Chapter III

KĀLIDĀSA
We have so far tried as best as possible, and in brief, to indicate the proper perspective or setting of our study. We may not have arrived at any final conclusion regarding the fundamental principles involved in our present study; but, we believe, we have sufficiently indicated the significance of some of the most well-known ideas concerning the essential nature of poetry or drama, besides indicating the object and scope of our study in its proper light. And we believe we can now proceed to tackle our main subject i.e., a study of the poetry of Kālidāsa and Shakespeare with particular reference to their recognised masterpieces, the 'Sākuntala' and 'Hamlet'. In order to do this, we now propose, in the present chapter, to give a critical general survey of the works of Kālidāsa except his 'Sākuntala' which we shall take up in a separate chapter. Similarly, in the next chapter, we propose to give a critical general survey of the works of Shakespeare except his 'Hamlet' which will be dealt with separately. The critical general survey proposed in this chapter as well as in the next will be based on a critical appreciation of the various works of their authors with special reference to their themes, characters and emotional effects ('vastu', 'neti' and 'rasa' — the three principal factors of drama, and we think as also of 'kāvya' in general, according to the Sanskrit critics), besides a broad assessment of their poetic value. If it is true, as the great modern poet and critic Eliot believed, that in order to understand a poet fully we must study his entire works as a whole — in particular in the case of such a great poet as

1 In his 'Selected Essays'. 

P245
Shakespeare —, our proposed general survey becomes an essential step to such understanding. And this applies as much to Kālidāsa as to Shakespeare, particularly in view of the volume of the works of both as well as the greatness of their creations.

To begin with, Kālidāsa, who is the earlier poet by well over a thousand years and more, he being almost universally accepted as belonging to about 400 A.D., is the undisputed author of the following works: *the Mālavikāgnimitra, Vikramorvaśīya* and *Abhijñāna-Sakuntala,* the dramas; *the Kumāra-sambhāva* and *Raghuvaṁśa,* the epics; and *the Rūtasmhāra* and *Meghadūta,* the lyrics or so-called lyrics. So, we have three dramas, two epics and two lyrics of our poet and within these three types they were most probably composed in the order in which they have been mentioned above. Dowden, in his study of 'Shakespeare — His Mind and Art' tried to arrange the works of Shakespeare on a chronological basis and proceeded on his study of both the poet's personality and his art on that basis. This seems to be a natural and justified method of study of a poet and his works as a whole and may, therefore, be followed with profit. We do not, however, propose to insist on such a method of study expressly, though in our critical general survey of the various works of both Kālidāsa and Shakespeare an approach on the above line is implied. Various chronological lists have been prepared by scholars and critics on various grounds — as in the case of Shakespeare, though with less scope of variety and vehemence,
the number being limited in the present case — some even refering to the 'Kumārasambhava' or the 'Vikramorvaśīya' as the poet's ultimates and greatest work. Without entering into any detailed arguments, for ultimately the keen power of appreciation and imagination on the part of the 'sahādaya' is what counts most, we shall give the chronology of the poet's works which appears to us to be the most probable and proceed on that basis. It is to be noted that whatever alternative chronology one might accept, this will not materially affect the overall estimate of the value of the poet's work. Here is our order: the 'Rūtusāmbhāra', 'Mālavikāgnimitra', 'Kumārasambhava', 'Vikramorvaśīya', 'Meghadūta', 'Raghuvaṃśa' and 'Abhijñāna-Śakuntala'. We have no absolute proof in favour of this, but we think, justified by their mutual relations in point of style, diction, theme, treatment, etc. the works may be placed in that order. We must guard, however, against a common error that a later work is necessarily the better one and the last is necessarily the best. It may or may not be so. In the case of many poets, it is not so, as with Shakespeare himself. All his famous masterpieces belong to his middle period, though he certainly attained a better poise and serenity in his poetic self in his probable last work, 'The Tempest'. With regard to Kālidāsa, however, who may probably be best described as a poet of perfection, as we shall see later, the common notion may not be erroneous, but may, on the other hand, be a pointer to truth. For example, the 'bharatavākyā' or epilogue of the 'Śākuntala', where the poet has prayed for his
personal salvation, probably indicates that work to be his last, while the Indian tradition has it as his best, viz., 'Kālidāsasya sarvasvamabhijñānasākuntalam'. As opposed to this, the so-called abrupt ending of the 'Raghuvaṃśa' as the almost similarly conceived abrupt ending of the 'Kumārasambhava', does not appear to be a valid argument for placing it as the last. For we hold both are quite natural and legitimate endings and they all the more fulfil the poet's artistic purpose. How we shall presently see.

As for the various other works ascribed to our poet, we have hardly any doubt whatsoever as to their spurious nature, judged by their contents, which sometimes run up to a few verses only, as well as by some of their very names, they being the scribblings of infamous poetasters who somehow aspired to our poet's great poetic fame and could merely succeed in aping him so poorly — so much so that we do not think we need mention them here at all. They, however, serve one useful purpose, that is, if perused even casually, they will at once reveal what our poet is not like.

The authorship of the 'Ṛtusāṁhāra' is doubted by some being rather immature in treatment and style and poor in final attainment, though not in its theme or tone, the majority, however, accepting the poet's undoubted authorship, its immaturity or lack of finish and attainment being ascribed to the apprenticeship of the adolescent poet putting the work on the same
level as Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis', 'Lucrece', etc., if not also his sonnets. We think the majority opinion to be probably true as there are unmistakable signs of the poet's authorship all throughout the work as seen in its style and diction especially in some of its gilded phrases besides the over-all tone of the poet and, in particular, in his treatment of nature and the various seasons, which is the very theme and stuff of the work. Indeed, as Sri Aurobindo has observed, in his essays on Kālidāsa, if fired by the mature imagination of the poet, and treated accordingly, the theme could be easily transformed into one not very much unlike the 4th Act of the 'Vikramorvaśīya' or the 'Meghadūta' itself. The same keen sense of our poet's style and diction, if not some of his unique imagination, that is, his armoury of 'vēgartha' which decidedly excluded the spurious writings in his name would include, we believe, the 'Rōtaśāhāra' which bears the indelible impress of his poetic personality though not of his poetic genius.

We know Kālidāsa as a poet of love and as a poet of nature. Both these characteristic aspects of the poet are laid bare in his maiden work the 'Rōtaśāhāra'. The name means 'the Collection or Gathering of Seasons'. Here the young poet describes, passionately and wistfully, in the form of his intimate address to his dear love, whoever she may be, the famous six seasons of India beginning with the great summer. Tradition relates the first word of this work i.e. 'Viśeṣa' in 'Viśeṣasūrya'
(the alternative reading being 'pracanda-suryah') to his
supposed first address, as a great poet, to his wedded learned
wife i.e. 'asti kaścid vāgvisēṣah' (I have some words to speak
to you). Whether it is the summer or the rains or the autumn
or the beginning of the winter or the winter itself or the
spring, the keenly discerning eye of the poet describes then
as they really are in all their various ramifications without
venturing into much poetic fancy or imagination. Thus his por-
trayal is based here more on 'svabhāvokti' (or natural description)
than on other 'alamkāras' (or embellishments) and it does not
convey any great suggestion or 'vyangya' or sentiment or 'rasa'.
It is expressly a 'citrakāvyya', no doubt, and not 'vyangya-kāvyya' or 'rasa-
kāvyya', if we may use these terms. Here an adequate 'rasa-
nigpatti' or the suggestion or manifestation of 'rasa' has not been
possible due to the lack of definite 'ālambana-vibhāvas' and of
the sufficient delineation of 'āmabhāvas' and 'vyabhicārībhāvas'
as to be properly conductive to the main 'rasa', although 'uddī-
pana-vibhāvas' are there, indeed, in plentiful profusion. But
within this limitation, doubtless imposed by the young poet's
limited vision, he has equally dealt with men, women and ani-
mals and, above all, Nature herself, in the midst of whom men,
women and animals have their roles to play. But if the poet
views with a keenly discerning eye, he also feels with a passio-
nately loving heart which knows no end to its lust for sensuous
pleasures. Love and lust both are there, but of the two lust
is demonstrably the more predominant. Both this love of women
and lust for their lovely flesh are fused together and both are permeated by a keen sense of the beautiful. If it is sensuous love, it is sensuous love of the fine aesthete and in the context of over-all provident nature. Nature is sometimes kind, sometimes cruel, and though cruel she is yet kind, for each particular season has its particular pleasures to offer. In fact, the various seasons, though some of them tend to inflict some pain, eventually provide various dimensions to the languid pleasures of lovers who will never cease to cling to each other. Here nature both provokes and provides love. We know Shakespeare, in his 'Venus and Adonis', etc., had as his subject, Love and Lust, or to put it in a composite form, sensuous love and nature. So, it is with Kalidāsa in his Rātusāhāra, where his sensuous love has not yet matured into love proper and his nature is as yet unimpregnated with his brooding imagination. Now, to the poet every season is beautiful, and has its own charms to offer, as every maiden is beautiful if she has her own charms to offer. Kalidāsa, in his Rātusāhāra, thus seems akin to young Shakespeare as also Keats in the pervasiveness of his sensuous love as in his intense love of the beautiful. The form and style are rather diffuse than concentrated and the treatment of the theme, though on the physical plane, is rather abstract than concrete, because the imagination and the vision of the mature poet are yet to grow and develop. We do not think we need to elaborate upon it any further beyond saying that, as in every nāṭaka, there is
where the seed or germ of the dramatic theme is first sown, this maiden work of our poet is where the seed of his poetic genius was first laid, which was inevitably to grow into that wonderful celestial wish-yielding tree bearing forth lovely, fragrant flowers and mellow, life-giving fruits in his mature works.

We then take up the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' for our brief critical survey and estimate. There was a time when it was not at all considered as our poet's, judged mainly by its comparable lack of finish and perfection in its style and diction and, to speak rather more pointedly, by its apparent lack of charm and even crudeness in not a few places. But to-day there is hardly anyone who will be found to hold this view. In fact, the consistent general perfection of Kālidāsa's style and diction in almost all his works often seem to us to demand a flawless perfection in every part of his every work. Ironically, the poet's own genius seems to be at fault in this, forbidding the least touch of imperfection anywhere in his work. But this is deification and not criticism or proper appreciation of art. The 'Mālavikāgnimitra' has thoroughly passed that test and is known to be very much our poet's even as the 'Vikramorvaśīya' and the 'Sākuntala' or the rest. Its relative lack of finish and charm is perhaps due to the fact, among others, that the poet had not yet gained his due recognition and fame. So, when
he had attained his due recognition and fame — and in full measure, he could say in the 'Sākuntala', 'Autsukyamātramavasāyati pratisthā' etc.

It has been held that the theme of the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' is rather a common court-intrigue, so customary in those days of careless ease and luxury always seeking to find the only possible pleasure in either hunting of animals or hunting of women by a gallant king — gallantry, very much in the Shakespearian sense, being almost the one virtue in a King, other kingly qualities being only mentioned but hardly demonstrated whether in actual life or in drama which is the representation of such a life. In fact, this same charge has been more or less repeated in the case of other two dramas of our poet as also with regard to Sanskrit dramas in general. Here we shall submit that if, in the 'Mālavikāgnimitra', our poet has evidently taken up the theme of a court-intrigue, so to say, so much a common thing in courtly life and probably an object of our poet's personal experience in the court of Vikramaḍītya, he has not at least erred in choosing as the subject of his drama a theme which is not a semblance of life. It is, beyond doubt, life-like and true to life. And it is quite natural and significant that our poet, in his very first attempt at representation of life, has chosen a theme which is, so far as he was concerned, very much a part of life. It may, again, he said that in this he was limited by his experience of narrow court-life rather than inspired by the wider life of humanity, as it has,
indeed, been laid as a serious charge against our poet, the narrowness of his theme being linked to the narrowness of his vision. But we do not agree. The theme of the drama may be a so-called court-intrigue, which, as we have already observed, is very much a semblance of life as the poet saw and knew it. But the real question is whether the treatment of this limited theme by the poet was conductive to creation of art and poetry which are the things that count. In terms of Sanskrit critical literature, whether this particular 'vastu' has been successfully employed for the suggestion of his avowed principal 'rasa' which is no other than his most favourite 'şṛngāra' or love (both in 'sambhoga' or union as well as in 'vipralambha' or separation). And it is amazing to suggest that the avowed poet of love should not portray a so-called court-intrigue or which may be better described as royal love and the consequent rivalry among the queens or maidens in course of that love. This is a most natural theme of our poet, such being the conditions in which he happened to live. But what we should judge, in a proper evaluation of his poetry, is whether or how far the poet actually used his conditions or materials in the creation of his poetry which is the chief end or object of his poetic endeavour — how far he has been able to transcend his conditions and create something that is timeless.

Another important aspect of the theme of the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' is that here the lover king Agnimitra and his queen
Dharini and Iravati and lady love Malavika are all earthly beings, there being no divine element among them, although love as such between the lover king and his beloved, besides naturally being on the physical plane also, may be said to be divine. Notwithstanding this essential divine element, love as it has been portrayed here, among earthly mortals, is of the nature of an earthly passion, earthly zest, which almost inevitably arouses, in its wake, a spate of bitter jealousies and vehement rivalries, provided that the suitable conditions for them are present there. But since Kālidāsa is, above all, a poet of love, concord and peace, all hostile elements are ultimately reconciled, as in the last few dramas of Shakespeare, particularly, in 'The Tempest', and all end happily for all. While, in the 'Vikramorvāsiya', the lover king Puruvendra remains earthly as before or, as ever — for, in the 'Śākuntala' also, the lover king remains earthly — the object of his love is no earthly maiden, but the celestial beauty Urvasī herself, who is the fairest damsel in paradise and is almost the reigning queen of matchless beauty and ever-lasting youth in the whole range of creation. So, naturally Urvasī's love is divine, in the strictest possible sense of the term, with all its divine impetuosity of passion and heedless extravagance, and the king also, though earthly, has come to imbibe, considerably through her influence, a love that is of the same quality, if not of the same boundless measure, especially when he madly roams in search of her in the vast wilderness of nature. But, in the 'Śākuntala', as we shall see later, 'Śakuntala' is neither earthly nor divine
but something beyond both earth and heaven and yet belonging to both and is thus the really unique and final creation of her creator, the poet, the King Duṣyanta remaining as earthly as ever. Consequently, to put it here in brief, the whole tone and complexion of love there has immeasurably changed into something that is uniquely from its first soulful fervour to its last ardour of penance. Thus a comparison of the themes and their treatments in the three dramas of our poet clearly shows, we believe, the flight of his dramatic Muse first from earth to heaven and then from heaven to something beyond where spiritual bliss defies even the pleasures of heavens. Thereby we also most probably arrive at the correct chronology of the composition of the three dramas by our poet.

Judged by the results, the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' must be recognised as a distinct achievement of our dramatic poet in his search for perfection in dramatic poetry, though it may not be properly acclaimed as a veritable masterpiece. So far as the treatment of plot is concerned, it must be certainly deemed to be excellent, as it never flags or becomes dull, but all throughout maintains a sustained interest and carries the reader or the spectator along with it. In particular, the king's new love Mālavikā being a dancing star besides being a lovely maiden, the poet has brilliantly contrived through the agency of the never-failing jester, a glimpse of a brief but most beautiful dance in the second act accompanied by appropriate bodily movements and
gestures and a neat but delightful song wherein she has sung her own love. This piece of a drama within the drama all the more enhances the stage effect of the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' and makes it really lively and enthralling. This, in its turn, inflames the love of the king beyond measure as well as of the maiden herself who can but secretly love. Then, the quarrel of the two producers (i.e. modern directors), Haradatta and Gaṇadāsa, in Act I, so wittily contrived by the cunning jester, whose offshoot is but that dancing spectacle, is unforgettable in course of both of which our poet has unmistakably demonstrated his expert knowledge of the dancing and dramatic arts. All this vivacious demonstration of wit and the cunning skill of the jester as of the poet himself points to one conclusion, that this is the first dramatic creation of our poet. We have similar signs of vivacious demonstration of wit and cunning skill in his art of Shakespeare himself in his early comedies. To this must be added other evidences, i.e. the poet's self confident assertion through the 'Sūtradhāra' i.e. 'Puraṇītyeva na sādhu sarvam' (All that is old is not good, somewhat echoing, Shakespeare's 'All that glitters is not gold'), etc. purporting that his creation, though new, may yet have some value besides the creations of older masters, and to that great exposition on the nature, use and end of drama through Gaṇadāsa, the great teacher on the dramatics, which we have already discussed in chapter II and which is, as it were, a gospel, in brief, on the drama as
visualised by Bharata in his 'Nāṭyaśāstra' and by others. These are evidently self-conscious touches of our dramatic poet in his first drama and are equally important to our study of the poet as of his poetry. All this has increased the appeal of the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' as a dramatic creation of Kālidāsa as well as its value as a drama making it fit for a delightful representation on the stage. The very cunning device i.e. the real 'intrigue' planned by the ever-resourceful jester for rescuing Mālavikā from her forced confinement effected by the senior queen Dhūrinī who is sober but effectively jealous and for the desired union of the King and Mālavikā as also the monkey episode in the Act IV are very interesting episodes and are sure to make the drama a popular hit as we call it now-a-days.

