought about by Delhi College. He is not only a great poet, but a great prose writer. His letters, written with transparent frankness and in a conversational and spontaneous style, are a marvel of epistology writings and a landmark in the development of modern Urdu prose.

Urdu prose was divested of its adroitness, conventionality and useless lumber of learning by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who is called by Hali "Father of Modern Urdu Prose". In 1862, Sir Syed founded a literary and scientific society for translating standard English works into Urdu, and in 1870 started a periodical called *Tahzibul Akhlaq*, which revolutionised Urdu prose and also produced outstanding prose writers. He was not only a force in Socio-politics but also an influence in literature.

Among his friends, Hali (d. 1914) occupies a unique position as a biographer and critic. His "*Muqquadmae Shero-Shairi*" is the sheet-anchor of Urdu criticism. Shibli (d. 1914) was a towering personality in history and literary criticism. Mohd. Husain Azad (d. 1910) is pre-eminent as a stylist. His *Abe Hayat* (waters of life), *Nairange Khayal* and *Darbare Akbari* are still admired for their

inimitable prose. Nazir Ahmad wrote a number of social and didactic novels which are unsurpassed in fluency of language, directness of appeal and refinement of humour.

Urdu fiction is specially rich in *Dastan* or 'Cycles of legends', mostly translated from Persian and published by the famous Nawal Kishore Press of Lucknow. These supernatural stories usually deal with adventure, chivalry and love and are of extraordinary length. After Nazir Ahmad the modern Urdu novel took a real start with Pandit Ratan Nath Sarshar (died 1902) who contributed in 1878 the first instalment *Fisanae Azad* to the columns of *Avadh Akhbar*. It is an immortal book which describes life in Lucknow in all its phases but does not idealise it. *Dilgudaz* of Abdul Halim Sharar also rendered useful service to the historical novel. Sharar is a novelist, historian, critic, essayist and a journalist of no mean order. In spite of his prolific output, he is eminently interesting. Mirza Hadi Rusva is famous for '*Umrao-Jan Ada*', an auto-biography of a literate dancing girl of Lucknow. Nazir Ahmad's *Zahirdar Beg*, Sarshar's '*Khoji*' and Rusva's '*Bismillah*' and Rashidul Khair's *Navi Ashshow* are extremely interesting characters in Urdu literature, palpitating with life.

Prem Chand is a giant among novelists. He is extremely realistic and can vividly portray the anguish of the down-trodden. In fact he has given tongue to the "dumb, driven cattle" and invested them with a halo and greatness. The economic struggle as well as the spiritual awakening of our masses is clearly evinced here. He is a beacon light to the short story writers and novelists.

Among the present-day novelists mention may be made of Krishna Chandra, Ahmad Ali, Ashk, Ismat, Aziz Ahmad, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Swaliha Abid Husain, who have enlarged our notion of novelistic form. They are sensitive to foreign influences and the spiritual insecurity of our age.

In Urdu the Modern Short Story can be said to begin with Prem Chand. Sensitive and thoughtful, he set forth in simple and graphic terms significant episodes and intimate movements in the lives of the toiling millions. But on the contrary much ingenuity

was displayed by Niaz, Yadram and L. Ahmad in by-passing the real and the normal : in laboured fantasy and facile sentiment. The Urdu short story was actually founded and fostered by Prem Chand and by the example of foreign masters such as Chekhov and Maupassant. The progressive movement also stimulated interest in short story writing and after 1936, it emerged as an important form to be reckoned with. Prof. Mujeeb, Ahmad Ali, Krishna Chandra, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Sajjad Zaheer, Manto, Ismat, Askari, Bedi, Nadeem Qasmi, Ashk, Hayatullah Ansari, Ali Abbas Husaini and Mumtaz Mufti are the leading short story writers, who can record their observations of human nature with candidness and dramatise the stream-of-consciousness. Some stories abound in ruthless representation of sex-hunger, sensationalism and sentimentality.

Drama : The earliest drama extant in Urdu is *Indar Sabha* by Amanat, a musical comedy, produced in the time of Wajid Ali Shah. After his deposition, the Parsi Theatrical Companies catered for amusement of the public. Mohd. Mian Rounaq Benarsi, Talib, and Ahsan Lucknavi were the famous playwrights of these companies. Agha Hashr Kashmiri has been called the "Marlowe of the Urdu Stage". Most of the dramas of the period are written in stiff and slow prose. Urdu is deficient in great dramas. Ishtiaq Husain Qureshi, Imtiaz Ali Taj, Prof. Mujeeb and Dr. Abid Husain have, however, considerably extended the range of Urdu Drama. With the independence of the country and assimilation of World Cultures, Urdu drama is coming up and trying to make up the deficiency.

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Recently reporter writing has become very popular. In this field, Krishna Chandra and Ibrahim Jalees stand out prominently. In drawing pen-portraits, the names of Dr. Abdul Haq, Farhatullah Beg, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar, Dr. Abid Husain, Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi and Khwaja Hasan Nizami are the most important as they weave a vast and colourful tapestry of Indian life and manners which is a delight to readers.

In the sphere of critical writing, the names of Hali, Shibli, Azad, Waheeduddin Salim, Dr. Abdul Haq, Prof. Hamid Hasan Qadri and Niaz Fatehpuri stand out prominently. Ale Ahmad Suroor and Ehtesham Husain are the most notable critics who view

literature in all its social aspects. Among the literary historians, mention may be made of Mahmud Shirani, Abdus Salam Nadvi, Dr. Ram Babu Saxena, Dr. Abdus Sattar Siddiqi, Prof. Masood Husain Rizvi, M. Arshi and Qazi Abdul Wadood, whose researches have brought to light new facts, corrected many errors and some of them, indeed, approached the known works with clinical detachment.

In the fifties of the 20th century there is a superabundance of critical writing. The application of a really scientific method to criticism is long overdue.

There is a crop of satiric literature in Urdu. Sajjad Husain, Ratan Nath Sarshar, Syed Mohd. Azad, Mahfooz Ali, Bambooz, Hasan Nizami, Mirza Fatahullah Beg, Shaukat Thanvi, Azeem Beg Chughtai, Patras, Sajjad Ansari, Rasheed Ahmad Siddiqi, Qazi Abdul Ghaffar and Dr. Abid Husain write elegantly with transparent candour, social grace and exhilarating abundance of pungent wit.

Of a large number of writers on scientific and other serious subjects, only a few need be mentioned. Mir Bahadur Ali Husaini, Mazhar Ali Khan Vila, Mirza Jan Tapish of the Fort William College, Prof. Ram Chandra and Molvi Karimuddin of the Delhi College, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan Zakaullah, Hali, and Shibli of the Aligarh movement are the most distinguished. The scientific society, Shibli Academy, Hindustani Academy, Jamia, Academy, Nadwatul Mussannifeen, Anjuman Tarraqqiae Urdu, Osmania University and Idarae Adabiyati Urdu have produced works of enduring merit. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr. Abid Hussain, Khwaja Ghulam-us-Saiyidain, Dr. Zakir Husain, Prof. Mujeeb and Syed Suleman Nadvi have produced a variety of scientific works which are a model of clarity, erudition, adaptation or research.

Urdu is exceptionally rich in epistolary literature, which has a wide range and variety. Penned by important figures in our literary history, like Rajab Ali Beg Suroor, Wajid Ali Shah, Mirza Ghalib, Hali, Shibli, Mehdi Ifadi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad—these letters give us a vivid glimpse of the dramas of thought and emotion, lived out by these sensitive souls in the warm, intimate language of a personal dialogue.

HINDI

Development of Hindi Language

The history of Hindi language is the story of the Indian people's speech. In the *Rigveda* we find the age-old manifestation of the Indian sentiments; consequently the oldest form of the Indian language is also to be found there. The language of *Rigveda* is, however, different from the then popular language. The elements, cleansed and cultivated, of poetic craft which it embodies appear to be far-fetched for the normal and natural way of expression. Nevertheless, even there, the natural form of language is not altogether absent, which indicates clearly that then, too, a people's language certainly existed as a separate entity. Again, Sanskrit literature contains definite evidence that there was a language of the people as distinct from the literary language of the Vedic period. This should be regarded as the earliest stage of the historical background of Hindi. Hindi is, thus, the successor to that language which has been, from the earliest times of Indian letters, the vehicle of popular sentiment.

The strength of a language lies in its dynamic quality. But the Aryans laid greater emphasis on standardization and purity. The result was that though, ruled by the iron hand of grammarians like Panini, language became 'purified', yet it could not escape the grave drawback of rigidity. Grammarians may impose external rules; they cannot control the inner growth of a language because a language is the expression, through speech, of the natural emotions and thoughts of the people. So Sanskrit stayed chaste and inflexible. On the other hand the common speech of the Aryans progressed from day to day on its natural course of evolution. The pure 'Sanskrit' of Patanjali came to be the language, merely of the learned Brahmins whereas the developed form of what was the common folk's 'impure Sanskrit' is to day, honoured as the foremost medium of expression of India's national sentiment.

After its acceptance as the language of the elect, Sanskrit

was totally divorced from common life and, because of its 'naturalness', Prakrit became the speech of the common people. Later on, having assumed importance, Prakrit also gave rise to several literary currents, but the development of the people's language continued uninterrupted.

As already stated, the language of the *Rigveda* was a chaste form of the common speech of the Aryan people. This chaste form was, after further purification, finally accepted as Sanskrit. From the point of view of grammar, Prakrit contains peculiar traits of the Vedic language (and, not Sanskrit). A detailed description of these peculiarities is, of course, not possible here. The history of the development of popular speech may be considered under three sub-divisions : (i) Pali (500 B. C. to 1. A. D.) (ii) Literary Prakrit (1—500 A. D.), (iii) Apabhraṃśa (500 A. D. to 1000 A. D.).

Pali. The oldest form of popular language is found in the inscriptions of the time of Ashok and in the old Buddhist and Jain writings. These are composed in the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts. The language of the inscriptions proves that, under Ashok at least three different forms of language were current in Northern, Eastern, Western and North-Western India. Whether or not there was a Southern form is not definite.

Literary Prakrit : The second stage of development begins with the effort to improve and embellish the earlier form. In the middle period, literature began to be composed in Prakrit also. Prakrit was employed in the writing of poetic, dramatic, and religious works. Thus the tendency to purify the language was repeated in the history of Prakrit, as well. Being rigidly bound by laws of grammar and having become a vehicle of serious literary expression, it was cut off from the fundamental source of language, whereas the dialects of the common people went on, once again, with their natural development. Not much is known about what was 'pure' Literary Prakrit but four forms of this are believed to have existed—The Western form is known as 'Shauraseni' Prakrit and the eastern as 'Magadhi'. 'Ardhamagadhi' Prakrit is an inter-

mixture of both. The fourth form, Maharashtri Prakrit, is considered to be the foremost among all.

Apabhransha : On account of their rigid grammar, the Literary Prakrit languages of the second stage grew, in course of time, stereotyped while the dialects continued to develop. Because of their freer character the grammarians and litterateurs have given these dialects the name of Apabhransha or 'corrupted'. Three main forms of Apabhransha are accepted : Nagar; Brachar and Upanagar. The modern Indian languages arose from these Apabhranshas. Here it would be more appropriate to leave out the others and to give an account of the development of Hindi alone. The time of these Apabhransha languages is placed between the 6th and 10th centuries.

When and where did the oldest form of Hindi come into existence definitely ? This is a question on which almost all historians seem to have offered only guesses. Their arguments and findings are not entirely reliable. The basis of the conclusions of Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla, Dr. Shyam Sunder Das and Dr. Dharendra Verma is, in all cases, of doubtful value. However, Rahul has taken Apabhransha itself as the oldest form of Hindi, and considering the similarity between the external and internal features of the two languages, his view is admissible. The influence of Apabhransha on the vocabulary and grammar of Hindi is evident enough; even the style and sentiment of the two languages have a remarkable similarity. The chief difference between the two languages is that Apabhransha has a preponderance of 'tadbhava' (derived) words, whereas in Hindi the use of 'tatsama' words is not altogether forbidden. It is a significant fact that although Sanskrit is now freely employed in the vocabulary of literary Hindi, yet, even today, the tradition of using the 'tadbhava' words of Apabhransha continues, as ever, in the dialects of Hindi language. The writings of well-known Hindi poets have been influenced by the vocabulary, expressions and literary graces of Apabhransha. Thus, keeping in view the linguistic peculiarities of Apabhransha literature, it would not be inappropriate to accept it as the earlier form of Hindi. It is indeed true that the investigation made in this field is so scanty that it is not proper to

base new theories on this; all the same, considering the material available, these arguments cannot be altogether rejected.

Almost all the historians agree that the history of Hindi Literature began with the compositions of the Siddhas of Nath Panth. Some historians view the 'Siddha literature' as unliterary. They believe that Hindi literature really began with the poetry of the Bards. Whatever the view about the beginnings of its history, the fact remains that considering the great affinity between the language and style of the literature of that period and Apabhhransha literature, we cannot, in reason, accept that the writings of the Siddhas and the Bards constitute the first pages of Hindi literature. Indeed, the development of Hindi language had begun long before the work of its first poet, Chand Bardai, came to be written, although, by his time, its tendency, natural in the transition period, to shift and vary, had been considerably stabilized.

Thus, to sum up, the modern Indian languages came into being through the evolution, in due course, of the Apabhhransha languages. The various forms of Hindi issued forth from the Nagar and Upanagar Apabhhranshas which were based on Shauraseni and Arddhamagadhi Prakrits.

Having considered the historical background of the Hindi language, we have now to account for a period of more than a thousand years of its later history. This can be divided into three parts :

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| (1) Ancient Period | upto 1500 | A. D. (1557 A. V.) |
| (2) Middle Period | 1500-1800 | A. D. (1557-1859 A. V.) |
| (3) Modern Period | 1800- | to the present day. |
- (1857 A. V.—present day)

A glance at its early history shows that from its infancy Hindi has had to contend incessantly with hostile environments and political opposition. Let alone the question of receiving any royal patronage ; it had to face nothing but attacks. Nevertheless, being the people's language and possessing great innate vitality, it overcame all obstacles in its way and continued to progress. In the early period of the development of Hindi language, the entire Hindi-speaking region was dominated by the then foreigners. Political

and cultural influences go hand in hand, and, consequently, Hindi was adversely hit. However, religious movements helped in extending the use and currency of Hindi. In this context the contribution of Gorakhnath, Ramanand and Kabir Das deserves special mention.

Ancient Period

Knowledge of the oldest form of Hindi is obtained with difficulty and almost no help is available in this matter through inscriptions on stone or copper-plates. In the first place there has been very little investigation made in this field; secondly, because of the centuries of Muslim rule, there is very little possibility of finding inscriptions in Hindi. This old form of Hindi is embodied in the Apabhramsha poetry. In Rahul Sankrityayan's works "*Puratatva Nibandhavalī*" and "*Hindi Kavyadhara*," much material relating to the literature of Nath Panth and Vajrayani Siddhas has come to light. Dr. Barathwal's '*Hindi Kavita men Yogpravah*' and '*Gorakhvani*' also throw light on the language of that period. A few instances of the language are also found in the monograph, '*Purani Hindi*', of late Pt. Chandra Dhar Sharma Guleri. All the same, there is still, great need for research in this field.

The secular composition of the Bards as also the religious books of the period give some idea of the language of the time. But from the philological point of view, the value of these works is dubious, for no authentic manuscript of any work is available. On the basis of the material available, the language then in use is found to be, roughly speaking, of two kinds : One is Dingal which is an intermixture of the old forms of Rajasthani and Gujarati words with Prakrit words. The other is Pingal formed of an intermingling of old Brajbhasha and Panjabi. A third form of language is also indicated, which is known by the name of 'Hindvi' and which may be taken as the early form of modern 'Khariboli.' Some Sufi saints employed this language for the propagation of their faith. This language later developed in Southern India in the form of Dakhni Urdu. In this way, adopting and incorporating, right from its inception, the features peculiar to the Apabhramsha language, Hindi continued to evolve and develop. Obviously, it was not possible for it to escape

the foreign influences but, although overshadowed by these, it never lost its individuality.

Middle Period

From about the 15th century, begins the golden age of the development of Hindi language. Literary development of two main forms of Hindi, Avadhi and Brajbhasha, took place in the 16th century. The older forms of Hindi flowered forth, chiefly, as 'Braj' 'Avadhi' and to a much lesser extent, as 'Khariboli.' We cannot give here a detailed account of these developments, but there can be no doubt that these languages must have undergone the requisite rigorous tests before being accepted as literary languages.

The earliest form of old Hindi is Avadhi. It was used in the works of the Saint Poets of 'Nirguna Panth'. They had adopted the language of the common people for more effective propagation of their beliefs, and thus their language was not, strictly speaking, literary in character but, rather, didactic and propagandistic in nature. The Sufi poets, of the 'Premashrayi' sect, modified and embellished Avadhi and finally the powerful, creative genius of Tulsi Das made it, through use of Sanskrit, eminently suitable for literary expression. It is to be noted, however, that although an immortal work like '*Ram Charitmanas*' had been written in Avadhi, it was Brajbhasha which dominated the literary field. After the 16th century, no important book was written in Avadhi; whereas Braj Bhasha received, on the one hand, religious patronage through Vallabhacharya, and, on the other hand, a place of honour in the courts of native rulers as well as Muslim Kings. Thus Brajbhasha acquired the position of the literary language of the entire Hindi-speaking region. The history of the 17th century Hindi literature is, therefore, the history of Brajbhasha literature. Through their genius, the 'Ashtachhap' poets imparted to it great beauty and grace and later on, the poets of the 'Reeti Kal' made it an highly ornate poetic diction. Brajbhasha contains several words belonging to other dialects of Hindi. At first it was considered quite proper to import these words into the language but afterwards a reaction set in and Brajbhasha also tended to be refined and exclusive. Ghananand is considered to be the chief representative of this movement. The

tradition of Brajbhasha poetry did not die out with the close of the middle period. For a long while in the modern period, it was employed as the language of poetry and, as a dialect of Hindi, it is very much alive, even today.

In addition to Brajbhasha and Avadhi, stray specimens of Khariboli are also found, scattered here and there, in the earliest compositions of Hindi literature. Another point of note is that although in the South 'Hindi' came in vogue from the 14th century onwards, in the North, the Muslim poets continued to write in Avadhi or Brajbhasha until the 18th century.

Modern Period

The decline of the Mughal Empire had set in in the first half of the 19th century of the *Vikram Era*. Its impact on the literature of the period was inevitable. In the conflict of the Marathas, the Afghans and the English, the English won and among the areas conquered by them the Hindi-speaking region was conspicuous. Brajbhasha had had its day and the Urdu Khariboli, enjoying imperial patronage, came to the forefront. Because of the impact of scientific and the predominance of the intellectual philosophy of life, Brajbhasha ceased to be a suitable medium of expression. As a language for poetry, Brajbhasha was good enough ; but for common, day-to-day work, Khariboli Urdu enjoyed greater importance. The English had inherited Urdu as the official language but, with their foresight, they were not unaware of the limitations of an official language which was half-foreign. They realized the importance of the use of the people's language for governmental work and for imparting education. Several works were, therefore, composed, through the efforts of the authorities of Fort William College, in Hindi Khariboli. That is why George Grierson has placed the origin of Hindi Khariboli in the Modern Period and has accepted Lallulalji as its first writer. But, as has been said earlier, there is evidence of the use of Khariboli in the earliest stages of the history of Hindi literature. Amir Khusro had composed his 'riddles' in Khariboli in the 14th century of the *Vikram Era*. Kabir's poetry contains traces of Khariboli and sufficient poetry was produced in Aurangzeb's time, in Persianized

Khariboli. It would, however, be wrong to conclude from this that Urdu was the original form of Khariboli and that the making of modern Khariboli has been brought about by substituting the 'tatsama', (exact) words of Sanskrit for Persian and Arabic words. As a matter of fact, Khariboli existed in its native form even before it took the shape of Urdu. It did not achieve importance as a literary language and so its place was with several other dialects. Several available specimens clearly prove that Khariboli had come to be used as the medium of normal intercourse in the time of Akbar and Jehangir. Again, two books—'*Bhasha Yog Vasishta*' written by Ram Prasad Niranjani and '*Padmapurana*' translated by Pandit Daulat Ram—composed sixty-two years before the time of Lallujilal and Sadasukhlal proclaim the fact that Khariboli was current as the language of the people of north-western U. P. and, further, that it was unaffected by any influence of Persian or Urdu. The truth is that Khariboli which was developing in accordance with the natural laws of Philology, fell into the hands of Muslim scholars who moulded it on the pattern of their own language and ideas.

