her appearance, and my heart is fixed upon her, so I’ll test her and marry her. For one regret after another is sure to fall on the heads of people who don’t take precautions!” So, looking at her affectionately, he said, “Dear girl, can you cook a good meal for me with this measure of rice?”

“Then the girl glanced at her old servant, who took the measure of rice from his hand and seated him on the veranda, which had been well sprinkled and swept, giving him water to cool his feet. Meanwhile the girl bruised the fragrant rice, dried it a little at a time in the sun, turned it repeatedly, and beat it with a hollow cane on a firm flat spot, very gently, so as to separate the grain without crushing the husk. Then she said to the nurse, ‘Mother, goldsmiths can make good use of these husks for polishing jewelry. Take them, and, with the coppers you get for them, buy some firewood, not too green and not too dry, a small cooking pot, and two earthen dishes.’

“When this was done she put the grains of rice in a shallow wide-mouthed, round-bellied mortar, and took a long and heavy pestle of acacia wood, its head shod with a plate of iron. . . . With skill and grace she exerted her arms, as the grains jumped up and down in the mortar. Repeatedly she stirred them and pressed them down with her fingers; then she shook the grains in a winnowing basket to remove the beard, rinsed them several times, worshipped the hearth, and placed them in water which had been five times brought to the boil. When the rice softened, bubbled and swelled, she drew the embers of the fire together, put a lid on the cooking pot, and strained off the gruel. Then she patted the rice with a ladle and scooped it out a little at a time; and when she found that it was thoroughly cooked she put the cooking pot on one side, mouth downwards. Next she damped down those sticks which were not burnt through, and when the fire was quite out she sent them to the dealers to be sold as charcoal, saying, ‘With the coppers that you get for them, buy as much as you can of green vegetables, ghee, curds, sesame oil, myrobalans and tamarind.’

“When this was done she offered him a few savouries. Next she put the rice-gruel in a new dish immersed in damp sand, and cooled it with the soft breeze of a palm-leaf fan. She added a little salt, and flavoured it with the scent of the embers; she ground the myrobalans to a smooth powder, until they smelt like a lotus; and then, by the lips of the nurse, she invited him to take a bath. This he did, and when she too had bathed she gave him oil and myrobalans [as an unguent].

“After he had bathed he sat on a bench in the paved courtyard, which had been thoroughly sprinkled and swept. She stirred the gruel in the two dishes, which she set before him on a piece of pale green plantain leaf, cut from a tree in the courtyard. He drank it and felt rested and happy, relaxed in every limb. Next she gave him two ladlefuls of the boiled rice, served with a little ghee and condiments. She served the rest of the rice

* The economics of this and the other transaction referred to are very hard to explain. No doubt the rice husks, so carefully threshed, had some commercial value, but it is hardly likely that they would have bought the wares mentioned. If this passage has any historical significance it confirms the evidence of other sources that in ordinary times the means of subsistence were plentiful and cheap.
with curds, three spices [mace, cardamom and cinnamon], and fragrant and refreshing buttermilk and gruel. He enjoyed the meal to the last mouthful.

"When he asked for a drink she poured him water in a steady stream from the spout of a new pitcher—it was fragrant with incense, and smelt of fresh trumpet-flowers and the perfume of full-blown lotuses. He put the bowl to his lips, and his eyelashes sparkled with rosy drops as cool as snow; his ears delighted in the sound of the trickling water; his rough cheeks thrilled and tingled at its pleasant contact; his nostrils opened wide at its sweet fragrance; and his tongue delighted in its lovely flavour, as he drank the pure water in great gulps. Then, at his nod, the girl gave him a mouthwash in another bowl. The old woman took away the remains of his meal, and he slept awhile in his ragged cloak, on the pavement plastered with fresh cowdung.

"Wholly pleased with the girl, he married her with due rites, and took her home. Later he neglected her awhile and took a mistress, but the wife treated her as a dear friend. She served her husband indefatigably, as she would a god, and never neglected her household duties; and she won the loyalty of her servants by her great kindness. In the end her husband was so enslaved by her goodness that he put the whole household in her charge, made her sole mistress of his life and person, and enjoyed the three aims of life—virtue, wealth and love. So I maintain that virtuous wives make their lords happy and virtuous."

Subandhu, the next of the three great prose writers, is known only from one work, called after its heroine Vásavadattā, which tells of the vicissitudes of her love for the prince Kandarpaketu. Unlike Daṇḍin, Subandhu was quite unable to tell a story and had no sense of character. His merits lie in his ornate descriptions and his mastery of language, and his work consists of a series of descriptive tableaux, linked by a thin thread of narrative, each long description told in a single sentence which covers two or more pages of type. The work abounds in flowers of speech of all kinds—puns, doubles entendres, alliterations and assonances, and is a typical example of the Gauḍa (Bengālī) style of literary composition, as distinguished from the simpler Vaidarbhā (Berār) style, with shorter, less involved sentences, employed by Kalidāsa and Daṇḍin. It cannot be enjoyed in translation and its merits are only apparent in the framework of its own standards. Of European literature perhaps Lily's Euphues and similar late Renaissance prose works most closely approach it in style and spirit.

Bāṇa's style is similar to that of Subandhu, but his work is much more vital and congenial to Western taste. Not only do his elaborate descriptions show accurate and close observation, but throughout his two works, the "Deeds of Harṣa" (Harṣacarita) and Kādambarī, the personality of the author breaks through. In the former
work, moreover, he gives us a fragment of autobiography unparalleled in Sanskrit literature. Bāṇa was born of a well-to-do brāhmaṇ family, and his mother died in his early childhood. At the age of fourteen he lost his father also, and, after a period of mourning, he began to sow his wild oats. He names with evident affection the bosom friends of his dissolute youth, which was spent in wandering from city to city among the intellectual bohemians of the time. His circle was remarkably wide, including ascetics of various types, both orthodox and otherwise, literary men, actors, musicians, entertainers doctors, and even humble people of low caste. The list of Bāṇa’s friends, mentioned in no special order, is in itself sufficient to show how lightly the rules of caste weighed on the educated man. The author gives us no details of his adventures, but it would seem that in the course of them he was received at the court of Harṣa, whom he offended in some way. Later he returned for a while to his home, and resumed the peaceful life of a country brāhmaṇ; but soon a message came from Harṣa, demanding his attendance at court. He was at first received coldly, but afterwards was restored to favour.

Though religiously minded, Bāṇa seems throughout his life to have transcended the bounds of orthodoxy and to have retained some of the unconventionality of his wild youth. He was not afraid to put forward opinions which might have made him unpopular with his royal patron—for instance he condemned the doctrine of royal divinity as gross sycophancy, and attacked the Machiavellian system of statecraft associated with the name of Kautilya as immoral and inhuman. Here and there in his work occur passages which show implicit sympathy with the poor and humble—a sentiment rarely found in ancient Indian literature—and he is a master of exact observation. For all the floweriness of his style Bāṇa’s outlook has more in common with the 20th century than has that of any other early Indian writer.

Of his two works the “Deeds of Harṣa” tells of the events leading up to Harṣa’s rise to power with general authenticity, but with some evident exaggeration and with a lack of circumstantial detail which the historian finds irritating. Kādambarī is perhaps a conscious and successful attempt to improve on Subandhu’s Vāsavadattā. The story is a romance, told in a series of narrated episodes which link together to build up a complicated plot. This work was unfinished, and was completed by the author’s son, whose prentice hand is quite evident.

As an example of Bāṇa’s style we give a somewhat abridged and adapted version of his description of Harṣa’s army striking camp to march against his enemies. In the original the whole consists of a single sentence, the basis of which is the phrase “the royal court was
filled with chieftains" near the end of the passage. The separate
sentences or clauses of our translation are single compound words in the
original.

"Then it was time to go. The drums rattled, the kettledrums beat joy-
fully, the trumpets blared, the horns blew, the conches sounded. By degrees
the hubbub of the camp grew louder. Officers busily roused the King's
courtiers. The sky shook with the din of fast-hammering mallets and drum-
sticks. The generals assembled the ranks of the subordinate officers. The
darkness of the night was broken by the glare of a thousand torches which
the people lighted. Lovers were aroused by the tramping feet of the women
who kept watch. The harsh shouts of the elephant-marshal's dispelled the
slumber of their drowsy riders as awakened elephants left their stables.

