

## ❁ Chapter 9 ❁

1860

He begins 1860 on a more cheerful note, writing to Majruh, on January 1, 1860:

'Where are you, my boy? Where are you roving? Come here and listen to the news. [He then tells him of the Governor-General's durbar and subsequent visit to Delhi and his own lack of success. But he continues:] As for the pension, although there is still no decision one way or the other, I am planning something and we shall see what comes of it. . . .

'Orders have been issued for the general return of the Muslims' properties. Those who had been paying rent for them have now been exempted from paying it. . . . If you think fit, come and take possession of your property. Then stay on here or return [to Panipat] just as you like. . . . Give my blessing to Hakim Mir Ashraf Ali and tell him to write out the prescription for those pills he gave me and send it to me quickly. . . .'

What he was planning in relation to his pension does not become clear until March, when in a letter to Bekhabar (dated only 'March, 1860') he explains what he did after being told that the Chief Secretary would not receive him because he had been a well-wisher of the rebels.

'The next day I wrote a letter<sup>1</sup> in English to the effect that it was sheer conjecture to think that I had been a well-wisher of the rebels, and requesting an investigation so that my name could be cleared and my innocence established.'

Then, either because he decided after all that his hopes were futile, or because he saw no need to stay on in Delhi waiting for the British to reply, he decided to carry out his intention to go to Rampur.

The Nawwab had long been pressing him to come—ever since early 1858, in fact—and letters from him in November 1858 and April 1859 had repeated the invitation. Ghalib had replied that he wished to wait until the British restored his pension, as he was generally confident that they ultimately would. Thus he had written to the Nawwab on April 18, 1859: 'The day after I receive the [pension] money I shall ask you for money to pay for conveyance and portorage; and the day after I receive it I shall start out for Rampur.'

<sup>1</sup> i.e., presumably, had a letter written.

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But, as we have seen, 1859 passed by, and the restoration of his pension was not yet in sight. On December 8, 1859 he had had to ask the Nawwab bluntly for extra money:

'Your draft of Rs. 100 for . . . November 1859 reached me. I drew the money and spent it, and was again hungry and naked. Whom should I tell if not you? If you will send me Rs. 200 over and above my regular allowance, I shall be able to breathe again—provided that it is not reckoned against my allowance, and that you send it very soon.'

The Nawwab sent him the money, and at the same time repeated his invitation to him to come to Rampur. Ghalib had in any case intended to accept the invitation in due course, and in the circumstances probably felt that he could not reasonably delay much longer.

On the way to Rampur, on January 21, 1860 he wrote to Tufta:

'My friend, I have left Delhi for Rampur. I reached Muradnagar on Thursday 19th and Meerut on Friday 20th. Today, Saturday 21st, I am staying on at the insistence of our friend Mustafa Khan [Shefta], and I'm posting off this letter to you from here. Tomorrow I shall stay at Shahjahanpur and the day after at Garhmukteshar, and then go on to Rampur via Muradabad. So send your next letter to me to Rampur. All the address you need write is my name, and Rampur. This is enough for now. I will write to you again from Rampur.'

He also wrote from Meerut on the same day to Hakim Ghulam Najaf Khan giving him the same information and adding:

'It's nine o'clock [a.m.], and I'm sitting here writing to you. I am getting my food free, and shall stuff myself to my heart's content. . . . I've got the two boys to write to their grandmother [Ghalib's wife] and am sending their letters off. Go to my house with this letter and read it out to your teacher [Ghalib's wife] and tell her that I am safe and sound. . . .

'I've thought it best to tell you the stages of my proposed journey, but now if anyone asks you, tell him plainly that I'm in Rampur. Don't make a secret of it. I want every one to know the position plainly.'

Tufta, as usual, was not content to address his letters in the (in his view) inadequate style Ghalib had suggested. Ghalib's next letter (undated) rebukes him:

'You say that your son doesn't know the world, but you're no better yourself. Tell me first, who in Rampur doesn't know me? Do you think they know Maulvi Wajih uz Zaman Sahib better? [Tufta had presumably addressed Ghalib in his care.] His house is a long way from mine. And I'm not at the

Nawwab's court. He entertained me in his own mansion for four days, and then I asked for separate accommodation. . . . It so happens that the post-office is near where I am living, and the post-office clerk has got to know me. Letters reach me from Delhi all the time addressed with my name and "Rampur", and that's all. . . . In fact if you address me *c/o* the Maulvi Sahib and the Court your letters may go astray. . . .'

He was very well satisfied with the treatment he received at Rampur. He writes to Hakim Ghulam Najaf Khan on February 3, 1860:

'Write and tell me in detail any fresh news of what is going on in Delhi. And now let me tell you my news: I am treated with great honour. I have met the Nawwab three times, and have been given a house which is three or four houses in one. There is no stone here . . . and only a handful of the houses are brick-built. Mud walls and tiled roofs—the whole population lives in this kind of house, and my houses too are of the same kind. So far we have not discussed anything together. I shall not make the first move, and he too will not speak to me directly, but through his officials. Let me see what he has to say and what allowance he will make me. I had thought that once I arrived here, things would be settled very quickly, but so far—and today is Friday, my eighth day here—nothing has been said. The Nawwab has both meals sent to me every day, and there is enough food for all of us. It's not unacceptable to my taste either. As for the water, I cannot find words to express my thanks to God for it. There's a river here called the Kosi. God be praised! Its water is so sweet that you would think it was diluted sherbet—clear, light, refreshing and quickly assimilated. For these eight days I have been safe from attacks of constipation. I develop a really good appetite in the mornings. The boys are thriving and my servant [unnamed] well and strong. True, Inayat [another servant, says Mihr] has been out of sorts for the last two days, but he'll soon be well. . . .'

On February 14, 1860 he writes again to Hakim Ghulam Najaf Khan: 'My friend, you ought to have opened the letter. . . . It wasn't from the Lieutenant-Governor, but from the Chief Secretary to the Governor-General.' [He then translates it into Urdu. It is dated January 27, 1860, and is to the effect that the Governor-General has received Ghalib's petition and will reply after due enquiry has been made.]

'The position here is that the Lieutenant-Governor is coming to Muradabad from Agra. Muradabad is twelve *kos*<sup>1</sup> from here. The Nawwab is away on a tour of his dominions, but he will be back in three or four days, and if he goes to Muradabad to meet the Lieutenant-Governor, I shall go with him. True, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces has nothing to do

<sup>1</sup> About 18 miles.

with Delhi, but let me see what comes of the interview. I will write and let you know what happens.

