the situation by returning the fatal ornament. An escape from his home is the only alternative left for him. In his wanderings he falls in love with a prostitute. His wife who represents the spirit of sacrifice and the ideal of Indian womanhood is washed out in his separation. The prostitute, when she comes to know of it, restores him to his wife and allows herself to be washed away by a stream. It is a bold stroke of sacrifice on the part of a prostitute. The theme thus, includes the transformation of a 'public woman'. A minor theme portrays the suffering of a young widow who was married to an old and prosperous lawyer. She is a great friend of the hero’s wife and helps her in her misery. Her own lot is equally miserable; but she quits the world by committing suicide. It is the author’s universal device to get rid of characters whom he cannot otherwise dispense with.

113. Rāmākānt, the hero, is a significant departure from his conception of heroes in the previous novels. He is not represented as a caricatural simplification of idealistic features which do not undergo a change. He is not of one piece, entirely good or entirely bad; but a creature of circumstances, education, and a development of events. A chicken-hearted young man belonging to the lower middle-class, and a victim of ‘inferiority complex’, he tries to cover his poverty and shield his egoism by telling lies which do not carry him

33 Appendix B Letter 1 (2).
very far. At last he is caught in his own web; but he deserves sympathy for his weaknesses which are essentially human. He is not so much patterned and grouped by the author into a melodramatic plot which is less abundant in the present novel. Premchand has matured his experience of life and mastered the realistic technique of constructive arrangement. As before he does not obviously create events which might astound the reader or play upon his emotions. The theatrical instinct is less marked in this novel. In his last novel, 'Godān' (1936) he has achieved such a remarkable control over this instinct that there are very few notes which might jar on the ears of the sensitive reader. As this book is beyond the scope of the present inquiry it is not desirable to discuss how this great novel has been shorn of all extravagant notes which are to be found in his previous novels. 'Godān' glows in its mellow maturity and makes a definite advance in the realistic tendency in fiction.

114. The novels of Premchand, judged by Western standards undoubtedly suffer from serious artistic flaws. The defective technique and melodramatic denouements have been referred to in his novels. No one can read them without being irritated, occasionally exasperated by his crude humour, strange coincidences, improbable situations; yet these blemishes are easily explained. Premchand, it must be remembered inherited no

34 Article No. 104, 106, 110, 111.
tradition; he had to create his own technique. In his early youth he had nourished his appetite on the novels of Devikī Nandan Khatri and others. It is no wonder then that he could not shake off the crude devices of his predecessors. Thomas Hardy presents a striking resemblance to him in his artistic development. Hardy also could never completely throw off the influence of Wilkie Collins even in his best works. As his faculties matured, he employed these devices less and less; but his critics have rightly complained that Hardy’s art is not completely satisfying, that the frequency of chances, coincidences, and melodramatic interludes considerably detract from his art. Premchand’s art grew mature as he grew in years. And he would have revealed artistic maturity of an exceptionally high order, had gods been kinder to him and given him a few more years to live. What he might have been able to achieve he gave a glimpse—only a glimpse—in his last novel. (‘Godān’). It is an irony of fate that he died at a moment when his literary apprenticeship had ended, when he had attained to full maturity.

115. Premchand is at his greatest when he is dealing with the lower middle-class and the peasants. He can claim to rank with Reymont in the vivid and sympathetic study of the life of peasants. The background of his best novels is the life of peasants. He has

35 In ‘Kafan’ (1937) read ‘Merā Jivana’.
36 ‘The Peasants’ for which he was awarded the Noble Prize in Literature.
painted for us with superb skill their life—their stoic
indifference to suffering, their generosity, nobility,
their meanness, imbecility, cruelty and lust......The
rest of his novels are a study in contemporary middle-
class life. He knew this class more intimately even than
he knew the peasants. He himself belonged to this
class.

Premchand portrays characters, not character, except in his last novel.37 He has created several
characters, but hardly a character. His fundamental
aim is not characterisation, but essentially reformation.
His interest is centred in a moral or a social problem,
not in the subtleties and contradictions of psychology.
The range is undoubtedly wide; but Premchand is
seldom successful with his upper middle-class and aristo-
cracy.38 His aristocracy is effete, destitute, subservient
to authority, lacking in all elements which go to make
up character.39 The main reason why he could not, in
spite of his undoubted talents, create an immortal char-
acter, lies in his wrong conception of the function of
art. The streak of idealism in him led him into making
a hero who is deeply, too deeply, inspired by ideals to
be genuinely human and he has created other secondary
characters around him to bring out his idealism.40 The
result is disaster. His heroes are more angelic than

37 The character of Har and his wife.
38 The philosopher's group in the last novel.
39 The Landlords.
40 Appendix B Letter 1 (2).
human. They spurn human weaknesses like love. They are all consecrated souls; their one aim in life is to serve with single-minded devotion the cause of the poor. He has created neither loveable heroes nor delightful rogues and scoundrels. He makes his heroes behave in an ideal way, without realising the limitations of human nature, without penetrating into the half-shades and half-lights of a human heart.

The dialogue of middle-class characters is not individual and characteristic of them. Its real nature is destroyed by its many-paged length. It is generally clogged by explanatory purpose. There is little wit, humour, or brightness in it. The nineteenth century technique of the novel is employed by him in which the talk is careful, strained, and laborious. It is generally given to argument and sermonette. In a technical discussion, explanation, or argument, a long speech can be tolerated; but in a novel it is either entirely omitted or hastily skinned over. In these novels the dialogue is generally flat, extensive and dead. The dialogue of middle-class characters presents a refreshing contrast to the dialect of peasants and villagers. It is sparingly employed to suggest the tone of their speech.41

116. Premchand is almost a socialist, but his socialism is reared on the bedrock, partly of a genuine intellectual conviction and mostly of a sensitive high-string emotional temperament. His novels are virtually

41 In 'Goūn', 'Raṅghbhūmi,' 'Pramāśrama'. 
a crusade against all forms of bourgeois exploitation of the peasants and labourers. The reprehensible practices of the Indian barbasses, the inhuman oppression of the landlords, the vicious system of land revenue—all these have been mercilessly satirised and exposed.\textsuperscript{42}

The author feels the woes of the peasants so acutely that he seems to tremble at the injustices of the rich. He hates suffering and cruelty. He has in the widest measure what Santayana calls charity with reference to Charles Dickens. He denounces injustice with all the forensic eloquence of a prophet. This partiality for the poor and the weak lend all his novels a high emotional tone. As he has seen the stark realities, the iron has entered his soul. He paints his exploiters in the darkest possible colours. He fails to realise that most people are neither cruel nor exploiters by intention; but they are bound down by the system. It is a standing complaint against him that he has never been able to do full justice to the upper-middle-class. The fact is that he is too good a propagandist to retain the rigidity of artistic treatment.

117. Premchand's socialism is based on a deep respect for human personality. He believes in equal opportunities for all.\textsuperscript{43} This ideal of equality is reiterated very frequently in all his novels. He has not generally painted the industrial world; but in a few

\textsuperscript{42} Article No. 107.
\textsuperscript{43} Appendix B Letter No. 1 (8).
places he has helped to ridicule the capitalists who make millions; but he has abjured the ideology of a proletarian revolution. He is an evolutionary socialist. He seems to be a follower of the Gandhian strategy of moral pressure through suffering and non-violence of the brave. In a letter Premchand writes, “My ideal society is one giving equal opportunities to all. How that stage is to be reached except by evolution...... What fate a revolution may lead us to is doubtful. It may lead us to worse forms of dictatorship, denying all personal liberty. I do want to overhaul but not destroy. If I had some prescience and knew that destruction would lead us to heaven, I would not mind destroying even.” It is the voice of a democrat. He has the horror of the revolution because of the fear in the light of Russian and Italian dictatorships—what form dictatorship may take. It is this haunting fear that leads many confirmed socialists prefer the path of constitutional, peaceful evolution to a proletarian revolution.

