

VIII CONCLUSION

WE have now come to the end of our survey of Urdu Literature. In dealing with English influence we have spoken of the work of Fort William College in the beginning of the nineteenth century; Col. Holroyd and his connection with Hālī and Āzād have been referred to on p. 94 in explanation of the characteristics of the New Age. Mention should also be made of the Delhi College, 1827-57, to which Sir Sayyid Ahmad, Nazīr Ahmad, Zakā Ullāh and Ziyā ud Dīn owed so much. English influence is seen in the increased attention paid to thought and matter as opposed to language and form, in more naturalness and less conventionality, and, generally, in greater breadth of subject and treatment. Going more into detail, we may note the following as due to it.

(a) Study of nature. Formerly descriptions of nature were largely conventional and artificial. Exceptions may be found in Qulī Quṭb Shāh, Nazīr of Agra, and Durgā Sahāe Surūr. Nazīr Ahmad, No. 221, wrote many nature poems, but he is little esteemed as a poet. Other students of nature were Hālī, Āzād, Ismā'īl, Akbar, Shauq Qidvāi and Iqbāl.

(b) The same writers are prominent in poetry of description. They write of flowers, insects, birds and other living creatures, occasionally of festivals and famous buildings.

(c) Another form of poetry which owes its inspiration largely to English sources is that which breathes love of country and true patriotism, portraying the glories and beauties of scenes and events loved by the author, but not decrying or belittling other lands and peoples.

(d) Moral and didactic verse has much increased in popularity of recent years; its poetic value is not great, but

its ethical value is enormous. Indian opinion has eagerly availed itself of the support given by English literature, and the difference in moral tone between Urdu writings of today and those of days gone by is almost beyond telling. Indeed, the sympathy between the best sentiment in India and the great writers in England, particularly in moral aspirations, is a happy augury for the days to come.

Religious poetry, when, as in Hālī's *Musaddas*, it is free from bigotry, helps to this end, for it then rouses men to a realisation of all that is best in them, including love for others.

(e) As regards poetical form and language, Urdu has not changed much under English influence. There was a time, a few years ago, when it appeared likely to adopt many western models, but it has not done so, and it remains nearly as it was. This dislike of change has encouraged the continuance of over-Persianisation (which, as we have seen, is one of the greatest hindrances to the true development of Urdu poetry), and has prevented the employment of new forms of verse.

Prose has made more advance than poetry in the last twenty-five years. It is less shackled by convention, and though it suffers from the blight of Persian and Arabic, which eat out its vitality, it is freer and more vigorous than all but a small part of the poetry. Novels are becoming more and more numerous, but no great novelist has yet arisen, one capable of delineating growth of character and developing a plot. Prem Cand, who writes both Urdu and Hindi, nearly achieved greatness in this respect, before he gave up his short stories, which were admirable, for his long novels, which are unconvincing and improbable. He will never attain the heights which are within his reach unless he goes back to his tales of the village life which he has lived, and the Hindu villagers whom he understands. Those tales alone ring true, and only they enable him to express his soul.

The range of Urdu poetry is still very circumscribed. We have seen that epics can hardly be said to exist, the only substitutes being the elegies relating to Karbalā (p. 61). There is no dramatic poetry. Plays are being

written in ever-increasing numbers, but they are not literature. If the Urdu writers of today would make a study of Shakespeare, Milton, Tennyson and Browning, they might create a whole new world for their readers.

In prose we miss philosophy, impartial history and penetrating criticism. There are works on historical subjects, but generally speaking they show a lack of genuine research and unprejudiced investigation. Criticism tends to confine itself to questions of verbal cleverness and linguistic correctness. Little or no effort is made to discuss an author's thoughts and meaning, or estimate his poetry as a whole, and when lines are quoted from his poems, we are not told in what poem they occur or when they were written. We must, however, recognise a certain improvement of late, which gives encouragement for the future. Many of the Urdu magazines, which are now numerous, are devoted to literary subjects, and the level of criticism is getting higher.

