

INTRODUCTION.

The author.

1. Criticism of Sanskrit Poetry on modern lines under the Western influence was started by Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. It was continued with rare critical insight by Babu Bhudeb Mukhopadhyaya, Babu Bankimchandra Chatterji and by Babu Chandranath Basu. It has been now taken up by the gifted poet Rabindranath Tagore with his characteristic delicacy of perception. It is needless to say their contributions have enriched this branch of Bengali Literature. Pandit Rajendranath Vidyabhushan has undertaken a systematic and exhaustive criticism of the greatest poets of the classical age of Sanskrit literature on the same lines and on a scale hitherto unknown in this country. His works on Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti are the first instalments of his criticism of Sanskrit poetry and in these he has already made his mark as an original critic.

The work and its title.

2. His present work "The Tapo-vana" completes his series of critical reviews on Sanskrit Poetry. It contains an exposition of the works of three poets—The Kiratarjuniya of Bharavi, the Shishupala-vadha of Magha and the Naishadhiya

or Naishadha-charita of Sriharsha. The appropriateness of the title of the work is not apparent at first sight. The following considerations, however, would make it clear. The Tapo-vana plays a unique part in the history of Indian literature. It was in the sacred penance-groves of India that the seers of the Upanishads realised their unity with the Absolute Spirit and composed those inspired works that must remain the foundation of high metaphysical thought for ever. It was in the penance-groves of India that the earliest poets Valmiki and Vyasa sang their immortal songs. The later poets, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Bharavi, Magha and Sriharsha drew their poetic inspiration as well as the material of their works from the inexhaustible source of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Muse of Tapo-vana may thus be regarded as the mother of all Sanskrit poetry. With Tapo-vana, therefore, the author fitly associates his critical review of the three last named poets. In his former two works he had a pleasing task to perform. He had only to unravel the beauties of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti to which the critics of the traditional school are sadly blind. In the present work he had to do a good deal of unpleasant destructive criticism in demolishing the traditional views held by the critics of the old school with whom "जायते दुःखाय" is an accepted saying. He has boldly done his duty in impartially exposing the defects of the three most favourite poets of the critics of this school.

The plan of this introduction.

3. Sanskrit Poetry reached its culmination in the works of Kalidasa and in his successors we find its

gradual decay. The truth of this remark will be clear from the following brief historical review of the four of the successors of Kalidasa who form the subject of Pandit Rajendranath Vidyabhushan's works.

Bharavi.

4. The latest limit of the date of Kalidasa as well as of Bharavi is the year 634 A. D., the date of an inscription composed by the Jaina poet Ravikirti in which he claims equality with Kalidasa and Bharavi thus proving both had already attained a wide literary reputation. In spite of the overthrow of Professor Max Muller's theory of Renaissance of Sanskrit literature in the sixth century A. D. by the discovery of a continuous growth of Kavya literature from the second century B. C. downwards, the date of Kalidasa cannot be pushed back beyond the middle of the fifth century, the time when the Huns first burst through the north-western passes of India during the latter years of the reign of Kumaragupta. For Kalidasa in the Raghuvamsa IV. 63 (1) refers to the Huns as lying near the north-western frontier of India. The middle of the fifth century being thus settled as the earliest limit of the date of Kalidasa, Bharavi cannot be supposed to have flourished earlier than the first half of the sixth century. This interval of time is barely sufficient to account for the decay in the spirit and form of Sanskrit poetry

(1) तत्र ह्यन्धमरुतैः कर्तुं न शक्यते ।
अपौरुषेयैः कर्तुं न शक्यते ।

that is noticed in Bharavi's work when compared with the master pieces of Kalidasa. The priority of Kalidasa to Bharavi is supported not only by the simplicity of style and originality of the poetry of Kalidasa but also by the presence of many thoughts and expressions in the Kiratarjuniya which are evident reminiscences of Kalidāsa [cf. Kirat III. 48 (1) with Raghu II. 53 (2) ; Kirat IV. 3 (3) with Meghaduta 44 (4)].