Along with Urdu, the British had inherited, also a powerful tradition of Hindi Khariboli which they could not easily ignore. Credit for the growth and expansion of Hindi does not, however, go to the British. On the contrary, from accounts of the activities of the Fort William College, it appears that the policy of the college was not very favourable to Hindi. Persianized Urdu had replaced Persian as the Court language and to have a knowledge of the Urdu script became essential for one's livelihood. For Hindi language and Devnagari script, this was a period of great difficulty. Because of official patronage, Urdu dominated Hindi which was cried down as a language ill-developed in every field of literature. Nonetheless, because of its intrinsic strength, Hindi continued to develop. To-day it has grown to be a powerful medium of expression, suitable both for literature as well as for practical affairs.

Thus it is abundantly clear that Hindi has reached the present extent of its development solely on account of its inherent vitality. It is gratifying that while on the one hand great literature is being produced in Hindi, it has been on the other, proclaimed as the national and official language of the country.

Hindi has a broad base

It must be understood that Khariboli is not the limit and boundary of Hindi. The national language of India is the language of an extensive region in which many dialects are spoken. These dialects have wide regional differences and yet they all have a basic unity. While discussing the present form and significance of Hindi, it will not be out of place to make a mention of these dialects. Philologically, these dialects of Hindi are sub-divided into two groups : (1) Western Hindi (2) Eastern Hindi. The first group comprises Khariboli, Bangru, Braj, Kanauji and Bundeli. Eastern Hindi consists of Avadhi, Bagheli and Chhatisgarhi. Bhojpuri is also included in the second group.

We have already considered in outline the development of Khariboli, but there only its literary aspect was touched upon. One distinct form of Khariboli exists as a dialect which is spoken in Western Rohelkhand, Northern 'Doab' of the Ganges and Ambala district. The number of people who use it as a rural dialect for every-day speech is about 53 lakhs. Another subsidiary form of Khariboli is Bangru. This is spoken in Delhi, Karnal, Rohtak, Hissar, Patiala, Nabha and so on. The influence of Panjabi and Rajasthani is evident ; nearly twenty-two lakhs of people speak Bangru. Of the literary form of the third dialect of Hindi, Khariboli, mention has already been made but this language is, even today, alive with all its strength as a dialect of the common people. The number of people who speak it is about seventynine lakhs. The area where Kanauji is spoken lies between the regions of Brajbhasha and Avadhi. In reality, it is but a form of Brajbhasha ; nearly fortyfive lakhs of people use it. Bundeli is the dialect of Bundelkhand and which was the centre of literary work during the Middle Period. Yet the poets of Bundelkhand have composed their poetry in Brajbhasha. Between Bundelkhandi and Brajbhasha there is great similarity. In fact Kanauji and Bundeli could be taken as different forms of Brajbhasha.

Foremost among the dialects of Eastern Hindi is Avadhi. In addition to being the dialect of Avadh province, it is also current in adjacent areas. The number of people who speak this dialect is roughly a crore and fortytwo lakhs. Bagheli may be considered as

the Southern form of Avadhi, about fortysix lakhs speak it. Chhattisgarhi is the dialect of a part of Madhyapradesh ; the number of people who use it is nearly thirty-eight lakhs. Bhojpuri is spoken in various places between Kashi and Chhota Nagpur; the number of people who speak it is, approximately, two crores.

What has been stated above indicates how important is the position of Hindi from the point of view of the extent of the area it covers. It is current in the form of many dialects, spread over a large field which extends from the Bangru-speaking, boundary-region of Delhi Province to Madhyapradesh, and from Rajasthan to Bihar. Philologically, Rajasthani and Bihari are not related to Hindi, but even in their areas, Hindi is accepted as the literary language. Pt. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi has employed the term 'Madhyadesh' for the Hindi-speaking region. This use of the word is historical. According to Sanskrit works, the region between the Himalayas and Vindhya mountains, and between the point where the river Saraswati disappeared and Prayag, was known as 'Madhyadesh'. The inhabitants of this region are deemed the best and their language is considered to be standard and authentic. In the history of Indian languages, the position of the language of this region 'Madhyadesh', has been supreme. There were many dialects in existence before Hindi made its appearance, but it was Apabhhransha, the language of 'Madhyadesh' which was employed for cultural, literary and commercial purposes. 'Madhyadesh' was so situated that its inhabitants had to contend time and again with people of different cultures and ideas. The result was that along with a desire to adapt themselves to their environments, they also developed the characteristic of absorbing the quintessence of different cultures. This tendency to absorb and imbibe will be evident from a bird's eyeview of the Hindi vocabulary. Whereas in the composition and making of Hindi vocabulary have gone the 'tatsama' words of Sanskrit, the 'tadbhava' of Prakrit and the 'Ardhatatsama' and indigenous words, the acquisitive and absorptive tendency of Hindi is indicated also by the existence, in its vocabulary, of foreign words. In the words of Dr. Shyamsunder Das, "A large number of these words have been included in our language after transformation. It is a common-

place principle that the 'foreign' pronunciation of the language from which words are borrowed is changed into the nearest native." Hindi adapted to its requirements the words and special features of whatever languages it came in contact with. It did not have much to do with Dravidian languages but even with these there has been some exchange, though the influence of these languages reached Hindi mainly through Prakrit. Influence of several provincial Aryan languages is seen in the vocabulary and style of Hindi. Especially strong is the influence of Bengali, Marathi and Gujarati. The influence exerted by foreign languages can be considered under two heads : (i) the influence of Islamic languages (ii) the influence of European languages. Persian, Arabic and Turkish have got so inter-mixed with our common speech that it is difficult to call them foreign words. Similarly, many words from European languages have also found their way into our language. Hindi has been influenced by Portuguese, Dutch, French, and others but the greatest influence is that of English. Most of the English words have come in modified forms, but words like *inch*, *vote*, *budget*, *button* exist in their original forms. In the transformation of words various laws of philology—Augment, mutation, evolution etc.—have been operative.

In a discussion of the development of Hindi language, it is imperative to include a few remarks on the Devnagari script. Language and Script are interdependent. In fact, Script is the graphic symbol of sound. As in the case of Hindi language, the history of Devnagari script is also fairly old. It is not necessary to give here a description of the various important points relating to the origin and development of Devnagari. The most significant fact in this regard is that as a symbol of National Unity, Devnagari script, rather than Hindi language, has greater importance. Devnagari, which is a modified form of Brahmi script, is the script of the main languages of India. Brahmi was in the past the National script just as Apabhraṃśa was the National language. It was the script not only of the Northern languages, the script of the Dravidian languages of the South was also a modified form of the same, the difference being merely stylistic. In Northern India, the use of this script started in the 10th century but in Southern India are to be found some writings in the script that belong to the 8th century.

Devnagari script is known in the South, as 'Nandi Nagari'. In almost all the inscriptions of this period, found in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Bharat (Central India), Madhya Pradesh the script used is Devnagari. "Between the Nagrai of 11th century and the Nagari of today, there are points of similarity as well as difference, but the 12th century script and the present Devnagari are the same. From that time onwards, the script has continued to exist more or less in the same form".

(Ojha : *'Bharatiya Prachin Lipi Mala'*, pp 69-70)

Thus we see that the installation of Hindi as the national language is merely a regeneration brought about through a removal of the adverse conditions created by political subjugation. Indeed this regeneration may justly be called self-deliverance, for the rise of Hindi has come about through its inherent strength rather than through dependance on any external power or assistance. It possesses all the virtues of a people's speech and, as the language of eminent men of letters, it has attained a literary refinement which is truly remarkable. In the background, there is the Sanskrit vocabulary, well organised and abundant in meaning and several dialects, spoken over a wide and extensive region, represent its manysided development as the people's speech. Furthermore, as the successor to the old national script, Devnagari, is the symbol of national unity. Hindi's acceptance as the official language of the Indian people, and as the national language, is a proclamation of the victory of the people's speech. The time-honoured common speech of "Madhya Desh" is once again fast growing to be a medium of the cultural unity of India.

A critical survey of Hindi Literature

Literature is the expression of the External and the Universal element in human life. That is why the essence of literature transcends the limits of time and space, even if the outward form of expression, being dependant on language, varies. To put it in another way, the soul of world literature is one, although the literatures of various countries possess their own distinct features. These external differences are due to the variation of geographical conditions and of historical, cultural and social backgrounds. Thus, the racial

and national peculiarities of each country are reflected in her literature.

Before Hindi made its appearance, a powerful tradition of Apabhraṃśa existed in Madhya Deśh. Mention of this has already been made while discussing the development of the language. When exactly did Hindi replace Apabhraṃśa is difficult to determine because Hindi came into being through evolution and transformation of Apabhraṃśa itself. Taking into consideration the philological principles governing forms of language, we may say that Hindi came into existence round about the 10th century. Several historians maintain that in the background of the thought-content of Hindi there are the frustrations occasioned by political defeat and subjugation. This, however, is misleading. In the history of the development of Hindi, the influence of various poets and tradition of Apabhraṃśa is evident. It is true, especially of all the divisions and subdivisions of poetry current in the Early and the Middle Periods. The three poetic traditions of the Early Period of Hindi, the diverse currents of Devotional School of Poetry of the Middle Period, and the predominantly erotic schools of poetry, based on a mundane philosophy of life—all these have developed out of the several poetic traditions of Indian literature which flowed through Apabhraṃśa. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to regard them as altogether divorced from the consciousness of the age. The influence on Hindi of foreign culture and literature cannot be denied, but the great secret of the richness and popularity of Hindi lies in the fact that it could successfully combine its traditional features with foreign influences. As the literature of a nation, its absorptive tendency is the greatest quality of Hindi.

From the 10th century onwards, the history of India has been characterised by great political unrest. Now although, basically, literature is the expression of the subjective experience—the thoughts and emotions of the individual—yet tradition, environment and the spirit of the age contribute very largely towards moulding the personality of the writer. It is difficult to imagine that the ideas of the writer have an isolated existence, independent of the larger truth of life. Nor has the Hindi writer escaped these influences.

As has been stated earlier, a powerful literary tradition—in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhraṃśa—existed long before Hindi made its appearance. The main sources of inspiration of Hindi literature are to be found in these traditions. The idealistic point of view of the Indian Philosophy of life and the indigenous elements peculiar to the Hindi Literature find expression—though, naturally, tempered by the influences of the period—in Hindi Literature. Depending on the changing circumstances, different points of view, regarding life, whether spiritual or temporal, collective or individualistic, keep on forming and reforming. Thus, there is a definite background to the various trends in the earlier literature in Hindi. The heroic elements expressed in ‘Dīngal’ poetry and the erotic poetry inspired by a worldly view of life, of the ‘Middle Period’, are not just the reactions of their respective ages. Similarly, the manifestation of spiritual knowledge and metaphysics in Hindi is not something exotic. Rather, it is a re-establishment of the philosophy of the past, in a pattern affected, naturally by the existing environments.

The basis of the thought-content of the various schools of Hindi Poetry is, in the main, old and traditional; even the style and sentiments bear the impress of earlier influences. The ballads of the early period, with their lyrical form and peculiar composition; the intensity of ardour and the song composition of the Sain poets, the Vaiṣṇava Poetry characterised by the feeling of eternal yearning (*virah* of the soul), the allegories of the Sufis and the form and sentiment of ‘Reetī-Kavya’—all these are flowerings of past traditions. In this way, the various traditions of Hindi developed in different forms out of a blending of new ideas and past philosophies, and the political and social conditions of the age gave them a distinct shape.

How, in what form, and why did these new forms of old features come into being? It is necessary to answer these questions while outlining the history of Hindi Literature. A detailed consideration of the everflowing stream of Hindi Literature from the 10th century to the present day would, however, blur the outline. We may, therefore, in accordance with accepted historical princi-

ples, divide this long period into the usual three stages : early, middle and modern. Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla, who is the chief, and in importance, the greatest historian of Hindi Literature, has divided the entire history of Hindi Literature into four main periods. Later historians have also accepted, with slight changes, the same divisions. No period-divisions can be entirely accurate because it is difficult to base these divisions on considerations of time as well as trends. It is, indeed, true that in any given age, a given tendency does predominate but other currents of thought also continue to exist side by side. The period-division undertaken by Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla has been made on the basis of main trends and is as follows:

1. **Adi Kal (Early Period)** The age of Bardic Poetry—Virgatha Kal : 1050 to 1375 (A. V.)
2. **Purva Madhya Kal (First half of the Middle)**—Bhakti Kal (The age of Devotional Poetry) : 1375—1700 (A. V.)
3. **Uttar Madhya Kal (Later half of the Middle Period)**—Reeti Kal (The age of Elaborate Poetry) : 1700—1900 (A. V.)
4. **Adhunik Kal (Modern Period)**—Gadya Kal (The age of Prose) : 1900 (A. V.)—to Present day.

Before we undertake a discussion of the main periods of Hindi Literature, it will be helpful to cast a rapid glance over the pre-Hindi Literature. Many historians have thrown light on this topic in their 'Prefaces' or treated it as background material. Dr. Ram Kumar Verma has even gone to the length of incorporating in the History of Hindi Literature all literary material relating to this age under the head 'Sandhi Kal'—the transitional period. From the point of view of the development of language, the history of the 'Sandhi Kal' of Indian Literature, begins in about 750 A. D. "Shastra Chhor Ban Jai Lok Ki Lik Jyon" *i. e.*, 'like the people's way which branches off from the Scriptures.' This line of the 'Rashtra Kavi' Shri Maithili Sharan Gupta aptly describes the course of Hindi language. The making of Hindi has indeed been on the lines of "the people's way." Shauraseni Apabharansha gave up the literary style of the 'Classics' and not only developed as the people's language but, because of its wide currency, also affected the other

Apabhransha languages. That is why Apabhransha dialects other than Shauraseni, the predecessor of Hindi, also developed on such a pattern that these were not very dissimilar to Hindi. Extant Apabhransha literature—although available in scant quantity—indicates definite formal similarity with Hindi.

In regard to the subject-matter, there is manifestation of both the temporal and the spiritual thought currents in Apabhransha literature. But the themes of that period are based chiefly on philosophy and religion. The great religious movements and doctrines under whose shelter Apabhransha literature developed are 'Siddha', 'Jain,' and 'Nath' faiths. The earliest form of Hindi poetry is seen in the compositions of the Siddhas of Nalanda and Vikram-Shila. These Siddhas spread the doctrines of the Vajrayan branch of Buddhism through the language of the common people. The tradition of the Siddhas existed in Hindi for a long while. It later developed as 'Nath Panth' which was founded by (Guru) Matsyendra Nath and Gorakh Nath. Based on the doctrines of the same Nath Panth, the tradition of Devotional Poetry came into being. To Shri Rahul Sankrityan goes the main credit for bringing the Siddha Literature to light. Before him, Mahamahopadhyaya Pt. Harprasad Shastri, Dr. Shahid-Ullah and Dr. Probodh Chandra Bagchi also produced studies in the Siddha-Sahitya. Rahul's description of the Siddhas has been based on the work of the five chief priests of the '*Saskya-Vihar*' at Tibet. According to this book, Sarhapa is regarded as the first 'Siddha'. Various extracts from his compositions are extant.

The researches of Rahul Sankrityayan place these Siddhas in a period extending from the latter half of the 8th century to the first half of the 13th century of the Vikram Era. Lack of space forbids a detailed mention of the works of each Siddha poet but both from the point of view of sentiment as well as technical skill, these compositions have great merit. *Sarhapa* has already been referred to ; in addition to him there are *Shabarapa*, *Bhusukuya*, *Lui*, *Virupa*, *Dombipa*, *Darikpa*, *Gundaripa*, *Kukuripa*, *Kamripa*, *Kandahapa*, *Gorikshapa*, *Vilopa*, *Shantipa*, and so on.

Apart from those mentioned above, there are other Siddhas whose works are extant. The thought-content of all these works

is founded on the doctrines of the Vajrayan sect which regarded the natural unconventional way of living as the ultimate aim of life. Linguistically, great significance attaches to Siddha literature as signs of modernity are evident in the language of their works. Their language is known as 'Sandhya Bhasha'—"the language of the Twilight", 'Shant'—the quietistic and 'Shringar'—the erotic elements predominate in these compositions which are mostly in the form of ritual songs though metres like Doha, Chaupai, Soratha and Chhappya have also been employed.

So we see that it is not only the Siddha Literature which, being the fore-runner of the important 'Sant Mat', School of devotional poetry of Hindi Literature, has significance, but even the language in which the literature was composed has its own importance.

The second current of spiritual thought of the period is that of Jainism. The thought-content of Jain literature is based on many diverse aspects of life. As a result of the fusion of the old traditions and new ideas, many historical and mythological tales have been presented in a novel form in this literature.

In addition to the narratives dealing with the ideas of the Jain '*Tirthankaras*', there are other works of this kind which are based on the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat*. These may be regarded as fore-runners of Hindi epic and narrative verse. Whatever be the angle from which we view the matter—whether that of story-element, poetic form, descriptive skill or use of metres—origin of the tradition of narrative verse in Hindi is to be found in these works. Of this tradition, Svayambhu is the foremost poet. Four of his works are extant (i) *Pauma Chariu (Ramayana)* (ii) *Rithomi Chariu* (iii) *Panchami Chariu* and (iv) *Svayambhu Chhand*. Rahulji has collected in his '*Kavyadhara*' the most poetic extracts from Pauma Chariu which give an idea of the powerful genius of the poet. In addition, Acharya Dev Sain, Bhaill Ghavel, Mahakavi Pushpadant, Ubheidev Suri and Aharya Hem Chandra are other chief poets of Apabhransha. Because of his great scholarship and knowledge of language, Acharya Hem Chandra holds, among these an important place. Works of innumerable other Jain poets are also extant.

As has been stated earlier, these poets had sought their inspiration from various sources and in all the fields of life. The blending in their themes, of the worldly and the other-worldly is a special feature of their poetry. In this context, mention must be made of the love tales—romances—written by Jain poets. The descriptions in these stories of the worldly elements is par-excellence, though, of course, all these tales, invariably, terminate in salvation.

The 'Dohas' which have been put together in the '*Vyakaran*' of Hem Chandra and in the long narrative poem '*Chintamani*' of Meru Tung appear to be the forerunners of the erotic couplets in Hindi. This remark applies both in respect to the subject-matter as well as style.

We have already given an account of the '*Prakrit Sadhana*' 'realization through normal living' of the Siddhas. A later form of this is 'Sahaj Sadhana' found in the 'Nath' sect. The poets of the Nath sect display a novel form, the style and thought of the "Vajrayani Siddhsa". One ever-developing tradition runs through, from 'Vajrayan' to 'Sahajyan' and from the latter to the 'Nath' sect. The 'Sahajyan' doctrines included the 'Ashtang yog'—'the eight-fold system of yoga'—but followers of the Nath sect attached the utmost importance to this. These practices were extremely difficult to achieve and, therefore, Nath sect could not flourish as a popular religion.

Gorakhnath is regarded as the founder of the Nath sect. There is much dispute as to when he lived. So far, no authentic investigation about him has been made. Acharya Shukla places him in the 15th century, whereas Dr. Barathwal and Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi believe that he wrote in the 11th century. (Guru) Gorakhnath propounded his doctrines in the language of the people.

In connection with the 'Nath sect' the word 'Navanath' is frequently used. It refers to the nine 'Naths' of the sect. Of these, (Guru) Matsyendranath, Gorakhnath, Bharati Nath and Gopichand Nath are prominent. These pages of the history of Literature have grown dim and faded ; nevertheless, even today the immortal story of Bhartrihari Gopichand lives in the folk songs.

For the history of Hindi Literature it is an auspicious sign that

investigations are being made in regard to Apabhraṃśa literature, for it contains a stage-by-stage development of the various traditions in Hindi literature. In the literature of earlier Apabhraṃśa and its developed form, 'Old Hindi', marked expression was given to religious and philosophic ideas, modified and coloured by worldly attachment. In all these traditions, whether philosophic, religious or mundane, the blending of the worldly and the otherworldly has been achieved in a striking and original way.