About 250 authors have been mentioned in this work. Apart from Prem Cand, who has just been alluded to, only eight are Hindus, the rest are Muhammadans. The eight are Nos. 18, 132, 192, 193, 198, 210, 222 and 235. The only famous writers among them are Dayā Shankar Nasīm, Ratn Nāth Sarshār and Durgā Sahāe Surūr. Hindu authors of real ability prefer to write in Hindi. To explain the situation we may liken Urdu, with its Hindi, Persian and Arabic elements, to English, with Anglo-Saxon, Latin and Greek. Hindi, and especially Sanskritised Hindi, is what English would be if we excluded words of Latin and Greek origin and introduced Anglo-Saxon, while Urdu corresponds to English with an excess of Latin and Greek words. Hindi is written in Sanskrit letters, Urdu in adapted Arabic letters. Again, Sanskrit is the sacred language of Hindus, Arabic of Muhammadans. Instead of having one strong, virile language for both communities, we find two languages, rendered stiff and almost unintelligible by the over-use of Sanskrit in one and Persian or Arabic in the other.

It is perhaps an illustration of the need for female education that there are no women in the list, though we saw on p. 28 that Princess Khadija was a great patron of letters,

and on p. 25 that a lady in Sidhoṭ had ordered a copy of *Phalban* from Rustumi.

The future of Urdu depends chiefly on the great mass of its speakers and writers, but also on the Osmaniya University in Haidarābād; to some extent, too, on the Anjuman i Taraqqī e Urdū, with its headquarters in Aurangābād, and the Hindustānī Academy. Connected with the University is the Dār ut Tarjuma, a translation bureau which exists for the purpose of familiarising the Urdu reading public with scientific work in Europe, and especially in Great Britain. The Anjuman is purely literary, and, under the guidance of its secretary, 'Abd ul Haqq, Professor of Urdu in the Osmaniya University, serves the interests of Urdu literature by the issue of its quarterly magazine, *Urdū*, and the production of books, old and new. It is related to the Muhammadan Educational Conference, which is a product of 'Aligarh University. The Hindustānī Academy, under the auspices of Government, has two branches, Hindi and Urdu, the members being exclusively Indians. Two quarterly magazines are published, one for each language, and valuable work is being done. In addition to these institutions there is the Shibli Academy in A'zamgarh, which endeavours to give to India not only the best of Muslim thought, but also the philosophy of the west, and thus in some measure to supply a want which has been referred to above.

We have hitherto not referred to living authors except incidentally, but it seems fitting to give some account of one who occupies a place among the great Urdu poets.

241. **Iqbal.** SIR MUHAMMAD IQBĀL (1875-) is a Panjabi. He was born in Siālkot, where he received his education till he reached manhood. He took his degree in Lahore. From 1905 to 1908 he was in England and Germany. These years in the west left a permanent mark upon his life and thought. He has written in both Persian and Urdu, but for some time now has devoted himself to philosophical subjects and has not written verse.

His first poem, *Ode to the Himalayas*, was written in 1901. At one time he wished to give up poetry, but on Sir Thomas Arnold's advice, took it up again. His poetical writings

show excessive Persian influence, which unfortunately is most clearly seen in his latest poems.

His best work is contained in *Bāng i Dirā*, 1924, which is divided into three parts according to date—(i) before, (ii) during, and (iii) after, his visit to Europe, 1905–8. He is fond of nature subjects, such as flowers and animals, the moon, the stars and the clouds, evening and night, the banks of the Rāvī and the mountains. All his poems are short. The best known are *Khizr i Rāh*, *Tasvīr i Dard*, *Shikva*, *Javāb i Shikva*, and his *Odes to the Himalayas*, *to Golkundā*, *to the Firefly* and *to the Cloud*.

He sings the praises of Muslim achievement, for he is not a national but a Muslim patriot, one who has imbibed some of the culture of the West, but holds himself rather aloof, not so much antagonistic to it as suspicious of its effects on his co-religionists. Like Hālī, he looks back to a golden age, but he feels a greater personal pain at its passing away. Latterly he appears to have experienced much disillusionment and become somewhat embittered. However, as he has hardly passed his prime, he may once again write poetry, and he may then be able to view the world with greater optimism. Some of his admirers have named him *Tarjumān i Haqiqat*, Interpreter of the Truth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS ON URDU LITERATURE

The following books are known to the writer personally. From this list are excluded Persian anthologies, books dealing with individual poets, and volumes of poetry, whether with or without an introduction.

