

to learn the language in its purity from him. This devotion to the elegance of idiom occasionally led to attacks on his want of scholarship.

Mir Babbar Ali Anis was born in 1217 A. H. or 1216 A. H. at Fyzabad in one of its quarters called Gulab badi, where his father resided. He was brought up under the fostering care of his father and he came to Lucknow when his eldest son, Nafees, had already been born to him. His younger brother accompanied him. Connections did not however cease with Fyzabad for his father and brothers continued to live there. It was only later that the family migrated to Lucknow and settled there permanently.

Anis was not a great scholar in any sense. He had enough learning which stood him in good stead in his poetic career. He learnt *Sadra* from Mufti Mohommad Abbas and read the preliminary course with Moulvi Haider Ali. He was fond of physical culture exercises and also learned the use of arms from Mir Kazim Ali and his son, Mir Amir Ali, who were regarded as the finest exponents of this art in Lucknow. He also knew horsemanship. The technical knowledge of arms was highly useful to him in his descriptions of battles where he could utilize it dexterously and with striking effect. He was a great lover of beauty not only in human beings but also in animals and in nature. Anis was very proud of the family to which he belonged. He had an overwhelming sense of self-respect and thought much of the prestige and status of his family. He paid a great regard to the proprieties and was very formal in his intercourse with men. He would never see people unless they had made a previous appointment with him. Even his intimates could not come to him unannounced. In his dealings with the nobles he behaved with the same regard to his dignity. The same treatment was extended to the kings. He would not go unless Wajid Ali Shah sent a special messenger to request him to recite in the assembly. He ranked his noble birth and high avocation as a poet and a marsia-writer above every thing else. He permitted no breach of etiquette or of rules which he had framed to regulate his intercourse with his friends, visitors and admirers. He held fast steadfastly to the rules that he laid down for himself and others, without once deviating from them. He had one fashion in which he clothed himself. His principles and his poetic powers, earned for him respect and veneration from the greatest in the land. Nawab Tahawwar Jung of Hyderabad considered it an honour when he took the pair of shoes of Anis and placed them with his own hand in the palanquin in which Anis was sitting. Anis, apart from his independence, led a life of contentment and never hankered

after riches. He never made a request or wrote panegyrics in the hope of getting rewards. As a reciter of elegies he got handsome presents from the nobles of Lucknow.

Elegy leapt into sudden popularity when the Nawabs of Oudh became Shias. The period of conventional mourning was extended from ten days to forty days. The nobles and wealthy men of Lucknow especially those of Shia persuasion patronised this kind of composition for its sanctity and devotion. The court of Lucknow would temporarily suspend its gaieties and revelries during the sacred month of Moharrum. Special meetings would be convened at various places where marsias were chanted and people wept copiously and mourned deeply the sad death of the martyrs, Hasan and Hussain. The Nawabs and nobles would forego their pleasures and abstain from every kind of enjoyment. Such mourning and sorrow for a month was deemed by them a sufficient expiation for the sins of the whole year. The Nawabs even composed marsias, soz, salaams and rubais all bewailing the death of the Prince of Martyrs. Wajid Ali Shah called and heard Anis and Dabir and Ghaziuddin Haidar heard Dabir.

Anis did not leave Lucknow until after the annexation of Oudh. He did not like to move thinking that his art would not be truly appreciated outside Lucknow. Circumstances compelled him to visit outside places. In 1859 A. D. he went to Azimabad (Patna) and in 1860 A. D. he again went there. He also halted at Benares on his return, after the second journey. He visited Hyderabad in 1871 A. D. and stopped at Allahabad while coming back. At all these places he recited his marsias to thousands of people in spacious halls which were packed to overflowing. Whenever Anis used to recite in Lucknow in his later days, thousands of people would collect from the surrounding places to hear him.

Anis died of fever at Lucknow in 1291 A. H. (1874 A. D.) and lies buried in his own house.

Anis was a born poet and had received poetry in inheritance. No house could present such a long line of illustrious poets and it was natural and befitting that Anis prided himself on his distinguished ancestry. He lispied in numbers and wrote verses when he was at Fyzabad. At first he adopted the pseudonym of Hazin probably owing to the intimacy of Mir Zahk with Ali Hazin the famous Persian poet. When Anis came to Lucknow he changed it for Anis at the desire of old Nasikh to whom Khaliq had brought him to see. This *tukhullus* is said to be a gift from Nasikh who predict-

ed a bright and a hopeful future for him. Anis began with writing ghazals but he was early initiated into the composition of marsias in which his father had distinguished himself. During his own lifetime, Khaliq saw his son famous and admired. With the retirement and death of Khaliq and Zamir, the field was left open to Dabir and Anis. Both took to marsias with enthusiasm and wrote copiously.