"Squadrons of horses woke from sleep and shook their manes. The camp
resounded loudly as spades dug up the tent-pegs, and the tethering chains
of the elephants clinked as their stakes were pulled up... As the foragers re-
leased the elephants all space was filled with the clanking of their fetters.
Leather bags full to bursting were placed on their dusty backs, which had
been rubbed down with tufts of hay. Servants rolled up the canvases and
awnings of tents and pavilions, and the bundles of tent-pegs were stored
away in bulging leather sacks. Storekeepers assembled their stores, and
many elephant-drivers loaded them. The dwellings of the vassals were
cluttered with cups and cooking utensils, which were lifted on to the backs
of elephants, steadied by their riders. The soldiers laughed as the fat strum-
pets were dragged away by force, resisting vigorously with feet and hands.
The many mighty and savage elephants trumpeted, as the girthbands
of their bright harness were tightened, and restricted the freedom of their
limbs... Camels neighed in annoyance as sacks were loaded on their backs.

"The wives of higborn gentlemen were visited in their carriages by go-
betweens sent by princes. Elephant-captains, who had forgotten that it was
time to go, looked for their servants. The splendid horses of the King's
favourites were led by footmen wealthy with their masters' gifts. Troops
of handsome warriors adorned their bodies with circles of unguent, scented
with camphor. The harness of the marshals' horses was hung with bags of
salted peas, little bells, and whistles.* Monkeys sat among the troops of
horses, as the grooms straightened their tangled reins. Stablemen dragged
sacks of musty fodder for the horses' morning meal. The calls of the grass-
cutters grew louder and louder. There was uproar in the stables as young
horses strained and reared and swerved at the confusion of starting. Girls
hurried at the call of the riders of the harnessed horses with unguents
for their faces. As the elephants and horses set out the poor folk of the
neighbourhood ran up to loot the remains of the heaped grain. Donkeys

* Cowell and Thomas (The Harappa Inscription of Edga, p. 200) take lavapakādyā as "wooden
figures of deer" on the basis of a late commentary. Lavapa means salt, and kādyā a type
of pea, and we believe the compound to mean a bag of salted peas, the horse's iron rations.
The translation of kikkipu-nālī-tenāka as "bells with reeds attached" is equally improb-
able. The horse's harness would be hung with bells, but nālī, "reed," or "tube," may
well mean a whistle attached to the harness by a cord, and used for signalling.
plodded on together, loaded with piles of clothing. The trampled roads were filled with carts with creaking wheels. Oxen were loaded with equipment which would suddenly fall off. The strong oxen, first to be driven away, lagged behind, drawn by the grass which grew by the roadside.

"In front went the field-kitchens of the chief vassals. Standard bearers led the ranks. As the troops left their small huts hundreds of their friends came out to meet them. The feet of the elephants trampled the hovels by the roadside, and the people came out and threw clods at their keepers, who called on the bystanders to witness their assaults. Poor families ran from their wrecked and ruined huts. Oxen, bearing the wealth of unfortunate merchants, fled from the hubbub. Clearing a path through the crowd with the glare of their torches, runners led the way for the elephants bearing the women of the harem. Horsemen shouted to the dogs running behind them. The veterans praised the tall Taṅgana horses, which trotted so smoothly and quickly that they made travelling a pleasure. Unhappy Southerners upbraided their fallen mules. The whole world was swallowed in dust.

"The royal court was filled with chieftains who had come from every quarter, riding on cow-elephants, whose drivers bore bows adorned with stripes of gold-leaf. Seated within [the howdahs] their batmen carried their swords. Their betel-bearers fanned them with flywhisks. The soldiers seated in the rear bore bundles of javelins in cases. The trappings [of the elephants] bristled with curved sabres and gilded arrows. . . . The thighs [of the chieftains] were clothed in fine-patterned silk, but their legs were covered with mud-stained trousers. . . . Their tunics were decked with dark jewels, which glistened against their bodies. They wore Chinese cuirasses, doublets adorned with bright clusters of pearls, . . . and scarves as bright as a parrot’s wing. All the ends of the earth were filled with knights and warriors, who hurried on with tossing shields and plumes. The ends of heaven were loud with the jingling golden ornaments on the harness of the prancing Kamboja steeds in their hundreds. The ear was deafened by the harsh booming of hundreds of large kettledrums, mercilessly beaten. The roll was called. With upturned faces the footmen awaited the order to march."40

After Bāna similar prose romances were often written, as well as stories in mixed prose and verse (campū), but none is of much literary importance, and most are derivative, pedantic and dull.

Another branch of prose narrative literature was the fable, which we meet first in the Pāli Jātakas. These cheerful little stories, whose characters are often talking animals, have much in common with the fables popular in ancient Greece, and there has been some discussion on the question of influence. Direct borrowing is unlikely, though it may be that some of the tales were derived from a common source in the ancient Middle East. Whatever the origin of these stories Indian folklore did influence the literature of the West, for one of the most famous Indian collections of fables, the Pañcatantra, was translated
into Pahlavī, or Middle Persian, in the 6th century. Thence it was translated into Syriac, and thence again, in the 8th century, into Arabic. In various versions it appeared in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and found its way all over Europe. The earliest English version is that of Sir Thomas North, called "The Morall Philosophie of Doni" after the name of the translator of the Italian version, which North used. This appeared in 1570, and was the earliest work of Indian literature (much garbled by successive translations) to be published in English. The fables of La Fontaine are admittedly based on "Pilpay", the form in which Vidyāpati, the title of the Indian sage who is said to have narrated the stories, reached Europe. As well as the fables of La Fontaine the stories of Reynard the Fox, popular in the folk literature of many parts of Europe and given finished form by Goethe, owe much to this source. Other Indian tales, including several from the Brhatkathā (p. 431), found their way westwards, and the "Arabian Nights" owes several of its stories and themes to India, including some of the marvels met by Sindbad the Sailor.

The Pañcatantra ("Five Treatises") is in theory a book of instruction in niti, or the conduct of one's affairs, especially intended for kings and statesmen. The little stories are contained in a framing narrative which tells how a king was distressed at the evil and stupidity of his sons, and entrusted them to a sage who reformed them in six months by telling them a series of fables. The book exists in several versions of varying length and merit, mostly in prose, but containing many verses of a gnomic type. The most famous of these versions is Nārāyaṇa's Hitopadeśa ("Salutary Instruction"), composed in Bengal in the 12th century. The work was intended as a "reader" for students of Sanskrit, and serves that purpose well down to the present day. Never was a school textbook better written. The author was compelled by his purpose to avoid the euphuisms and pedantries which affected most of the literature of his time, and he wrote lucidly and wittily, liberally including memorably terse gnomic stanzas. Ethically many of the stories are dubious, for they encourage caution and self-interest rather than altruism. The two stories we quote are boxed within others.

"'It is said:

He who takes a well-spoken knave
to be a man of his own stamp
is fooled by rogues, like the brāhman
who was robbed of his goat.'

"'How did that happen?' asked the King
"'In the forest of Gautama,' said Meghavarna, 'there lived a brāhmaṇ famous for his sacrifices. Once he went to a village and bought a goat for sacrifice, and as he was carrying it home on his shoulder he was seen by three rogues. "'If we could find a way to get that goat,' they said to themselves, "it would be a fine trick!' So they stationed themselves each under a tree about a krośa apart. As the brāhmaṇ passed by, the first rogue said, "'Why, brāhmaṇ, that's a dog you're carrying on your back!' "'It's not a dog,' replied the brāhmaṇ, "it's a goat for sacrifice!''

"'Then the next rogue addressed him with the same words. This time the brāhmaṇ put the goat on the ground and looked at it hard, and again slung it over his shoulder and went on, his mind wavering like a swing; for

The words of rogues make even the mind of a good man waver.
If he trusts them he dies as Pretty-ears died.'

"'How did that happen?' asked the King.

