

THE BRIDE'S MIRROR

OR

MIR-ĀTU L-ARŪS

OF

MAULAVĪ NAZĪR -AḤMAD

EDITED (BY PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR)

IN THE ROMAN CHARACTER

WITH A VOCABULARY AND NOTES

BY

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE *mir-ātul-arūs*, or 'Bride's Mirror,' was written by its author, as we are informed by him in the preface, for the amusement and instruction of his own daughters. The main object of this edition of it is to furnish a suitable textbook in Hindustani for English ladies who desire to study that language. It is a work which is peculiarly fitted for such a purpose, since it deals with subjects in which ladies are naturally interested, and is written in the unpretentious but refined language of home life, with great sincerity, and not by any means without humour. Although the first, it is still the most popular work of its kind that has been published in Upper India; and the date of its publication will always mark an epoch in the history of Hindustani literature.

In adapting it for the use of English ladies, it was necessary to transliterate the text into the Roman character. I have adopted the system of transliteration which was invented by Sir William Jones and has been popularized by Sir William Hunter; but with two modifications, which I trust no one will hastily condemn without reading my remarks on the difference between European and Oriental notions of phonology in the note which follows this preface.

There is another feature in the text which requires a word of explanation. In Hindustani, as in English, verbs are conjugated, and nouns are declined, with the aid of particles, and many a *phrase* does duty for a single *word*; e. g. 'kartā hai' (is doing) may be translated by the single word 'does,' and, supposing that 'does' denotes *habitual* action, its equivalent in Hindustani would

be 'kiyā kartā hai.' In the same way '-us kā' (of him—her—or it) may be rendered by the single word 'his' (her or its) and 'bil fe-l (in the act) by the single word 'now.' I have endeavoured to facilitate the reading of the text by so grouping the words within the space of each line, that those which only form component parts of such phrases may be readily distinguished by their position from those which stand by themselves. But in cases where a particle applies to a phrase or combination of phrases too long to be treated as a single group I have detached it from the last word of the combination, lest it should be thought to apply to it alone; e. g. in the first paragraph of the Preface (page 1, line 3) the 'ki' after 'ni-matōn' is detached from it, because it refers not to 'ni-matōn' only, but to the whole expression beginning with 'bandanawāziyōn.'

The translations of the author's Preface and Introduction are not intended to be literal;—the difference in the grammar of the two languages is so great that a literal translation would be impossible. Nor are they guaranteed to be rigidly accurate;—it should be the aim of the student to *discover* whether they are sufficiently accurate to convey a true impression of the original. But, with the aid of the vocabulary and notes, I trust that they will enable students to thoroughly master these portions of the work (which are naturally more difficult and less interesting than the story) before proceeding further. Whatever labour is bestowed by the student upon the Preface and Introduction will be repaid if it enables the story to be read with ease and enjoyment; and although the notes on these earlier portions of the work may at first seem unnecessarily diffuse, yet, if the text be read in the light of them—not once, but until both the meaning and the *methods of expression* of the author are understood—the reader will, I believe, have made sufficient progress in the language to be able to read the story itself with no other aid than the vocabulary.

In the present state of opinion, one can hardly cherish the hope that the study of Hindustani will ever be placed on the same level in England with the study of modern European languages, although for every Englishwoman who passes six months of her life on the