'What is this that you write, telling me to write home<sup>1</sup> more often? The letters I write to you are in effect written to her too. Is it too much to ask of you to go and read them to her? Now she will be wondering what was in the English letter. Take this letter of mine with you and go and read it to her word for word.

'The boys are both well. Sometimes they amuse me, and sometimes they plague me. Their goats, and pigeons, and quails, and their kites—small and big—are all in good order. I gave them their two rupees apiece for February, and they spent it all in the first ten days. Then two days ago the younger gentleman came to me and said, "Grand-dad, give me something on indefinite loan." So I gave him something. Today is the 14th, and the end of the month is a long way off. Let's see how many times he comes back to borrow more. . . .

'Ask at home whether Kidar Nath has paid all the servants. I have sent the pay for all of them—even the sweeper. . . .'

On March 1, 1860 he writes to Tufta:

'Nothing is fixed yet. At present it seems that the Lieutenant-Governor will be coming to Muradabad, and thence to Rampur. After he leaves I shall be in a position to know whether I am going to stay here or not. If I do, I intend to send for you at once, so that we can spend together whatever days of life are left to me.'

However, he did not stay on in Rampur. In a letter to Aram dated March 14, 1860 he says, 'I am leaving for Delhi on Saturday, March 17th'—without, however, giving any explanation of his departure. There is a hint in a letter to Yusuf Mirza written on April 2, 1860, which tells us that he arrived back in Delhi on March 25th, the first day of Ramzan, the Muslim month of fasting, and adds: 'The children made my life a misery: otherwise I would have stayed a few days more.'

But a letter of April 6, 1860, to Majruh is more explicit. Majruh had apparently been surprised to learn of Ghalib's return to Delhi. Ghalib rebukes him with mock solemnity:

'Mir Mahdi, have you forgotten my accustomed ways? Have I ever once missed listening to the recitation of the Quran at the Jama Masjid during the blessed month of Ramzan? How could I stay in Rampur during this month? The Nawwab tried to detain me, and tried very hard, in fact, tempting me all the time with the prospect of the mangoes I would get there during the rains. But, my friend, I would have none of it, and moved to such purpose that I reached here on the night of the new moon [from which Ramzan begins]. The holy

<sup>1</sup> i.e. to his wife.

month began on the Sunday. And from that day to this I have been present every morning at Hāmid Ali Khan's mosque to hear the reverend Maulvi Jafar Ali Sahib's reading of the Quran. Every night I go to the Jama Masjid to say the *tarawih* prayer.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, when I feel so inclined, I go into the Mahtab Garden at sunset and break my fast there and take a draught of cold water. And, oh, how happily the days pass by!

'And now let me tell you the real facts. I took the boys with me to Rampur and they made my life there a misery. I didn't like to send them back on their own. If anything should happen to them on the way, I thought, I should never live it down. So I came away sooner than I had intended; otherwise I should have passed the hot season and the rains there. Now, if I live, and if I can go there alone, I shall return after the rains,<sup>2</sup> and not come back here for a long, long time. The position is that ever since July 1859—that is, for the last ten months—the Nawwab has been sending me a hundred rupees a month. When I got to Rampur he paid me an additional hundred rupees a month, calling it "hospitality allowance". This meant that as long as I stayed in Rampur I should get two hundred a month, whereas in Delhi I should get only a hundred. Well, my friend, the point is not whether I get two hundred or a hundred. The point is that the Nawwab treats me as his friend and his *ustad*, and gives me my allowance in that spirit, and not as though I were his employee. It was as a friend too that he always met me, with the deference and warmth which friends observe in their intercourse with one another. I had the boys offer presents when we were received, and that was all. Anyway, I'm fortunate; I must be thankful that my daily bread is well provided for. Why should I complain that it is not enough?'

He goes on to speak of the unjust (as he believed) reduction of his pension all those years ago to a mere 750 rupees a year, but recalls with satisfaction the honour formerly shown him both by the British and by the Mughal King. He goes on:

'And so, my dear friend, things are back to where they were. I sit in my little room with the *khas* screen in place.<sup>3</sup> A breeze is blowing; a full pitcher of water is beside me, and I am smoking the hookah and writing you this letter. I felt like talking to you, so I did. . . .'

Ghalib's return to Delhi gave rise to a good deal of speculation, some of which he reports in a letter to Tufta dated March 30, 1860:

'You know that I went to Rampur at the end of January and returned at the

<sup>1</sup> A special prayer of twenty genuflexions performed at night-time during Ramzan.

<sup>2</sup> —that is, late in October or early in November,—letter of April 29, 1860, to Yusuf Mirza.

<sup>3</sup> In the hot season screens of a particular fragrant grass called *khas*, drenched in water, are placed at the doors so that the air is cooled as it passes into the rooms.

end of March. Do you know what people here are saying about me? One lot says, "This man was the *ustad* of the Nawwab of Rampur and has been to visit him there. If nothing else, the Nawwab must have given him at least five thousand rupees." Another group says, "He went there to look for a job, but he couldn't get one." Another says, "The Nawwab gave him a job, and fixed his salary at two hundred rupees a month. But the Lieutenant-Governor came to Rampur from Allahabad, and when he found out that Ghalib was employed there he told the Nawwab that if he wanted to continue in his favour he must dismiss him; and so the Nawwab gave him the sack". And now you've heard all that, let me tell you the facts. Nawwab Yusuf Ali Khan has been my friend for thirty-one years and my shagird for five or six years. He used to send me money from time to time and now regularly sends me a hundred rupees a month—since July 1859. He had often invited me to Rampur, and now I have been there. I stayed two months, and then came back. If I live, I shall go again after the rains. But by God's grace I shall get my hundred rupees a month whether I am here or there.'

He had suffered one disappointment before he left Rampur. The letter of March 1860 to Bekhabar, already quoted above, tells us that in February he received an official letter rejecting his request for an investigation into his conduct during the Mutiny. Not for the first time, he concluded that he could no longer hope for anything from the British.

It is with some astonishment, therefore, that he writes to Tufta on April 16, 1860:

'I have something remarkable to tell you—something which will occasion you the greatest astonishment and the greatest pleasure. I had given up all hope that the British authorities would renew my pension. The list of pensioners had at last been made out here and sent to higher authority, and the Commissioner here had written of me that I did not merit a pension. The government has acted in despite of his opinion and issued orders for the renewal of my pension. The order has reached here, and has become generally known; and I too have heard of it. Now it is said that payments will begin next month, that is from May 1st. Let us see what instructions have been given about the arrears.'