A very delicate touch of the poet — our poet's characteristic touch, which is comparable to the bee-episode in the 'Śākuntala' — is that seen in Act III where Mālavikā's feet are annointed by her maid and anklets are tied to them so that by a gentle touch of her left foot the Aśoka tree may burst forth into lovely blossoms in the pleasure garden upon which spring has now descended in full glory, while the king and the jester watch them from behind a grove. Then queen Irāvatī with her maid comes along that way, also watches that delicate scene as well as the watchers themselves from behind, and then suddenly rushes out and pounces upon the King in mortal jealousy while the king with falsely coaxing words tries to assuage her, who but angrily leaves
him in a huff — all this is a very fitting anti-climax to the
delicate scene mentioned first. Last, but not the least, the
political episode including the horse sacrifice running through
the drama is very significant for its historical value and
possibly also for determining the time of the poet, though it
cannot be said that this political episode has been very success­
fully integrated into the main plot. The king has been shown
gallant in love, but not gallant in war, which quality has not
been necessary, because there are others, his general and his
son, to win wars for him, while he is left to win his love.

Then comes 'netti' or character — rather characteriza­
tion which has been regarded by almost all as the principal mark
of modern dramas, chiefly of Shakespeares. And here also the
'Mālavikāgnimitra' does not lack in the least. For, besides
the characters of the hero and the three rival heroins which have
been portrayed beautifully and true to life, the character of
the 'vidūṣaka', who is not exactly a Shakespeare's fool but may
be deemed to be a parallel creation called the King's jester
and friend, essentially a contribution of the Sanskrit drama,
is beyond doubt, one of the greatest characters created by
Kālidāsa and is easily comparable to similar characters in Shakes­
peare. The jester may not have risen to the height of a False­
staff or he may not be one with the fool of 'King Lear', but
he is the master of himself and of all situations somewhat like,
if one might say, Prospero of 'The Tempest' of the mature
Shakespeare. In sheer command of himself and his situations he even dwarfs his master who is too love-sick to be able to divine a situation or act properly. It is he who through his series of cunning devices enables the king to fulfil his love toward Mālavikā and makes it possible for them to unite. In fact, he reminds us of a famous character in modern fiction viz. Jeeves in 'Carry on, Jeeves', etc. and in that he shares something of his creator, the dramatist himself.

Something has been already said of the characters of the King and his lady love and very little remains to be added to this. The kingly qualities of the King have been well indicated but not demonstrated as they have not been considered necessary for the drama. Only his qualities as a lover — a passionate and persistent, but a dreaming and ineffective lover — have been vividly delineated. Though apparently past his middle age, he is yet ready to fall in love with a lovely maiden provided her loveliness is sufficient to catch his eye and capture his heart. He still apparently possesses all the vivacity and passion of his youthful years and he is of such an age when extra-ordinary beauty and youthfulness in a maiden may yet feed his love. And his love has not certainly been misplaced, for Mālavikā, whether in her beauty or in her youth or in her accomplishments, has, indeed, no rival in the harem or among the rival queens. She is also of a noble parentage, a princess herself, though in the garb of a maid at present under most
unfortunate and mysterious circumstances. It is her matchless beauty, matchless youth (both the rival queens are apparently older than herself) and her matchless accomplishments as a finished dancer, singer and actress that have rightly captivated the royal heart. But both the lovers are very timid; the King seems to be timid because possibly of his age, apparently because Mālavikā is but a maid to him and certainly because of the wrath of the rival queens, and Mālavikā is timid both by nature, thus all the more enhancing her beauty, and by the fact of her present unfortunate condition and also for fear of the queens. Such lovers on the one side, and the impetuous and heedless jealousy of Irāvatī, the maid queen, on the other, and the calm, dignified, yet effective rivalry of Dhārīṇī, the first and chief queen are, indeed, a spectacle to see. Only the wit of the 'omnipotent' jester could contrive to fulfil such love.

The 'Paribrājikā' is a most essential character, she being a sort of presiding deity in the drama. Her knowledge of the arts and dramatics is exemplary and this speaks of a very high standard of learning and culture attained by women of the higher class in the society in the time of Kalidāsa. The jester and the 'Paribrājikā' between themselves hold the key to the whole drama, and the happy denouement is the direct result of their relentless efforts, each in a different way, in that direction. As such they have been, as it were, the destiny of the lovers and of the whole dramatic events, and in that they pertake of something
of the dramatist himself.

So far as the dominant sentiment of the spirit is concerned, it is a fine, gay, jovial and even sometimes boisterous comedy not untouched by contending rivalry, bitter jealousy and impetuous wrath as by intensity of passion and keen love of fun and even, what may be called, love of life and love of love itself. In this respect it is comparable to any of Shakespeare's drama belonging to its own kind. This first dramatic venture of Kālidāsa seems to have more than succeeded in its objective i.e., possibly to surpass the creation of Bhāsa, etc. say, the 'Swapnavāsavadatta', Bhāsa's masterpiece, in particular, at least in poetic if not also dramatic achievement -- for certainly the poetry of the 'Mālavikāgnimitra', if one can speak apart, is appreciably greater than that of the 'Swapnavāsavadatta' and that its dramatic value is not also less than that of the later. So, the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' is, by all means, a shining jewel in the golden crest of our poet and, though it may not be the brightest jewel, it is a jewel of which the poet may justly be proud.

Next, we take up the 'Kumārasambhava', our poet's first epic poem, dealing with the birth of Kumāra, son of his favourite deities Pārvatī and Maheśvara. Those who seriously believe that Cantos IX - XVII belong to Kālidāsa himself 'amaze us, indeed, as to their woeful lack of knowledge of the poet's
authorship of the many spurious works ascribed to him as mentioned earlier. Those who think that the title 'Kumarasambhava' or 'the advent of Kumāra' indicates that both the actual birth and exploits of Kumāra must have been described by the poet are sadly mistaken and, to use stronger words, they show a lamentable lack of what may be called poetic sense. As soon as the deities Hara and Pārvatī are wedded and they go for a pleasure trip or honeymoon, to use a modern word, the advent of Kumāra is suggested by the poet and that is the legitimate end of the epic. And the style and diction of Canto VIII together with its erotic description, which is a close parallel of Canto XIX of the 'Raghuvaṃśa', are undoubtedly Kālidāsaś, though this canto may not be to the taste of our moralist scholars. Western scholars are very much fond of the story of the 'Kumarasambhava' as well as the epic itself more than the story of the 'Raghuvaṃśa' or that epic. Tagore also felt the same way, but for somewhat different reasons. Indian scholars and critics, however, called Kālidāsa as 'Raghukāra' and that shows the supreme importance of the 'Raghuvaṃśa' in their eyes. Nevertheless, the 'Kumarasambhava' must be regarded as one of the poet's great creations or masterpieces.

To put it in brief, which we shall presently elaborate, the descriptions of Himālaya and of Pārvatī in the 1st canto, though a little elaborate, are excellent; the 2nd canto contains a notable song in praise of the Lord and Kāma's self-glorification which will soon come to naught, the 3rd canto is unique in
every respect and is one of the greatest creations of our poet, which, taken by itself, can even rival with the great 'Meghadūta' and 'Śākuntala'; the 4th canto contains a fine lamentation of Rati for Kāma; the 5th canto, again, has no parallel, where the very climax of the epic has been reached and its recurrent spiritual message revealed; the 6th canto is, to a certain extent, a matter-of-fact one wherein the 7th germinates; the 7th canto is a vividly beautiful, elaborate description of marriage ceremony that was current in our poet's time. Above all, the 3rd and the 5th cantos stand out supreme in the whole epic in sheer poetic beauty, dramatic action, characterization and spiritual significance and therein the epic and the drama have become one. To those who love pure poetry more than pure drama, if these terms are permitted, these two cantos, in their almost even balance between poetry and drama, may appear to be more beautiful than even poetic drama itself. However, to speak the truth, even the great 'Meghadūta' and 'Śākuntala' have nothing like these 3rd and 5th cantos of the 'Kumārasambhava', though each has something which is unique in itself. Both the intensity of poetry and the poet's humanism in the treatment of divine deities are the two great marks of the poem. The Western mind is apparently attracted by the simple yet grand story and the corresponding simple, yet grand style and treatment of this epic, while Tagore was evidently fascinated by its deep, abiding spiritual significance. As Tagore has himself shown, this significance, that is to say, fleshly love is made pure and perfect by spiritual
penance and suffering and then it becomes divine or one with God, is the great basic principle of all religions, especially of Indian philosophy and religion and has found in our poet its first splendid expression in the 'Kumārasambhava', has flowered in the 'Rāghuvaṁśa' and borne its magnificent fruit in the 'Śākuntala'.

In fact, Kālidāsa fully revealed his true poetic self in the 'Kumārasambhava'; it seems to be hardly possible to say that he improved very far in this particular direction even in the 'Rāghuvaṁśa' itself, though evidently his artistic self attained further distinct advancement and near perfection in the later epic. A mere glance at the 7th canto of both, where a marriage ceremony is described, will suffice to show that he had already reached his poetic possibilities in the 'Kumārasambhava', while in the 'Rāghuvaṁśa' he is greater more as an artist than as a poet. In this context, we may perhaps refer to an example i.e., while in the 'Kumārasambhava' in a particular verse he uses the word 'Viphala', in the corresponding verse in the 'Rāghuvaṁśa' he makes only one apparently insignificant change i.e., from 'vīphala' to 'vitatha'. Now, what is the point in this apparent trifle? The answer lies in the unquenchable artistic zeal for perfection of our poet in everything including such apparently small matters of diction and the like. This small change has seemed to our poet to have considerably increased the beauty of his diction and consequently increased the value of his
poetry. And we know that in this he was right. This will reveal, we are sure, the consummate artist in our poet. Earlier we have mentioned our poet as a poet of perfection and his poetry as nearly perfect poetry. More of this later. We have only to add that possibly due to the supreme excellence of the 3rd and 5th cantos of the 'Kumārasambhava' some are inclined to place this epic even after the 'Raghuvaṃśa'. We have not the least doubt, however, that it is not so, for, among others, the artistic maturity and perfection rather than mere poetic imagination must decide the matter in this particular question.

Kālidāsa is known not only as the finest flower of Indian culture, he is also her national poet. In that latter capacity, he has provided us with a poetical geography, so to say, of the nation. In the 1st canto of the 'Kumārasambhava', he has given us an enchanting description of the Himalaya and in the 13th canto of the 'Raghuvaṃśa' he has furnished a magnificent description of the sea as also of some of the middle regions of the country running from the South to the North, and in the 4th and 6th cantos of the 'Raghuvaṃśa', again, and in the 'Meghadūta' he has left us a beautiful, vivid portrait of the rest of the country, its kingdoms, rivers, mountains, forests, dales, countrysides and cities and its people. It has been held (for example, by late Prof. Janakinath Bhattacharya in his introduction to his notes on the 13th canto of the 'Raghuvaṃśa' following the views of some Western scholars) that the poet's description of the Himalaya or of the sea has not been sublime or sufficiently
so, as it ought to have been. But such critics seem to forget that such sublimity would not have been conducive to the principle sentiment of the epic i.e., "Sr̥ngāra" and its particular kind. In the case of the Himālaya, enchantment is the one quality needed by the poet for this particular epic. And as a poet of love, and of love of this kind, he can not possibly stray into sheer sublimity without hindrance to his principal 'rasa', as Bhabavūti has done in his 'Uttaracarita' which is appropriate to his 'karuṇa'. This may be contended and it may be said that the divine love between the deities would have been more fitting in the context of a sublime surrounding. But it must be remembered that our poet has treated his deities on a human level, their divinity notwithstanding, and so the description of the Himālaya has been made enchanting and humanly interesting. Nevertheless, there are elements of sublimity in the description viz., in the very first verse where 'Devatātmā' (or the God-souled) Himālaya has been called the measuring rod of the earth, as it were, touching both the Eastern and the Western seas; the same strain is followed up to the 3rd verse. Then follows an enchanting spectacle where Nature conspires to make it a wonderful place for lovers to enjoy their love and others to enjoy their sport. Whether it is love-sport or mere sport, it is a most fitting place for both. In the 12th verse, again, there is a touch of sublimity, which strain is followed in the 16th and the 17th, the last stanzas. So, it is, after all, a sublimely enchanting
place — this great Himalaya, where even Lord Śiva will be shaken from his penance and fall in love with Pārvatī, the beautiful daughter of the god Himalaya. Then follows the beautiful and elaborate description of her lovely person and her tender youth. Though elaborate, it is not over-wrought or tiresome as in other poet, say, Bhārati, Māgha and Śrīharsa. The young poet has followed his tradition in giving a detailed description of the physical beauty of his heroine, but his creation has become immensely different in quality from those of others. The mature poet, however, in his 'Raghuvaṃśa' has totally discarded with such necessity of express description and has served the same purpose much better through suggestions or incidental references viz. in the case of Indumati in the 6th canto of the 'Raghuvaṃśa'. The gist of the description of Umā's beauty lies in the concluding line viz., 'Sā nirmītā Visvāṣṭi prayetnād-kasthāsaudaryadīrṣkṣayeva' — purporting that in her, the creator has put all the world of beauty or all the beauty of the world concentrated in one person. So, in a sense, Pārvatī represents the very Poesy of the poet, which is of the most perfect kind in Sanskrit literature and one of the greatest in all literatures. To such a enchanting place, where roams such enchanting beauty, comes the austere god Lord Śiva for no other reason but practising severe penance; Umā is employed by her father to serve this ascetic god who accepts her service ungrudgingly, for 'Vikāra-hetau sati vikriyante yeśām na cetāṃsi ta yeva dhīrāh' (those alone who are steady even among severe obstacles are, indeed, steady.).
This also justifies the poet's description of the Himalaya not as just sublime or as just enchanting but as sublimely enchanting in tune with the unity of his whole conception.

The 2nd canto begins with a different note. Here the gods with their chief, Lord Indra, being oppressed by the demon Tāḍaka, go to Lord Brahmā for redress. They first praise Him as the supreme God of the universe and as their father and protector. The God, being pleased, compassionately asked each of them why they seem to be deprived of their glories and what they want from Him. Being told of the violent oppression made by Tāḍaka upon the gods including their women folks, the God assures them of eventual liberation. But, in this, He would not Himself join. He advises them to ask Cupid, the god of love, to attract the heart of Lord Śiva toward Umā whose powerful offspring will rescue them from their calamity by killing the demon in fierce battle. So, here the story element is apparently prominent, and this 2nd canto is a fine link, as it were, between the poetry of the 1st canto and that of the 3rd. Similarly, the 6th canto is a fine link between the 5th and the 7th cantos. The epic begins with a flourish in the 1st canto, rises into its grand crisis in the 3rd, attains its great climax in the 5th and quite consummation in the 7th, the 8th being a fine follow-up, so to say, so that the alternate cantos beginning with the 1st are the most important both poetically and dramatically. The 4th, however, has a special importance, being a pathetic lament of
Rati for her husband Kāma and thus providing both poetry and a background in which the severe penance of Umā for Śiva and the 5th will shine forth magnificently. One has to earn with pains the right of marital bondage, which, when severed, again, causes pains. Yet the particular success of the poet in the 2nd canto is his brilliant and yet poetical summary of the scores of praises of the different deities as found in the 'Purāṇas', etc. and this shows his power of poetization, so to say, of even the sacred scriptures, at least in this particular field. This piece of the Lord's praise and His assurance may be profitably compared with those in 10th canto of the 'Raghuvaṃsa', where not Brahmā but Viṣṇu is the Lord. The latter is more brief, precise and significant from points of both style and substance, as it comes from a maturer poet. But, in both, the Lord to whom praise is being sung in rosy verses, is naturally extolled as the Supreme Being. This shows the poet's clear synthesis of the gods, which are but different names for the really one Supreme God, and it is futile to seek in him either a 'vaiṣṇava' or a 'śaiva' or a sectarian of any other kind. Personally he may be a 'śaiva', but he knows that all gods are one. He is a poet and a spiritual poet, though a poet of love which is their true essence. We are fortunate that Kālidāsa has enabled us to sing the praise of that Supreme Lord in such touching yet beautiful, golden verses, their beauty and spirituality being thus fused in one. Another vital significance of this canto should not be lost upon us. It is not naked power but power born of love which can conquer naked power,
and hence the Lord points to the future offspring of Uma and Śiva, the ever-united deities of love, and not to Himself as the saviour of the gods and of all mankind.

The 3rd canto we have described as a grand crisis. But before the crisis takes shape, there are preparations for the crisis. The flower-bowed god of love, being called by Lord Indra, has already hastily appeared before him who now eyes him wistfully. Cupid now bursts out into boastful words of power and self-assurance as to be able to smite any man or woman or god — even Lord Śiva — with love-sickness. Indra, thus assured, sets before him his one task i.e., to beguile the very Lord Śiva with the charms of Uma according to the advice of Lord Brahmā, Cupid thus goes determined to succeed, ironically enough, even at the cost of his own person, along with his consort Rati and his ally, the spring. In this ironical context begins the magnificent poetry and drama of the 3rd canto. Now, the spring has suddenly burst forth, in the midst of winter, upon the penance-grove where the Lord Śiva has been practising penance. Both its sudden onrush and its beguiling charms are too much for the inhabitants of that forest who go wild in joy and infatuation. In this, beast or nature is no exception. All are set ablaze, as it were, in a mad rush for love and its enjoyment. But the Lord remains calm and Nandī commands His followers and all nature to hushed silence. At that dramatic juncture, enters Cupid with his avowed purpose and sees the Lord engaged in His austere penance, and becomes affrighted. To boost his courage,
then enters Uma decorated in spring flowers, and like a moving creeper in foliage (Sāmcūriṇī pallavīni lateva). The Lord sees her and is about to accept offering from her when Cupid releases his shaft, at which even the Lord feels infatuated a little of her charms. But in a moment he masters Himself, eyes Cupid at a distance and instantaneously fire flashes forth from His third eye which reduces Cupid to ashes. At this Pārvatī feels ashamed and her father hurriedly takes her to his abode. Apart from the extremely exhilarating and yet austere beauty of the scene, it is also intensely dramatic. Now, the boastful pride of Cupid is gone along with his own person, the high hopes of Pārvatī herself are reduced to naught and the power of penance of the Lord asserts itself. The significance of this unique piece of poetic drama within the epic is that beauty and enchantment alone are not sufficient to win the love of the Lord of love; what is needed is austere penance, and selfless surrender of self at the alter of the Lord, which will be fulfilled in the great 5th canto. Meanwhile, Pārvatī must learn her lesson and act accordingly.

