INTRODUCTION

A retrospect. There are certain periods in the history of the world which have a special attraction for any student of the intellectual and moral development of mankind. Such a period is the age of Kanada, Budha and Wardhmana in India and of socrates Plato, Aristotel and Sophists in Greece, the ages when the belief in the mythology was being shattered, old traditions, authority and customs were no longer accepted as adequate sanctions for moral rule and political institutions.

In a world spirit of rational enquiry and criticism was supervening upon an age of childlike faith. In India this period of transition from old order to the new one was in fact a kind of reaction against the extreme rigidity of the Brahmical age. A new ethical code and an earnest craving for unraveling the mysteries of the Universe materialistic as well as metaphysical philosophy were visible at this period. Our greatest philosopher like Kapila, Kanada, Patanjali, Vyasa, Gautama, Jaimini the founders of new religious movements as Gautama—Budha, lāhāvira, our famous theologians Yajnavalkya, Ajatasatru, Janaka, Sanatkumara etc. and some of our epicurian philosophers as Čaivaraka, Lokayata all these belong to this period which roughly dates from 8th Century. During this period there was constant struggle both in the theocratic as well as political field between Brahmānism which was mostly based on faith and rituals, and the new school of thoughts aspiring for the moral purity and self realisation. In brief the people were looking from the subjective to the subjective world.

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brotherhood. For some time the old rivalry between Hinduism and Islam disappeared. Both of them vied with each other in paying their homage through the muse of poesy to the creator of the universe. Moghal Emperor from Babar to Shahjahan could not remain unaffected by this cosmopolitan spirit of the age. The swords of the Rajputs, and the sabres of Moghals were sheathed and the beads of the rosary adorned their proud chests. The royal courts were converted into shrines of learning where high dialectical symposiums were held preaching fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind. A spirit of toleration instead of fanaticism, an attempt for integration of all the hostile elements in place of vivisectionist and fissiparious tendencies of certain section of selfish people, a desire of understanding each other instead of mutual suspicion and rancour were some of the high principles which were reflected in the poetry of this age.

Such an augustan age was followed by an age which gave us a poetry highly sensuous, embellished, vague, artificial, rigid, and to some extent morbid, which lacked the intensity and emotional depth of the heartfelt experience of the former period. This is rightly termed as the artistic age of the Hindi poetry which gave us, no doubt, such poets as Behari, Bhanu, Natiram, but which in fact savoured more of sex and passion than of spiritual love. The poetry lost its purity by basking in the sunshine of the royal courts.

Such an age could not last long and soon found its reaction in the modern age in the person of Bharatendu Harish Chandra who is rightly called the father of the modern Hindi. This literary prodigy wrote about not less than two hundred works and spent the most of his life in rendering pliable and mellow the rough Hindi language and harmonising it into all
kinds of meters and thus laying the foundation of the present
day standard Hindi. He endowed the language with all the grace
and refinement which it lacked. He came at that psychological
moment when our entire self was at stake due to the impact of the
Western civilization and by throwing his weight of genius into the
balance decided the future of the Hindi language.

Bharatendu Harishchandra due to his early
death could not witness the crowning glory of his achievements
in the various domains of Hindi literature. It was left to his
worthy successor, prasāda to take up the thread and weave it
to perfection. While Harish Chandra was the creator of this
age, prasāda might be called as the greatest architect. This
illustrious scion Sughani Shahu family soon eclipsed his literary
contemporaries by his creative genius, marvellous penetrative
insight and highly developed power of imagination. His great
influence on the modern Hindi literature could not be denied by
any one, as we will point out in the successive pages. A very
larger group of the budding literary artists gathered round him
and took inspiration from him. He entered the storm-tossed word
as a votary of the goddess of poetry like a child pilgrim and
after passing through many ups and downs the echo of which is
heard in his entire poem anchored his wrecked ship on the solid
surface of Kamyani, the epic poem which was the crowning glory of
his philosophical concept and peotical art.

He was a man of versatile genius. There is no branch of
Hindi literature which escaped his notice. He had the charming
merits of the story writer as it is evident from the large number
of the stories written by him. He had the keen power of observa-
tion into character and emotions of the people whom he came
across and had the visualising imagination of a dramatist artist.
He possessed the consummate skill of a matured journalist and an
essayist too. His greatest quality was the creation of an all—
absorbing atmosphere in which the reader lost his ownself. In short this master architect who found Hindi literature as a brick left it as a marble.

He had a sensitive and assimilative mind trained in orthodox school and refined by the deep study of the Western philosophy, which enabled him to assume the role of a creator as well as conscientious interpreter of his age. His exuberant vitality, profound versatility, balanced outlook on life, and refined manners evoked appreciation from all quarters. If we study the development of his mind when as a lad of six he crawled upon the literary surface of the world and to his last exit as an immortal lamp, there were four clear stages as we would discuss in the later pages.

1. Inquisitiveness
2. Struggle
3. Triumph
4. Identification.

A study of Kāmāyani also reveals that it is a study of the development of his mind from the start to finish.

There is hardly any branch of Hindi literature which he has not handled but he was a poet first and last. His plays, stories, novels all breathe an air of his poetry. God revealed his Divinity first through the poetry. The earliest philosophers, seers, and sages all express their thoughts through the verses. In fact most of our ancient literature was composed in poetry. Thus poetry is the best means through which an artist can reveal the music of life. On studying deeply his poetical works we find the following six characteristics.

