

not only certain that the Bhārata legend must have been current in his time (c. 400 B.C.), but most probable that it existed already in poetical form, as undoubtedly it did at the time of Patañjali, the author of the "great commentary" on Pāṇini (c. 150 B.C.). The great epic is also mentioned, both as *Bhārata* and *Mahābhārata*, in the *Gṛhya-sūtra* of Āśvalāyana, whom Lassen supposes to have lived about 350 B.C. Nevertheless it must remain uncertain whether the poem was then already in the form in which we now have it, at least as far as the leading story and perhaps some of the episodes are concerned, a large portion of the episodical matter being clearly of later origin. It cannot, however, be doubted, for many reasons, that long before that time heroic song had been diligently cultivated in India at the courts of princes and among Kshatriyas, the knightly order, generally. In the *Mahābhārata* itself the transmission of epic legend is in some way connected with the Sūtas, a social class which, in the caste-system, is defined as resulting from the union of Kshatriya men with Brāhmaṇa women, and which supplied the office of charioteers and heralds, as well as (along with the Māgadhas) that of professional minstrels. Be this as it may, there is reason to believe that, as Hellas had her *doidoi* who sang the *κλέα ἄνδρῶν*, and Iceland her skalds who recited favourite sagas, so India had from olden times her professional bards, who delighted to sing the praises of kings and inspire the knights with warlike feelings. But if in this way a stock of heroic poetry had gradually accumulated which reflected an earlier state of society and manners, we can well understand why, after the Brāhmanical order of things had been definitely established, the priests should have deemed it desirable to subject these traditional memorials of Kshatriya chivalry and prestige to their own censorship, and adapt them to their own canons of religious and civil law. Such a revision would doubtless require considerable skill and tact; and if in the present version of the work much remains that seems contrary to the Brāhmanical code and pretensions—e.g., the polyandric union of Draupadi and the Pāṇdu princes—the reason probably is that such legendary, or it may be historical, events were too firmly rooted in the minds of the people to be tampered with; and all the clerical revisers could do was to explain them away as best they could. Thus the special point alluded to was represented as an act of duty and filial obedience, in this way, that, when Arjuna brings home his fair prize, and announces it to his mother, she, before seeing what it is, bids him share it with his brothers. Nay, it has even been suggested, with some plausibility, that the Brāhmanical editors have completely changed the traditional relations of the leading characters of the story. For, although the Pāṇdavas and their cousin Kṛishṇa are constantly extolled as models of virtue and goodness, while the Kauravas and their friend Karṇa—a son of the sun-god, born by Kuntī before her marriage with Pāṇdu, and brought up secretly as the son of a Sūta—are decried as monsters of depravity, these estimates of the heroes' characters are not unfrequently belied by their actions,—especially the honest Karṇa and the brave Duryodhana contrasting not unfavourably with the wily Kṛishṇa and the cautious and somewhat effeminate Yudhisṭhira. These considerations, coupled with certain peculiarities on the part of the Kauravas, suggestive of an original connexion of the latter with Buddhist institutions, have led Dr Holtzmann to devise an ingenious theory, viz., that the traditional stock of legends was first worked up into its present shape by some Buddhist poet, and that this version, showing a decided predilection for the Kuru party, as the representatives of Buddhist principles, was afterwards revised in a contrary sense, at the time of the

Brāhmanical reaction, by votaries of Vishṇu, when the Buddhist features were generally modified into Śaivite tendencies, and prominence was given to the divine nature of Kṛishṇa, as an incarnation of Vishṇu. The chief objection to this theory probably is that it would seem to make such portions as the *Bhagavad-gītā* ("song of the holy one")—the famous theosophic episode, in which Kṛishṇa, in lofty and highly poetical language, expounds the doctrine of faith (bhakti) and claims adoration as the incarnation of the supreme spirit—even more modern than many scholars may be inclined to admit as at all necessary, considering that at the time of Patañjali's *Mahābhāshya* the Kṛishṇa worship, as was shown by Prof. Bhandarkar, had already attained some degree of development. Of the purely legendary matter incorporated with the leading story not a little, doubtless, is at least as old as the latter itself. Some of these episodes—especially the well-known story of Nala and Damayantī, and the touching legend of Sāvitrī—form themselves little epic gems, of which any nation might be proud. There can be no doubt, however, that this great storehouse of legendary lore has received considerable additions down to comparatively recent times, and that, while its main portion is considerably older, it also contains no small amount of matter which is decidedly more modern than the *Rāmāyana*.

As regards the leading narrative of the *Rāmāyana*, while it is generally supposed that the chief object which the poet had in view was to depict the spread of Aryan civilization towards the south, Mr T. Wheeler has tried to show that the demons of Lankā against whom Rāma's expedition is directed are intended for the Buddhists of Ceylon. Prof. Weber, moreover, from a comparison of Rāma's story with cognate Buddhist legends in which the expedition to Lankā is not even referred to, has endeavoured to prove that this feature, having been added by Vālmiki to the original legend, was probably derived by him from some general acquaintance with the Trojan cycle of legends, the composition of the poem itself being placed by the same scholar somewhere about the beginning of the Christian era. Though, in the absence of positive proof, this theory, however ably supported, can scarcely be assented to, it will hardly be possible to put the date of the work farther back than about a century before our era; while the loose connexion of certain passages in which the divine character of Rāma, as an avatār of Vishṇu, is especially accentuated, raises a strong suspicion of this feature of Rāma's nature having been introduced at a later time.

A remarkable feature of this poem is the great variation of its text in different parts of the country, amounting in fact to several distinct recensions. The so-called Gauḍa recension, current in Bengal, which differs most of all, has been edited, with an Italian translation, by G. Gorresio; while the version prevalent in western India, and published at Bombay, has been made the basis for a beautiful poetical translation by Mr R. Griffith. This diversity has never been explained in a quite satisfactory way; but it was probably due to the very popularity and wide oral diffusion of the poem. Yet another version of the same story, with, however, many important variations of details, forms an episode of the *Mahābhārata*, the relation of which to Vālmiki's work is still a matter of uncertainty. To characterize the Indian epics in a single word:—though often disfigured by grotesque fancies and wild exaggerations, they are yet noble works, abounding in passages of remarkable descriptive power, intense pathos, and high poetic grace and beauty; and, while, as works of art, they are far inferior to the Greek epics, in some respects they appeal far more strongly to the romantic

mind of Europe, namely, by their loving appreciation of natural beauty, their exquisite delineation of womanly love and devotion, and their tender sentiment of mercy and forgiveness.