Continent there are probably two who spend as many years in Upper India. The fact is barely recognized as yet that there is such a language as Hindustani, with a literature worth studying for its own sake. The ignorance which prevails on this matter is not altogether due to indifference, but is largely attributable to a circumstance which, so far as I know, is without parallel in the literary history of any nation. For the last three centuries or more, there have existed side by side, in Upper India, two entirely different systems for *writing* a language which when spoken is essentially one. The old inhabitants clung to the indigenous method of writing in the syllabic characters called Nāgari, which are the same as those used for writing Sanskrit. The descendants of the Muslim invaders introduced and continued to use the Persian script, which had been adapted to the requirements of that language from the Arabic alphabet. It should also be stated that each section of the community preserved its traditional metres and rules for the composition of poetry; and until a comparatively late date the need for prose composition was not felt. The productions of the two schools of poetry, when they are recited, do not differ from each other to a much greater extent than the 'Vision of Piers the Plowman' differs from the 'Canterbury Tales'; but as soon as they are committed to writing they assume disguises which obliterate all points of resemblance. It was no extraordinary error on the part of the Europeans who first endeavoured to encourage the study of the vernacular, when they supposed that there were really two languages in Hindustan, and assigned to them respectively the names of Hindee and Oordoo; although the former of these terms bears exactly the same relation to 'Hindustani' as 'Saxon' does to 'English,' and the latter means simply 'the vulgar tongue.'¹ But that a mere blunder committed by foreigners, with the best intentions, a hundred years ago, should have had a lasting and most pernicious effect upon the literature, and even the social life,

¹ The two terms *can* be used interchangeably. For instance, when the celebrated 'letters of Ghālib' were collected and published by his admirers, the book was issued under the title '-urdū -o mu-alla,' which means 'high-class Urdu,' but in those very letters, when Ghālib speaks of his own compositions other than Persian, he almost invariably calls them 'hindī.'

of some eighty millions of people, would be absolutely incredible if it were not established by the most positive evidence.

At the beginning of this century, no prose work in the vernacular of Hindustan was in existence. To those authors who employed the Nāgari characters in writing, the very idea of prose composition was unintelligible. For ages it had been the custom in India to put every form of literature—even the commentaries of one author upon the works of another—into verse. The rhythm of the metre was considered essential to the sense, and often supplied the place of a very imperfect grammar.¹ On the other hand, those authors who employed the Persian character in writing, although they had invented a new style of vernacular poetry, continued to compose their prose works in Persian. The Government of the day, in its anxiety to provide books for the instruction and examination of its junior officers, demanded *prose* works in the *vernacular*, and,

¹ An excessive *compression* of thought was the bane of Hindi poets, who never learned the maxim of Horace, 'brevis esse laboro, Obscurus fio.' Illustrations of this might be multiplied, but an extreme one will suffice. It is a couplet of the seventeenth century by a poet named Ballabha :

'tana tāji -aswār mana : nayana piyāde sāth,
yā bana śalo shikār ko : biraha bāj laya hāth.'

The following is an exact rendering of the words—

¹Body, ²courser, ³rider, ⁴mind : ⁵eye, ⁶footrunner, ⁷alongside,
⁸This, ⁹wilderness, ¹⁰gone, ¹¹for game : ¹²separation, ¹³hawk, ¹⁴take, ¹⁵hand.

The *sense*, which is largely supplied from the metrical arrangement of the words, is this :—(The) 'mind (of a man, controlling the actions of his) ¹body (and guided by the) ²light of experience, (and) ³carrying (with it into) ⁴this (world of phenomena a constant sense of) ⁵alienation (from the Divine Being, is like some nobleman) ⁶mounted (upon an) ⁷Arab horse (with a) ⁸footrunner ⁹alongside, (who has) ¹⁰sallied forth (into a) ¹¹wilderness, ¹²in pursuit of game, (with a) ¹³hawk (upon his) ¹⁴wrist.' It is hardly conceivable that a fluent style of prose could have been developed from such materials without the aid of foreign influence. The language was utterly deficient in those 'little words whose meaning is as strikingly telling as it is palpably subtle,' to which, as Professor Earle has justly remarked in his 'Philology of the English Tongue' (par. 248), the Greek language owes so much of its beauty. The Urdu poets of India, although much of their work was trivial and ephemeral, supplied this want, and, however much the value of their writings may be depreciated, it must still be conceded to them that they made a fluent style of *prose* in Hindustani possible.