118. Premchand is an optimist. His optimism is too facile to carry conviction. All his novels deal with vital social and economic problems; yet except in few cases he has failed to realise the complexity of the problems. The institution of prostitution is an instance. Many have no doubt taken to this ignoble

44 The Christians in ‘Raṅgbhūmi’, although they are petty merchants.
45 Appendix B Letter 1 (8).
46 Article No. 104.
profession under the stress of economic circumstances, but very few people will agree that poverty constitutes the basic cause of this inglorious profession. Marriage is another. One seeks in vain for that lofty conception of marriage which finds its expression in the celebrated pamphlet written by Milton. Premchand does not favour divorce on grounds which seem rather unusual in a man whose respect for human personality is too deep-rooted to be doubted. In fact he possesses all the virtues and vices of a pioneer in the realm of fiction. ‘He had borrowed the technique from Western writers in an abstract form and he had to give it a concrete shape and form. In the absence of competition among rival writers of his age, he had to work under serious limitations. ‘Hence his weaknesses.
THE REALISTIC TENDENCY (*Contd.*)

MINOR NOVELISTS

119. Premchand is the pioneer of the realistic tendency in fiction. Kausika (V. N.) and others have continued this tendency in their novels and improved upon its technique and expression. 'Mā' (mother) which is one of his mature creations in the realm of realistic fiction does not contain a single extravagant note which might destroy the illusion of reality. The theme deals with the life of an adopted child who is apt to be 'spoiled'. In the company of his friends he begins to visit the houses of public women. His brother comes to know of his new habit. In a puritanical fit he decides to reform him. He is immediately married to a girl who fascinates him for a few days. The old habit of visiting the prostitutes still persists in him. At last he feels weary of this habit and stops his visits. The inevitable happy end of the story is marred by a sad episode. One of his friend's wife sickens and dies on account of her joyless domestic life. The story portrays the life and problems of two middle-class families. The demand for a male child, the absolute authority of the husband in the family, the defective laws of inheritance regarding a widows' right
to her late husband’s property, the puritanical attitude towards social problems, a great emphasis on the value of sexual purity in marital relations, an undying faith in fate (Karma) are some of the middle-class values which have been realistically depicted in the novel without any moral indignation or bitter satire. He has given a stark and pitiless picture of the prostitute’s way of life. He omits nothing of the abominations of the oldest profession in the world. His writing is more scathing than all the moral indignation of other novelists who have dealt with a similar theme. In “Sevāsadana” Premchand has confined the story to a solitary girl who was forced by circumstances to adopt this ignoble way of life. She ultimately gave up the immoral profession to which she was not completely reconciled. In ‘Mā’ greater stress is laid on social and economic environments which determine the course of a prostitute’s life. There are no serious attempts at social reform; but the evil has been relentlessly brought to the notice of the readers. One man is ‘reformed’; but the public women continue to ‘flourish’ in the same brothels. Kauṣika has the firm grasp of a ‘naturalist’ who is interested more in the portrayal of life than in its reformation. Premchand is a ‘micawberist’ who flies from reality. Prostitution is perhaps the outcome of man’s polygamous instinct and rigid monogamous social laws. It requires a deeper analysis and a more delicate handling of the social problem than is attempted by Premchand.

The construction of the plot in this novel is striking-
ly simple and neat; the narrative seldom flags. Its interest is maintained at a constant pitch by the highly individualised, terse, purposive, simple, and crisp dialogue. It is not so individualised that one can recognise every character by the peculiar intonations and rhythm of his speech as easily as one can recognise the voice of one's friend; but it presents a refreshing contrast to the laborious and tedious dialogue employed by other novelists.

120. "Vidā" (Parting) is another solitary realistic attempt by a different novelist. The novel is a deep analysis of the life of a newly married couple. They find it difficult to adjust themselves to the new situation for psychological reasons. The young man is 'fixed' upon his mother. His ideal of a woman is his mother to which his wife does not conform. 'The son of his mother' regards her as a 'sinister' agent in disturbing his love for his old mother. The girl, on the other hand, is attached to her father. After a serious quarrel with her husband and his mother, she comes back to her father's house. The professor blames the Western ideas for this spirit of independence among women; but he does not discover the complex of his own mind. Nevertheless, he still loves her with all her weaknesses.

1 Pratāpa Nārāyaṇa Śrīvāstava.
2 'Vidā' pp. 28, 35, 37, 38, 50.
3 Ibid. pp. 54, 56.
4 Ibid. p. 66.
5 Ibid. pp. 66, 67.
She wavers between her husband and her father. The ‘fixation’ on either side gradually wears off in course of time. They are reconciled to each other after involving the happiness of another girl, Capalā, who fell in love with the professor. She makes a sad exit at the end of the novel, hence the title.

Srivāstava has restricted the theme to a single social group, the upper and intellectual middle-class constituted by civil service officers, professors, government title holders and other highly educated persons. In confining the theme to a single social group, he has achieved an organic unity which is a definite advance on the technique of Premchand who generally employs the double or treble plot. The construction of the plot in this novel is without many flaws, except for a solitary crude episode which has been introduced to get rid of the villain. Varmā, the civil service officer, who has been sowing wild oats in a Western land is dogged by his rejected lady who brings about his death. The villain, thus, is disposed of by her. He complicates the story by falling in love with the professor’s wife who does not respond to his advances. Kumudinī, on the other hand, grows jealous of her new rival and resolves to snatch her husband from the clutches of this woman. It is a fine stroke of feminine jealousy in the story.

121. The psychological imagination of the writer

6 Article No. 106.
7 'Vidā' p. 308.
is much better suited to the creation of female rather than male characters. The female members in the novel arrange themselves into two groups. Capalā and Kumudini are self-conscious natures chiefly interested in their own vanity. Lajjā belongs to the opposite group which is characterised by humility, patience, and simplicity. Kumudini is assertive, vain, and a girl child in her emotional development. Capalā is a sophisticated and mature personality who is capable of understanding and appreciating the viewpoint of other persons. Varmā is the villain of the piece. There is no redeeming feature about his character. He is portrayed as a cunning, intriguing, selfish man to whom all the problems of life resolve themselves into a single theme; how far they can serve his ends. Professor Nirmala Chandra, a brilliant product of the university, well-versed in both the Eastern and Western philosophy, is yet inexperienced in the ways of love. He is deeply in love with his mother and he does not brook any insult or threat of insult to her.

122. “Canda Husino ke Khatūta” (1927) by Ugra (B. S.) is an experiment in the epistolary method of narration. There are generally three methods of bringing the characters on and off the steps. Daniel Defoe found the solution in the autobiographical method of narration in the first person singular. He made his hero tell the story of his adventures, and made every effort to give the narrative

° ‘Robinson Crusoe’.
a ring of truth; to make versimilitude doubly certain he borrowed facts and documents from historical reality. In Hindi fiction Dhaniram Prem also has made use of this device with some success. After Defoe, Richardson invented the epistolary novel, in which a series of letters enabled him plausibly to express the psychological workings of several characters. Ugra, in the form of seven letters has narrated a love-adventure of a young man and a girl belonging to the two warring communities of this land in the present novel. The writer has tried to strike a synthesis of the two opposing ‘cultures’ in the year of communal rivalry and tension (1927) by making love triumph over religion, caste, creed, and colour. The romance ends in smoke on account of the hero’s death brought about by his Muslim rival. The introduction of the rival completes the eternal triangle. It also avoids the joyous ringing of the wedding bells which would have sounded improbable in the present awkward situation for the father and brother of the girl, who were deadly opposed to this marriage on account of communal and religious considerations. The characterisation is meagre; but the novel is important in this survey for its method of narration. It is the solitary instance in Hindi literature, in which the theme has been developed exclusively through epistolary correspondence. Ugra has

9 Article No. 136.
10 ‘Pamela’.
chosen a potential theme of communal tension and conflict; but the treatment is far from deep.