2. *Purānas and Tantras*.—The *Purānas* are partly legendary partly speculative histories of the universe, compiled for the purpose of promoting some special, locally prevalent form of Brāhmanical belief. They are sometimes styled a fifth Veda, and may indeed in a certain sense be looked upon as the scriptures of Brāhmanical India. The term *purāna*, signifying "old," applied originally to prehistoric, especially cosmogonic, legends, and then to collections of ancient traditions generally. The existing works of this class, though recognizing the Brāhmanical doctrine of the Trimūrti, or triple manifestation of the deity (in its creative, preservative, and destructive activity), are all of a sectarian tendency, being intended to establish, on quasi-historic grounds, the claims of some special god, or holy place, on the devotion of the people. For this purpose the compilers have pressed into their service a mass of extraneous didactic matter on all manner of subjects, whereby these works have become a kind of popular encyclopædies of useful knowledge. It is evident, however, from a comparatively early definition given of the typical *Purāna*, as well as from numerous coincidences of the existing works, that they are based on, or enlarged from, older works of this kind, more limited in their scope, and probably of a more decidedly tritheistic tendency of belief. Thus none of the *Purānas*, as now extant, is probably much above a thousand years old, though a considerable proportion of their materials is doubtless much older, and may perhaps in part go back to several centuries before our era.

In legendary matter the *Purānas* have a good deal in common with the epics, especially the *Mahābhārata*.—The compilers or revisers of both classes of works having evidently drawn their materials from the same fluctuating mass of popular traditions. They are almost entirely composed in epic couplets, and indeed in much the same easy flowing style as the epic poems, to which they are, however, greatly inferior in poetic value.

According to the traditional classification of these works, there are said to be eighteen (*mahā*, or great) *Purānas*, and as many *Upa-purānas*, or subordinate *Purānas*. The former are by some authorities divided into three groups of six, according as one or other of the three primary qualities of external existence—goodness, darkness (ignorance), and passion—is supposed to prevail in them, viz., the *Vishṇu*, *Nārada*, *Bhāgavata*, *Garuḍa*, *Padma*, *Varāha*, *Matsya*, *Kārna*, *Linga*, *Siva*, *Skānda*, *Agni*,—*Brahmāṇḍa*, *Brahma-vairavata*, *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Bhaviṣya*, *Vāmana*, and *Brahma-Purānas*. In accordance with the nature of the several forms of the Trimūrti, the first two groups chiefly devote themselves to the commendation of Vishṇu and Śiva respectively, whilst the third group, which would properly belong to Brahman, has been largely appropriated for the promotion of the claims of other deities, viz., Vishṇu in his sensuous form of Kṛishṇa, Devī, Gaṇeśa, and Śūrya. As Prof. Banerjea has shown in his preface to the *Mārkaṇḍeya*, this seems to have been chiefly effected by later additions and interpolations. The insufficiency of the above classification, however, appears from the fact that it omits the *Vāyu-purāna*, probably one of the oldest of all, though some MSS. substitute it for one or other name of the second group. The eighteen principal *Purānas* are said to consist of together 400,000 couplets. In Northern India the Vaishnava *Purānas*, especially the *Bhāgavata* and *Vishṇu*,<sup>1</sup> are by far the most popular. The *Bhāgavata* was formerly supposed to have been composed by Vopadeva, the grammarian, who lived in the 13th century. It has, however, been shown<sup>2</sup> that what he wrote was a synopsis of the *Purāna*,

<sup>1</sup> There are several Indian editions of these two works. The *Bhāgavata* has been partly printed, in an *édition de luxe*, at Paris, in 3 vols., by E. Burnouf, and a fourth by M. Hauvette-Besnault. Of the *Vishṇu*, there is a translation by H. H. Wilson, 2d ed. enriched with valuable notes by F. Hall. Several other *Purānas* have been printed in India; the *Mārkaṇḍeya* and *Agni Purānas*, in the *Bibl. Ind.*, by Prof. Banerjea and Rājendralāla Mitra respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Rājendralāla Mitra, *Notices of Sansk. MSS.*, ii. 47.

and that the latter is already quoted in a work by Ballāla Sena of Bengal, in the 11th century.

From the little we know regarding the *Upa-purānas*, their character does not seem to differ very much from that of the principal *Purānas*. One of them, the *Brahmāṇḍa-purāna*, contains, as an episode, the well-known *Adhyātma-Rāmāyana*, a kind of spiritualized version of Vālmiki's poem. Besides these two classes of works there is a large number of so-called *Sthala-purānas*, or chronicles recounting the history and merits of some holy "place" or shrine, where their recitation usually forms an important part of the daily service. Of much the same nature are the numerous *Māhātmyas* (literally "relating to the great spirit"), which usually profess to be sections of one or other *Purāna*. Thus the *Devī-māhātmya*, which celebrates the victories of the great goddess Durgā over the Asuras, and is daily read at the temples of that deity, forms a section, though doubtless an interpolated one, of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāna*.

The *Tantras*, which have to be considered as a later development of the sectarian *Purānas*, are the sacred writings of the numerous *Saktas*, or worshippers of the female energy (*śakti*) of some god, especially the wife of Śiva, in one of her many forms (Pārvatī, Devī, Kālī, Bhavānī, Durgā, &c.). This worship of a female representation of the divine power appears already in some of the *Purānas*; but in the *Tantras* it assumes quite a peculiar character, being largely intermixed with magic performances and mystic rites, partly, it would seem, of a grossly immoral nature. This class of writings does not appear to have been in existence at the time of Amarasiṃha (6th century); but they are mentioned in some of the *Purānas*. They are usually in the form of a dialogue between Śiva and his wife. Their number is very large; but they still await a critical examination at the hands of western scholars. Among the best known may be mentioned the *Rudra yāmala*, *Kulārṇava*, *Syāmā-rahasya*, and *Kālikā-tantra*.