At the end of the same month of April he is able to report to Sarur:

'My position, in general terms, is this, that my relations . . . with the authorities . . . have been restored. I had sent by post to the Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces a copy of *Dastambu*. I have received . . . a reply from him in Persian, praising its style and accepting the sincerity of my devotion and love. Then I had sent an ode celebrating the spring and telling his praises. I have had an acknowledgement of this, in which I am addressed in my former style of "Khan Sahib, our most kind well-wisher and friend", written on paper

sprinkled with gold dust. Then I had sent a panegyric in praise of Mr Robert Montgomery, Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjab, through the . . . Commissioner of Delhi. In reply to this too came a letter, through the Commissioner, expressing his pleasure.'

Subsequent letters show that Ghalib's information proved to be reliable, and that furthermore the arrears due to him for the whole period since May 1857 were granted him. They also show how little was left of them once he had settled, for the time being, with his creditors. There are several letters which give the details, but the fullest is that to Tufta dated May 6, 1860:

'I've just had your letter, and am writing this reply immediately after reading it. How do you make out that three years' arrears amounts to some thousands of rupees? My pension is seven hundred and fifty rupees a year. Three years at this rate comes to two thousand, two hundred and fifty. I had been given a grant in aid of a hundred. This was deducted, and another hundred and fifty was accounted for by miscellaneous items. That left two thousand. My agent in these matters is a baniya, to whom I owe a debt of long standing. He kept the two thousand, and asked me to settle accounts with him. The principal and interest worked out at Rs. 1493. We calculated other miscellaneous debts at the same rate and they came to a few rupees over eleven hundred. So the 1500 and the 1100 made 2600—six hundred more than the two thousand. He wants me to pay him his 1500, and keep the 507. I want him to share the 2000 half and half, arguing that the miscellaneous debts come to 1100, leaving 900. He came with the money two days ago—on the 4th—and up to yesterday we hadn't reached a settlement. I'm not hurrying matters. One or two other moneylenders are involved. The thing will take a week to settle. . . .'

What exactly was settled we do not know, but we find him writing two months later, on July 8, 1860, to Ala ud Din Ahmad Khan Alai: 'After paying off all my debts I was left with four hundred rupees still to pay, and only eighty-seven rupees, eleven annas in hand.'

Not only was the lump sum swallowed up in this way; a change was introduced in the method of payment which involved him in further debt. He writes to Tufta on July 20, 1860:

'At the end of June orders were received from the Panjab authorities directing that established pensioners should in future be paid not monthly but twice-yearly. I was obliged to go to the moneylender and borrow money on interest, so that I should have something to supplement my income from Rampur. I shall be paying interest on the loan over the next six months, and that means a substantial loss.

We know the rite in hour of the dead  
Called the 'six-monthly'—all observe it here.  
But see *my* case: men, while I still live on,  
Celebrate *my* six-monthly twice a year.'

In actual fact the changed method of payment was not introduced right away, as a letter of September 1860 to Sarur shows:

'I am getting my money month by month; but this will last only three months more—September, October and November. As from December 1860 it will be paid twice-yearly. Moreover there is going to be a cut of 4 per cent. At this rate I shall lose two and a half rupees a month.'

There has been much speculation about what led the British authorities to restore Ghalib's pension. Ghalib himself had hoped that the Nawwab of Rampur could influence them in this direction, and his efforts may indeed have played a part, for Ghalib's statement in one of his letters that the restoration of the pension was not the Nawwab's doing, but God's, does not necessarily contradict this. Ikram argues that the efforts of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan probably played a decisive part. He writes:

'Maulana Abul Kalam Azad says that Sir Sayyid exerted every effort to get Ghalib's pension restored . . . and there are signs which support this statement. . . . On his return journey [from Rampur] he stopped at Muradabad, and Sir Sayyid, who was at that time Sadr us Sudur<sup>1</sup> there, went to the inn where he was staying and brought him to his own house. It is reasonable to assume that during his stay he told all his troubles to Sir Sayyid, and that Sir Sayyid used the influence which he had acquired after the Mutiny to remedy them. Possibly because Sir Sayyid was a government employee, or perhaps from some other consideration, it was not considered advisable to speak of these efforts. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's statement also seems plausible because it was in March 1860 that Ghalib stayed with Sir Sayyid and the restoration of the pension was made only a month or two later, in May, 1860.'

However that may be, Hali's account (in his life of Sir Sayyid) of Ghalib's stay at Muradabad on this occasion is interesting. It shows amongst other things that any sense of estrangement that may have arisen over the *Ain i Akbari* incident some years earlier was now ended. He writes:

'Sir Sayyid used to say that when he was in Muradabad, Ghalib had gone to visit . . . Nawwab Yusuf Ali Khan at Rampur. "I did not know he had gone there, but during his return journey to Delhi I heard that he had stopped at Muradabad and was staying at an inn. I at once went there and brought him

<sup>1</sup> A judicial post of some importance.

and his luggage and all his companions to my house." It would seem that when Sir Sayyid had refused to print Ghalib's introduction [to *Ain i Akbari*], the two men had kept at a distance and felt a certain reserve towards each other, and that this was why Ghalib had not informed him of his coming to Muradabad. Anyway, when Ghalib arrived at Sir Sayyid's house from the inn and got out of the palanquin, he had a bottle [of wine] in his hand. He took it into the house and put it down in a place where anyone who passed could see it. Sir Sayyid later picked it up and put it in a store-room. When Ghalib found the bottle missing he got very upset. Sir Sayyid said, "Don't worry, I've put it in a safe place." Ghalib replied, "Show me where, my friend." Sir Sayyid then took him to the store-room and produced the bottle. Ghalib took the bottle from him and held it up to look at it, and then said with a smile, "There's some missing, my friend. Tell me truly, who's had it? Perhaps that's why you took it away to the store-room. Hāfiz was right:

These preachers show their majesty in mosque  
and pulpit  
But once at home it is far other things they do.'

Sir Sayyid laughed and made no reply, and in this way the sense of strain between them that had lasted for several years was removed. Ghalib stayed on for a day or two and then returned to Delhi.'

When the arrears of his pension were swallowed up in paying off his accumulated debts, Sarur suggested that he should write an ode in praise of the Nizam of Hyderabad and allow him to have it presented on Ghalib's behalf by an intermediary at the Nizam's court. The proposal depressed him, and he replied in an undated letter showing how fate had always frowned on him in these matters:

'First let me write of some matters which you will at first sight think irrelevant. I was five years old when my father died, and nine when my uncle died. In place of the income from his estate, I and my blood relations were to be granted ten thousand rupees a year from the estate of Nawwab Ahmad Bakhsh. He refused to give more than three thousand a year, of which my own personal share amounted to seven hundred and fifty. I pointed out this misappropriation to the British government. Colebrooke Sahib Bahadur (the Resident of Delhi) and Stirling Sahib Bahadur, Secretary to the government at Calcutta, were in agreement with me that my rights must be restored. But the Resident was dismissed and the Secretary met an untimely death.

