Chapter VII

The Fragments

Apart from five full-length plays, Sri Aurobindo has left behind half a dozen fragments of dramas. Whether these are fragments of dramas which, though completed by the dramatist, are not available in complete form, or they are fragmentary dramas, left incomplete by the dramatist himself, is not known for certain. It is not unlikely that the plays were written fully, but parts of them are now missing due to some reason, most probably, the ransacking of Sri Aurobindo's house by the police in connection with the Alipur Bomb Case in 1908. One casualty of the incident was The Viziers of Bassora which, by a stroke of good luck, got salvaged from Government Archives years later in 1951. But another work of Sri Aurobindo, which is a translation of Kalidasa's Meghadut (Cloud-Messenger), and which he himself mentions¹, is still not traceable. So, maybe, the missing parts of the fragments were lost in the medley of papers and documents seized from Sri Aurobindo's house, and they met the same fate as did the translation of Meghadut.

Incomplete as these plays are, the reader must give the reins to his imagination and use his own logic to offer explanations for their incompleteness. Dr. A.K. Sinha gives

¹. See Sri Aurobindo's Introduction to Collected Poems and Plays (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1942), and Collected Plays, B.C.L. Vols. 7 and 8, Bibliographical Note.
his reason for the incompleteness of *Prince of Edur*:

...the play took an unexpected turn when Sri Aurobindo in the third Act lavished his choicest art on the description of the natural beauty of the forest of Dongurh. Comol Cumary emerges in this Act as the queen of the forest (Vanadevi) and all the denizens and objects of the forest adore and worship her.... This drift from heroism to romance at least destroyed the unity of theme and introduced elements which were alien to the spirit of the play as it was first conceived by Sri Aurobindo. It was perhaps this realization that impelled the playwright to abandon the play at this stage.1

Though it is not possible to dismiss the view altogether, it is to be considered whether such a thing was possible in the case of Sri Aurobindo, who wrote *Prince of Edur* in 1907 when he had already written most of his dramas and by which time (i.e., after about fifteen years long literary career) even his apprenticeship2 as a playwright must have been completed. Doubtless, a more plausible reason of the incompleteness of the play is given by Dr. Prema Nandkumar: She says,"*The Prince of Edur*...had unfortunately to be discontinued because of Sri Aurobindo's arrest and subsequent incarceration in connection with the Alipur Bomb Case."3

This may be true of *The House of Brut* also which was written

2. "The unfinished plays (of Sri Aurobindo) complete Sri Aurobindo's apprenticeship as a playwright. Benefitting from his experiments, he goes on to write complete plays, thereby continuing his development as a playwright."
   
   S.S. Kulkarni, "The Plays of Sri Aurobindo", in *Perspectives on Indian Drama in English*, p. 2.
about the same time.

The fragments in their present form contain some hints regarding their original completeness or otherwise. The Witch of Ilni has Act III, scene i and part of scene ii along with some parts of an Act which perhaps immediately precedes it. A dramatist, perhaps, would not begin writing a play with its second or third Act. Besides, each of the fragments has its *dramatis personae* prefixed to it. This indicates at least that Sri Aurobindo had these dramas in his head even though he might not have been able to give them concrete shape.

As things now are, one only wonders what a niche in the temple of fame Sri Aurobindo would have had as a dramatist if the plays were completed, or not lost if they had been completed but lost.

The incomplete plays included in the Birth Centenary Library Vol.7 are as follows:

1. The Witch of Ilni
2. Achab and Esarhaddon
3. The Birth of Sin
4. The Maid in the Mill
5. The House of Brut
6. Prince of Edur

The Prince of Mathura is, perhaps, an earlier version of Prince of Edur. Therefore, it may not be regarded as fragment
of a separate play. Another fragment, containing two scenes, is Savitri which was published by Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry in 1951 and is mentioned by Dr. S. Krishna Bhatt in his Bibliography. This, however, has not been included in the Collected Plays volumes. B.C.L. Vol. 27 contains yet another fragment which seems to be the beginning of a play. It was found in Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts.