"'In a forest land,' he said, 'there lived a lion named Madotkata, who had three servants, a crow, a tiger and a jackal. Once as the three were out walking they met a camel, and they asked him whence he came, and whether he had fallen out of a caravan. He told them his story, and they took him back and handed him over to the lion, who gave him his freedom and security; and he took the name of Pretty-ears.

"'Later the lion was taken ill, and there was heavy rain and they were very distressed for want of food. So they agreed to arrange matters in such a way that their lord should kill Pretty-ears. "'Of what other use to us,' they said to themselves, "is that eater of thorns?' "'But how can we manage it,' said the tiger, "when our master has given him a pledge of security and has him in his favour?' "'At a time like this,' said the crow, "when the master is reduced to skin and bone, he won't scruple at a sin; for

A woman torn by hunger will abandon her child.
A snake torn by hunger will eat its own eggs.
What evil will a hungry man not do?
Lean men are always pitiless!

And, what is more,

A drunkard, an imbecile, a lunatic,
a man tired out, an angry man, a hungry man,
a greedy man, a frightened man, a hasty man,
and a man in love never do the right thing.''

"'After thus deliberating they all went to the lion. "'Have you found anything to eat?'" the lion asked. "'We've done our best,' they replied, "'but we haven't found a thing!' "'Well,' said the lion, "how are we to keep alive now?' "'Sire,' said the crow, "if we don't get our natural food we'll all surely die.' "'And what,' asked the lion, "is our natural food?'" "Pretty-ears!'" whispered the crow in the lion's ear.
"The lion touched the earth and covered his ears in horror. "We've given him a pledge of security," he said, "and we must stand by it. How can we eat him? For

Not gifts of land nor gifts of gold,
not gifts of cattle nor gifts of food
are said to be the greatest gift.
Of all gifts greatest is the gift of safety.

Moreover

The merit of the horse-sacrifice
and the fulfilment of all desires
come to the man who protects
those who take refuge with him."

"True!" said the crow. "Our lord must not kill him. But there's no reason why we shouldn't so arrange things that he offers his body voluntarily." At this the lion kept silence. So when a suitable occasion offered the crow found a pretext to bring them all into the lion's presence. "Sire," he said, "however hard we try we can find no food. Your Majesty is weak from days of fasting. So now make a meal of my flesh, for

All subjects are dependent on their lord.
Only well-rooted trees bear fruit,
and only when the king is strong
dom men's works prosper."

"I'd rather die myself than do such a thing!" said the lion.

Then the jackal made the same offer. "Never!" the lion replied.

The tiger next spoke up. "Let my lord live on my own body!" he said. "Such a thing can never be right!" the lion replied.

Finally Pretty-ears, full of confidence, offered himself in the same way. And, in accordance with his offer, the lion ripped his belly open and they all ate him up.

And that is why I say:
The words of rogues make even the mind of a good man waver.
If he trusts them he dies as Pretty-ears died.

Meanwhile the brāhmaṇ met the third rogue, who spoke to him in the same way. This time he decided that his senses were defective. So he abandoned the goat, performed a ritual ablation, and went home, while the rogues took the goat away and ate it. And so I say:

He who takes a well-spoken knave
to be a man of his own stamp
is fooled by rogues like the brāhmaṇ
who was robbed of his goat."
Pāli Literature

The Pāli language was closer to the speech of the ordinary man than was Sanskrit, and its style was in general simpler; but though they contain many fine passages the Pāli scriptures are largely prosaic and repetitive. The same stock phrases and descriptions, often quite lengthy, occur again and again with a dull monotony which can only be circumvented by drastic abridgement. Yet the narrative portions of the Pāli canon are frequently of much merit. Here for instance, somewhat abridged, is an account of the Buddha’s “Great Going Forth”, a passage of intense dramatic force.

“Then lovely women, decked like the damsels of the gods with every kind of ornament and well trained in dance and song, began to perform. But the Bodhisattva had no taste for dancing, and for a while sleep overcame him. The women thought: ‘He for whose sake we danced and sang has fallen asleep—why should we trouble ourselves further?’ And they put up their instruments and lay down. The lamps of scented oil burned on.

“The Bodhisattva awoke and sat cross-legged on his couch. He saw the women with their instruments laid aside, fast asleep. Saliva trickled from the mouths of some; some were covered in sweat; some ground their teeth in sleep; some snored; the garments of some were in disarray, so that they repulsively showed their private parts. When he saw them thus in their dishevelment he was more than ever disgusted with the life of passion. The great hall, decked like the heavenly palace of Indra, seemed to him like a charnel ground full of scattered corpses. Life seemed as fleeting as a house on fire. ‘How wretched it all is! How afflicted it all is!’ he cried, and his mind was set even more strongly on asceticism. ‘Today I must leave on the Great Going Forth,’ he thought, and he rose from his bed and went to the door.

“There lay Channa, his head on the threshold. ‘Today I must go forth on the Great Going Forth,’ he said, ‘get ready my horse’. . . . When he had thus sent Channa he thought ‘I will see my son’, and he went to the apartments of the Mother of Rāhula, and opened the bedroom door. A little lamp of scented oil burned in the inner room. The Mother of Rāhula was sleeping on a bed thickly strewn with flowers, with her son’s head on her arm. The Bodhisattva set one foot on the threshold and stood gazing at them. ‘If I move her hand and take up my son I shall waken the queen,’ he thought, ‘and then I shall not be able to go. When I am a Buddha I will come back and see my son.’ And he left the palace.”

As a further example of Pāli prose we give a Jātaka tale. This story, inculcating the fickleness of women, has of course no religious value and its origin is certainly secular, but we give its framework, in order that the reader may see how the most unpromising material was pressed into service for religious purposes. This story is typical of the terse dry style of the collection, and of the tales of
marvels which were very popular in India then as now. The reader will recall that the verses are the original, round which the story itself is built as a sort of commentary.

"The Master, who was living at Jeta's Grove at the time, told this story in connexion with a backsliding brother. The Master asked him if he wanted to return to the world and regretted taking orders. 'It's all because of the wiles of women,' the monk answered. 'Brother,' said the Master, 'it's impossible to keep on your guard against women! Wise men of old couldn't guard against them, even when they dwelt in the realms of the suparnas.'* And when the brother pressed him the Master told an old story.

"In former times King Tamba ruled the kingdom of Vārāṇaśī. He had a chief queen named Sussondi, a woman of the utmost beauty. The Bodhisattva was born then as a suparna. At that time there was an island of serpents called the Island of Seruma. In that island the Bodhisattva dwelt in a palace of suparnas.

"One day he went to Vārāṇaśī in human guise, and gambled with King Tamba. The attendants saw how fair he was, and told Sussondi that a handsome man was gambling with the King. She wanted to see him, so one day she put on all her ornaments and came to the gambling-hall, where, standing among her maids, she watched him. And then he saw the Queen. The two fell in love with one another. The King of the Suparnas stirred up a magic wind in the city, and everyone rushed from the royal palace, fearing that it might fall. With his magic power he created darkness, seized the Queen, and flew to his palace in the Isle of Serpents.

"Nobody knew where Sussondi had gone, but the Suparna took his pleasure of her and went back to play with the King. Now the King had a minstrel named Sagga. Not knowing what had happened to the Queen he said to the minstrel, 'Go and seek over land and sea, and find out where the Queen has gone.' So he took money for his journey and, starting in the suburbs, he sought everywhere until he came to Bhṛgukaccha. Just then some merchants of Bhṛgukaccha were setting out by ship for the Land of Gold (? Burma). He went up to them and said, 'I'm a minstrel. If you'll remit my fare and take me with you I'll make music for you.' They agreed, took him aboard, and set sail.

"When the ship was well under way they called him to make music for them. 'I'd willingly make music for you,' he said, 'but if I did the fish would leap out of the water and smash your ship'. "When a mere man makes music the fish don't get excited," they said, "so tune up!" "Then don't blame me for anything that may happen," he said, and he tuned his lute and made music, with strings and voice in perfect unison. The fish heard the sound, and leapt with excitement. Then a sea-monster (makara) leapt from the sea, fell on the ship, and smashed it to pieces. Sagga lay on a plank and drifted with the wind to the Isle of Serpents, and landed by a banyan tree near the palace of the King of the Suparnas.