1. Perfect melody.
2. A rare sense of beauty.
3. A splendid imagination
4. A lofty moral purity and moral sobriety of vision.
5. A delicate idealism which can make all nature look extremely attractive.
b. Music reverberance.

His poetry presents a figurative panorama of Indians life of various ages in its diverse aspects. His classical scholarship was extensive, and profound as reflected in his masterful poem, *Kamayani*. Seemingly voluptuous he was not sensuous at all, though passionate and romantic, yet he was the most original than his contemporaries. His objective view of life as the image of eternity rendered it possible to him to sublimate the physical desires to the spiritual ones. He portrayed in his works the glorification of colour, richness of fancy, passionate adoration for the beauty of the womanhood.

In fact he represented all the magnificence, profusion, and princeliness of the nature, but it is true to say that he represented not a phase of the art, not an age of poetry, but in some sense the genius of the poetry. He is its spirit incarnate.

His *YOGIC PHILOSOPHY*.

From Indian mythology he has drawn his idea of Divine beauty and perfection, and love of sensuous beauty from the study of the Western literature as well. This put a rejuvenation of the old Upanisadic, or Vedantic, or to some extent of Kabir, and Hira belief conception of Divinity in man. In his philosophy he identified good with beautiful, and *darsan* depicted vividly all those emotions which draw us to beauty, and yet refined as they rise from earthly plane to transcendental one. According to him happiness results when the live possess, as the beautiful.

His philosophical allegory *Kamayani* is a wilderness of fancy, a tropical name of exuberant, and inexhaustible creation. The main purpose of this poem is didactic as well philosophic, and the mode chosen for its expression is allegorical.
Allegory in the middle ages is employed over theology, philosophy, and poetry. Our classical Sanskrit literature is full of such works. For centuries the allegory subdued all ways of thoughts, and all forms of mental activity to its peculiar temper. Hence allegorical method chosen by Prasada for his mystical poem had the sanction of ancient and the medieval didactic and philosophical poetry behind it. The allegory using concrete personifications to represent abstractions in 4amâyâni was further elaborated when certain set of principles were made to stand for people always existing in one form or other, and who were grouped here round the central figure of Panu. The various kinds of interpretations of this epic allegory can be had. According to mythology, history, and metaphysics, it is a treatise on the origin of man and woman on earth, their passion, love, quarrel, struggle for existence, hopes and disappointments, failures, and success, and ultimate triumph. From social, economic, political, and religious point of view it is a tirade on the many sided abuses of the society, it is a kind of challenge to the materialistic outlook of life which eventually is apt to lead it to its destruction.

His Satires

Keeping his hand on the pulse of the age it was quite natural for him to satirise the society and its manifold problems, and suggest some probable solutions with a mature and congenial mind, under a perfected poetic, dramatic, and narrative technique. He produced imperishable pieces in the form of his three novels, and 70 short-stories which would continue for long to exercise their influence on the minds of the readers, by their all absorbing interest, exuberant vitality, and bold satires. The motive behind them was
his keen desire to point out the plague spots of the society, and like a reformer to devise better means for its amelioration. His satires are impersonal, bold, and trenchent. He has mastered the stirical kind of expressions, like any other art. At some places he has assailed the present day society bitterly, and under the heavy hammering of sarcasms held the parents responsible for the sing of their children, husbands for the degeneration of their wives, and brothers for the downfall of their sisters. On the whole his satires are not destructive, but constructive, not vulgar, but decent and many a times redundent with the mystical element too.

In conclusion we can sum up our study of Prasāḍa by comparing him with the worlds two greatest artists-Rubens, and Raphael. The conception of his art had two forms- first what charmed the senses, a fact which led many of his admirers to call him Rubens of Hindi artists, and the second which exalted the senses, and led others to confer upon him the title of Raphael. Those who care more for sensuous pleasures will find them in abundance in Prasāḍa, but they will not find all what he wanted to be found. To him beauty was the perfect model after which the love of the Great Master is wrought, to sublimate the gross matter of the earth to Divinity as we have pointed out already. It is this which gives the sensuous impressions such power as to penetrate the eye and reach the heart. Thus the sensuous becomes beautiful and the beautiful in its turn gets Divine without.

In the following chapters an attempt is made to understand, interpret, and to examine the art of Prasāḍa as best as possible.

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I have tried my best to correct the typed text and
put diacritical marks on the model of the international
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always subject to correction. Any suggestion for the
improvement of this work, and any just criticism on the
interpretation of Prasāda's shall be highly welcomed by the
author.

It is the result of my four years consistent hard
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disturbances for which I had to put in an additional labour,
undergo lot of hardship, in order to reproduce them again.
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relations experienced in the west Punjab was another factor
which considerably perturbed the balance of my mind, and
thus consequently much hindered the progress of this work.
But notwithstanding these, I had to keep my eyes constantly
on the target.

With the Divine grace now I feel much relieved of
my burden, when I have the honour to present this study to
the public in general and admirers of Prasāda in particular,
and hope it will help to acquaint them with the various
works of this master mind who was the greatest literary
genius of this age.