123. "Dehli ka Dalal" (1927) is another novel by the same author. A scandalous group of society, marketing in immoral traffic of women who are subjected to rape, molestation,\textsuperscript{11} and prostitution\textsuperscript{12} and who are treated as chattels, has been portrayed in this novel. It is an indictment of those hooligans, 'sādhus', and 'fakirs' who abduct innocent women from holy places and public fairs and treat them as means of gratifying their lust without any sense of shame or humanity. A nude picture of their atrocities has been penned in this novel to arouse moral indignation of the public; although the author claims that, "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are either well-written or badly written. That is all."\textsuperscript{13} In spite of the claim of its 'non-moral' nature, the purpose has been definitely made moral, when a didactic speech condemning the social evil is delivered from the mouth of a judge. He tries a case against the hooligans who have abducted and sold twenty-five hundred young girls. It ill becomes a session judge to remark in a court of law, "The social evil is a black spot on the fair name of this country which is known for its idealism, character, celibacy, and chastity. I am shocked to remember the episodes and its evil consequences in society. All those reformers who shout

\textsuperscript{11} The Novel p. 59.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid. p. 197.
\textsuperscript{13} Preface.
from the house-tops would have immortalised their services, if they had paid heed to this evil." The remedy for this evil suggested in the novel is equally sentimental. The town is rid of the kidnappers.

The author has adopted the 'modern' manner of choosing a single group of society and laid bare the evils which infest it. The characters are merely types. Abdulla and Santoo are ring-leaders of the abductors of women; Bhūdeva is a typical social reformer who rescues a young woman from the dirty pit. The style is crisp, epigrammatic, and voluptuous in describing the beauty of women and experiences of sexual life. At a few places the illusion of reality has been destroyed by directly addressing the reader. The introduction of characters has been attained by single strides which retard the gradual and natural growth of characters in the course of events.

124. "Badhuā ki Beti" is a severe tirade against the evil of 'untouchability' which has a religious sanction behind it. The life and problems of this social group, which is at the lowest rung of the ladder of the society have been expressed with a realistic force. It aims at social regeneration which can be brought about by a humanitarian attitude towards their poverty, superstitions, and other evils. The social purpose dominates the theme; but the novelist has portrayed the character of a beautifuluntouchable girl who has been brought up

14 The Novel.
15 Ibid. p. 19.
by a Christian missionary after her father’s imprisonment. The girl grows out to be passionately beautiful, falls an innocent prey to a high-caste Hindu with a view to marry him; but he discards her after satisfying his lust. The wounded deer returns to her father’s house to find him in delirium. After his death, the girl is packed ‘home’ along with the missionary to wreak vengeance on a young man by first entrapping him and then rejecting his love. The supernatural character of the ‘sādhū’, who acts as a guardian angel to the untouchables; by administering to their wants, by fighting for their rights, and by curing their disease by occult powers mars the effect of probability, and disturbs the impression of unity in the novel. The episode of the judge who renounces his property in favour of the untouchable girl does not fit in with the theme. The realistic and bold treatment of sex is a novel feature of the story.

125. “Hṛdaya ki Parākha” (1932) relates the story of a child who lost her parents. She was brought up by her uncle who passed her on to his issueless master for adoption. In the subsequent part of the story her identity is lost and then gained. The theme is not capable of any deep analysis; but even in its present treatment the motivation is feeble, the presentation crude, and the situations elude the realistic grasp of a great novelist. The sentimental characters are persons of strong emotions and they frequently burst into sobs. The entire composition smacks of a sentimental effervescence in a cup which overflows and spoils the table.
It belongs to the cheap type of sentimental literature characterised by tears and sobs which are indulged in to excite pity and love in the chicken-hearted reader.

126. “Hṛdaya ki Pyāsa” (1932) primarily belongs to the class of domestic fiction. Sastrī, its author, holds a firm grasp of the immediate reality of life. He does not transcend in this novel the ordinary domestic problems of marital maladjustment in a family. Praviṇa is wedded to a plain-looking woman, he hungers therefore for beautiful girls. The easy prey which falls to him is his friend’s wife. She is suspected of foul play with his friend. He is insulted by him: He cannot bear it. To avenge this insult he resolves to snatch his beautiful wife, and thus kill two birds with one stone. They are caught by the husband in a close embrace. In a rigidly monogamic society the punishment for extra-marital relations is suicide or murder. She swallows a dose of opium; but survives it. He has no other course except to become a brother to her. The story is rounded off with the ringing of joyous bells when both the husbands are reconciled to their wives—Praviṇa through her selfless sacrifice; and his friend for Praviṇa’s brotherly attitude towards his wife.

Sukhadā, the plain-woman, forms the pivot of the novel. A typical Hindu woman who has been idealised for her constant devotion to her ‘wayward’ husband represents the beauty of the spirit. The writer who has been obviously inspired by the middle-class ideal of chastity does not miss an opportunity of directly address-
ing the reader and hammering upon him the importance of this ideal in married life. “In Hindu society the basis of marriage is not passion but love.” To exalt this ideal he has overlooked the necessity of divorce in such an acute marital misfit. He has thus justified the middle-class bias for reform. In the novel there is a subtle treatment of the passion of jealousy which is born of an inferiority feeling and possessive instinct in the men characters. Pravīṇa nurses a grudge against the whole world. The frequency of weeping and sobbing which was observed in abundance in his previous novels has been considerably lessened; maturing thus the author’s realistic approach to the situations in life.

127. In “Apsarā” (1931), Nirālā, the author, has tried to portray the character of a young girl born of a wayward woman. She is young, full-blooded, passionate, and lives all her feeling and instincts entirely uncensored. Her tempestuous moods lure and hold the men. Rājkumār who rescued her from molestation is her first victim. Hamilton, the Superintendent of Police, is the second victim. They never know whether they will be received with passionate embraces or with a stiletto. Such a woman lives as she feels, without calculating the consequences. She personifies “nature red in tooth and claw.” Kipling’s line, “the female of the species

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16 The Novel, p. 21.
17 Ibid, p. 27.
18 ‘Hṛdaya-ki Parkha’.
19 ‘Apsarā’ p. 3.
is more deadly than the male" characterises her. She is a flame swarmed by moths who burn their wings.²⁰

The writer travels on 'the open road' of portraying a new type of character in fiction; but he follows the beaten track by gradually transforming and reforming this woman. She becomes a votary in a temple and chants songs of devotion instead of love and passion. Religion triumphs over humanity. The novel is an attempt at psychological portraiture and analytical treatment of character. Nirālā's is the only raw and genuine attempt at an analytical type of character. It would have been a success, but for the anticlimax which results from the middle-class prejudice for reform.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 113.
THE SHORT STORY
The Realistic Tendency
THE REALISTIC TENDENCY