"Now the King of the Suparnas had gone away to play dice, and so

* A class of large mythical bird, of whom Garuḍa (p. 303) is the chief.
Queen Sussondi had come down from the palace and was walking on the shore; and she saw and recognized Sagga the minstrel, and asked him how he came. He told her all his story. She told him not to be afraid, and comforted him, and clasped him in her arms, and had him taken to the palace, where she laid him on a couch. When he was revived she gave him fine food, bathed him in sweetly scented water, dressed him in fine clothes, adorned him with beautiful fragrant flowers, and again made him rest on the fine couch. So she cared for him, and whenever the King of the Suparpa returned she hid him; then, as soon as he went again, she took passionate pleasure with him.

"When a month and half a month had passed, merchants from Varanasi landed on that island at the foot of the banyan tree in search of fuel and water. He boarded their ship, went back to Varanasi, and saw the King while he was gambling. Then he took his lute, and, making music, sang the first stanza:

"There blows the scent of timira trees
with the sounding of the evil sea,
but Sussondi is far away.
Tamba, desires torment me!"

"When he heard this, the Suparna sang the second stanza:

"How did you cross the ocean?
How came you to see Seruma?
How was it, Sagga,
that she and you did meet?"

"Then Sagga sang three stanzas:

"From Bhrgukaccha there sailed
traders in search of wealth.
A monster broke their ship.
I floated on a plank.

"In her soft and tender lap
ever fragrant with sandal
the gentle lady pillowed me,
as a mother her own son.

"This you should know, King Tamba,
the fair-eyed lady gave me
food with her own hands,
and drink, and raiment, and a bed."

"Even as the minstrel sang the Suparna was filled with regret. "Though I dwelt in the Palace of the Suparnas," he thought, "I could not keep her! What is the wanton to me?" So he brought her back, gave her to the King, and went away. And he never came again."

"When the story was over the Master declared the Four Noble Truths (p. 271), and identified the births. . . . Ananda (p. 269) was the King of Varanasi, and I was the King of the Suparna." "48
As examples of Pāli poetry we give a few verses from the "Songs of the Elder Monks and Nuns" (Theragāthā and Therigāthā), a collection of poems ascribed, falsely no doubt, to the great disciples of the Buddha in the early days of the Order. The style of these poems is simpler than that of courtly Sanskrit literature, and suggests the influence of popular song. The first is attributed to Ambapāli, the beautiful courtesan of Vaiśāli who became a Buddhist nun.

"Black and glossy as a bee and curled was my hair; now in old age it is just like hemp or bark-cloth.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful. . . .

"My hair clustered with flowers was like a box of sweet perfume; now in old age it stinks like a rabbit's pelt.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful . . .

"Once my eyebrows were lovely, as though drawn by an artist; now in old age they are overhung with wrinkles.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful . . .

"Dark and long-lidded, my eyes were bright and flashing as jewels; now in old age they are dulled and dim.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful . . .

"My voice was as sweet as the cuckoo's, who flies in the woodland thicket; now in old age it is broken and stammering.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful . . .

"Once my hands were smooth and soft, and bright with jewels and gold; now in old age they twist like roots.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful . . .

"Once my body was lovely as polished gold; now in old age it is covered all over with tiny wrinkles.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful . . .

"Once my two feet were soft, as though filled with down; now in old age they are cracked and wizened.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful . . .

"Such was my body once. Now it is weary and tottering, the home of many ills, an old house with flaking plaster.
Not otherwise is the word of the truthful." 

Few ancient Indian poems show such a deep love of nature as some of these verses, ascribed to pious monks of the 5th century B.C.
**When the drum of the clouds thunders in heaven,**  
and all the ways of the birds are thick with rain,  
the monk sits in the hills in ecstasy  
and finds no joy greater than this.

**When by rivers covered with flowers,**  
and gaily adorned with reeds of varied hue,  
the goodly monk sits on the bank in ecstasy  
he finds no joy greater than this.

**When the rain pours down at night,**  
and elephants trumpet in the distant thickets,  
the monk sits in the hills in ecstasy,  
and finds no joy greater than this."**46

**When the crane with clear pale wing**  
flies in fear from the black cloud,  
seeking shelter and finding none,  
The river Ajakaraṇī gives me joy.

**Who would not love**  
the rose-apple trees  
fair on either bank  
beside the great cavern?

**Freed from the fear of flocks of cranes**  
The frogs croak softly now.  
This is no time to leave the hills and streams!  
Safe, good and pleasant is Ajakaraṇī."**46

As an example of Pāli descriptive poetry we give a stirring passage  
from the Ceylon Chronicle, the *Mahāvamsa*, describing the capture of  
Vijitanagara, the capital of the Tamil invader Elāra, by the Sinhalese  
national hero, King Duṭṭhagāmanī (161–137 B.C.), with the aid of his  
favourite elephant, Kaṇḍula.

**"The city had three moats,**  
and was guarded by a high wall.  
Its gate was covered with iron  
hard for foes to shatter.

**"The elephant knelt on his knees**  
and, battering with his tusks  
stone and mortar and brick,  
he attacked the iron gate."
"The Tamils from the watch-tower
threw missiles of every kind,
balls of red-hot iron
and [vessels of] molten pitch.

"Down fell the smoking pitch
upon Kaṇḍula's back.
In anguish of pain he fled
and plunged in a pool of water.

"'This is no drinking bout!'
cried Gothalimbara.
'Go, batter the iron gate!
Batter down the gate!!'

"In his pride the best of tuskers
took heart and trumpeted loud.
He reared up out of the water
and stood on the bank defiant.

"The elephant-doctor washed away
the pitch, and put on balm.
The King mounted the elephant
and rubbed his brow with his hand.

"'Dear Kaṇḍula, I'll make you
the lord of all Ceylon!' he said, and the beast was cheered,
and was fed with the best of fodder.

"He was covered with a cloth,
and he was armoured well
with armour for his back
of seven-fold buffalo hide.

"On the armour was placed
a skin soaked in oil.
Then, trumpeting like thunder,
he came on, fearless of danger.

"He pierced the door with his tusks.
With his feet he trampled the threshold.
And the gate and the lintel
crashed loudly to the earth." 47
Prakrit Literature

Space will not permit more than a brief reference to the Prakrit scriptures of the Jainas, examples of which we have already quoted (p. 296f). In general they have little literary value. Like Jainism itself they tend to be arid, and, like the Pali scriptures but in even greater measure, they repeat lengthy stock phrases and descriptions, which may have had some mnemonic value but which to the modern reader are very irritating. Lengthy descriptions of the Tirthankaras, of pious monks, mighty kings, wealthy merchants, prosperous cities etc. occur over and over again, in exactly the same words throughout the canon, and give it a flavour of uninspired dryness. The style is somewhat more ornate than that of the Pali scriptures, and closer to courtly Sanskrit.

The poetry of the Jainas is better than their prose. In this connexion we cannot refrain from quoting a remarkable poem, which is one of the most humorous things in ancient Indian literature, and which, by some lucky chance, has found its way into the Jaina canon among the austere pages of the Sutakrtianga. It is intended as a warning of the grim fate in store for the backsliding monk, and throws a most unexpected light on one aspect of Indian marriage. Our translation is rather free, but we have tried to keep some of the lively vernacular style of the original.

"A celibate monk shouldn't fall in love,
    and though he hankers after pleasure he should hold himself in check
    for these are the pleasures
    which some monks enjoy.

"If a monk breaks his vows,
    and falls for a woman,
    she upbraids him and raises her foot to him,
    and kicks him on the head.

"Monk, if you won't live with me
    as husband and wife,
    I'll pull out my hair and become a nun,
    for you shall not live without me!"

"But when she has him in her clutches
    it's all housework and errands!
    'Fetch a knife to cut this gourd!'
    'Get me some fresh fruit!'