The Slaying of Congress: A Tragedy in Three Acts has been included in Bande Mataram, B.C.L. Vol. 1. But it does not find place in the Collected Plays volumes perhaps because it is not intended to be a serious literary work of the writer. Published on Feb. 16, 1908 in the Journal, Bande Mataram, by Sri Aurobindo, it may be regarded as an expression of his disapproval of the strategy of Moderate leaders in the Congress to hold the reins of the Party, so that they could conduct the National Movement in their own way. This might be described, in Sri Aurobindo's opinion, as slaying of the Congress. The play highlights the background to the split of the Congress at the Surat Conference in 1907, laying all the blame for the split on the Moderates. It has among its characters some real figures like Gokhale, Tilak,


Ferozshah Mehta, Suren (Surendra Nath Banerjee), etc. Like in an allegory, there are in the play such characters also as Democracy, Congress, Nagpur, Surat and Surat Moderate.

To study the themes in the fragments in which "only three feet, or but one foot or a mere syllable" of "a perfectly conceived iambic line" "has been actually written down"¹, is a difficult task indeed. It would mean conjecture and speculation, and reconstruction of the whole story of the plays on the unsure foundation of an Act or two of a play, or a scene or two, or even just a page or two.

The Witch of Ilni and Achab and Esarhaddon are Sri Aurobindo's juvenilia — his earliest attempts at writing drama. The former, a 600-line long fragment, was written when he was a student in London in 1891. It was published for the first time in Collected Plays, B.C.L. Vol. 7, in 1971. It is an index of the writer's love of Shakespeare, for the influence of the great dramatist's such works as Macbeth, The Tempest, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, As You Like It, etc., on the fragment is obvious.

The foresters and forest damsels, the Woodlands of Ilni, the magic of Alacial, the song, and love etc., provide the play with all the elements of an Elizabethan pastoral romance, as is suggested also by its subtitle, 'A Dream of Woodlands'.

the play, if completed, would have been a romantic comedy of the Shakespearean type.

Melander, a sylvan poet, is loved and admired by all the foresters and forest damsels, including Myrtil, the "woodland moon", "a silver loveliness/But tipped with gold."¹ But the poet seems to be bewitched by the rare charms of Alacias, the Witch of Illni:

Thou art a flower with candid petals wide,
Moon-flushed, most innocent seeming to the eye.²

However, he has also heard from people that she is "perilous", "the black-haired witch" with "her mother's hell-brewed legacy of arts"³:

But in thy cup, they say, lurks venomed wine
Which whoso sucks, pale Hades on him lays ⁴
Ensnaring arms to drag from the sweet sun.

But, as Alacias tells the poet, she only knows the art of taking from the plants "the liquid essence of their souls/
Potent to help or hurt, cure or kill."

The passionate love-making that follows is interrupted by the arrival of Marcion on the scene. He persuades the poet to join his friends, who are in a holiday mood and miss

2. Ibid., p. 1061.
3. Ibid., p. 1060.
4. Ibid., p. 1061.
Melander badly. While taking her leave, the poet promises to Alaciél to return early; but Alaciél, who cannot live without him even for a moment, says:

I pray you, sweet, do not break promise with me,
For that will kill me, I will think of you
And comfort solitude with sighs and tears
Until you dawn afresh, a noontide star.1

All this is manifestly the beginning of a romantic love-story in the play. A significant thing in the fragment, however, is Myrti's evocation of Dawn which reminds us of Athene's words in the Prologue to Perseus the Deliverer, through which prophetic intimations of brighter days for Syria have been given:

But the dawn comes and over earth's far rim
The round sun rises, as thyself shalt rise
On Syria and thy rosy Andromeda,
A thing of light.2

The following words of Myrti, addressed to Melander who is in a sad mood, are redolent of similar optimism:

Now kernelled in the golden husk of day
Pale night with all her pomp of sorrow sleeps,
And stinted of soft-clinging melancholy
The elegiac nightingale is husbed,
Of melancholy from whose sombre grape
She crushes music out in foamy drops.
But all the votarists of happy Light,
A rainbow-throated anarchy of wings,
Lift anthems to the young viceregent sun...3

2. Sri Aurobindo, Collected Plays, B.C.L. Vol. 6, 10.
Sri Aurobindo, in fact, emerges in his poetry (both
dramatic and non-dramatic) as the poet of Dawn — as a
harbinger of Light, Love and Delight in man's earthly life.
He gives the message of the inevitable growth of man's
nature into divine nature. As presages of a bright future,
his poetry and drama contain frequent references too dawn.
For example, the symbolism of 'Dawn' is used in 'Ahna',
one of his long poems, as well as in Savitri.\(^1\) Ahna, the
Divine Dawn, says to the allegorical figures — 'the Hunters
of Joy', 'the seekers of Knowledge' and 'the Climbers in
quest of Power': "Thou shall not suffer always nor cry to
me, lured and forsaken."\(^2\) The words seem to have been
addressed by Sri Aurobindo to the suffering humanity.

