

VI

URDU PROSE

A. EARLY PROSE WRITERS

WE noticed above (pp. 18-20, 24) that some of the earliest literature in the Deccan was religious prose. 'Ain ud Dīn (Ganj ul 'Ilm; d. 1393); Khājā Banda Navāz (d. 1422), author of *Mi'rāj ul 'Ashiqīn* and *Hidāyat Nāma*; Shāh Mirān Jī, author of *Jal Tarang* (d. 1496); his son Shāh Burhān, (d. 1582), author of *Kalimat ul Haqāiq* and other prose works, were the most important. It must not be forgotten that none of these works were literary in the strict sense of the term; they were purely religious in character. Still the fact remains that they were prose, and some of them good prose. Thus we have as early as the end of the fourteenth century Urdu or Dakhnī prose which is not nearly so far from the Urdu of to-day as the English of Piers Plowman is from modern English. Perhaps a comparison with Chaucer would express the difference better.

In the seventeenth century were written *Mittāh ul Khairāt* (about 1630); *Sab Ras*, a Sūfī religious work by Vajhī (1634); 'Abdullāh's *Ahkām us Salawāt* (1662); Valī Ullāh Qādri's *Mā'rifat us Sulūk* (1688); and Shāh Muḥammad Qādri's tracts of about the same date, all of which have already been mentioned. The Deccan did not produce much literary prose.

182. MĪR JA'FAR ZAṬALLĪ (c. 1659-1713: No. 94). In extant MSS. of his work may be found examples of Urdu prose sufficient in amount to fill about two pages. They are disconnected sentences, but are smooth and natural; evidently they represent his ordinary speech.

183. A prose work often heard of is FAZLĪ's *Dah Majlis*, translated from the Persian *Rauzat ush Shuhadā*, with a

preface, also in Urdu prose, stating how he came to do the translation. It is referred to in Azād's *Ab i Hayāt* and a quotation from it is given, but no MS. is known to exist and nothing further has been discovered about it.

183a. MUḤAMMAD ḤUSAIN KALĪM, as we have seen (No. 105), wrote prose as well as verse. Some have doubted his having written prose. Garcin de Tassy takes certain Persian words from Mir Ḥasan's anthology to mean 'he wrote a treatise on the spread of Hindi,' but the word translated 'spread' should be read as an almost identical word meaning 'prose.' The passage is then clearly seen to state that Kalīm wrote Hindi prose (Hindi meaning Urdu); further, Mir Ḥasan's illustrative quotation is prose. It refers to the Emperor Aḥmad Shāh as blind, which suggests 1754, or shortly after, as the date.

184. The poet SAUDĀ (No. 103) translated into Urdu verse Mir's romance *Shu'la e 'Ishq*; this translation is not now extant, but a few lines of the Urdu preface to his own poems may still be read. It is astonishing how clumsy and stilted both Saudā and Fazlī are. Their prose suggests the early efforts of people imperfectly acquainted with a language. It is full of awkward Persian constructions and rhythmical jingle. Since they were writing their native language, the explanation must be that they felt bound to reject straightforward conversational Urdu in favour of Persianised, semi-poetical composition. Zaṭallī's sentences, though about 30 years earlier, are much superior.

185. MUḤAMMAD 'ATĀ ḤUSAIN TAḤSĪN of Itāvā (Etawa) is the author of *Nau Tarz i Murassa'*, usually said to be a translation of *Cahār Darvesh* attributed to Amīr Khusrau, but entirely unknown. (See No. 188.) No such work appears in the list of Khusrau's writings. *Nau Tarz i Murassa'* is important, but it has never been popular; it has too many Persian and Arabic words in it, and is now hardly ever heard of. Recent researches go to show that it was composed about 1770, nearly 30 years earlier than usually stated.