3. *Modern Epics*.—A new class of epic poems begin to make their appearance about the 5th or 6th century of our era, during a period of renewed literary activity which has been fitly called<sup>3</sup> the Renaissance of Indian literature. These works differ widely in character from those that had preceded them. The great national epics, composed though they were in a language different from the ordinary vernaculars, had at least been drawn from the living stream of popular traditions, and were doubtless readily understood and enjoyed by the majority of the people. The later productions, on the other hand, are of a decidedly artificial character, and must necessarily have been beyond the reach of any but the highly cultivated. They are, on the whole, singularly deficient in incident and invention; their subject matter being almost entirely derived from the old epics. Nevertheless, these works are by no means devoid of merit and interest; and a number of them display considerable descriptive power and a wealth of genuine poetic sentiment, though unfortunately often clothed in language that deprives it of half its value. The simple heroic couplet has mostly been discarded for various more or less elaborate metres; and in accordance with this change of form the diction becomes gradually more complicated,—a growing taste for unwieldy compounds, a jingling kind of alliteration, or rather agnomination, and an abuse of similes marking the increasing artificiality of these productions.

The generic appellation of such works is *kāvya*, which, meaning "poem," or the work of an individual poet (*kavi*), is already applied to the *Rāmāyana*. Six poems of this kind are singled out by native rhetoricians as standard works, under the title of *Mahā-kāvya*, or great poems. Two of these are ascribed to the famous dramatist Kālidāsa, the most prominent figure of the Indian Renaissance, and truly a master of the poetic art. He is said to have been one of the nine literary "gems" at the court of Vikramāditya, now generally identified with King Vikramāditya Harsha of Ujjayini (Ujjain or Oujain), who reigned about the middle of the 6th century, and seems to have originated the Vikramāditya era, reckoned from 56 B.C. Of the poets whose works have come down

<sup>3</sup> M. Müller, *India: What can it teach us?* note G.

to us Kālidāsa appears to be one of the earliest; but there can be little doubt that he was preceded in this as in other departments of poetic composition by many lesser lights, eclipsed by the sun of his fame, and forgotten. Of the six "great poems" named below the first two are those attributed to Kālidāsa. (1) The *Raghu-vamśa*,<sup>1</sup> or "race of Raghu," celebrates the ancestry and deeds of Rāma. The work, consisting of nineteen cantos, is manifestly incomplete; but hitherto no copy has been discovered of the six additional cantos which are supposed to have completed it. (2) The *Kumāra-sambhava*<sup>2</sup> or "the birth of (the war-god) Kumāra" (or Skanda), the son of Śiva and Pārvatī, consists of eight cantos, the last of which has only recently been made public, being usually omitted in the MSS., probably on account of its amorous character rendering it unsuitable for educational purposes, for which the works of Kālidāsa are extensively used in India. Nine additional cantos, which were published at the same time, have been proved to be spurious. Another poem of this class, the *Nalodaya*,<sup>3</sup> or "rise of Nala,"—describing the restoration of that king, after having lost his kingdom through gambling,—is wrongly ascribed to Kālidāsa, being far inferior to the other works, and of a much more artificial character. (3) The *Kirātārjunīya*,<sup>4</sup> or combat between the Pāṇḍava prince Arjuna and the god Śiva, in the guise of a Kirāta or wild mountaineer, is a poem in eighteen cantos, by Bhāravi, probably a contemporary of Kālidāsa, being mentioned together with him in an inscription dated 634 A.D. (4) The *Sisupāla-badha*, or slaying of Sisupāla, who, being a prince of Chedi, reviled Krishna, who had carried off his intended wife, and was killed by him at the inauguration sacrifice of Yudhisṭhira, is a poem consisting of twenty cantos, attributed to Māgha,<sup>5</sup> whence it is also called *Māghakāvya*. (5) The *Rāvāna-badha*, or "slaying of Rāvāna," more commonly called *Bhāṭīkāvya*, to distinguish it from other poems (especially one by Pravārasena), likewise bearing the former title, was composed for the practical purpose of illustrating the less common grammatical forms and the figures of rhetoric and poetry. In its closing couplet it professes to have been written at Vallabhi, under Śrīdharasena, but, several princes of that name being mentioned in inscriptions as having ruled there in the 6th and 7th centuries, its exact date is still uncertain. Bhāṭī, apparently the author's name, is usually identified with the well-known grammarian Bhārtṛihari, whose death Prof. M. Müller, from a Chinese statement, fixes at 650 A.D., while others make him Bhārtṛihari's son. (6) The *Naishadhīya*, or *Naishadha-charita*, the life of Nala, king of Nishadha, is ascribed to Śrī-Harsha (son of Hira), who is supposed to have lived in the latter part of the 12th century. A small portion of the simple and noble episode of the *Mahābhārata* is here retold in highly elaborate and polished stanzas, and with a degree of lasciviousness which (unless it be chiefly due to the poet's exuberance of fancy) gives a truly appalling picture of social corruption. Another highly esteemed poem, the *Rāghava-pāṇḍarīya*, composed by Kavirāja ("king of poets"),—whose date is uncertain, though some scholars place him later than the 10th century,—is characteristic of the trifling uses to which the poet's art was put. The well-turned stanzas are so ambiguously worded that the poem may be interpreted as relating to the leading story of either the *Rāmāyana* or the *Mahābhārata*.

A still more modern popular development of these artificial poems are the numerous so-called *Champās*, being compositions of mixed verse and prose. As specimens of such works may be mentioned the *Champā-bhārata* in twelve cantos, by Ananta Bhatta, and the *Champā-rāmāyana* or *Bhoja-champā*, in five books, by Bhojarāja (or Vidarbharāja) Paṇḍita, being popular abstracts of the two great epics.