Now, where is the unique beauty and unique drama in this most magnificent of our poet's creation? First, the boastful pride of Cupid and his smug self-assurance and the consequent hopefulness of the chief of gods are, in no time, reduced to ashes by the supreme power of penance of Lord Śiva. To effect this contrast, the poet has included the dialogue between Cupid and Indra in the 3rd canto itself and not in the 2nd. Then begins the real pivot of the 3rd canto; where lo and behold! the spring
bursts forth magnificently and with a stunning suddenness upon the chilly winter of the penance grove. Now, this bursting forth of the spring amidst the winter seems to be the boldest stroke of our poet's imagination in his entire works -- only the Act VII of the 'Sākuntala' seems to have a faint parallel and that also in the opposite direction, where the blossoming forth of the spring is forbidden due to the remorse of the King. This is something akin to Tagore's 'Nirjharon Swapnabhanga' — the spring's waking up from dream — and may be the source of inspiration for Tagore, and probably has no exact parallel in world literature. All nature is mighty astir at the advent of this sudden spring and both animate and inanimate objects are mad for love. And how the poet describes it! His verses, always beautiful, now take a new quality — the quality of moving animation or an extraordinary brightness or 'dīpti'. But all is again hushed to silence at a single command of the Lord’s lieutenant, and the Lord serenely continues to practise His austere penance. Then enters Pārvatī, the embodiment of tender beauty and irresistible charm. To-day she is made all the more enchanting being decorated in a bright red attire and all the spring flowers that her hand can lay on. Now when the Lord is ready to accept her offering of a garland of lotus seeds for muttering prayers, Cupid, lying in wait, releases his shaft and even the great Lord is enamoured a little of her charms. But He controls himself in a moment and takes command of the whole situation. He eyes Cupid, the cause of His momentary loss of control, crouching at a distance,
and from His third gye fire now flashes forth and reduces the
proving god of love to mere ashes. Now the animated beauty
of the spring contrasted with the austere penance of the Lord,
Parvati's enchanting appearance, Cupid's bold venture, his
seeming success for a moment and his eventual defeat and anni-
hilation constitute a world of poetic drama in itself which is
yet unsurpassed in world literature both for its moving beauty,
and intense dramatic effect together with the vital spiritual
significante. The 'Purāna' provides us with this grand theme,
but its treatment by the poet has surpassed all expectations.
This 3rd canto together with the 5th canto of the 'Kumārasambhava'
are the highest points of imagination touched by our epic poet
not to be surpassed even in the 'Raghuvaṃśa'. Even the 'Śākun-
tala' may be said to be a dramatic version of this epic achieve-
ment.

The 4th canto describes the pathetic and tender lament
of Rati, Cupid's beloved wife. Rati, who was struck unconscious
at her Lord's fatale, now gains consciousness and sees a mere hand-
ful of ashes instead of her husband. She, again, spreads herself
upon the earth and bursts into heart-rending lamentations, 'O! what
has befallen thee? Why hast thou left me? Thou hast been true
to me and I to thee. But when thou art gone, I alone am alive.
Without thee, what will happen to all men and women and loving
nature? I have no peace when I remember thy love and thy love
gifts to me. Fie upon me, for yet I live without thee! I will
follow thee. O spring! his friend, where art thou, too? Then
the spring appears before her and she bursts into further crying laments, 'O Lord! dost thou appear for the dear friend, if not for me. O spring! seest thou me, the wretched wife of thy friend! O what a shame! I yet live. Makest for me my funeral pyre, I will follow my dear husband in death.' Then a voice in the sky consoles her and assures her she will meet her husband who will be revived through the Lord's grace in due course; and she somehow saves her life. This lament of Rati should be contrasted with the lament of Aja in the 8th canto of the 'Raghu-vaṃśa', where it is a man's lament for his woman instead of being a woman's lament for her man. Besides, the latter is a more mature piece of poetry together with a distinctly spiritual message imparted by a sage, as we shall see in its proper place.

As we have indicated earlier, this tender lament of Rati is contrasted with the severe penance of Pārvatī to show the value of love and how love is both won and lost.

The 5th canto, called by us the great climax of the dramatic epic, begins with a sombre note. Pārvatī, thus vanquished in her love and put to shame, determines to win the Lord's dear love by practising severe penance. 'Avāpyate vē kathamanyathā dyayaṁ tathāvidah prema patiṣca tādṛṣṭāḥ' — how else could such love and such a husband be won? Her mother tries to dissuade her but she is now resolved of an unbending will. With the blessings of her father, she now proceeds to her task. Pārvatī who is extremely tender now takes to severe penance. She also rears plants and befriends the deer. Hermits come to see her in her sacred
hermitage. When she fails to gain her objective, she takes to still more severe penance. In the summer, she, surrounded by four fires, gazes at the blazing sun. She only drinks the moon beam and the drop of rain. The waters of the rains sprinkle her. Through rain and storm, only the nights look on her. In the winter, she, like a golden lotus herself, dwells in the cold water among the 'cakravākas' and her glowing face provides the only lotus to the pond. She even gives up taking the leaf fallen from the tree and so is called Aparnā (or leafless). At the height of such penance, one day a bright young hermit comes to her. She attends to her guest who asks of her welfare and speaks highly of her and her penance. He, however, likes to know the cause of her arduous penance, when with her great ancestry, extreme beauty and tender youth nothing more laudable is to be attained by her. If she seeks heaven, the Himalaya is the very heaven. And if she seeks a husband, who will not seek her hand? Then he chides that man who thus possibly neglects her. He offers to give her the fruit of his own penance to win her desired husband. At this Pārvatī cannot speak herself, but her maid speaks. She says that Pārvatī is madly in love with the Lord Śiva, being struck by the shaft of the god of love though He had escaped it. Hence this penance, but without any fruit so far. Then the young hermit asks whether this is a joke or no; when Pārvatī modestly but firmly affirms this. Thereafter the hermit tries to show how inconceivable, unjustifiable, miserable and even laughable will be the union of Śiva and Pārvatī. Pārvatī is visibly angry and firmly
speaks of the great glory of the Lord Śiva to whom even the gods bow down. His mysterious nature is incomprehensible to common men. However, whatever He might be, she loves Him and love knows no law. Thus saying, she starts to go away, when, lo and behold, Śiva Himself smilingly holds her. Now, she, with her trembling delicate limbs, holds her one foot just lifted and like a swelling river before a way-side hill she does neither move nor stay, for a moment (‘Mārgācalavyatikarākuli-teva sindhuḥ sāilādhīrā-jatanevā na yayau na tāsthau’). Then when the Lord says, ‘I am thy slave, won by the penance (‘Tavāsmi dāsaḥ kṛītastapobhīḥ...’), she is at once endowed with the fruit of her labours.

In this the most magnificent 5th canto, Pārvatī’s firm, yet quiet resolve for penance, her growingly arduous penance itself, day and night through the seasons, yet her tender beauty and a tender heart for the creatures of the forest, and the ultimate height of penance achieved by her have all been described with a most delicate beauty, balance and precision. Then the dialogue between the Lord, in disguise, and Pārvatī follows. This is a masterly piece of dialogue composed with both logic and poetry fused in one. Both argue brilliantly, though while the one i.e. Pārvatī is in mortal earnest, the other i.e. the Lord is in animated zest with a view to testing the heart of Pārvatī. Then this 5th canto of the ‘Kumārasambhava’ is easily comparable to the 2nd canto of the ‘Rāghuvaṃśā’. But while the latter is more refined and austère, the former is poetically more beautiful and moving.
Both have intense dramatic effect, yet the former appears to be dramatically more delightful and significant. In fact, however, both are brilliant and consummate pieces of poetic drama within their respective epics, but while that in the 'Kumarasambhava' delineates śṛṅgāra that culminates almost in śānta, that in the 'Raghuvamsa' delineates vīra which is almost equivalent to śānta. Hence the difference. However, in this dramatic episode of the 5th canto in the 'Kumarasambhava', the loving characters of both Pārvatī and Śiva, the two loving deities, have been portrayed so vividly and life-like as to win our hearts for ever. The poetry and drama have been fused in one and the whole points to the one supremely spiritual revelation that the power of love, through the power of penance, alone triumphs where all enchantments fail.

The 6th canto again, like the 2nd, poetically narrates the episode leading to the delightful description of marriage in the 7th. Gouri now, with her modesty and appropriate decorum, urges Śiva, through her maid, to request her father for her hand. Then the Lord remembers the seven celestial sages who, pure and resplendent, come to Him along with Arundhatī. They then sing the praise of the Lord and seek His command, who expresses His desire for marrying Umā for the welfare of the gods and urges them to seek the permission of Himalaya. So they immediately arrive at Ośadhiprastha, the capital of Himalaya which is indeed more grand and glorious than even the great Alakā. Himalaya duly receives them, showers them with reverential
praises and asks for their command which he will fulfil with his whole family — himself, his wife and his darling daughter. Nārada for them, in turn, extols his highness and majesty and says that the supreme Lord Śambhu is desirous of marrying his daughter. They also speak highly of the proposed union and the stroke of fortune for Himalaya, while Pārvatī, by the side of her father with her face down, counts the lotus leaves in her hand (‘वेवानो वेदिमे देवार्षाद पार्वती पितुरोद्धमुक्ती / लिलाकमलापत्राणि गाणयामासा पार्वति/’). Himalaya, though pleased, looks at his wife who welcomes the proposal, and thereafter he places his daughter, in bridal attire, before them and submits, 'here is the bride of Śiva saluting thee.' They heartily bless her and Arundhatī places her on her lap. The sages go away after fixing the date of marriage after three days, come back, and relate all to Śiva who pines for the fateful day. Such is the power of love which spares not even the Supreme Lord. Though mainly a narrative, the descriptions of the sages and of Ośadhí-prastha very much like that of Alakā in the 'Meghadūta', in content though not in style, and the dialogues between the sages and the Lord and between them and Himalaya are very neat, to the point, poetically beautiful and socially and spiritually significant.

Then begins, in the 7th canto, a beautifully elaborate and vivid description of the marriage ceremony of Pārvatī and Śiva. The whole house of Himalaya becomes agog with festivity and the city itself wears a festive look. Umā, the darling of
all, receives ornaments and love from the ladies. She, in due attire, is bathed by women and wears her bridal costume. Then she is decorated and her lock of hair is bound with a lovely knot. She, lovely in person and more lovely in her new dress and decorations, sees herself in a mirror and pines for union with her Lord. Her mother, with tears in her eyes, somehow performs her auspicious decorations. Then Umā takes the feet of elderly women who bless her; 'get thou the whole-hearted love of the Lord.' Meanwhile, the Lord, too, decorates Himself with His usual decorations now turned into novel ornaments. Then He sets out, along with His train of followers, sages and gods and goddesses. He arrives and is heartily received by the joyous Himālaya and his friends. He leads the procession along the royal road, when the ladies of the city madly rush to the windows to have a glimpse of Him, leaving aside their half-finished decorations in haste. The ladies are struck by the beauty of the bridegroom and the most fitting union between Him and His bride. He enters, amidst a rain of dried rice, the abode of Himālaya, is led to a room and there duly receives auspicious offerings for the occasion. He is then led to the bride and their eyes meet each other's and then he takes her hand and both are exhilarated. They then go round the sacred fire and she showers dried rice upon it. After some other ceremonial functions, the principal ceremony is over, when they bow to Brahmā who finds no words to bless the couple. Then follows certain local customs and then Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī serve them and the Apsaras
stage a delightful drama before them. Thereafter the Lord, at the request of the god, receives Cupid and allows his delightful service of Him. He now enters the bridal chamber with His bride, and there makes her secretly smile, after an effort, through the comic facial gestures of His followers. This is a most vivid and beautiful description of a marriage ceremony strictly according to the custom in our poet's time which even holds today in Northern India. Only the magnificence is all the more captivating because the marrying couple are no less than Lord Śiva and Pārvatī, the gods of love themselves. The beauty and the inward feelings of the couple have been delineated with aptly beautifull similes at every vital stage of the ceremony. This 7th canto may be profitably compared to the 7th in the 'Raghuvaṁśa', in both of which most of the verses are exactly the same with certain partial or wholesale variations in the rest. In the latter, it is of course, a mellower description than in the former where it is more effusive. But the exact similarity in most of the verses, in particular, in the description of the mad haste of the ladies in rushing to see the Lord, shows the poet of perfection in Kālidāsa who is not at all shy of repeating his own verses provided they once really hit the mark and he finds no better way of expressing the same idea or feeling in other words.

The much debated 8th canto describes the love sports of Pārvatī and Śiva, our parent deities, which has been regarded
as 'atyan
tamanucitam' (extremely inappropriate) by the critics of Sanskrit literature. But Mallinātha has commented upon it and it is quite in Kālidāsa's style and taste and can be compared to the 19th canto of the 'Raghuvaṁśa' which describes the dalliance of Agnīvaraṇa in a similar vein. Umā is, at first, shy of her Lord's love approaches, but gradually she steadies herself and finds delight in love. Her mother feels happy as she is happy. She learns the art of love from her Lord and yet teaches Him something of the art by her youthfulness. After a month, with the permission of Himālaya, the Lord rides His bull along with His bride and roams various pleasure spots. They roam the Meru, Mandara, Malaya, Nandana and Gandhamādana mountains and enjoy the love of each other in those lovely places. In the last place, one day the Lord describes to her the beautiful evening and the quiet, glowing nature. He quickly finishes His evening rites and then turns again to her, who is angry because of His lack of attention to her, though for a moment only. He, again, describes the most enchanting evening with the glorious moon and Umā's beauty enhanced by nature. They then drink wine, the elixir of love, and go to their abode of love. There they heartily enjoy love till the day breaks upon them. Thus 150 seasons pass by, and yet they are not contented of their love, and thus is laid the seed of the birth of Kumāra. Here ends the genuine 'Kumārasambhava' of Kālidāsa.

The next venture of our poet seems to be his 'Vikramor-vasīya' where he has taken as his theme the love of earthy King
Purūravas and the divine beauty Urvāśī — a legend famous from the Vedas down to the various Purāṇas. This grand theme coupled with the impetuosity of contending passions — both earthly and divine — have lent to this drama a unique charm and fascination not to be seen even in the great 'Śākuntala'. This is undoubtedly the creation of the poet's full-blooded youth and years of romantic passion. In this, he has attained a dizzy lyrical height particularly where he has described the pitiful condition of the love-mad King — whose blinding love it was that made him mad — who aimlessly roamed in the magic woodland in search of his dearest consort and sought her tiding from the various creatures and even lifeless objects therein. The 4th act of 'Vikramorvāsīya' and the great 'Meghadūta' are the two examples of our poet describing madness in love or 'unmādadaśā' in 'vipralambha śṛṅgāra' and both of them are uniquely and intensely beautiful. They are also lyrical in nature — not lyrical in the strictly modern sense — but lyrical in the sense that both of them consist of long soliloquies. The 'Meghadūta' is undoubtedly a more mature and perfect development of the 4th act of the 'Vikramorvāsīya' in that it is more elaborate and vivid and its poetry is of a far more heightened and elevated kind signalled by the flight of the cloud in high heaven accompanied by lightning, thunder and rains as well as by the majestic flow of the mandākrāntā metre. Both these works may suggest some personal experience of a similar nature on the part of our
poet, judged both by intensity of passion as well as by the sincerity of tone.

The 'Vikramorvasīya' is, in many respects, a distinct advance of the poet in his dramatic venture than his maiden drama the 'Mālavikāgnimitra'. Here his imagination has taken a big flight from earthly mortal to celestial being at least in so far as his heroine is concerned, and, of all persons and even among the hero and the heroine, the heroine is the real centre of our attention in his dramas. The hero king remains an earthly being as before and as ever in his dramas, but the heroine is no other than Urvasī herself, the fairest of the divine damsels. Thus the poet has created for himself an opportunity for portraying mortal love for divine beauty and the consequent mortal madness in passion. The very title of the drama is significant by virtue of the 'śleṣa' on the word 'Vikrama' indicating that only valour (or shall we say, chivalry or gallantry) can win such divine beauty. May be the poet had another purpose in his mind i.e., to sing the praise of his great patron and friend Vikramāditya Candragupta II in this delightfully veiled fashion. However, it is a bold stroke of the poet's imagination that he now ventures to depict the love of a divine being no less than the great Urvasī herself who is almost regarded as the reigning queen of matchless beauty, love and passion and everlasting youth. To Kālidāsa, who is the greatest poet of love or śṛṅgāra in Indian literature, this, in fact, appears to be only natural and
quite legitimate. Though he has taken his theme from the Vedas and the various 'purāṇas' he has deftly affected certain changes both in the story as well as in the characterisation and hence also in the ultimate emotional effect or 'rasa'.