So we see that the history of Hindi literature is not a sorry tale of the inferiority complex of a subject race. On the contrary, it possesses all the greatness of a national literature. Continuing old traditions, Hindi literature is the history of the cultural, philosophic and religious greatness of the Indian people and the history of Hindi language is the history of the Indian popular speech.

Early Period : (Samvat 1050—1375 Vikram Era).

From the account of the poetic forms and thought-currents described in connection with the background of Hindi literature, it is clear that the trends belonging to the transition period represent no more than a brief pause in the incessant stream of Hindi literature. The dissimilarity of language of these departures from an otherwise uninterrupted course marks the boundary between the Apabhraṃśa and Hindi literature. However, between the 10th and the 14th centuries the language of 'Madhyadesh' was gradually developing the form of Hindi. Because of this it is generally accepted that history of Hindi begins somewhere about the latter half of the 10th or the first-half of the 11th century.

As has been stated earlier, the beginning of the history of Hindi took place at a time of national decentralization. The prevalence of several disruptive forces and their fundamental antipathy were the basic causes of disintegration in that age. At that time, the Government at the centre had grown weak and 'Madhyadesh' was being subjected to attacks by the Muslims from the North-West. It was in this region that great kingdoms of India had been established and the culture, civilization and glory of India lay embedded. But, after the kingdom of Harshavardhan, the sentiment of an undivided nationality had ceased to exist and

small and separate kingdoms like Gaharwar, Chauhan, Chandel and Parihar grew up. To enhance their own prestige, these small states were for ever at war with one another. Display of valour had, no doubt, come to be the symbol of their greatness, but because of their disunity they were incapable of opposing the designs of conquest of the foreign invaders. This does not mean that Indian bravery lost its edge and joyfully embraced the Muslim domination. Indians defeated the Muslims on countless occasions when after Mahmud Ghaznavi's return, an official of the Sultans of Ghazni used to reside in Lahore and attacks were organized on several parts of the country. Accounts of these are found in several historical epics. The long and short of the matter is that the Indian rulers fought against the Muslims as best as they could but on account of their lack of unity they were finally overpowered.

In such a state, the question of affording protection and encouragement to literature could hardly arise. So decrepit was the political atmosphere that Hindi did not receive any governmental patronage whatever. Nor did it get any support in the sphere of religion because on account of the attacks and atrocities of the invaders Jainism, Buddhism and other allied faiths had moved away to comparatively safer regions.

In such conditions, only such works could survive as were based on the traditions of the common people.

Two types of compositions are found in this period. Of one kind, mention has been made in the background given above ; these are closer to Apabhramsha than to Hindi. The second category comprises those written in the language of the common people. Works of Hem Chandra, Meru Tung and Rajshekhar etc., have already been mentioned. Other books belonging to this class are the '*Sandesh Rasaka*' of Abdur Rahman and the '*Prakrit Paingalam*' of Lakhshmi Dhar. '*Raso*' works whose original form has undergone much change also come under this second category. A special point regarding these compositions is that the extant works of Jain and Siddha literatures were composed or compiled in areas which are situated on the boundary of the 'Hindi speaking' region. The main reasons for this are the feebleness of the government, foreign

invasions and the setting-up of important religious sects on the boundary of Madhya Desh. Authenticity of the works for which such a claim is made is dubious. 'Mishra Bandhus', the well-known historians of Hindi literature regard Pundra or Pushya as the first Hindi poet, and yet not a line composed by Pushya is extant.

'*Khuman Raso*' is the work of an unknown poet. At one place the name of its composer is given as Dalapati Vijaya. The book contains accounts of several kings—from Ramchandra to Khuman. Col. Todd has given a detailed account of this book. Three kings of the name of Khuman have existed in Chittor. From the account of the invasion of Khalifa Almamu given in '*Khuman Raso*', it is surmised that the work was composed during the time of the second Khuman. The extant copy of *Khuman Raso* is an incomplete one and it contains an account of Maharana Raj Singh who is believed to have ruled from Samvat 1708 to 1729. It is, therefore, clear that this work is not as old as it is usually thought. As a matter of fact, it is debatable whether a description of this book should at all be included in an account of the early history of Hindi literature.

The second important work, but again of doubtful authenticity, is '*Bisaldev Raso*' of Narapati Nalha. This has been composed in the ballad style. Since it can be recited, its language has undergone much transformation but some scholars of Rajasthan maintain that '*Bisaldev Raso*' has never been sung. Generally, the language is closer to Apabhramsha, but now and again, words are used which indicate a language that could not belong to a period earlier than the 16th century. However these arguments do not carry much weight because the use of such words as compared to that of the cases, verbs and nouns of Apabhramsha is very limited. According to Shri Motilal Manariya, Narapati Nalha and poet Narapati of Gujerat are one and the same. There is a surprising similarity between the language of the Gujerati compositions of Narapati and that of '*Bisaldev*'. Although the subject-matter of '*Bisaldev Raso*' has been treated in the ballad metre, the narrative is spontaneous and smooth. This is so on account of the description of several incidents included in the theme. This work has considerable impor-

tance from every point of view—expression of sentiment, figures of speech, poetic style etc.

Jai Chand Prakash of Bhatta Kedar and the *Jaya-Mayanka-jas Chandrika* of poet Madhukar also belong to the 'Early Period'. These works, which are not available, were composed in the form of eulogies sung in praise of Jai Chand, the ruler of Kannauj.

Sharangdhar is regarded as the second most important poet of this age. He composed a work called '*Hammir Raso*', but the authenticity of this, too, is not certain. An account of Sharangdhar is found in '*Shiv Singh Saraj*' where he is credited with the composition of '*Hammir Raso*'. A Sanskrit anthology of verse compiled by Sharangdhar has been discovered in which a few compositions from his own pen have also been included.

'*Vijaya Pal Raso*' composed by Nalla Singh is also regarded as a work of this period and has been mentioned by 'Mishra bandhus.' It is believed to have been composed in about 1355 A.V. but the style of the language of the book indicates that it was written much later.

For this period, the works of Amir Khusro have very great significance. By composing poetry in Khariboli he managed to draw the attention of the Muslim rulers towards Hindi. Further, by compiling '*Khariboli Kosh*' he provided an opportunity of common contact for Hindi, Persian and Arabic. Amir Khusro was a great scholar and a competent poet. By putting together the synonyms in the three languages, named above, he provided them the means of mutual give-and-take. However, it is a matter of enquiry as to how far are the riddles and quibbles attributed to him authentic. Some of these appear to have been definitely interpolated.

The most important work of 'Adikal' is '*Prithvi Raj Raso*' whose authenticity is largely accepted. It is believed that Chand—the author of '*Prithvi Raj Raso*'—was an intimate friend of Prithvi Raj and the composition was regarded as authentic on this very basis. But while this book was being published by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, a fragmented copy of a work called '*Prithvi Raj Vijaya*', was discovered by Dr. Buhler. Historically, this was found to be more authentic in

comparison with the '*Raso*' because the episodes described in this accorded with the accounts of the time of Prithvi Raj. As against this, the subject-matter of '*Raso*' is altogether different. Dr. Buhler, Shri Gauri Shankar, Hira Chand Ojha, Munshi Devi Prasad etc.,—all these research scholars of history and literature have not only suspected the genuineness of '*Raso*' but have definitely declared it unauthentic. Even so, the '*Raso*' has great significance. Although it is extremely difficult to determine the genuine portions in the '*Prithvi Raj Raso*', it is certain that there was a poet named Chand in the court of Prithvi Raj. There is a description of four 'Chhapayas' of Chand in the book, "*Jai Chand Prabandh*" published by Shri Muni Jin Vijaya.

In unfolding the plot of '*Prithvi Raj Raso*' all the poetic conventions current in the Indian technique of story-telling have been employed by its author. The theme has been set forth through the use of conventional similes in the traditional metres but artificiality has been avoided. In those days the usual way of telling a story was through a conversation between two persons. '*Prithvi Raj Raso*' has also been written in the form of a dialogue between a parrot and his mate. In the extant copies of '*Raso*', description of war and matters connected with war have been given in great detail. At times, it appears to be nothing but an account of affairs of war; but all these portions are, largely, later additions. Several abridged editions of '*Prithvi Raj Raso*' have been discovered but nothing can be stated regarding their authenticity.

'*Parmal Raso*' is another book belonging to this period. This was composed by Jagnik. Jagnik enjoyed the patronage of Parmal, the king of Kalinjar. He composed a heroic epic about two famous warriors—Alha and Udal of Mahoba. The epic can be recited and has, as such, undergone much transformation. It is difficult to say what the original form of '*Parmal Raso*' was. Thus, like '*Prithvi Raj Raso*', this book may also be regarded as partially authentic.

Generally speaking, the works, authentic or otherwise, which have been discovered so far are written about historical personages; nevertheless, the imaginary element predominates. The facts of

history have been used as means for the free play of fancy. But Abdur Rahman has written a book named '*Sandesh Rasak*' which is different from these historical works. The story is extremely simple but touching. The practice of sending a message through a way-farer is an ancient Indian tradition. The lonely wife of someone who has gone away expresses her sorrow of separation which she experienced during the six seasons. In this work, the element of sentiment excels the expression.

In *Prakrit Paingalam* the compositions of several poets have been collected. The poems of Vidyadhar, Jajjal, Babbar, Sharang-dhar and other poets are found there. These compositions contain the heroic, the erotic, and almost all forms of the devotional sentiment. We get from these a clear indication of an age-long tradition. Both in regard to the technical skill and expression of ideas, these are mature compositions.

The classical poem *Kirtilata* and the *Padavali* of the famous poet Vidya Pati are also listed as works of this period. *Kirtilata* is a standard and beautiful composition of its age. The story is narrated in the form of a dialogue between a bee and his mate. Another of his books is *Kirtipataka* which narrates love-tales.

Thus two kinds of literary works are to be found in the 'Adi Kal'. One type of literature comprises the works of Buddhist and Nath Siddhas. In the other category are included the epics narrating the deeds of historical personages, composed by the bards. The late Pt. Ramchandra Shukla gave it the name of 'Virgatha Kal' because of the predominance, in the compositions of the period, of epic works so full of heroic sentiment. However, in the light of modern investigations, the authenticity of these works has become so doubtful that this name does not seem to be suitable. Mahapandit Rahul has stressed the preponderance in this age, of two elements (i) the speech of the Siddhas (ii) the praise of the warriors. He has, therefore, labelled this age as the "Siddha-Samant Yug". From the point of view of language, it would be right to call it the 'Adi Kal' of Hindi, because from now onwards the common speech of the times begins to evolve as Hindi.

Purva Madhya Kal (1375-1700 A. V.)

The change of form of the poetic currents, secular as well as spiritual, of the 'Adi Kal', began early in the fifteenth century. The thought-stream that came up in this age shows a fusion of the worldly and the other-worldly. Different scholars have drawn different conclusions as to the urge and inspiration behind this blending. The deep sentiment of devotion which this age produced makes itself felt even today. An account of the political unrest during the infancy of Hindi has already been given. It is not strictly correct to say that the poetic feeling sought out the spiritual because of the difficulties of mundane life. All the same, there can be no doubt that in the circumstances then prevailing, the people did receive consolation from this great and popular religious movement which was founded on ancient philosophic doctrines. The re-establishment of the spiritual traditions of the past came about because the environments were so well suited to this task. As a result of the inspiration of this important religious movement great literature was created which constitutes a valuable treasure of Hindi.

According to the view of Dr. Grierson, the religious movement of the Middle Ages started through contact with the Christian religion. He maintains that in the 2nd or 3rd century A. D., Nestorian Christians migrated to, and began to live in, the Madras Presidency, and that it was from them that Shri Ramanujacharya learnt about emotional devotion based on self-realization. But this statement is incorrect. The actual history of the Devotional (Bhakti) movement of the Middle Period is altogether different.

Although the reinstatement of the Vedic religion in place of Buddhism had been brought about through the ceaseless efforts of Shankaracharya, there was a complete absence of the human element of attachment in his 'Advaita' philosophy based on pure knowledge. It was, therefore, not easy for the common people to understand it. A reaction against the 'Advaita' philosophy of Shankaracharya had set in, in the South, in the 12th century. According to the 'Bhagwat' faith, the path of devotion was regarded as the supreme means of realization of God. Shankar had pro-

pounded, on the basis of 'Shrutis', the truth of the 'Brahman' and the worthlessness of the world. Apart from the 'Brahman' nothing else exists ; the soul as well as the universe are the 'Brahman'. On account of Maya which also is a manifestation of the power of the Brahman the oneness of the soul and the 'Brahman' is not perceived. For purposes of devotion, however, the identity of the 'Brahman' and the soul is a hindrance because it is essential to have separate existence of both the devotee and the deity. Four powerful schools of thought arose in opposition to Shankaracharya's philosophy. These are the 'Shri' school of Shri Ramanujacharya ; Madhvacharya's 'Brahm' school; 'Rudra' school of Vishnu Swami and the 'Sanakadi' school of Nimbarkacharya. All these oppose the 'Mayavad' of Shankar. The various trends of Devotional Literature in Hindi are all founded on the doctrines of these schools.

The 'Nirguna' poetry originated in the early years of the 15th century. This spiritual movement came into being through a conjunction of many social, religious and political factors. The political conditions then existing provided a suitable background for nurturing spiritual feelings. Through the conquests of the Muslims two separate cultures, two dissimilar forces, came into mutual contact. The result was that in every sphere of life there were all kinds of reactions. Although, use of force for religious convention was not in keeping with the tenets of Islam, yet in the extension of the Muslim power, the sword had helped a great deal. The social conditions were equally unhappy. At such a time, the people found in religion the means to convert their hopeless lot, their lost battle of life, into a thing of success and purposefulness. The gulf between the conqueror and the conquered was fairly wide. Nevertheless, some devout people on either side felt the need for a common meeting-ground and desired to transform the material and worldly despair into spiritual achievement. The School of Poetry—a blending of the essential doctrines both of Hinduism and Islam—which resulted is known as 'Nirguna Bhakti Kavya'. Some historians regard Islam as its source of inspiration but an analysis of the compositions of the saints of the 'Nirguna' faith shows unmistakable influence of Indian thought-currents. Based on the 'Nirguna' philosophy, two tradi-

tions developed. In one, the element of knowledge predominated, so it is known as the 'Jnanashrayi' branch. The other is called the 'Premashrayi', on account of its greater emphasis on the 'love' element. The advent in the Hindi world of this current of thought was not accidental. It is absolutely clear from an analysis of the 'Nirguna' poetry that this tradition has been very deeply influenced by Indian thought and that it is directly connected with the last batches of the Siddhas of Buddhism, and the hermits of the 'Nath Panth'. For emotions, language, technical terms, in short, for all the essentials of poetic composition, it is indebted to Apabhramsha literature.

We find, in this literature, the contribution of three main currents of thought acting as its sources of inspiration : they are a mixed form of 'Nath and Sahajyana' faiths; 'Sufism' and 'Vedanta'. In this connection it would seem appropriate to briefly review these three thought-currents and to have a bird's eyeview of their influence on the 'Sant mat' (the Faith of the Saints). As we have already remarked, there is strong opposition in the compositions of the Vajryani Siddhas and the Sadhus of the 'Nath Panth' to outer show and ritual. But along with this, there was, in their practices, a lack of the emotional attachment, due, no doubt, to the emphasis on the sentiment of tranquility and on death. It was not the aim of the 'Nath Panth' that the narrow and dim boundaries of the field of action be broadened. Their doctrines, therefore, provided no satisfactory answer to the doubts of the conflict-afflicted common people. Lacking in true feeling, the Yogis of the Nath Panth had succeeded in establishing their position in public chiefly through exhibition of 'spiritual' miracles and other abnormal practices, and not through an enlightened appeal to the heart.

These 'Nath Panth' Sadhus had not only failed to attract the common people, but even the important scholars of the age were unimpressed. Notwithstanding all this, 'Santmat' gave its support to all the three branches of religion, so that it brought about a fitting union of action, knowledge and devotion. The voice of intense ardour in the Sant faith is a contribution of the 'Vajrayani Siddhas' and the followers of 'Nath Panth'. But whereas 'Nath Panth'

failed because of the lack of any greatness of purpose, 'Sant mat' succeeded in becoming the universally-accepted religion for it put forth the good of the people as its ultimate aim.

In this way began, early in the 15th century, that tradition of Hindi literature which achieved a perfect fusion of individual realization with the desire for common welfare. Until this time Hindi literature was based on eulogistic songs of glory or traditional poetic conventions, but with the appearance of the 'Saint' tradition, a new aim, a new philosophy of life, became manifest in literature.

To bring about a blending of action and knowledge, help of '*Vedanta*' was sought. Altogether cut off from the influence of the Sadhus of 'Nath Panth', scholars, well-versed in the *Shastras*, were keeping up the task of propounding in their religious debates, the doctrines of the '*Gita*', '*Upanishads*', '*Brahmsutra*' and '*Vedanta*'. Kabir conceived the 'Nirakar' (God without form) which concept belongs to '*Vedanta*'. But he went further and from the Sufis, he learnt the way, through mystic love, of worshipping this formless God. The element of attachment was altogether absent from the doctrines of 'Nath Panth'; by taking up the 'love' element of Sufism, Kabir supplied this want. But in 'Sant mat' this love found expression in chaste emotion for a spiritual support. It kept aloof from all worldly coarseness. The setting up of the 'One God' cult of the 'Nirgun mat' was brought about through a union of the 'Brahman' of the Hindus and the 'Khuda' of Islam. The chief aim of this religion was to denounce the external show and humbug of both religions and to establish the right of all men to worship God. Credit for the founding of 'Nirguna' faith is given usually to two preceptors. The first of these saints is Namdev of Maharashtra, though for the origin of this thought-stream in Madhyadesh credit goes to Shri Ramanand. The compositions of Namdev indicate the influence of both 'Nirguna' and 'Saguna' philosophies; though from the traces of 'Nirguna mat' found in his compositions, it is clear that Namdev was, in fact, the pioneer of this tradition. But the credit for giving it a practical form belongs to Kabir Das who was a disciple of Ramanand. He learnt from Ramanand the broad essentials of the Indian 'Advaita' philosophy, and joining

these with the 'Hathayoga' of the Yogis, the 'love' of the 'Sufis' and the philosophy of non-violence of the 'Vaishnava' sect, he gave a unique form to the Nirguna poetic tradition. In the works of Kabir the name of Namdev is mentioned with great respect. The hymns of Namdev Ji have been included in '*Guru Granth Sahib*' also.

Kabir Das is the foremost among the poets of the 'Nirguna' tradition. About his birth, it is said that he was the son of a Brahman widow who, from a sense of shame, threw away the child in a tank called 'Lahartara'. He was brought up by a weaver couple named Neeru and Neema. We cannot say how far this story is true, but it is a fact that he was brought up in a weaver's home. Not much time had elapsed since the religious conversion of the weavers' community, so that inspite of having received instruction in Islam, the inherited Hindu impress on the subconscious mind had persisted ; this influence was mainly that of the doctrines of 'Nath Panth'. Thus Kabir had received a 'Nath Panth' background quite naturally. As the disciple of Ramanand he learnt about the doctrine of 'Devotion', and his great genius, combining the essential elements of all, founded a new faith.

Many books are attributed to Kabir, but several of these are not his works. Kabir was illiterate, his compositions are available in collections made by others and, therefore, it is difficult to say as to which compositions are his own and which mere interpolations. '*Bijak*' is the chief of Kabir's work ; several commentaries on this have been produced. It is divided into three sections——'Ramaini', 'Shabad', and 'Sakhi'. Many subjects like propounding of Vedantic philosophy, denunciation of traditional customs, the transient quality of the universe, purification of the heart, the worthlessness of ritual and ceremony, error of illusion, etc., have been touched upon. The 'Sakhis' generally contain an exposition of doctrines and explanation of the principles of the Faith. 'Ramaini' and 'Shabadas' can be sung. The style of language is not ornate, but his sayings do not lack effectiveness.

The second important poet of the 'Sant Mat' is Raidas. He was a cobbler by caste. He composed no independent work, yet he holds a prominent position in the 'Nirguna' branch of poetry.