B. THE FORT WILLIAM TRANSLATORS

DR. J. B. GILCHRIST and FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE, CALCUTTA. The year 1800 is important in the history of Urdu. In that year Fort William College, Calcutta, was founded by the East India Company for the instruction of its servants in Indian languages, and at its head was placed an Edinburgh medical man, Dr. J. B. Gilchrist. Though he was compelled by ill-health to resign in 1804, he had already appointed a band of Indian scholars, both Hindu and Muhammadan, to do translation and other literary work. Sanskrit books were translated into Hindi (Kharī Bolī), and Arabic or Persian into Urdu. In this way he had given a great impetus to prose composition in these languages. It is true that after Gilchrist left the country the movement hung fire, but it is not possible to doubt that the revival of interest which took place later on was in great measure due to his work.

The names which follow (Nos. 186 to 198) were all associated with Fort William.

186. MIRZĀ 'ALĪ LUṬF was a poet of little merit, but famous for his biographical anthology named *Gulshan i Hind*, a translation from Persian. He tells us in the preface that it was written and compiled at Dr. Gilchrist's request. This is a valuable work in simple and good Urdu, giving much information about poets and society at that time. The language shows many traces of Dakhnī influence, for Luṭf was living in the Deccan when asked to write the book. It is in two parts, the first of 400 pages contains notices of sixty 'good' poets, while the second part is devoted to poets of inferior rank.

187. SAYYID HAIDAR BAKHSH HAIDARĪ, of Delhi, who died in 1828, translated many works from Persian into Urdu. He entered Dr. Gilchrist's service in 1801. His best-known works are the following: *Arāish i Mahtil* (1801), an adaptation of the story of Ḥātim Ṭāī; *Toṭā Kahānī*, (1801) translated from the *Tūtīnāma* of Muḥammad Qādri; less important translations are *Gulzār i Dānish* from 'Ināyat Ullāh's *Bahār i Dānish*, *Gul i Magfirat* from the *Rauzat ush Shuhadā* of Husain Vā'iz Kāshifī, and *Tārīkh i Nādirī* from Mirzā Muḥammad Mahdī's history of the Emperor Nādir

Shāh. Still earlier than these is *Qisṣa e Lailā o Majnūn*. He also wrote a little verse. The language is good and idiomatic, remarkably like modern Urdu, and there is little difficulty in reading it.

188. MĪR AMMAN of Delhi in 1801 wrote *Bāg o Bahār*, which he professed to have translated from 'Amīr Khusrau's *Cahār Darvesh*,' but almost certainly Khusrau never wrote such a work. The *Bāg o Bahār* is perhaps a re-telling of Tahsin's *Nau Tarz i Murassa'* mentioned above (No. 185), which it has superseded in popular favour. Mīr Amman in his preface gave an account of the origin of the Urdu language; this is responsible for the erroneous views which for long prevailed and have not been wholly given up yet. In 1806 he translated Husain Vā'iz Kāshifī's *Akhlāq i Muhsinī*, to which he gave the name of *Ganj i Khūbī*. It is a book of 366 pages. His style is perhaps better than that of any other of Gilchrist's helpers; it drew forth a special encomium from Sir Sayyid Aḥmad. Mīr Amman's style in prose may be said to correspond to Mīr Taqī's in poetry.

189. BAHĀDUR 'ALĪ HUSAINĪ in 1802 told in prose the story of Mīr Ḥasan's romance *Sīhr ul Bayān*, giving it the name of *Nasr i Benagīr*. His other works are: *Akhlāq i Hindī* (1802), a translation of a Persian version of the Sanskrit *Hitopadeśa*; *Tarjuma e Tārīkh i Āsām* (1805) from the Persian of Valī Aḥmad Shahāb ud Dīn; a little pamphlet on Urdu grammar with various titles, apparently adapted from some Grammar by Gilchrist. He assisted also in the *Oriental Fabulist*, a translation of some of *Aesop's Fables* and in a translation of the *Qur'ān*.

190. SHER 'ALĪ AFSOS of Delhi is best known for his *Arāish i Mahtil*, which, though based upon the Persian *Khulāsat ut Tavārīkh* of Sujān Rāe of Pateāla, is practically an original work, and one of considerable ability; in addition to this he revised Nihāl Cand's *Mazhab i Ishq*, Bahādur 'Alī Husainī's *Nasr i Benagīr*, and Muḥammad Ismā'īl's *Bahār i Dānish*; finally he translated the *Gulistān* of Sa'dī into Urdu with the name of *Bāg i Urdū*.