The events of the 1st Act are a clear deviation from the original. Here Purūravas, the hero king, does not meet Urvasī in heaven, but valiantly rescues her from the clutches of the demon Kesīṅ and his barbarous host in the air who had the audacity to kidnap her apparently finding no way to win her heart. Before Mahendra, the Lord of heaven, who is himself most enamoured of her, could affect her rescue, the earthly king does the feat in an instant. While the king comes back riding his chariot along with the rescued queen of beauty now on a swoon, she opens her eyes and sees her great saviour. Is it surprising that she should now fall madly in love with this man, who has as much beauty as a mortal can possibly have and who is no less pleasant in his tongue than in his person? Unfortunately, however, the beauty and the necessity of this brilliant 1st Act have not been properly appreciated by some critics who characterise it as bold and exotic, though it has clearly improved upon its original both regarding characterisation as well as dramatic effect. For, besides its apparent dramatic value, the sudden love of Urvasī for a mortal king, neglecting Indra and other gods, has been shown to be quite credible and justified.
Another important innovation is the creation of the character of Ausinari, the chief queen and rival to Urvasi. The originals have no such rival queen, only there is, in the 'Mahabharata', a reference to Ausinari, the daughter of the king of Kāśi and not as the queen of Purūravas. So she is entirely our poet's invention ('Kavipratibhotthita vastu') and to that extent must fulfil a special dramatic purpose. That purpose is apparently to draw the character of Urvasi in contrast with that of Ausinari and also to show what may be called love in conflict. Besides being a foil to Urvasi and a test of the love of the king, the character of Ausinari is, in itself, a great attraction of the drama as it has infused the necessary interest and life into it. Though Urvasi by her divinely fascinating beauty and charm and her divinely passionate love occupies the centre of our attention and claims our ardent attraction and love, Ausinari with her growing age and failing physical charm is no less charming in another way. With her quiet earthly dignity and silent pathos, she certainly fills our heart with profound sympathy, unbounded admiration and ineffaceable pity. She is, indeed, a true foil to her more splendourous rival who weaves her unforgettable charm at every step. She rivals charm with dignity, passion with devotion and impetuosity with self-composure and self-restrain culminating in complete self-effacement and self-sacrifice. It is, true, being frustrated and betrayed in her life's most cherished love, she has been subjected to violent inner agitations of
jealousy, hatred and fury, but she has always been able to control them with her dignified majesty ('ojasvitayā') and has submitted herself completely to the dear interests of her husband even at the cost of her dear love. This is why Western critics have found in her not only an infinitely more dignified but also a more charming and attractive character than Urvasī herself. It is interesting to view the character of Ausīnarī as compared to those of Dhārīṇī and Irāvatī in the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' and 'Vasumatī' in the 'Śākuptala'. No doubt, they have one thing in common, being frustrated and betrayed in their love by their wedded husbands due to the advent of a younger and lovelier woman. But while Irāvatī is impetuous, wrathful and spiteful, and Dhārīṇī though less vocal, is firmer in her action and even makes her rival captive, Ausīnarī shines brighter in her eventual calm dignity and fateful reconciliation. Vasumatī, however, in her quiet majesty, has been made by our maturer poet to stir a little in the beginning and thereafter to rest in silence. The character of Ausīnarī should not be viewed merely as an unavoidable woman's suffering in the context of a playful and amorous court-intrigue which has been supposed to be the main-spring of our poet's creation. It is a noble picture of a woman's suffering who has fallen out of grace due to the presence of the other woman's which is to be found everywhere in life, and which, therefore, assumes an universal character of tragic consequence thus endearing itself to all men including the tragedy-hungry Western critics.
What about Urvasī herself? She is, as it has already been observed before, the reigning queen of matchless beauty, love and passion and everlasting youth, like Venus and Ἀφροδίτη of the Greeks, and is the fairest woman in heaven (प्रत्यादेशाः श्रिगाँव्रियाः). She is a singer, dancer and actress and enchantress, the chief among the अप्सरास्, and we find her playing the heroine's role in a drama intended to please the gods in heaven, the chief among whom is the great lord Mahendra. It is apparent Urvasī is the most beloved mistress of all the gods (साधारणि स्त्री), especially of Mahendra who may be called a slave to her never-failing charms. Such is the picture of Urvasī in the original Vedas and the Purāṇas. In the Vedas, particularly, she has a fierce soul and is more loved than loving. In the purāṇas, she has been softened gradually. Kālidāsa's Urvasī retains these essential characteristics, and yet assumes a new character of her own. It is a passionate and ardent lover that she shines brightly in the 'Vikramorvaśīya'. The extraordinary chivalry and the earthly beauty of the king, which is exotically charming to her, she being divine, have moved her, probably for the first time, to love. And once she is in love, she loves with all the fierceness of her soul. She pursues the king from heaven to earth and is madly after him. After her desired union with him, she is madly jealous of an insignificant girl whom the king observes wistfully, perhaps out of mere curiosity, and vanishes from his sight and makes him mad for her. Eventually, she shines as a passionate wife and loving mother. Some say she is selfish in her love as
she conceals her son for fear of being separated from the king. But it is apparent here that her passion for the king is too great and she does not thereby neglect her son but makes proper arrangement for his care and protection. We must remember that this fairest divine beauty is expected to be somewhat heedless and extravagant in what to her is probably her first flush of love for any being, mortal or divine. In the last scene, she glowingly shines as a mother, very much like an earthly wife and earthly mother, when her blooming breasts pour out milk — the milk of motherly kindliness — at the very sight of her long lost son. This is the real metamorphosis of Urvaśī at the hands of our poet — the metamorphosis of her character. Maybe, Tagore was influenced by this, in his famous poem 'Urvaśī'. Incidentally, though this is not to the liking of some critics, i.e., Mohitlal Mazumdar, not being in tune with the Venus or Aphrodite of the West, this is quite in tune with the spirit of India and her poet spokesman, Kālidāsa. Some i.e., Wilson, etc. have taken the theme to be allegorical where Urvaśī stands for Uṣā or the Dawn and the king for the Sun-god. This is meant to explain the king's mad search for her in the midst of nature, herself strewn all over nature. However, without resort to an allegorical interpretation, the drama and the characters can very well be normally explained, as really conceived by the poet.

The king, as ever in the Kālidāsa, is full of chivalry (and gallantry) and love. In the 'Vikramorviśīya', unlike the 'Mālavikāgnimitra', his chivalry is also in action, like his love.
While in the 'Sakuntala', the king's chivalry is shown twice, both before and after, in the 'Vikramorvasiya' also, it is brilliantly shown before and indicated after. But it is as a lover and loved one that Pururavas shines more. Once he has been pursued by Urvasi; but in the great Act IV when she is lost to him, he, in his turn, madly seeks her in the vast wilderness of nature. Now, the great king turns really mad and seeks her tiding from the various creatures and even lifeless objects therein. Some critics do not like this 'unmanly' grief of the kings, but they possibly forget that the mortal king's love of the divine beauty is naturally to be expected to turn into madness, for her love is literally maddening, and the originals including the Vedas uphold this. In fact, the drama attains it great climax in the 4th Act, where the mighty king roves mad for his divine love. The purpose of our poet, in this drama, is to delineate love in madness, and Pururavas is a most fitting vehicle for that. In fact, the love of a divine and a mortal being is apt to lead itself to madness, and the 'Vikramorvasiya', being traditionally a 'troṭaka' its theme being 'divyamānuṣasamsrayam', is meant precisely for this. To Pururavas, Urvasi is not only the fairest divine beauty but the fairest divine beauty now madly in love with himself and one who has pursued him from Heaven to earth for his love; so, when this fairest divine beauty, with whom he is in love himself, is lost to him, he becomes mad and roams the vast wilderness of nature in search of her. In this, the passion of the king for his newly
won divine love is revealed in full and, in this passion, the king seems to have imbibed some impertuosity of Urvasī herself. However, through the never-failing grace of Mahendra, Purūravas and Urvasī are united till the life of Purūravas on earth, for the valiant king has to render a most essential service to gods in heaven by assisting them in their war with demons. The king is at his weakest with regard to the queen Ausīnārī whom he continues to love and to honour, but he cannot resist the love of Urvasī which is overwhelming. So, he has to take resort to some sort of tricks (śāthya) including coaxing words of sweetness (cāṭu), etc. to assuage her feeling and to avoid her as far as possible. He is sorry for her, and shy and a bit nervous before her, though exhilarating with the love of Urvasī. But he has to forsake her as his first love because of Urvasī before whose love his lordship of the entire earth is nothing (‘Sāmanta-maulī-mañi- rañjita-pāda-pīṭhamekātapatra-mavaner na tathā prabhutvam / asyāḥ sakhe carṇayorahamadya kāntāmājāā-karatva-madhigāmya yathā kṛtārthah’ //). Such is the love of Purūravas and such is the power of love itself which knows no law or bound.

The jester or Vidūṣaka is, as usual, a typical friend of the king, and a minister-in-love, so to say, to him. In this, he plays a modest though delightful role. He is not, however, like his counterpart in the 'Mālavikāgnimitra' where he is all-powerful and takes the leading role, as it were, from the hero himself. He plays his quiet part and then fades away, as in the
'Sākuntala', leaving the hero and heroine to fight and win their lone battle of love through the great climax in the 4th Act. Other characters are, as usual, in Kālidāsa, distinctly individual characters and not types. They are lively and appropriate to the theme and to the ultimate emotional effect of the drama.

The 4th Act of the 'Vikramorvāsīya' is, in many respects, unique in the whole range of Sanskrit literature. It has reached there a dizzy lyrical height which has no exact parallel in the other two dramas of Kālidāsa or in his 'Meghadūta' or in any other work of Sanskrit literature. The 3rd Act of Bhavabhūti's 'Uttarārāmacarita' called 'chāyāsitādārsāna' bears certain resemblance with this and may have been modelled on this. The 4th Act of the 'Sākuntala' may be viewed as bearing certain resemblance with this 4th Act of the 'Vikramorvāsīya', but their difference is more pronounced. The poet has doubtless received inspiration from the glowing examples of Rāma's search for Sītā in the 'Rāmāyaṇa' and Damayantī's search for Nala in the 'Mahābhārata'. While the sources depict the king as mad and roving for a very long period i.e. 60 or 55 years, our poet has compressed this vast span of time into high-strung poignancy confined to a brief point of time. The bubbling and prating passion as found here does not lack profound pathos in the least; on the other hand it nearly reaches a natural tragic climax and could very well end in a first-rate tragedy but for the commanding direction from the hands of its creator following the distinctive philosophy of dramatic
poetry of this land. Western critics as well as many Indian critics have bemoaned over this glowing opportunity of creating a real tragedy being lost, particularly when the Vedic sources have a definite tragic ending. But, let us submit, our poet's creation has to be truly appreciated in its proper perspective and this hungering for tragedy following the models of Greek and Shakespearian tragedies has to be held in restrain and the philosophical and artistic justifiability of a so-called comedy, which may be better called a tragi-comedy, has to be kept in view.

Besides the concept of tragedy as found in ancient Greek dramas would include a drama like the 'Vikramorvasiya' in the tragic fold. The delineation of 'vipralambha śṛṅgāra' and in particular its 'unmāda dasā' amply fulfils the tragic function of purging the emotion (of pity in this particular case) leading to its just culmination — a happy re-union in love, concord and peace. Though predominantly lyrical then 'dramatic' having little 'action and conflict', it is nevertheless dramatic in that the inner 'action', if we may say so, is no less important than outer 'action' leading to the great climax of the drama and relevant characterisations.

The long dialogues in Shavian dramas and the long monologues and dream sequences in some modern dramas have not detracted, according to many critics, from their dramatic character, but have boldly opened out a new direction in dramatic literature. It is significant to note in this connection, as indicated in chapter II, that while Aristotle regarded plot, later resolved into action and conflict, as the soul of drama, Indian critics regarded 'rasa'
This 4th Act of the 'Vikramorvasi'ya' has some striking resemblance with the storm scene of Shakespeare's 'King Lear' where Lear roves mad on the heath. The impetuosity of passion and the convulsion of feeling are laid bare in both, and it seems the whole of our being will be torn asunder. But here the resemblance ends. The utter pathos of Lear and its supreme irony and supreme tragedy at once transport us to an entirely different world than this passion-lossed unfolding of a love-lorn heart in the magic woodland of Kālidāsa's fancy which possesses a deathless charm all its own.

It will be seen both the 4th Act of 'Vikramorvasi'ya' and the 4th act of 'Sākuntala', which has a certain resemblance with the former in that both have a lyrical predominance, are regarded by Indian tradition as the best in the drama. This fact is not without its significance. Equally significant is the fact that the Western critics do not have much praise for them precisely because they are more lyrical than dramatic. They prefer the 5th act of 'Sākuntala', and possibly also the 1st act of the 'Vikramorvasi'ya' for their dramatic action and sharp characterization. This only points to the fundamental difference in the outlook of the Eastern and Western critics. For the present, however, we shall content ourselves by observing that while in the West plot resolved into action and conflict together with characterization are regarded as the soul of drama, according to the Indian
principle aesthetic sentiment or 'rasa' is the soul of poetry including dramatic poetry, though this does not ignore 'vastu' or 'nāyaka', but depict both leading to the suggestion of the aesthetic sentiment wherein lies the consummation.

The ultimate maturity of passion is to love as shown in the 5th act, which has been beautifully depicted in the 'Śākuntala' does not seem to be very happily done. So also the returning of the king riding on the back of a cloud transformed into an aerial car by Urvaśī seems to us to be somewhat incongruous. But this may be said to have been softened to some extent due to the divine nature of Urvaśī. Anyway, therein the 'Vikramorvaśīya' only lacks in that quality which makes the 'Śākuntala' unique, making it nearly a masterpiece rather than a complete masterpiece; or, let us call it a masterpiece, though not a perfect or flawless one.

Next, we take up the 'Meghadūta', the great and unique lyric or so-called lyric. It is not lyrical poetry in the modern sense in which Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth or the like are lyrical. Sanskrit critics call it 'khaṇḍa kāvya' which may be taken to mean that it is a semblance of the 'Mahākāvya' of the Sanskrit critics and not exactly of the epic of the Western conception. The word 'khaṇḍa' again means a very delicious kind of solid sweet. From all this the 'khaṇḍa kāvya' takes its own peculiar nature and consequent charm. No doubt it tends to be somewhat lyrical and it may be said to be the closest approximation of modern lyrical poetry in Sanskrit literature. The 'Meghadūta', however, is not
only a 'khaṇḍa kāvya', it is also a 'dūta kāvya' as opposed to another series of important 'khaṇḍa kāvya' i.e., 'Bhatṛhari's Śṛṅgārasataka', 'Nītisataka', and 'Vairāgyasataka', which may also be described as 'sātaka kāvya'. The 'Meghadūta' is unique in a double sense. It is the first and only type of a kind of poetry which has no exact parallel in world literature, the 'Shepherd's Calender' being only a poor shadow of its majestic self and the numerous feeble imitations of itself in Sanskrit literature remaining as mere imitations and nothing more. It is also unique in its supremely majestic and almost absolutely flawless poetry. In this sense also we think it has no contender in world poetry. Kālidāsa, we know, was a poet of perfection and when his zeal for perfection was concentrated into a small piece of poem we can imagine what white-heat intensity he would attain in its beauty and perfection.

To speak from another angle i.e., from the view-point of the contending poet and the artist in Kālidāsa it may be said that while the poet in him more than the artist held sway in his 'Kumārasambhava', being the first flush of his genuinely inspired poetry and both held sway in equal balance in his mature epic the 'Rāghuvamśa' and mellow drama the 'Śākuntala', in the 'Meghadūta' the poet in him found his most majestic self-expression in perfect art and to that extent the artist, it may be said, held his sovereign sway over the poet. Yet, it cannot be said, his poetry suffered on that score, for compared to the predominantly musical,
the 'Gitagovinda', the 'Meghadūta' carries in it the substance of superb poetry, though the majestic form seems to be overwhelming. Or, it may be said, this all-engrossing form of the 'Meghadūta' was precisely necessary for its elevated kind of poetry -- the out-pouring of a love-lorn heart mercilessly banished far away from its dear love spurred by the crouching mass of cloud upon the hills on the first advent of the rainy season urging it with nostalgic passion to float aloft high heaven across the various lands, hills, dales, forests, streams, countrysides and cities to its languishing love in Alakā, give her his earnest tidings and then return to him with hers, in order to save their love-lorn lives.

Another important feature of the 'Meghadūta' is that as the two hearts are cleaved into twain, the work itself is split into twain, the first half being devoted to portraying the undying glories of loving nature in contrast to their own love-sickness and the second being addressed to painting the love-pangs of the dear lady in the context of all-encompassing nature. Nowhere will be found more perfect fusion of nature and man, both in contra-distinction with one another and yet in throbbing vital harmony, each to each. The two parts are complimentary to each other and make one whole. Such elaborate and picturesque study of man and nature in tune with one another is only possible by Kālidāsa. His treatment of nature is well known and if the 4th Act of the 'Śākuntala' is a masterpiece, the 'Meghadūta' is no
less a masterpiece. But while in the 'Sākuntala' he has portrayed man in relation to nature which is his final form of depicting both man and nature, in the 'Meghadūta', he experimented, as it were, with the possible styles of depicting them, fully exhausted the possibilities by describing both, in turn, in terms of the other and thus having gained a rich experience of and insight into the true nature of relation between man and nature finally adhered to the perfect form of seeing man through nature in the 'Rāghuvaṁśa' and the 'Sākuntala'. Majesty and perfection are the two words easily suggested by the 'Meghadūta' and in this the stately metre 'mandākrāntā' has its full contribution. For the metre itself is a replica, as it were, of the season in as much as the first part of each foot seems to suggest the roaring thunder, the second part the quiet lightning and the copious rains and the third part the howling winds. The rise and fall of the syllables are uniquely reminiscent of the Indian rainy season.