His known verses have been got together in the '*Sant Bani*'. Among the saint poets, his name is mentioned with much reverence. The greatest merit of the poetry of Raidas, lies in his simplicity and emotional warmth. As against knowledge, sense of 'attachment' prevails and the emotional element in his poetry is extremely powerful.

Sant Dharmdas was Kabir's successor. It is said that on becoming a disciple of Kabir, he gave away all his rich possessions. Having carried out for twenty years the responsibilities of leadership, he died at a very old age. Among the saints, his words command great respect. As compared to that of Kabirdas, his poetry is more simple and straight, and the element of love predominates.

The comprehensiveness of the doctrines of Guru Nanak, another saint of the 'Nirguna' faith, is evident from the fact that even today there is a large number of his followers. Although there is a great resemblance between the compositions of Kabir and Nanak, yet the poetry of Nanak is not characterised by invective and denunciation. There is sweetness and softness in Nanak's speech. He too has made an attack on the caste system, on ceremony and ritual, and on differences of creed and faith, not with the crude harshness of Kabir, but with great modesty ; and he gives sound reasons for his stand. His language is straight and simple and his style of propounding his ideas is extremely lucid.

Dadu Dayal is, from the point of view of doctrines, a follower of Kabir, but he set up an independent sect of his own which is known as 'Dadu Panth'. Both in style and sentiment, Dadu's sayings are very similar to the 'Sakhis' of Kabir. His language shows use of Western Hindi as well as 'Rajasthani'. In his compositions the element of 'love' is even more prominent than in Kabir's poetry. He has written on all the aspects and branches of '*Sant Mat*'.

Sunder Das was a disciple of Dadu Dayal. He was a reputed scholar of Sanskrit and possessed a good knowledge of Persian. Of the poets belonging to the 'Nirguna' sect, he was the only one who had received a proper education and who was acquainted with the diverse traditions of poetic composition. Therefore his compositions do not contain the passion, merely, of the propagandist ; they are literary and are full of charm. His chief work is

'*Sunder Vilas*'. He did not write his works in the lyrical tradition generally followed by the Saints but composed 'Kavitas' and 'Savaiyas' in the academic way. The figures of speech have been used skilfully and in plenty. He has set forth the philosophic doctrines in a scientific way. As poetry, his compositions rank supreme among the works of the Saint Poets.

Two compositions of Maluk Das are well known : '*Ratna Khan*' and '*Gyan Bodh*'. In the 'Nirguna' faith, an attempt was made to find out a path of devotion suited alike to the Hindus and the Muslims. Almost all the Saint poets have, therefore, frequently employed Urdu and Persian words in their compositions. The work of Maluk Das, too, contains Urdu and Persian words and, at places, his compositions indicate mature poetic ability. He was born in 1631 A.V. and died at the age of 108.

The literary career of Shri Akshar Ananya is regarded to have begun about the year 1710 A. V. He was a great scholar and had made a fine study of 'Vedanta'. He wrote a great deal regarding 'Yoga' and 'Vedanta'. His chief works are: '*Raja Yoga*', '*Vigyan Yoga*,' '*Sidhant Bodh*', '*Vivek Deepika*', '*Brahma Jnan*' etc. He wrote a Hindi translation of '*Durga Sapta shati*', also.

From the point of view of literary evaluation, the school of 'Nirguna' poetry does not have much significance. The didactic element predominates and, therefore, the content of the universal elements of life is limited. The tradition of devotional poetry continued for a long while but in the sphere of the popular literature of the country, it was soon replaced by the Vaishnava poetry based on the 'Saguna' faith.

(Sufi) love poetry constitutes the other branch of the 'Nirguna' poetic tradition and from the literary point of view, the value of these works is higher. Making use of a few popular Hindu stories, the poets of this school have expounded the tenets of Sufism, especially the element of mystic love in it. Although the stories are mundane, but love has been treated in such a lofty and catholic manner that the works acquire, quite naturally, a deep undertone of other-worldliness. This branch of poetry does not concern itself with the 'Saint-poets' practice of refutation and denunciation. Rather, it

undertakes to express beautifully the human experiences common alike to Hindus and Muslims. The Sufi doctrines are propounded not through intellectual discussion and argument, but through an appeal to the heart.

Mulla Daud, the first poet in this tradition, is believed to have lived in the reign of Alauddin Khilji. Daud wrote the love story of Nurak and Chanda. The work is not extant. For quite some time after him, we come across no love poetry, but towards the end of the 15th century, innumerable works of this kind began to be composed. Of these, many received a mere mention in some work or the other. Chief among these writings are : '*Swapna Vati*', '*Mugdha Vati*', '*Mriga Vati*', '*Madhu Malati*' and '*Padma Vati*'; '*Mriga Vati*' was composed by Kutban. His time is 1550 A.V. or thereabouts. '*Mriga Vati*' is a story of human love with allegorical references to divine love. The heroine is Mriga Vati, princess of Kanchanpur, whose beauty is so enchanting that it drives the hero, the heir of Chandra Giri, to renunciation. From the literary point of view, this composition is not of great significance but allegorical symbols have been successfully sustained. The language employed is 'Avadhi' and the metres used are 'Doha' and 'Chaupai'.

Another work, preceding the poetry of Jayasi is '*Madhumalati*' of Manjhana. As literature it ranks much higher than '*Mriga Vati*'. Fancy and feeling have been finely blended. The portrayal of the grief of separation is superb. Through this story of worldly love between Manohar, the prince of Kannesar, and Madhumalati, princess of Maharasa, divine love has been charmingly expressed.

'*Padma Vati*' of Malik Mohammed Jayasi is the foremost work in this tradition. The most important feature of this composition is that its plot is not imaginary. Historical events, fancifully embellished, have been presented in a novel form. Of this work, numerous copies—written in different scripts : Persian, Devnagari and Kaithi, are extant. The language used is simple 'Avadhi', of every day speech. In '*Padma Vati*' Jayasi has presented an amalgamation of the doctrines of Hinduism and Islam. Although the entire story is founded on Sufi doctrines, there are also, at several places, descriptions of the 'Hathyog' propounded by the two saints. The work is an

excellent example of Jayasi's spirit of religious tolerance. From the literary point of view, too, it has great significance. As is obvious from the title, the heroine of '*Padma Vati*' is Padmavati, royal princess of Singhal Dweep. Learning from the parrot 'Hiraman' of the great beauty of the princess, the king of Chittor, Ratan Sen, sets out to marry her. His former queen is left behind to suffer pangs of separation. Overcoming numerous difficulties, with the assistance of Shiv, Ratan Sen finally succeeds and marries Padmavati, and returning to Chittor, lives with her two queens ; but not happily everafter. Before long, the king, in displeasure, exiles one Raghava Chetana who goes to Alauddin and sings praises of the wondrous beauty of Padmini. Alauddin is filled with desire for Padmini and invades Chittor, but the valour and far-sightedness of Gora and Badala baulk him the victory. While Ratan Sen is away, a king named Devpala makes overtures to Padmini. This leads to a duel between Devpala and Ratan Sen. Both are killed and the two queens of Ratan Sen. Nagmati and Padmavati, burn themselves on the pyre. So we see that in '*Padmavati*' there is a unique mingling of the cultures of the Hindus and the Muslims. The invocations to God, eulogies of the prophet and of the king, and self-introduction have been given in accordance with the poetic convention of Persian '*masnavies*'. But the work was influenced also by the Indian Epic tradition, and most of the characters have been drawn after the Hindu ideals. Considering its great excellences—characterization and the successful manner in which the universal elements of life have been presented through a skilful arrangement and sequence of events—'*Padmavati*' may be regarded as a work of which Hindi is justly proud.

'*Chitravali*' is another significant work belonging to this school of poetry. The plot is imaginary. In the story of '*Chitravali*' many spiritual matters have been included, and the author, Usmana, has made a great effort to sustain the spiritual element. The heroines of the 'earthly' plot are Kanwalavati and Chitravali to marry whom the Nepalese prince, Sujan Kumar, faces numerous difficulties. The time of '*Chitravali*'s composition is regarded to be about 1670 A. V. Thus we find that this stream of poetry was in existence, as a subsi-

diary current, a long period, yet not many works followed which may be placed on a par with the 'Sufi' love poetry. Among the later works, '*Madhavanal-kamakandala*', '*Rasaratan*', '*Jnan Desh*', '*Dhola Marura Duha*' etc. are prominent.

Viewing this poetic tradition in retrospect, the most important fact that comes to light is that both the subject-matter and the style of expression show Hindu as well as Islamic influences. In this context, another point to be noted is that though this poetic tradition was pioneered by the Muslim Sufi poets, later on several Hindu poets also composed works of this kind. In these works, no attempt has been made to expound any doctrines and the element of the earthly manifestation of love is predominant.

Didactic utterances regarding knowledge and meditation ; the idea of the Abstract 'Brahman' existing in the Void, and the doctrines propounded through 'Hathyog'—these were not altogether unsuccessful in diverting the inclination of the people away from material struggle and in directing it towards spiritualism. Nevertheless, faced with the bitter realities of life, it was not only difficult but impossible to support existence on these abstract doctrines which were so far removed from life. In the austere devotion of the 'Nirguna' faith, the people could find no satisfactory answer to their perplexities. For, in the 'Nirguna' philosophy, there was a negation and lack of the fundamentals of life. The saints of the 'Nirguna Panth' proposed that to cure our despair in material life we should seek a remedy in the effort to control our senses and to suppress our desires. But the people wanted some greater 'Stay' on whose feet they could pour out all the weariness of their heart and, offering all, could convert the curse of human existence into a blessing. Attachment is the more powerful component of the human heart ; and though a union of emotional attachment and knowledge-based devotion is possible, the two are not the same thing. The 'Nirguna' Saints tried to substitute completely the 'intellectual' devotion for attachment and affection, and it was in this that they failed. The devotees of the 'Saguna' faith, on the other hand, provided, for those desires which were, in material life, starved and thwarted, a stay and a prop in the form of Ram and Krishna. Thus such

natural inclinations of the mind which are generally engrossed in the material were canalized into selfless devotion to God.

Ideals of many kinds were set up through the creation of the character of Ram, the Man of Righteous Conduct, whereas in the character of Krishna, the incarnation of Amorous Playfulness, joy and sport were portrayed.

The founding of the 'Saguna' poetic tradition in Hindi was based on Vaishnava doctrines. This spirit of devotion of the middle ages, had found expression in the South, before it became current in the North of India. The concept of Vishnu is an ancient thing in the metaphysical history of India. It is believed to have sprung up about 500 years before Christ. 'Bhagwat' religion is merely a modified form of this. In the 8th century (A. D.) it had to contend with the 'Mayavad' of Shankar. Four preceptors have contributed, primarily, to the propagation of this religion: Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Vishnu Swami and Nimbark. Afterwards Swami Ramanand, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya spread it far and wide. These preceptors have expounded the form of Vishnu in different ways. Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Vishnu Swami and Nimbark set up respectively the creeds of 'Vishishtadvaita', 'Dvaita' 'Shuddhadvaita' and 'Dvaitadvaita'. We cannot give here a detailed description of these creeds. Ramanujacharya denounced the 'Mayavad' of Shankar and established that truth was manifest in the living being. Swami Ramanand emphasised the worship of Ram instead of Vishnu. In his form of worship the devotion to Duty is given greater importance and Ram is regarded as 'Purushottama' the most excellent man.

Chaitanya Prabhu accorded a place of honour to Radha along with Krishna. His way of thinking was much influenced by the 'Dvaitvad' of Madhvacharya and the 'Dvaitadvaita' of Nimbark. Basically, his way of worship is founded on the *Bhagvat Purana*.

Vallabhacharya is the foremost philosopher of that age. In his philosophic ideas, he was influenced by Vishnuswami as well as Nimbark. According to him, the path of Devotion is superior to that of Knowledge for through Knowledge we can only *know* God, whereas through devotion we may *realize* Him. That feeling of devo-

tion through which we realize Krishna is in itself, for the devotee, the grace and favour of Lord Krishna. This 'Grace' is, according to Vallabhacharya, 'Pushti'—sustenance. That is why the doctrines of Vallabhacharya are sometimes known as 'Pushtivad'.

Thus it was that a modified and expanded form of the 'Vishishtadvaita' of Ramanujacharya, became current, through Swami Ramanand, as 'Ram Bhakti' (worship of Ram). Similarly, the followers of Nimbark, Madhva and Vishnuswami, namely Chaitanya and Vallabhacharya, propagated the cult of Krishna Bhakti (worship of Krishna). Since the language of the common people had come to be used for dissemination of religion, two traditions of 'Ramkavya' and 'Krishnakavya', based on the 'Saguna' cult, arose in Hindi.

In the spiritual world of India, Ram's was not a new name. His personality had been portrayed in numerous works, extending from the '*Ramayana*' of Valmiki to works of mediaeval literature. For the spread of the cult of 'Rambhakti' in Hindi Literature and in Northern India, the credit goes to Swami Ramanand, for, to popularise this cult, he used Hindi, side by side with Sanskrit. He himself composed several works, in both Sanskrit and Hindi, not many of which are extant. All the same, for the works of Kabir and Tulsi, Hindi Literature is greatly indebted to Swami Ramanand. Ramanand was a follower of Ramanujacharya, who stressed the worship of Vishnu and Narayan. Ramanand altered the form of 'Narayan' to 'Ram'.

The tradition of 'Ramakavya' in Hindi developed on the doctrines of Ramanand. Hindi's foremost poet, Tulsidas, is a representative of this same tradition. It is through the works of Tulsidas that literature relating to Ram has attained a universal and permanent significance. The idea of the service of the Lord was predominant in Ramanand's concept of worship. Tulsidas, too, adopted the same idea of 'servitude'. But poetry on Ram was composed earlier also by some poets preceding Tulsidas. In his book '*Rama Prakasha*', Munilal has portrayed, in a figurative academic style, the story of Ram. In addition to that, there is the '*Bhed*

Bhaskar' of Bhagwat Das which was written to expose and denounce "Advaitvad".

Basing his work on the universal elements in human life, Tulsidas created 'the Pre-eminent Man' in the person of Ram. Combining the idea of people's welfare with the emotions of personal attachments, he has composed poetry which has a world-wide appeal. Whether we judge the works of Tulsidas from the idealistic or the literary point of view, his poetry is found to be equally excellent. The greatest merit of Tulsi's work lies in the felicitous blending of the ideal and the actual; of the interest of the individual and the good of the many; and of the sense of duty and the sentiment of attachment and affection. Tulsidas ushered in a new era and his ideas and ideals gave a new lead to the thought-current of the middle ages.

So far we possess no authentic account of the life of Tulsidas. Some light is thrown on a few events by a variety of external and internal evidence, but no authentic re-construction of his life-story has been possible. The period 1657-1711 A. V. is regarded as the time during which his works were composed. His representative works are '*Ramcharit-manasa*', '*Gitavali*', and '*Krishna Gitavali*', Other writings are : '*Vinaya Patrika*', '*Ramlala Nahachhu*', '*Parvati Mangala*', '*Janaki Mangala*', '*Dohavali*', '*Ram Satsai*', '*Hanuman Bahuk*', '*Vairagya Sandipani*', '*Ramagya*', and '*Barvai Ramayana*'. All these works bear the mark of the profound scholarship of Tulsidas. '*Ramcharitmanasa*' and '*Vinaya Patrika*' prove that he had made a deep study of philosophy. He has expounded the 'Mayavad' of Shankar with great skill. Tulsi's mind was influenced by both the 'Advaitvad' and the 'Vishisht-Advaitvad' of Indian thought. From the literary point of view, the value of Tulsi's poetry is immeasurable. He gave to Avadhi, for the first time, a form that was purified and cultivated. In addition to 'Avadhi', he employed 'Brajbhasha', with great success, in works like '*Gitavali*', '*Krishna Gitavali*', '*Kavitavali*' and '*Vinaya Patrika*.' Tulsi has such a wealth of ideas that there is not a trace of laboured effort at expression. Rather, the figures of speech fit in, entirely suiting the ideas. Everywhere in his works is seen the magic of music and meaning. Tulsi's catholic philosophy

of life and his tranquil and earnest style of expression are a precious treasure of the Hindi world.

In the works of Tulsidas, both the ideas and the expression of '*Ram Kavya*' reached perfection. The poets that followed could not get any where near him. The tradition of Ramkavya continued, but the works of others were not a patch on the great, universal and quintessential poetry of Tulsidas. In this tradition, Agradas is the poet who comes next in importance. He is believed to have lived around 1634 A. V. Four of his books are extant : '*Hitopadesh*'; '*Dhyan Manjari*'; '*Ramadhyan Manjri*'; and '*Kundalian*'. Nabhadas, a disciple of Agradas, wrote the famous '*Bhaktamal*', which contains biographies of two-hundred 'Bhaktas'. He also wrote a few works relating to the worship of Ram. He had a good command over Brajbhasha. Further, he composed two '*Ashtayams*', one of which is a prose-work in Brajbhasha. His disciple, Priyadas, wrote a commentary on '*Bhaktamal*'. To bring out the greatness of the 'Vaishnava' faith, many supernatural phenomena have been incorporated in this commentary. Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi is of the opinion that Bengali, Oriya and Marathi literatures have been deeply influenced by the book '*Bhaktamal*' and its commentary.

Acharya Kavi Keshavdas has an important position in this school. He has written in praise of the character of Ram in his book '*Ramchandrika*', the thought-content and style of which indicate influence of the Sanskrit '*Prasanna Raghava*' and '*Hanumannataka*'. Keshavdas was primarily a scholar. He composed '*Kavipriya*', '*Rasikpriya*', '*Virsinghdeva Charitra*', '*Vijnan Geeta*', '*Jehangir-jas Chandrika*' and other works. Receiving in a dream, a command from Valmiki, he wrote to glorify Ram. But at the very outset in the work, '*Ramchandrika*', the pedagogue in him is revealed. Essentially, he was not a devotional poet. Therefore, his work completely lacks any spontaneity of feelings. Tradition has always depicted him as a man of erotic habits. In reality, Keshavdas was a poet of the 'Riti' tradition. That is why there is in '*Ramchandrika*', neither sincerity of emotion nor facility of expression.

Pran Chand Chauhan composed '*Ramayan Mahanataka*' on the basis of Sanskrit plays, and Hriday Ram made a translation of the

Sanskrit '*Hanumannataka*', under the title '*Bhasha Hanumannataka*'. These books are important because of their poetic excellence. This tradition of the '*Ram Kavya*' continued long afterwards, so that a few works were composed even during the latter half of the Middle Period; but these are of very slight value.

A study of the literature in the '*Ram Kavya*' school clearly indicates that it gave expression to the 'perfect' form of '*Bhakti*'. All the credit for the manifestation of this 'ultimate' form of '*Bhakti*' belongs to Goswami Tulsidas. Tulsidas presented, before the world, devotion in its 'perfect' form in which love and trust unite and which regarded Duty and righteous conduct as its essential qualities. This social sublimation, of the individual's sentiments is the basic cause for the wide-spread acceptance of the cult of '*Rambhakti*'. However, in spite of such comprehensive and philosophic background, the element of love, in its crude form, penetrated even into this devotional system, characterized as it was by the emphasis on righteous conduct and common weal. This was owing to the influence of the cult of '*Krishnabhakti*' which was rooted in personal devotion based on love. The consequence was that Ram, too, came to be looked upon as the man of amorous sport, and not as the pre-eminent man devoted to Duty. The founder of this sentiment was Ramcharandas, the well-known commentator of '*Ramcharitmanasa*', who propagated the adoration of conjugal affection. His way of devotion is known by the name of '*Svasukhi*' branch. The devotees, belonging to this cult dress themselves as women, accept Sita as a co-wife, and, adorning themselves to perfection, try to captivate Ram. Different historians have evaluated this cult according to their particular view-point. But this tendency could not keep in step with the march of time because it lacked life's essential elements. Many more beautiful works were written round the character of Ram which were inspired by the new national consciousness and feeling of regeneration. These will be mentioned under the Modern Period.