5. The decay of Sanskrit poetry in the works of Kalidasa's successors is marked by a lack of creative genius, sense of proportion, harmony, beauty and natural feeling, by a slavish adherence to the rules of rhetoric and by a predominance of rhetorical devices till sense was sacrificed to sound and language was manipulated simply to shew tricks of style or verbal jugglery. In the Kiratarjuniya we see almost all these signs of decay have already set in. For the incidents and characters of the poem, the author cannot claim any originality. Save in the introduction of the character of the spy, in every detail he has closely followed the Mahabharata. Kalidasa also borrowed his materials from the great national Epics. But he always improved the characters and the story by the omission of unpoetical details, by the development in the characters

(1) अतः किञ्च भावस्य संसृष्टः चकस्य शब्दो मुक्तेषु वृत्तः &c.

(2) सचक्रियकाच-वृत्तः कर्मा वः &c.

(3) इतः प्रजा-उदित-विवाह-विषयः कर्मात्तस्य अर्धः अस्मदीयविराटः &c.

(4) चटुः च अकरोदवर्षम-ने विद्यादि &c.

of some relieving traits or imparting to the whole a softer shade of colouring. While the copies of his successors are only dull and feeble imitations of the original always spoilt by disproportionate diffuseness of descriptions or speeches. They had no sense of harmony or proportion and almost all their works may be improved by the pruning of superfluities and even by complete elimination of entire cantos. This shows how slowly the action moves and how the epic interest of the works is subordinated to a mania for description. With the only exception of Bhavabhuti, these authors devoid of any poetic intuition tried to produce poems by a blind adherence to the rules of rhetoric and their works have no breathing beauty of life but are mummies or anatomical models to be kept as literary curiosities in museums. Even Bharavi who had more natural feeling and a better sense of proportion than Magha or Sriharsha was so enchained by the rhetorical account of a Mahakavya that in a heroic poem of eighteen cantos he devotes two entire cantos (cantos IV. and V.) to the description of autumn and the Himalaya and four cantos (VII.—X.) to the description of the celestial nymphs sent by Indra to tempt Arjuna and their amorous dalliance and sports, while the feats of valour of Arjuna and his mighty antagonist are left to be dealt with only in the last seven cantos, one of which (canto XV.) is devoted to various kinds of Chitra Bandha in which verbal ingenuity at the sacrifice of active thoughts its culmination. For thus carrying to

disproportionate lengths the erotic sentiment in a heroic poem he is rightly condemned by Vishvanatha Kaviraja a later writer on Poetics. In spite of the indulgence of the author in abstract political harangues and moral discourses, the first, second and eleventh cantos only of the poem are saved from the uniform dulness by the infusion of ardent natural feeling and are the only redeeming portions of the work which display that moderation, self-restraint, subdued energy and gravity which have justly been held as the peculiar quality of his poetry.

Bhavabhuti.

6. Bhavabhuti with Vakpati Raja is stated in the *Rajatarangini* to have lived at the court of Yasovarman of Kanyakubja who was conquered by Lalitaditya Muktapida of Kashmir (A. D. 726—760). Vakpati composed a Prakrit poem, *Gauda-baha*, celebrating Yashovarman's victory over a Gauda king in which he highly admires Bhavabhuti. Bhavabhuti must therefore, be considered a senior contemporary of Vakpati and the period of his literary activity must be placed towards the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century. He was a native of the Vidarbhas (the Berars) and his three plays are full of topographical references to the Central India and the city of Ujjaini and contain no internal evidence of his having lived at the court of Kanauj. On this ground Mr. Anandaram Barua rejects the evidence of the *Rajatarangini* and places him in the fifth century and at the court of Ujjaini. He

might have left his native land for Kanauj, however, after finishing the composition of his three extant plays. The positive references given above outweigh the general argument of Mr. Barooah based purely on negative evidence and there is no adequate ground for challenging the accuracy of the Rajatarangini in this case.