128. The short story as a distinct literary form is only of recent growth, though literatures of the ancient world are rich in tales bewildering in their variety of form and substance. In the East, where the idea of the short story and of the novel as we understand it to-day never existed, the short story is of great antiquity as a fable, allegory, or romance. The Upaniṣads make frequent use of allegorical tales to point a moral or to make a nice point of metaphysics clear to the understanding of the layman. The old epics begin their career full of promise, narrating the brave tales of former days in a fluent and lively style. "The tale passed from the hands of the bards into the control of pandits, and the pandits after their usual manner, stuffed into the old epic frame-work enormous masses of heterogeneous sermons of religion, philosophy, and polity, which, though valuable as documents of the ideas of early times, are for the most part utterly incongruous with the central themes." The 'Panca-tantra' is an inexhaustible store-house of inter-linked stories that aim at a realistic treatment of human nature through the medium of conventional beast-lore. The 'Hitopadesa', likewise, seeks

2 'Romantic Tendency'. Article 88.
3 Dr. Barnett's (L. D.) 'Hitopadesa' Introduction, p. 5.
to amuse by wit and humour and to teach with garnered wisdom. In both these purposes it is singularly successful. It has probably trained no statesman, but it has made countless readers familiar with the principles of Indian statecraft, besides entertaining them with its stories and instructing them with its lessons of everyday morality. Its tales are narrated perfectly in a simple, limpid prose, with the utmost economy of words, in which every word tells.\(^3\) The animals in the fables act, talk and mimic the world of mankind in its "splendours and ambitions, its ranks and conventions, its follies and sorrows" and by their faithful imitation they cast a genial satire on man. Dr. Barnett thinks that the Indian has been in close touch with the animal creation. He has been constantly seeing around him his brothers and sisters in fur and feather. Also he has been frequently told that the souls of these animals are in their present bodies because of their deeds in previous births. "This teaching has sunk deep into his heart and has given him a fellow-feeling with the animal world and a keen interest in it."\(^4\) Another reason why this wisdom has been put into the mouth of animals is that an educated Indian has been by nature a sceptic. He wishes to show by putting wisdom into the mouth of animals 'what fools these mortals be.' In 'Kādambari' and other books the writers spin out their stories into inordinate lengths by poetic descriptions, beautiful in themselves, but

\(^3\) Dr. Barnett's (L. D.) 'Hitopadeśa' Introduction, p. 13.
\(^4\) Ibid. pp. 7, 8.
only remotely connected with the plot. They do not study an economy of words and make very little use of dialogue as a means of character revelation.

The tone of all these stories is moral. An Indian, sententious by nature, has always been fond of the story with a moral. The 'moral' tone persists even in the modern short story. In the days of hoary antiquity the "farmers gossiping together in the village panch at evening time; the friars of low degree beguiling the tedium of the rainy season with tales; the travelling traders in the caravan-sarai—these and their like are the sort who nurtured the folk-tale." The tale was simple in construction and singular in variety.

129. The short story to-day is remarkable for its variety. In Modern Hindi literature it has firmly established itself. Its immense vogue is the result of many co-operating causes; among them, the rush of modern life which has made men impatient of long tales or novels, the enormous development of the magazine, the newness of the literary form which the writers are zealous to experiment with, and its claim to displace the novel. Many writers essay the short story to work off an occasional mood. All knowledge and life have become its province. It is developing a high and a deli-

5 Article No. 134.
6 Dr. Barnett's (L. D.) 'Hitopadesa' Introduction, p. 9.
7 'Saraswatį' 'Madhuri' 'chand', 'Sudhā', 'Bhārati', 'Viśāla Bhāratī', 'Viśvā Mitrā', 'Hans' etc.
8 Article No. 46.
cate standard of technical perfection based on the models of short stories in Western literature. It has a great future because Indian social life with all its unnecessary restrictions of social intercourse is more easily represented on a shortened canvas. The material for great novels of real Indian life is scanty, but writers can peep enough behind the veil of life to guarantee a successful round of short stories. And there is an abundance of them.

130. Premchand alone has written about 250 short stories on a variety of social themes. In his comparatively early productions he has concentrated on a series of events and episodes which dominate and overwhelm the ideas in his stories. Their immense popularity among the heterogeneous mass of readers without any background for the appreciation of this new form of fiction, depends on the predominance of the plot over the idea and the character; and also by the bourgeoisie outlook on life characterised by the doctrine of retribution and poetic justice which are an organic part of middle-class mind. In "Mātā kā Hṛdaya" (A Mother’s Heart), he describes the resolution of a mother to avenge her son’s wrong; but her determination evaporates when she has to murder a child whose parents were responsible for the wrong done to her son. In spite of the story being a ‘character-story’ the arrangement of the feast and her subsequent employment as a maid-servant in the house of the officer are episodes which

9 Article No. 133.
10 Appendix B Letter 1 (3).
dominate the character of the mother. The event describing the death of the child is added to bring tears into her eyes.

“Narka kā Mārga” is a graphic account of a wife disappointed in her cold husband who has renounced the world and lives a life of religious devotion. After his death she grows weary of her ‘sexless’ and empty life and adopts the way of prostitutes. As usual she attributes her suffering to her sins in the previous birth, according to the doctrine of retribution which she inherits through religious tradition. It is a realistic delineation of character which is seldom overwhelmed by the few events in the short story. In “Svarga kī Devī,” a wife reforms her husband by her patience and service. It is a popular theme of many other stories. Many extraneous events have been mixed up in this story and they obscure the character of the wife and have no direct bearing on the main theme. In the first part which is separated by a gap of five years, the erring husband attempts to pick up a quarrel with his mother for maltreating his wife, whose misery is accounted for by her deeds in the previous birth. In order to describe her suffering the subsequent accidental deaths of the father and her children by cholera are the usual melodramatic episodes. They destroy the attempt at characterisation, which appears to be the aim of the short story.

In “Satyāgraha” (Truthful Resistance) a typical “pandit” who resorts to religious stunts to dupe the ignorant masses has been portrayed. The strike is not
a suitable device to characterise the traits of this social type. Again the grotesque and bizarre elements detract from the artistic aim of the story. In “Divālā” (Liquidation) the transformation in the character of a landlord has been affected by the ruthless poverty and heart-rending misery of the masses. The pity of the landlord has been excited by the suicide of an insolvent who was once his friend. The character is idealised by a crude manipulation of the plot. In “Nairāśya Lilā” a protest is lodged against child marriage which leads to widowhood and a crippling of personality. The character of the child-widow predominates over the idea of the story.

131. In the second class of his stories where the idea predominates over the character and situation, the motive is frequently social. In “Strī Aur Puruṣa” a man of aesthetic temperament has been married to a plain girl who wins him by her service and sacrifice. “The beauty of the soul is more valuable than the beauty of the flesh.” This sublime idea has been expressed in a crude, jerky, and sensational way which shocks the aesthetic sense of the reader. The illness is a cheap device to bring home this truth to the man. The suffering of the aesthete has been attributed to his sins. “Nairāśya” (Despair) is a departure from the usual note of retribution and poetic justice in his stories. The story describes the collapse of a luckless wife who successively gives birth to daughters in the patriarchal social order where the male child is more welcome than a female child.
In “Uddhāra” (Reformation) a protest has been lodged against the system of dowry which weighs heavily on the parents of a girl. They are prepared to give her to a consumptive in marriage. The boy disappears before the marriage ceremony and commits suicide. The writer harangues his readers on this social evil in two pages. In “Gr̥hadāha” a whole family is practically ruined by the jealousy of a stepmother who wants to exact the entire love of her son. The son is attached to his step-brother. Indirectly the story has been penned to protest against the second marriage of a widower who has already got children by his first wife. The weary life of the first son threatens to dominate the main idea. In fact the story describes the Oedipus situation, the character, and the second marriage against which a protest is lodged. The idea, the situation, and the character have been made equally important by an endeavour to render them in their fullness, betraying thus the aim of the short story. In “Sāntī,” a bourgeois husband initiates his wife to the Western ways of life, in spite of resistance from his mother. The attempt results in arrogance and vanity, displacing service and sacrifice from her life. It is not the assimilation of Western culture, but an aping of Western manners. The story represents the idealistic reaction against Westernism. The character of the wife after which the name of the story goes has been drawn with precision.