'Krishna kavya' Tradition

While discussing the philosophic background of Devotional Poetry, it was stated that of the four main preceptors mentioned

there, three had worshipped Vishnu in the form of Krishna. In the history of mediaeval devotion, Vallabhacharya occupies the most important position. That he came to the North was a very happy event, indeed. Because of his doctrines, 'Krishna Kavya' received a new inspiration and a new impetus. By giving to singing of Krishna's amorous play a prominent place in the world of devotion and worship, Vallabhacharya provided to the public a much-longed-for means for the expression of such of their inclinations which, through worldly attachment, were making men feel so bewildered. In this delightful and adorable incarnation of Krishna, the people found a cherished object fashioned after their own heart. Vallabhacharya and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu were leaders of their age and, proclaimed by countless numbers belonging to succeeding generations, their love of God (Vishnu) has resounded down the centuries.

Like the concept of Ram, the concept of Krishna is, also, an ancient one. Of course in the '*Mahabharata*', we come across the incarnate Krishna, but a mention is made even in the '*Rigveda*' and '*Chhandogya Upanishad*'. Again, the form of Krishna is manifested, in different ways, in various other ancient books. In the cult of Krishna-worship, Radha has a privileged position, but there is no mention of Radha either in the '*Mahabharata*' or the '*Bhagwat*'. In the latter, the Gopis are introduced but there is no Radha. Mention is made, no doubt, of a particular Gopi but her name is not Radha. References to Radha, are, however, found in the works composed on the basis of the '*Bhagwat Purana*' as also in the 'Vishnu' and 'Nimbark' cults.

Vidya Pati is the foremost poet of the 'Krishna Kavya' tradition in Hindi. Many scholars regard him as a Bengali poet but he was a 'Maithil' and his '*Padavali*' was composed in Maithili. He was, moreover, a profound scholar of Sanskrit in which language he wrote many works. In 'Avahatt' Apabhransha he composed '*Kirtilata*' and '*Kirtipataka*'. '*Padavali*' is a collection of his 'Maithili' songs. Vidyapati was a Shaivite so that his verses relating to Shiv are steeped in devotion. But in his concept of Krishna and Radha, the element of sensual longing predominates. It is

absurd to regard these too apparent manifestations of desire as the refinement of 'Bhakti'. Even so, because of their poetic beauty, his superior genius is found stamped on these verses about Radha and Krishna.

In Hindi, the writing of the 'Krishna Bhakti' poetry was prompted by Vallabhacharya's 'Pushtimarg'. According to Vallabhacharya, the 'Gopis'—the 'milkmaids'—are the prime preceptors of the 'Pushtimarg'. They were blessed with the grace and favour of Krishna. To imitate the loving devotion of the 'Gopikas' is the goal of 'Pushtimarg'. Poetry that was written on the basis of this doctrine is characterized by sincerity of feeling.

The foremost poet of this school of poetry is Surdas. He belongs to the first rank of poets not in Hindi only but in the entire Indian literature. His verses are popular alike in the South and in the North. As in the case of Tulsidas, the pioneer of the age of 'Rambhakti', no authentic biographical data is available regarding Surdas either, and a great difference of opinion prevails. The most important work of Surdas is '*Sur Sagar*'. Other works are '*Sursaravali*' and '*Sahitya Lahari*'.

Since 'Pushtimarg' bases its worship on emotion, Sur leans towards the sportive element in the personality of Krishna. The 'Diplomat' Krishna, philosopher of statecraft, is not his God. He worships the boy-Krishna. The Krishna of the '*Bhagwat*' symbolizes Power. Surdas has combined, in the personality of Krishna, sweetness and love with power. The psychological skill with which Surdas has grafted the sweetly human on the spiritual ground is wonderful. The common little tricks of the boy Krishna and his playfulness will, for ages, resound from the courtyards of innumerable households. To fully appreciate its beauty, the subject-matter of Sur literature may be viewed from five different angles. All these topics bear the stamp of originality, and have, as such, great significance :

1. The psychological portrayal of the character of Krishna as a child.
2. The erotic description of the Seasons and 'Nakh-Shikh'.
3. Romantic passion of Radha and Krishna.

4. Bhramar Geet portraying the sentiment of separation.
5. Spiritual symbolism.

Surdas is, in particular, the poet of love and affection. In the verses composed before he received instruction from Vallabhacharya, the 'quiestistic' style predominates. In the field of deep affection and unrequited love, he is supreme. In his poetry, we find a fine combination of human psychology, poetic craft and spiritualism. The success and skill with which Sur symbolized spiritual truth through a psychological treatment of the various sentiments is something which only he could have accomplished.

Surdas was the first of the 'Ashtachhap' School of Vitthaldas. Their names are : Surdas, Nand Das, Krishna Das, Parmanand Das, Kumbhandas, Chaturbhujdas, Chhita Swami and Govind Swami. From the point of view of literary importance, the second name, after Surdas, is that of Nand Das. Sixteen works of his are extant of which '*Rasa Panchadhyayi*' and '*Bhanwargeet*' are noteworthy. A perusal of these works clearly shows that Nand Das was not only a devotee but also a competent artist. About his art of expression there is a well-known saying that unlike other poets he was an artist in mosaic. The other poets of the 'Ashtachhap' have, also, sung of the childhood and boyhood of Krishna. '*Bhramargeet*', '*Prematva Nirupan*' and '*Jugalman Charitra*' of Krishnadas and '*Dhruvcharit*' and '*Dan Leela*' of Parmanand Das are other works which are extant. Three books written by Chaturbhujdas have also come to light ; these are : '*Dvadash Yash*', '*Bhakti Pratap*' and '*Hitju Ko Mangal*'. As far as Khumbandas, Chhita Swami and Govind Swami are concerned, only stray verses composed by them are available.

In the school of 'Krishna bhakti', the name of Mirabai is immortal, and her works have a very exalted position. The account of Mirabai's life is not altogether authentic, and there is a great deal of difference of opinion regarding her time and biographical material. There are several references to works composed by her which comprise '*Narsiji ka Mayra*', '*Geet Govind ki Tika*', '*Rag Govind*', '*Garva Geet*' and '*Meera's Pada*'. A few of these are extant; the others are inaccessible. In her poetry the 'Madhurya' sentiment prevails.

She gives unfettered expression to her feelings of intense love for Krishna—her 'Girdhar Gopal'. Generally we find that if rein is given to feelings, expression runs wild. However, it is the great merit of Mira's poetry that inspite of the fact that emotion is untrammelled, there are no unrestrained, erotic expressions. Nor is there, in Mira's poetry, any cheap attraction of affected charm, groaning under the weight of figures of speech. The beauty of her poetry is, rather, like the healthy and innately tender beauty of the naive, fancy-free and self-willed village girl. Her poetry has the innocence of a wild female deer and the music of intense simplicity.

In the verses of Mira, we see traces of all the cults, of religious devotion, of the middle ages. She composed many verses based on the doctrines of the 'Nirguna' sect. In the frenzied moments of extreme emotion she seems to be closer to Chaitanya. This, too, is believed that she was initiated by 'Jivgoswami'. It is possible that not having received initiation from Vallabhacharya, she had to face much public slander and dislike; but the truth seems to be that her desire to give free expression to her emotions kept her from accepting the bondage of any sect. Thus, her rich and sweet concept of the Beloved, desired freely, and the expression of her unchecked emotions are truly her own.

Mira was endowed with a natural talent for poetic composition. Because of a lack of scholarship and any mature literary or artistic knowledge, her poetry may not be comparable to the works of the more learned poets of the 'Bhakti' movement; nevertheless, the unadorned, subjective, poetic quality of the passionate emotions of the pain-stricken Mira is not to be found elsewhere.

In the school of 'Krishna Kavya', Goswami Hitharivansh holds a high position. He was a preceptor of the 'Radha vallabhiya' sect. His method of devotion was different from that of other cults. The doctrines of this sect lay down that Radha is the 'Most Beloved' one. Krishna is important only because he is the lover of Radha; he is not in himself the Desired one. The devotees dress and make themselves up as a friend of Radha. Krishna's relation with them is not like the free and open love-relationship with his gopi-mistresses, nor do the devotees have feelings of co-wifeship towards Radha.

Shri Hitharivansh wrote many charming and able works in Sanskrit. His works in Brajbhasha are also of a very high level of excellence. The collection of his verses is known by the name of "*Hit Chaurasi*." Swami Haridas founded the 'Tatti' sect which is a subsidiary branch of the 'Nimbark' sect. He is believed to be Tansen's teacher. The verses composed by him can be set to music and sung in various 'ragas'. Anthologies of his poetry are found under various titles like '*Haridas ke Granth*', '*Haridas ji ke Pad*' and '*Haridas Ji ki Bani*'. His couplets (Dohas), are elegant and beautiful. The compositions of Gadadhar Bhatta have been collected in the book, '*Yugal Shataka*'. Hariram Vyasa was another poet of the 'Radha-Vallabha' sect. In his verses mainly the childhood and the amorous playfulness of Krishna are described.

The well-known poet Raskhana, a devotee of Krishna, was a Muslim. According to popular hearsay, love constituted the principal component of his personality. Because of the transitoriness of worldly props, he took to Krishna's spiritual support, and his emotions found expression as the beautiful effervescence of the heart of the loving devotee. Intensity of feelings—even to intoxication—and a smooth and facile style of expression are the merits of his poetry. Two small books of his, '*Prembatika*' and '*Sujan Raskhana*', have been published. In these, also, the element of love prevails.

Dhruvadas Ji was a disciple of Hitharivansh. He wrote as many as forty books or so. Apart from 'Padas', he also composed 'Dohas', 'Chaupais', 'Kavitta', 'Sawaiya' etc. Love is the theme of these compositions also. He wrote an account of his contemporary poets which is known as the '*Bhaktanamavali*'.

In the latter middle period of the 'Krishna Kavya' school, there were other poets like Nagaridas, Albeli Ali, Chacha Vrindavandas, Bhagvat Rasik etc. The engaging sweetness of the poets of the 'Krishna Bhakti' school and their fine style of expression form an everlasting treasure of the Indian literature.

In the first-half of the middle period, mainly devotional poetry was composed. The poets wrote for the people and the basic inspiration of their work was the devotional feelings brought about by the popular movements. But, side by side with these popular

poets, many others flourished in the Royal Court of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar. Akbar was passionately interested in the pursuit of true knowledge, and under his patronage, a class of poets came up, whose poetic inspiration found expression in such different forms as their circumstances conditioned. Among these court poets, the foremost position is held by Abdur-Rahim Khankhana. He was a scholar of Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit languages. He wrote many works of which '*Rahim Dohavali*', '*Barve Nayika Bhed*,' '*Madnashtak*', '*Shringar Sorath*', and '*Ras Panchadhyayi*' are important. The poet, next in rank in Akbar's Court, was Ganga. No independent work of his own is accessible. Only scattered '*Padas*' or '*Kavitts*' are found. Another poet is Narhari Bandijana whose '*Rukmini Mangal*', '*Chhappya Niti*' and '*Kavit Sangrah*' are extant. In addition to the above mentioned, other chief poets of the Court of Akbar included Birbal, Todar Mal, and Manohar Kavi.

By the time it reached the 16th century, the pure and sweet emotion of Krishna's devotion had begun to be coloured by worldliness. Desire-rooted attachment is the most powerful component of the human personality. No page of the history of Hindi Literature—whether it has the Heroic or the Devotional, as the predominant sentiment—has escaped the erotic touch. While giving expression to their love for the Brahman, the Saint and the Sufi poets sang endless songs of yearning and union. In the '*Krishna Kavya*', the amorous playfulness of the Lord itself constituted the subject-matter, with the result that the divine illimitableness got bogged in a multitude of human actions. In accordance with the deep-rooted traditions of Literature, even the beloveds of the Lord were not spared application of the principle of 'classification of heroines'. Rup Goswami wrote a book named '*Ujjval Nilmani*' which was soaked in the Sanskritic '*Madhurya*' sentiment. And so, after the 17th century, the expression of amorous-cum-worldly emotions came to the fore in the name of Krishna and the Gopikas. Consequently both the subject-matter and expression underwent a transformation. Whereas the '*Madhurya*' sentiment of devotion gave place to the secularity of amorousness, even the easy and natural expression of earlier times was altered. So much emphasis was laid on figures

of speech, Metre and Style that instead of remaining the mere means, they became ends in themselves.

'Riti Kal'

The beginnings of the 'Riti Kal' or 'Shringar Kal' in Hindi literature belong to the time when, having attained its supreme height, Mughal grandeur had started moving towards its downfall. The glory of the Mughal rule in India had reached its zenith during the reigns of Jehangir and Shahjehan, but soon afterwards, its power began to weaken. On account of the troubles and difficulties caused by several imperial defeats, popular uprising and religious conflict, and as a result of Jehangir's love of pleasure and Shahjehan's passion for splendour, the Mughal Empire was heading towards its decline. The history of the progress and decay of the social conditions in India was concomitant with the rise and fall of the Mughal Empire and, therefore, because of all these reasons, to quote Dr. Nagendra, "The Riti Kal subsisted on a scanty and diseased residue of life from which even the element of the warriors' pride was missing. A crude hankering after enjoyment based on sensual desire and material wealth, was all that remained. That is why the viewpoint of the poets of the 'Riti Kal' is so narrow and limited." With the defeat of Dara, it became impossible to expect from the rulers any sympathy or tolerance towards Indian culture. As a result of the establishment of the despotic rule of Aurangzeb, rebellion and its suppression became an every day occurrence in all parts of the country. The deputies of Aurangzeb had grown so weak that they were unable to put down internal disorder or to cope with attacks from without. Thus, owing to the absolute power and religious intolerance of Aurangzeb, several problems cropped up. The defeat-dejected, unhappy Indians, and the Muslims thoroughly exhausted after their life of luxury and pleasure, contributed to create the sorry state of affairs existing during the latter half of Hindi Literature's Middle Period. In such an age, a deterioration in the intellectual level of the people was certain. Signs of decay became manifest in all spheres—literary, philosophic and others. In the field of literature, there was an absence of the exalted emotion and healthy view of poetry of the saint-poets like Tulsidas and Surdas.

Instead, sensuality became the subject-matter of poetry, and the display of craftsmanship its aim and purpose.

The period between 1700 to 1800 A. V. is regarded as the later Middle Period of the history of Hindi Literature. Emphasising the main poetic trends of the age, various historians have given it different names, 'Ritikal', 'Shringarkal', 'Alankritkal'—the very names indicate the main tendencies. Considering the subject-matter, the School of 'Ritikavya' may be regarded as having begun, in a way, in the year 1598 (Vikram Era), when '*Hit-Taringini*' of Kriparam was composed, or when, basing his views on ancient '*Shastras*', Keshavdas wrote an academic account of the entire range of elements of poetry. But it was fifty years after Keshavdas that the full stream of 'Ritikavya' in Hindi, subscribing at once to several ideals, really began to flow.

This uninterrupted flow originated with three works of Chintamani Tripathi, namely: '*Kavyaviveka*', '*Kavikul Kalpataru*' and '*Kavya-Prakasha*'. Whereas Keshav had accepted the 'Purvadhvani alankarvad', Chintamani followed the 'Rasdhwanivad' of the 'Uttardhwani kal'. Then there appeared, literally, a plethora of books on poetics and a new school of poetry came into existence. It became a common practice for the poets to give a definition of 'Alankar' or 'Rasa' in 'Dohas' and then to add illustrations thereof in 'Kavitts' and 'Savaiyyas'.

These 'Riti' works can be divided, on the basis of their academic background, into three sections. The first comprises those poets who discuss in their works, all the aspects of poetry, after '*Kavya-prakasha*'. '*Kavya Kalpadrum*' of Senapati; '*Kavi Kul Kalpataru*' and '*Kavyaviveka*' of Chintamani; '*Ras Rahasya*' of Deva; '*Kavyasiddhanta*' of Surati Mishra; '*Kavyasaroj*' of Shripati; '*Kavyamirna*' of Das, '*Raspiyoosh Nidhi*' of Somnath; '*Rasik Govindanand Ghana*' of Rasik Govinda—all these writings belong to this class. In these works, we come across no new fundamental principles. Basically, these poets were poets only and, therefore, the quality of ripe scholarship is not to be met within their poetry. Nevertheless, these poets are the chief pundits of old Hindi Poetics.

The second group has concentrated on the theory of erotic

sentiment. The basic works of this school are '*Shringar Tilak*' and '*Ras Manjari*'. The subject-matter of these books is, chiefly, the differentiation and classification of the kinds of heroines. Prominent works under this section are : Keshav's '*Rasik Priya*'; '*Rasraj*' of Mati Ram; '*Rasratnakar*' and '*Rasarnava*' of Sukhdeva Mishra; Dev's '*Bhavavilasa*', '*Rasvilasa*', '*Bhawani vilasa*' and '*Sujan vinod*'; '*Ras chandrodaya*' of Kavindra; '*Ras nirnaya*' of Das; '*Sudhanidhi*' of Tosh; Beni Praveen's '*Navarasataranga*' and Padmakar's '*Jagadvinod*'. These books undertake a thorough investigation into the two aspects of 'Shringar': Union and Separation. In the words of Dr. Nagendra: "These poets are the true representatives of 'Ritikal'. Their approach is not intellectual; rather, they succeed through competent application of the 'rasas'. It is impossible to come across elsewhere such a beautiful fusion of the two basic trends of the 'Ritikal'—'Riti' (rhetorics) and 'Shringarikta' (amorousness), as we find in their works".

The third group deals with the 'Alankars'—figures of speech. This mode begins with the book '*Shrutibhushan*' of the poet 'Karnesa'; but its proper establishment came about with Jaswant Singh's '*Bhashabhushan*'. This work has been composed in 'Doha' metre. Many other books on 'Alankars' were written in imitation of this. Of these the following deserve mention: '*Alankarmala*' of Surati Mishra; '*Alankar Chandrodaya*' of Rasik Sumati; '*Kanthabhushan*' of Bhupati; Shambhunath Mishra's '*Alankar Deepak*'; '*Alankar Manjai*' of Rishinath and '*Bhashabharan*' of Vairisal. Over and above these, there are three other well-known works on 'Alankars' which were written as commentaries on '*Bhashabhushan*'.

In addition to these three main classes there is yet another section of those poets who did not write any works with the object of determining and ascertaining the beauties or ornaments of poetry. Instead of definitions they have concentrated on the composition of illustrations and have been concerned more with the elements that constitute poetry. Bhushan, Matiram and Pratap Singh were 'rasvadi' poets. Similarly, the poets, Dulaha and Datt, cared more for artistry.

Raghunath and Gwal have stressed equally on both definitions

as well as illustrations. A poet like Behari did not, however, submit, to the academic patterns of Riti poetry. By merely inseting a few hundred precious couplets against the ornamental background of Riti, he attained immortal fame.

Much discussion has taken place in the Hindi world regarding the question of originality of these above-mentioned preceptors. By making a comparative study of the '*Riti works*' of the '*Riti Kal*' and the Sanskrit works on poetics Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla and other critics have established that, for their doctrines, the Hindi Pandits, of the Riti School, are wholly indebted to the Sanskrit scholars. That is why, inspite of the emphasis on the idea of preceptorship in the age, no school of poetics was set up during the '*Riti Kal*'. New schools are founded on new doctrines; owing to an absence of originality, this was not possible in the '*Riti*' poetry of Hindi.

In fact, all these '*Acharyas*' were, essentially, poets. A scientific ascertainment of the elements of poetry was not their aim. Their basic object was the creation of an erotic style. In their view of the erotic sentiment, a negation of the worldly love was not regarded as important. As a matter of fact, the encroachment of sensual desires on the poetic spirit of this period reached the limit of deformity. The fundamental cause of this is the excessive worldliness of the times—a mention of which has been made previously. The view of the poets of this age was dominated by pleasure and enjoyment; therefore, in his poetry there is an absence of a clean exposition of the sentiment of pure love.