Very similar in character to the artificial epics are the panegyrics, composed by court poets in honour of their patrons. Such productions were probably very numerous; but only two of any special interest are hitherto known, viz., the *Śrī-Harsha-charita*, composed in ornate prose, by Bāna, in honour of Śilāditya Harshavardhana (c. 610-650 A.D.) of Kānyakubja (Kanauj), and the *Vikramānka-charita*,<sup>6</sup> written by the Kashmir poet Bilhana, about 1085, in honour of his patron, the Chālukya king Vikramāditya of Kalyāna, regarding the history of whose dynasty the work supplies much valuable information. In this place may also be mentioned, as composed in accordance with the Hindu poetic canon, the *Rājataranginī*,<sup>7</sup> or chronicle of the kings of Kashmir, the only important

<sup>1</sup> Edited, with a Latin transl., by F. Stenzler; also text, and commentary, by S. P. Pandit.

<sup>2</sup> Text and Latin transl. published by F. Stenzler; an English transl. by R. T. H. Griffith.

<sup>3</sup> Text, with comm. and Latin transl., edited by F. Benary; Engl. transl., in verse, by Dr Taylor.

<sup>4</sup> Editions of this and the three following poems have been published in India.

<sup>5</sup> Bhāo Dīji, in his paper on Kālidāsa, calls Māgha "a contemporary of the Bhoja of the 11th century." <sup>6</sup> Edited by G. Bühler.

<sup>7</sup> Published at Calcutta; also, with a French transl., by A. Troyer.

historical work in the Sanskrit language, though even here considerable allowance has to be made for poetic licence and fancy. The work was composed by the Kashmirian poet Kalhana, about 1150, and was afterwards continued by three successive supplements, bringing down the history of Kashmir to the time of the emperor Akbar. Unfortunately the two existing editions were prepared from very imperfect MS. materials; but Dr Bühler's discovery of new MSS., as well as of some of the works on which Kalhana's poem is based, ought to enable the native scholar (Prof. Bhandarkar) who has undertaken a new edition to put the text in a more satisfactory condition.

4. *The Drama.*—The early history of the Indian drama is enveloped in obscurity. The Hindus themselves ascribe the origin of dramatic representation to the sage Bharata, who is fabled to have lived in remote antiquity, and to have received this science directly from the god Brahman, by whom it was extracted from the Veda. The term *bharata*—(1) *i.e.*, one who is kept, or one who sustains (a part)—also signifies "an actor"; but it is doubtful which of the two is the earlier,—the appellative use of the word, or the notion of an old teacher of the dramatic art bearing that name. On the other hand, there still exists an extensive work, in epic verse, on rhetoric and dramaturgy, entitled *Nāṭya-sāstra*, and ascribed to Bharata. But, though this is probably the oldest theoretic work on the subject that has come down to us, it can hardly be referred to an earlier period than several centuries after the Christian era. Not improbably, however, this work, which presupposes a fully developed scenic art, had an origin similar to that of some of the metrical law-books, which are generally supposed to be popular and improved editions of older śāstra-works. We know that such treatises existed at the time of Pāṇini, as he mentions two authors of *Nāṭya-sūtras*, or "rules for actors," viz., Śilālin and Kṛṣṇaśva. Now, the words *nāṭa* and *nāṭya*—as well as *nāṭaka*, the common term for "drama"—being derived from the root *naṭ* (*nart*) "to dance," seem to point to a pantomimic or choral origin of the dramatic art. It might appear doubtful, therefore, in the absence of any clearer definition in Pāṇini's grammar, whether the "actors' rules" he mentions did not refer to mere pantomimic performances. Fortunately, however, Patanjali, in his "great commentary," speaks of the actor as singing, and of people going "to hear the actor." Nay, he even mentions two subjects, taken from the cycle of Vishṇu legends—viz., the slaying of Kamsa (by Krishna) and the binding of Bali (by Vishṇu)—which were represented on the stage both by mimic action and declamation. Judging from these allusions, theatrical entertainments in those days seem to have been very much on a level with our old religious spectacles or mysteries, though there may already have been some simple kinds of secular plays which Patanjali had no occasion to mention. It is not, however, till some five or six centuries later that we meet with the first real dramas, which mark at the same time the very culminating point of Indian dramatic composition. In this, as in other departments of literature, the earlier works have had to make way for later and more perfect productions; and no trace now remains of the intermediate phases of development.

Here, however, the problem presents itself as to whether the existing dramatic literature has naturally grown out of such popular religious performances as are alluded to by Patanjali, or whether some foreign influence has intervened at some time or other and given a different direction to dramatic composition. The question has been argued both for and against the probability of Greek influence; but it must still be considered as *sub judice*. There are doubtless some curious points of resemblance between the Indian drama and the Modern Attic (and Roman) comedy, viz., the prologue, the occasional occurrence of a token of recognition, and a certain correspondence of characteristic stage figures (especially the

Vidūshaka, or jocular companion of the hero, presenting a certain analogy to the servus of the Roman stage, as does the Viṭa of some plays to the Roman parasite)—for which the assumption of some acquaintance with the Greek comedy on the part of the earlier Hindu writers would afford a ready explanation. On the other hand, the differences between the Indian and Greek plays are perhaps even greater than their coincidences, which, moreover, are scarcely close enough to warrant our calling in question the originality of the Hindus in this respect. Certain, however, it is that, if the Indian poets were indebted to Greek playwrights for the first impulse in dramatic composition, in the higher sense, they have known admirably how to adapt the Hellenic muse to the national genius, and have produced a dramatic literature worthy to be ranked side by side with both the classical and our own romantic drama. It is to the latter especially that the general character of the Indian play presents a striking resemblance, much more so than to the classical drama. The Hindu dramatist has little regard for the "unities" of the classical stage, though he is hardly ever guilty of extravagance in his disregard of them. The dialogue is invariably carried on in prose, plentifully interspersed with those neatly turned lyrical stanzas in which the Indian poet delights to depict some natural scene, or some temporary physical or mental condition. The most striking feature of the Hindu play, however, is the mixed nature of its language. While the hero and leading male characters speak Sanskrit, women and inferior male characters use various Prakṛit dialects. As regards these dialectic varieties, it can hardly be doubted that at the time when they were first employed in this way they were local vernacular dialects; but in the course of the development of the scenic art they became permanently fixed for special dramatic purposes, just as the Sanskrit had, long before that time, become fixed for general literary purposes. Thus it would happen that these Prakṛit dialects, having once become stationary, soon diverged from the spoken vernaculars, until the difference between them was as great as between the Sanskrit and the Prakṛits. As regards the general character of the dramatic Prakṛits, they are somewhat more removed from the Sanskrit type than the Pāli, the language of the Buddhist canon, which again is in a rather more advanced state than the language of the Aśoka inscriptions (c. 250 B.C.). And, as the Buddhist sacred books were committed to writing about 80 B.C., the state of their language is attested for that period at latest; while the grammatical fixation of the scenic Prakṛits has probably to be referred to the early centuries of our era.