"'We want wood to boil the greens,
    and for a fire in the evening!'
    'Now paint my feet!'
    'Come and massage my back!'"
"'Get me my lip-salve!'  
'Find my sunshade and slippers!'  
'I want a knife to cut these leaves!'  
'Take my robe and have it dyed blue!'...  

"'Fetch me my tweezers and my comb!'  
'Get me a ribbon to tie my hair!'  
'Now pass me my looking-glass!'  
Go and fetch me my toothbrush!'...  

"'Fetch the pot and the drum and the rag-ball,  
for our little boy to play with!'  
'Monk, the rains are on the way,  
patch the roof of the house and look to the stores!'  

"'See to getting that chair re-upholstered!  
Fetch my wooden-soled slippers to go out walking!'  
So pregnant women boss their husbands,  
just as though they were household slaves.  

"'When a child is born, the reward of their labours,  
she makes the father hold the baby.  
And sometimes the fathers of sons  
stagger under their burdens like camels.  

"'They get up at night, as though they were nurses,  
to lull the howling child to sleep,  
and, though they are shamefaced about it,  
scrub dirty garments, just like washermen...  

"'So, monks, resist the wiles of women,  
avoid their friendship and company.  
The little pleasure you get from them  
will only lead you into trouble!""  

A number of medieval works of a secular nature were written in Prākrit, chief of which are the poems "The Building of the Causeway" (Setubandha), describing Rāma's invasion of Ceylon and falsely ascribed to Kālidāsa; "The Slaying of the King of Bengal" (Gaudāvadha), a long panegyric by the 8th-century poet Vākpati, describing the exploits of Yaśovarman, king of Kānyakubja (p. 71); and a drama named after its heroine, Karpūramañjarī, by the 10th-century dramatist Rājaśekhara. These works, though not without merit, are indistinguishable in style and content from comparable Sanskrit productions, and need not detain us.
The most important literary work in Prākrit is the "Seven Hundred" (Saptasataka) of Hāla. This is a large collection of self-contained stanzas of great charm and beauty, in the Aryā metre (p. 513f). Their traditional author was the shadowy Sātavāhana king Hāla, who ruled in the Deccan in the 1st century A.D., but in fact many of these verses seem considerably later, and they must be looked on as anonymous. They are notable for their conciseness; like Amaru, their authors were able to suggest a whole story in four short lines. This great economy of words and masterly use of suggestion would indicate that the verses were written for a highly educated literary audience; but they contain simple and natural descriptions and references to the lives of peasants and the lower classes, which point to popular influence. The treatment of the love affairs of country folk reminds us of early Tamil poetry, and suggests that "Hāla" may have tapped a widely diffused source in South Indian folksong.

"Last night with scorn the lady gave the wanderer straw for his bed.
This morning she gathers it together, weeping.""

"'This morning, my friend, I heard a man singing,
and his song reminded me of my lover,
and opened all the wounds
that the shafts of the Love-god had made in my heart.'"

"'Waiting for you, the first half of the night passed like a moment.
The rest was like a year,
for I was sunk in grief.'"

"'When the season of rains, with its high clouds,*
has passed like youth,
the earliest single kāsa flower
comes, like a grey hair on the earth.'"

"'Ungrateful lover, still I see the mud
in the village street,
which, on a rainy night,
I trod for your sake, shameless one!'"

Tamil Literature

The oldest Tamil literature goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era. Its dating is still a matter of some dispute but it

* There is a pun here on pōekhäar, which may mean either "clouds" or "breasts".
seems almost certain that the most ancient stratum was composed before the great Pallava dynasty of Kānci became dominant in the Tamil Land in the 6th century, and it is probably some centuries older than this.

Tamil tradition tells of three literary academies (śaṅgam) which met at Madurai. The first of these was attended by gods and legendary sages, and all its works have perished. Of the second, there survives only the early Tamil grammar, Tolkāppiyam. The poets of the Third Śaṅgam, on the other hand, wrote the “Eight Anthologies” (Ettutogai), which are the greatest monument of ancient Tamil literature, as well as a number of later works. Some authorities have doubted the tradition of the Śaṅgams, and it is almost certain that the grammar Tolkāppiyam, attributed to the Second Śaṅgam, is later than many of the poems of the Third. But the tradition of the Śaṅgams, which is a strongly held one, has no parallel in Northern legend, and we may believe that the bards of the Tamil Land, who wandered over the country enjoying the patronage of chieftains and villagers alike, would meet from time to time in the city of Madurai for great festivals of poetry and music, and that many of the verses of the Anthologies were recited there.

The poetry of the “Eight Anthologies” is little known outside the land of its origin, and its language is so archaic that the modern educated Tamil cannot read it without special study. The relation of the language of the Śaṅgam literature to Tamil as it is now written is perhaps similar to that of Piers Plowman to modern English. The tradition of Tamil poetry at the time of the composition of these works must already have been a long one, for the poetic conventions finally fixed in the Tolkāppiyam had almost reached their finished form even in the earliest poems of the Anthologies. But their style is much nearer that of folk literature than is the style of courtly Sanskrit. The life of the peasant and the scenes of the countryside, the bustle of the towns and the ruthlessness of war, are here depicted as though from direct experience, and with no formal unrealistic idealization.

Together the “Eight Anthologies” make up a very large body of poetic literature, and contain well over 2,000 poems, ascribed to more than 200 authors. To them must be added “The Ten Songs” (Pattuppattu), containing ten longer poems of similar style but somewhat later date. Until the end of the last century this great collection was

* Naṟṟṟai: 400 short poems on love, each of from nine to twelve lines; Kurunṭogai, 400 love poems of from four to eight lines each; Ainguruṟṟu, 500 short erotic poems; Padīṟṟṟṟṟu, a short collection of eight (originally ten) poems, each of ten verses, in praise of the king of the Cēra country (Kerala); Paripāḷai, twenty-four (originally seventy) poems in praise of gods; Kalittogai, 150 love poems; Aganṟṟṟṟu, 400 love-lyrics of varying length; and Purundṟṟṟu, 400 poems in praise of kings.
almost forgotten, even by the Tamils themselves; only within the last fifty years have the rare manuscripts containing it been edited and given to the world. Much is still untranslated, and a full and thorough study of the Sañgam literature from the critical and historical point of view has yet to be made.

Very early the Tamils developed the passion for classification which is noticeable in many aspects of ancient Indian learning. Poetry was divided into two main groups: “internal” (agam), dealing with love, and “external” (puram), dealing with the praise of kings. A further division was made according to the region of the Tamil Land to which the poem referred or was most appropriate. Conventionally there were five regions (tiṅai): the hills (kuriñji), the dry lands (pālai), the jungle and woodland (mullai), the cultivated plains (marudam), and the coast (neydai). Each was connected with some special aspect of love or war; thus the hills were the scene of poems on pre-nuptial love and on cattle-raiding; the dry lands, of those on the long separation of lovers and on the laying waste of the countryside; the jungle, on the brief parting of lovers and on raiding expeditions; the valleys, on post-nuptial love or the wiles of courtisans and on siege; and the seacoast, on the parting of fishermen’s wives from their lords and on pitched battle. To each region were attributed its own appropriate flowers, animals and people. Every poem of the “Eight Anthologies” was classified in one of the five sections, but much of the poetry was written with little regard to this formal classification.

A unique feature of Tamil poetry is the initial rhyme or assonance. This does not appear in the earliest Tamil literature, but by the end of the Sañgam period it was quite regular. The first syllable or syllables of each couplet must rhyme. Thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{IŠAI TAĐ} & \text{ eniñum iyarriñor árral} \\
\text{AŠAI TAĐu nirpadām ānmai; išaiuygal} \\
\text{KANDARirai alaikkuk kānal an tañ śrīpā} \\
\text{PENDIRum vālārō marru.}''
\end{align*}
\]

"Though you fail, to work and struggle,
unwaveringly steadfast—this is manliness.

Lord of the cool and lovely shore, where the waves shake the thorny groves!

Will not even women flourish in prosperity?"^50

This initial assonance, in some poems continued through four or more lines, is never to be found in the poetry of Sanskritic languages, or, as far as we know, in that of any other language. Its effect, a little strange at first, rapidly becomes pleasant to the reader, and to the Tamil it is as enjoyable as the end rhyme of Western poetry.
We give a brief anthology of short poems and extracts from this wonderful literature.