'After a lapse of many years the King of Delhi appointed me to a pension of fifty rupees a month, and the heir apparent to one of four hundred rupees a year. Two years later, the heir apparent died.

'Wajid Ali Shah, King of Oudh's court appointed a sum of five hundred rupees a year to be paid me in reward for my odes of praise. He too did not

survive more than two years, by which I mean that though he still survives, his kingdom was destroyed, and destroyed within those two years. The kingdom of Delhi was a little more tenacious of life. I drew my daily bread from it for seven years before it was destroyed. There are no stars so baneful as those that kill my patrons and destroy my benefactors. Now if I turn to the ruler of the Deccan [the Nizam's dominions, Hyderabad], mark my words, my intermediary will die, or fall from office, or if neither of these things happens, then his efforts on my behalf will be fruitless and the ruler will give me nothing. And if by any chance he does, then his state will be levelled in the dust and put under the asses' plough.

'And suppose I put all that aside and make up my mind to write a panegyric. Well, I can make up my mind to it, but not carry it through. Fifty to fifty-five years of practice have given me a certain talent, but I have no strength left in me. I sometimes look at the prose and verse which I wrote in former days; I know that it is mine, but I am lost in wonderment that I could write such prose and compose such verse. Abdul Qādir Bedil spoke as though with my tongue when he wrote:

My story echoes round the world—and I am  
nothing.

My life is ending, and my heart and mind are spent. My hundred rupees from Rampur and my sixty rupees' pension suffice amply for my maintenance. Fluctuations of prices are always with us. For better or for worse, the work of this world goes on. Caravan upon caravan is ready to depart. See, Munshi Nabi Bakhsh [Haqir] was younger than I, but he died last month. Where shall I find the strength to write a panegyric? And if I make up my mind to it, how shall I find the leisure? And if I write it, and send it to you, and you send it to the Deccan, when will our intermediary find an opportunity of presenting it? And if he does, what will be the response? Do you think I shall live to see all these stages passed? "Verily we are for God, and Verily to Him we shall return. There is no god but God, and none who may be worshipped but He, and nothing exists but God, and God was when no other thing was, and God is now just as He was."'

All the same, the restoration of his pension and of his standing with the British must have been a source of much satisfaction to him. Another welcome event of the same time was a move to re-issue his Urdu diwan. Here he inadvertently landed himself in difficulties. He explains in a letter to Aram dated April, 1860:

'Let me tell you the facts about my diwan being printed at Meerut. Then you can have your say. I was still in Rampur when I received a letter headed "Petition of Azim ud Din Ahmad, of Meerut". May God strike me if I know who this Azim ud Din is or what profession he follows. Anyway, I read the

letter and learned that he wanted to print my Urdu diwan as a business venture, and expected to make a profit out of it. Well, I made no reply. When I got to Meerut from Rampur, I stopped off at friend Mustafa Khan's [Shefta's]. There my old friend Munshi Mumtaz Ali came to see me. He said, "Send me your Urdu diwan. A bookseller named Azim ud Din wants to print it." Now listen to this: where was I to find a fully complete copy of the diwan? True, before the Mutiny I had had a copy made and sent to Nawwab Yusuf Ali Khan Bahadur at Rampur. When I was about to leave Delhi for Rampur, brother Ziya ud Din urged me strongly to get the diwan from the Nawwab, get it copied by a scribe, and send it to him. Accordingly, during my stay there I got it copied by a scribe and posted it to Ziya ud Din at Delhi. Now let me return to what I was saying. When Munshi Mumtaz Ali said that to me, all I could say was, "Very well, I'll get the diwan from Ziya ud Din and send it you. But who will be responsible for correcting the proofs?" Nawwab Mustafa Khan [Shefta] said, "I will." Now, tell me, what could I do? When I got to Delhi I got the diwan from Ziya ud Din and sent a man with it to Nawwab Mustafa Khan. If I had been in a position to make what arrangements I pleased for printing it, do you think I'd have ignored our own press [i.e. Aram's] and sent it to someone else's? I am writing this letter to you and at the same time writing off to our friend Nawwab Mustafa Khan to tell him that if printing has not already started, he is not to give it for printing, but is to send it back to me as soon as possible. If it comes, I'll send it on immediately to you; if the scribe there has already started it, then there's nothing I can do. I am not at fault; and if, now you've heard what happened, you think I am to blame, well, my friend, then please forgive me. People will be involved with Ramzan and Id; I feel sure that the copying won't have begun; my diwan will be sent back to me, and shall then be sent on to you. . . .'

Some good-humoured sarcasm in a letter to Yusuf Mirza on May 9, 1860 shows that the situation was unchanged up to then:

'As for our friend Fazlu, Mir Kazim Ali, how could he know what "book" means and what weapon is called "Agra" and what tree bears the fruit called "Sikandar"? My Urdu diwan went to Meerut; Sikandar Shah took it for me and delivered it to Nawwab Mustafa Khan. . . .'

It transpired that Azim ud Din, having once got his hands on the diwan, was not prepared to give it up. Ghalib writes to Sayyah on June 11, 1860:

'What can I say about the printing of my diwan? That unknown stranger known as Azim ud Din, who got me to send him the diwan, is not a man but an apparition, a horror, a ghoul—in short, a very uncouth sort of person—and I don't want to put the printing of my diwan into his hands. I am asking him to return it, but he won't. God grant that I get it back. You too must pray for it.'

But in the end all turned out well. He was able to write to Aram on June 25, 1860:

'Friend, I have sinned against you, and kept your book [i.e. the diwan] to myself. It cost me a lot of effort and labour to stop it being printed there and to get it back. Today, Monday, 25th June, I have sent it off by parcel post. So now forgive me my sin and restore me to your pleasure and write and tell me you have done so. The book—my Urdu diwan—I give over to you entirely. Now it belongs to you. I don't say, "Print it" and I don't say "Don't print it." Do whatever it pleases you to do. If you print it, put me down for twenty copies. And, yes, my son, do please take great care to see that it is printed correctly.'