This may be the point of vantage to see why Sri
Aurobindo chose to write only comedies. Rodoquine, the only
tragic play he wrote also highlights man's transformation
through love, fate, etc., instead of underlining tragic
possibilities in human life.

---

1. As Prof. M.K. Naik observes: "It is a distillation of
Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of Integral Yoga, according to
which 'God must be born on earth and be as Man/That Man
being human may grow even as God'. ... Savitri thus is an
exciting and prophetic vision of a glorious future, not
a dull recital of a dead past."

M.K. Naik, *A History of Indian English Literature*,

Possibly, *The Witch of Ilni*, one of the earliest works of Sri Aurobindo, was purported to be a drama depicting progress through struggle. The conflict in it might have originated from the triangle of love formed by Myrtil, Melander and Alaciël in the play. In other words, had *The Witch of Ilni* been written completely, it would have anticipated the playwright's later dramas of conflict and change.

*Achab and Esarhaddon*, another "fragment of a drama", has only four pages. It was first published in *Collected Plays*, B.C.L. Vol. 7, in 1971. Achab here is the priest of Assyria and Esarhaddon, the King. They are seen taking extreme positions in the play as believer and non-believer respectively. Esarhaddon, who does not believe in Baal, says:

> What is he
If not a helpless name that cannot live
Unless man's lips repeat him.1

The priest argues that everything in the universe is Baal's creation. But the King, who reminds us of those believing in the mechanistic theory of evolution, insists that all in the world proceeds from a force working spontaneously and incessantly:

---

All is a force that irresistibly
Works by its nature which it cannot help,
And that is I and that the wood and flint,
That Achab, that Assyria, that the world.1

He further says:

For me
I care not what 'tis called, Mithra or God,
You call it Baal, Perizade says
'Tis Ormuzd, Mithra and the glorious sun.
I say 'tis force.2

In fact, the King's opposition to Achab is mainly due
to his faith in Baal, who is a blood-thirsty primitive god,
and in a cult "crying at each turn for human blood."3 The
King says:

Priest, I need a cult
More gentle and less bloody to State,
Not crying at each turn for human blood.

*** " *** *** *** *** *** ***
Will it be loss to you, if it be said
Baal and Mithra, these are one, but Baal
Changes and grows more mild and merciful,
A friend to men?4

But the priest, who seems to represent the forces of
status quo and is himself not ready to accept the change,
says:

So you urge, 5
The people's minds are not so mobile yet.

2. Ibid., pp. 1086-87.
3. Ibid., p. 1087.
4. Idem.
5. Idem.
The King's reply to the priest vividly shows his earnestness about taking a step forward by embracing a higher form of religion:

If you and I agree, who will refuse?
I care not, man, how it is done. Invent Scriptures, forge ancient writings, let the wild Mystics who slashed their limbs on Baal's hill,
Cry out the will of Baal while they slashed.1

The priest is impressed by the King's magnanimity and his patience in persuading him. He yields to the King's desire when the latter says:

Achab,
You know I have a sword, and yet it sleeps;
I offer you the gem upon the hilt
And friendship. Will you take it? See, I need
A brain as clear as yours, a heart as bold,
What should I do by killing you, but lose
A statesman born?2

The priest agreeing to work with Esarhaddon to establish a better religion, the way is paved for Assyria's evolution, like that of Syria in *Perseus the Deliverer*, from a dark primitive cult to a religion of bright humanism. Thus, it may be said that the play points to Sri Aurobindo's later plays, like *Perseus the Deliverer*, where the primitive and inhuman cult of Poseidon's worship yields place to a human and enlightened religion of Athene's worship. The play,

2. Ibid., p. 1088.
perhaps, was intended to embody the reiterated theme of man's progress towards his divine destiny, in Sri Aurobindo's dramas.