191. ḤAFĪZ UD DĪN AḤMAD of Delhi in 1803 translated Abu'l Faḥl's *Ayār i Dānish* calling it *Khīrad Afroz*.

192. NIHĀL CAND LĀHAURĪ translated *Mazhab i 'Ishq* (1802) from a Persian version of the Hindi *Gul i Bakāvālī*, a story reproduced in verse by Dayā Shaṅkar Kaul Nasīm in his famous romance, *Gulzār i Nasīm*. Nihāl Cand was born in Delhi, but left it to live in Lahore, on account of which he is known as 'Lāhaurī.' He calls the Urdu of his translation 'Hindī rekhta.' In the catalogue of the Asiatic Society of Bengal the next entry after Nihāl Cand's work is '*aizan manzūm*,' i.e. 'the same in verse,' but this is probably by another hand.

193. LĀLLŪ LĀL is more famous for his work in Hindi, both Khaṛī Bolī and Braj, but along with Kāzīm 'Alī Javān he translated into Urdu, or Urdu and Khaṛī Bolī mixed, *Singhāsān Battīsī* and *Śakuntalā*; he also helped Maḡhar 'Alī Vilā with *Baitāl Pacīsī* and *Mādhunāl* (1805). In 1810 he compiled *Latāif i Hindī*, partly Urdu and partly Hindi.

194. KĀZĪM 'ALĪ JAVĀN in 1802 translated *Śakuntalā* into Urdu with the aid of Lallū Lāl whom he helped with the translation of *Singhāsān Battīsī*. His *Dastūr i Hind* is a poetical account of the months of the year with the feasts that occur in each.

195. MAḡHAR 'ALĪ VILĀ, apart from a large volume of mediocre poetry, and the works in which Lallū Lāl helped him as mentioned above, produced the following translations: *At Paṅdnāma* said to be from Sa'dī, *Tārīkh i Sher Shāhī*, *Hatt Gulshan*, *Jahāngīr Shāhī*, and under the guidance of Dr. Gilchrist a little textbook, *Atāliq i Hindī*.

196. IKRĀM 'ALĪ made from a famous Arabic work a translation which has been greatly praised. It bears the name of the original, *Ikhvān us Ṣafā*. The Urdu is on the whole extremely good. The work was finished in 1810.

197. AMĀNAT ULLĀH SHAIḌĀ translated *Akhṭāq i Jalālī* (1804), and *Hidāyat ul Islām* (1804) which is partly in Arabic. He wrote also a little Urdu grammar in Urdu verse.

198. BENĪ NĀRĀYAṆ is the author of *Divān i Jahān*, a bibliographical anthology of Urdu poets (1814). Three years earlier he translated a Persian book under the name of *Cār Gulshan*. He is credited also with a little book of stories, *Qissa-jāt*, and a translation from the Persian, *Tanbīh ul Gāfilīn*. These are much later than the others.

C. URDU PROSE WRITERS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Fort William writers were chiefly translators; before passing on to Urdu literary prose, we may mention a group of three whose works were religious rather than literary.

199. MAULVĪ ISMĀ'IL, the reformer (1796-1831), was the author of *Taqviyyat ul Imān* and a number of tracts. He was killed during a religious war with the Sikhs. An English translation of the first part of *Taqviyyat ul Imān* was printed in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, XIII, 316 ff.

200. SHĀH RAFĪ UD DĪN (1749-1818) and No. 201, SHĀH 'ABD UL QĀDIR (1753-1815) were the sons of the famous Shāh Valī Ullāh, who translated the Qur'ān into Persian in 1737. These two brothers were learned and religious men. Each of them made a translation of the Qur'ān into Urdu; that of the younger brother (1790) is much better known. It has been greatly praised by Naḡīr Aḡmad, who himself about a century later made an Urdu translation of the Qur'ān (No. 221).