He writes again on July 3, 1860:

'My son, you make me laugh. The diwan I sent you is comprehensive and complete. What are these "two or three ghazals in Mirza Yusuf Ali Khan Aziz's possession, which are not in the diwan"? On this score you can set your mind completely at rest. I have not written a single line which is not in this diwan. However, I'll speak to him too and get him to send these ghazals for me to look at. What do you want with a picture of me? And how can Aziz, poor fellow, get my portrait done? If it's all that important, write to me about it. I'll get a portrait done and send it to you. You don't need to present anything, not even your respects. I love you like a son, and I give thanks to God that you are a dutiful son. God grant you long life and give you all that you desire.'

Ghulam Rasul Mihr thinks that an undated letter to Nawwab Ziya ud Din Ahmad Khan relates to this same period—or at any rate to the same year. 'Diwan,' he writes, 'here means the collected Persian verse. . . . The letter would seem to be one of 1860, when he contemplated getting his collected Persian verse printed at Munshi Newal Kishor's press.' The letter reads:

'Reverend sir, why are you so reluctant to give me the diwan? It's not as though you studied it every day. Nor is it so dear to you that you can't digest your dinner until you see it. So why won't you let me have it? There'll be a thousand copies instead of just one. My verse will win fame. My heart will rejoice. The whole world will see my ode in your praise. Everyone will be able to read the prose encomium on your brother. Are not these advantages enough? As for fear that the book may be lost, that is just a baseless feeling. Why should it? And if by any chance it *is* lost, if the mail is robbed between Delhi and Lucknow, then I'll travel at once by the mail to Rampur, and bring you the copy transcribed by the late Nawwab Fakhr ud Din Khan.'

Perhaps you'll tell me, "Go to Rampur and send it off from there." But don't you think they would ask me why I don't send the Delhi copy? And if I write and tell them that Nawwab Ziya ud Din Sahib won't give it to me, don't you think I'll be told, "When your own relation and neighbour won't give it to you, why should I, who am so far away, give you my copy?" And if you tell me to borrow Tafazzul's copy and send that, what am I to do if he refuses to part with it? And if he does part with it, what use is it to me? In the first place it's incomplete, and then it's defective in other ways. There are some panegyrics in it in which I've altered the names for presentation elsewhere, and which in his edition still bear the earlier names. Shihab ud Din's copy too, which Yusuf Mirza has taken, has both these defects, and moreover is full of mistakes. Not a couplet, not a line is free of them. This thing can't be done without your help; and you lose nothing by it. You may *think* you do, but that's just a baseless fear, a boggy. And if you do, I'll guarantee to make good your loss, as I have already said. So make up your mind to grant my request and write to me accordingly so that I can inform the man who has asked me for it, and when he asks again, can send it to him.'

For the rest of 1860 there is no further mention of either the Urdu or the Persian verse. We find him in the middle of the year pre-occupied with the weather, with the Delhi scene, and with the problems of moving house—and on occasion with other themes, some more weighty, and some less so.

In May 1860 Yusuf Mirza had written telling him the news that his father had died. He replies on May 19th:

'Yusuf Mirza, how can I bring myself to write the words, "Your father is dead"? And if I do, what am I to write next? What am I to tell you to do now? To bear it patiently? That is the well-worn custom of the world—formal condolence and formal repetition of the phrase, "Bear it patiently". Alas that when a man's heart is cut out people can tell him to be still! How *can* he be still? This is not the occasion to offer advice, nor one where prayers and remedies have any place. First your son died, and now your father. If anyone were to ask me what it means to have nowhere to turn I would say, "To be in Yusuf Mirza's place."

'Your grandmother [the dead man's mother] writes that the order for his release had been passed. Is that true? If it is, then our stalwart broke both his bonds at a single effort—the bonds of existence and the bonds of English captivity. And she writes also that his pension-money had come, and that it would help to pay the expenses of his funeral. I don't understand this. When a man is found guilty and sentenced to fourteen years' imprisonment, how can it be that his pension is paid him? At whose request? Who would sign the receipt? Mustafa Khan's [Shefta's] release was ordered, but his pension was forfeited. There's no point in asking about it now, but it's a very strange thing; write and tell me any explanation that occurs to you. . . . Anyway, I've sent on

your grandmother's letter, which your brother had sent me, to your uncle [mother's brother]. Orders have been issued for the restoration of his property. . . . Let us see what happens. . . .'

He was conscious that the year in which he had predicted he would die—1277 AH, due to begin on July 20, 1860—was now approaching. On June 6, 1860 he writes to Majruh:

'Dear friend, I have just been so ill that I myself felt sorry for myself. For four days I couldn't eat. Now I am fit and well again. To the end of Zil Hij [the last month of the Muslim year], 1276, I have nothing to fear. From the 1st Muharram [the first month of the Muslim year] God knows.'

On June 11, 1860 he writes to Sayyah:

'It grieves me to hear of the desolation of Lucknow, but remember that there this destruction will give way to creation—that is, the roads will be widened and the bazaars improved, so that everyone who sees it will approve what has been done. In Delhi destruction is not followed by creation, and the work of destruction goes on all the time. The whole appearance of the city, except for the street of shops that runs from the Lahore Gate of the Fort to the Lahore Gate of the city ["i.e.," says Mihr, "Chandni Chauk and Khari Baoli"] has been spoiled, and will go on being spoiled. . . .' But he laments the fall of Lucknow all the same. On June 30, 1860 he writes again to Sayyah: 'What praise was too high for Lucknow? It was the Baghdad of India, and its court—may God be praised!—a mint of rich men. A man could come there penniless and become wealthy. Alas that autumn should come to such a garden!'

On July 8, 1860 he writes to Ala ud Din Khan Alai:

'For the last ten to twelve years I have lived in Hakim Muhammad Hasan Khan's mansion. Now Ghulamullah Khan has bought the house, and at the end of June he asked me to move out. I've been trying to find two adjacent houses somewhere, so that I can make one the zenana and have the other for my own use. I couldn't find any, so I had to content myself with looking for a house in Ballimaron to which I could move. But I couldn't get one. Your aunt came to my rescue, and gave me Karorawali mansion to live in. It wasn't what I wanted, in that it wasn't near the zenana, but anyway, it's not all that far away. I shall move in tomorrow or the next day; so I have one foot on the ground and one in the stirrup. . . .'

'Yesterday . . . at about nine in the morning your letter came. About an hour or so later I had news that [your father] Amīn ud Din Khan Sahib had come to dignify his mansion with his presence. In the evening he was kind

enough to pay me an unexpected visit. I found him thin and dejected, and that upset me. Ali Husain Khan [Alai's younger brother] also came, so I met him too. I asked why *you* hadn't come. Your father said, "Someone has to stay there while I am away: besides, he is very fond of his son." I said, "As fond as you used to be of him?" He laughed. In short, I found that he seemed to be a better man than you. But what is in your hearts only God knows.'