The Birth of Sin is a still shorter fragment of which nothing very much can be made out. In a little over two pages of the fragment, we come across a dialogue between Lucifer, the Angel of Power, and the Sun as well as Belial, the Angel of Reason. Among the other characters in the fragment are Sirioth, the Angel of Love; Gabriel, the Angel of Obedience; Michael, the Angel of War; Raphel, the Angel of Sweetness; Baal, the Angel of Worldly Wisdom; Moloch, the Angel of Wrath, etc. Based, obviously, on the Bible, the play is tantalisingly incomplete. Maybe, it proposed to depict the clash of power, reason, love, etc., through the clash of different angels figuring in the fragment, and to show love ultimately prevailing. Love is described as an all-conquering force in the later dramas of Sri Aurobindo. Perhaps, the dramatist intended to show Sirioth, the Angel of Love, triumphing over angels like Lucifer, whose arrogance and power-madness goes to the extent of declaring:

A crisis comes
In the infinite, mobile and progressive world.
For God shall cease and Lucifer be God.

The Birth of Sin seems to be the first version of what appears as a dialogue in poetic form in *Collected Poems* of Sri Aurobindo. In it, Lucifer, the Angel of Power, claims that Power is more godlike than anything else, whereas, according to Sirioth, the Angel of Love, Love is more divine. Sirioth also refers to the clash and cries in the world as a result of the birth of sin to which symbolic reference is made by the poet through Sirioth, who says to Lucifer:

I know not who he was. He laughed and said, "Sin, sin is born into the world, revolt And change, in Sirioth and in Lucifer, The evening and the morning star. Rejoice O world!" And I beheld as in a dream Leaping from out thy brain and into mine A woman beautiful, a grandiose mien, Yet terrible, alarming and instinct With nameless menace. And the world was full With clashing and with cries. It seemed to me Angels and Gods and men strove violently To touch her robe, to occupy the place Her beautiful and ominous feet had trod,...

This, perhaps, gives an inkling of the possible thematic dimension of the story of *The Birth of Sin*.

First published in *Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual*, in 1962, *The Maid in the Mill* belongs to Sri Aurobindo's early Baroda period. The whole Act I and the beginning of the second Act is all that we have of the play. But even as a

2. Ibid., p. 71.
fragment, it gives sufficient hints of Sri Aurobindo's dramatic talent. Packed as it is with sparkling wit, brilliant humour and romantic love, it comes as a pleasant surprise to the reader who usually takes Sri Aurobindo for a serious philosopher and a mystic, normally far beyond the common man's reach. Like *The Witch of Ilni*, *The Maid in the Mill* also is full of Shakespearean echoes. Obviously, it is influenced by such plays of Shakespeare as *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, etc. There are in the fragment three pairs of lovers: Antonio and Ismenia, Basil and Brigida, and Count Conrad and Euphrosyne. The Antonio-Ismenia story is reminiscent of the Romeo-Juliet story in Shakespeare.

Located in Salamanca (Spain), it is a story of King Philip's time. A background to the story is provided by the hostility between the houses of Count Beltran and Count Conrad, which reminds us of the Montague-Capulet rivalry in *Romeo and Juliet*. Count Conrad's sister, Ismenia, however, is attracted to Antonio, son of Count Beltran, at the very first encounter with him. She says:

> Can hatred sound so sweet? Are enemies' voices like hail of angels to the ear, Brigida?!

Antonio too is irresistibly drawn towards Ismenia's bewitching beauty:

Heavens! It was she—her words were not a dream, Yet I was dumb. There was a majesty
Even in her tremulous playfulness, a thrill When she smiled most, made my heart beat too quickly For speech. O that I should be dumb and shamefast, When with one step I might grasp Paradise.

As Antonio and Ismenia thus get infected with love, King Philip tries to bring together the two warring houses of Beltran and Conrad. Referring to the masque with the theme of the Judgement of Paris and the Rape of Helen, that is to be performed in his presence, the King says:

Sweet friendship between mighty jarring houses And by great intercession war renounced Betwixt magnificent hearts: these are the masques Most sumptuous, these the glorious theatres That subjects should present to princess. Conrad And noble Beltran, I respect the wrath Sunders your pride: yet mildness has the blessing Of God and is religion's perfect mood. Admit that better weakness. Throw your hearts Wide to the knocks of entering peace; let not The ashes of a rage the world renounces Smoulder between you nor outdated griefs Keep living.