The existing dramatic literature is not very extensive. The number of plays of all kinds of any literary value will scarcely amount to fifty. The reason for this paucity of dramatic productions doubtless is that they appealed to the tastes of only a limited class of highly cultivated persons, and were in consequence but seldom acted. As regards the theatrical entertainments of the common people, their standard seems never to have risen much above the level of the religious spectacles mentioned by Patanjali. Such at least is evidently the case as regards the modern Bengali *ġātras*—described by Wilson as exhibitions of some incidents in the youthful life of Krishna, maintained in extempore dialogue, interspersed with popular songs—as well as the similar *rāsas* of the western provinces, and the rough and ready performances of the *thans*, or professional buffoons. Of the religious drama Sanskrit literature offers but one example, viz., the famous *Gitagovindā*,<sup>1</sup> composed by Jayadeva in the 12th century. It is rather a mytho-lyrical poem, which, however, in the opinion of Lassen, may be considered as a modern and refined specimen of the early form of dramatic composition. The subject of the poem is as follows:—Krishna, while leading a cowherd's life in Vrīndāvana, is in love with Rādhā, the milkmaid, but has been faithless to her for a while. Presently, however, he returns to her

"whose image has all the while lingered in his breast," and after much earnest entreaty obtains her forgiveness. The emotions appropriate to these situations are expressed by the two lovers and a friend of Rādhā in melodious and passionate stanzas of great poetic beauty. Like the Song of Solomon, the *Gitagovindā*, moreover, is supposed by the Hindu commentators to admit of a mystic interpretation; for, "as Krishna, faithless for a time, discovers the vanity of all other loves, and returns with sorrow and longing to his own darling Rādhā, so the human soul, after a brief and frantic attachment to objects of sense, burns to return to the God from whence it came" (Griffith).

The *Mṛichhakatikā*,<sup>2</sup> or "earthen toy-cart," is by tradition placed at the head of the existing dramas; and a certain clumsiness of construction seems indeed to justify this distinction. According to several stanzas in the prologue, the play was composed by a king Śūdraka, who is there stated to have, through Śiva's favour, recovered his eyesight, and, after seeing his son as king, to have died at the ripe age of a hundred years and ten days. According to the same stanzas, the piece was enacted after the king's death; but it is probable that they were added for a subsequent performance. In Bāna's novel *Kādambā* (c. 630 A.D.), a king Śūdraka, probably the same, is represented as having resided at Bīḍisā (Bhilsa)—some 130 miles east of Ujjayini (Ujjain), where the scene of the play is laid. Chārudatta, a Brāhman merchant, reduced to poverty, and Vasantasenā, an accomplished courtesan, meet and fall in love with each other. This forms the main story, which is interwoven with a political underplot, resulting in a change of dynasty. The connexion between the two plots is effected by means of the king's rascally brother-in-law, who pursues Vasantasenā with his addresses, as well as by the part of the rebellious cowherd Āryaka, who, having escaped from prison, finds shelter in the hero's house. The wicked prince, on being rejected, strangles Vasantasenā, and accuses Chārudatta of having murdered her; but, just as the latter is about to be executed, his lady love appears again on the scene. Meanwhile Āryaka has succeeded in deposing the king, and, having himself mounted the throne of Ujjain, he raises Vasantasenā to the position of an honest woman, to enable her to become the wife of Chārudatta. The play is one of the longest, consisting of not less than ten acts, some of which, however, are very short. The interest of the action is, on the whole, well sustained; and, altogether, the piece presents a vivid picture of the social manners of the time.

In Kālidāsa (c. 550 A.D.) the dramatic art attained its highest point of perfection. From this accomplished poet we have three well-constructed plays, abounding in stanzas of exquisite tenderness and fine descriptive passages, viz., the two well-known mytho-pastoral dramas, *Sakuntalā* in seven and *Vikramorvaśī* in five acts, and a piece of court intrigue, distinctly inferior to the other two, entitled *Mālavikāgnimitra*,<sup>4</sup> in five acts. King Agnimitra, who has two wives, falls in love with Mālavikā, maid to the first queen. His wives endeavour to frustrate their affection for each other, but in the end Mālavikā turns out to be a princess by birth, and is accepted by the queens as their sister.

In the prologue to this play, Kālidāsa mentions Bhāsa and Saumilla as his predecessors in dramatic composition. Of the former poet some six or seven stanzas have been gathered from anthologies by Prof. Aufrecht, who has also brought to light one fine stanza ascribed to Rāmila and Saumilla.

Śrī Harsha-deva—whom Dr F. Hall has proved to be identical with King Śilāditya Harshavardhana of Kānyakubja (Kanauj), who reigned in the first half of the 7th century—has three plays attributed to him. Most likely, however, he did not write any of them himself, but they were only dedicated to him as the patron of their authors. Such at least seems to have been the case as regards the *Ratnāvalī*,<sup>5</sup> which was probably composed by Bāna. It is a graceful drama of genteel domestic manners, in four acts, of no very great originality, the author having been largely indebted to Kālidāsa's plays. Ratnāvalī, a Ceylon princess, is sent by her father to the court of King Vatsa to become his second wife. She suffers shipwreck, but is rescued and received into Vatsa's palace as one of queen Vasavadattā's attendants. The king falls in love

<sup>1</sup> Edited by F. Stenzler, translated by H. H. Wilson; German by O. Böhtlingk and L. Fritze; French by P. Regnaud.

<sup>2</sup> Both these plays are known in different recensions in different parts of India. The Bengali recension of the *Sakuntalā* was translated by Sir W. Jones, and into French, with the text, by Chézy, and again edited critically by E. Pischel, who has also advocated its greater antiquity. Editions and translations of the western (Devanāgarī) recension have been published by O. Böhtlingk and Mon. Williams. The *Vikramorvaśī* has been edited critically by S. P. Pandit, and the southern text by R. Pischel. It has been translated by H. H. Wilson and E. B. Cowell.