Anis has written many thousands of elegics, odes, quatrains and gitas. The whole of his work is not published but it is computed to contain over 250,000 distichs. His published poems extend to five volumes and the rest is preserved in his family. He has left a diwan containing amatory ghazals. He used to recite in a very pleasing and charming style which he perfected by constant practice before a mirror. Despite his fertility he was a very elegant and skilful writer. There is no unevenness which disfigures the works of other poets such as Mushaffi.

Mir Anis is one of the most remarkable figures in Urdu literature. As a poet he stands in the foremost rank and there are not wanting men and critics who regard him as the best of Urdu poets. He is variously termed the 'Indian Shakspeare' the 'God of Urdu literature' the 'Homer', 'the Virgil,' the 'Valmik' of Urdu poetry. This is the very 'ecstasy of criticism'.

Anis rendered a great service to Urdu language. He polished and refined the language and his compositions are remarkable for their sweetness, elegance and freshness of diction. He was always careful about the purity of his idioms and he plumed himself on this as a distinctive feature of his writings. His vocabulary was vast and he used words gracefully and aptly. He added many new ones to the stock of Urdu words and firmly fixed the use of the old. In the beginning he employed old obsolete words which he abandoned as he gained experience and practice. The Urdu of Anis is regarded as most authoritative both in Lucknow and Delhi. His family was regarded as the custodian of the pure Urdu idiom. He always said that he used the idiom in accordance with the practice of his family in a particular way different from that of the people of Lucknow. Mir Hasan and Mir Khaliq maintained their connections with the family of Bahu Begum mother of Asafuddaulah, whose family was regarded as the repository of pure Urdu. There was a regular office at Fyzabad where idioms and proverbs which had been coined in the harems of Bahu Begum were registered and circulated broadcast. At the head of this office were Mir Hasan and Mir Khaliq who were naturally regarded as the masters of pure idioms. Nasikh also realized the position of the home

of Mir Khaliq for he used to advise his pupils to go and learn the language there.

His position in Urdu literature is unique. He supplied the epic element to Urdu literature. Urdu could not be expected to possess an epic of the rank of Homer's Iliad, Virgil's Aeneid, Vyas' Mahabharat, Valmik's Ramayan or Firdausi's Shahnama. The language being of recent birth knew not that age which sees the birth of epics. It is too early to judge of its achievements. However Anis contributed something towards this direction. He perfected the old themes and imported new ones for marsias. His long exordia are delightful and highly poetical. They contain descriptions of battle-fields and fights which rival those of Firdausi in the Shahnama and Nizami in the Sikandarnama. His landscape painting is also admirable and new to Urdu literature. His portrayal of human emotions is extraordinarily clever. He strikes a new note in Urdu poetry.

Anis was a master painter of scenes from nature in all its landscape moods. These descriptions are never independent but always subordinated to the main theme. They are however self-contained and as such are vignettes of perfect beauty and can be detached from the body of the poems without any harm. The dawn of the morning, the close of the evening, the rising of the sun, the moon-lit night, the blowing of the zephyr are all painted realistically. The gradual disappearance of stars, the rising of the mist, the mantling of darkness, the blooming of flowers, the verdure of trees are befittingly and charmingly sung.

Anis is pre-eminent in the knowledge of human emotions and in his interpreting them in his verses. Feelings of joy and sorrow, anger, love, jealousy, envy, fear, are all portrayed in a masterly style. He is a master artist as he never forgets the position of the personages who figure in his narration of the tale. If a child speaks, Anis would use sentiments and language befitting a child. He never overlooks the difference and thus shows glimpses of dramatic powers. Anis also distinguishes himself in appreciating the subtleties underlying the various relations of woman to man in her various capacities as mother, sister, wife, aunt.

The descriptions of battle-fields, fights, marches, counter marches, challenges, arms, accoutrements are very vivid and powerful. He has praised horses and swords in many places but every time he describes them with freshness and vigour.