132. In his stories of situations the writer hunts
for arbitrary combinations of events so that they do not possess the warm flavour of a fruit ripened in the sun; but the insipidity of one forced in a hot-house. “Śūdra” narrates the hardships of a low class widow who has a beautiful daughter. To relate them, the writer has resorted to the inclusion of blind chances which turn out in favour of the widow. It is a simple tale or narrative without a proper stress on the unity of the situation. In “Ādhāra,” there are two events; one relating to the death of an altruistic peasant, the other describing the refusal of his widow to marry his brother at the eleventh hour. They have been presented without a dominating motive to create the impression of unity of situation. “A fundamental idea, or a single situation, or a character is an absolute requisite for the modern short story.”

In spite of this rigid dictum, the story-writer, who has been influenced by the discursive technique of Rabindra Nath Tagore, imitates his manner of gathering a few events; but misses the aesthetic unity of impression. “Rabindra Nath’s power seems to lie in his amazing vitality of imagination and his remarkable ability to create an atmosphere which grows upon the mind.”

In Premchand the creation of the atmosphere which gives a unity of tone to the short story is lacking.

In “Nirvāsana” (Exile) a wife is lost in a fair.

11 Albright (E. M.); ‘The Short Story’ p. 5.
12 Appendix B Letter 1 (4).
13 Guha Thakurta ‘The Bengali Drama.’ ‘His Dramatic Art.'
After a week, she arrives at her house to relate the story of her adventure to her husband who is not satisfied with her version. While suspecting her chastity, he turns her out of the house. The wife submits to his will without much protest. The whole situation is rendered grotesque by the banishment. In “Kauśala,” a husband steals the necklace which his wife borrows to satisfy her sense of vanity. What is a joke in the beginning becomes a serious thing in the end. The story does not possess the heightening of the dramatic effect which is essential to the situation story. In “Durgā kā Ṣaṇḍir” a psychological situation has been portrayed to describe the conflict of an honest person, when he is forced to help his friend with money which he has discovered in a garden. The delay in restoring the bag of money to the police pricks his conscience. In “Decree Money”, a conflict of loyalties between friendship and truth has been portrayed. The temporary betrayal of a friend has been compensated for by a monetary help at the close of the story. To uphold the idealistic way of life, the writer has sacrificed the human side of character by superficially describing the crisis in his life.

In all these stories comprising the first phase of his literary production, Premchand has adopted the manner of giving himself the full liberty to interpose remarks in the course of the story, to comment on its progress, character and life in general. In doing this he has established a precedent for didactic and
sentimental interruptions in the narrative, which destroy the illusion of reality and the unity of impression; but he caters to the taste of the crude mass of readers.

133. In the later phase of his story writing, Premchand has considerably modified the technique and changed the aim of the short story. In a comprehensive Introduction to the first part of “Mānasarovara,” he explains the function of this new form of literature. In the evolution of the short story many changes have taken place in its technique which has been entirely modified. 14 It delineates the struggle in contemporary life. 15 The best short story is based on a psychological truth. 16 Of character and situation one must predominate over the other. The character-story is superior to the story of the situation. As there is not copious scope for the full development of character, the aim of the short story writer should be to limit its scope to a section of character in its change rather than in its complete growth. 17 On account of the Western influence, the short story has approached the pattern of life. Now there is no scope for describing a series of events which mar the unity of impression which is essential to a short story. To achieve this effect, there is less of comment and more of suggestion from the author’s pen. 18 The modern short story is not grounded on a series of episodes; but on a deep psychological experience.

14 ‘Mānasarovara’ Introduction, p. 4.
15 Ibid. p. 5.
16 Ibid. p. 6.
17 Ibid. p. 7.
18 Ibid. p. 8.
In the light of these aims which have been fashioned after Western models, the writer begins his new phase of story-writing in which he has achieved considerable success. In "Idagāha," the writer has shown the contrast between the sad plight of an orphan boy and the vivacity of his fortunate companions on the day of the national festival. At every step, Hamīd feels the shortness of his purse; a psychological note has been struck by the precocious part which the little boy plays to remind his grandmother of her dead husband. In "Mā" (Mother) which expresses the proverbial love of the mother, the writer employs his earlier technique with a few modifications, consisting of scattered psychological touches; whereas the structure of the edifice remains the same. "Sānti" is the story of 'marital maladjustment' which leads to the suicide of the wife. The husband elopes with an actress; the wife ends her life out of mental anguish. It is an uncommon end as generally his stories conclude with a chorus of joy. "Gharjamāi" is a searching analysis of a character who, after his father's death lives with his mother-in-law; and on being maltreated by her returns home to live with his step-mother. His wife, who is not weaned from her father, does not accompany him. The story is an important departure from his early technique. The incidents are subordinated to the delineation of the character.

In "Pūsa kī Rāta" (A Winter Night), the appalling poverty of peasants and their inability to pay off their
debts forms the theme of the story. A peasant shivers in a winter night for want of a blanket which he cannot afford to buy. The freezing cold disables him from moving about on the farm, so that the whole of it is ravaged by wild cows. In this story, the writer has achieved that effect of compactness and instantaneity which is rarely to be found in the works of the great short story writers of the world. In Guy de Maupassant this conciseness has been frequently attained by observing a traditional unity of time and vision. The duration of time in the present story has been limited to one night. "Dhikkāra" (Reproach) is the tragedy of an orphan widow who commits suicide from a sense of shame and disgust, for she has no place in life. "Kāyara" (Coward) describes the story of a "coward" who is responsible for the tragedy of a girl student. After much hesitation, the girl has decided to marry the boy who gives her a slip at the threat of his parents. They are opposed to his marriage with a girl of a different caste. The girl sings a 'swan song' and ends her life. The character of the boy has been delineated with searching realism. In "Ghāsavāli" (The Grass Mower) Mulia is a beauty among the cobblers for which she is harassed and humiliated by a young man of the village. On the next day she is accidentally found mowing grass in the field of the same person. In an apprehensive mood, she appeals to his nobler sentiments; and it leads to the sublimation of the sexual desire.

134. In the short stories of Sudarshan there
is a definite ethical outlook which attaches greater importance to the standards of external conduct than to those of the conscience. The essential ethical problem of the writer is always the problem of the human action (Karma) which can be traced to a deep religious faith in the doctrine of retribution. The preponderance of coincidences in the stories is the inevitable outcome of a fatalistic outlook which is based on the idea of an external agency governing the conduct of men and women. All the stories analysed below show this tendency and illustrate the dominant idea contained in each one of them.

In “Pratikāra” (Revenge) a retribution befalling a young and gay student who marries, by choice, the daughter of his professor, but begins to love another girl is illustrated by a disjointed chain of mishaps. The height of improbability is reached, when the husband and wife ultimately meet in a jungle. In “A Little Lie” again, the idea of retribution has been worked out by relating a series of mishaps which befall a doctor for telling a lie. All the absurd mishaps are attributed to a single innocent lie which he is alleged to have told by sending a false telegram.