<sup>3</sup> Edited critically by S. P. Pandit; transl. by C. H. Tawney; and previously into German by A. Weber.

<sup>4</sup> Edited by Tārānātha Tarkavāchaspatis, and by C. Cappeller; Böhtlingk's *Sanskrit-Chrestomathie*; translated by H. H. Wilson.

<sup>5</sup> Ed., with a Latin transl., by C. Lassen; Engl. transl. by E. Arnold.

with her, and the queen tries to keep them apart from each other; but, on learning the maiden's origin, she becomes reconciled, and recognizes her as a "sister." According to H. H. Wilson, "the manners depicted are not influenced by lofty principle or profound reflexion, but they are mild, affectionate, and elegant." It may be doubted whether the harams of other eastern nations, either in ancient or modern times, would afford materials for as favourable a delineation. Very similar in construction, but distinctly inferior, is the *Priyadarśikā*, in four acts, lately published in India, having for its plot another amour of the same king. The scene of the third play, the *Nāgānanda*,<sup>1</sup> or "joy of the serpents" (in five acts), on the other hand, is laid in semi-divine regions. Jimūtavāhana, a prince of the Vidyādhara, imbued with Buddhist principles, weds Malayavati, daughter of the king of the Siddhas, a votary of Gauri (Siva's wife). But, learning that Garuḍa, the mythic bird, is in the habit of consuming one snake daily, he resolves to offer himself to the bird as a victim, and finally succeeds in converting Garuḍa to the principle of ahimsā, or abstinence from doing injury to living beings; but he himself is about to succumb from the wounds he has received, when, through the timely intervention of the goddess Gauri, he is restored to his former condition. The piece seems to have been intended as a compromise between Brāhmanical (Śaiva) and Buddhist doctrines, being thus in keeping with the religious views of King Harsha, who, as we know from Hwen-tsang, favoured Buddhism, but was very tolerant to Brāhman. It begins with a benedictory stanza to Buddha, and concludes with one to Gauri. The author is generally believed to have been a Buddhist, but it is more likely that he was a Śaiva Brāhman, possibly Bāna himself. Nay, one might almost feel inclined to take the hero's self-sacrifice in favour of a Nāga as a travesty of Buddhist principles.

Bhava-  
bhūti.

Bhavabhūti, surnamed Sri-kantha, "whose throat is beauty (eloquence)," was a native of Padmapura in the Vidarbha country (the Berars), being the son of the Brāhman Nīlakantha, and his wife Jātīkarnī. He is said to have passed his literary life at the court of Yaśovarman of Kanauj, who is supposed to have reigned in the latter part of the 7th and beginning of the 8th century. Bhavabhūti was the author of three plays, two of which, the *Mahāvīracharita*<sup>2</sup> ("life of the great hero") and the *Uttarāramacharita*<sup>3</sup> ("later life of Rāma"), in seven acts each, form together a dramatized version of the story of the *Rāmāyana*. The third, the *Mālātī-mādhava*,<sup>4</sup> is a domestic drama in ten acts, representing the fortunes of Mādhava and Mālātī, the son and daughter of two ministers of neighbouring kings, who from childhood have been destined for each other, but, by the resolution of the maiden's royal master to marry her to an old and ugly favourite of his, are for a while threatened with permanent separation. The action of the play is full of life, and abounds in stirring, though sometimes improbable, incidents. The poet is considered by native pundits to be not only not inferior to Kālidāsa, but even to have surpassed him in his *Uttarāramacharita*. But, though he ranks deservedly high as a lyric poet, he is far inferior to Kālidāsa as a dramatic artist. Whilst the latter delights in depicting the gentler feelings and tender emotions of the human heart and the peaceful scenes of rural life, the younger poet finds a peculiar attraction in the sterner and more imposing aspects of nature and the human character. Bhavabhūti's language, though polished and felicitous, is elaborate and artificial compared with that of Kālidāsa, and his genius is sorely shackled by a slavish adherence to the arbitrary rules of dramatic theorists.

Bhāṭṭa  
Nārā-  
yaṇa

Bhāṭṭa Nārāyaṇa, surnamed Mrigarāja or Siṃha, "the lion," the author of the *Vēṇīśambhāra*<sup>5</sup> ("the seizing by the braid of hair"), is a poet of uncertain date. Tradition makes him one of the five Kanauj Brāhmins whom King Ādisūra of Bengal, desirous of establishing the pure Vaiṣṇava doctrine, invited to his court, and from whom the modern Bengal Brāhmins are supposed to be descended. The date of that event, however, is itself doubtful; while a modern genealogical work fixes it at 1077. Lassen refers it to the beginning of the 7th century and Grill to the latter part of the 6th. If it could be proved that the poet is identical with the Nārāyaṇa whom Bāna (c. 630) mentions as being his friend, the question would be settled in favour of the earlier calculations. The play, consisting of six acts, is founded on the story of the *Mahābhārata*, and takes its title from the insult offered to Draupadī by one of the Kaurava princes, who, when she had been lost at dice by Yudhishtira, dragged her by the hair into the assembly. The piece is composed in a style similar to that of Bhavabhūti's plays, though less polished, and inferior to them in dramatic construction and poetic merit.

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Mādhava Chandra Ghosha, and translated by P. Boyd, with a preface by E. B. Cowell.

<sup>2</sup> Edited by F. H. Trithen (1848), and twice at Calcutta; translated by J. Pickford.

<sup>3</sup> Edited at Calcutta; transl. by H. H. Wilson and C. H. Tawney.

<sup>4</sup> Edited by R. C. Bhandarkar, 1876; translated by H. H. Wilson.

<sup>5</sup> Edited by J. Grill, 1871.