being under the impression that there could not be two varieties of script without two varieties of speech, demanded prose works in both forms of the vernacular. Accordingly Sanskrit and Persian works were translated by competent scholars into the spoken language of the people, which was called by the Muslims '-urdū,' and by the Hindus 'hindi,' and were subsequently converted into an official Oordoo, by a copious infusion of Persian and Arabic phrases, and into an official Hindee, by the process of striking out every word suspected of a foreign origin, and substituting for it some expression that bore a resemblance to Sanskrit. Two book languages were thus *created* for Upper India by Maulavis and Pandits,¹ under European supervision, in Calcutta, while the spoken language of the country was still being polished and brought to perfection at the ancient metropolis of Dehli. It is true that a prose style was also created, but the prose writers, as well as the poets of the country, have ever since been split up into two camps; and, as is usually the case, there have not been wanting extreme partizans on either side—the one set exulting in their efforts to Sanskritize the vernacular, and the other bent upon Arabicizing it.

This artificial creation of two languages out of one for the purpose of examination has been no boon to the English 'examinee'; but the worst effect it has had upon him is one which recoils upon the language itself, and the people who speak it. As I have said, the language is really one, but its literature has two forms. The bigoted adherents of '*Hindi*' now denounce everything which appears under the form of Urdu as bastard Persian; and the bigoted adherents of '*Urdu*' denounce everything which appears under the form of Hindi as bastard Sanskrit.² No doubt, it is only the extreme partizans on either side who furnish their opponents with any real data for such recriminations, but it cannot be denied that there are specimens of the later vernacular litera-

¹ These terms denote those who have obtained the highest 'degree,' respectively, in Arabic and in Sanskrit.

² The vernacular, however, is not even *derived* from Sanskrit, but from an older vernacular, which 'nourished a blind (but vigorous) life' under the shadow of Sanskrit.

ture which are disfigured on the one side by the most grotesque exoticisms, and on the other by equally ridiculous archaisms.¹ At all events, a bewildered foreigner may well be pardoned if he prefers to devote what leisure time he may have for study to genuine Persian, or genuine Sanskrit, which have a recognized value in England, and to the literatures of which he has already stormed the approaches when he has learnt to decipher the scripts in which they are written.

The general adoption of the Roman character, in lieu of Nāgari and Persian script alike, has long been advocated in India, not only by European, but by some native scholars, as the only means of recovering the lost clue to unity in the literature. This however is not a measure which could be hastily carried out. In some respects each of the two systems of writing is more perfect than the Roman system. Each is a heritage of which its possessors may be justly proud, and to which they are undoubtedly much attached. Still a beginning may be, and should be, made in England. Here, there is absolutely no reason, except the want of books, why the language should not be fully taught in the Roman character alone. An English student could thus learn double the amount within the time at his disposal; and he would learn the language as a whole, without prejudice or misgiving as to its double form. It would be far easier for him to learn the scripts used in India after he has become familiar with the language, than it is now, when the labour of decipherment proceeds *pari passu* with the labour of translation. There are numbers of Hindustani manuscripts lying, many, I believe, uncatalogued, in the great libraries at the great seats of learning in England. Here again the baneful distinction between 'Hindi' and 'Urdu' prevents their being classified as the literature of a single language. Those in the Nāgari script are treated as an excrescence on the Sanskrit department, and those in the Persian script as an excrescence on the Persian. Indeed so little interest is taken by their custodians in the language and literature of our fellow

¹ These assertions may be verified by reference to the printed evidence taken in the North-West Provinces and Oudh by the Education Commission of 1882-3, and published as an Appendix to the Report of the Commission.