Here a mother tells of her son, who has gone to war.

"If you lean against the pillar of my little home
and ask the whereabouts of my son,
I reply, 'I cannot tell you'.
Behold, like a tiger's cavern of rock,
the womb that bore him!
You will find him on the field of war."

The three following poems are attributed to the poetess Avvaiyār.

"It charms not like the harp,
it accords not with the time-beat,
it conveys no meaning,
but the prattling of a son
brings bliss to his father.
So, O King Neḍumāṅ Afji,
through the grace of your favour
my empty words are imbued with meaning.
O King, you have overcome the enemy's forts,
though unscaleable were their walls."

"To allow the little children of the village
to wash clean its white tusks,
the huge elephant will lie on the river bank.
O great King, you favour me like that!
But to approach an elephant in rut is death,
and you are death to your foes, O King!"

Here Avvaiyār compares the wealth of the luxurious king of Toṇḍai (Kāñci) with that of her own warlike chief.

"Bedecked with peacock-feathers, garlanded with flowers,
fine are the Toṇḍai spears in the spacious armoury,
with their strong shafts, and sharp points bright with ghee.
The weapons of my king are blunt with fighting,
broken their points through parrying the thrusts of the foe.
The swordsmith's forge is busy with repairs.
My king, when rich, freely gives food away,
when poor he messes with his men.
He is the head of the family of the poor,
yet great is he, with his sharp-pointed spear."
"O bee, fair of wing, ever in search of flower-garlands,
tell me not what I fain would hear, but what you really saw!
Among all the flowers you know is any more fragrant
than the tresses of my lady of the close-set teeth?
Graceful as the peacock she dwells, rich in love, with me!"66

"Ever anew aches my heart!
Again and again I brush off the burning tears.
My love, once peaceful at my side, grows restless.
My heart aches!"67

"In the gathering night
hushed of speech all men sweetly sleep.
Devoid of wrath,
countless people in the world are resting.
I alone sleep not!"68

Here a mother asks an ascetic the whereabouts of her daughter,
who has eloped with her lover. The sage offers her this consolation:

"Save to the wearer of its scent,
of what use is the sandalwood tree,
even to the mountains amid which it was born?
If you ponder the matter, it is so with your daughter.

"Except to the wearer of it
of what avail is the highly prized white pearl,
even to the sea in which it was reared?
If you ponder the matter, it is so with your daughter."69

Here a girl speaks to her playmate:

"What bright bracelets you have! Do listen!
As I was playing in the road
he kicked over my mud castle with his foot,
and snatched the garland from my head,
and ran away with my striped ball.
How he teased me, the naughty boy!

"Another day my mother and I
were together, when a voice called out:
'Whoever's at home, please give me some water!'
Mother said to me: 'My dear,
fill the gilded vessel, and give him water to drink!'
I went out, not knowing who it was.
He caught my wrist, with the bangles on, and squeezed it,
and I was frightened, and cried out:
"Mother, just look what he's done!"
She was very upset, and hurried down,
but I told her he'd hiccups because of the water.
He looked at me as if he could kill me,
but then the rogue made friends with a smile."\textsuperscript{60}

Here a newly married girl makes her first attempts at cooking:

"Her fingers, slender as the \textit{kāndaḷ} blossom, had been squeezing the new curds.
Her clothes had not been washed since she wiped her fingers on them.
The appetizing steam had got into her lily-like eyes.
Yet, as she rubbed them, he just said, 'The curry you've cooked is delicious.'
He of the bright brow was most pleased with what he was eating."\textsuperscript{61}

Striking touches of natural description often illumine the rather monotonous panegyrics:

"Though milk turn sour [in the udder], though day turn to night,
though the path of the Vedas lead men astray,
may you stand unshaken, long famed, with loyal supporters, that, in the foothills of the mountains,
the large-eyed mother doe with her small-headed fawn
may sleep secure at evening by the flame of the three fires
of hermits who perform hard penances."\textsuperscript{62}

... ...

"Unfalling in the hard tasks of war,
O king, like death, for whom there is no cure,
though the earth be moved from her place, your name is eternal—
you, whose legs wear golden anklets, whose broad breast
is spread with drying sandal-paste!
In an uninhabited land, a land of bitter hardship,
a land without water, a land of long tracks,
your valiant warriors fight, unerring in their archery,
gazing afar, with their hands hung over their eyes.
There, in the silk-cotton tree, where roads diverge,
the eagle, with trim feathers and crooked beak,
wails over the new cairns of those who have shot their arrows."\textsuperscript{63}

Here a girl consoles her lovelorn friend:

"'The toiling fishermen catch the shoals
in their close-meshed nets, and the soft-headed prawn,
thin as the cassia bud in the forest.

'Like hunters who chase the deer in the woods
young fishermen chase in the waste of the waters
the saw-toothed shark, and return with meat
LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

""They return to the shore and unload on the sand,
where the wind plays wild across the salt pans,
and soon the street of the fishing village
will ring with the wheels of your lover's chariot.""64

A young man praises his sweetheart's cooking:

""At every post before the house
is tied the gentle calf of a crooked-horned buffalo.
There dwells my sweetheart, curving and lovely,
languid of gaze, with big round earrings,
and little rings on her tiny fingers.

""She has cut the leaves of the garden plantain
and split them in pieces down the stalk
to serve as platters for the meal.
Her eyes are filled with the smoke of cooking.
Her brow, as fair as the crescent moon,
is covered now with drops of sweat.
She wipes it away with the hem of her garment
and stands in the kitchen, and thinks of me.

""Come in then, if you want a good meal!
You'll see her smile and show her tiny
sharp teeth, whom I long to kiss.""65

A village festival:

""The farmers who harvest rice in the hot sun
now leap into the waves of the clear sea.
The sailors, captains of stout craft,
drink strong liquor and dance for joy,
as they clasp the bright-bangled hands of women
who wear garlands of clustering punnai...

""In the cool woods, where the bees seek flowers,
women, bright-bangled and garlanded, drink
the sap of the palm and the pale sugar-cane,
and the juice of the coconut which grows in the sand,
then running they plunge into the sea.""66

A poignant description of famine:

""The hearth has forgotten cooking:
It is overgrown with moss and mould.
The woman, thin with hunger,
has breasts like wrinkled bladders.
Their nipples are quite dry,
but the child chews them, weeping.
She looks down at his face
and tears hang on her lashes.""67
Our final quotation from the "Eight Anthologies" is the plaint of a neglected wife:

"My garment smells of ghee and frying curry, and is stained with dirt and lampblack.

"My shoulders stink with the sweat of the child whom I carry upon them and feed at my breast.

"I cannot face my lord, who, in gay attire, rides in his car to the street of the harlots."98

The next stratum of Tamil literature shows much greater Aryan influence. Aryan religious ideas and practices, not unknown even in the Eight Anthologies, had by now been thoroughly grafted on to the original Tamil heritage, and Jaina influence is prominent. "The Eighteen Minor Works" (Padiñengkilkanakku) are largely gnomic and moralizing in character, the two most famous being the Tirukkurāl, and the Nālaṭiyār. The former, sometimes called the "Bible of the Tamil Land" is a series of brief metrical proverbs on many aspects of life and religion, and we have already quoted some of its aphorisms (p. 341f). We add a few others of a more secular type.

"Vain is the kingdom where are all good things but no love between ruler and ruled."

. . . . .

"Even the hermit ceases his penance if the husbandman folds his arms."

. . . . .

"Earth laughs in scorn at those who plead poverty."

. . . . .

"No food is sweeter than rice-gruel when you have worked for it."

. . . . .

"Wide as the sea is the joy of love, but wider still the sorrow of parting."

. . . . .

"Love is stronger than wine, for the very thought of it intoxicates."

. . . . .

"Sweethearts delight in a lover's quarrel for the greater delight of making it up."99

Nālaṭiyār is more formal and literary in style, and contains verses of much merit and high ethical content.
"Better hatred than the friendship of fools.
Better death than chronic illness.
Better to be killed than soul-destroying contempt.
Better abuse than praise undeserved."