202. KHALĪL ULLĀH KHĀN ASHK of Faizābād produced a number of works, both original and translations. They are *Muntakhab ul Favā'id* (1799, translated from Persian); *Qissa e Amīr Hamza* (1800, original); *Gulzār i Cīn* (1804), an original prose romance; *Intikhab i Sultāniya* (1804), a short original history of the kings of Delhi; *Vāqī'āt i Akbarī* (1809) a translation of Abu'l Faḡl's *Akbar Nāma* and the same author's *Tārīkh i Akbarī*; lastly a short treatise on Physics, *Risāla e Kānūt*.

203. MIRZĀ JĀN ṬAIŠH produced some verse which has been published, and a little book on Urdu idioms.

204. INSHĀ ALLĀH KHĀN INSHĀ (d. 1817) has been described under the poets of Delhi. He did not write Urdu prose, but in *Daryā e Latāfat* (1807) he gives several examples of Urdu letters and conversations which are remarkable for the close resemblance to everyday Urdu to-day. They are a tribute to his versatility. (See p. 55.)

205. SA'ĀDAT YĀR KHĀN RANGĪN (1756-1834) and his poetical works have been dealt with (p. 56) and his two

Urdu prose works have also been mentioned. He wrote in a fluent and easy style.

206. FAQĪR ULLĀH GOYĀ (d. between 1845 and 1850) was the author of *Bostān i Hikmat*, a prose translation of the *Anvār i Suhailī* (1835). He also wrote verse.

207. RAJAB 'ALĪ BEG SURŪR (d. 1867) is famous as the ablest author of the old rhythmical prose based on Persian models. He was brought up in Lucknow, a place for which he ever retained a great affection. His best-known work is the fanciful story, *Fasāna e 'Ajāib*. The date is quite uncertain. His *Shabistān i Surūr* contains stories from *The Arabian Nights*. Other tales composed by him are *Shigūfa e Muḥabbat* (1851) and *Sharr i 'Ishq*. He also translated from Persian, *Surūr i Sultānī* and *Gulzār i Surūr*. He published a collection of letters, *Inshā e Surūr*, useful specimens of a now obsolete style, and wrote an ode on the marriage of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII. His writings are valuable as describing life and society in Lucknow 100 years ago, and as the best examples of rhythmical Urdu, but they do not appeal to us now, for his pictures of Lucknow life are like a far-off fairy tale, and the style is florid and artificial. It is not met with in these days.

208. ASAD ULLĀH KHĀN GĀLIB has been spoken of already (No. 162). The fascination of his letters lies in their naturalness. He changed the whole course of Urdu letter-writing, substituting the natural for the artificial. Many authors have since then published letters, but Gālib's have never been equalled. Apart from *'Ūd i Hindī* and *Urdū e Mu'allā* he has not written much Urdu prose of importance. He is the author of a few pamphlets and part of a novel. His reviews, found in *'Ūd i Hindī* along with letters, are in the formal style which the time demanded. His preface to Mir Lāl's *Sirāj ul Mā'rifat* is a very good example of this style.

209. GULĀM IMĀM SHAHĪD was a contemporary writer the date of whose birth and death is not known. He wrote both prose and poetry in a flowery style. He was a religious teacher with many pupils, and because of his writings in praise of Muḥammad, was called *Maddāḥ i Nabī* (Praisers of the Prophet), and *'Āshiq i Rasūl* (Lover of the Apostle). His

works include *Inshā e Bahār i Beḥ'azān* (1866), verses on the birth of Muḥammad called *Majmū'a e Maulūd i Sharīf*, and some other poems, chiefly odes and love lyrics.

210. RĀM CANDAR wrote principally about higher mathematics and allied subjects, on which he published nine volumes. He was converted to Christianity in 1852 and baptised the following year. His literary works were *Kitāb i 'Ajāib i Rozgār* on the marvels of the age, and *Tazkirat ul Kāmilīn* (1849), an account in 200 pages of the lives of famous men.

211. 'ABD UL KARĪM in 1845 translated *The Arabian Nights* for the use of schools. The Urdu is simple and good, being free from all superfluous ornament.