The continuity of description is also remarkable. Anis may not have been an altogether trustworthy historian for he has woven certain incidents in his verses which never took place except in his own imagination, but their fanciful existence has been perpetuated by later writers who continue to celebrate them in their marsias. Mir Anis is not free from solecism. Maulvi Abdul Ghaffor Khan Nassakh published a brochure in which he pointed out the prosodical errors and other mistakes of Mir Anis and Dabir. Their apologists retaliated and published pamphlets in which they justified their heroes on every point. The truth lies midway. It is true that the marsias of Anis and Dabir were not published in their original and correct form and that interpolators made emendations. Allowance must also be made for the archaic words sometimes employed but it must be conceded that the quality of all the marsias is not even and that some verses fall short of that standard of excellence for which the names of Anis and Dabir are so justly famous. No wonder that these poets who wrote lacs of verses are sometimes found nodding.

Mir Anis is singularly happy in his similes, metaphors and figures of speech. He does not indulge in senseless extravagances and stupid hyperbole which was the craze of the Lucknow school amongst which he lived and wrote and although he does not wholly escape the influence yet he uses the figures of speech so judiciously that they are subordinated to the main theme and help to heighten the beauty of the verse. His similes are beautiful, noble and easy to comprehend. He is particularly happy in using them with charming effect. Great things are never compared with small. The similes are never trite and commonplace. He never allows his metaphors and other figures of speech to dominate him. His style is simple or gorgeous as occasion demands, but it is always eloquent and graphic. The flow of language is wonderful. His verses are characterized by the force and flow of language, elegance of diction and purity of idiom. Eloquence, melody and vigour are admirably blended. His verses are chaste, sincere and polished, and easy to understand although the simplicity often hides subtleties just as a limpid river deceives the unwary about its depth by its clear waters. His style is not uneven. He was a facile and a skilful writer who could describe the same subject in various ways with a freshness, alluring and attractive.

Anis occupies a very high place amongst the best masters of Urdu Literature. He sounded a note of real and genuine poetry amidst the artificiality and conventionality of Lucknow school. He heralds the new age ushered in by Hali and Azad. He left Marsia a perfect weapon which could be wielded with considerable effect and Hali made a noble use of it. He is a special favourite of English know-

ing readers who find a welcome escape from the perfumed atmosphere of conventional love so plentiful in Urdu literature. They find glimpses of true and genuine poetry full of real fire and pathos. The reputation of Anis even in his lifetime stood very high in Lucknow and Delhi and is still unchallenged and unimpaired. His fame is continuously on the increase and will increase with the advancement of Urdu literature and he will come into his own when Urdu literature is properly appreciated.

Mirza Salamat Ali poetically surnamed Dabir was born at Delhi in 1218 A. H. 1803 A. D. His father was one Mirza Ghulam Hussain. There is a good deal of discussion regarding the nobility of his ancestors and attempts have been made to show that he came of a noble stock and his ancestors were well connected and highly distinguished. It must however be stated that his family was respectable and commanded some influence in bygone days. His father forsook Delhi on its devastation for Lucknow where he married and settled. He repaired to Delhi again when quiet was restored. Dabir, however came, with his father to Lucknow when he was seven years of age and was educated thoroughly. He evinced keen enthusiasm for scholarship and the discussions he held with learned men sharpened his intelligence and wit. Poetry and especially the marsia exercised great fascination for him and he became a pupil of Zamir, the great rival and contemporary of Khaliq. He however outstripped other pupils by the quickness of his intelligence and attained a proficiency which earned great praise from his teacher and other poets. He was ranked as a great marsia writer and is mentioned by Sarur in his *Fisanai Ajaib* along with the memorable marsia writers of that age. His fame advanced rapidly and he had the privilege and the honour to recite his compositions before Nawab Gaziuddin Haidar and Wajid Ali Shah. Many noble men and ladies of the royal household became his pupils and he came to be regarded as an authority on the Urdu language. His reputation as a poet and his intimacy with his teacher excited the envy of some of the less favoured rivals who created bad blood between him and his teacher on the subject of a marsia which he recited in the assembly of Nawab Iftakharuddaulah. In the end however they were reconciled and all misunderstandings were cleared. Dabir was always respectful towards his *Ustad* and never permitted others to speak ill of him. Dabir was already famous when Anis came from Fyzabad. The poetical contests and rivalries with Mir Anis resulted in sharpening of poetical powers but the rivalries never transgressed the bounds of decorum or sank into the ribaldries of Mushaffi and Insha. Both were courteous and respectful to each other and seldom appeared together. In 1291 A. H. (1874 A. D.) Mirza became blind