To Tufta he describes his house-moving difficulties in more detail, writing on July 20, 1860:

'I had been living in these narrow confines for the last ten to twelve years. For seven years I had paid four rupees every month. Now I paid three years' rent—something over a hundred rupees—in a lump. The owner sold the house, and the new owner told me—insisted, rather—that I must move out. That's all right if you can find another house. But he had no consideration and began to pester me by starting on the repairs. He put up scaffolding by the balcony (about two yards deep and ten yards long) overlooking the courtyard. That's where I slept at nights. What with the oppressiveness of the heat and the closeness of the scaffolding I felt as though it was the scaffold nearby, and, come morning, I should be hanged. I passed three nights in this state, and then on Monday, July 9th at midday, I got a house. I moved in, and felt as though my life had been saved. This house is a paradise as compared to the other, and the best of it is that it's in the same muhalla, Ballimaron. . . .'

Letters of the same period to Shafaq review the whole Delhi scene. He writes in a letter dated only '1860', but evidently belonging to early July:

'Lord and Master, it was twelve o'clock, and I was lying on my bed practically naked smoking the hookah when the servant brought your letter to me. As luck would have it, I was wearing neither shirt nor coat, otherwise I'd have rent my clothes in frenzy. (Not that your lordship would have lost anything by that—I would have been the one to suffer by it.) Let's begin at the beginning. I corrected your ode and sent it off. I received an acknowledgement. Some of the cancelled verses were sent back to me with a request to be told what was wrong with them. I explained what was wrong with them, wrote in words that were acceptable in place of those to which I had objected, and said that you might now include these verses too in the ode. To this day I have had no reply to this letter. I handed over to Shah Asrar ul Haq the paper addressed to him and wrote to you the verbal message he gave in reply. This letter too your Lordship has not answered.

My heart is vibrant with complaint as  
is the harp with music.  
Give it the slightest touch and hear the  
strains it will pour forth.

I think to myself, "I sent both letters unstamped. I cannot conceive that they should have been lost." Anyway, it was a long time ago. No point in complaining now. You don't re-heat stale food, and "service means servitude".

'Five invading armies have fallen upon this city one after another: the first was that of the rebel soldiers, which robbed the city of its good name. The second was that of the British, when life and property and honour and dwellings and those who dwelt in them and heaven and earth and all the visible signs of existence were stripped from it. The third was that of famine, when thousands of people died of hunger. The fourth was that of cholera, in which many whose bellies were full lost their lives. The fifth was the fever, which took general plunder of men's strength and powers of resistance. There were not many deaths, but a man who has had fever feels that all the strength has been drained from his limbs. And this invading army has not yet left the city. Two members of my own household are down with fever, the elder boy and my steward. May God restore both of them speedily to health.

'The rains have been plentiful here too, but not as plentiful as in Kalpi and Banaras. The farmers are happy, and the fields ready for harvest. Anxiety about the autumn harvest is at an end. For the spring harvest they need rain in the month of Pus [December-January].

' . . . Mughal Ali Khan died of dropsy not long before the Mutiny. Alas! how difficult it is to write of these things! Hakim Razi ud Din Khan was shot by a British soldier during the general massacre, and his younger brother Ahmad Husain Khan was killed on the same day. Both of Tale Yar Khan's sons had come here on leave. Then the Mutiny prevented them leaving, and they stayed on here. After Delhi was re-taken both of them were hanged, though they had committed no crime. Tale Yar Khan is in Tonk. He is alive, but I am certain that he would be better off dead. Mir Chotam too was hanged. As for Miyan Nizam ud Din's<sup>1</sup> son, he fled from Delhi when all the other prominent men did. For some time he was in Baroda, for some time in Aurangabad, for some time in Hyderabad. Last year, during the winter, he came here. The government has made its peace with him but only to the extent that his life is pardoned. Raushan ud Daula's seminary (behind the police headquarters) and Khwaja Qasim's mansion (where the late Mughal Ali Khan used to live) and Khwaja Sahib's mansion—all these were designated as the personal properties of Kale Sahib, and after him, of Miyan Nizam ud Din; they were confiscated and sold by auction, and the proceeds went to government funds. True, Qasim Jan's mansion, the deeds of which were in the name of Nizam ud Din's mother, was given to her. At the moment Nizam ud Din has gone to Pakpattan. Perhaps he'll be going to Bahawalpur too.

There is more about the weather in a letter of July 19, 1860:

'What is the weather like? The hot season, the cold season and the rains have all

<sup>1</sup> Son of 'Kale Sahib'—cf. p. 71 above.



come together, not to speak of the hailstorms. . . . I always find this season hard to bear. In the hot weather I feel the heat as badly as an animal that pants for water, especially now when I have to bear not only the heat but the innumerable griefs and anxieties that beset me.

The flames of Hell cannot give out such heat—  
For hidden griefs burn with a different fire.<sup>1</sup>

And in the next letter too: 'It rained last night and the wind was cold enough to be dangerous. Now it's morning, and a cool, harmless breeze is blowing. The sky is covered with light cloud. The sun is up, but you can't see it. . . .'

In July 1860 he writes:

'I have a story which will amuse you. The postman who delivers letters to Ballimaron these days is some baniya—somebody Nath or something Das—and he can just about read and write. I live on the upper storey. He came into the house, handed a letter to my steward and said, "Say that the postman presents his respects and his congratulations. The King of Delhi made him a Nawwab, and now there's a letter from Kalpi giving him the title of Captain." I wondered what on earth he was talking about. When I looked carefully at the address I found that my name was preceded by the words "makhdum i niyaz keshan" ['Master of his humble servants'—an honorific term of address]. The poor pimp had ignored the other words and read "keshan" as "kaptan"! [In the Urdu script the two words resemble one another more closely.]

On August 24, 1860 he writes:

'The dearness of grain is a calamity from heaven, and disorders of the blood make life a misery. Swellings everywhere, and huge boils—and no remedy avails, and no effort counts for anything. Was it the rebel army from Meerut that descended on Delhi that morning of May 11th, or was it the onset of repeated visitations of divine wrath? From end to end of the realm of India the doors of disorder and disaster are opened wide—and Delhi, distinguished before, is just as distinguished now in this too. "Verily we are for God, and verily to Him we shall return."'