7. Moreover, Bhavabhuti must be placed "at a proper distance from Kalidasa" as Prof. Max Muller puts it, for he not only took many fruitful hints and the materials of many masterly scenes from Kalidasa but also seems to refer to his plays in the prologue to the *Malati-Madhava*. A comparison of the spirit and style of their writings would also shew that Bhavabhuti wrote much later than Kalidasa. A supreme sense of harmony and beauty makes the creations of Kalidasa at once most natural and highly ideal. Bhavabhuti is carried away by his lofty ideality beyond nature and reality and by his tendency to exaggeration and expression of violent emotions spoils the subdued calmness and the brooding beauty of Kalidasa's pictures. Hence the genial tenderness of Kalidasa degenerates at his hands into a morbid pathos and a sickly sentimentalism. In the *Uttar Charita Rama*, the model of silent endurance and unflinching heroism in the *Raghuvamsa*, becomes declamatory and theatrical at the thought of sacrificing Janaki and displays the nervousness of a woman when in discharge of his kingly duty he has to lift the sword to behead Shambuka the transgressor of established

social laws. Hence all Bhavabhuti's characters are more or less hysterical and swoon at the slightest shock and revive as easily when the word "समाह्वयिहि" is uttered. The mark of degeneration in his style is still more apparent. Even his genius could not save him from the vitiated influence of his age and he has committed serious faults of style by introducing strings of long compounds, alliterations and obscure conjunctions of consonants to compose passages in the cumbrous Gaudi style, though he was perfect master of a more graceful simpler style.

Magha.

8. The Shishupala-vadha, as would be shewn in the next paragraph, is in every respect an imitation of the Kiratarjuniya. From this, it is clear, the earliest limit of the date of Magha must be fixed after the age of Bharavi, the first half of the sixth century. In the concluding slokas of his poem Magha calls himself a son of Dattaka and a grandson of Suprabhadeva. According to the Prabhakara-charita of the Jainas, Siddharshi who composed the Upamita-bhava-prapancha Katha in 906 A. D. was also a grandson of Suprabhadeva and a cousin of the poet Magha. The date of Magha falls therefore, in the latter half of the ninth century. Vamana, the author of Kavyalankara-Vritti quotes Magha along with Sudraka, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Kaviraja and others. Vamana, the joint author of the Kasika-Vritti with Jayaditya, who died according to I-tsing about A. D. 661 cannot be identical with this Vamana. Nor

Vamana mentioned in the Rajatarangini as a learned man of the court of Jayapida of Kashmir (A. D. 779—813) can be identified with him. If the above date of Magha be correct, Vamana the author of Kavyalankaravritti must have flourished after the latter half of the ninth century, the age of Magha. He cannot, however, be placed later than the middle of the tenth century, since he is quoted by the Kashmerian Shaiva philosopher Abhinava Gupta who wrote between A. D. 993 and 1015.

9. The Shishupala-vadha of Magha is a heroic epic in twenty cantos and, as has been remarked already, is in all essential features an imitation of the Kiratarjuniya. The poet in his attempt to outdo his model not in quality but in mere quantity has reproduced with exaggeration all the defects of the original. The Kiratarjuniya begins with the word "शिवः". Magha to outdo his model has not only placed the same word in the beginning of his poem but has also repeated the word "शिवः" in the last sloka of each canto. Like Bharavi Magha chooses a heroic theme from the Mahabharata. Like Bharavi he devotes the first two cantos of his poem to political debates. In the description of natural and amorous scenes he tries to surpass his model inasmuch as while Bharavi devotes two cantos to the description of nature and four cantos to erotic scenes, he devotes three cantos (III.—V.) to the first subject and six cantos (VI.—XI.) to the second. After two cantos more of descriptive matter, like Bharavi he

deals only in the last seven cantos with those feats of heroism which form the subject proper of his poem. As in the Kiratarjunia one of these last seven cantos (canto XIX.) again is devoted to those wonderful feats of word-manipulation by which the Chitra Bandhas of Bharavi are all outdone by our author. In this suffocating atmosphere of tedious descriptions, of accumulated learning and pedantry, of endless verbal quibbles the Muse of poetry has been strangled to death! In spite of his command of a lofty style and occasional passages of exquisite beauty in his poem, as a whole it is inferior to its model and the remark of those critics who regard it as the "poem of poems" is true only in the sense that in the treatment of topics to be embraced in a Great Epic it more blindly follows the description of a Mahakavya as given by Dandi than any other artificial epic.