The *Hanuman-nāṭaka* is a dramatized version of the story of Rāma, interspersed with numerous purely descriptive poetic passages. It consists of fourteen acts, and on account of its length is also called the *Mahā-nāṭaka*, or great drama. Tradition relates that it was composed by Hanumān, the monkey general, and inscribed on rocks; but, Vālmiki, the author of the *Rāmāyana*, being afraid lest it might throw his own poem into the shade, Hanumān allowed him to cast his verses into the sea. These fragments were ultimately picked up by a merchant, and brought to King Bhoja, who directed the poet Dāmodara Miśra to put them together, and fill up the lacunæ; whence the present composition originated. Whatever particle of truth there may be in this story, the "great drama" seems certainly to be the production of different hands. "The language," as Wilson remarks, "is in general very harmonious, but the work is after all a most disjointed and non-descript composition, and the patchwork is very glaringly and clumsily put together." It is nevertheless a work of some interest, as compositions of mixed dramatic and declamatory passages of this kind may have been common in the early stages of the dramatic art. The connexion of the poet with King Bhoja, also confirmed by the *Bhoja-prabandha*, would bring the composition, or final redaction, down to about the 10th or 11th century. There are, however, two different recensions of the work, a shorter one commented upon by Mohanadāsa, and a longer one arranged by Madhusūdana. A Dāmodara Gupta is mentioned as having lived under Jayāpīḍa of Kashmir (755-86); but this can scarcely be the same author.

The *Mudrārākshasa*,<sup>6</sup> or "Rākshasa (the minister) with the signet," is a drama of political intrigue, in seven acts, partly based on historical events, the plot turning on the reconciliation of Rākshasa, the minister of the murdered king Nanda, with the hostile party, consisting of prince Chandragupta (the Greek Sandrocottus, 315-291 B.C.), who succeeded Nanda, and his minister Chānaka. The plot is developed with considerable dramatic skill, in vigorous, if not particularly elegant, language. The play was composed by Viśākhadatta, prior, at any rate, to the 11th century, but perhaps as early as the 7th or 8th century, as Buddhism is referred to in it in rather complimentary terms.

The *Prabodha-chandrodaya*,<sup>7</sup> or "the moon-rise of intelligence," composed by Kṛishṇamiśra about the 12th century, is an allegorical play, in six acts, the *dramatis personæ* of which consist entirely of abstract ideas, divided into two conflicting hosts.

Of numerous inferior dramatic compositions we may mention as the best—the *Anarghya-vāghava*, by Mūrāri; the *Bāla-rāndāyana*, one of six plays (three of which are known) by Rājasekhara; and the *Prasanna-vāghava*, by Jayadeva, the author of the rhetorical treatise *Chandrālōka*. Abstracts of a number of other pieces are given in H. H. Wilson's *Hindu Theatre*, the standard work on this subject. The dramatic genius of the Hindus may be said to have exhausted itself about the 14th century.

5. *Lyrical, Descriptive, and Didactic Poetry.*—We have Lyric already alluded to the marked predilection of the mediaeval Indian poet for depicting in a single stanza some peculiar physical or mental situation. The profane lyrical poetry consists chiefly of such little poetic pictures, which form a prominent feature of dramatic compositions. Numerous poets and poetesses are only known to us through such detached stanzas, preserved in native anthologies or manuals of rhetoric. Thus the *Saduktikarṇāmrta*,<sup>8</sup> or "ear-ambrosia of good sayings," an anthology compiled by Sridhara Dāsa in 1205, contains verses by four hundred and forty-six different writers; while the *Sārngadhara-paddhati*, another anthology, of the 14th century, contains some 6000 verses culled from two hundred and sixty-four different writers and works. These verses are either of a purely descriptive or of an erotic character; or they have a didactic tendency, being intended to convey, in an attractive and easily remembered form, some moral truth or useful counsel. An excellent specimen of a longer poem, of a partly descriptive partly erotic character, is Kālidāsa's *Megha-dūta*,<sup>9</sup> or "cloud messenger," in which a banished Yaksha (demi-god) sends a love-message across India to his wife in the Himālaya, and describes, in verse-pictures, the various places and objects over which the messenger, a

<sup>6</sup> Edited (Bombay, 1884) by K. T. Telang, who discusses the date of the work in his preface.

<sup>7</sup> Translated by J. Taylor, 1810; by T. Goldstücker into German, 1842. Edited by H. Brockhaus, 1845.

<sup>8</sup> Rājendralāla Mitra, *Notices*, iii. p. 134.

<sup>9</sup> Text and transl., by H. H. Wilson; with vocabulary by S. Johnson.

cloud, will have to sail in his airy voyage. This little masterpiece has called forth a number of more or less successful imitations, such as Lakshmidāsa's *Suka-sandēsa*, or "parrot-message," lately edited by the mahārāja of Travancore. Another much admired descriptive poem by Kālidāsa is the *Ritu-sambhāra*,<sup>1</sup> or "collection of the seasons," in which the attractive features of the six seasons are successively set forth.

As regards religious lyrics, the fruit of sectarian fervour, a large collection of hymns and detached stanzas, extolling some special deity, might be made from Purānas and other works. Of independent productions of this kind only a few of the more important can be mentioned here. Sankarāchārya, the great Vedāntist, who probably lived in the 7th century, is credited with several devotional poems, especially the *Ananda-lahari*, or "wave of joy," a hymn of 103 stanzas, in praise of the goddess Pār- vati. The *Sārya-sataka*, or century of stanzas in praise of Śūrya, the sun, is ascribed to Mayūra, the contemporary (and, according to a tradition, the father-in-law) of Bāna (in the early part of the 7th century). The latter poet himself composed the *Chandrikāstotra*, a hymn of 102 stanzas, extolling Śiva's consort. The *Khandaprasasti*, a poem celebrating the ten avatāras of Viṣṇu, is ascribed to no other than Hanumān, the monkey general, himself. Jayadeva's beautiful poem *Gītāgovinda*, which, like most productions concerning Kṛishṇa, is of a very sensuous character, has already been referred to.

Didactic  
poetry.