The works begins, majestically and with a sombre note, from Rāmagiri, in whose cool penance groves Rāma and Śītā of old lived in their exile and where now lives a 'yakṣa' in exile for a year from his dear bride due to the curse of his master caused by neglect of duties on his ('yakṣa') part. There the love-lorn 'yakṣa' beholds, after lapse of eight months, on the 1st of Āṣā, a mass of cloud crouching upon the hill and is sick at heart pining for his distant spouse. In order to save her life, at the advent of the rains, he, being love-mad propitiates the
cloud with wild flowers and addresses it, though it be an inanimate object. Tagore said the poet could do away with this prosaic explanation justifying his poem, because a lyric poet had such normal liberty. We, however, think Kālidāsa is right in furnishing the explanation because lyric in the modern sense was unknown in those days when such explanation was called for and necessary. However, this address, which constitutes the rest of the poem, begins thus — 'Thou art born of glorious clouds and I beg thee for my far away love. Thou art the resort of those who are weary. Thou must go to the city of Alakā where dwells Lord Śiva and carry message to my beloved. The wives of the travellers will see thee happily floating along the sky. The breeze, now, blows gently, 'cātaka' to thy left is singing sweetly and cranes in rows will soothe thy eyes whilst thou wilt fly. Thou must see my wife who only lives in hope for me. Swans, hearing thy thundering that causes the ālindhras to sprout, will pick up lotus plants and accompany thee as far as Alakā. Hear from me, first, thy way and then thou shalt hear the message delightful to hear. When tired, thou shalt rest upon the hills and when thirsty, thou shalt drink the waters of the springs.' Thus saying, the 'yakṣa' continues his address to the last. He says that the humble siddha brides will look at the cloud in wonder, when it will start to fly, as to whether the peak of the hill itself is flying with the wind. The rain-bows, like a collection of the lustre of gems, shines forth brilliantly before its flight which will enhance its beauty. The cloud is
the friend of the tillers of land, and so their humble wives will look at it with their frank, wistful eyes. Now, the cloud should turn a little toward the west and then, again, it should fly to the North. The intention of the poet is to describe his favourite lands up to the city of Ujjayinī, where he lived. Besides, he wanted to avoid the route described in the 'Rāmāyana' in connection with Rāma's return from Lāṅkā to Ayodhya. In the 'Raghuvansā' 13th canto, however, the maturer and more confident poet describes the same route but with immensely more beauty and variation in aspect. The wild fires of the Āmrakūṭa mountain will be extinguished by the rains of the cloud and so it will gratefully bear the tired cloud upon its crest. Mangoes ripen in plenty on the sides of that mountain, and with the cloud upon its crest, it will verily look like the breast of the mother Earth. Then the cloud will fly further and see the stream Revā lying scattered at the foot of the Vindya mountain, like the decoration on the elephant. The cloud should take its water which is scented with the ichor of wild elephants and whose currents are flushed against the groves of blackberries, for one who is full cannot be assailed while a light being is easily slighted. The deer will see the first blossoms of the Kadamba trees and they will taste the first sprouts of the 'kandali' plants and inhale the delightful flavour of the earth, and thus they will indicate the path of the cloud. Though flying fast for the 'yakṣa's sake, the cloud will rest awhile on mountains, fragrant with the 'kakubha' blossoms, which will welcome it with the cries of soft-eyed
peacocks. But it has to go fast, and then the beautiful Dasārṇa country will emerge before it — Dasārṇa where, in the advent of rains, the white 'ketsaka' flowers grow in the hedges of houses, where banyan trees on squares are humming with nestling birds who live on the householders' food, where forests are beautiful with ripe black berries and where even swans going to the Mānasa lake rest awhile among its beguiling charms. The cloud will attain the fruit of a lover at its capital Vidisā on the river Vetravaṭī because it will drink the water of that stream, like kissing its face. There it will rest on the Nīcaḥ hill blooming with 'kadamba' flowers and carrying the wild odour of youthful lovers sporting in its stone-houses. Having rested awhile it should fly again while sprinkling drops of fresh water upon rows of 'yūthikā' blossoms growing on the banks of wild streams and delighting the lovely faces of tired flower-gathering girls. Now, the cloud should swerve a little to the west, for it must not miss the beauty of the magnificent city Ujjayini where ladies in their palaces will beguile it with their moving glances timid through its flash of lightning. The Nirvindhā stream, on its way, will beguile it with its rows of birds and flowing currents, so the cloud should take its essence i.e. water. The stream Sindhu, now with thin water and brown with fallen leaves will look like its lady love, so it should sprinkle it with water. Then the cloud should pass through the Avanti country where old village folks are expert in narrating tales of Udayana, and reach the afore-mentioned capital city of Ujjayini, vast and prosperous,
which lies spread out, like a part of paradise. There the gentle breeze of the stream Śiprā fragrant with full-blown lotuses and causing the ever-growing sweet notes of the ‘sārasa’ birds takes away the fatigue of women in the morn. There the cloud should rest on its flower-scented palaces, puffed up with the smoke for drying ladies’ hair and delighted with the dance of peacocks and with the quaint foot prints of ladies on their floors. Then the cloud must visit the great temple of Mahākāla, on the stream Gandhavatī, whose gardens are shaken with the waves of breeze. Even at other times, the cloud should visit the Mahākāla and serve the Lord with its sonorous thunders. There dancing women will greet the cloud with their large glances for its first and pleasant showers. There in the evening, the cloud, wearing a red hue, should furnish the blood-stained elephant skin, as it were, at the time of the Lord’s dancing. In that city, the cloud should, by its soft lightning, show the path to the women on way to their lovers during dark night without frightening them with its thunders. Then the cloud should, again, march on, and reach the river Gambhirā and enter into it, as it were, by its shadow, which will cast its glances like a lady love, with its flickerings of small fishes. The river with its thin water, like scant dress, will be very hard to leave. On way to Devagiri mountain, the cool and fragrant breeze from its forests, which is drunk by the elephants and which ripens wild ‘udumbara’ fruits, will soothe the cloud. There on the Devagiri,
it should shower Skanda, son of Lord Siva, with rains of flowers and make His favourite peacock dance with its thunders. Thereafter it will see the river Carmanvati, flowing like the fame of Rantideva, born of the blood of slaughtered cows of that king. When trying to draw water from its stream, the cloud will appear as a thick blue diamond among a string of pearls from above. Then it should go straight to the city of Daśapura and be an object of the beautiful glances of its ladies. Then follows the country of Brahmāvartta where Arjuna once felled the lotus-like faces of the king by his shafts. Next comes the river Sarasvati whose pure waters even Balarāma sipped forsaking his favourite wine. Next, near Kanakhala, the descent of the river Jāhnavī from the Himalaya where its waters burst into lusty streams. The dark cloud, in drawing its water, will look like the river Yamunā united with the Gangā. Then comes the snow-clad Himalaya whose stones are fragrant with the Kastūrikā deer and where the cloud should now take rest. If there is a wild fire due to the friction of Devadāru trees destroying the tuffs of hair of the 'cemari' deer, then the cloud should drown it with its heavy showers. The 'sārabha' deer who are apt to jump too high should also be scattered with hail storms by the cloud. Slabs of stones are there bearing the holy foot print of the Lord Siva. The bamboo trees make sweet sound with their holes filled with air and the 'kinnara' women sing and dance there. Then the cloud should pass through the hollow lane on the Himalaya called the 'Kraunca randhra' and drift towards the North. Thereafter it should arrive at the
Kailāsa mountain, glistening white, standing as the loud laughter of the Lord heaped up, as it were. The blue cloud on that white mountain should curve its body like a stair case for Gaurī to climb above. Goddesses will surely draw its water out with the friction of their hard bangles. The lake Mānasa is there also where bloom golden lotuses and the cloud should enjoy its stay there. And the city of Alakā is on that mountain, lying like a lady on the lap of her lover, which on its lofty palaces bears raining clouds, as a lady bears her pearl-laden locks of hair.

Here ends the 'Pūrvamegha.'

The 'Uttaramegha' begins with an sublimely enchanting description of Alakā where towering palaces with beautiful ladies, pictures, music and marble floors resemble the clouds with lightning, rainbow, rumbling thunder and water, respectively, where the ladies are blessed with decorations in the form of flowers of all seasons round the year, where there are perpetual flowers, bees, lotuses, swans, peacocks and moonshine, where there is eternal youth, tears only of joy and pangs and feud only of love, where the 'yakṣas' enjoy, with their beloved, in marble palaces, the wine of the wish-yielding tree, while the clouds thunder, where girls play with gems among golden sands being soothed by the breeze of the Mandākinī and the shade of the Mandāra trees, where, when their lovers take away their dress, the girls throw golden sands, in vain, upon lamps of gem, where clouds spoil pictures in lofty palaces and steal out, like thieves, through the windows, where
Candrakānta gems on windows, in the dead of night, effuse water drops being kissed by moon beams and thus cool the fatigue of women due to love sport, where affluent lovers, with Kinnarasa singing sweetly, enjoy, chatting and dallying, in the pleasure garden called Vaibhrrāja, where the path of women stealing in night, to their lovers is indicated by the flowers, decoration and ornaments fallen from their person, where Cupid for fear of Lord Śiva dwelling there, does not often carry his flower-bow, the purpose being well served by the meaningful glances of clever women and where the wish-yielding tree alone furnishes all decorations, ornaments and wine, and, in fact, everything to the women in love. In that Alakā, is the abode of the yakṣa, with a gate towering like the rainbow, where there is a young Mandāra plant reared by his beloved, where there is a pond, with stairs of emerald, strewn with golden lotuses, which attract even 'mānasa-going swans in the rains; on the bank of which there is a pleasure hill, with peaks of Indrānīla and surrounded by golden plantains and where a red Aśoka and a Kesara tree beautiful with moving foliages are there near the Mādhavī bower, are dear to his darling, between which there is a golden stand where lives the peacock which dances to the tune of his wife's bangles. Such is the house of yakṣa, with the picture of a conch and a lotus drawn upon the door, which is now devoid of beauty due to his absence. The cloud should rest on that pleasure hill and cast its glance of faint lightning into the house, where there should
be his darling dear, frail, of golden hue, red-lipped, with fine teeth, slender in waist, with the glance of a timid deer, with a deep naval, leisurely moving with heavy hips, stooping a little with blooming breasts, and who thus seems to be the finest creation of the creator. She, now forlorn and almost mute, is the very soul of the yakṣa, and through suffering all these months, looks like the lotus plant frozen in dew. Her face, with tear-swollen eyes and with dried lips, placed in her hand, half seen through her long tresses of hair, resembles the moon among the clouds. The cloud may find her giving offering to gods or drawing the portrait of her lord or asking the she-parrot in the cage whether she yet remembers him, or trying to sing a song in his praise on the lyre but unable to set string wet with her tears or perhaps counting the remaining days of separation with flowers or dreaming the bliss of union with him. The nights are more lonely and so in the middle of night the cloud should from the window see her, waking on the floor. She, being emaciated and on her one side, will look like the thin orb of the moon in the East and will pass the long and tedious night in tears. She, with her eyes full of tears glancing at the moon beam and then turned away from it, will look like a lotus plant half open and half closed on a cloudy day. She, with her hot sighs removing her long tresses of hair and desiring of union even in a dream, will try to sleep, but sleep will not come to her tearful eyes. She will remove her rugged hair from her cheeks with one hand and her lovely but thin person, now shorn of all ornaments, will
cause even the cloud to shed its tears of rain. The 'yakṣa' is sure of all this, for he knows her love. At the sight of the cloud, her eyes half hid in hairs and with a straight look due to her not touching wine, will surely tremble and her tender left thigh, now devoid of its pearl chain, will also quiver. If then she is asleep awhile, the cloud should quietly wait and should not disturb her embrace in dream. Thereafter the cloud should wake her up with a cool breeze and with lightning inside, should quietly address the revered lady with her sad eyes at the window — 'I am thy husband's friend come to thee carrying his deer errand, I am a cloud who causeth travellers to rush to their darling wives.' Thus said, she will intently hear the cloud, like Sītā hearing Hanumān, for the message of love is akin to love itself for women. Then the cloud should say, 'thy consort on the Rāmagiri mountain, who is safe himself, asks for thy welfare. Thy hapless lord at a far away place enters in a dream, thy body, which is thin, hot, eager, full of tears and breathing hotly, with his own, which also is thin, hot, eager, full of tears and breathing hotly. He, who once used to whisper into thy ears for gaining the touch of thy cheek, though the words be nothing secret, being now far away from thee, doth thus address thee, through me — 'I see thy body in the Syāmā creepers, they look in the affrighted deer wives, thy face in the moon, thy locks in the peacock tails and thy knotted brow in the waves of the brooks, but alas! I do not see thy like anywhere. When I draw thy portrait on stones and I am about to fall at thy feet,
tears rush in my eyes and alack! they blight my vision of thee. When I stretch out my arms for an embrace with thee, gained in dream, large drops of tears fall on the foliages of trees, while the deities of the grove look on. I embrace the wind, blowing south from the Himalaya, fragrant with the juice of Devadaru leaves, for perchance it might have touched thy body too. How my nights may be shorter and how my days may be made cooler — only my soul, dreaming thus, in vain, been made disconsolate with sorrows of separation from thee. But I hold with fortitude and so shouldest thou, for happiness and sorrow come, in turn, to a man's life. Thou should somehow pass the remaining four months, and then we will enjoy ourselves to the full in the nights of autumn glowing with the moon light." Your lord further says, "Once thou wert awake from sleep, crying aloud, and being asked by me thou didst say, with a smile, that thou hast seen me enjoying another woman. From this secret proof, thou must trust me as hale and hearty and devoted to thee, dear, for love grows ever more in separation." Thus saying, the cloud should return to the yakṣa with her confident message, of course, and save his life as well. In conclusion, the yakṣa hopes the cloud, though silent, has accepted the task, and whether through friendship or pity, having performed this rather unusual task, it may, thereafter, float over cherished lands, majestically in the rains, and let there be no such separation of the cloud, as his, from lightning, its dear darling.
We have given above the contents of the Meghadūta, in a much greater detail than with regard to the other works of the poet, of course mostly shorn of its superb poetical flourishes, because it is comparatively a very short work and yet represents in many ways, the zenith of his achievement as a poet. Almost the whole work is a long soliloquy, so to say, being an address to an inanimate object i.e. the cloud at the advent of the rains, which, however, appears to be almost instinct with life. In course of that animated address of the forlorn 'yakṣa' imparting his earnest message to his love-lorn wife, he urges it to float aloft high heaven across the various lands, hills, dales, forests, streams, countrysides and cities and describes each one of them wistfully and vividly in superb verses. In the 'Vikramorvāśīya', though his darling is a celestial beauty, the king's intensely passionate love has yet something earthly in it, even as he treads the wood-land earth, with its grossness as well as vivacity and the agonising pangs of his heart bespeak earthly convulsions and earthly thunder. But, in the Meghadūta, as the imagination of the demigod has taken to wings, his love-sick heart has found relief in its elevated outpourings urging the God-sent cloud-angel to come to his aid and in portraying, with nostalgic passion, the underlying glories of loving nature and loving mankind, that had been laid bare below its charmed flight to its cherished destination.

Apparently the 'Pūrva-megha' the depicts nature and the 'Uttara-megha' the 'yakṣa' s bride and her surroundings. The principal
sentiment i.e. `vipralambha śṛṅgāra' has been magnificently nourished by the subsidiary sentiment i.e., `sambhoga śṛṅgāra'. The mythological allusions are all most appropriate and beautiful. The poet's philosophy of love has been suggested in `svā-dhikārapramattah' in the `Bṛhmaśēgha' and `snehanāmāḥ kimapi viraha ...' in the `Uttaramegha'. One may love, but one must do one's duty or `dharma' before or while one may love. One's love must be `dharma-viruddha' (wholesome or good). And languishing love increases its power and becomes purified and stable. Hence `vipralambha' is necessary even for `sambhoga', as `Na vinā vipralambhena...'. This is not only a formal or poetical necessity. It is a spiritual necessity. So, our poet's śṛṅgāra truly culminates in `sāntapraśya śṛṅgāra'. Tagore and others have interpreted the `Meghadūta' as an eternal quest of man for his god or deity — an entirely spiritual interpretation. The poem is, in fact, a song of love of man for woman and of woman for man, culminating in its ultimate significance, in the love of man or woman for his or her god.

At last we take up the `Raghuvaṃśa', the poet's mellow-epic. We have seen earlier that the Indian critics call the poet `Raghuvaṃśa' and not `Śākuntalakṛt'. Possibly, the Indian people were more epic-minded than drama-minded. Besides, it must be remembered, compared to the `Raghuvaṃśa', the `Śākuntala' is rather a small piece so far as volume is concerned. When the `Mahābhārata' is judged by both its quality and volume — `Mahāvād bhāravatvācchā...' — and is acclaimed as a great epic (to the Indians it is `itihāsa' and `purāṇa', though also `kāvyā'), it is
not surprising that in the domain of pure poetry the 'Raghuvamsa' with its volume as well as mellow perfection will hold its unrivalled sway over the readers of Sanskrit literature. The contrary impression created by the saying — 'Raghurapi kavyam tadapi ca pāthyam / tasyāpi ca ṭīkā sāpi ca pāthyā // — is no doubt, issued from some sophisticated scholars who were more fond of the over-laid compositions like the 'Naiṣadha carita', etc. characterised more by verbal wit and learning than by genuine poetry or finished art. This 'Raghuvamsa', composed of as many as 19 full blown cantos (or 'sargas' as they are called in Sanskrit meaning 'creations') is, no doubt, a veritable paradise for poetry-loving people as it is equivalent to 19 separate creations of the poet put it one. To experience the 'Raghuvamsa' is to witness the Viṣvarūpa itself in miniature in the realm of poesy. It may be said this is also true of other Mahākāvyas, but their quality differs. When they are very often dull, tedious and uninspiring, the 'Raghuvamsa' reminds one of Mañgha's saying — 'Kṣaṇe kṣaṇe yannavatāmupaiti tadeva rūpaḥ ramaṇīyatāyah — it is profoundly interesting, enchantingly beautiful and spiritually instructive in almost every verse and every line of its long 19 cantos. Late Pandit Iswardhanda Vidyāsāgar observed the 'Raghuvamsa' is infinitely the best among all Sanskrit Mahākāvyas taken both as a whole as well as in its every part. This is no exaggeration, but a statement of fact ('Bhūtārthnābhāvyāḥ śā hi na stutiḥ ...') as vouchsafed by every competent lover of Sanskrit poetry. In short,
it is an encyclopaedia of poetry (kāvyābhidhāna koṣa) as it were, and from that stand-point, Kālidāsa's poetic equivalent to the great 'Rāmāyana' as well as the 'Mahābhārata'.