From the artistic point of view, this age is regarded as the period when the adornment and embellishment of language took place. A perfect development of the element of expression in Hindi language had already taken place in the '*Bhakti*' period. The spiritual '*Shrinagar*' element of the '*Bhakti Kavya*' having been replaced by the secular sense of beauty, a corresponding artistic technique for its free manifestation also developed. This technical skill began to be displayed in '*Chamatkar*', '*Alankara*' and other modes of poetic expression. In moments of exalted emotion expression is automatically invested with a miraculous quality. But in the case of the

poets of the 'Riti Kal' personally-experienced emotions did not form a large part of their poetic inspiration; therefore, they had to embellish their work artificially and rather laboriously. With their view about Art—and, especially, Poetry—it was natural that they should adopt the poetic style in which 'alankars'—figures of speech—predominate. In that age, the people themselves cared more for the externals, for the artificial charms of beauty. The emphasis on dazzling display is to be found in both kinds of figures of speech: 'Shabdalanekar' and 'Arthalanekar' (figures of speech based on sound or meaning). The poetry of the 'Riti Kal' may be regarded as a rich treasure of figurative effects, wherein we may see the finest and the worst examples of the use of figures of speech. The poet shapes the material for expression in accordance with his poetic inspiration. Thus, lacking in any comprehensive philosophy of life, these poets have coloured all their work with their own bias for sensual pleasure. Since their view-point is essentially based on pleasure, portrayal of erotic union predominates and the entire paraphernalia of sensual pleasure has been put together in these compositions. The images and symbols standing for the universal and eternal elements of life become in their hands merely colourful symbols for separation and union.

A special merit of the technique of expression of the 'Riti Kal' poets is the use of delicate language befitting their thought. For poetry in which the 'Shringar' sentiment prevails, sweetly delicate terminology is more appropriate; therefore, the poets of this age relinquished, altogether, the use of harsh and crude language. In their writings, even a 'harsh' word is transformed into a sweet one. It is often stated that in Hindi Poetry there is a want of 'delicate thought' and of 'delicate sensibility', but in the sentiments and ideas of the 'Riti Kal' poets we find both: the 'delicate thinking' in the ideas and the 'delicate feeling' in the choice of words. It is likely that this was owing to the influence of contemporary environments. At that time, the influence, visible and invisible, of Persian language and culture was all in all; with the result that the aspect of expression was so excessively emphasised that it had grown to be the end, instead of the means, of poetry.

Although it was 'Riti Kavya'—poetry of the 'Riti' school—which predominated in the later Middle Period, nevertheless a good quantity of poetry was produced which did not subscribe to this cult. The poetic inspiration of these 'Riti-free' poets, too, is, chiefly, of an amorous character. They did not compose their poetry in the form of illustrations of the various constituents and components of poetry. But their style of composition is, generally, similar to that of the poets of the 'Riti School'. The fine expression of love that is found in the poetry of Ghananand, Raskhan, Alam, Thakur and others is due to the fact that instead of putting forth a mechanical enumeration and enunciation of definitions, they express their self-experienced feelings of separation. Among the 'Shringar poets', who do not belong to the 'Riti' school, Ghananand holds a very high position. '*Sujan Sagar*', '*Ras Kelivalli*' and '*Kripa Kand*' are his main works. In addition, a good quantity of scattered verses is also extant. From the point of view of language and expression also, his contribution is extremely significant. In his compositions, we see the finest flowering of the expressive power of 'Brajbhasha'. Not much poetry in the long narrative-verse was written during the 'Riti Kal'. The comprehensive view of life essential to the composition of such poetry was an impossible thing for an age in which amorousness had been accepted as the goal of life. Some narrative works were, of course, composed, but, judging from the point of view of poetic art, only a few of these are of any importance. '*Chhathra Prakasha*' written by Lal, '*Hammir Raso*' of Jodhraj, '*Madhavanal-Kamkandla*' of Harnarayana, '*Brajvilasa*' of Brajbasi Das, Sudan's '*Sujan Charitra*', '*Rameshvamedha*' of Madhusudandas, Padmakar's '*Ram Rasayana*' and the '*Hammir Hattā*' composed by Chandra Shekhar—all these are fine narrative compositions. In addition, essays in verse are also found, which contain descriptions of 'Danlila', 'Manlila', 'Holi', 'Jhula', 'birthday celebration' etc. In these, there are hardly any subtleties of style or thought, and they are more in the nature of descriptive accounts.

Besides the 'long narrative verse' compositions, some stray didactic 'Dohas' and 'Padas', were also written during the later Middle Period. There is very little poetic feeling in these 'Pad',

though some of them are rather touching. In these compositions, there is much erudition of language, but verbal erudition becomes poetry only when combined with emotion, not otherwise. Here, the emotional aspect is so poor that one is slightly hesitant to classify these writings as poetry. Acharya Ramchandra Shukla calls such composers not poets but 'suktikars'—makers of proverbs. Vrinda, Giridhar, Ghagha, Baital etc. are good 'suktikars'.

Although amorousness was the predominant tendency of the age, there were several learned preachers who propounded, through poetry, doctrines concerning knowledge of God and Salvation. The main object of these poets, also was not so much to write poetry, as it was to propagate their doctrines or to preach about spiritual matters. Even so, there were, among these poets, some who could, on the strength of their intense sensibility and sharp intellect, and through a clever application of metaphor and irony, powerfully affect the mind. Nagaridas and Maharaj Vishvanath Singh are among the great poets of this school. Some heroic poetry was also written in the 'Riti Kal' of which exaggerated and hyperbolic expression of the heroic sentiment is a special feature. These 'heroic' compositions were included as illustrations in the works on 'definitions', as well as written independently.

Thus, it is clear that in the poetry belonging to the later Middle Period, stress was laid on skill in expression. Owing to the paucity of thought-content and the lack of universality there was, in expression, a vitiation of the vital elements. On the other hand, there was a remarkable development of delicate and tender expressions. From the point of view of artistic technique, the 'shringar' poetry of the later Middle Period has an important place in the history of Hindi Literature.

Before proceeding to give an outline of the history of the Modern Period, it seems necessary to cast a glance on the work of the women-poets of the time extending from the Early Period to the later Middle Period. It is true that in the wide history of Indian literature, the contribution of these poetesses is very limited but this is due, entirely, to the age-old disparagement of the Indian woman who was not treated as an independent entity. In spite of

all this, women do not draw a blank and they have subscribed, at times more and at times less, to every school or branch of the Hindi poetic tradition. Among the poetesses in 'Dingal', Jheema Charni and Padma Charni have not written great quantity of poetry ; but considering the generally limited capacity of women, their compositions deserve respect. In the 'Nirguna' school of poetry, Sahjo Bai and Daya Bai, the disciples of Charandas, are of-course well-known saint-poets ; but the works of Indramati, the wife of Prannath who was the founder of 'Dhani Panth', also deserve mention. In the 'Premashryi' branch of the 'Nirguna' poetry, we find no mention of any poetess. In the 'Saguna' tradition of poetry, most women poets have composed devotional poetry regarding Krishna. The works of Gangabai show influence of the doctrines of Vallabhacharya. Several women, deeply impressed by the 'Nimbark' doctrines, composed poetry. Of these Sundari Kunwari Bai is worthy of mention. The passionate emotions of Meera need no introduction ; her verses resound in the speech of the people in every region, in Southern as well as Northern India. The 'preceptorship' of the 'Riti Kal' was beyond the ability of women ; nevertheless, they did make an effort to write 'Shringar' poetry, as well. It was not possible for the ladies of high families to indulge in the kind of crude eroticism so characteristic of the age, and so, the poetesses of the 'Riti Kal' are mostly, wanton women. The works of Rupvati Begam, and of the poetic inspiration of Keshavadas, namely 'Praveenrai Patur', Sheikh Rengezen,—are significant both from the view point of quality as well as quantity. Among poetesses of the 'ethical' school Ratnavali, the wife of Goswami Tulsidas, has an important position. Thus we see that right from the Early period up to the later Middle period of Hindi literature, woman has never lagged behind and has contributed her share as well as she could.

Modern Period

The Modern Period of Hindi literature is supposed to begin in the year 1900 A. V. After a great deal of political disorderliness and a long period of anarchy, English rule was established in India. Inevitably, an exchange of Western and Eastern ideas and sentiments followed and the values of life came to be related more to thought

than to feeling. Thus, the presence of the intellectual elements in modern literature constitutes its essential feature. Life and Literature are closely inter-related, and literary ideals are formed in accordance with the values of life. On account of the new scientific discoveries, and the intellectual progress of mankind, practical and social elements found their entry into literature. Thus, numerous problems political, social and national, were treated in literature and a new, rational, intellectual and scientific, view-point manifested itself. A blind adherence to orthodox traditions was denounced and under the influence of a new philosophy of life, there arose in the people's mind a keen desire to remove the pall of surrounding darkness.

The Modern Period really begins with the time of Bharatendu Babu Harishchandra. The Pre-Bhartendu period may be called a period of transition from 'Ritikal' to the Modern age; the period may be given, alternatively, the name of the 'Age of Prose'. Throughout its development, Hindi language has had to face several hostile forces. Many external as well as internal circumstances interfered with its progress. Its very existence seemed to be threatened by political disparagement and official opposition.

The first good prose writer of Hindi is Ram Prasad Niranjani who wrote '*Hindi Yogvasishta*' in 1890 A. V. After him, four pioneers of modern prose make their appearance. Sadasukhlal and Insha Alla Khan wrote prose in Khariboli in a very free and independent style. Besides these, Sadal Mishra and Lalluji Lal wrote, under the aegis of Fort William College, a few general works as well as text-books. In the battle between Hindi and Urdu, Raja Shivprasad took sides with the Urdu-biased common speech. In protest against this policy, Raja Lakshman Singh backed pure Hindi. The conclusion is that the period preceding Bharatendu is an age not merely of political instability, but also one of cultural and literary anarchy. However, Hindi's great strength lay in its being the people's speech, and, therefore, the language which seemed to be vanishing with the closing of the middle ages, drew itself up to take up arms against all hostile forces and to overcome all obstacles. It received inspiration from various popular uprisings. The 'Arya

Samaj', established to bring about the regeneration of Sanskrit culture, and the Freedom movement pulsating with nationalist consciousness became the motivating urges behind Hindi Literature and Language. History of Literature is related to the mental awakening of the people. During these eighty years Hindi flourished in many fields and its remarkable development, achieved through a fusion of the emotional and intellectual elements, is a clear evidence of the extent of the new national awakening.

The Modern period can be sub-divided into three phases. The first stage extends from 1925 to 1950 A. V. The literary leader of this period was Bhartendu Harishchandra ; that is why it is also called 'Bhartendu Yug'. The liveliness, the stirring intensity of feeling and the blending of the old traditions with new ideas—all these features show the unmistakable stamp of his personality.

The second phase called 'Dwivedi Yug' is regarded as extending from 1950 to 1975 (A. V.). Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi is the literary leader of this period. This was an era of the formation and systematization of language. In the poetry of this period, mainly the reformative and political trends are manifest ; the expression is, basically, matter-of-fact. For giving form, in verse, to such inspiration as is generally averse to poetry, the matter-of-fact style is inevitable. Thus, even in the poetic compositions of the age, the intellectual element and a sense of awakening predominate.

The third stage begins after 1975 A. V. and extends to the present time. To name this period after any particular personality will be inappropriate ; for it is not correct to over-estimate the influence of any one writer so as to cover the several poetic currents and the various branches of literature. We may call it the Contemporary Period or the Present Age. To take up each of these stages of the Modern Period for separate discussion will upset the unity of our theme. Therefore, it would be more befitting to give a connected account of the progressive development of the various trends in poetry and other branches of literature. Keeping this approach in view, we shall present here a brief outline of the origin and development of the Poetry, the Drama, the Novel, the Short Story, the Essay and Criticism of the period.

Development of Hindi Poetry

The poetry of the 'Ritikal' was dominated by erotic sentiment and rhetorical style. A few poets of the 'Bhartendu Yug' composed some works in the old 'Riti' manner. Sardar, Ram Lacchi, Badarinarain Chaudhary Premghan and Ambika Datt Vyas are the main poets of this school. In addition, some poetry was written which was full of the devotional sentiment and was based on the past, 'Bhaktikal' ideals. Both in regard to the thought as also the poetic forms, inspiration was derived from the poets of that age. The devotional poetry written by Lalit Kishori and Bhartendu Harishchandra is of a very high order, from the point of view of content as well as expression. Besides being inspired by the older styles, several poets found their poetic material in the environments and conditions created by a new awareness. The character of this collective, this communal consciousness was social, political and national. The works of this period do not exactly speak the language of revolt ; but, certainly, they do point out the evils of the foreign rule. In some form or the other, ideas of this kind find expression in the works of almost all the poets like Pratap Narain Mishra, Bhartendu Harishchandra, Chaudhary Premghan and Ambika Datt Vyas. Bhartendu is, of course, the leader of the Modern age, and so we notice in his works the influence of all the three main trends. 'Bhartendu Yug' has its own historical importance because in this age, the stream of poetry and literature flowed out in a new direction. Abandoning the narrow limits of the amorousness of 'Ritikal' and its individualistic philosophy of life, it embraced the new social sentiments and collective ideas.

The reformative tendencies of the poetry of the 'Bhartendu Yug' were further augmented and developed during the 'Dwivedi Yug'. In addition to the reformative, cultural and ethical trends are also apparent in the literature of the 'Dwivedi Yug'. The poets of this age may be divided, on the basis of their thought content, into four groups :—

1. The reformist poets who were influenced by Shri Dwivedi.
2. The reformist poets who were *not* influenced by Shri Dwivedi,
3. Independent——'Free-Style'——poets.
4. The poets who wrote in the old style,

In the Reformists' poetry, humanitarian ideas dominated. A traditional approach towards social reform, national awakening, and Indian culture is seen clearly expressed in their poetry. Their view of poetry has a definite bias towards politics and rationalism. The early works of Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, Ram Charit Upadhyaya and Maithilisharan Gupta, and, considering their subject-matter, most poems of Ayodhya Singh Upadhyaya, may be included in this class. As stated above, the 'Dwivedi Yug' was a period of formation and systematization of Hindi Language ; therefore, its poetry lacks altogether the subtler elements of expression. The language of poetry of this age is methodical and clean. Above all, it is lucid. But the formal beauty, appropriate to poetry, is missing. We see in the poetry of this school, the full bloom of the social awareness of the 'Bhartendu Yug'.

The work of the reformist poets of the second group is independent of any influence of Shri Dwivedi. These poets wrote verse of many kinds. Their language carries the impress of both Brajbhasha and Urdu. Nathuram Shankar Sharma, Gaya Prasad Shukla 'Sanchi', and Lala Bhagwan Din are the chief poets of this category.

The third school of poetry is that of the independent poets of whom Shridhar Pathak is the foremost. Other important poets of this school include Ram Naresh Tripathi, Lochan Prasad Pandeya, Mukut Dhar Pandeya, Rupnarain Pandeya and Rai Devi Prasad Purna. In their works we find beautiful touches of common life. Breaking away from age-old, deep-rooted traditions, these poets adopted an independent philosophy of life. Their attitude towards Nature and the world is romantic and their expression of love is free and easy. In conformity with their poetic material, these poets created new and free styles also.

In addition to those indicated above, there was yet another stream of poetry current in the 'Dwivedi Yug' which found its inspiration in the ideals of old poetic styles. The works of this school are, in thought and language, closer to the poetry of 'Riti Kal', but from the point of view of sentiment, they fail to attain the earlier high level. Mention of the 'Brajbhasha' poetry of Navnit

Chaubey, Ratanakar, Devi Prasad Purna, Satyanarain Kaviratna and Hariaudh may be made under this class. Jagannath Das Ratnakar holds the foremost position among the poets in this section.

The early works of the National poet, Maithili Sharan Gupta, were written in this period. In the words of Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla, "Maithili Sharan Gupta possesses the capacity to move according to the times and the ability to imbibe the ever-changeable poetic currents and ideas". Gupta's '*Saket*' and '*Tashodhara*' are immortal works of 'Dwivedi Yug'. The reaction to the extroverted poetic view of Dwivedi Yug came in the form of the introverted philosophy of life of 'Chhaya Vad'. The frustration and despair of life turned inward, and started creating a personal world of imagination. The view of Chhayavad is individualistic, but the roots of this individualism are hidden in the environment created by a sense of despair. Chhayavad was strongly opposed, for it was regarded as a mere imitation of the work of Ravindra Nath Tagore and the Western 'Independent' poets. The basic inspiration of Chhayavad was, no doubt, national and cultural. The mediaeval, feudal view of life was replaced by the individualism of the twentieth century. In India, this individualism was further promoted by political awakening and the nationalist movement. Under foreign rule, the free expression of the individual's feelings and desires was impossible. So, these poets expressed themselves in symbolic language. By means of symbols living and inert, of earth and sky, the crude and sensual desires were alchemized into something fine and subtle and, of course, found free expression. The underlying philosophy of life of the 'Chhayavad' poets is concerned with the creation of new ideals, and not with material utilitarianism. This 'personal idealism' of Chhayavad provided new poetic horizons to Hindi, created new standards of literature and set up new values of beauty. In the Chhayavad poetry, there is a unique fusion of poetic experience and expression. On one hand, the countless operations of the material world have been described in subtle and sublimated form. On the other, there is in 'Chhayavad' poetry, the presence of spiritual touches, inspired by Vivekanand, Ram Krishna Paramhans and Arvind, etc.—the spiritual leaders of the age,—and influenced by

the Vedantic and Buddhist philosophies. Not only in regard to the matter but also from the view-point of expression and poetic technique, the 'Chhayavad' school of poetry has great importance. Numberless new usages have been introduced in the fields of language, metre, figures of speech, etc.

Jai Shankar Prasad is the founder of this——'Chhayavad'—school of poetry : '*Jharna*', '*Ansu*', '*Lahar*', and '*Kamayani*' are his well-known works. Before these were published, a collection of his poems had already appeared under the title : '*Chitradhar*'. All the distinctive features of 'Chhayavad' school of poetry are noticeable in '*Jharna*', '*Ansu*', and '*Lahar*'. Nevertheless it is '*Kamayani*' which constitutes Prasad's immortal work.

'*Kamayani*' is the epic of the 'Chhayavad'. The splendid and fine way in which the intellectual and emotional development of man has been portrayed in the form of an allegory, based on ancient lore, is something which only Prasad could have achieved. We may safely say that '*Kamayani*' occupies a place of pride among the immortal works of world literature.

Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' is the poet, second in importance, among the 'Chief Three'—the triumvirate—of 'Chhayavad'. His '*Parimal*' and '*Anamika*' are representative works of the 'Chhayavad' School. These works manifest clearly all the tendencies of 'Chhayavad' poetry. '*Geetika*' is a collection of his songs. These poems have been inspired by many different aspects of life. It is, therefore, not possible to confine the personality of Nirala within the limits of 'Chhayavad'.

Nirala is one of the finest geniuses of this age. His poetry has the excellent attributes of free impulse and imaginative flight ; but he lacks the necessary ability to organize and control them, so his work has an uneven quality. Nirala's contribution in the field of poetic technique is unique. He has a remarkable ear for the musical element in words ; and Hindi Free Verse, based on elemental rhythmic music, will for ever bear testimony to his poetic achievement.

Pant is essentially a poet of Beauty—in all its aspects. Springing from the Poet's observation of the splendour of Nature, and gambolling with the loveliness of human thought, his sense of beauty has

finally settled on the silvery peaks of the soul. He is the greatest craftsman of Modern Hindi poetry and in his verse we find an uncommon finesse of expression. His important works are '*Pallav*', '*Gunjan*', '*Gramya*', '*Swarn Kiran*', '*Shilpi*' and '*Atima*' etc.

In the 'Chhayavad' school of poetry, Mahadevi has her own position. Sweet agony is the predominant chord in her verse. Her immortal compositions are '*Neehar*', '*Rashmi*', '*Neerja*', '*Sandhya Gita*' and '*Deepshikha*'. Her imagination leans in an attitude of loving prayerfulness towards the transcendental and combines with her secular emotions to form the background of her poetic ideas. Borrowing its colours from Nature, her art paints innumerable pictures which remain indelibly fixed on the memory. All the distinctive marks of Chhayavad poetry are to be met within Mahadevi's work : mystic yearning, infusion of human emotion on Nature, personification of abstractions, and the 'symbolist' and 'expressionist' art.

The second tendency of Modern Poetry is that of personal, almost private, expression. Although, we cannot, in a way, negate the element of personality in any form of poetry, yet in this particular school, it has received an extreme, an exaggerated, emphasis and is regarded, as the end and object of poetry. The 'Chhayavad' poet, too, expressed his joy and sorrow through a variety of symbols; but in the poems of Bachchan, Bhagwati Charan Verma, Narendra Sharma, Anchal etc., personal joy and sorrow are expressed in their actual form. This personal element has been gaining ground every day in modern poetry.