Sriharsa.

10. Sriharsa the author of the Naishadha-charita, the Khandana-khanda-khadya and of the Nava-Sahasanka-charita (see Naishadha XXII. 151) was, as we learn from the concluding slokas of his poem, not only a poet, but a subtle metaphysician and a mystic who, though a sceptic in philosophy, in ecstatic vision realised his unity with the Absolute Spirit. He lived at the court of Jayachandra of Kanauj (1) an inscription of the period of whose regency bears the date A. D. 1160

(1) "सुप्रसिद्धो जयचन्द्रः कानौज्यस्य" Naishadha
XXII. 151.

and who was defeated by Shihab-ud-din in 1193 A. D. The period of Sriharsha's literary activity falls, therefore in the latter half of the twelfth century and it seems he composed *Naishadha-charita* shortly after 1175 A. D. the date of the *Svayamvara* of Joychandra's daughter Sanyukta which probably suggested the *Svayamvara* scenes of his poem.

11. Sriharsha is thus the last writer of an artificial Great Epic and in him we should expect the climax of artificiality. And in fact, he has surpassed all his predecessors by inventing an extremely artificial style, wonderfully polished, elaborately ornate and inflated with all sorts of rhetorical tricks. He has taken the well known story of Nala and Damayanti from the *Mahabharata* for his subject—not the whole of it but only the amorous portion of it. The whole story takes up twenty eight chapters of the *Mahabharata*. Of these he has taken only the first six chapters relating how Nala and Damayanti fell in love with each other, how Damayanti chose Nala at the *Svayamvara* and their married life, omitting, the most pathetic and elevating portions of the story—the trials and sufferings of the pair and their ultimate triumph over misfortunes through fortitude and devotion to virtue. This small and insignificant part of the story he has expanded into 22 long cantos each of which is twice or three times as large as a canto of Bharavi. He did not care for epic interest or richness of sentiments or living characters. His obvious object was to surpass

all previous poets in description, alliteration, figures of speech and elegance of style. And in this he has succeeded no doubt. While other poets used similes and metaphors, he deals exclusively in exaggerations and hyperboles. While other poets restrict the flights of their imagination within the sphere of possibility, he never puts any restraints on the freaks of his fancy. Thanks to his philosophy that he did not think it worth while to surpass Bharavi and Magha in spinning Chitra Bandhas also. In spite of his elaborate style and lavish use of ornaments, however, he has failed to produce a poem. He had no depth of emotion, no poetic vision, no lofty ideal of character. His intellect was cool, logical, analytical. It could dissect ideas and systems of thought, but could not create living souls. And his work is nothing but a lifeless heap of descriptions, clever combination of ideas, some of which may indeed tickle the intellect of an admiring Naiyayika, but cannot melt the heart or elevate the soul of a man. In fact, we miss in it the spirit and the lofty ideal of the familiar episode of the Mahabharata and read the story of the death of Sanskrit Poetry buried under a heap of splendid ruins.

BALLYGUNGE,
May 23, 1913.

} MURALIDHAR BANDYOPADHYAYA.