The particular branch of didactic poetry in which India is especially rich is that of moral maxims, expressed in single stanzas or couplets, and forming the chief vehicle of the *Nīti-sāstra* or ethic science. Excellent collections of such aphorisms have been published,—in Sanskrit and German by Dr v. Böhtlingk, and in English by Dr J. Muir. Probably the oldest original collection of this kind is that ascribed to Chānaka, and entitled *Rājantīśa-muchhaya*, "collection on the conduct of kings"—traditionally connected with the Machiavellian minister of Chandragupta, but (in its present form) doubtless much later—of which there are several recensions, especially a shorter one of one hundred couplets, and a larger one of some three hundred. Another old collection is the *Kāmandakya-Nīṣāra*,<sup>2</sup> ascribed to Kāmandaki, who is said to have been the disciple of Chānaka. Under the name of Bhartṛihāri have been handed down three centuries of sententious couplets, one of which, the *nīti-sataka*, relates to ethics, whilst the other two, the *śringāra*- and *vairāgya-satakas*, consist of amatory and devotional verses respectively. The *Nīti-pradīpa*, or "lamp of conduct," consisting of sixteen stanzas, is ascribed to Vetālabhāṭṭa who is mentioned as one of nine gems at Vikramāditya's court (c. 550 A.D.). The *Amarā-sataka*, consisting of a hundred stanzas, ascribed to a King Amaru (sometimes wrongly to Sankara), and the *Chaurā-suratapanchāsikā*, by Bilhāna (11th century), are of an entirely erotic character.

6. *Fables and Narratives.*—For purposes of popular instruction stanzas of an ethical import were early worked up with existing prose fables and popular stories, probably in imitation of the Buddhist *jātakas*, or birth-stories. A collection of this kind, intended as a manual for the guidance of princes (*in usum delphini*), was translated into Pahlavi in the reign of the Persian king Chosru Nushirvan, 531-579 A.D.; but neither this translation nor the original is any longer extant. A Syriac translation, however, made from the Pahlavi in the same century, under the title of "Qualilag and Dimnag"—from the

<sup>1</sup> The first Sanskrit book published (by Sir W. Jones), 1792. Text and Latin transl. by P. v. Bohlen. Partly transl., in verse, by R. T. H. Griffith, *Specimens of Old Indian Poetry*.

<sup>2</sup> Edited by Rājendralāla Mitra, *Bibl. Ind.*

Sanskrit "Karataka and Damanaka," two jackals who play an important part as the lion's counsellors—has been discovered and published. The Sanskrit original which probably consisted of fourteen chapters, was afterwards recast,—the result being the existing *Panchatantra*,<sup>3</sup> or "five books" (or headings). A popular summary of this work, in four books, the *Hitopadēsa*,<sup>4</sup> or "Salutary counsel," is ascribed to the Brāhman Vishṇusarman. Other highly popular collections of stories and fairy tales, interspersed with moral maxims, are—the *Vetāla-panchaviṃśati* or "twenty-five (stories) of the Vetāla" (the original of the Baitāl Pachisi), ascribed either to Jambhala Datta, or to Sivadāsa (while Prof. Weber suggests that Vetāla-bhāṭṭa may have been the author), and at all events older than the 12th century, since Somadeva has used it; the *Suka-saptati*, or "seventy (stories related) by the parrot," the author and age of which are unknown; and the *Śimhāsana-dvātriṃśikā*, or "thirty-two (tales) of the throne," being laudatory stories regarding Vikramāditya, related by thirty-two statues, standing round the old throne of that famous monarch, to King Bhoja of Dhārā to discourage him from sitting down on it. This work is ascribed to Kshemankara, and was probably composed in the time of Bhoja (who died in 1053) from older stories in the Mahārāshtra dialect. The original text has, however, undergone many modifications, and is now known in several different recensions. Of about the same date are two great storehouses of fairy tales, composed entirely in śloka, viz., the *Vṛihat-kathā*, or "great story," by Kshemendra, also called Kshemankara, who wrote c. 1020-40, under King Ananta, and the *Kathā-sarit-sāgara*,<sup>5</sup> or "the ocean of the streams of story," composed by Somadeva, in the beginning of the 12th century, to console the mother of King Harshadeva on her son's death. Both these works are based on a work in the Paisāchi dialect, of the 6th century, viz., Guṇādhyā's *Vṛihat-kathā*.

In higher class prose works of fiction the Sanskrit literature is extremely poor; and the few productions of this kind of which it can boast are of a highly artificial and pedantic character. These include the *Dośakumāra-charita*,<sup>6</sup> or "the adventures of the ten princes," composed by Daṇḍin, about the 6th century, and the *Vāsavadattā*,<sup>7</sup> by Śubandhu, the contemporary of the poet Bāna (c. 620), who himself wrote the first part of a novel, the *Kādambarī*, afterwards completed by his son.

#### B. SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

I. *LAW (Dharma).*—Among the technical treatises of the later Vedic period, certain portions of the Kalpa-sūtras, or manuals of ceremonial, peculiar to particular schools, were referred to as the earliest attempts at a systematic treatment of law subjects. These are the *Dharma-sūtras*, or "rules of (religious) law," also called *Sāmāyāchārīka-sūtras*, or "rules of conventional usage (samayā-āchāra)." It is doubtful whether such treatises were at any time quite as numerous as the *Gṛhya-sūtras*, or rules of domestic or family rites, to which they are closely allied, and of which indeed they may originally have been an outgrowth. That the number of those actually extant is comparatively small is, however, chiefly due to the fact that this class of works was supplanted by another of a more popular kind, which covered the same ground. The *Dharmasūtras* consist chiefly of strings of terse rules, containing the essentials of the science, and intended to be committed to memory, and to be expounded orally by the teacher—thus forming, as it were, epitomes of class lectures. These rules are interspersed with couplets or "gāthās," in various metres, either composed by the author himself or quoted from elsewhere, which generally give the substance of the preceding rules. One can well understand why such couplets should gradually have become more popular, and

<sup>3</sup> Edited by Kosegarten, G. Bühler, and F. Kielhorn; transl. by Th. Benfey, E. Lancereau, L. Fritze.

<sup>4</sup> Edited and transl. by F. Johnson.

<sup>5</sup> Edited by H. Brockhaus; transl. by C. H. Tawney.

<sup>6</sup> Edited by H. H. Wilson; freely translated by P. W. Jacob.

<sup>7</sup> Edited by F. Hall, *Bibl. Ind.*

<sup>8</sup> Edited by Madana Mohana Sarman, and by P. Peterson.