subjects, who have fought side by side with British troops in many a hard-won battle, that if any one wishes to acquaint himself with a general history of the literature of modern Hindustan,¹ or the whereabouts of its masterpieces, he must have recourse to the works of a French author, M. Garcin de Tassy. No English man of letters (other than retired Anglo-Indians) has approached the subject. If only a selection of the MSS., both Nāgari and Persian, already housed in England, were edited upon some well-considered plan in the Roman character, it would be possible to write a history of the language, which might prove valuable to the philologist, since it is already known that it possesses some striking analogies with the history of English. That however would be a very insignificant advantage, compared with the gain which would result from the works being made accessible to English readers. For this would enable the British youth of both sexes who are drafted year by year to India, for extremely practical work of a high order of philanthropy, to equip themselves for their mission with some knowledge of the *existing* habits of thought in India, and with the faculty (which no amount of Persian or Sanskrit lore could give them) of listening with intelligence to the accents of the *living* human beings who seek their aid or sympathy. This faculty, above all others, is the key to the affection of the Indian people, which the British race has not yet succeeded in winning; although a belief in their justice, and an admiration for their free institutions, are everywhere prevalent. The attitude of the Native to the Englishman is something of the kind expressed in the lines

'main nē mānā ki taghāful na karoge;—lekin
khāk ho jā-ēngē ham tum kō khabar hote tak.'

'Not that you are inattentive, no I grant that;—but still—
By the time you are *aware*, we shall be dust in our graves.'²

¹ The word 'Hindustan,' which means 'the country (par excellence) of Hindus,' is applied more or less widely to the central portion of the Indian Peninsula. It excludes the Panjab to the west of the Sutlej, Bengal to the east of the Sone, and the Dekkan to the south of the Vindhyan range; but Hindustani emigrants have carried their language with them into every large town of India and even to the colonies under British rule.

² The metre is | - 0 - - | 0 0 - - | 0 0 - - | - - |

So powerful is the reaction of English upon Indian public opinion, that nothing more is wanted for the enfranchisement of Hindustani literature, than its recognition in England, as that of a language worth studying for its own sake, on the same terms as the languages of other civilized nations. Very little can be done towards this end by a single individual, but an effort, however feeble, in the right direction, is better than none at all. If the present work should succeed in demonstrating that a modern garb is not unsuited to a modern language, and that the study of Hindustani may be successfully pursued in England, without the aid of English maulavis or pandits (except, of course, in the way of criticism and correction)—just as English may be learnt by a foreigner without recourse to professors of Gothic and Latin, or even of Early Saxon and Norman-French—a real step in advance will have been made.

It would be impossible for me to conclude this Preface without acknowledging my debt of gratitude to Mr. J. T. Platts, Hon. M.A. of Balliol College, Oxford, whose 'Dictionary of the Hindustani Language' as far excels all previous works of the kind as the famous 'Liddell and Scott's Lexicon' excelled all previous dictionaries of Greek, for his friendly interest and encouragement.

I have also to acknowledge the unfailing courtesy and patience with which I have been treated, during the printing of the work, by the able staff of the Clarendon Press.

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NOTE ON THE SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

I. *On the difference between the two methods of determining the unit of speech, according to the quality or the quantity of sounds.*

THE English notion of the difference between vowels and consonants is that a vowel sound can be pronounced by itself, while a consonant cannot be pronounced without a vowel; and no account is taken of the fact that a vowel which can be pronounced by itself, e. g. the 'u' of 'habitual,' is a very different thing from a vowel which merely enables a consonant to be pronounced, e. g. the 'u' of 'buy.'

The *unit of speech* is considered in England to be a syllable; but vowels, capable of being pronounced by themselves, are necessarily admitted to rank as syllables. Hence a syllable, in the English sense of the word, is no measure of *quantity*, for it might be supposed that the last syllable of the word 'America' contains double the quantity of the first; and that the letter 'I,' used as a pronoun, has but one third of the quantity of the word 'pin.'

In India the unit of speech is neither vowel nor consonant, but *one moment of articulation*, and syllables are of three measures in length, being composed of one moment, or of two moments, or of three. The phrase *ba har hāl*, 'in every (i. e. any) case,' exhibits the three kinds of syllable in regular progression. The syllable 'ba' (pronounced like the *ba* of 'probable') has the prosodical value denoted by the Latin symbol \cup ; the syllable 'har' (pronounced like the first syllable of 'hurry') that denoted by $- (= \cup \cup)$; and the syllable 'hāl' (pronounced like the first syllable of 'harlequin')