

this collection, to be given with a similar collection of the best Urdu poets of the day, if I ever attempt it, and to have only prose-writers in this book. But the fear that Hali, with his novel ideals of poetry, will not be in keeping with his surroundings if placed side by side with Dag and Amir, with whom he has little in common, inclined me to have all living writers of the new school together. In this galaxy of eminent men, the grandest figure of all, the commanding personality of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan will be greatly missed, but his lamented death has robbed me of the privilege of including his name in the present collection. Besides, his remarkable work as a man of action makes it very difficult to have a purely literary sketch of him unblended with the influence of his activity in other directions, and I do not want just as present to trespass on the domain of his learned biographer and friend, Maulvi Hali, whose "Life of Sir Syed Ahmad" is ready for the press.

In conclusion I have to express a hope that this attempt will lead to further efforts in the direction of original and independent criticism of our literature from pens abler than myself and to state that if I find any appreciation of these sketches, I may try to prepare a similar collection of critical essays on the great masters of the Urdu language of the old school, including the two living poets, Dag and Amir, who, though born in this age, belong essentially to the generation that has passed away, in thoughts embodied in their writings.

1898

S. A. Q.

## URDU LITERATURE.

Travelling through a well-trodden path is at once easy and safe, and, had I consulted my own convenience, I would have taken a subject on which much might have been said already and then all I would have required would have been the tact and skill to use the scissors. But I have taken up Urdu Literature for my subject this evening, because I have noticed how sadly neglected it is among those receiving English education. It is with a hope to rouse in your minds an interest in Urdu and to set you at least at thinking about it that I have come before you. Subjects of this kind are hard to deal with, and, in spite of the best efforts of a writer to make them interesting, tax the patience of the audience to not a small extent, because an enquirey into the origin and growth of any literature is rather tedious and, except to a chosen few, often uninteresting. A lecture on literature generally contains a story of that literature, the various kinds of compositions in it, accounts of its most eminent authors, criticism of their styles, enumeration of their works, and quotations to illustrate the peculiarities of every style. A discussion at length of all this would require a volume. Therefore I would content myself with briefly dwelling upon each head and will just clear the way for further discussion of the subject in future.

Before proceeding with the description of the origin of the language, I cannot resist the tempta-

Note.—It was in August 1893 that this paper was read before a meeting of the Young Men's Muhammadan Association, Lahore, and published in the Punjab Magazine for the same month. It is a reproduction from the Magazine, with very slight alteration.

tion of impressing upon your minds how important it is to study Urdu literature, to encourage it to a proper extent and to engage in it as a literary pursuit. The first reason why I think it to be important is that the best way of reaching the common people, of enlisting their sympathies in any cause whatsoever of securing their affections, of winning their confidence, of enlightening and civilising them, is through the medium of the vernacular. It is the only language which has the capacity of furnishing a national literature for the country, without possessing which no nation can make any progress worth the name. as literature plays no insignificant part in making a nation what it is. Another thing which lends an importance to Urdu is that, notwithstanding there being different dialects in the different provinces of India, it is understood all over the country as a matter of fact, and serves the purpose of the *lingua franca* of Europe for the merchant and the traveller in India. The more its progress the easier it will be to trade with and travel through all parts of India. In Upper India especially its knowledge is indispensable to members of almost every profession. A legal practitioner has a better chance of success in all the lower Courts, if he can make an effective speech in Urdu than if he is an orator in English. The Magistracy must know it, and the *amla* cannot do without it. How then can a man afford to neglect it in the course of his education. Some of our enlightened men who have received liberal English education object to the progress of Urdu literature on the ground that there is nothing but زلف مشکین, زلف مشکین, and موئے کمر in Urdu literature and it is a waste of time to study it. This is like the common saying that there are only descriptions of گل, بلبل in the Persian literature, or as our orthodox Mulla will say that "there is nothing but cat and dog and pig in English," an impression received from hearing a beginner reading an English primer. But, you know better. You know

that English is not so narrow a language as has to do with only cat and dog, but on the contrary is one of the widest languages of the world and has a vast and various store of literature which would require twenty lives to read. Though Urdu and Persian are not possessed of so vast a literature and are not so free from objectionable elements as English is, yet we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that they belong to the category of the sweetest languages of the earth according to the testimony of outsiders who have studied them. Nothing so bad but has in it some elements of good and in the same manner Urdu is not without elements of a higher and nobler kind in its nature and, if duly taken care of, can be turned to as good an advantage as anything else, though at present its worth is not fully recognised.