212. **Sayyid Ahmad.** SIR SAYYID AHMAD (1817-98) exercised more influence upon Urdu than perhaps any other single man in the nineteenth century. He occupied many positions under the Government, wrote many books, started magazines, and helped to found societies, doing much to increase friendly feelings between Europeans and Indians. In 1847 he completed *Āṣār uṣ Sanādīd*, on the important buildings in Delhi, and in the following year began his history of Bijnaur. He was the author of many tracts on religious subjects and of incomplete commentaries on the Bible and on the Qur'an. His advanced views on religious questions roused much opposition among his co-religionists, though they also met with some support. In 1862 he founded the Scientific Society, and in 1872 started the *Tahzīb ul Akhlāq*, a magazine through which he exerted his greatest influence. It met with many difficulties, being twice given up and restarted before finally ceasing publication. In the first period of its activity, seven years, it printed 226 articles, of which 112 were by Sir Sayyid. He wrote good, flowing and simple Urdu, discarding the florid style of his predecessors in journalism. The artificial style had such a hold on Urdu writers that his book, *Āṣār uṣ Sanādīd*, was first put into literary form by Imām Bakḥsh Shāhbāī, the well-known writer of ornate Urdu, and it was only at a later date that Sir Sayyid ventured to write it himself in his own natural, simple style. Other magazines were started to oppose his. They were sometimes written in the very style

which they were condemning—the earnestness of the authors made them natural in spite of themselves. For a time the issue of the conflict seemed doubtful, but ultimately, so far as prose went, he won a complete victory, and no one now thinks of writing in the style of Surūr when he has before him as a model the forceful and straightforward writing of Sir Sayyid. The men who best understood his spirit, and most faithfully followed his principles were Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥalī and Vahīd ud Dīn Salīm. (See Nos. 218, 230.)

213. GULĀM GAUṢ BEKḤABAR (1824–1905) was born in Lhasa and brought up in Benares. Most of his life was spent in Government service. His *Khānāba e Jigar* is in Persian verse, but he has left an Urdu work, *Figān i Bekhabar* (1891) which is sometimes quoted as *Figān i Besabr*. He was a very good letter-writer.

The influence of Fort William was in the direction of simplicity. But the love for an ornate, artificial style was so great that at first this simple method of writing was scoffed at. Surūr in his *Fasāna e 'Ajāib* wrote against Mir Amman. In spite of mockery it conquered. It was assisted by the tracts and books produced by religious writers like Sayyid Aḥmad, the Vahābī (not the same as Sir Sayyid Aḥmad), his disciple 'Abdullāh in *Tanbīh ul Gāfilīn* (translated from a Persian book written by his master Sayyid Aḥmad), Gulām Imām Shahīd, and Ḥājī Ismā'īl in *Taqviyyat ul Imān*. Delhi, at first in opposition, soon accepted the natural style; the objections of Lucknow took much longer to overcome. In 1832 Urdu became the language of the law courts, many legal terms were introduced, and thus the language was strengthened in a new direction. The primary and secondary schools, by their demand for simple textbooks gave a further stimulus to the movement towards simplicity. Finally, Sir Sayyid Aḥmad threw the whole weight of his influence on to the same side.

214. AMĪR AḤMAD MĪNĀĪ (1828–1900) is better known as a poet (No. 178). He published a volume of letters written in very smooth, good Urdu. His *Intikhāb i Yādgar*, an anthology of 410 poems connected with Rāmpūr, has introductions written in the ornate style which we associate with Surūr. By order of Vājīd 'Alī Shāh he wrote *Hidāyat us Sultān*

and *Irshād us Sultān*, which brought him great fame. He can hardly be said to be a writer of literary prose.

215. MUḤAMMAD ḤUSAIN ĀZĀD (d. 1910), professor of Arabic in the Government College, Lahore, is by some regarded as the greatest of Urdu prose writers. He wrote in a very agreeable, picturesque style, using a good many expressive Hindi words, yet here and there introducing an unfamiliar Arabic or Persian one. There is nothing flamboyant in his writing. He often stages his thoughts in a poetical manner, but he does not attempt rhyming words or rhythmical constructions. His Urdu Reading Books, the Primer and First, Second, and Third Books, show an amazing ability to write the simplest Urdu in the most charming way. His volume, *Qisaṣ i Hind*, stories of Indian history, is another example of this.