The very title of the 'Raghuvaṃśa' signifies the poet's preference for Raghu as the creator of the dynasty of which Rāma is undoubtedly the greatest king and thus our poet has sought to avoid any undue competition with Vālmīki, his 'pūrvasūrin', though it may be boldly said that if Vālmīki excelled in sheer poetry, Kālidāsa excelled in sheer art. The beginning of the epic also is significant for, as we have seen earlier, in the very first verse in course of invoking his favourite deities he had the only occasion in his entire works to suggest the true nature of poetry itself which is the despair of even the ablest of critics. Then here alone our poet has opened his mind about himself and his art and this coupled with his pronounced humility unmistakably suggest that the 'Raghuvaṃśa' was the greatest undertaking of his poetic career. This introduction to the 'Raghuvaṃśa' is, therefore, very important to understand the poet and his art.

We are making a few quotations from the 'Raghuvaṃśa' because it is, undoubtedly, the highest fruit of Kālidāsa's poetic endeavour. The great epic begins uniquely with his solitary formulation of his concept of poetry which has been already briefly discussed in chapter II. The unity of word and meaning in poetry—has been beautifully suggested there with a sublime imagery on the
force of the simple word 'vāk', instead of the word 'śabda', being coupled with the word 'artha', like that between the ever-united deities of love, Pārvatī and Paramesvara. Then follows his brief personal introduction already touched upon by us. Then the poet narrates logically a list of the qualities of the Kings of the dynasty of Raghu which will be exemplified later severally in beautiful poetry. The keynote to this is the possession of the finest and noblest qualities, physical, mental and spiritual that always bend towards doing good to others. Then begins the poet's conception of an ideal monarch in the form of a grand description of Dilīpa both as a king and as a man, ending with 'Tama vedhā vidadhe nūnām mahābhūtasamādhinā / tathākie sarve tasyāsan parārthaikaphalā guṇāh//' meaning that he must have been created by the creator with the basic materials of the five great elements of nature and thus all his qualities, even as those elements, are meant only for doing good to others, so that in brief, he is, as were, an element of nature himself (this may be contrasted with Shakespeare's description of Brutus — 'All nature could stand and say, "he was a man"'). Such a king and his queen Sudakṣiṇā, very much his equal, have no issue even after long years. They then set out for the hermitage of their preceptor, sage Vasiṣṭa; for finding out a solution to their problem. They ride a single chariot and pass through calmly delightful nature, talk with the common folk on their way, and reach the holy hermitage, serenely beautiful in the evening. They duly worship the great sage and his consort Arundhatī. The king, himself a
sage, as it were, in the hermitage of the state (राज्याधरममुनि), being asked for the welfare of his state, submits all is well through the grace of the great sage, but for their lack of issue which torments them severely. Thereafter the sage meditates for a while and discloses the cause of their misfortune. To alleviate this, they have now to propitiate her daughter Nandini, who immediately turns up before them. The royal couple readily agree.

The king did once ignore the wish-yielding celestial cow Surabhi and because dishonour to the venerable ones holds up good ('प्रतिबद्धनाति हि स्रेयः पूज्यः पुजायत्तिक्रामः'), they should now propitiate her daughter Nandini. They pass the night quietly in the hermitage. The description of the kingly qualities of Dilipa, of the royal couple’s pleasant journey through the forest, of the holy hermitage of Vasista and the dialogue between the sage and the king are superb pieces of poetry, and are an infinite improvement upon the style of Valmiki, the poet’s पुरवसुरिं. Above all, the spiritual significance of royal modesty and royal service before the majesty of the great sage and the divine cow, intended for the welfare of the state and the people, is never to be missed.

The 2nd canto describes the propitiation of Nandini by the royal couple, in particular, by the king, who sets out in the morning, with the cow for the forest and serves her in every possible way. The king, in his humble dress, following the cow is welcome by the deity of the forest. In the evening, they
return to the hermitage and the royal couple continues to serve the cow with the greatest devotion. Thus three weeks pass by. Then the cow, in order to test the king, enters a Himalayan cave. The king suddenly sees a lion upon the cow and is about to draw an arrow. But he is unable to do the same and is addressed by the lion. It says that it is a servant of Lord Śiva now turned into a lion and that it must have the cow as its food. The king says though he is helpless he offers himself as the lion's food as he must protect his preceptor's cow. Thereafter the lion replies with a laughter that the king appears to be a fool as he is about to forsake his all — his lordship of the earth, his youth and his beautiful person — for a mere trifle ('Ekātapatraṁ jagataḥ prabhutvaṁ navaṁ vayaḥ kāntamidaṁ vapuṣca / alpasya hetor bahu hātumicchan vicāramūḍaṁ pratibhāsi me tvam //'. The king should save himself and serve his people by offering substitute cows, in billions, to his preceptor. Then the king majestically replies that, as a Kṣatriya, it is his duty to protect the life of the cow who is Suravi's daughter, even at the cost of his own life. Let the king live in his fame, not in his mere body and let the lion please agree. It agrees, and as it is about to jump upon the king serenely ready for the ordeal, lo and behold! a rain of flowers, and not the lion, falls upon the amazed monarch. Then he hears the sweet voice of the cow, 'I have tested thee, my boy, none can kill me. I am pleased with thee for thy devotion, for thy preceptor and for me. Ask for thy boon.' Thereupon he prays for an able son. The cow asks him
to milch her and drink the milk. He wishes to do the same in
due course with his preceptor's permission. The cow is all the
more pleased and they return to the hermitage. Thus the royal
couple obtains their boon and comes back to the capital, where
the queen soon becomes pregnant. Two things seem to be out-
standing in this superb canto of which the first is the brilliant
dialogue between the king and the lion, in particular, the king's
magnificent and absolutely self-less reply revealing his extra-
ordinary character, and next, the underlying spiritual signifi-
cance that, besides service being before self, it is only by severe
penance and selfless devotion that anything worthy can be achieved,
and this is true even of the lord of the earth who has need of a
son to protect his kingdom and his people. Above all, the poetry
in which all this has been conveyed, is, as far as we can judge,
absolutely flawless and perfect and is one of the finest in this
epic and in entire Kālidāsa. Its sonorous metre - rather the
poet's sonorous treatment of the metre - which is unrivalled and,
above all, its dramatic interest and heightened quality must en-
der itself to every reader of Sanskrit poetry. From the artis-
tic standpoint, it is a sheer beauty in words and is one of the
examples of perfect poetical composition.

The 3rd canto begins with a delightful description of
the queen's much sought for pregnancy. She now wears a yellow
face in an emaciated body. The king smells her face and finds
not satiety. He asks her companions about her desires and insta-
tantly meets them. The queen gradually grows in bulk and her
breasts swell. All rites duly performed, she, now fully pregnant, looks like heaven heavy with rain clouds. And then she gives birth to a glorious son under most auspicious stars. All nature rejoices. The lamps around the mother, dimmed by the resplendence of the new-born baby, look like painted lamps. The king is mad with joy and releases all prisoners. Great festivity begins. The boy is named Raghu. He grows from day to day and delights his parents. Their mutual love grows through the love of their son. Raghu grows up into a magnificent young man, strong in body and strong in spirit and possessed of all the lores. He is married to princesses. Brave, yet humble, he is made the crowned prince and becomes the king's ablest ally. The king, placing him in charge of protecting the sacrificial horse, performs his 99th sacrifice. Then the king begins his 100th sacrifice and Indra steals his horse. Then suddenly Nandini turns up and having washed his eyes with her holy water Raghu sees Indra taking away the horse. He tells Indra that he should return the horse. Indra replies that he must protect his fame and none but he can perform a hundred sacrifices. So Raghu should go back. Thereupon Raghu smilingly challenges a combat and begins to fight to which Indra replies in like manner. Then begins a fierce battle between the two armies but Indra cannot subdue Raghu as the cloud cannot quench its own fire with its rains ("Svataścyatena vahnimadbhirambudaḥ"). Then Indra hurls his thunderbolt upon Raghu and Raghu falls in a swoon, but in a moment he rises again.
Then Indra says, 'I am pleased with thee. What dost thou want save the horse?' Raghu replies, 'If the horse cannot be spared, dost thou make my father gain the entire fruit of the sacrifice.' It is granted and they part. The proud king heartily welcomes the not-so-happy son. Then he retires placing Raghu on the throne. The extremely delicate descriptions of the queen's impending motherhood and the motherhood itself, Raghu's most charming childhood and magnificent youth and his brave encounter with the Lord of gods himself and his eventual triumph are special features of the canto. All this portends Raghu will soon become a mighty warrior and unchallenged conqueror as we shall see in canto IV.

In the 4th canto, Raghu shines all the more being now the king and people delightfully welcome him even more than his father. He is unique in every respect and just in administration. But his enemies are envious. As the moon is called Chandra because it delights and the sun is called Tapana as it produces heat, so he wears the significant title Raja (i.e. one who pleases) for pleasing his people ('Yathā prahlādanāccandraḥ pratāpāttapano yathā / tathaiva sobhūdanvartho rājā prakṛtir añjanāt/'). As the new monarch reigns everything becomes new, as it were. Then autumn - the season of light clouds, warm sun, blooming lotuses, clear waters, passable rivers and dry roads - comes and goads him to a military expedition. He, therefore, duly sets out, along with his vast army, first to the east. Many kings surrender before him and pay him rich revenue. Thus he reaches the
shores of the eastern sea green with Tālī forests. The Suhma kings are wise to surrender. The Bānga kings resist with their navy, but they are crushed and pillars of victory erected on the Gangesic islands. Then they bow to him, who implants them again after uprooting them like the paddy plants of Bengal (‘utkhaṭa-pratiropitāḥ’). Raghu then marches on towards Kalinga and establishes his authority on the peak of Mahendra mountain. The Kalinga king fiercely resists with elephants, but yields. Raghu’s soldiers enjoy there betel leaves and wine made of cocoanut juice. Raghu, who conquers for fame and virtue (‘dharma-vijayī’), returns to the king his kingdom. Then he marches to the south and his army rests on the valley of the Malaya mountain, where fragrant Elā creepers and snake-infested sandal trees abound. The Pāṇḍya kings cannot bear his prowess. They pay him the best of their pearls of the sea near the Tamraparnī river. Raghu crosses over Malaya and Dardura mountains and marches to the western sea. The Kerala kings are lost. The western kings pay him revenue and the Trīkūṭa mountain becomes his monument of victory. Then Raghu marches to Persia through the land route. After a fierce battle he routs his enemies and the rest surrenders to him. His men drink wine in grape-bowers. Then Raghu starts on the northern route. His army rests on the river Sindhu where pollens of saffron flowers (‘kuṃkuma keshara’) stick to his horses’ manes. Raghu easily conquers the Hūpa and the Kamboja kings. Then he climbs the great Himalaya, where lions in caves fearlessly look at his army. His army delightfully rests there amidst its many
charms. He subdues the mountain tribes after a fight and receives a rich tribute from them. Then he marches to Kāmarūpa in the east and completes his victory by gaining a heap of gems from its king. He then returns and performs Viśvajit sacrifice, for he, like the clouds, receives only to give away to others ('ādānaṁ hi visargāya satāṁ vārimucāmiva'). At the end of the sacrifice he releases the captive kings who go to their countries which are now all under the sovereign sway of the emperor Raṅgu. This 4th canto along with the 6th describes the principle kings and kingdoms of India of the time of our poet and the special characteristic of each country. It is possible Kālidāsa might have accompanied Samudragupta in his great conquest.

The keen eye of the poet and his power of poetic description are extraordinary. His brief picture of the Himalaya is reminiscent of his description of the Himalaya in the 1st canto of the 'Kumārasambhava'. It is a conquest for fame and for sovereign authority and all the wealth that is gained through conquest is given away to the people. Such is our poet's portrait of the hero of his epic.

In the 5th canto, Kautsa, the disciple of the sage Varatantu, approaches Raṅgu, who has been reduced to a penniless state due to his having given all in the Viśvajit sacrifice, for money to give it as a fee to Varatantu. The king nevertheless welcomes him and asks about the welfare of the great sage, and offers to carry out any command of either of them. Kautsa,
in reply, expresses the purpose of his mission, and says he would better go elsewhere, as he has come too late. Raghu learns that the fee asked for is as much as 14 crores gold coins. He, however, requests Kautsa to stay awhile. He then wishes to seize the money from Kuvera, who, however, showers huge gold on his treasury. Raghu offers the whole amount to the sage, but he would not accept more than his due. Then the pleased sage says, 'no wonder a just king enjoys all the treasures of the earth, but unthinkable is thy power, who hast sucked thy desire from heaven too' (*Kimatra citaṁ yadi kāmasūrbhūr vṛtte sthitasyādhipataṁ prajānāṁ / acitanīyastu tava prabhāvo maṅgaṁ dyaurapi yena dudgḥā //*). And, through the blessing of the sage, Raghu gets a worthy son whose name is Aja. Aja is his father's equal in every respect, and he grows into a magnificent youth. Then a messenger comes from the king of Vidarbha inviting Aja to the svaṁvara assembly of the king's sister Indumati. Aja, with his father's approval, sets out with an army. They take rest, on their way, on the bank of Narmadā, where an infuriated elephant charges at them. The prince strikes the elephant with a shaft, and it assumes the form of a celestial being and says it is a Gandarva reduced to such state through the curse of a sage. Being now free, it offers the Gandarva weapon which the prince accepts. Aja then enters the capital of Vidarbha and is welcome by the king. He is led to his new abode, where he passes a restless night. At day-break, royal bards cheer him by their charming song, 'dost thou get up, o prince, night is over,
thou hast to hold the reign of thy father. Look! the moon too, hangs on the horizon and shakes off thy charm — the moon who has soothed all night the fair lady, thy face, being forsaken as thou hast been laid in sleep ("Nidrāvasēna bhavatāynchronously paryutsukavamavatā nisi khaṇḍiteva / lakṣmīrvindayati yena digantalambi sōpi tvadānanarucīṁ vijāhāti candraḥ/\). Dost thou open thy eyes. The morning breeze steals the fragrance of thy breath. Dew drops on the foliages of trees look like the graceful smile on thy lips ("Līlāsmītmē saḍasānārcciriva tvadīyaṁ"). Darkness melts. Thy elephants and horses also are awake. Flower garlands are drying up, lamps have lost the halo of their light, and hark! this parrot in thy cage is repeating our words of thy praise in its haunting tone.' The prince, thus awakened, leaves the bed and performs the morning rites, and being properly dressed and with lovely eyes enters the assembly of kings for the great 'svayamvara'. Raghu's extra-ordinary munificence, the strange elephant episode and the magnificent song of the royal bards are the special features of this canto — all being described in flawless and superb poetry.

The great 6th canto gives a beautiful description of the 'svayamvara' assembly. Prince Aja finds various kings seated on the thrones. At the very sight of the beauteous prince they are disheartened. He climbs the stairs and takes his seat. At that time, Grace, dazzling with resplendence, shines divided, as it were, among the various kings, like lightning among the clouds
Andjhe alone, among the kings, shines the brightest. Then after the preliminaries, Indumati enters in bridal attire seeking her husband ('paññivarā kāptavibāhavesā'). The kings became restive through desire. The lady in wait began to describe each suitor. First, she speaks of the king of Magadhā, the foremost among kings, who has performed many sacrifices and whose capital is Puṣpapura, where lovely ladies dwell. The princess refuses him with a modest nod. Next, she speaks of the lord of Ángha whom even celestial damsels desire, by whom the wives of his enemies have been made widows and in whom Grace and Learning have become united. But she does not like him for men are of various tastes ('Vinnarucirhi lokāḥ'). Then comes the lord of Avanti and who possesses a strong body and is a conquerer of kings, who living near Mahākāla, perpetually enjoys moon-lit nights and who has a series of pleasure gardens on the river Śiprā. Then comes the king of Anūpa, the descendent of the great Kārttavīrya who conquered Rāvaṇa, where Grace constantly dwells, who challenges even Parasurāma and whose palace is on the charming river Revā. Next comes the lord of Śūrasena, in whom all qualities dwell, who delights his friends and chastises his enemies, who lives in Mathurā on the Yamunā, who wears a priceless pearl and in whose kingdom the Vṛndāvana forest and the Govardhana hill are the special attractions. The lord of Kālīṅga comes next, who is the lord of the Mahendra mountain and of the great sea, who
is a great warrior and who lives on the very sonorous sea lined with the murmuring Tālī forests. Next comes the lord of Uragapura, who smears his body with Haricandana sandal paste, to whom the sage Agastya is a great friend, with whom even Rāvana had to make peace and in whose kingdom the valley of the Malaya mountain is a great attraction. Thus the princes, like a moving light, passes the kings, one after another, and they are steeped in gloom like houses on the royal road when the light passes on ('Saṅcāriṇī dīpasīkheva rātrau yaṁ yaṁ vyatīyāya patiṁvarā sā / narendraṁrgaṭṭa iva prapede vivarṇabhāvaṁ sa sa bhūmipālah//'). Kalidāsa is called 'Dīpasīkhā Kālidāsa' by virtue of this verse.