The value of Chhayavad poetry is uniformly high from the viewpoint of aesthetic sense and artistic expression ; but as regards great inspiration and loftiness of the subject-matter, those poems alone have the foremost place which are based on the national-cultural awareness. As a result of its age-consciousness, Chhayavad poetry contains an expression of both the emotional as well as the practical aspects of Gandhism. The Indian Satyagrah Movement is something unique in World history. In the 'Bhartendu' and 'Dwivedi' eras, poets had begun to seek inspiration, not in individual loves and hates, but from larger social forces. Nevertheless, the basic difference between literature and political movements had not

been reconciled. In the literature belonging to the latter part of the 'Dwivedi' era, patriotic poetry ceased to be propagandistic. The expression of emotion and zeal that we find there is but an echo of the national sentiment of the age. The strong feeling against British Rule had begun to manifest itself, under Gandhi's leadership, in the form of a non-violent struggle. The tone of this struggle against slavery and suppression is, therefore, most predominant in these poems inspired by the nationalist movement. In the works of powerful poets like Maithili Sharan Gupta, Makhanlal Chaturvedi, Bal-krishna Sharma Navin, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Subhadra Kumari Chauhan and Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar', popular feelings of agitation against foreign rule were voiced. And as suppression increased, they became more and more vociferous. Their poetry is a powerful expression of the national fervour. In Gandhian philosophy, violence and revenge have no place; sacrifice and renunciation were the weapons of the soldiers of freedom. Therefore, in the works of these poets, the idea of sacrifice predominates. But, whereas, on the one hand, they showed resentment against the failures and disappointments of the present; on the other, they appeased their frustrations by painting rosy pictures of the future. Of such patriotic poetry, there is one type which expresses feelings of pure attachment. Under this we find two distinct characteristics: manifestation of love and affection towards the people of India; and offerings of sentiment made to India and her physical aspects like the Himalayas and the Ganges which are invested with human qualities. The portrayal of the Divine Motherhood of India is a priceless treasure of Hindi Literature. Almost all the poets have sung of India as Mother. They have drawn sublime pictures of her geographical vastness and have repainted her past in new colours.

The enrichment of the new with the treasures of the old, and a reorientation of the ancient in the light of the modern constitute the essentials of the National-cum-Cultural poetry. Many modern poets have made, through a novel presentation of old stories and through offering solutions of modern problems in the light of ancient wisdom, a unique contribution to the development of the present-day cultural awakening of the country. '*Saket*', '*Tashodhara*' and

many other writings of Maithili Sharan Gupta, and Dinkar's '*Kurukshetra*', are classics of this school. After independence, a great change has occurred in the tone of national poetry. In place of defeat and despair, purer and gentler feelings have steadily grown more and more resonant and, gradually, a great sentiment of world-brotherhood has developed. The front rank poets of the national-cum-cultural school of poetry are : Maithilisharan Gupta, Makhan Lal Chaturvedi, Balkrishna Sharma Navin, Siyaram Sharan Gupta, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan and Dinkar,

Maithili Sharan Gupta is India's national poet as well as the representative of the Modern age. In his poetry, he has finely delineated human relations against a background of India's national culture. Even Nationalism is accepted by him as a more developed form of higher development of human relationship and not as a separate idea. That is why the most successful expression of this approach is to be found in his longer narrative works like '*Saket*' and '*Jai Bharat*' and not in verse-essays like '*Bharatbharti*' or in scattered or collected poems like "*Swadesh Sangeet*".

Makhan Lal's genius is lyrical. He has written romantic songs of love for the country in '*Himkiritini*' and '*Himtarangini*'.

Balkrishna Sharma 'Navin' is the poet of the Nation's Youth. His philosophic bent of mind, impregnated with vigour and feeling creates a strange poetic flavour. '*Kwasi*' etc., contain a collection of his philosophic poems whereas in his works like '*Apalaka*', his sweeter songs have been strung together. A representative collection of his vigorous yet reverent poetry will soon be published.

The poetry of Subhadra Kumari Chauhan has two qualities : It has the ring of the old Bardic voice combined with the gentle tones of sweet and affectionate motherhood. Her '*Jhansi ki Rani*' is the most popular heroic ballad of Modern Hindi Poetry.

Among these poets Dinkar is the youngest. In fact, he belongs, properly, to the next generation of poets. However, the basic element of his poetry is the same. If, Gupta is the vast 'Banyan' tree of the garden of India's patriotic poetry, Dinkar is like its rose. In Dinkar's poetry, too, there is a very felicitous blending of youthful fervour and beauty of colour. In richness of imagination

and artistic beauty he is supreme among the poets of his class. This is so because, he had, before striking his true form, allowed his poetic self to dally in the flowery ways of 'Chhayavad'.

Siyaram Sharan Gupta's work has a tone altogether different from that of any other. Free from any trace of sensual pleasure his verse is the expression of the chastity of the soul. Of his works, '*Bapu*', '*Unmukt*', '*Nakul*' are well-known long narrative poems while his stray verses have been collected in '*Mrinmayi*' etc.

The third main tendency of the Modern Period is that of progressive poetry. In so far as it partakes of the progress of life, literature of any and every age may be called progressive; but today the word 'progressive' has a special significance. In the background there is the socialist philosophy of life based on the doctrine of Dialectical Materialism. According to this philosophy, Materialism is the only truth in life, and material needs and desires of the individual are all-important. As a social force, progressivism supports and propagates proletarianism. In Hindi, the history of Progressive thought is not older than two decades. Sumitranandan Pant, the chief poet of 'Chhayavad', is also the founder of the Progressive school of poetry. His works '*Tugvani*' and '*Gramya*', contain many beautiful compositions based on socialistic philosophy of life. Among other poets, Dinkar, Narendra Sharma, Shivmangal Singh 'Suman', etc., have written much healthy, progressive verses inspired by humanitarian philosophy. As against this healthy trend, a few litterateurs confined their view-point to the narrow limits of political doctrines and the comprehensiveness of the socialist philosophy of life was lost in the conventionalism of doctrinarian narrowness.

The fourth stream of Modern poetry is that of the 'Experimentalists.' The basic task of this school of poetry is to conduct experiment and investigation about poetry. Like life poetry, too, has a progressive tendency, so these new poets seek to make new experiments and enquiries into the field both of matter and style. In the realm of thought-content,—rich with cultural glories or with the sweet and gentle poetic images of '*Chhayavad*' or, again, with the healthy and solid progressive deals of social welfare—these 'Intellectual' poets of the Experimentalist School introduced unfette-

ted elements of a new and sceptical way of life. Further, to gain ground for their 'experiments', they made unsuccessful attempts to uproot established values. In the sphere of expression, the Experimentalists stood for the free and 'individualistic' use of language. Rejecting the simple, accepted meaning of a word, the new poet tries to invest it with a much greater significance and meaningfulness. This poetry is afflicted by a kind of excessive egotism which cannot harmonize with social life.

Hindi Drama

Literary Historians maintain that Hindi Drama began in the 12th century. Two plays of *Vidya Pati* of the 14th century (Vikram Era), namely '*Rukmini Haran*' and '*Parijat Haran*' have sometimes been mentioned as the precursors of Hindi Drama. In addition, many translated plays and a few original plays in verse are also to be found in the mediaeval period. Examples of these are : Hriday Ram's '*Hanuman Nataka*' (translated); Yashwant Singh's '*Prabodh Chandrodaya*' (translated); Dev's '*Dev Maya Prapanch*' (original); Alam's '*Madhavanal Kamkandla*' (original) and Maharaj Vishwanath Singh's '*Anand Raghunandan*' (original). They are, in reality, mere narratives in verse from which the conflict, the action and the characterization—the main dramatic elements—are altogether absent. The history of the tradition of Popular drama like '*Ras*', '*Swang*' etc., is perhaps still older, but it is difficult to include these under 'Drama' without giving the word 'Drama' a much wider meaning. In the first-half of the 20th century (Vikram Era); the poet Amanat wrote a '*Rupak*' (a play) named '*Inder Sabha*' and ten years, thereafter, Bhartendu's father, Shri Gopal Chandra wrote '*Nahush*'. Bhartendu regards this last ('*Nahush*') as the first play of Hindi language.

All these have only an historical importance and it is not quite appropriate to call them plays in the modern sense. Therefore, the birth of modern Drama may be regarded as belonging to the Age of Bhartendu. Assimilating many different influences, Bhartendu and his contemporary writers commenced a new tradition. Bengali language and literature were the first to be influenced by English. Imitating the Western theatre, several theatrical companies had

been set up there, and many social problems were presented and their solutions offered through the medium of plays. It was, as yet the beginning of the Modern age, and men of letters were looking forward to spreading the gospel of the new awakening through literature. Prose was, for such work, better suited than poetry ; but it was easier still to influence the heart of the public through these plays. In this way, the need of the times occasioned the composition of good literary plays in Hindi. Gifted with good taste, Harishchandra wrote plays of all kinds—patriotic, social, traditional and devotional. In all these, past tradition has been blended with modern technique. His contribution, both as a founder and a writer, is noteworthy. Of his works '*Prem Jogini*', '*Chandravali*', '*Bharat Janani*', '*Bharat Durdasha*', '*Neel Devi*', '*Sati Pratap*', '*Vaidiki Hinsa Hinsa Na Bhavati*', and '*Andher Nagari*' are original plays ; whereas '*Vidya Sundar*', '*Satya Harish Chandra*', '*Pakhanda Vidambana*', '*Dhananjaya Vijaya*', '*Karpur Manjari*', '*Mudra Rakshas*' and '*Durlabh Bandhu*' were adopted or translated.

Following Bhartendu's lead, several writers of that period wrote plays on the same lines. Of these we may mention '*Randhir Prem Mohini*' and '*Sanjogita Swayamvar*' of Shri Niwas Das ; '*Durgawati*' and '*Maharana Pratap*' of Radha Krishandas ; '*Mayank Manjri*' and '*Natya Sambhav*' of Kishori Lal Goswami. Ambika Datt Vyas, Badari Narayan Chaudhari Premghana, and Pratap Narayana Mishra also wrote a few plays. In all these plays attempt was made to bring about social reform and to inspire patriotic feelings through a revival of India's past greatness. In addition to these didactic plays, many satirical plays were also written in which much fun was made of the various social evils. Bhartendu's '*Vaidiki Hinsa Hinsa Na Bhavati*' ; '*Shikhsa Dan*' and '*Jaisa Kam Vaisa Parinam*' of Balkrishna Bhatta ; '*Ek Ek Ke Tin Tin*', '*Stri Charitra*', '*Vaishya Vilas*' of Devki Nandan Tripathi ; Radha Charan Goswami's '*Burhe Munh Munhase*', '*Dekhen Log Tamasha*' and '*Tan Man Dhan Shri Gusain Ji Ke Arpan*'—all these are successful comic satires

Besides these original works, translations from many Sanskrit, Bengali and English plays were also made. We have already referred to the translated plays of Bhartendu. Lala Sita Ram trans-

lated '*Uttar Ramcharit*', '*Malti Madhav*', '*Malvikagnimitra*', '*Mrichha Katik*', '*Nagavanda*' etc. from Sanskrit. Balmukund Gupta made a translation of '*Ratnavali*' and Jwala Prasad of '*Venisanhara*'. From English, mainly the plays of Shakespeare were translated. '*Venice Nagar Ka Vyapari*', '*Man Bhawan*', '*Prem Lila*' and '*Sahasendra Sahas*' are the chief among translated plays of the period, their originals being, respectively, '*Merchant of Venice*', '*As You Like It*', '*Romeo and Juliet*' and '*Macbeth*'. Many Bengali and some Marathi plays were also translated. Thus it is clear that the awakening social consciousness of the writers of that age manifests itself in the original plays of the period. On the other hand, the translated plays emphasised the importance of linguistic and literary give-and-take.

After Bhartendu, the next great name—actually the greatest in the field of dramatic literature, is that of Jaya Shankar Prasad. Yet the number of plays written in the intervening period is not negligible. Though several writers of Hindi as well as Urdu, wrote plays for Parsee theatrical companies, these cannot be regarded as literary drama. From the point of view of literary quality, Pandit Badri Nath Bhatt's '*Kuruwan Dahan*', '*Durgavati*', '*Chandra Gupta*', Mishra-Bandhus, '*Netronmilan*' and Devi Prasad Purna's '*Chandrakala Bhanukumar*' deserve mention. The satires written in this period gained much popularity among the people and the satirical comedies of Ganga Prasad Shrivastava and Bechan Sharma '*Ugra*' had a great vogue.

Thereafter, begins the era of Prasad's plays. In the history of Hindi literature, the place of Jaya Shankar Prasad is obviously on the top. Reinterpreting the ancient and historical stories so as to fit in with the ideas of the age, he presented, through his plays, the glory of the Indian culture. His important historical plays are '*Rajyashri*', '*Ajat Shatru*', '*Chandra Gupta*', '*Skand Gupta*' and '*Dhruv Swamini*'. For his plays, Prasad borrows the plots from ancient Indian history and his language is, naturally, Sanskritized. With his lively imagination, nourished by deep study, he has pre-eminently succeeded in reconstructing the golden past of India. The successful staging of these plays is possible only with the help of highly talented artists and before audiences with a literary bent of mind.

Some of Prasad's contemporaries also contributed to this cultural tradition. Mention may be made, in this context, of '*Krishnarjun Yuddha*' of Makhan Lal Chaturvedi; '*Mahatma Isa*' of Bechan Sharma '*Ugra*'; '*Varmala*' of Govind Vallabh Pant and others. In the meanwhile, during the third decade of the 20th century, the Hindi problem-play came into being. In this field, Pt. Lakshmi Narayan Mishra occupies an important place and '*Sannyasis*', '*Rakshas Ka Mandir*', '*Mukti Ka Rahasya*,' '*Rajyoga*' and '*Sindoor Ki Holi*' are his chief problem-plays.

Another important category of Modern Hindi Drama can be described as the national-moral play. The plots of these plays relate to ancient or mediaeval history or to the present age of conflict. Though the bases of these plays are different, yet the basic inspiration is the same. This category includes '*Harsha*', '*Vikas*', '*Shershah*', '*Shashi Gupta*', '*Pakistan*' and others of Seth Govind Das; and several plays of Hari Krishna Premi like '*Rakshabandhan*', '*Swapnbhang*' etc. In spite of the deep influence of poetry, very few plays have been written in verse. Of these, the most successful are the lyrical plays of Uday Shanker Bhatt, namely : '*Matsyagandha*', '*Vishwamitra*' and '*Radha*'; Bhagwati Babu's '*Karana*' and '*Draupdi*'; Pant's '*Shilpi*', '*Rajat Shikhar*' etc. Uday Shanker has not confined himself to lyrical plays only; he has written plays of almost all types.

Drama is a rather weak aspect of Hindi literature. In comparison to the theatre in other Indian languages like Marathi and Bengali, the Hindi stage is definitely far behind. From the point of view of presentation, the plays of Upendra Nath Ashk and Jagdish Chandra Mathur have proved very successful. Chief among Ashk's plays are '*Chhala Beta*,' '*Swarg ki Jhalak*', '*Jai Parajai*', '*Aadi Marg*', and '*Kaid aur Uran*'. Jagdish Chandra Mathur combines in himself a refined cultural consciousness and a good understanding of stage-craft. His '*Konark*' is indeed a very good play.

In the story of the development of modern drama, the advent of the one-act play is an event. In Sanskrit drama, there is mention of numerous species of poetic plays and playlets which, considering their length, may be regarded as early forms of the one-act play. '*Bhan*', '*Vyayog*', '*Ank*,' '*Vithi*', '*Prahasan*,' and other varieties are

plays of this kind. Indeed, some writers belonging to Bhartendu's age have composed a few works based on the Sanskrit pattern. The shorter plays which Bhartendu himself, Shriniwas Das, Premghana, Radhacharan Goswami, Balkrishna Bhatt, Pratapnarin Mishra and others have written are the fore-runners of the modern one-act play. Nevertheless, the proper beginning and development of the one-act play took place in the third decade of the present century. Prominent one-Act playwrights of to-day are Bhuvneshwar Prasad, Dr. Ram Kumar Verma, Uday Shanker Bhatt, Lakshmi Narain Mishra, Seth Govind Das, Upendranath Ashk, Jagdish Chandra Mathur and Vishnu Prabhakar. The dramatic form is being fully exploited by these writers for the artistic portrayal of all kinds of problems of life. Of late the Radio has opened new ways and means for the development of Hindi drama.

Development of the Hindi Novel

The origin of the Hindi novel should also be placed in the modern age. Prior to this we had only verse narratives in Hindi. Through contact with Western literature and culture many new forms were evolved in Hindi, in the beginning of the modern era. As in the case of drama, the novel too came to Hindi not through direct contact with Western literature but via Bengali literature. Good novels were being written in Bengali long before the Hindi novel came into existence. It was through their influence that in the Bhartendu Age the writing of Hindi novels began. Perhaps the earliest Hindi novel is '*Pariksha Guru*' written by Lala Shriniwas Das. For the convenience of critical discussion we shall divide the development of the Hindi novel into three stages (i) pre-Prem Chand Hindi novel, (ii) novels of Prem Chand and his contemporaries (iii) Post-Prem Chand Hindi novel.

(i) Hindi Novel before Prem Chand

From the point of view of subject-matter, the novels of this period may be classified into four categories : Social Novels, Historical Novels, Novels of Tilism (magic), Novels of adventure and love. Chief social novels are : '*Nutan Brahmachari*' and '*Sau Ajan ek Sujan*' of Balkrishna Bhatt; '*Nissahai Hindu*' of Radha Krishan Das; Kirti-prasad Khatri's '*Jaya*'; Kishori Lal Goswami's '*Lavanglata*', and

'*Kusum Kumari*'; '*Kamini*' of Balmukand Gupta, Gopal Ram Gahmari's '*Nai Bahu*' '*Sas Patohu*' and '*Bara Bhai*', and Lajjaram Mehta's '*Dhurt Rasiklal*,' '*Swatantra Rama*' and '*Paratantra Lakshmi*'. Devkinandan Khatri founded the school of novels of magic and mystery. Innumerable people learnt Hindi merely to read his '*Chandra Kanta*' and '*Chandrakanta Santati*'. Prominent novelists of this category are Kishori Lal Goswami, Harekrishna Jauhar etc. Besides these Gopal Ram Gahmari and others wrote detective novels. A few historical novels were also written, but most of them are historical in name, for they do not contain the essential elements of the historical novels. The characters are, no doubt, historical personages but otherwise these should be regarded as romantic novels or novels of magic and mystery. Kishorilal Goswami's '*Lucknow ki kahar*,' '*Raziya Begam*' and others belong to this class. The fourth category is that of romantic novels which contain sensuous portrayal of the Indian idealistic love and of the adventurous love so characteristic of Persian fiction, '*Lilavati*,' '*Chandravati*' and '*Madhvi Madhav*' of Kishori Lal Goswami; '*Sheela*' of Bijjal, Ramlal's '*Gulbadan*' etc. belong to this group.

Thus it is evident that in this age novels based on four types of plots were written. Further, whether the plot was historical or social, connected with magic and mystery or romantic, it was, nevertheless, replete with events. Individual characterisation in these novels is not of a high quality. The characters are not altogether lifeless but there is little variety or individuality. In regard to the style of language, we find the use, in a few of these novels, of refined and Sanskritized language; though, some writers have employed language which is steeped in Urdu. In that age, the aim of literature was to reaffirm the social and moral values; so in these novels, too, ethical lessons were conveyed through the triumph of good over evil. To reform society, to criticise the Western civilization, and to glorify India and the Indian women—these were the chief aims of these novels. The greatest contribution of the novelists of that period is that they created in the minds of the people a desire to read Hindi. These novels do not contain a criticism of life; they were written, rather, with a view to provide recreation or moral education.

Prem Chand and the Hindi Novel of his time

Premchand's appearance in the Hindi World created a revolution and ushered in a new era. He took the novel out of the narrow limits of fulfilling a didactic and recreative purpose and made it a medium of the artistic manifestation of people's life. The greatest merit of his novels lies in the combination of the ideal and the actual, though, wherever, the two are in conflict, he has, throughout, taken sides with the ideal. In his early works, Premchand was more inclined towards idealism but by the time, he wrote '*Godan*', he had become an expert in the art of combining the ideal and the real. The success that Premchand achieved in the creation of characters representative of his age, belongs to no other novelist before or after him.