In the first place it is to its poetry that the objection of dealing too much with زلف مشکین and خال سیه [dark moles and musk-odoured locks], applies, and Urdu literature is not all poetry. It can boast of prose as well which in its best specimens is as good as that of any other language. Moreover Urdu poetry is not all what some of its accusers allege it to be and what some consider it without so much as examining its worth. Taking for instance the famous Lucknow poet Mir Insha Ulla Khan *Insha*, who, perhaps, may be adduced as typical of the objectionable side of Urdu poetry, I ask, can his famous *gazal* which has a history of its own and in morality of tone, purity of diction, pathos and effect ranks with the highest in Urdu, be ignored or lost sight of because the same author happened to speak pretty often of wine and sweethearts according to the tastes of the age in which he lived? The story connected with that piece of poetry is commonly known, and scarcely needs repetition, but for the benefit of those present here who might not understand the allusion I will give it briefly.

Picture to yourself the grandeur of the durbar of a Muhammadan Prince in India before the time when the love of magnificence of the East had been marred by the influence of the West, and think yourself seated in the presence of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan of Oudh. You see approaching a portly gentleman, gorgeously clad, in the height of fashion of an Oriental courtier and the rest of the courtiers paying respect to him. The Nawab himself receives him in an affable and kind manner. This man whom we behold is the poet and the minister of the Court, the right hand of the Nawab and has more access to him than any body else. He can see the Nawab even when sitting with his Begams in the Zenana. Elephants, horses and steeds belonging to the Nawab throng in his stables and unbounded is the influence and wealth he owns. But alas! the instability of the things of this world and of the disposition of Oriental despotic rulers.

You can no longer be in the midst of this pomp and magnificence. The scene changes. Come with me if you have the heart to do so. There a friend of Mir Insha Ullah Khan is going to see him and perchance you may like to see him once more. Well then, let us follow the visitor.

The friend enters a street, pauses, looks about and is bewildered, turns back and again seems to recollect something by association as it were and back he goes again, stops at a house, looks at the surroundings and at last knocks at the door. No voice. "Perhaps, Mir Sahib has left the house for another one," he exclaims almost audibly. "I have come here after several years." He turns back again to go away when a thought suddenly flashes across his mind and he gives another louder knock, a second and a third. At last comes a feeble voice from inside.

بہیا کون ہو؟ اندر کے دالان میں ہیں اور میں  
 ننگے سر ہوں۔ اگر ضروری کام ہے تو آنکھیں بند کر کے  
 گزر جاؤ \*

It was the wife of the once rich poet who spoke, and who now described herself as without a covering for her head.\*

Bewildered and astonished the gentleman heaves a long sigh as he passes in, with his head cast down and his eyes fixed on the ground.

Near a large heap of ashes, sits a lean, haggard-looking man, his body besmeared with ashes just like a Hindu Jogi, with his head resting on his knees.

"Mir Insha," cries the friend in an agitated voice, "What does all this mean; am I not dreaming?"

After repeated voices from the friend the down cast head is at last raised and a tear trickles down from the eye which had become almost dry by weeping constantly, and the friend weeps bitterly. After a sympathetic conversation between the two, the friend makes mention of a *mushaira* or poetical contest about to take place and departs.

The old tendency again takes possession of the poet and you see him one day walking out of his house like a spectre with a bag round his neck and in that bag a little *hugqa*. He reaches the place where the contest is to be held. No one recognises the man who used once to be the hero of such meetings. He asks for a little fire to smoke his *hugqa* and his request is rejected, but some one happens to recognise the voice of the long-forgotten Mir Insha-ulla Khan and he offers him his *hugqa* and

\*The authenticity of this story has been questioned by Mirza Auj, son of Dabir of Lucknow, in a pamphlet published to refute the theory that Insha was ever reduced to poverty.

asks him to sit on the *masnad*, which offer he declines with thanks. Remonstrance with him is in vain. Though the people are not yet all assembled, he insists on reading his *gazal* and then he pours forth this effusion from his heart, better than all that he had written before, a monument which will last for ever, if people do not let Urdu die by their neglect:—

کمر باندھ ہوئے چلنے کو یاں سب یار بیٹھے ہیں  
 بہت آگے گئے باقی جو ہیں تیار بیٹھے ہیں  
 نہ چھیڑ لے نگہت باد بہاری راہ لگ اپنی  
 تجھے اتھکیلبان سوچھی ہیں ہم بیدار بیٹھے ہیں  
 بہلا گردش فلک کی چین دیتی ہے کسے انشا  
 غنیمت ہے کہ ہم صورت یہاں دو چار بیٹھے ہیں

Now I repeat the question, are these lines to be lost, because of some others to which he gave expression? If Urdu contains verses which the present taste despises as useless, the same contains verses which deserve to be written in letters of gold, to guide the Indian youth through difficult crisis in life, to console him in trouble and to furnish an innocent pleasure for his leisure moments.