"True housekeeping is to eat a meal
sharing, as far as may be, with friend and foe alike.
The useless men who eat their food alone
will never pass the gate of heaven."

"Though you feed him with care from a golden dish
a dog will always prefer carrion.
Though you deal with the base as you would with the good
their deeds will always show them up."

"Hillmen remember their lovely hills.
Farmers remember their fertile fields.
The good remember another's kindness.
The base recall only fancied slights."

"As a scroll read by one who well understands it,
as wealth to the man of generous spirit,
as a sharp sword in a warrior's hand,
is the beauty of a faithful wife."

"To those who once embraced their lovers
whose broad chests were hung with garlands,
when their loved ones are far away
the thunder sounds like a funeral drum."

By the 6th century Āryan influence had penetrated the whole of the Tamil land, and her kings and chiefs worshipped and supported the gods of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. The indigenous style of poetry was rapidly altering under the influence of Sanskrit, and Tamil poets took to writing long poems which they called by the Sanskrit name kāvyā. The earliest and greatest of these is "The Jewelled Anklet" (Silappāṭigāram), which is still very different from Sanskrit poetry. Though written for an educated audience and in faultless literary style it is near to the life of the people; by comparison realistic, it deals with the lives of two ordinary folk enmeshed in unhappy circumstance, and, unlike the Sanskrit courtly "epic", it sounds a note of true tragedy.

The traditional author of the poem was Ilaṅgōvaḍīgaḷ, a grandson of the great Cōla king Karikālaṉ, who lived in the 1st or 2nd century A.D. The tradition is certainly false, and the poem is several
centuries later. Its author, whoever he was, though a great poet, was not a great storyteller. His tale was well known to his hearers, and he could afford to be irritatingly allusive and terse in important narrative passages, and linger lovingly over interesting description. He successfully drew together all the themes of earlier Tamil poets and welded them into a whole, in the framework of the story of the luckless Kövalan and Kaṇṇagi. Rightly this poem and Kambaṇ’s Rāmāyaṇam are looked on as the national epics of the Tamil people. We give an outline of the story, with a translation, considerably abridged, of its climax, which has a grim force and splendour unparalleled elsewhere in Indian literature. It is imbued with both the ferocity of the early Tamils and their stern respect for justice, and, incidentally, it throws much light on early Tamil political ideas.

Kōvalan, the son of a wealthy merchant of the city of Pugár or Kāvirippaṭṭinam, married Kaṇṇagi, the lovely daughter of another merchant. For some time they lived together happily, until, at a festival at the royal court, Kōvalan met the dancer Mādavi and fell in love with her. He bought her favours and in his infatuation forgot Kaṇṇagi and his home. Gradually he spent all his wealth on the dancer, even to Kaṇṇagi’s jewels. At last he was penniless, and returned repentantly to his uncomplaining wife. Their only fortune was a precious pair of anklets, which she gave to him willingly. With these as their capital they decided to go to the great city of Madurai, where Kōvalan hoped to recoup his fortunes by trade.

On their arrival at Madurai they found shelter in a cottage, and Kōvalan went to the market to sell one of Kaṇṇagi’s anklets. But the queen of Nedujēliyaṇ, king of the Pāṇḍyas, had just been robbed of a similar anklet by a wicked court jeweller. The jeweller happened to see Kōvalan with Kaṇṇagi’s anklet, and immediately seized it and informed the King. Guards were sent to apprehend Kōvalan, who was cut down immediately, without trial. When the news was brought to Kaṇṇagi she fainted away; but she quickly recovered and, with her eyes ablaze with anger, she went out into the town, carrying the remaining anklet in her hand as proof of her husband’s innocence.

“Chaste women of Madurai, listen to me!
Today my sorrows cannot be matched.
Things which should never have happened have befallen me.
How can I bear this injustice?”

“All the folk of the rich city of Madurai
saw her, and were moved by her grief and affliction.
In wonder and sorrow they cried:
‘Wrong that cannot be undone has been done to this lady!'
""Our King's straight sceptre is bent!
    What can this mean?
Lost is the glory of the King Over Kings,
    the Lord of the Umbrella and Spear! . . .

""A new and a mighty goddess
    has come before us,
in her hand a golden anklet!
    What can this mean?

""This woman afflicted and weeping
    from her lovely dark-stained eyes
is as though filled with godhead!
    What can this mean?"

""Thus, raising loud accusing voices,
    the people of Madurai befriended and comforted her,
    the tumultuous throng
    some showed her her husband's body.

""She, the golden vine, beheld him,
    but her he could not see. . . .

""Then the red-rayed sun folded his fiery arms
    and hid behind the great mountain,
    the wide world
    was veiled in darkness.

""In the brief twilight
    Kannagi cried aloud
    and the whole city
    echoed her wailing.

""In the morning she had taken the wreath from his neck
    and decked her hair with its flowers;
in the evening she saw him lying
    in a pool of his own blood.

""But he saw not the agony of her grief
    as she mourned in sorrow and wrath. . . .

""Are there women here? Are there women
    who could bear such wrong
done to their wedded lords?
    Are there women here? Are there such women?
"Are there good men here? Are there good men
who cherish their children
and guard them with care?
Are there men here? Are there such men?

"Is there a god here? Is there a god
in this city of Madurai, where the sword of a king
has slain an innocent man?
Is there a god here? Is there a god?"

"Lamenting thus she clasped her husband's breast,
and it seemed that he rose to his feet and said,
'The full-moon of your face has faded,'
and he stroked her face with his hands.

"She fell to the ground, sobbing and crying,
and clasped her lord's feet with her bangled hands;
and he left behind his human form
and went, surrounded by the gods.

"And, as he went, he said,
'My darling, you must stay!'
'Surely this
was a vision,' she cried.

"I will not join my lord
 till my great wrath is appeased!
I will see the cruel King,
 and ask for his explanation!"

"And she stood on her feet,
er large eyes full of tears,
and, wiping her eyes,
she went to the gate of the palace.

"I saw, alas, I saw in a dream
 the sceptre fall and the royal umbrella.
The bell at the palace gate rang of itself,
while the whole heaven shook in confusion!

"A darkness swallowed the sun,
a rainbow glowed in the night,
and a burning meteor
 crashed to the earth by day."

"Thus spoke the Queen,
and took her maids and her bodyguard,
and went to the King on the lion-throne,
and told him her evil dream."
“Then came a cry from the gate:
  ‘Ho, Gatekeeper! Ho, Gatekeeper!’
Ho, Gatekeeper of the King who has lost wisdom,
  whose evil heart has swerved from justice!!

“Tell the King that a woman with an anklet,
  an anklet from a pair of tinkling anklets,
  a woman who has lost her husband,
  is waiting at the gate.”

“And the gatekeeper went to the King and said:
  ‘A woman waits at the gate.
She is not Korravai, goddess of victory,
  with triumphant spear in her hand. . . .

“Filled with anger, boiling with rage,
  a woman who has lost her husband,
  an anklet of gold in her hand,
  is waiting at the gate.’”

Kannagi was then admitted to the King’s presence.

“‘Cruel King, this I must say. . . .

“‘My lord Kōvalan came
to Madurai to earn wealth,
  and today you have slain him
  as he sold my anklet.’

“‘Lady,’ said the King,
  ‘it is kingly justice
to put to death
  an arrant thief.’”

Then Kannagi showed her anklet to the King. On comparing it very carefully with the remaining anklet of the pair belonging to the Queen, he realized that Kōvalan had been innocent.

“When he saw it the parasol fell from his head
  and the sceptre trembled in his hand.

“‘I am no king,’ he said,
  ‘who have heeded the words of the goldsmith.

“‘I am the thief. For the first time
  I have failed to protect my people.
Now may I die!’
  [And he fell to the ground, dead.]
Then Kannagi said to the Queen:

"If I have always been true to my husband
    I will not suffer this city to flourish,
    but I will destroy it as the King is destroyed!
    Soon you will see that my words are true!"