“Nyāya ki Parakha” (The Test of Justice). In two separate episodes the writer has illustrated the sense of justice of a scrupulously honest judge who operates like a machine in the judicial seat. In a case of murder against his own son, he holds even the scales of justice. In his enthusiasm to idealise the character
of the judge, the story writer does not appreciate the conflicts of a human heart; nor does he care to know that according to the Indian Penal Code the father cannot try his own son. "Pāpa ki kamāi" (The Ill-gotten Wealth) is a story of accidents and supernatural forces shaping the end of a "sinner" who has accumulated ill-gotten wealth, in spite of his friend's warning to the contrary. The accidental death of an innocent victim who was fleeced by the sinner recoils on him. He is dismissed from his job for negligence of work and dies of an accident. In "Svapna" (A Dream) a fantastic dream of a dead wife has been described to bring forth the idea of retribution, when the husband has married another woman in his affluence. The artistic device of employing the irony of circumstance to heighten the tragic effect has been cheaply repeated by the author. In "Andhakāra" (Darkness) by a series of incredible coincidences (deaths) the writer has satirised the social prejudice for male children in a patriarchal society. In "Nairāsya" (Despair), Premchand has dealt with a similar theme. "Baiju Bābu" describes the intoxicating power of music on men, animals and plants. The leaves of the trees never stirred, when the instrument was played by the master-musician, who himself was completely lost in the melody. In an ornate style the writer has lost his usual crispness of utterance. In moments of crises he makes the characters talk at length and does not take full account of the psychological truth, that intense emotions cannot be expressed by long speeches.
In his art, Sudarshan is not only offensively didactic, but his view of morality is so primitive that he emphasises the rewards of a 'moral' life in worldly advantages, and the punishment in a lack of them in physical pain. All his stories are sincerely designed to promote the cause of virtue and to expose some of the most glaring evils which infest the society. As a contrast to this, Premchand declares the dividends of virtue in the increased greatness of character.

135. In ‘Citrasāla’ the stories are snapshots of middle-class life of which the writer has a firm grasp. Kauśika has portrayed the type as well as the developing character in a crisis. The personages have been presented in changing lights to permit the illusion of reality. The growing demand of realism in the realm of Hindi literature is responsible for a lack of complete portrayal of characters, a loss of that intangible atmosphere of romance which have dominated the stories of Premchand and Jaya Śankara Prasāda. Another characteristic which makes his stories more realistic in their treatment is his device of introducing a proper setting, the function of which is to furnish the conditions of time and place. The function of dialogue in his short stories is strictly utilitarian. The dialogue is characteristic of economy and brevity. It has been cut,

19 By Kauśika (V. N.).
20 Prasāda’s stories have not been dealt with in the present work. Only representative authors to indicate the realistic tendency in the realm of the short story have been included.
pruned, and trimmed; till it becomes a strong current for carrying the characters and the plot to their inevitable goal. The third person narrative is the predominant form of his fiction; but the unity of impression which permits little comment in a short story has been occasionally sacrificed when the author jumps into the midst of the scene to manage his stage. Such behaviour not only distracts the attention of a person outside the story; but it also destroys the illusion of reality. The mechanism of his plot is simple and natural without any attempt at surprise. The singleness of plot achieves a unity of impression which is lacking in stories of complex plots involving digressions. Kauśika has achieved simplicity, unity, brevity, and suggestive force in the realm of the short story of the modern type.

In 'Namaka Halāla' the writer has described the character of a proud and faithful 'muṇīm' who saves the firm of his late master from liquidation by consigning the 'huṇḍi' (prontoe) to fire; postponing thus the payment to a convenient date. The son of his late master admits with folded hands the fidelity of the old man. ‘Nastika Professor’, (The Atheist Professor), is a product of the nineteenth century rationalism. He is married to a woman of deep religious faith in the intelligent creator. She represents the ancient traditions of the race. Their son seriously falls ill. On the recovery of the son from the serious illness, the professor becomes a theist. It appears to be a superficial device for a conversion of faith. The story illustrates
the change of character in a crisis which is illness of the son in this case.

‘Nara Paśu’ (Man-Beast) is the character-sketch of a professor belonging to a middle-class family. In a fit of anger he thrashes his wife for coming late. On the next day he gives a talk, advocating the equality of sexes. He reveals thus the inherent contradiction between his intellectual beliefs and emotional behaviour. He himself comes late on a different occasion and rebukes his wife for having gone to bed. His wife dies of illness. It is a great relief to him. Her death is interpreted in the press as a heart-rending shock to the professor who dearly loved his wife. The character of the ‘sadist’ professor has been portrayed with simple artistic strokes of irony. The story is also an illustration of middle-class prudery and hypocrisy which is characterised by the professor who is a type figure.

‘Sāhitya Seva’ (Service of Literature) portrays an ordinary type of a struggling literary hack who writes plays which nobody is prepared to publish. When he is completely frustrated in his attempts, his wife encourages him to make the last attempt which proves a success on the stage. He is honoured with a cash prize and a letter of appointment as a dramatic writer. ‘Bagalā Bhagata’ (A Hypocrite) is the portrait of a lawyer who robs his clients of their money and parades himself as an honest public worker. He is a double-faced python typical of the middle-class.

‘Karuṇā ki Mūrti’ (Idol of Compassion) gives a
pathetic account of a young widow who is yet to discover the consequences of widowhood. At every step she is made to feel that she is a widow who is not specially entitled to the status enjoyed by other women in the house. When she is spurned from all quarters, death is the only escape for her. Nobody sheds a tear at her death which becomes still more pathetic. 'Pagali' (Mad) describes the story of an untouchable girl who pulled the fan in the house of an aristocratic lady. The poor girl was taught to read and write by a sympathetic young man in the house. Once she examined her poor plight by 'stripping herself naked' and was staggered to find herself so base that she went mad. 'Patni' (Wife) is the portrait-sketch of a 'modern wife'. She does not acquiesce at the foibles of her husband who is a libertine. She files a suit against him for the partitioning of property. The husband loses the case and begs the pardon of his wife, who succumbs to his entreaties like a true Indian woman. The modern wife represents a departure from the conventional wife who always submits to her Lord's word as law. 'Vidhavā' (Widow) is another attempt at portraiture of a widow. Raghuvirā would marry only a widow. His friend who has been insisting on his marriage falls ill and dies, wishing the marriage of his widowed wife with Raghuvirā who had been asked to marry her. He goes back on his word and continues to live the life of a bachelor. The story provides a situation which brings out the conflict between his intellectual belief and emotional
behaviour. The title of the story is rather misleading. 'Mātā kā Hṛdaya' (A Mother's Heart) describes the eternal Oedipus situation which arises after the marriage of a 'mother's son'. He is snatched from his fond mother by his wife. The mother is gradually reconciled to the new situation after nursing him through his illness.

136. Dhanīrām Prem is another important writer in the realm of the short story. He has invariably employed the autobiographical technique which restricts the range, while it heightens the vividness of his stories. The character in such stories is sure to emerge successfully from the most unpromising situations and the reader has greater curiosity than suspense. His stories therefore read like long letters from one character. In 'Dila kī Āga' (a novel) the problem has been comparatively solved by relating the story through the mouths of more than one character. In 'Canda Husīno ke Khatūta' which is composed of a series of letters and where the autobiographical technique has been employed, the validity of direct knowledge is gained with the advantages of varied company. As the first person narrative is pre-eminently awkward, Prem who uses it gives the impression that he is continually blundering in front of his camera; so that the result is a patchy story marred here and there by a grotesque enlargement of his own anatomy. He makes the first person narrator egotistic by making him speak.