With special reference to students it is argued that now-a-days English is the most important subject of study and a tendency to read Urdu ought not to be generated or indulged in as it interferes with the more important study of English. I admit the importance of studying English. You cannot overestimate its importance, neither can you read it too much. The more you make progress in English the better for the community at large. It is so indispensable now-a-days that without its knowledge one cannot enjoy being in a country under the influence of English civilization. You cannot get fresh news, hear good speakers and talk with your rulers or with foreign travellers. English, in short, is indispensable and I do not mean at all to encourage Urdu reading among students at the expence of the study of

English. But those of you who can ought to manage to save a little time from your immediate duty and snatch occasionally an hour or half an hour for the language of your country. Having said so much to interest you in my subject I proceed to consider the various headings in which I divided the subject in the beginning.

The basis of Urdu language, like English, is a dialect of the Aryan family of language known as Bhasha, which is derived from Sanskrit. When the Moguls took possession of Northern India, and a large number of Mohammadan conquerors settled here, naturally the language of both began to have a mutual influence. When the Persian and Turkish speaking Mohammadan met the Hindu in mart, in camp, or in battlefield, the former in order to make himself understood had to use a mixed dialect, as he had naturalised some words of the language of the Hindu. The Hindu on the other hand had adopted some of the expressions of the conquering people. For instance the Hindu had changed the Persian بار into بہار while the Tartar had derived سیدھا from the Hindi سده The Tartar pronounced the Hindi ست as سچ If the Hindu had naturalised the Persian تن and من the Mohammadan had adopted دهن and دولت

This process continued, till the time of the Emperor Shahjahan, when we find in his *Urdu*, i. e., army, spoken a dialect which was essentially the same as the language we are now treating of, and hence its name. Urdu properly so called began with the time of Shahjahan. First of all the language, though interspersed with Persian, contained more of Bhasha, and even now sometimes poets use that old form with great effect. Zafar deserves a special mention among those who have used that simple dialect with success.

Then by and by as people began to study Persian

and Arabic, foreign words began to be appropriated in hundreds, until the language was quite saturated with them. This was in Urdu literature exactly what the Johnsonian period was in English literature. Mirza Ghalib of Delhi furnishes the best example of those who used this form of Urdu very often, though of course sometimes he wrote simple verses which are unparalleled in their beauty. The following two verses of his will illustrate the point:—

شب خمار شوق ساقی، دستخیز اندازه تھا  
 تا محیط بادہ صورتخانگہ خمیازہ تھا  
 پوچھ مت رسوائی اندازه استغنائے حسن  
 دست مرہون خدا رخسارہ رهن غازہ تھا

These verses could well have taken their place in a Persian collection, had it not been for one or two words. Ghalib not only used Persian words where he could not find a Hindi one but used foreign words even where he could have easily found a simple one. In the last of the above lines, instead of *دست* he might have said *ہاتھ* without injuring the metre, but the fact was that Mirza Ghalib was a very learned man, and Persian and Arabic words came to him very naturally, but for the people he was difficult to understand. Zauq notwithstanding his not being really as great a poet as Ghalib, enjoyed more popularity for his simplicity. It is hardly forty years, however, that Ghalib lived and during this short space of time a great change has again come over the literature and tastes of the Urdu reading public in this country. Poetry now is simple and prose simpler still. You all know what this is due to. This is due to our coming in contact with the English. Not only has our language been enriched with about two hundred words from the English language—words which we use every day without the least idea that they are

foreign—such as school, college, master, station, office, ball, bat, cricket, match, court, General, Colonel and so on, but it is also unconsciously receiving the impress of English style, of English simplicity, even of English mode of thought. The old tendency for euphemistic writing is gradually giving way to a simpler and more natural form of expression and it is fortunate that it is doing so.