In September 1860 he writes to Sarur:

'Here it seems as though the whole city is being demolished. Some of the biggest and most famous bazars—Khas Bazar, Urdu Bazar, and Khanam ka Bazar, each of which was practically a small town, have gone without a trace. You cannot even tell where they were. Householders and shopkeepers cannot point out to you where their houses and shops used to stand. It is the

rainy season, but there has been practically no rain, and it is under the rain of picks and shovels that houses are collapsing. Food is dear, and death is cheap, and grain sells so dear that you would think that each grain was a fruit. *Mash-lentils* sell at sixteen pounds to the rupee, millet at thirty-two pounds, and wheat at twenty-four pounds; gram at thirty-two, *ghi*<sup>1</sup> at three. Vegetables too are expensive. And to crown it all, the month of Kunwar [September-October], which they call the threshold of the cold season, is as hot as Jeth and Asarh—the water is warm and the sun fierce, and the hot wind is blowing. . . .'

He goes on to address Sahib i Alam:

' . . . How is it that you are expecting a visit from me? In what letter . . . did I express any such intention? Who conveyed any verbal message from me . . . ? It is true, I long more than I can say to kiss your feet and to set eyes once more on Anwar ud Daula—and I think I shall carry this longing with me to the grave. . . . Lala Gobind Parshad has not arrived yet. I am not a worldly man, but a humble faqir, and hospitality is part of my nature . . . God willing, he will be happy and content with me.'

Then to Muhammad Amir:

'It grieves me that you thought I had been anxious [in 1857] and had fled from my home. Who could have told you anything so contrary to the facts? I have always stayed here in Delhi with my wife and children—swimming in this sea of blood.'

In another, undated letter he had in fact hinted at a visit to Sarur in the cold season:

'You invite me to Marahra and remind me that I had planned to come. In the days when my spirits were high and my strength intact, I once said to the late Shaikh Muhsin ud Din how I wished I could go to Marahra during the rains and eat mangoes to my heart's content and my belly's capacity. But where shall I find that spirit today, and from where recover the strength I once had? I neither have the same appetite for mangoes nor the same capacity to hold so many. I never ate them first thing in the morning, nor immediately after the midday meal; and I cannot say that I ate them between lunch and dinner because I never took an evening meal. I would sit down to eat them towards evening, when my food was fully digested, and I tell you bluntly, I would eat them until my belly was bloated and I could hardly breathe. Even now I eat them at the same time of day, but not more than ten to twelve, or, if they are of the large . . . kind, only six or seven.

Alas! how the days of our youth have departed!  
Nay, rather the days of our life have departed!

<sup>1</sup> Clarified butter.

Now I would make the journey only to see you; and I can stand the troubles of travelling only in the winter, not in the rains. . . .’

When it came to the point he seems to have felt unable to face the physical strain which travel involved. Thus he had written to Ala ud Din Khan Alai on July 2, 1860: ‘I should very much like to see you, but that can happen only if you come here. I wish you could have come with your father and visited me. . . .’

Meet with my rival if you like:  
I leave that to your whim.  
But what is wrong with asking after me  
as well as him?’

It was certainly not lack of interest which held him back. On December 31, 1860, he replies to a letter which his friend Sayyah had written him from Banaras:

‘My friend, I like Banaras: it is a fine city. I have written a poem in praise of it called “The Lamp of the Temple”. It is in my volume of Persian verse. Have a look at it. . . . You have written an account of your journey from Lucknow to Banaras, and I’m expecting you to go on with it. I am very fond of travelling and sight-seeing. . . . Oh well, if I cannot travel, never mind. I will content myself with the thought that “To hear of pleasure is to experience half of it”, and will think of Sayyah’s account as itself a journey.’

Among his other preoccupations during the latter half of the year was the correcting of the verses which his friends sent him. He writes to Ala ud Din Alai on July 2, 1860 that this is the most that his remaining poetic powers enable him to do:

‘You ask me for recent verses. Where from? Verses on themes of love are as far from my taste as faith is from unbelief. I was the government’s hired bard. I wrote my panegyrics and got my robes in reward. But the robes stopped coming, and I stopped writing. No ghazals, no odes. Lampoon and satire is not in my line. So, tell me, what am I to write? I am like an old wrestler, who can only explain the holds. Verses keep coming in from all directions, and I correct them. Believe me, I am telling the literal truth.’

On more than one occasion he has to protest, not for the first time, his inability to write chronograms. He writes to Sayyah on July 31, 1860:

‘My friend, I swear to you by your life and by my faith that I am a complete stranger to the art of the chronogram and the riddle. You won’t have heard of

any chronogram by me in Urdu. I have composed a few in Persian, but the position there is that while the verses are mine the words giving the date were supplied by others. Do you understand me? Calculation is a headache to me, and I can’t even add up. Whenever I work out a chronogram I always find that I’ve calculated it wrongly. There were one or two of my friends who, if the need arose, could work out for me the words which gave the required date, and I would fit them into a verse.’

He goes on to say that whenever he has attempted a chronogram himself he has had to make provision for additions and subtractions to such an extent that the whole thing becomes laughable. ‘In Calcutta a mosque was built at the tomb of the late . . . Siraj ud Din Ali Khan. His nephew . . . asked me for a chronogram, and I wrote one which you will find in my volume of Persian verse.’ He then quotes it, and shows by what tortuous methods he gets the right date, by selecting a key word which gives far too large a total and then finding ways of indicating that from this must be deducted numbers yielded by two other words. He concludes, ‘I ask you, can you call this a chronogram?’ This leads him on to quote two other examples which he likes better, because they incorporate a method which he had himself invented. He goes on:

‘You write that “Sayyid Ghulam Baba” doesn’t fit into any metre. How do you make that out? [He then writes two four-line verses, each in a different metre, and each incorporating this name, and goes on:] Produce some indicating word which fits into this metre and you’ll have your chronogram. The friends who used to produce the key words for me have all departed for Paradise. And I, as I wrote above, am helpless in the matter.’

Perhaps the best chronogram which Ghalib composed himself was that on the Mutiny—*rustkhez i beja*—which he worked out and included in *Dastambu*; and since it well illustrates some of the points which his letters of this time discuss, it is convenient to analyse it here. The phrase is indeed an apt one, for it both fixes the date of the Mutiny and expresses Ghalib’s view of it. It is not easy to translate. ‘Unseasonable tumult’ is an approximate equivalent, but ‘unseasonable’ does not convey the sense of outrage which ‘beja’ here carries. The other word, *rustkhez*, means ‘Judgement Day’, but is also used to describe any great tumult or upheaval, including emotional tumult such as the stunning impact of a woman’s beauty, or the sudden news of a friend’s death, might cause. If one adds up the numerical values of the letters of the word *rustkhez* as written in the Urdu script, they give a total of 1277. From these must be deducted the combined values of the two letters ‘ja’—for ‘beja’ may be read as a single word (and, indeed, must be so read to give the meaning required), or alternatively as two words ‘be ja’, meaning ‘without (or, minus) ja’. The total of ‘ja’ is 4, and 1277 minus 4 comes to 1273, which gives the date of the Mutiny in the Muslim era.