22 Not discussed in the present survey.
23 Article No. 122.
Another characteristic of his stories is the element of pathos which has been introduced to gain that unity of impression which is essential to a short story. The stories with social themes brim with the pathetic sentiment which has been created with the sufferings of the widow, the prostitute, and the untouchable girl. In case of the untouchable girl the pathos gives rise to indignation when the girl is dragged out of the temple. Prem is a victim of the sentimental tendency in realism which has dominated modern Hindi fiction. It is on account of this sentimentality that the prostitute, the brazen courtesan, and the wayward woman have become the object of pity and compassion, however reprehensible their behaviour may be in life. At least they have a good heart.

The vivacity of dialogue is another feature of his stories. The writer has employed a dialogue which is not entirely utilitarian in its function. It is therefore characterised by its comparative lack of direction, but it is extensively used by him. The extensive use of it is distinctly a modern tendency. Prem has made the most striking departure from the practice of other short story writers. Premchand, Prasāda, and Kauśika—all use dialogue; but they keep it strictly subordinate to the action or the character. Dhanirām Prem has tried a novel experiment by writing the dialogue-story which is becoming fashionable in Hindi fiction. The
characters reveal themselves and carry the burden of the plot mostly by means of conversation which argues skill and cleverness on the author’s part.

157. ‘Māṭ Mandira’ (A Mother’s Temple) is a keen analysis of a widow’s heart, her empty life, her longing to marry again, her mating which leads to the birth of a child, and the refusal of her ‘lover’ to marry her for want of courage and presence of rigid social restrictions. It becomes a vigorously moving story when she resolves to end her life; but ultimately finds solace under the warm wings of a Muslim lady. To avenge her past wrongs inflicted on her by the society, she gets converted. After this, the story becomes melodramatic, when her grown up son resolves to wreak vengeance on a Hindu on the day of communal riots. And of all persons he tries to kill, he murders his father. The story ends with a didactic note on religious conversion. “Veśyā kā Ḥṛdaya” (A Prostitute’s Heart) relates the story of a prostitute who has a tale of woe behind her and who is not supposed to have a feeling heart. She comes to the succour of an untouchable child who has been thrown into the gutter by a caste Hindu. This melts the heart of a religious votary who feels drawn to the ‘fallen’ woman, but he cannot marry her. In employing the ‘auto’ technique, the writer has unconsciously introduced his mature person into the narrative of a comparatively raw youth who happens to be the protagonist of the story. In ripeness of wisdom and restraint of emotions towards a woman, he does
not bear the usual marks of a young man. In ‘Achhūta’ (Untouchable) a young professional singer who sings songs of love and equality is offered a bunch of flowers by an untouchable girl who is moved by his songs. At first he rejects the offer; but he suffers from a feeling of remorse and sympathises with her. Afterwards he sees the same girl being dragged out of a temple which she wanted to enter for worshipping the gods. He is touched by her plight. To give a practical shape to his lip sympathy, he engages her services in his house, in face of hue and cry raised by the high-caste people. When he is outcasted by them, he proposes to marry the girl; thus fulfilling the didactic purpose of the story, which is a reformatory piece of composition written for the uplift of untouchables. ‘Prema’ (Love) is a dissertation on true love. The girl relates the tale of her first poor lover, her subsequent marriage to a rich person; and the final help rendered to her by her previous lover in a moment of crisis. The writer has depicted the common conflict between marriage by love and marriage by gold. ‘Muskāna’ relates the problem of a college student who is ever haunted by the memory of sweet smiles of his wife, while pursuing his course of studies at college. In the end, his wife dies to make the story sensational which is typical of a magazine story. ‘Jalā Bhunā’ (a Tortured Soul) is lively satire on romantic lovers who persist in their endeavour to win their lady-love. In spite of the hardships and the slips which create humorous situations in the story, the ‘constant lover’
pursues her till she is married to another man. In the midst of funny episodes the writer has depicted the character of a typically romantic lover who is ever disappointed in his efforts. In the Hindu family romance has been of recent growth; because marriage has been a family matter under the direct control of parents. The romantic love can only develop when both sexes may choose according to their desires. It is only among young men that the element of choice has been allowed; but the choice of the mate for girls still lies in the hands of the parents.

Srivāstava (P. N.) who belongs to the school of sentimental realism has written a few short stories, in which the characters have been invested with a roseate light. The characters are not the grandiose heroes and heroines of romance, but figures of common life. 'Asīrvāda' (Blessings) is the sentimental tale of a beggar-woman who was once rescued by a married man from molestation. She disappeared and reappeared to embarrass the wife of the married man who had taken a fancy to her. The beggar woman turns out to be her playmate. She blesses her child. The guileless conversation of the child in the story is a digression from the main theme. The author, in order to idealise the poor woman, bubbles with sentiments. 'Tīyā kī Sāri (A Sārī) relates the pathetic tale of an ailing daughter who longs to wear a new 'sāri' on the day of the fair (Tīyā); but she is denied the pleasure of wearing the silken 'sāri' on account of her poverty due to her
father's imprisonment. The story is reduced to a sentimental and farcical piece, when her father arrives to find her no more. The illness of the daughter, the helplessness of the mother, the imprisonment of the father, and finally the death of the girl have co-operated to reduce the story to the level of cheap sentimentalism. 'Sesha Saṃbala' is the story of the widow who fights her natural impulses but in a fit of passion she suffers the 'inevitable fall' by netting her late husband's cold friend to whom she was entrusted at the death of her husband. The portrait of her husband reminds her of the promise of chastity she made to him. And she is reformed. The pros and cons of widow marriage are given at length; the customs of foreign lands in favour of widow marriage are described in profusion. In 'Mīthī Muskāna' (Sweet Smile) a married man falls a victim to the charms of a courtesan who shocks him, when he demands love from her. After a few romantic adventures, he is reconciled to his wife. 'Lālasā' (Yearning) provides an eternal triangle. Suhāsinī, a woman, is sandwiched between two lovers who are friends. Each believes that the woman loves him, till one of them finds his rival friend in the arms of the woman. He shoots them dead, writes a letter of confession and commits suicide. Suhāsinī is essentially a 'man hater' belonging to the class of 'light women' who catch many victims in their net just for a whim.
APPENDIX A

'Sāketa' (1931)

'Sāketa', written by Gupta (M. S.), after the name of the capital city, is a comparatively successful attempt of the 'epic tendency' in modern Hindi poetry. It relates the old tale of 'Ramāyaṇa' rewritten in the modern language. The coronation ceremony, the disruption of it by the evil genius in the story, the order for exile, the leave-taking, the life in the forest, the grief-stricken people of the city, the agony of the old father, the lamentations of the mothers, the refusal of Bharata to accept the crown, are in accordance with the story in the original epic. A great emphasis has been laid on the traditional notion of the moral government of the universe. The ethical note is as strong as it is in the original epic. At one place evil is shown to triumph over virtue (p. 234); but it is ultimately attributed to the mysterious fate shadowing man at every step of his life. Bhāvī in the epic is nothing but the dark figure of destiny governing the lot of men and women in the tale.