When Indumati approaches Aja, his right arm quivers. She sees him graceful in all his limbs ('sarvāvayavānavadyam!') and desists from going elsewhere. And then the lady in wait speaks, 'He is born of the race of Iksvāku, the lord of the Uttarakośala, who climbed on the back of Indra, turned into a bull, and destroyed the demons and who sat on Indra's throne along with Indra himself. He did not perform the 100th sacrifice only to avoid the displeasure of Indra. Absolute peace reigned in his kingdom where even women could move fearlessly in the open. His son Raghu is now the lord, who has performed the Visvajit sacrifice wherein he has given away all he had from his conquest of the quarters, and whose fame has spread in all directions. This prince Aja is holding the reign of his father. By race, by grace, by young age and by virtues such as modesty, etc. dost thou choose him, thy equal, as thy husband and so let the gem unite with the gold.
('ratmaṁ samāgačhatsu kāñcānenā'). Thereupon the princess chooses him with her graceful look and though she cannot speak, she feels exhilarated. The lady in wait says in jest, 'let's go elsewhere' but the bride eyes her with mock anger. The princess gently places the garland on his neck with the help of her maid and then the prince feels as if she has embraced him. All the people are delighted except the suitor kings on whom gloom descends. Here we have a vivid, and most beautiful description of a svayamvara assembly of those days which the poet must have witnessed himself and in course of this description we also have a picture of the kings and kingdoms along with the most special features of each. Above all, the poetry is enchanting. Magnificence, yet modesty and virtues of which modesty is predominant, are the key-notes of the beauty of this poem.

The 7th canto describes the marriage of Aja and Indumati and Aja's triumphant fight with the combined rival kings. Now, the marriage ceremony is held very much as in the 7th canto of the 'Kumārasambhava'. Only here the description is further compressed and mellowed than in the 'Kumārasambhava'. The ladies' mad rush to the windows to have a glimpse of the prince is as charming as ever and the identical verses have been used as in the 'Kumārasambhava'. They are so engrossed in seeing the prince that their other senses have, as it were, entered into their very eyes ('Tathāṁ ṛṣeṇḍriyavṛttiṁ sarvāṁ cakṣuriva praviṣṭāy): Both the ceremony and the feelings of the bride and the bridegroom...
are the same as before. The prince takes the hand of his bride, and they look into each other's eyes with a charming bashfulness (\textit{\textquoteleft}Tayorapāṅga-pratisāritāṁ kriyaśaṁpaṭtinivartitāṁ / hṛīyaṁ-\textquoteleft}traṅgāmaṁ asāśıre manojñām anyonyalollāṁ vilocanāṁ //'). After the ceremony is over Aja sets out for his kingdom along with his newly won bride and his army. The frustrated kings who are lying in wait for him now attack him in a body. Then follows a fierce and bloody battle between the two armies who fight desperately for victory. And the battle field shines verily like a drinking place of the god of death with fruit-like skulls, cup-like beavers and wine-like blood (\textit{\textquoteleft}śīlīmukhoṛṛtaśiṅrahphalāḍhyā \textquoteleft}eyutaiḥ śīrastraiśaṣakottareva / rāṇakśitiḥ śonātamadyakulyā \textquoteleft}rerāja mṛtyorive pānahhūmiḥ //'). This shows how the poet wishes to beautify even terrible things. What is terrible has become terribly beautiful in his hands. Aja fights valiently, but he is surrounded by the overwhelming number of his enemies. Then he uses the Gandarva weapon obtained on the way whereupon they all become fast asleep. But he does not take away their life, he only takes away their fame. Then the proud victor says to his bride, 'look! these men want to take thee from my hands'. She is at last happy, and though pleased she, due to bashfulness, cannot herself congratulate her beloved but do so through the words of her consorts even as the forest-grove, sprinkled with the drops of new rains, hails the mass of clouds through the sweet notes of the peacocks (\textit{\textquoteleft}Hṛṣṭāpi sā hṛīvijita na sākṣād vāgbhiḥ sakhīnām priyamabhyanandat / sthānī navāmbhaḥprṣatābhinvṛṣṭā \textquoteleft}.
mayūrakekābhīrivābharaṇām //). Thereafter the prince places his left foot on the heads of his enemies and returns to his kingdom along with his bride, who is, as it were, his victory in war, in person ('Samaravijayalakṣmīḥ saiva mūrtā brahmāva'). Raghu heartily welcomes his victorious son and his worthy bride, and then having placed him on the throne renounces the world. Arjuna's battle with the combined rival kings in the Mahābhārata is doubtless the source of our poet, but as usual, he has infinitely improved upon it in point of poetic art.

In the 8th canto, Aja ascends the throne and ably and justly rules the kingdom like his great father. He wins all his subjects and all kings by his just and temperate administration. Raghu wants to go to the forest, but at the request of his son he consents to live in a solitary place near the city. Both the young and the old kings achieve equal success in their endeavours — the former in his art of administration and the latter in his meditation — a contrast vividly described by the poet. Then Raghu dies and Aja performs his last rites. Thereafter Aja rules the earth as the paramount lord. He and Indumati have a son who is called Daśaratha. Aja's power is meant for removing the fear of the afflicted and his learning for honouring the wise. So, not only his wealth but his virtues also are intended for doing good to others ('Balaṁārttabhayopā́ntaye vīḍuṣāṁ satkṛtaye bahusrūtam / vasu tasya vibhorr na kevalāṁ guṇavattāpi paraprayojanā//'). One day, while the king is dallying with the queen in the pleasure
garden, a garden of celestial flowers falls from heaven upon her breasts and immediately falls down dead. The king also falls upon a swoon. Revived, he places his queen upon his lap and bursts into pathetic laments — 'Tender as thou art, thou hast been killed by tender flowers. But they do not kill me. Why hast thou forsaken me? My heart! dost thou burn! Life is so brief and uncertain. My beloved! dost thou appear and cheer me up. This thy mute face torments me. How I am to bear thy separation! Thy charming voice in the female cuckoos, thy playful slow-gait in the sweetly chirping female swans, thy moving glance in the female deer and thy dalliances in the creepers mildly shaken by the breeze do not uphold my grievous heart ('Kalamanyabhitasu bhāṣitāṁ kalahāṁśīṣu madālas̄ṣaṁ gataṁ / prṣatiṣu vilolamīkṣitāṁ pavanādhūtalatēṣu vibhṛamēṁ//'). 'Guruvyatham hṛdayaṁ na tveva-lambitum kṣamēṁ'). Thou hast also forsaken thy dear trees and creepers along with me. Today my patience is gone, my joy is lost, my song has ceased, my spring is devoid of festivity, the necessity for ornaments is no longer there for me and my bed is empty ('Dhṛtirastamītā ratiścyutā virataṁ gevamṛturnirutsavaḥ / gatamābharaṇaprayojanāṁ parisūnyaṁ sayanīyamadya me //'). Thou wert my housewife, my minister, my secret consort and dear disciple in the fine arts ('Grhiṁī sacivaḥ sakhi mithāḥ priya-śiṣyā lalite kalāvidau'). But now all is lost! Thus the king mourns and all nature mourns with him. After the queen’s last rites are performed, Vasiṣṭha sends his message of consolation to
Aja through a disciple which reads - 'Your queen was a celestial
damsel come down to earth through the curse of a sage whom she
tried to entice under Indra's command. The curse being over,
she has gone back to heaven. So dost thou rule the earth and
not mourn, for tears cannot bring her back. Death is the nature
of man, life is but an interim ('maranam prakṛṭih sārīrīnām
vikṛtjīvitamucyate budhaih'). So thou shouldst not mourn like
an ordinary mortal.' The king, however, with unmitigated grief,
lives 8 more years and then having placed his son on the throne
dies and meets his beloved in heaven. Here the poet also pro-
vides the wisdom of life, along with the pathetic lament, unlike
his 'Kumārasambhava', which alone can sustain a man or a king
through a grievous crisis.

The 9th canto, again, provides Kālidāsa's portrait of
an ideal monarch in the form of a description of Daśaratha as a
king. Though composed in a somewhat difficult and for an epic,
a typical style of 'yamaka', the description yet holds certain
points of merit in itself. Then follows a beautiful description
of the spring in the same 'yamaka' style. Though handicapped by
the self-imposed restriction, the description moves quite freely
and with a quiet intensity of passion. First, there is the
flower; next new foliages, thereafter the humming of the bees
and the cooing of the cuckoos and thus spring gradually appears
having come down upon the forest grove strewn with trees ('Kusuma-
janma tato navapallavāstadamu śaṭpadakokilākūjitam / iti yathā-
Shake off thy honour, it is no use quarrelling, for playful youth, once lost, does not, indeed, come back again — thus, as it were, speak the female cuckoos of the voice of love whereupon the wives begin to enjoy (Tyajata manamalah bata vigrahair na punareti gataṃcaturem vayah / parabhṛtābhiritīva nivedite smaramate ramate sma bhūjanah //'). Then begins a lively description of the wild hunting by Ďēgrātha followed by the tragedy, where the only son of the blind ascetics is wrongly killed and the king receives the curse, which, however, promises him a son. This 9th canto is somewhat unique with the 'yamakas' and with a variety of metres in succession. All this, however, is not without its significance, as some critics appear to think. First, Kālidāsa's treatment of these 'yamakas' is incomparably superior to that of Māgha or any other, showing thereby that even when the poet wishes to take, as it were, a temporary exile from the realm of high-charged imagination and adopted to write more formal poetry, so to say, unwillingly though, in deference to his established tradition, he is a complete master of his profession. In such portions, our poet and his poetry may be profitably judged. Secondly, the somewhat deliberate monotony of the description of spring and the rapid swing of metres in course of describing the royal hunting suggest lack of life and vigour of the fated king and the hunting being performed in a whirlwind fashion, as it were, portends the impending tragedy of the king and the fall of
the dynasty from its mighty height.

In the 10th canto, Daśaratha, being childless, begins a `putreṣṭi´ sacrifice. Meanwhile, the gods being oppressed by Rāvana, approach Lord Viṣṇu for redress, who just wakes up from meditation. They praise Him in a more mellowed fashion than in the 'Kumārasambhava' -- 'Thou art the supreme Lord of the universe, its creator, sustainer and destroyer. Paths of salvation are various according to the various scriptures, but they all merge in thee even as the various currents of the Gangā fall in the great ocean ('Bahudhāpyagamairbhinnah panthānāh siddhīhetavah / tvayyeva nipatantyogahā jāhnaviyah evāram //'). Thou art the destiny of man, and hallowed thy name which sanctifies him. Boundless are thy virtues and beyond our words. This is, however, a statement of fact about the supreme Lord, and not mere praise'('Bhūtārthavyāḥty-tiḥ sā hi na stutih parameṣṭhinah'). Then the Lord speaketh, 'I know thee oppressed by Rāvana who has grown powerful through the boon of Brahmā. I shall kill him in the person of Daśaratha's son in the battle and thou shalt have thy former glory.' Thus saying He disappears, and meanwhile a being appears in the sacrificial fire with some `cāru` in his hand. Daśaratha distributes it among the queens, who become pregnant and in due course give birth to four sons, Rāma, Bharata, Lakṣmana and Ṣatrughna. There is great rejoicing in all nature and flowers reign from heaven. The princes grow up along with the joy of their father. They receive education and their prowess knows no bound. The princes are
friendly to each other. In particular Rāma, and Lakṣmana, and Bharata and Śatrughna are especially fond of each other. They become very popular with the subjects as they shine with their prowess as well as modesty. And their proud father shines even more with great expectations. So, Rāma, the greatest king in the race of Rāghu and the hero of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa, is born and grows up. Here our poet has brilliantly summarised scores of cantos of the Rāmāyaṇa, his source of inspiration, in just a canto in flawless and superb poetry.

The 11th canto begins with the journey of Rāma and Lakṣmana along with Viśvāmitra to kill Tādakā with the permission of king Daśaratha. The two archer boys shine with their fickle steps and swaying hands like the two turbulent rivers, Uddhya and Vidya in the raṁs ('Viśiṭalabhujayostāryogatam āsāvācācampaḷama-pyasobhata/ toyaḍaṅgama iṇoḍhevyidvayor nāmādheya-sadṛśam vice-ṣṭiṭam //'). All nature serves them. Then Tādakā appears dark at the night and with ear-rings of skulls looking like a mass of black cloud with dranes flying in it ('Bahulakṣapacchevīṁ Tādakā calakapālakunḍalā Kālikeva nibidā valākini'). She sweeps upon Rāma who kills her with just an arrow and receives a powerful weapon, the slayer of demon, from the sage. Then, in the hermitage of Vāmana, a host of demons attacks him, but they are all defeated. Thereafter they are invited by Janaka, the king of Videha, where Rāma wants to win Sītā by breaking the bow of Lord Śiva. Janaka hesitates, but Viśvāmitra assures him. Then the
great bow is brought, and Rāma easily breaks it and wins Sītā. Dasāratha comes from Ayodhya and performs the marriage ceremony. On their way back, suddenly all nature takes a grim look and Paraśurāma haughtily appears before them. Dasāratha is puzzled, but Rāma is alert. Paraśurāma exclaims that Rāma has taken away his fame by breaking the bow of Śiva. So he should just fit the string to Paraśurāma's bow and prove his mettle. Rāma silently takes up the bow and subdues Paraśurāma who recognises him as Lord Viṣṇu. Rāma, though victorious, touches his feet; for humility toward the enemies, who have been vanquished by power, brings forth fame to the vanquisher ('Nirjīteṣu tasārṣa tasārṣvinām śātruṣu prañātireva kīrtaye'). Then they part from each other, and Dasāratha gladly embraces his victorious son. Thereafter they come back to the city of Ayodhya and are welcome by their people. Thus the poet summarizes scores of chapters of the Rāmāyaṇa in this brief but delicately beautiful canto.

The 12th canto contains another whirlwind summary of the 'Rāmāyaṇa' i.e. of a large portion thereof, made in fine poetry. Dasāratha has grown old and his favourite queen Kaikeyī seeks her two boons, which are granted; Bharata rules the kingdom from Nandigrāma by placing the pair of Rāma's sandals upon the throne, and Rāma gladly goes to the forest along with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā. Once while Rāma is sleeping in the lap of Sītā, a crow scratches her breasts whereupon Rāma pierces its
one eye with his arrow. Then they leave the Citrakūṭa forest, Śītā following Rāma with the fragrant ointment on her body, a gift from Anasūyā. Then Virādha, a demon, comes on their way and is killed by Rāma. While living in the Paścimaṭi forest, Śūrpa-ṇakhā, the sister of Rāvana, comes full of passion for Rāma and being rejected by both the brothers and laughed at by Śītā, assumes her terrible shape whereupon Laksmana cuts her nose with his sword. She goes back and reports the matter to the demons who sweep upon them and are destroyed in no time. Rāvana, having heard of this from Śūrpaṇakhā, feels grossly violated. He steals Śītā by deceiving Rāma and Laksmana who learn of this from Jātāyu. Rāma kills Bālī and installs Sugrīva in his place. The monkeys begin to search for Śītā. Hanumān finds her in Lāhkā, gives her Rāma's signet ring and having burnt Lāhkā comes back with hers. Rāma sets out with his army of monkeys. Vibhīṣaṇa sides with Rāma who promises him the throne, for devices taken in time bear forth fruit ("Kale khalu samārvadhāḥ phalam bandhānti nītayaḥ"). Rāma builds a bridge on the great sea and crosses it. Then begins a fierce battle between the monkeys and the demons. Śītā swoons on a false news of Rāma's death and is received by Trijāṭā. Garuḍa releases Rāma and Laksmana from the snares of Meghanāda. Rāvana's weapon pierces the breast of Laksmana who is revived by the herb brought by hanumān. Meghanāda and Kumbhakarṇa are killed along with the host of demons. Then Rāvana again comes out to fight, determined to make the world either without himself or without Rāma ('Arāmaṇamaraṁ mā jagadadyeti nisctah'). Indra
sends his car for the great battle. The fight between Rāma and Rāvaṇa becomes, as it were, really significant ('Rāmarāva-
ṇeyor yuddham caritārtham ivābhavat'). Rāma has regard for his
enemy, who, though one, appears to be many in his host of heads
and arms. They both fight valiently and the gods of heaven
showers flowers upon both. Then Rāma releases his Brāhma weapon
which at last kills his formidable foe — followed by a heavy
shower of celestial flowers upon the proud head of the conqueror.
Having tested the purity of Sītā in the fire and having placed
Vibhīśaṇa on the throne of Laṅkā, he sets out, along with his
host, on the aerial car for the capital city of Ayodhyā. Thus,
in this canto, the poet beautifully but briefly describes the
exploits of Rāma upto his final victory over Rāvaṇa in his own
inimitable poetical style. It is amazing to see how the poet
could summarise the events of hundreds of cantos of the Rāmāyaṇa
in a single brief canto as this.