বিজ্ঞাপন ।

সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যে সুপরিচিত, সংস্কৃত ভাষার সেবকগণের পরম শ্রদ্ধাভাজন, মহাকবি ভারবি, মাঘ এবং ত্রীহর্ষের মহাকাব্যত্রয়ের সমালোচনা প্রকাশ করিবার চরাশা অনেক দিন হইতে মনে মনে পোষণ করিতেছিলাম । নিজের অযোগ্যতা স্বরণ করিয়া, এতদিন উহা কার্যে পরিণত করিতে সাহসী হই নাই । কিছু দিন হইল, মহাকবি কালিদাসের কাব্য এবং নাটকসমূহের, “কালিদাস” নামে, এবং মহাকবি ভবভূতির নাটকাবলীর “শ্রীকণ্ঠ” নামে সমালোচনা পুস্তক প্রকাশ করি । সঙ্গদয় পাঠকবৃন্দ ঐ পুস্তকদ্বয় অতি অমুগ্রহের চক্ষে অবলোকন করেন । বঙ্গদেশ এবং পশ্চিমাঞ্চল—কানপুর, লাক্কৌ, কাশী, এলাহাবাদ, আলিগড় প্রভৃতি স্থানের অনেক মনীষাসম্পন্ন পাঠক—উক্ত গ্রন্থদ্বয় পাঠ পূর্বক স্ব স্ব প্ৰীতিখ্যাপন করিয়া আমাকে উৎসাহিত করেন ও অন্ত্যস্ত প্রমিতনামা কবিকুলের কাব্যাবলীর সমালোচনা করিতে অমুরোধ করেন । তাঁহা-দিগের অমুকম্পার আমার সাহস বাড়িয়া যায়, আমি লিখিতে প্রবৃত্ত হই ।

লিখিতে আরম্ভ করিয়া বৃদ্ধিতে পারি যে, যত সহজ মনে করিয়াছিলাম, মাঘ, ভারবি, নৈষধের সমালোচনা তত সহজ নহে । সত্যকথা বলিতে কি, মানুষ অল্পজ্ঞ ব্যক্তির পক্ষে উহা একান্ত দুঃসাধ্য । আমি মাত্র রেখাপাত করিয়া গেলাম, কোন নিপুণ, সহদয় লেখক, ইচ্ছা করিলে, বঙ্গভাষার ত্রীভুজিকল্পে সুচারু প্রতিমা গঠন করিতে পারিবেন । আমার ভার অজ ব্যক্তির পদে পদে ক্রটি থাকি বিচিত্র নহে, পাঠকবৃন্দ কৃপা-পরতন হইয়া মার্জনা করিলে প্রম সকল মনে করিব ।

কয়েক বৎসর পূর্বে যে সঙ্কলন করিয়া “ কালিদাস ” লিখিতে বসিয়া ছিলান, আজ আমার সে সঙ্কলন পূর্ণ হইল। সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের প্রধান পাঁচজন মহাকবির কাব্য সমালোচিত হইল। অজ্ঞের এবং বন্ধুর পথে যাত্রা করিলে স্বপ্ন অনিবার্য্য, তজ্জন্ত পণ্ডিতমণ্ডলীর নিকট আমার রুতালিপুটে প্রার্থনা—

অযুক্তমস্মিন্ যদি কিঞ্চিৎকৃতং
 অজ্ঞানতো বা মতিবিত্রমাধা ।
 ঔদার্য্যাকরণ্য-বিশুদ্ধবীভিঃ
 মনীষিত্তিস্তৎ পরিশোধনীয়ম্ ।

সায়নত কুটার,
 কাকুলিয়া রোড ।
 বাণীগঞ্জ, কলিকাতা,
 ডিসেম্বর, ১৩২০ ।

শ্রীরাভেন্দ্রনাথ দেবশর্মা ।

দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণের বিজ্ঞাপন ।

“তপোবন” ২য় বার মুদ্রিত হইল । ১ম বারের স্তায় এ বারেও সাধারণ পাঠক পাঠিকাগণের রূপা লাভ করিলে, “তপোবন” ধস্ত হইবে । এই সংস্করণে বিশেষ কোন পরিবর্তন সাধিত হয় নাই । বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কর্তৃপক্ষ অগ্রগতপূর্বক, এই পুস্তক বি, এ, পরীক্ষার পাঠ্যরূপে নির্দেশ করায়, আমি তাঁহাদিগের নিকট কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ করিতেছি । ইতি—
বৈশাখ, ১৩২৫ ॥