All this is relevant to the understanding of the letter which follows. Despite his dislike of the chronogram, Ghalib did not like to disappoint his friends if he could help it. A letter to Tufta of November 19, 1860, expresses his attitude:

'I consider the art of chronogram-writing beneath the dignity of poetry, nor do I believe, like you, that you pay any debt of love by writing a chronogram on a man's death. But anyway I wrote and sent off a verse which gave the date of death of the late Munshi Nabi Bakhsh Haqir. Munshi Qamar ud Din Khan Sahib didn't like it. Here it is: [He then quotes it.<sup>1</sup>] There is another way of doing it simply by producing some word which adds up to the required total, and not even bothering about it meaning anything. . . . Take a look at the odes of Anwari [the great classical Persian poet]. You will find three or four passages at the beginning of his odes which yield the right total and give the year he wants, but have no meaning. [By contrast] see in what good taste is the word *rustkhez* [which I used]—how meaningful and, moreover, how suited to the occasion. Of course, if I had used the word in a chronogram of a birth or marriage it would certainly have been objectionable. Anyway, to cut it short, if composing a chronogram pays a debt of love, then I have fulfilled the demands of friendship. What more is there to write?'

We may not unreasonably assume that his previous use of *rustkhez* in his chronogram on the Mutiny made him quick to realize that it gave him the date he now needed, this time without any modification being required. And, as he quite justly says, the word is indeed appropriate to the occasion it commemorates.

Some time during 1860—the letters are undated—he wrote to Mihr the last two letters to him which we possess. They are of exceptional interest. Mihr had written to tell him of the death of his mistress, a courtesan named Chunna Jan. Ghalib replies:

'Mirza Sahib, I received your letter with its grievous news. When I had read it I gave it to Yusuf Ali Khan Aziz to read, and he told me of your relationship with her—how devoted to you she was and how much you loved her. I felt extremely sorry, and deeply grieved. Listen, my friend: in poetry Firdausi, in ascetic devotion Hasan of Basra, and in love Majnun—these three are the pre-eminent leaders in these three arts. The height of a poet's attainment is to become a second Firdausi, the limit of an ascetic's achievement to rival Hasan of Basra, and the ideal of a lover is to match Majnun. His Laila died before him, and your mistress died before you; in fact you excel him, for Laila died in her own home, while your beloved died in yours. Friend, we "Mughal lads" are terrors; we are the death of those for whom we ourselves would die. Once in my life I was the death of a fair, cruel dancing girl. God grant both of them His forgiveness, and both of us, who bear the wounds of our beloveds' death, His

<sup>1</sup> The key word is *rustkhez*.

mercy. It is forty years or more since it happened, and although I long ago abandoned such things and left the field once and for all, there are times even now when the memory of her charming ways comes back to me, and I shall not forget her death as long as I live. I know what you must be feeling. Be patient, and turn your back on the turmoil of earthly love. . . . God is all-sufficient: the rest is vanity.'

We have no means of knowing how long an interval elapsed between this letter and the next, but it seems that Mihr could not overcome the grief he felt at his mistress's death, and Ghalib adopts quite another tone in an effort to rally him:

'Mirza Sahib, I don't like the way you're going on. I have lived sixty-five years, and for fifty of them have seen all that this transient world of colour and fragrance has to show. In the days of my lusty youth a man of perfect wisdom counselled me, "Abstinence I do not approve: dissoluteness I do not forbid. Eat, drink and be merry. But remember that the wise fly settles on the sugar, and not on the honey." Well, I have always acted on his counsel. You cannot mourn another's death unless you live yourself. And why all these tears and lamentations? Give thanks to God for your freedom, and do not grieve. And if you love your chains so much, then a Munna Jan is as good as a Chunna Jan. When I think of paradise and consider how if my sins are forgiven me and I am installed in a palace with a houri, to live for ever in the worthy woman's company, I am filled with dismay and fear brings my heart into my mouth. How wearisome to find her always there!—a greater burden than a man could bear. The same old palace, all of emerald made: the same fruit-laden tree to cast its shade. And—God preserve her from all harm—the same old houri on my arm! Come to your senses, brother, and get yourself another.

Take a new woman each returning spring,  
For last year's almanac's a useless thing.'

After which he drops the subject completely and goes on to talk of other things.

Although Mihr lived for another nineteen years, no letters written to him after this survive.

As the year draws to a close he again feels despondent. On December 18, 1860 he writes to Majruh:

'You tell me that I'm not to invite Miran Sahib to Delhi until you say so—as though *you* are the only one that really loves him, and I don't. My friend, come to your senses and just think. I haven't got the means to invite him here and fix him up with a separate house to stay in and, if nothing more, give him thirty rupees a month, and say, "Here you are, take this and tour the ruins of Dariba

and Chawri Bazar and Ajmeri Gate Bazar and Bulaqi Begam's lane and Khan Dauran Khan's mansion". Mir Mahdi, I think to myself how you lie abandoned and helpless in Panipat, and how Miran Sahib lies there wishing all the time that he could visit Delhi, and how Mir Sarfaraz Husain wanders around looking for employment. Do you think that such heart-rending sorrows are easy for me to bear? Had I had the means, I would have shown you what I would have done. "Alas, how many yearnings have turned to dust!" O, God! O, God!

As the Christian year ended, nearly half of A. H. 1277 had already elapsed and Ghalib still believed in his own prediction, he had at the most another six to seven months to live. He perhaps has this in mind when he writes to Sayyah on December 31, 1860:

'My weakness is at its height, and old age has made me useless. I am weak, slothful, lethargic, depressed, and weary of life. My foot is in the stirrup and my hand on the bridle. I have a long, long journey to travel, and no provision for the road, for I go empty-handed. If I am forgiven without being questioned, well and good. If I am called to account then I shall dwell in hell and damnation will be my station. Alone to face eternal torment. How well some poet<sup>1</sup> has said:

Tired of all this, we look to death  
for our release  
But what if even after death we find  
no peace?

<sup>1</sup> Zauq—cf. p. 85 above.