The great 13th canto, perhaps the greatest in the
epic in poetic flight, sublime grandeur and nostalgic passion
begins with a description of the great sea in the words of Rāma
to Sītā while riding on the aerial car. The foamy sea, now,
bridged up to the Malaya mountain, looks like the starry sky
divided by the galaxy in autumn ('Āmalayād vibhaktām matsetunā
phenilamambūrāṣim / chāyāpatheneva sāratprasannamākāsāmāviskṛ-
tacārūtāram //'). It was dug by Rāma's ancestors, and it is the
great source of the sun's rays, the moon, the underneath fire
and of course, the gems. It is vast and sublime like the Lord Himself. Brahmā lies on this sea and mountains once resorted to it. After dissolution, the earth rose out of the sea. All streams fall into it. It is infested with fierce animals. Conch shells are thrown up by its waves upon the shore. With a cloud close to it being turned round by the force of its whirlpool it appears like being churned again by Mandara. The distant shore, blue with the line of Tamāla and Tālī forests, of the salt sea looks like the black hue attached to the fringe of the iron disc ('Dūrādāścakranivasya tanvī tamālatālīvane-rājinīlā / ābhāti velā lavyāmbiraśer dhārā-nibaddheva kalakka-rekha/'). Then they quietly reach over the shore from the receding sea where a fragrant breeze refreshes Sītā. Besides, the cloud touched by Sītā's hand hanging from the car's window flashes forth lightning and creates, as it were, a second bangle on her hand ('Kareṇa vātāyanalambitena sprṣṭastvayā canḍi kutūhalinyā / āmaṇccitāvābharaṇaṁ dvidiyamuddbhinnavidyadvalayo ghanaste/'). Then they pass over Janasthāna to which hermits have now returned. There Rāma points to Sītā the spot where Rāma found Sītā's anklet and was shown her way even by the creepers and deer wives. Then they came over the peak of the Mālyavat mountain where Rāma suffered unspeakable pangs of separation from Sītā. Then emerges the Pampa lake which witnessed the same sufferings of Rāma. Then they see the river Godāvarī and the Pañcavati forest where they once lived happily together. Gradually they cross over the sacred hermitage of
sage Agastya, the pleasure pool of the hermit Sātakarnī and the great ascetic Sutikṣaṇa and the hermitage of Sarabhaṅga who sacrificed his very life in the sacrificial fire. Then follow the Chitarkūṭa mountain and the river Mandākinī flowing serenely at a distance, like a string of pearls, on it ('Prasamastimitapraṇāḥ/mandākinī bhāti nagopakaṇṭhe muktāvalī kaṇṭhagateva bhūmeḥ //'), and the austere hermitage of the great sage Atri. Then follows a superb description of the confluence of the river Ganga and Yamunā mingled in their white and blue waters respectively as viewed from the above. Somewhere the Ganga, its stream being mingled with the waves of the Yamunā, looks like the moonshine stripped by dark shadows, elsewhere like the white line of clouds from which emerge portions of the sky ('Kvacit prabhā cāndramasi tamobhis chāyāvilīnaiḥ śabālīkrteva / anyatra śubhāś saradabhralekha randhresvivālāksyanavah-pradesāḥ//'). Then appear the city of Guhaka and the sacred river Sarajū which welcomes Rāma as it were, like his mother, with its arms of waves. Thereafter Bharata with his ministers and army comes to receive them who alight from the car. After mutual greetings, etc. they advance to dwell in a beautiful pleasure-garden on the outskirts of the city of Ayodhyā. Thus, in the 13th canto, which is the masterpiece within the masterpiece, which the epic itself is, he has created, out of a small event plainly and briefly described in the 'Rāmāyaṇa', a whole world of utter beauty and enchantment which, ranks with his very
best of the kind — with the great and unique Meghadūta itself. The description of the great sea and the fast emerging shores, of various places through which Rāma and Sītā roamed during their exile and persons with whom they were familiar, the confluence of the Gangā and Yamunā and their meeting with Bharata are without parallel in Sanskrit literature. It is also essential to note that the high elevation of style while the car was in the air and as soon as it starts to climb down the style takes an earthly note. The words of the poet himself truly describe the plight of his poetic imagination — 'Yathāvidhō me manasobhillāśaḥ pravartate paśyā tathā vimānaḥ' — in the case of the poet, this 'vimāna' is his 'kalparatha' or the car of his imagination. This high elevation together with sheer enchantment where Rāma describes his love-pangs, Sītā being lost and the rains beginning to appear, create a world of utter beauty beyond words. It is not a little less than the liquid essence of beauty being laid bare in its naked purity. Indeed, it is difficult to choose between this 13th canto of the 'Raghuvaṃśa' and the 'Meghadūta' itself. In all these cases, as the physical plane is elevated, so the style and poetry itself are elevated, and the total effect is an ineffaçably elevated, yet ripened enchantment. This mellow perfection of poetry or what may be called 'Kāvyapraudhipāka' is the highest attainment of Kālidāsa of which the other name is sheer grandeur.

In the 14th canto, Rāma, Laksmana and Sītā meet the mother queens and are blessed by them. Then after his coronation
is over, Rāma ascends the throne and justly rules his subjects. He is also just towards his mothers and brothers. As he is without greed, his people are wealthy, as he is the destroyer of all fear of troubles, they can perform sacrifices, as he is their governor, they have him as their father and as he wipes out their sorrows, they have a son in him (‘Tenārthavān llova-parāśānukhena tena ghnatā vighnahayām Kriyāvān/temāsa lokaḥ pitṛmān vitrā tenaiva sōkāpāṇudena putrī//’). Rāma and Sītā think of their sufferings in the Dandaka forest but their memories now delight them. They live happily together and Sītā conceives. On being asked to express her desire Sītā says, she wishes to go back to the hermitages on the Ganga. Rāma promises and climbs the top of his palace. He finds people happy and himself feels happy. Then he is shocked to learn from a spy the scandal about his marrying Sītā who was confined in Rāvana's abode. For a moment, he is puzzled to decide whether he should renounce Sītā or not (‘Dolācalacittavṛttiḥ’). Then he decides in favour of renunciation as fame to the great is most essential (‘Yośodhanānām hi yośo garīyaḥ’). He calls forth his brothers and discloses his mind before them. They are dumb-founded. Then he calls Lākṣaṃaṇa and orders him to leave Sītā in the hermitage of sage Vālmīki. Lākṣaṃaṇa has to reluctantly accept his command. Sītā, however, rejoices as she thinks her wish is being fulfilled. On their way, the waves of the Ganga swell to stop Lākṣaṃaṇa, as it were, from doing the dire deed. They cross the river and then Lākṣaṃaṇa utters the terrible
command. Sītā instantaneously sinks to mother earth. When she regains consciousness, she bursts into piteous lamentations. She does not, however, censure her husband, she only curses her own lot. Lakṣmana begs her pardon. Sītā blesses him and says, 'Dost thou say to the king whether it has been proper for thy great family to thus forsake me, already tested pure in the fire before thy very eyes, merely on the gossip of the people? But thou art ever gracious, ever kind to me. So, this must be due to my own misfortune. Now, whom should I approach for shelter, when thou art the lord of the earth? I would surely end my cursed life but for thy very child in my womb. Such as I am, I will try to practise penance with my gaze fixed on the sun till my child is born, so that, in the next birth, too, thou art again my husband and from thee there is no separation ('Sāhāṁ tapaḥ sūryaṁ-niṣṭadṛśtiūrdhāṁ prasūtacaritum yatiṣye / bhūyo yathā me janañāntarepi tvameva bhartā na ca viprayogaḥ/'). After Lakṣmana leaves, Sītā cries again piteously and all nature pities her. Then the kind sage Vālmiki comes and consoles her and offers her shelter in his hermitage. He says he is, indeed, angry with Rāma for his cruelty on her goaded by false scandal. She being the foremost among the faithful women is welcome to him. He then takes her to his hermitage and makes arrangement for her residence where she lives a sacred life. Meanwhile, when Lakṣmana reports the whole matter to Rāma the latter suddenly bursts into tears, like the cold
moon raining snow, because Sītā has been banished from his abode for fear of scandal, but not indeed from his heart ('Babhūva rāmāḥ sahasā sabāṣpastuṣṭarvasīva sahasyacandarāḥ/ kauḷīnabhītena grāṇṇivāstā na tena Vaidehasutā manastāḥ //'). Rāma, however, subdues his grief and rules his kingdom justly and properly but with a vacant heart. When Sītā hears that Rāma has not married again but has performed sacrifices with the help of her portrait alone, she somehow consoles herself of her unbearable grief. This 14th canto is another great creation. If the 13th is great in poetry, the 14th is great in character-study and dramatic effect. The climax has been reached here in Rāma's life. The sudden scandal of Sītā, Rāma's great conflict, his ultimate decision to banish Sītā, the banishment itself and the message of Sītā to Rāma and last but not least, Rāma's breaking down, his stern duty accomplished, before his loving heart have, to say the least, few parallel in literature. Rāma's noble will has been portrayed with unerringly perfect touches by the master poet. Those who seem to seek for tragedy and noble poetry in vain in Sanskrit literature may do well to read closely, besides the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata this 14th canto of 'Raghuvaṃśa', which is another masterpiece within the masterpiece which the epic itself is.

From the 15th canto, if not from the 14th, begins the tragic decline of the great solar race. Now, when Rāma, all alone, rules the earth, the hermits of the Yamunā region, being oppressed
by Lāvana, approach him and he sends off Sātrughna for the purpose. On way, Sātrughna passes one night in the hermitage of Vālmīki when Sītā gives birth to the twin sons Lava and Kusā. Sātrughna kills the demon after a fight and is blessed by the hermits. He then builds the fine city Madhurā and enjoys the beauty of the Yamunā. Meanwhile, Vālmīki teaches the Vedas to the sons of Sītā and makes them sing his work, the 'Rāmāyaṇa' which first shew the path to the poets ('Kavi-prathamapaddhatim'). The boys thus somewhat lighten the sorrow of their mother. Sātrughna next avoids the hermitage of Vālmīki where the deer stay motionless under the spell of the songs sung by the sons of Maithilī and return to Ayodhyā('Maithilīlītānayodgītānispandārgamāsrāmam'). He, however, suppresses the news of Rāma's sons under Vālmīki's instructions. Then Rāma rushes to subdue Śamvuka who, though a 'śūdra', is practising penance, in order to bring a brahmin's boy into life again. The feat accomplished, he is praised by the brahmin. Thereafter Rāma performs the horse sacrifice in which the golden image of Sītā represents her. Then Lava and Kusā come to the court and sing the songs of the 'Rāmāyaṇa'. The whole court is held in silent tears like the forest-grove in the morning where no wind blows and which sheds drops of snow ('Himani-syandini prātarnirvāteva vanasthalī'). The people finds Rāma's likeness on the boys' faces. Rāma is in a trance. He learns that they are his sons. He then goes to Vālmīki and gives his all to him. The kindly sage asks for the acceptance of Sītā.
Rāma asks for a fresh test of Sītā in the fire before the people to which Vālmīki agrees. Then begins the trial, where the much-tormented Sītā now cries for a shelter into mother earth. Earth appears, takes away Sītā with her last lingering look fixed on her dear Lord. Brahmā assuages Rāma’s wrath at this turn of events. Rāma now puts his affection for Sītā in her sons. Then Kāla, in a hermit’s disguise, comes and asks Rāma to go back to heaven under the direction of Brahmā. Laksmana, having been made by Durvāsā to break off the sworn word that he should not see the secret conference between Kāla and Rāma, goes to the shores of the Sarayū and gives up his life. Rāma, left alone, places his sons on separate cities and, with a firm resolve, sets out for the North followed, in love, by the entire people of Ayodhya. The monkeys and demons too, follow him. The celestial car appears and Rāma makes, for his people, the Sarayū the way to heaven. Rāma, himself in heaven, creates a new heaven for those who follow him to the last. Thus the glorious exploits of Lord Rāma come to an end. Here the poet describes, as usual, with a rare beauty and in a brief racy style the events of scores of chapters of the 'Rāmāyaṇa'.

In the 16th canto, Kuśā ascends the throne and the dynasty spreads out through him and his seven brothers. One night Kuśā wakes up and is surprised to see a lovely woman before him. She says she is the presiding deity of the city of Ayodhya which lies deserted and in ruins. The royal road where once trod the loving women in their bright and sweetly
jingling anklets is now being paced by jackals howling with their fiery mouths seeking for flesh ('Nisāsu bhāsvatakalanūpurāṇām yaḥ saṅcaroḥbhūdabhisārikānām / nadamukholkāvicītāmīsābhīḥ sa bāhyate rājapathaḥ śivābhīḥ //'). Wild animals and snakes infest places where human beings once lived. The river Sarayū lies barren. On the request of the Deity, Kuśa sets out with his vast army for the city of Ayodhyā. The army seeking various ways on the valleys of the Vindhya mountain, like the trumpet-tongued Revā, makes its many caves resounding ('Mārgai-śīni sa katakāñhareṣu vaiṃdhyeṣu senā bahudhā bibhinnā / cakāra reveva mahāvīrāvā baddhapratiśrunti guhāmukhāḥ //'). Kuśa crosses the Ganga and reaches the Sarayū. He rebuilds the city and enters it which now shines again in its former glory.

Then at the advent of summer the snow-clad mountain begins to melt. The day grows extremely hot and the night excessively thin and these, like husband and wife going each in a different way, become full of remorse, as it were ('Pravṛddhatapo divisotimātreṣyante kṣaṇadā ca tanyā / ubhau virodhakryayā vibhīmannau jāyāpati sānuṣayāvivāstām //'). As the summer grows, Kuśa wishes to bath in the Sarayū along with his wives. While the ladies come down the stairs on the shore dashing against each other's armlets with their feet jingling in anklets, the swans on the stream become restless ('Sākīrasopānapathi ca vaṭāvadanyonya- keṭṛavighattinībhīḥ / samūpurakṣobhapadābhīrāsidudbhignaṁ sa saريدāganābhīḥ//'). The stream becomes red with the ointment of ladies and their eyes though washed white shine with the glow
of passion. The ladies can hardly swim with their heavy hips. Drops of water make a second necklace on ladies' neck whence the original one is dropped. Women madly play in water with their scattered locks of hair and spray out water with their mouths. Kuśā climbs down from his boat and plays with them. After the sport is over, he finds his celestial armlet lost which has been kept by the sister of the snake-king living underneath. As Kuśā takes his arm, the waters swell and the snake-king appears and gives her in marriage to Kuśā to assuage his feeling by her life-long service. Thus ends the last burst, as it were, of the poet's imagination in his 'Raghuvaṃśa'.

In the 17th canto, Atithi, the son of Kuśā climbs the throne after the death of his parents. Then follows a description of the coronation ceremony of Atithi which resembles an eye-witness account followed by an elaborate description of the kingly qualities of the young but most competent king. A high pedestal on four pillars is erected and there the king is seated on his throne and holy waters lie in golden jars. Drums beat on sweetly and serenely. The king receives the auspicious things from his old kinsmen. Then the Vedic brahmins pour holy waters upon him along with the chanting of mantras while bards sing his praise. After the coronation the new king gives away riches to brahmins with which they can perform sacrifices and they, in turn, shower blessings upon the king which are merely superfluous for him. Prisoners are freed, those doomed to death are saved, beasts of burden are loosed and
milching of cows is stopped; even birds in cages are let free and they fly to their cherished destination. The decorators decorate the king with all kinds of brilliant decorations and the king shines as the prince of the presiding deity of royal fortune. Thereafter he enters the royal assembly and ascends his paternal throne. He becomes a really extraordinary king and he himself examines the grievances of his people. Young age, beauty and wealth — anyone of this trio is the cause of pride. He has all the three in one and yet his mind does not tend to be proud ('Bayorūpadibhūtīnāmekaikām madakāraṇam / tānī tasmin samastāni na tasyotśśīča manāḥ//'). He is firmly established in the hearts of his people. He is incomplete command of his senses as of his enemies and so fortune never leaves him. As mere policy is temerity, and mere prowess is brutal, so he seeks to achieve success with a blending of both ('Kataryyaṁ kevala nītiṁ śauryyaṁ śvāpadaceśṭitam / atāḥ siddhiṁ sametābhāyaḥbhāḥbhāyamanviyeśa saḥ//'). His counsel with his ministers is secret. He properly pursues the three objects of life — virtue, wealth and desire and does not hinder the one with the other. He follows the four kinds of royal policy and always achieves success. Even his suitors become givers themselves as they receive handsome gifts from him. He is glorious like the sun dispelling gloom from and imparting light and energy to his people. He is praised even by his foes. Thus he rules justly and properly and becomes, like Lord Indra in heaven, a king among kings on earth. This 17th canto, long-drawn
but meaningful to the last words, gives a vivid portrait of the coronation ceremony of Atithi — unmistakably from the poet's personal experience — the last picture drawn by the poet of his ideal king, showing the final glimpse of glories of the dying dynasty.

The 18th, regarded by all as the least charming, we consider as very significant. At long last, rot has set in. The great dynasty of Dilīpa, Raghu and Rāma is falling to pieces. Insignificant names for kings come and go. There is no one to hold the race to its former state of glory and achievement. There are no great names, great souls, great deeds, great goings. And in tune with all this the subtle and superb artist describes tersely and drily the names in their succession in a rapid swing of verses, much as in the 9th canto, with merely verbal rhythm and verbal music ringing in our ears pointing to the irony of the situation and the inevitable final tragedy. Besides, in all this, the poet has provided us with a good lesson in the art of poetical composition and versification.

The 19th and the last canto is a close parallel to the 8th in the 'Kumārasambhava' — though it is a vast improvement and perfection of the style and treatment of the same theme. Now, the tragedy has struck. The worthless debauchee, Agnimitra, the vide of a king, indulges in unrestrained dalliance and swiftly meets his inevitable end in consumption. The expectant widowed queen
reigns under the guidance of able ministers. Will she be able to turn the tide of misfortune? But she is a woman and the time is against her. Thus a great and glorious dynasty comes to a small and inglorious end. The light is out and darkness sets in. So ends the great 'Raghuvaṁśa'.