His most famous work is *Āb i Hayāt*, a history of Urdu poetry. It can hardly be described as scientific; he accepted too readily what had been said by others and relied too much on his prodigious memory. Some of his accounts of people's lives, and statements about books which have since been published, are now known to be inaccurate. The book contained little literary criticism, but it led the way and as a pioneer work deserves our respect. Another important book is his edition of the poems of his teacher Zauq. His *Darbār i Akbarī* is a large historical work. He was a great Persian scholar, and apart from Persian Readers for schools he wrote two histories of Persian literature, *Sukhandān i Fārs* and *Nigāristān i Fārs*. His *Nairang i Khayāl* is an allegorical study.

He made his influence felt in education, journalism and literature; his great accomplishment lay in what he did for prose by his inimitable style, and for poetry by introducing along with Ḥalī the new era of thought. (See No. 232.)

216. CIRĀG 'ALĪ (1844–95) was a well-known civil servant whose latter days were spent in Ḥaidarābād. Apart from one or two Government reports his work consists almost entirely of controversial and other religious books or tracts. His letters, *Majmū'a e Rasāil*, deserve mention.

217. MUSHTĀQ ḤUSAIN VAQĀR UL MULK (1839–1917) had

a career similar to that of Cirāg 'Alī. He worked first in British India and afterwards in Haidarābād. He wrote for *Tahzīb ul Akhlāq* on social and religious reform, and translated two books on France. He had a good command of virile Urdu, but was too fond of big Arabic words.

218. **Hālī.** ALṬĀF ḤUSAIN HĀLĪ (1837-1914), the great contemporary and friend of Āzād, was famous both as poet and as prose writer. He wrote three large volumes of biography, *Hayāt i Jāved*, a life of Sir Sayyid Ahmad, perhaps his greatest prose work; *Yādgār i Gālib*, a life of Gālib; and *Hayāt i Sa'dī*, a life of the Persian poet Sa'dī. In the field of poetics he wrote *Shīr o Shā'iri*, 199 pages long, a valuable introduction to his *Divān*; in this he discusses the different varieties of Urdu poetry. Among his minor works are *Tiryāq i Masmūm* (1868), a religious controversial book; *Majlis un Nisā* (1874) and *Mazāmin i Hālī*, a collection of magazine articles, contributed chiefly to *Tahzīb ul Akhlāq*. (See No. 231.)

Hālī's style is free from artificial ornament, a little monotonous, yet straightforward and vigorous, as is seen when he writes on scientific subjects. Sometimes it is really good, but his informality displeased readers. It is remarkable that he and Āzād, the pioneers of the new movement in Urdu literature, which owed so much to English influence, were themselves indifferent English scholars.

219. **Muhsin ul Mulk.** SAYYID MAHDĪ 'ALĪ, MUHSIN UL MULK (1837-1907) was a friend of Sir Sayyid Ahmad, whose views he advocated by numerous articles in *Tahzīb ul Akhlāq*. He exercised a great influence in Haidarābād, where he was employed after some years of Government service, and was largely instrumental in getting Urdu recognised as the State language. His writings have been collected into a number of volumes. They deal chiefly with subjects of special interest to Muslims, and their life and religion. His books include collections of lectures, magazine articles and letters.

220. **Shibli.** SHIBLĪ NU'MĀNĪ (1857-1914) was a voluminous writer on historical, religious and literary subjects. His most important contributions to the history of Islām are his biographies, *Sirat un Nu'mān*, *Al Fārūq*, *Al Gazzālī*,

Sirat un Nabī in three volumes, *Al Māmūn*, *Savānih i Maulānā Rām*. His chief works on literary subjects are *Muāzina e Anīs o Dabīr*, *Shīr ul 'Ajām* and *Bayān i Khusrāu*. The first of these, the *Muāzina*, compared Anīs and Dabīr to the advantage of Anīs; a reply by Fauq called *Al Mizān* advocated the claims of Dabīr. *Shīr ul 'Ajām* is a history of Persian poetry in five volumes. His *Safarnāma e Miṣr o Rūm o Shām* is a book of travel, describing his journeys in Egypt, Turkey and Syria. He wrote several books of poetry which are much inferior to his prose work. In addition to these he published collections of letters, articles and lectures.