The King's appeal for peace and amity, between two ancient rivals is combined with the fact that the new generation of Antonio and Ismenia, representing the two houses of Beltran and Conrad, would not like the legacy

2. Ibid., pp. 833-34.
Therefore, it must have produced the desired result and the houses must have ceased their hostility and attained "noble reconcilement"\(^1\), so that love here too is assigned with the same role of a grand unifier as it is done in \textit{Vasavadutta} and \textit{Eric}. Perhaps, before the amity and peace is attained, love between Antonio and Ismenia results into vehement protests by their respective houses, and the conflict leads ultimately to the triumph of love. But an attempt to speculate about the way the story might have developed in the play is no "more than an exercise of fancy or a reckless pursuit of the probable."\(^2\) This is because such a speculation must be based on a mere Act I and the beginning of the second Act of the play.

The subplot in the play has a pair of delightful lovers—Basil and Brigida. They remind us of the Benedick-Beatrice pair in Shakespeare's \textit{Much Ado About Nothing}. If for nothing else, the fragment must be read for the splashes of sparkling wit and delightful humour that are in plenty in the play. They mostly result from the crossing of verbal swords that takes place between Basil and Brigida. Even as love between Antonio and Ismenia deepens and Basil and Brigida agree to marry, Conrad gets infatuated with Euphrosyne's beauty. A Miller's daughter, she is "a marvel",

---

and "simply the most exquisite beauty of the kingdom."¹

Thus, in the play, love, beauty and laughter are all aplenty. However, there "comes a colon" to the play. The playwright keeps "the full stop for tomorrow" which, unfortunately, never comes in the case of the lovely play.

Of The House of Brut, all that has survived is a single scene (Act II. scene i). Even this is not complete and comprises a little over three pages. Written about the same time as The Prince of Edur, it also must have been left incomplete due to the same reason, that is, the arrest and long imprisonment of Sri Aurobindo as a fall-out of the Alipur Bomb Case. Not only that the play had the same fate as The Prince of Edur, it also seems to enshrine a similar theme. It is about the legendary Brutus, the grandson of Aeneas of Troy. Brutus here is presented as a hero-deliverer who sets free the Trojans living as slaves in Greece, takes them to a far-off island and establishes there a new kingdom, which is known after him as Britain. The story, thus, has obvious affiliations with the story of The Prince of Edur and also the same political implications as the former as well as Perseus the Deliberer, which also was published in Bande Mataram in the same year (i.e. 1907) when the two fragments were written. This is but natural because all these

¹ Sri Aurobindo, Collected Plays, B.C.L. Vol. 7, 877.
works were written "in the very thick of Sri Aurobindo's political activity"; which was solely aimed at the restoration of freedom and glory to his country.

In the play we come across another Polydaon, an acute case of megalomania. Named as Humber in the play, this king of Norway has the same lust for power, the same vaulting pride and the same cruelty in him. Initial success makes him almost as mad as Polydaon, and had the play been completed, he would have also met the same inevitable fall as Polydaon does. Like Lucifer in The Birth of Sin, he also thinks that he is mightier and greater than gods, like Thor. Mark his address to Estrild, the captive princess:

Kneel down, daughter of princes, favoured more
Than Freya or Gudrun; for these were wives
Of gods or demigods, but thou the slave
Of Humber. 2

The following lines present an example of his vaunting:

This river we ascend, shall now no more
Bear its old name but mine; and all this region
Be Albany no more but Humberland:
The world's name changed shall be my monument. 3

Humber, the Norwegian invader of Britain, is perhaps ultimately defeated and she is delivered from his demonic clutches, so that the freedom of Britain from an invader

1. Sri Aurobindo, Collected Plays, B.C.L. Vol. 7, Bibliographical Note.
2. Ibid., p. 837.
3. Idem.
is the intended story of the play and deliverance, its purported theme.

The Prince of Edur, perhaps the last, the largest and the most important of the unfinished plays of the dramatist, was first published in Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual, 1961. Its thematic proximity to the writer's such works as 'Vidula', 'Perseus the Deliverer', etc., which appeared in Bande Mataram in 1907, and The House of Brut, which too belongs to the same year, is obvious. All these are Sri Aurobindo's patriotic writings which evince his deep love for freedom and are intended to be a clarion-call to the people to arise, awake and work with iron-resolve till the Motherland's shackles of slavery are broken and her glory restored to her. Like Perseus and Brutus, Bappa, the Prince of Edur, also is the 'deliverer' of his country, in this play.