দারস্বত কুটীর,
বাগীচঞ্জ, কলিকাতা

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শ্রীরাজেন্দ্রনাথ বিদ্যাভূষণ ।

উপক্রম ।

জগতের মঙ্গল কামনার আগাদের পূর্বে পিতৃপিতামহগণ, সংসার ভুলিয়া, জনহীন শাস্ত্র তপোবনের নিম্নে শ্রামল অঞ্চলে বসিয়া, তন্ময়-হৃদয়ে করনাবীগার যে গান গাহিয়া গিয়াছেন, কত যুগ-যুগান্ত কাটিয়া গিয়াছে, কত বিপ্লব, কত পরিবর্তনে ভারতবর্ষ ধ্বস্ত-বিধ্বস্ত হইয়াছে, তবুও অজ্ঞাবধি, তাঁহাদের সে মধুর গানের তান, নিশীথে দূরগত বীণাধ্বনির স্রাব, ভূষিত, পথ-ভ্রান্ত পথিকের কর্ণে নির্ঝরিতীর্ণ অক্ষুট কুলকুল গীতির স্রাব ভারতের সর্বত্র,—না—না, শুধু ভারত নহে,—জগতের সর্বত্র ভাসিয়া বেড়াইতেছে। যে সঙ্গীত-শ্রবণে আজিও প্রাণে কেমন একট উদাস ভাব, আনন্দময়ী জড়তার ভাব জাগিয়া উঠে,—বাস বাস্তবিক প্রভৃতি মহাকবিগণের সেই গীতলহরীই আমার আলোচ্য। তাঁহার তপোবনে বসিয়া তান ধরিতেন, সেই তানে বিরাট ভারতবর্ষে একটা আনন্দের, একটা পুলকের সাড়া পড়িত। সেই আনন্দে বিহ্বল হইয়া, সেই তানে আত্মহারা হইয়া, কালিদাস, ভবভূতি, ভারবি, মাঘ, শ্রীহর্ষ প্রভৃতি মহাকবিগণ স্ব স্ব মধুর-কণ্ঠে সেই গানের আলাপ করিয়াছেন। তাঁহাদের সে আলাপেও ভারতবর্ষ পুলকিত হইয়াছে, অথবা হইয়াছে বলি কেন, জগৎ এখনও পুলকিত হইতেছে। রামায়ণ এবং মহাভারতের চিত্রাবলীর ছায়ায় তাঁহারা যে সকল মধুর মূর্তি উদ্ভাসিত করিয়া গিয়াছেন,—সংস্কৃত ভাষা ব্যতিরেকে, অন্তত সে মূর্তি ছলিত। প্রাচীন কবিগণের অঙ্কিত সে সকল মূর্তির এবং সেই সকল গানের আলোচনা করিতে গেলে সর্বাণ্ড্রে স্বপ্নময় তপোবনের ছায়া নয়নের সমক্ষে ভাসিয়া উঠে। মনে

হয়, বিধাতা এমন বর দিন, বাহাতে জন্মজন্মান্তরেও যেন, এই বিরাট তপোবনরূপী ভারতবর্ষে আবার আসিতে পারি, সেই প্রাচীন তপোবন গীতিকার আলাপ করিয়া কৃতকৃতার্থ হইতে পারি। সেই মহনীর তপোবনের পুণ্যস্বত্বিতে পুলকিত হইয়া, এই অকিঞ্চন প্রবন্ধের নামও “তপোবন” রাখিলাম, ইহার মর্যাদা বৃদ্ধি করিলাম। আমার এ ছরাশার জন্ত আমি উপহসিত হইবার যোগ্য, কিন্তু ছরাশার হাত এড়াইতে পারা বড়ই কঠিন।