Some people consider him the greatest of Urdu prose writers. His style is stately and literary, occasionally stiff but brighter than Hālī's. It is well adapted to the religious and historical subjects with which he dealt. He avoids prolixity and exaggeration, yet sometimes he repeats the same idea over and over again in different words. At one time he gave great assistance to the Nadvat ul 'Ulamā, an institution for the study of Muslim theology and history; later on he founded in A'zamgarh the Dār ul Muṣannifin or Shibli Academy. Its chief object was the study of Muslim literature, especially Arabic, Persian and Urdu. In this connection it devoted special attention to the collection of MSS.

The Three Novelists—Nazir Ahmad, Sarshar and Sharar. At the end of the century these three men were writing novels of very different types. Nazir Ahmad wrote domestic novels, chiefly for women and girls, and advocated the reform of life in the Muslim home; Sarshar gave himself to vivid, humorous and sparkling description of ordinary Lucknow life; he had no religious end in view. Sharar's historical novels were written to depict the past glories of Islām in Spain, Arabia, Persia and India.

221. **NAZĪR AHMAD** (1831-1912) was essentially a reformer. While ardently attached to his own faith he was not a bigot; he felt the need for a pure practical religion and civilised domestic life. In *Taubat un Na'sh* he wrote of religious repentance, in *Banāt un Na'sh* and *Mirāt ul 'Arūs* of daily home life, in *Rūyā e Sādiqa* and *Cand Pand* of

religious beliefs and practices. In *Muhsanāt* he preached monogamy, and in *Ayyāmā* he advocated the re-marriage of widows. In addition to these he showed his mastery over Urdu by his translations of the Indian Penal Code, the Income Tax Act and the Indian Evidence Act. He translated the Qur'an into excellent Urdu and published the translation without the Arabic text, an unusual thing among Muhammadans. He wrote several books on the Qur'an and Muslim religious duties; in later life he lectured a good deal, and some of his lectures were published. Under the name of Benazir he wrote some verse of no poetic merit, but interesting in the fact that much of it deals with nature subjects.

His easy familiar style, carefully altered to fit his characters, is well suited to his novels, which have great literary value. But it is not so well fitted for religious works, where some of his colloquialisms seem undignified; even his translation of the Qur'an is not free from them. Though he was a learned Arabic scholar he generally avoids obtruding his knowledge of Arabic. His chief title to fame lies in his having founded a new school of novelists and a new kind of novel—the domestic novel. He has a worthy successor in Rāshid ul *Khairī*. A gentle vein of humour runs through his stories, but it never comes much to the surface.

222. RATN NĀTH SARSHĀR (1846–1902) was a humorist and novelist. To understand his literary position we must remember that he was a journalist; his most famous book, *Fasāna e Azād*, a novel of enormous length, appeared in his paper, the *Avadh Akhbār*, and has all the faults of hasty work done from day to day. As a description lively and gay, often broadly farcical, of all conceivable characters in all ranks of society to be seen in the *Vanity Fair* of Lucknow it is inimitable, but we do not find in it any carefully worked-out plot or delineation of character. He was casual, lazy and careless. For a long time he would remain idle, then he would dash off a few chapters. In that way he did nearly all his work. His novels, *Hushshā*, *Pī Kahān*, *Bichrī Dulhan*, *Tufān i Betamāzī* and *Karam Dhum*, have the same rollicking fun and insouciance running through all of them.

In addition to novels and a little poetry, which is not devoid of merit, he translated with great success several works from English, such as Wallace's *Russia* and Dufferin's *Letters from High Latitudes*; his novel, *Khudāi Faujdār*, is an adaptation of Don Quixote. Sarshār uses the idiomatic Urdu of Lucknow; there is a ceaseless flow of conversational idioms, the language of the man in the street; there is no stiffness or halting in anything he writes; he is intensely human and his pictures are full of life. Rajab 'Alī Beg Surūr, who described Lucknow life a generation earlier, leaves the impression of a dream; Sarshār's pictures on the other hand are vividly real, his style entirely natural and unartificial.