The story of the play seems to have been taken from Tod's Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan where Bappa, a great Guhila Rajput, is described as the founder of Mewar. Sri Aurobindo, however, does not include in his play the various legends and oral tradition about Bappa, but seems to keep to the historical facts about the great hero. Relating the facts, Tod in his book says:

Bappa Rawal was the founder of the greatness of this reputed family of Rajputs. He was born in the forest to which his widowed mother had fled for refuge when her husband's kingdom in a far-away corner of Kathiawad was sacked and he died in the battlefield.
The child grew to manhood among the wild Bhils and he became their chieftain, and carved out for himself a kingdom around the impregnable rock of Chitor in the 8th century A.D. He stayed the progress of the Muhammadans about 730 A.D. and performed deeds of heroism which are even now the subject of ballads. He became the Maharaja of Chitorgadh and thus founded the illustrious Rajput house Medapata (Mewad) still reigning at Udaipur after twelve centuries of its establishment, and esteemed as Rajputs of the bluest blood. Bappa resigned his throne to become a (Saiva) Sannyasi in 783 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Guhila.

That Bappa in The Prince of Edur is the real Gehelot Prince of Edur of the eighth century A.D., is indicated clearly in the play. Referring to him, Nirmol Cumary says to Comol and Coomood:

Well, there is another Krishna of that breed out who will make eighth-century Rookminnies of you if you dance too far into the forest, sweethearts.

But other characters in the play do not seem to have historical basis. Torman referred to here is, perhaps, not the sixth century Hun invader of India, but the later Torman to whom reference has been made in Kalhan's Rajatarangini.

The Prince of Edur dramatises one of the glorious pages of Indian history. The dramatist's purpose in writing the

play was obviously to put before the people of India a splendid example of patriotic heroism from their own history. This had its special significance for the Indian people fighting for the liberation of their country. Sri Aurobindo wanted them to derive inspiration from the great legend of Rajasthan and to emulate the heroism and nationalism of Bappa, one of the worthiest Rajput sons of Mother India.

Bappa, son of the late Cehelot Prince of Edur, is in refuge among the Bheels. His kingdom has been usurped by Rana Curran, the Rahtore Prince of Edur. To consolidate his position, Curran wants to give the hands of Comol Cumary, his daughter, to Torman, the Scythian prince of Cashmere. He says:

What is it but a daughter? One mere girl
And in exchange an emperor for my ally.
It must be done.1

But the marriage is considered an outrage by Meenadevi, his wife, and the king of Ajmere, his brother-in-law, who would like only a gallant Rajput youth to marry Comol Cumary. The queen tells the king:

You know, my lord, we hold a Rajput soldier
Without estate or purse deserves a queen
More than a crowned barbarian.2

2. Ibid., p. 744.
But the king ridicules "the lofty Rajput pride" of the queen and her brother as arrogance of the worst kind. Referring to Pratap, the Rao of Ichalgurh, his brother-in-law, whom the queen considers a suitable match for her daughter, the king derisively says:

No arrogance can match
The penniless pride of mountaineers who never
Have seen the various world beyond their hills.
Your petty baron who controls three rocks
For all his heritage, exalts himself
O'er monarchs in whose wide domains his holding's
An ant-hill, and prefers his petty line
To their high dynasties;—as if a mountain tarn
Should think itself more noble than the sea
To which so many giant floods converge.1

Firm about his resolve to marry Comol to Torman, he decides to send her to the fort of Dongurh with just ten lances for her escort so that she is easily kidnapped by the Prince of Cashmere. But the queen makes her vehement opposition to the whole plan clear:

My blood shall never mingle with the Scythian.
I am a Chouhan first and next your wife,
Edur.2

Thus is introduced the first conflict in the play between the selfish interest of Rana Curran, on the one hand, and the racial pride of his queen, his brother-in-law and indeed the whole Rajasthan of Rajputs, on the other.

2. Ibid., 745.
Though she declares that her first loyalty is due to her race and not to her husband, there is a clash also between the two loyalties of the queen.

In order to safeguard the racial pride, the queen informs Pratap so that Comol may be kidnapped by him even before Torman appears on the scene. She confides to Comol thus:

When you shall hear the trumpet's din
Or clash of blades, think not 'tis Toraman,
But your dear mother's care to save her child
From shameful mating. Little sweetheart, go.
When I shall meet you next, you'll shine, a flower
Upon the proudest crest in Rajasthan,
No Scythian's portion.