It is only in the ninth canto that the author has departed from the original version. The outburst of emotions and sentiments shows that the poet has not been able to escape the predominant influence of lyricism even in an epic. The lyrical cry which has been
meticulously excluded in the preceding and following cantos of epic dignity is an external growth. Urmilā's expressions of sorrow in separation from her husband, written, in lyrical verses at a high poetical pitch (pp. 274, 278, 282, 292, 300) are not in unison with the classical note of restraint maintained throughout the composition. In this canto action is meagre and the description of Nature looms large. Dasaratha's character has also been made more pathetic by introducing verses of a lyrical quality in the epic. Mahātāmā Gandhi has seriously objected to this 'flaw' which he has discovered in it. He says, "I may say one more thing—I do not like the pathetic cries of the old but heroic man in the modern age of heroism. It also hurts the devotional sense. Those who regard the joys of this world as transitory cannot regard pain born of death or separation as unbearable. A temporary mood is probable, but we can never hope to hear pathetic cries from such people." He has thus criticised the same lack of epic restraint in his characteristic way. The reasons for this literary flaw have been discussed in article number 17.
APPENDIX B

Letter No. 1

Dhanpat Rai, B.A. 168 Saraswati Sadan, Dadar
(alias Premchand). Bombay, 14. 26 Dec. 1934

Dear Mr. Indar Nath,

Glad to receive your letter of the 16th. The answers to your questions are herewith attempted in their order.

(1) ‘Raṅg Bhūmi’ is in my opinion, the best of my works.

(2) I have in each of my novels an ideal character, with human failings as well as virtue, but essentially ideal. In ‘Premāsrama’ there is Gayānshankar, in ‘Rangbhumi’ there is ‘Sūrdās’. Similarly in ‘Kāyākalpa’ there is Cakardhar, in ‘Karmabhumi’ there is Amarkant.

(3) The total number of my short stories reaches an approximate figure of 250 (stories). Unpublished stories I have got none.

(4) Yes, I have been influenced by Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, and Romain Rolland. As regards short stories I was inspired originally by Dr. Rabindra Nath. Since I have evolved my own style.

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(5) I never seriously attempted drama. I have conceived of one or two plots which I thought might be better utilised in a drama. Drama loses its importance when not staged. India has not got a stage, particularly Hindi and Urdu. What passes for a stage is the effete Parsi Stage, for which I have a horror. Then I never came in touch with drama technique and stage craft. So my dramas were only meant as reading dramas. Why should I not stick to my novel where I had greater scope to reveal my characters, than I can possibly have in a drama. This is why I have preferred novel as a vehicle of my thought. I still hope to write one or two dramas. As far as financial success, this commodity is rare in Hindi or Urdu. You may get notorious, but by no means financially independent. Our people have not the weakness of buying books. It is apathy, dull-headedness, and intellectual lethargy.

(6) Cinema is no place for a literary person. I came in this line as it offered some chances of getting independent financially but now I see I was under a delusion and am going back to my literature. In fact I have never ceased contributing to literary work, which I regard as the aim of my life. Cinema is only what pleadership might have meant for me, only healthier.

(7) I have never been to jail. I am not a man of action. My writings have several times offended power, one or two of my books were proscribed.

(8) I believe in social evolution, our object being to educate public opinion. Revolution is the failure of
saner methods. My ideal society is one giving equal opportunities to all. How that stage is to be reached except by evolution. It is the people’s character that is the deciding factor. No social system can flourish, unless we are individually uplifted. What fate a revolution may lead us to is doubtful. It may lead us to worse forms of dictatorship, denying all personal liberty. I do want to overhaul, but not destroy.” If I had some prescience and knew that destruction would lead us to heaven I would not mind destroying even.

(9) Divorce is common among the proletariat. It is only in so-called higher classes where this problem has assumed a serious shape. Marriage even at its best is a sort of compromise and surrender. If a couple mean to be happy, they must be ready to make allowances. While there are people who can never be happy even under the best of circumstances. In Europe and America divorces are not uncommon, in spite of all courtship and free intercourse. One of the couple must be ready to bend, male or female, does not matter. I refuse that only males are to be blamed. There are cases where ladies create trouble, fancy grievances. When it is not a certainty that divorce will cure our nuptial evils, I don’t want to fasten this on society. Of course there are cases when a divorce becomes a necessity. But ‘misfit’ is in my opinion nothing but fastidiousness. Divorce without any provision for the poor wife. This demand is only made by morbid individualism. There is no place for it in a society based on equality.
(10) Formerly I believed in a supreme deity, not as a result of thinking, but simply as a traditional belief. That belief is being shattered. Of course there is some hand behind universe, but I don’t think it has anything to do with human affairs, just as it has nothing to do with the affairs of ants or flies, or mosquitoes. The importance which we have given to our own selves has no justification.

I hope that will be sufficient for the present. Not being an English scholar, I may have failed to express what I wished to say, but I can’t help it.

Yours truly
(Sd.) P. Chand

Letter No. 2
Bombay, Ill, Esplanade Road
Benares ‘Hans’ Office
7-9-1935
My dear Indar Nath Ji,

* * * * * * * *

Now I must answer your queries.
(1) My impressions of my home as a child are just the ordinary, neither very happy nor very depressing. I lost my mother while I was eight. Previous to that my recollections are very hazy, watching my languishing mother who was just as affectionate, and when occasion arose, just as stern as all good mothers are.
(2) I started writing in Urdu weeklies, then monthlies. Writing to me was simply a hobby. I never dreamt that ultimately I shall be an author. I was a government servant and wrote in my leisure hours. For novels I had an insatiable hunger, devouring whatever came in my way, without any judicious or critical selection. My first article was printed in 1901, and the first book in 1903. The writings brought nothing except satisfaction of vanity. At first I wrote of contemporary events, then character sketches of our present and past heroes. In 1907 I began to write short stories in Urdu and encouraged by success continued. In 1914 my stories were translated by others and appeared in Hindi magazines. Then I took up Hindi and began to write in Saraswati then my ‘Sevasadan’ appeared and I gave up my job and launched on my literary independent career.

(3) No, I have had no love-affair. Life was so engrossing and bread winning was such a tough job that it left no scope for romances: They were some petty affairs of a very universal type and I cannot call them love affairs.

(4) My ideal of a woman is sacrifice, service, purity, all rolled into one. Sacrifice without end, service always ungrudging and purity to that of Caesar’s wife beyond reproach.

(5) My married life has nothing of romance. It is just the common type. My first wife died in 1904. She was an unfortunate woman, not at all good looking,
and although not satisfied with her I pulled on uncomplainingly just all traditional husbands are. When she died I married a ‘Bal Vidhwa’ and am fairly happy with her. She has picked up some literary taste and sometimes writes stories. She is a fearless, bold, uncompromising, sincere lady, amenable to a fault and awfully impulsive. She joined the N. ‘Coop. movement and went to jail. I am happy with her, not claiming what she cannot give. You cannot bend her, though she might break.

(6) Well, life has been always to me work, work, work. Even when I was in government service I devoted my whole time to literary pursuits. I find pleasure in work. There are moments of depression when money trouble stares, otherwise I am quite satisfied with my lot, got more than I deserve. Financially I am a failure, do not know business and am never above wants. I was never a journalist but circumstances forced me to become one and I have lost in journalism almost all I earned in letters, not much after all.

(7) Plots I always weave with a view to bring out what is beautiful and manly in human characters. It is a complicated process, sometimes inspired by a person, or by an incident or by a dream, but I must have some psychological basis for my story. I am always open to suggestions by friends.

(8) The majority of my characters are drawn from real life though they are sufficiently veiled. Unless a character has some basis in reality, it is shadowy, uncer-
tain, and unconvincing.

(9) I am a believer in regular work like Romain Rolland.

(10) Yes, my ‘Godan’ is shortly going to the press. This is approximately 600 pages.

Yours truly

(Sd.) P. Chand
APPENDIX C

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