URDU BOOKS

1. *Āb i Hayāt*. By M. Husain Āzād. 556 pp. c. 1880. A bright chatty account in beautiful Urdu of 70 poets down to 1875; contains many amusing stories; about 200 pp. of quotations from *gazals*; historical order.
2. *Gul i Rā'nā*. By 'Abd ul Hai Nadavī. 545 pp. 1925. A long introduction on the course of Urdu poetry, mentioning a few better-known Dakhnī poets; account of seven Dakhnī and 63 north Indian poets; historical order.
3. *Khumkhānā e Jāved*. By Sri Rām. 4 vols., 2,550 pp. In alphabetical order of *takhalluṣ*, dealing with 2,054 versifiers; completed down to the letter *shīn*, the last name being Shū'ūr. Many biographical details, but little about poems or style; if completed will comprise about 4,600 pp., and contain notices of about 4,000 writers. First volume out of print.
4. *Shi'r ul Hind*. By 'Abd us Salām Nadavī. 2 vols., 907 pp. c. 1926. Vol. I deals with selected poets in historical order; Vol. II speaks of different kinds of poetry and the men who wrote it. Both vols. have copious quotations.
5. *Āb i Baqā*. By Ja'far 'Alī Nishtar. 280 pp. 1918. Tells of 25 poets chosen at random, and has a chapter on Rāmpūr.
6. *Siyar ul Muṣannifīn*. By M. Yahyā Tanhā. 2 vols. 879 pp. 1924 and 1928. On Urdu prose writers from 1798 to present day; long biographical account of later writers.

refers to their chief works, and quotes from some. Very few recent writers mentioned.

7. *Mahbūb uz Zaman*. By 'Abd ul Jabbār Khān Āṣafī, 2 vols., 1,242 pp. c. 1870. Out of print. Deals with Dakhnī poets; much biographical detail, but little about poetry.

8. *Urdū e Qādīm*. By Shams Ullāh Qādrī. 158 pp. 1927. Useful information about early writers and the early history of Urdu.

9. *Dakān men Urdū*. By Naṣir ud Dīn Hāshimī. 332 pp. 1926. Like the last mentioned.

10. *Urdū ke Asālib i Bayān*. By Gulām Muḥiyyud Dīn Qādrī. 204 pp. 1927. A clever book on selected prose writers and their style; does not mention their works.

11. *Arbāb i Naṣr*. By Sayyid Muḥammad. 306 pp. 1927. On the early Urdu translators connected with Fort William College, Calcutta.

12. *Panjāb men Urdū*. By Mahmūd Shīrānī. 327 pp. 1928. Much interesting material. Claims a high place for the Panjāb in the development of Urdu from early times to the present day.

13. *Shī'r o Shā'irī*. By Alṭāf Ḥusain Hālī. 197 pp. 1896. Monograph on Urdu poetic style and various kinds of poetry.

14. *Hamārī Shā'irī*. By Mas'ūd Ḥasan Rizvī. 132 pp. 1928. Sketchy essays in defence of Urdu poetry.

15. *Tanqīdī Miqālāt*. By author of No. 10. Essays in criticism with illustrative critiques.

16. *Urdū Shahpāre*. By author of No. 10. 365 pp. 1929. Urdu literature to the time of Valī; copious, well chosen extracts; a valuable book.

17. *Dunyā e Afsāna*. By 'Abd ul Qādir Sarvarī. 215 pp. 1927.

ENGLISH AND FRENCH BOOKS

18. *Histoire de la Littérature Hindouie et Hindoustanie*. By Garcin de Tassy. 3 vols., 1,840 pp. 1870. Founded on Persian and Urdu anthologies; in alphabetic order; deals with Urdu and Hindi writers and shows amazing industry for one who had never been in India.

19. *History of Urdu Literature*. By Rām Bābū Saksena.

385 pp. 1927. A good but discursive account; very useful to those who cannot read Urdu.

20. *Influence of English Literature on Urdu Literature*. By 'Abd ul Latīf. 146 pp. 1924. Brightly written from the new standpoint; a good deal of information.

21. *Catalogue of Hindustani MSS. in the Library of the India Office*. By James Fuller Blumhardt. 183 pp. 1926. Many useful biographical details.

22. *Hindustani Literature*; in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (9th Edition, Vol. XI, pp. 843 ff.). By Sir C. J. Lyall. A brief account of Hindi and Urdu literature.