But Curran's minister, Visaldeo, has a different plan in his mind. In a secret letter he writes to Bappa, he says:

Comol Cumary, Edur's princess, goes
With her fair sister and a knot of lances
To Dongurh, Bappa, young lion of the hills,
Be as the lion in thy ranging; prey
Upon earth's mightiest, think her princesses
Meant only for thy spoil and serving-girls,
Her kings thy subjects and her lands thy prey.
Dare greatly and thou shalt be great; despise
Apparent death and from his lifted hand
Of menace pluck thy royal destinies
By warlike violence.

Bappa seizes the opportunity and, with the help of his gallant friends, Prithuraj and Sungram, who are two young

2. Ibid., p. 756.
Rajput refugees and Kodal, a young Bheel, who is his foster-brother and lieutenant, he kidnaps Comol Cumary and her companions. This is an act of policy, says Bappa. He thus wants to compel Curran to attack them in the hills, for he is confident that with his gallant Bheel soldiers and friends, he will be able to defeat Curran, the usurper of his kingdom.

When the kidnapped princess is brought to Bappa along with her companions, Coomood says in pleasant surprise:

Is this the Bheel? the rough and uncouth outlaw? He has a princely bearing. This is surely A Rajpoot and of a high-seated blood.

Comol gets equally enamoured of him:

Why, Coomood, it was Krishna after all.

A really romantic situation is created with the princess of Edur, the usurper's daughter, falling in love with Bappa, whose kingdom has been usurped. The situation, thus, has in its womb another conflict to be resolved in the play.

As the playwright intends to project Bappa as a true hero, he shows him victorious over all his enemies and surmounting all the difficulties that come in his way to regain his kingdom. As he also falls in love with Comol at the first

2. Ibid., p. 772.
sight, the play must have depicted the conflict arising from this love and, towards the end of it, Bappa must have been shown victorious also in the matter of love. But, as the play has been left incomplete, this must be a mere speculation about the way the action of the play would have developed and concluded.

Comol, however, does not surrender in love to Bappa unless he has proved himself "unparalleled". In order to test his mettle, she writes letters to Pratap and Toraman, urging them both to come to her rescue. Both of them come to Dongurh to fight against Bappa. Bappa, however, has no difficulty in defeating Toraman, who fights through his knavish and cowardly jester, Canaca. He finds it easy to vanquish Pratap as well, for, as Sungram says about Bappa:

He is a mighty warrior, but not age
Nor bulk can measure strength; the exultant spirit
Facing towards glory gives the arm a force
Mightier than physical.1

Pratap, when defeated, does not only withdraw his claim on Comol, but also pledges friendship with Bappa. Now the only foe, who remains to be conquered by the great hero, is Curran and Bappa waits eagerly to cross swords with him:

I wonder when great Edur moves upon us,
I long to hear his war assail our mountains.2

2. Ibid, p. 801.
By defeating Toraman and Pratap, Bappa finally wins the heart of Comol:

O my king,
My hero, thou hast o'erborne great Ichalgurh;
Then who can stand against thee? Thou shalt conquer
More than my heart.1

Unfortunately, the action of the play is left incomplete practically at this point. The third Act, scene i, in which the action takes a romantic drift, only presents Comol as a rare sweetness, a Vanadevi, and depicts her amorous moods and love of Nature. As such, the reader is left to speculate about the development and conclusion of the action of the play. However, on the basis of the part of the action the fragment contains, one may speculate that, had the play been completed, it would have concluded on the happy note of restoration of his usurped kingdom to Bappa, as a result of Curran's defeat at the hands of the great hero and his gallant Eheel and Rajpoot soldiers, and Bappa's marriage with Comol, which would naturally have resolved all the conflicts in the play.

The play obviously seems intended to enshrine the theme of patriotic heroism. It is not a historical romance which it appears to be on the surface. If it is seen in the perspective of the National Movement, it has a marked political accent and a clear contemporary relevance.

When Bappa says that he "will invite all Rajpoot swords" to fight against the usurper of his throne, his words acquire significance in the context of India's struggle for freedom which called for a united fight against the British regime. Similarly, Visaldeo's exhortation to Bappa "to pluck his "royal destiny" "by warlike violence", may be of relevance to the people of India in general fighting for the freedom of their country:

Dare greatly and thou shalt be great; despise
Apparent death and from his lifted hand
Of menace pluck thy royal destinies
By warlike violence.1