Premchand's literary life began with the writing of Urdu novels. '*Sevasadan*' was his first novel to be published in Hindi. Thereafter, he wrote '*Premashram*', '*Nirmala*', '*Kayakalpa*', '*Rangbhumi*', '*Ghaban*', '*Godan*' and others, and was established as the greatest novelist of Hindi. Any number of characters taken from his novels may be placed at par with the great characters of World literature. Reaffirming the higher value of our ethical, social and cultural traditions, Prem Chand offered in his novels a comprehensive picture of the entire range of life and gave, to the perplexed humanity, a message of hope and progress.

Following in the footsteps of Prem Chand, numerous novelists wrote works on similar themes. Like him, his contemporaries also wrote idealistic novels based on social and ethical plots. Vishwambhar Sharma Kaushik, Pratap Narayan Shrivastava, Bhagwati Prasad Vajpeyi are novelists of the Premchand school. Another trend of Hindi novel, which came into existence as a reaction to Premchand's works, is characterised by naturalism. Of this school, Chatursen Shastri, Bechan Sharma '*Ugra*', Rishabh Charan Jain and others are important writers. The story of these novels centres round the problems of sex. Naked reality of life is portrayed in these, with a lustful attitude. The language, however, is vigorous and racy. In reaction to the idealistic point of view and matter of fact style of Prem Chand, a few romantic novels also came to be

written. There is an abundance of romantic element in these novels. Richly coloured and adorned by thought and fancy, the '*Tilli*' and '*Kankal*' of Jaya Shanker Prasad and, the novels of Hridayesh are instinct with a romantic, and imaginative lushness. Progress was made in the field of the historical novel, too. So far, things of mystery and magic had been described in the name of history. But now, Vrindavan Lal Verma presented, in a life-like manner, historical happenings and personages. In novels like '*Garh Kunder*', '*Virata Ki Padmini*', '*Kundali Chakra*', '*Jhansi Ki Rani*', '*Kachnar*', '*Mrignayani*' etc., several historical characters were successfully recreated. These novels show a skilful combination of history and fancy. Consequently the feudal and the parochial atmosphere (mainly of Bundelkhand) during the middle ages are revived.

Apart from these novels, numerous psychological novels were written under the growing influence of Sharat Chandra. In this group Jainendra's works occupy the foremost place. In his novels, several psychological problems, arising from man-woman relationship, are treated against a philosophical background of self-afflicted penance. His '*Kalyani*', '*Sunita*', '*Tyagpatra*', and '*Sukhada*' are remarkable novels. In his late works '*Vivart*' and '*Vyatit*', we do not find that synthesis of keen intellectual analysis and essential human sympathy which is Jainendra's forte. So, from art's point of view, these novels are, in value, inferior to his previous works.

Although the spirit of Siya Ram Sharan's novels is not very unlike that of Jainendra's, the characterization is altogether different. This imparts a distinctive quality to his work. In place of Jainendra's sharp intellectualism, there is, in Siya Ram's novels like '*Nari*', an affectionate gentleness which is his own and which it is difficult to find elsewhere.

Hindi Novel in the post-Premchand Era

After Premchand two distinct trends in Hindi novel appear on the forefront : (i) The Psycho-analytical novel (ii) The Progressive novel. These tendencies are not new. The earlier novels of Yashpal, Agyeya, Ilachandra Joshi and others had been published in the Premchand period, but it was in the post-Premchand period that both these trends developed independently. The source of

inspiration of the psycho-analytical novel is to be found in the doctrines of Freud and Adler, in which an analysis, based on sex inferiority complex of the subconscious mind is presented. From the artistic point of view, the foremost work of this School is Agyeya's '*Shekhar: ek Jiwani*'. The second eminent writer is Ilachandra Joshi who has written many psycho-analytical novels like '*Sannyasi*', '*Parde Ki Rani*', '*Pret aur Chhaya*' etc. In these novels, the conception of fiction as an interesting and sympathetic study of life is gradually reduced to secondary importance and an analysis of mental aberrations becomes the end. This results in a less healthy philosophy of life. Although the writer is concerned, theoretically, with the serenity and the equilibrium of the mind, a kind of morbidity is evident in the atmosphere of these novels. (A change of direction occurs with '*Mukti path*'). The critics have the same complaint against Agyeya's second novel '*Nadi ke Dwip*'.

The other important school is that of the Progressive Novel, of which Yashpal is the representative writer. In his works we find, in intensified form, the social consciousness of Prem Chand. The aim of his novels is to destroy the decadent values of modern society. His main works are '*Dada Comrade*', '*Deshdrohi*', '*Divya*', '*Manushya ke Rup*' etc. Yashpal does not fully succeed in imbibing the serene philosophy of life of Prem Chand, but, as compared to Prem Chand, he has a keener eye. Naturally his reaction to social evils is more violent and harsher. In his art he makes use of a great deal of sarcasm which grows more and more bitter and cruel and, at places, even horrid. In comparison with Yashpal, Ashk has a lesser talent but greater balance, and, viewed thus, he comes closer to Prem Chand. His '*Sitaron ka khel*' and '*Girti Deewaren*' are good novels, but '*Garam Rakh*' and '*Bari Bari Ankhen*' show signs of deterioration. Mention must also be made here of the novels of Rangeya Raghav. He has written historical as well as social fictions but his viewpoint has been, in the main, progressive. His important novels are '*Gharonde*'; '*Sidha Sadha Rasta*'; '*Murdon ka Tila*', etc. In his historical works he, too, has remodelled old personages and past events to suit the new pattern philosophy of life.

Considering their basic inspiration, Rahul's novels should be

included in this category; but his ground is altogether different. Instead of portraying the present day socio-political atmosphere he has made a successful attempt to bring past history to life. '*Jai Yaudheya*' is his best work. Far removed from this is the entirely different view point of Bhagwati Charan Verma. The fundamental source of Verma's literature is the egoistic individualism which he has tried to read in, and interpret through, the Gandhian philosophy of life. His novels are '*Terhe Merhe Raste*'; '*Tin Varsh*'; '*Akhri Daan*'. But his most renowned work is '*Chitralekha*' whose plot and basis are quite unlike those of his other novels but, even here, the actuating impulse is the same 'egoism'.

Such, then, is, in brief, the history of the Hindi Novel as it developed after Prem Chand. In respect of forcefulness and intellectual compactness, it has definitely progressed, but the healthy view of life has been mutilated. Where Prem Chand had looked at life as a whole, the novelist of today seems to be busy presenting a distorted picture of life through an exaggerated emphasis on parts.

Development of the Hindi Short Story

As in the case of the Hindi novel, the appearance of Hindi short story is also a phenomenon of modern times. The story has, of course, existed for ever so long; but the 'literary' form of the 'short story' is, no doubt, of recent origin. It is possible by regarding as stories the 'Khyats' and 'Bats' of Rajasthan and the literature of popular tales in the dialects, to establish the existence, in older literature, of a tradition of the short story. But there is an essential difference between the old popular tale and the modern (literary) short story. In the last phase of the Middle ages many stories were written under Persian influence in which we find an extravagant portrayal of passionate love '*Chhabili Bhatiarin*'; '*Qissa Tota Maina*', '*Gulbakavali*', etc., are all stories of this type. Even in the early stages of prose literature, Insha Allah Khan's '*Rani Kelki ki Kahani*', Jatmala's '*Gora Badal ki Katha*'; and Raja Shiv Prasada's '*Raja Bhoj ka Sapna*' had already been written. But these cannot be called 'stories' in the true sense. They do narrate interesting events, but their style is nearer the essay than the short story. From the modern point of view the historians regard '*Indumati*' written by

Kishori Lal Goswami as the first short story in Hindi. Some people accord this honour to '*Dulai Wali*' of Bang Mahila. The first decade of the infancy of the Hindi short story is the experimental period and it was dominated by translations. The plays of Shakespeare were presented, in translation, in the form of stories ; some Sanskrit plays were also similarly treated. A few short stories from Bengali were adapted in Hindi. The vogue of 'Short Story' in the regular form began with the publication of '*Indu*'. In 1962 A. V. Prasad's first story '*Gram*' was published. Maithili Sharan Gupta's '*Ninyanway ka Pher*' and Ram Chandra Shukla's '*Gyarah Varsh ka Samay*' having been published earlier still. Thereafter, the short story literature in Hindi was fed, in a regular manner, with the works of Jaya Shanker Prasad, Jwaladutt Sharma, Vishwambhar Sharma Kaushik, Prem Chand, Sudarshan, Vrindavan Lal Verma and others.

Like the novel, we may, for the sake of convenience, divide the short story also into the Premchand era, and the post-Premchand era. In the Premchand era, idealistic stories about every-day existence were written in which the ethical view of life was put forth. All these stories were generally constructed round social questions, and the common problems of the house-holder, or the larger ones of society, were examined. Usually, the themes of these stories are widow-remarriage ; uplift of the untouchables ; alien culture and Western civilization; fight against traditions and customs and so on. The characters are, in general, excellently portrayed.

In reaction against the 'idealistic' stories, Chatursen Shastri, 'Ugra' and others adopted the naturalistic viewpoint as opposed to the idealistic. As in the novel of this school, the plots of these short stories are also confined to problems connected with sex. In them there is no avoiding of stark realism from any sense of shame or modesty. Nevertheless, the eye of the writer is not wholly fixed on the plot. Because of their emphasis on sex, descriptions are given which are, to say the least, in bad taste.

The third main stream of the first phase of the short story is that of romantic and historical stories. These short stories are based on historical events of ancient and mediaeval India. Among the stories written about ancient Indian culture, Jaya Shanker Prasad's compo-

sitions are the best. These stories are extremely successful in respect both of presentation of subject matter as well as character-portrayal and the cultural values have been well-sustained. Prasad's '*Akash-deep*', '*Mamata*', '*Pratidhwani*,' '*Swarg ke Khandhar Men*', and '*Himalay ka Pathik*' are very beautiful stories. Shri Vrindavanlal Verma bases his stories on the history of mediaeval India. Prem Chand's '*Rani Sarandha*' and '*Vajrapat*' may also be listed under this category, but Prem Chand's view was, fundamentally, socialistic and not historical. Chatursen Shastri's '*Bhikshuraj*' and Sudarshan's '*Nyaymantri*' are also good stories of this kind.

In addition, some detective stories and tales of magic and mystery were also published, but they lack any serious criticism of life. Invention has been brought into play only for entertainment and for creating an atmosphere of mystery. Gopal Ram Gahmari, Durga Prasad Khatri, G. P. Shrivastava, and others have written stories of this kind. Some stories of this age belong to the 'symbolist' school and though not many in number, they deserve to be mentioned because of their excellence. Prasad, Raikrishan Das, Bakhshi and Sudarshan wrote what may be termed 'symbolic' stories. Besides these, a few humorous stories also exist. Broad humour characterises the stories of G. P. Shrivastava whereas in the stories of Badri Nath Bhatt we find comparatively refined humour. Among the short stories of this age, those of Siyaram Sharan Gupta—collected in '*Manushi*'—have a special significance. In these, there is neither the extrovertive ethical bent of mind of Prem Chand, nor the romantic introvertive inclination of Prasad, neither the passion of Ugra and Chatursen, nor the humour of Badrinath Bhatt and others. His stories manifest purer and finer experiences of inner life and glow with the 'gentle light' of a sacred lamp burning in a temple. There is great variety of style in the stories of this period. All sorts of styles—descriptive, autobiographical, conversational, epistolary—have been employed. However, the analytical style was not used during this first phase.

In the post-Prem Chand short story, there arose, as in the case of the novel, two tendencies : psychological and socialistic. Jainendra Kumar is, again, the chief exponent of the psychological

type. His greatest virtue lies in the fact that he does not write his stories to demonstrate psychological theories. Rather, he has used the analytical method to lay bare the working of the human mind. In his short stories also, the influence of Gandhian philosophy is evident and the intellectual element is stressed. His '*Ek Rat*', '*Vatayan*', '*Neelam Desh ki Raj Kumari*', '*Pajeb*', etc. are well-known stories. This tendency becomes more marked in the stories of Ila Chandra Joshi. In these, the sex-theories of Freud and other doctrines of psycho-analysis are treated not as means but ends. Consequently we find in them distorted pictures of morbid states of mind. Against this, we find in the stories of Agyeya, a clear-cut and sound study of the science of psycho-analysis.

The short stories with a socialist leaning constitute the second important category of the modern period. Their aim is to awaken a social consciousness. In these stories we find a denunciation not only of the outworn traditions but also of idealistic values and they all subscribe to the philosophy of dialectical materialism and to socialist thought. The realistic portrayal of social conditions predominates in these stories, but their crude and naked realism at times approaches the limit of vulgarity. Yash Pal, Radha Krishna, Amrit Rai, Rangeya Raghav, Chandra Kiran Saunriksh etc. are the writers of this class. The stories of Upendra Nath Ashk belong, also, to this category ; but, his viewpoint is much broader and more practical. He is interested not only in the poor classes, but also draws a realistic and lively picture of the conflict of life of the middle class. The short stories of Bhagvati Prasad Vajpēyi move between these two currents. His brush paints the rosy colour of love, as well as the dark shadow of human depression. Vishnu Prabhakar's stories differ from his and in them, we find a touch of the ethical-cum-social consciousness of Prem Chand.

The short story in Hindi has achieved a very high standard of excellence. The subtlety of psycho-analysis, the intensity of social consciousness, and the high quality of style, technique and craft—these have imparted an unparalleled literary quality to some of the stories in Hindi. The sense of fragmentation of life

which is a curse for the novel of the long narrative verse, proves a blessing in the case of the short story.

The Development of the Hindi Essay

The origin of the Hindi essay, too, belongs to the Bhartendu age. Articles written on various contemporary subjects and published in numerous newspapers and magazines show the earliest form of the essay. Translations of innumerable writings from different languages were later produced. Gradually, many articles were being written on all sorts of topics—politics, society, problems relating to the country, beauty of the seasons, celebration of festivals, biography, etc. Four main kinds of essays are found in Bhartendu's Age. Many sentimental essays on the condition of the country and society were written in the style of 'prosepoetry.' Bhartendu, Bal Krishna Bhatt and Premghan are the chief writers in this style. Bhartendu, Balkrishan Bhatt, Pratap Narayan Mishra, Premghan, Ambika Datt Vyas and others wrote humorous essays also. In descriptive essays, the celebration of festivals, and pictures of natural beauty were presented in ornate language. The important writers in this class too are Bhartendu Harish Chandra, Balkrishan Bhatt, Jagmohan Singh and Radha Krishan Das. In addition a few light reflective essays were also written. Thus, the most distinguishing feature of the essay in Bhartendu's time was the variety of subjects and styles. In the Dwivedi era, and after the publication of *Saraswati*, essays began to be published in a regular way. Pt. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, Chandra Dhar Sharma Guleri, Babu Shyam Sunder Dass, Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla and Shri Gulab Rai wrote numerous reflective essays whose style was analytical and argumentative. These essayists wrote on serious subjects in a solid and concise style. In some descriptive essays about places, or events fanciful presentation and art of painting were combined to form a swift-moving, interlinked, poetic style. The names of Mishra Bandhu and Baldev Verma deserve mention in this connection. The lively emotional essays of Padma Singh Sharma, Balmukund Gupta, Brajnandan Sahai and Madhava Mishra were also published during Dwivedi era. Out of these writers several took to expressing their ideas in broken sentences

in the manner of soliloquy. In the essays of Purna Singh, there is a successful combination of feeling and thought. Further, many narrative essays were written in the personal style. The names of Babu Gulab Rai, Padumlal Punnalal Bakhshi, Siyaram Sharan Gupta, Jainendra Kumar, Mahadevi Verma and Hazari Prasad Dwivedi deserve special mention as leading essayists of this group. Maharaj Kumar Raghuvir Singh wrote a few emotional essays inspired by the ruins of the past.

As in the case of other branches of literature, after Dwivedi era, in the field of essay, too, the emphasis on the individual becomes manifest. In this period was formed an essay-style combining thought, feeling and fancy, and the personal essay in its true form trends came into vogue. In the later essays, the analysis of the mind and its concomitant style of expression (stream of consciousness) were introduced. The true development of the essay took place in this age.

Criticism in Hindi

Although in a way, several scholars had earlier reaffirmed the various traditions of Sanskrit poetics, yet applied criticism appears only in the modern age. During Bhartendu era, some short critical notes were published now and then in '*Kavivachan Sudha*' and '*Harish Chandra Magazine*'. Afterwards, such notes became more methodical and detailed in '*Hindi Pradeep*', '*Anand Kadambini*' and other magazines. The nature of such criticism was mainly denunciatory, and they did not pretend to make any analysis of the internal organism of the literary works. It meant an acquaintance with and a discussion of the merits and demerits of the work. During Dwivedi age, criticism had an all-round development and many forms came into vogue. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, Mishra Bandhus, Padam Singh Sharma, Krishna Bihari Misra, Bhagwan Din and Ram Chandra Shukla are the chief critics of this age. Of these, Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi founded the school of conventional criticism listing good and bad points. The Mishra Bandhus set up the school of judicial criticism and Lala Bhagwan Din, Pt. Padam Singh Sharma and Pt. Krishna Behari Mishra founded the academic school of criticism. The earlier writings of the foremost Hindi critic Acharya Ram Chandra Shukla,

were also out during the time of Dwivedi. However, he comes into his true form in the age of 'Chhayavad'. The work of Acharya Shukla is the maturest specimen of Hindi criticism, rather of Indian criticism, of the modern age. He interpreted the Indian principles of criticism on the lines of Western theories and, relying on his own steady vision and mature literary taste as unfaltering, he set up and developed the modern form of Indian criticism. From this point of view, he has a place of honour in the tradition of the master-poeticians of India. In the criticisms of Dr. Shyam Sunder Dass a colleague of Acharya Shukla the Western and Indian principles have been intermixed. Accepting the essence of both, he has contributed much to the fashioning of the modern literary theories in Hindi.

Subsequent to Dwivedi era and until now, we see the evolution of several new schools of criticism. Vishwanath Prasad Misra, Krishna Shanker Shukla, Nand Dulare Vajpeyi, Nagendra, Satyendra and others have kept up the academic tradition of Acharya Shukla. These critics have made use of Western as well as Indian theories and have presented studies in the art of poetry, through an analysis, both of the matter and the style. In the field of historical criticism, Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi's name is on top. 'Unfolding the various social and cultural traditions of people's life, he views the literary work in relation to collective life. In psychological criticism, the names of Nagendra, Ilachandra Joshi and Agyeya deserve special mention. These critics evaluate the work of a poet through an analysis of his psyche, independently of the broader, social and ethical background. The critical style of Shanti Priya Dwivedi is, in the main, appreciative, and makes an appeal more to the heart than to the head. Then, there is the sociological school of criticism. According to this, the artist and his art are a product of society ; therefore, their value and significance should be measured in terms of the social consciousness incorporated in the work. Although the importance of the social value has been exaggerated in the Marxist school of criticism, nevertheless, it has, by disparaging the morbid elements, definitely helped in establishing a healthier relationship between life and

literature. Shivdan Singh Chauhan and Ram Vilas Sharma are critics of this school. Besides, theoretical criticism, which had come into being earlier, made marked progress in the modern age. Many critics of today have reinterpreted Indian as well as Western poetics and made a commendable effort to synthesize both. Dr. Nagendra's '*Bhartiya Kavya Shastra ki Bhumika*' and '*Riti Kavya ki Bhumika*' and Sudhanshu's two books '*Kavya men Abhivyanjanavad*' and '*Jivan Ke Tatva Aur Kavya Ke Siddhant*' are excellent works of this class. Again, the research activities in the Universities are yielding useful critical work at a rapid pace. Both in respect of quality as well as quantity, this branch of Hindi literature has shown good progress.

In this way, it is evident that along with its rich cultural and historical background of a national language, Hindi has shown, even in its present march, a manysided development. In every branch of our literature there are positive indications of a continued creative activity. Not only is Hindi a language with rich past, but the present-day resources which are constantly feeding it are, likewise, powerful. Reaching out of a narrow isolation, it has been developing the tendency to seek its inspiration, in an ever-increasing measure from national and international forces. It has within its womb the limitless strength of Brajbhasha and Avadhi, and its great capacity of assimilating the best from every source is the surest guarantee of its bright future.