223. 'ABD UL ḤALĪM SHARAR (1860–1926) was a journalist, historian and novelist. He wrote chiefly historical novels about the old days of Islām in different countries, but one or two deal with modern life in India. Their fundamental idea comes from Scott's *Waverley Novels*. They number about 30 in all; the best known perhaps are *Mansūr-Mohana*, *Hasan aur Anjalīna*, *Firdaus i Barīn* and *Malik 'Azīz aur Varjana*. They differ little from one another, the same heroes and heroines under varying names appear in them all; the same sudden attachments and conversions occur over and over again. They are mere stories, not historical studies. He does not recreate the spirit of the country or people of whom he writes, and in all his novels he is intensely solemn; none of his characters ever laugh, at the same time they are interesting, and through much fighting, plotting and secrecy the reader is carried on to the necessary conclusion.

He wrote a large number of books dealing with the early history of Islām and its heroes; and was sometimes involved in fierce controversy. He wrote ceaselessly for the press, started several magazines which enjoyed only a brief existence, and delivered many lectures. His life was one of great activity. His style is plain and unadorned, rising to greater vigour in his historical and social writings, especially his magazine articles, than in his novels.

224. MUḤAMMAD ZAKĀ ULLĀH (1832–1910) was an educationist whose work was mostly translation and com-

pilation. He had a good, but not exalted, style and his translations read as if they were originals. He was interested mainly in mathematics and history. His most important historical works are a *History of India* in many volumes, *The British Period of Indian History*, *Āin i Qaiṣarī* (the Victorian period), and a *Life of Lord Curzon*.

225. IMĀM BAKHSH SHAHBĀI (d. 1857) was another educationist who had a great reputation as a writer of Urdu in the old ornate style. As we have seen above he wrote Sir Sayyid Ahmad's *Āṣār i Ṣanādīd* in this style before Sir Sayyid himself wrote it in simple and direct Urdu. He was killed at the time of the Mutiny.

226. SAJJĀD HUSAIN (1856-1915) was a novelist of some distinction. In 1877 he began the issue of *Avadh Punch* and he himself was the first editor. His chief novels are *Ṭilismī Fānūs*, *Ṭarhdār Larindī*, *Kāyā Palāt*, *Mithī Churī*, *Hājī Bagol* and *Pyārī Dunyā*. His style was fresh and pleasing with plenty of life and humour.

227. SAYYID AHMAD of Delhi (1846 to c. 1920) was the author of a number of educational works chiefly for women and girls, and also of dictionaries and other works, including one or two stories. His most important publication is his famous Urdu dictionary, *Farhang i Aṣafiya* (1892).

228. SAYYID 'ALĪ BILGRĀMĪ (1851-1911) is known for two important translations, *Tamaddun i 'Arab* from Le Bon's book on the civilisation of the Arabs, and *Tamaddun i Hind*, the civilisation of India.

229. ŠAFĪR BILGRĀMĪ (1833-?) was not related to the foregoing. He lived a large part of his life in Āra and wrote much verse, principally love lyrics. His published books include an anthology, *Šalavāt i Khizr*, and volumes of lyrics called *Šafīr i Bulbul* and *Khumkhāna e Šafīr*. He wrote a novel, *Rūh Atzā*, which was not published. Perhaps his most important work was *Jalva e Khizr*, a history of Urdu literature, which he wrote with a view to correcting what he considered the mis-statements of Āzād's *Ab i Hayāt*.

230. VAHĪD UD DĪN SALĪM of Pānīpat (d. 1928) was Professor of Urdu in the Osmania University, Haidarābād. He was a follower and friend of Sir Sayyid Ahmad, and

worked in his spirit. Along with 'Abd ul Haqq, secretary of the Anjuman i Taraqqī e Urdū, he was leader of the Hindi movement in Urdu, and in this connection he wrote the remarkable book, *Vaṣā' e Iṣṭilāḥāt*, on the formation of technical terms in Urdu.