I will now mention the various kinds of compositions that are to be found in Urdu literature. Literature in the widest sense of the term means the whole written thought of a nation, but in its restricted sense it has come to mean only belles lettres or polite literature. But I shall speak of the following under this head:—Poetry, (*Ghazal*, *Qasida*, *Marsiya*) Prose, (Romance, Novel, Essay, Biography, History, Journals and Periodicals).

All of you know that true poetry under the present notions is something different from what it was believed to be in former times and *Ghazal*, unless under very special circumstances, falls far short of the thing required. I, though an admirer of every sort of poetry, even of *Ghazal*, cannot shut my eyes to the fact that a *Ghazal* often has very little real substance, is nothing but a rhapsody produced by a quick succession of unconnected ideas and can simply serve the purpose of amusement. Therefore, excepting those who have gone far in their *شوق* to recede, I do not think it very appropriate for general students of Urdu. Some extracts of good verses ought to be made for them. As to the authors who have distinguished themselves in this branch of poetry, I may mention that Mir is at the head of them all and is regarded by them as a master of this style. The chief among this class after Mir are Insha, Atish, Mushafi, Nasikh, Jurat, Dard, Momin, Ghalib, Zauq. and

Zafar, and among the living ones the laureate is Nawab Mirza Khan *Dagh* who combines simplicity with richness of thought, Maulvi Altaf Husain *Hali*, and Amir Ahmad Minai. *Amir* of Lucknow are others who may be classed in the first rank of living poets. But India swarms at the present day with poetasters who walk over the same beaten track as these great men have trodden. Their occupation is neither of profit nor pleasure except to themselves.

The odes or قصائد also are not the best specimens of our literature. They are often too exaggerated and far surpass reality and, therefore, they too are generally, if not in a modified style, repugnant to the prevailing taste. I am glad to tell you that a distinguished graduate of the Aligarh College, whose name I shall mention later on and whom the Urdu reading portion of you probably know, has very successfully given a sample of beauty and force co-existing with simplicity in Urdu odes. For instance he begins his ode to the Mausoleum at Agra with the following eloquent and forcible lines.

کچھ بتا احوال دل اے منزل خامش زبان  
کیوں نظر آتا ہے وحشت خیز تیرا آستان  
گنبد گردوں سے نکراتا ہے کیوں تیرا نشان  
کیا سناتی ہے اسے کچھ درد دل کی داستان  
یا بگوشش شکوہ ہے بیوفائی میکنی  
وز ندیمان کہن یاد جدائی میکنی

Another important division of Urdu poetry is *Marsia*: It is most sadly neglected by the general Urdu reader and yet it perhaps deserves best to be studied. It has no objectionable elements in it. The *salam* and *rubaiyat* that precede in it contain a good many terse, epigrammatic sayings, and at least the *rubaiyat* more than repay a perusal to everybody with any taste for Urdu.

There is another kind of *Marsia* strictly speaking, but not technically. Poems relating to the present, the past and the future of our nation are called قومی مرثیہ and are written in the مسدس style. The leader of this kind of writing is Hali. Mirza Arshed of Punjab fame also writes in the same style. This is a kind of poetry at once useful, soul-stirring and pleasant, and I recommend the writings of Hali and Arshed to those who have not yet read them. They will benefit by them in every way.

As to prose, the earliest writings in it are romantic tales—tales dealing with talismans and sorceries, now-a-days affording neither pleasure nor profit; therefore, it is not necessary to dwell upon them. Though one cannot help praising imaginations which produced fourteen large volumes of *داستان امیر حمزہ* or *طلسم ہوش ربا-بوستان خیال* etc., yet I regard them as much energy lost. Moreover they are written in a style now out-of-vogue.

The branch of prose writings which requires the greatest consideration is modern fiction. Novels are largely read and have a good deal of influence on the mind, for good or for bad, according to their nature and merits. Of all the novels recently published, the most instructive and useful I regard those by Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, who uses often the language which is spoken in Hindustani homes, yet he sometimes introduces his learning and makes his style a little too heavy. His novels are mostly without any plots and are not of the strictest English fashion, yet they all have a certain end in view. His worth is sufficiently recognised, but it will be more so after him. Next to him comes a writer, who has adopted the manner of English novelist, and has produced several interesting novels the best of which is *عزیز اور ورجنا* the first that establish-

ed his fame. I refer to Sharar, and our literature owes him a great deal. Several others have followed his example but they have not achieved much. Another novelist who deserves mention is Pt. Ratan Nath, a voluminous writer. His books are undoubtedly interesting and instructive, but owing to the profuseness of his style, they contain an alloy of inferior matter also. But I believe this is not a satisfactory progress in novels, nor are all that are produced readable and useful. The style now in vogue is excellent but the subject matter ought to be improved. Novels describing country life and simple scenes, painting men and manners, ought to come out instead of those dealing with battle-fields and bloodshed. People ought to be able to see themselves as in a mirror and by seeing their own defects placed in a position to improve themselves. Let us hope that a time will come when this ideal will be realised.