"And with these words she left the palace,
    and cried out through the city, "Men and women
    of great Madurai of the four temples,
    listen! Listen you gods in heaven!

"Listen to me, you holy sages!
    I curse the capital of the King
    who so cruelly wronged
    my beloved lord!"

"With her own hand she tore the left breast from her body.
    Thrice she surveyed the city of Madurai,
    calling her curse in bitter agony.
    Then she flung her fair breast on the scented street. . . .

"And the burning mouth of the Fire-god opened
    as the gods who guarded the city closed their doors. . . .

"The high priest, the astrologer and the judges,
    the treasurer and the learned councillors,
    the palace servants and the maids,
    stood silent and still as painted pictures

"The elephant-riders and horsemen,
    the charioteers and the foot-soldiers
    with their terrible swords, all fled from the fire
    which raged at the gate of the royal palace. . . .

"And the street of the sellers of grain,
    the street of the chariots, with its bright-coloured garlands,
    and the four quarters of the four classes
    were filled with confusion and flamed like a forest on fire. . .

"In the street of the singing girls
    where so often the tabor had sounded
    with the sweet gentle flute and the tremulous harp . . .
    the dancers, whose halls were destroyed, cried out:

"'Whence comes this woman? Whose daughter is she?
    A single woman, who has lost her husband,
    has conquered the evil King with her anklet,
    and has destroyed our city with fire!'"
At last the patron goddess of the city interceded with Kaññagī, and she agreed to withdraw her curse, and the fire abated. Weak with loss of blood from her self-amputated breast, Kaññagī struggled to a hill outside the city, where after a few days she died, and was reunited with Kōvalaṇ in heaven. Meanwhile the news of her death spread throughout the Tamil Land. She was deified, temples were raised and festivals held in her honour, and she became the patron goddess of wisely loyal and chaste.

A little later than "The Jewelled Anklet" was composed its sequel Manimēgalai, attributed to the poet Sāttan of Madurai. Though by tradition it is the earlier of the two all other evidence suggests the opposite, for it assumes the reader's knowledge of "The Jewelled Anklet", to which it is a sort of Buddhist supplement. "The Jewelled Anklet", though containing many religious and moral lessons, was primarily written to tell a story, while in Manimēgalai the story is a mere framework for philosophical polemic, and the atmosphere of the narrative passages has some of the other-worldly formality of the courtly Sanskrit kāvyā. The heroine, Mañimēgalai, is the daughter of Kōvalaṇ, the hero of "The Jewelled Anklet", by the dancer Mādavi, who became a Buddhist nun on hearing of her former lover's death. The story tells of the love of Prince Udayakumāraṇ for Mañimēgalai, and the miraculous preservation of her chastity. In the end she becomes a Buddhist nun like her mother, and most of the poem is taken up with her discussions with members of various sects, both Hindu and heterodox, and her triumphant refutation of their doctrines.

A third Tamil "epic", Śivaga-sīndāmaṇi, describes the exploits of the hero Śivaga or Jivaka, a superman who excels in every art from archery to the curing of snake-bite, and who wins a new bride for his harem with every feat, only to become a Jaina monk after his many triumphs. The author was a Jaina, Tiruttakkadēvar. His work is fantastic and lacking in any contact with real life; its style is elegant and ornate, and much influenced by courtly Sanskrit. It is definitely later than the other two "epics".

By now Tamil poets were not satisfied with their own traditions, translations and adaptations of various Northern works were made, the most notable of which is Kambaṇ's Rāmāyaṇam, composed in the 9th century. This great poem is still known and loved in the Tamil Land, and is by no means a mere translation of the original, for Kambaṇ adapts themes as he thinks fit, and here and there adds episodes of his own. It is noteworthy that in Kambaṇ's hands the demon Rāvaṇa frequently takes on the proportions of a heroic figure, and contrasts favourably with the rather weak and unimpressive Rāma. Like Milton, Kambaṇ was of the devil's party without knowing
it. The greatest glory of medieval Tamil literature, however, is undoubtedly the hymns of the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite devotional teachers, which are among the great religious literature of the world, and which we have discussed and quoted in another connexion (p. 332ff). Other than these, later Tamil literature produced little of the first order. The canon of the Tamil Śaivites contains work of merit (p. 336), but the adaptations of the Purāṇas and the lengthy commentaries on earlier literature, though not unimportant, need not be discussed here.*

The early literatures of Canarēse, Telugu and Malayālam, which had begun to be written before the end of our period, are less important than that of Tamil, and need not detain us. They appeared at a time when Āryan influence was already thoroughly entrenched, and, though containing many beauties, lack the originality of early Tamil poetry. Thus they cannot aspire to the importance of Tamil, which can claim one of the longest unbroken literary traditions of any of the world's living languages.

Folk Poetry†

The literatures which we have been discussing were all the work of schools with formal conventions and long traditions. Some poetry, obviously, is less formalized than that of classical Sanskrit, and here and there, notably in the verses of the Tamil anthologies and the Prākrit Saptasati, we seem to catch echoes of folk-song and popular oral literature. No Indian writer however, as far as we know, thought fit to record the folk-song of ancient India, which, if we are to judge by modern analogy, must have been plentiful and of high quality. But a few verses have been preserved in Chinese translation, which may well be the words of genuine folk-songs of pre-Gupta times.

That part of the Buddhist canon called Samyutta Nikāya (p. 269) was first translated into Chinese about A.D. 440, from a manuscript acquired in Ceylon by Fa-hsien in 411. At the end of the book occurs a section which is not to be found in the Pāli version as it exists at

* Perhaps the greatest literary figure in later Tamil was Viramillunijar (1680–1767), a pseudonym of Father Costanzio Bechi, an Italian Jesuit who taught for thirty-six years in the Tamil country. Like many early Christian missionaries, he lived in wholly Indian fashion and attained a complete mastery of the Tamil language and literary conventions. It is doubtful if any European before or since has gained so profound a knowledge of an Indian language. Bechi's long poem Tembhuvan tells stories from the Old and New Testaments in ornately beautiful Tamil. His style and the treatment of his themes were altogether in keeping with tradition, but the influence of Tasso has been traced in his work.

† The material for this section, together with the translations of the Chinese verses, has been provided by Dr Arthur Waley. We are much indebted to him for the honour of being permitted to publish them here for the first time.
present, but which must have been included in Fa-hsien's manuscript. Probably the verses here quoted were sung in India between the time of the codification of the Pāli canon in the 1st century B.C. (p. 268) and the beginning of the 5th century A.D.

The passage in question describes a monk, who hears the singing of various secular songs and converts them to Buddhist purposes by comparatively slight alterations. Thus the first verse quoted is capped by the monk with a pious wish that he may gently flow to Nirvāṇa, and so on.

The song of a lady who got on badly with her "in-laws":

"O river Ganges, all I now want
is to go with your waters that flow gently to the sea;
that never again by my father- and mother-in-law
I may at every turn be scolded and abused."

The song of a melon-thief:

"Bright moon, I beg you not to come out,
    Wait where you are till I have cut these melons.
But when I have got my melons safely away,
    then come out or not, just as you please."

The song of a poor man:

"So long as I own just one pig,
    and a single jar full of good wine,
    one cup to pour the wine into,
    and someone to fill my cup again and again—
    so long as I own just as much as that,
    there is nothing else that bothers me at all."

The song of a girl who, going to a tryst with her lover on a rainy night, slips and falls in the mud:

"The hair of my head is all loose and astray;
    my lovely necklace has fallen in the deep mud.
My rings and bracelets are all broken and spoiled;
    when I come to my lover, what shall I give him to wear?"

The song of a lover, picnicking with his mistress:

"With thoughts of love, all for our ease and pleasure,
    we loiter under the shade of the green trees.
The running stream flows swift and clear,
    the sound of my zither is very tuneful and sweet.
The spring weather is just right for our jaunt;
    what happiness could there be greater than ours?"
Advice to a dove:

"Dove, my bird, you must lay up your stores—
seamum-seed, rice, millet and the rest—
and take them to a tree on the very top of the hill,
and make yourself a nest-cavern high and bright.
Then when Heaven sends the rainy season
you will be sure of lodging, food and drink."