There are very few essays and letters in Urdu literature. It is only in modern times that attempts have been made at these things with a pretty large amount of success. M. Nazir Ahmed, Maulvi Zaka-Ulla, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, M. Muhammad Hussain and several others have got letters, essays or lectures which repay perusal. Letters especially of Maulvi Nazir Ahmad to his son are the best among modern productions. Among the comparatively ancient writers Mirza Ghalib ranks highest and his letters in literary merit are far superior to those of any body else. We ought however to have more of these productions. Maulvi Azad under this heading deserves a special mention. Whatever the Punjabi knows of Urdu he owes it to Azad. He is one of the best of our prose-writers. He has done more to bring about the present state of literature than anybody else. He has infused a new spirit in Urdu literature. He showed what a man who possesses the advantage of

English education, in addition to Oriental knowledge, might do to enrich his language. Notwithstanding his absolute want of a knowledge of English he produced his *Nairang-i-khyal* which may be termed a series of essays in imitation of the allegoric Greek style. He probably owed the suggestion to Dr. Leitner, but the plan of the book, the thought and language are his own and the book is written in his raciest vein. You cannot read that book without being benefitted by it.

Now I come to the most important and still the most abused branch of this literature. I refer to Journalism. Sorry to say very few vernacular papers have yet understood what the duties and responsibilities of a journalist are. There is not a single vernacular paper throughout India which fulfils all the requirements of a good and really useful paper.

None so perfect but some defect in it

Quarrels with the noblest grace it owns

And puts it to the foil.

Properly speaking there is no periodical literature here. The newspapers deem it their duty to write libelous articles, to give currency to false, unfounded, unauthenticated news, and to fill their columns with rude, vulgar and obscene jests, and thus pervert and vitiate the tastes of their readers. We lack monthly or weekly journals or magazines to deal with important literary subjects. The only monthlies\* we have are three or four collections of verses recited in

\*The *dilgudaz* which was a monthly magazine of a higher type had become extinct after a short existence at the time of writing the above. It is a pleasure to note that Maulvi Abdul Halim Sharar, its able and talented editor has again issued it from Hyderabad. Another magazine, deserving of commendation, the *Maarif* has recently been started at Aligarh under the editorship of Haji Muhammad Ismail Khan and Maulvi Wahid-ud-Din Salim. (Since writing the above monthly journalism made great progress. The *Makhzan*, the *Adib*, the *Zamana*, the *Kahkashan* and many others came into existence between 1900 and 1920. The latest addition to literary monthlies is the *Shabab-i-Urdu*).

poetical contests such as the *پیام یار-فتنہ-گلچین* etc., which except for a few lines occasionally are not even entertaining, not to speak of doing any good. Of Biography\* we have very little and History† we almost entirely want.

You have seen what your language contains, how it originated and progressed, what it is now, and the only thing now remaining to be discussed is what it ought to be and what means ought to be adopted in order to make it reach that standard. There might be chances of its gradual decline, if you were to continue indifferent towards it. But there is no doubt that it has made satisfactory progress hitherto. The English language has reached its present standard after more than a thousand years of slow gradual development. Our language is quite an infant compared to English and when we see all that it has achieved, we are apt to think that great results are reserved for it by Providence. It is constructed on the same basis as English, can admit foreign words, assimilate foreign idioms and appropriate foreign thoughts, and has all the elements of a wide language. Do not be narrow minded and say that it contains nothing, or nothing that will suit you. The work of each of the old writers has been his own, shaped by his own individuality, tinged often by the circumstances of his own life, coloured still more by the spirit of the age in which he lived. What you have got to do is to study the old writings and produce things which would be in harmony with the spirit of your age. Chaudhri Khushi Muham-

\*Since writing the above some progress has been made in the direction of biographies. Maulvi Hali, who had already given us "Life of Saadi," contributed other valuable additions to our literature by a "Life of Ghalib," and a "Life of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan," *Almāmoun* of Maulvi Shibli is a work of great historical as well as biographical value. The latest of Shibli's works is the *Siratan Nabi* or the Life of the Prophet.

† We can now claim at least on historical work of great value in Urdu the History of India by Maulvi Zaka-Ullah, in ten volumes.

mad, a clever graduate of the Aligarh College, to whom I alluded before, is a Punjabi gentleman, who has set an example before you and showed that it is quite possible for a College student to know Urdu well with English and other subjects of study fixed by the Universities. If he goes on, I believe, he will make a fine example of a writer in a pure and simple style. A poem recently written by him in imitation of Thomson's Seasons ought to be read by every one who can get hold of it.

Indian gentlemen with high education ought to rise and try to purify and improve their language, to edit journals and magazines in it, to give a new life to its fiction, to improve its essays, to write biographies of their great men in their mother-tongue, to translate\* or adapt useful books from other languages in short to enrich Urdu in every way they can.

When these few old men who now use Urdu with effect are taken away from us, what preparation have we made to repair the loss? The following lines deserve to be taken to heart:—

The voices of our fathers gone before,  
Stay here to help us with their magic thus;  
What voices of ours abiding ever more,  
Shall help the dear ones who come after us?

I do not mean to hint that all of you are to become authors. Nothing would be more injurious than this. What I mean is that those of you who really have a taste for literature ought to take advantage of it, and not to think that you will not get anything by engaging in the pursuit of Urdu

\*Under this head the translation of the highly valuable French work of Dr. Le Bon on the Civilisation of the Arabs, by Shams-ul-ulama Maulvi Sayed Ali Bilgami of Hyderabad, deserves special mention. It is an ideal of what sort of works should be translated by educated aspirants of literary fame and of what should be the quality of those translations.



literature. There is always room at the top, and India stands badly in need of good vernacular journalists, essayists or orators, and any one who accomplishes something really substantial in these directions will not have reason to repent his efforts.

### THE WRITINGS OF HALI \*

کوئی ملتا نہیں ہے محترم راز  
مجھ کو کہنا ہے کچھ ایسی زبان میں

The significant line from the pen of the distinguished writer whose works are to furnish the subject of this evening's discourse expresses exactly the state of mind in which I was when I took up pen to write this paper. Were it not for the possession which that state of mind had taken of me I would fain have refrained from attempting the risky business of criticising a living writer of Maulvi Altaf Husain Hali's position and ability. Interesting as literary criticisms may be to some minds, I, for one, have no unmixed admiration for them, as critics in general, who sit on judgment on men far abler than themselves in every respect, retard instead of advancing the progress of true learning. Good criticism is as rare as good writing. There are those who understand by criticism the ability to pick as many holes as possible, to expose the flaws and to hide the beauties of a literary work. There are others who, being admirers of a writer, will hold up everything of his as perfect. The position of a just critic, however, is truly critical. He is sure to give offence to passionate admirers for not admiring to the same extent that they do, and he is sure to lose

\* Read at the young men's Muhammadan Association, Lahore, in 1896 and published in the *Punjab Observer* of the 16th May.

the good graces of opponents for thinking the man capable of even the slightest good ; and if, to add to his other difficulties, the subject of his criticism is a living writer, ten to one he is sure to displease the auther himself, who, of course, liking, nay loving, his own productions, is resentful if any of them are made light of. What, then, has led me, inspite of my conciousness of the above difficulties to attempt an estimate of Hali's writings is that very feeling to which I have referred, of finding a few sympathetic souls who could feel just the same way about Hali and his work as I do, who could be called محترم راز, that is capable of understanding the language of my heart, and if by this ventilation of my views I succeed in causing even one heart to appreciate Hali as he ought to be appreciated, or if one heart goes home this evening thinking better of Urdu poetry and modern poets than before, I will not repent having run the risk of incurring the displeasure of some parties.

A biographical sketch is, of course, beyond my scope at present, as a record of Hali's life is not yet ready ; but also because he has hardly been a man of action, and consequently the story of his uneventful life cannot present anything more than an account of careful application to work, steady efforts after attainment of learning, a youth of continued routine work for making a living, enlivened occasionally by flights into the higher atmosphere of poetry, a strong feeling for the good of his community all the time engaging his innermost thoughts, an old age crowned with comforts and the satisfaction of well-earned fame, and his touch with the still more patriotic and strong mind of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to whom he had been attracted by affinity. These few words might well summarise the whole course of a quiet, peace-loving life. As to those details which form