

contain the rudiments of a plot which, for the last forty years, has been the most popular and the most used, namely, the tragedy that follows when boys after their return from Europe cannot take up the thread of life where they left it.

The sketches of "Avadh Panc" have the same place in the development of the Urdu novel and short-story as the Roger de Coverley sketches in the "Spectator" and the "Tatler" have in the development of the English novel. Navāb Sayyid Muḥammad's series of sketches, 'Naī Raushnī ke Nāme Payām' and 'Purānī Raushnī ke Nāme Payām' are very like the Roger de Coverley sketches as in these also the same hero appears in different situations.

"Avadh Panc" can be regarded as having laid the foundation not only of literary journalism in Urdu but of its necessary appendage, the short-story, as well.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHORT-STORY
IN URDU FROM 1900 TO 1925

"Avadh Panc", it cannot be denied, laid the foundation of literary journalism as its character sketches prepared the ground for the writing of the short-story, and its scathing articles in connection with the poetry of *Hālī*, the authorship of 'Gulzār i Nasīm', and the merits of Dāg, were the precursors of literary criticism. But the tone of "Avadh Panc" was too light and its attitude too frivolous and far too personal for it to be regarded as a serious literary organ. The style of writing of the contributors of "Avadh Panc" still savoured too much of the "Navābī" courts of Lucknow. The laughter was loud and long, the jokes full-blooded and vulgar, and the criticism highly offensive and of a personal nature.

Literary journalism having the dignity and the seriousness of tone and impersonality demanded by modern standards can be said to have started with the coming out of "Makhzan" under the editorship of Sir 'Abd ul Qādir in 1900. Short-stories have appeared in each language in the wake of the magazine and the same happened in the case of Urdu. The works of Sayyid Sajjād Ḥaidar Yildarim, *Khājā Ḥasan Nizāmī*, Sultān Ḥaidar Josh, 'Abd ul Majid *Khān Sālik* and Rāshid ul *Khairī*, were introduced to the public at first through the pages of "Makhzan".

"Makhzan" was soon followed by numerous other magazines, amongst which those with any literary merit were: "Urdū e Mu'allā", which came out under the editorship of Ḥasrat Mohānī, "Tamaddun", edited for a time by Rāshid ul *Khairī*, "Nizām ul Mashāikh", edited by Mullā Muḥammad Vāhidī, "Kahkashān", edited by Sayyid Imtyāz 'Alī Tāj,

“*Dīn Dunyā*”, edited by Zuhūr Ahmad Vahshī, and “*Durvesh*”, edited by Khājā Hasan Niẓāmī.

These magazines had very short lives and did not succeed in introducing any new names in connection with the short-story. But they helped in creating a greater demand for the short-story and encouraging more and more people to try their hand at it, and thus are indirectly responsible for the success it has now achieved.

For the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Urdu short-story remained in its infancy. The best known name in connection with it at this period was that of Sayyid Sajjād Ḥaidar Yildarim. His short-stories were the first referred to as “*fasānas*”, the title by which the modern short-story is now called, as opposed to “*qiṣṣas*”, by which the tales written in the old way were designated. The “*fasānas*” of Sayyid Sajjād Ḥaidar were romantic in tone and contained a love interest, those of the other writers of the period were mostly stories of domestic interest eschewing the love motive.

Sayyid Sajjād Ḥaidar’s works were not always original but often adaptations from other languages, mostly Turkish. But these adaptations were never in the nature of direct translation. Not much more than the plot or the hint of a plot was borrowed, the rest was the work of his own imagination.

How much the stories adapted by Sajjād Ḥaidar became his own is illustrated by his version of the famous love story of *Lailā* and *Majnūn*. It is one of the most whimsically and delightfully written stories. *Lailā* and *Majnūn* are reborn under modern conditions. *Majnūn* has a sub-conscious feeling like Priestley’s hero that “I have been here before”, and feels irritated at the hundred-and-one references to him in the older literature. It seems to him that his character has never been understood by those myriads of writers and poets who chose to write about him.

This modern *Lailā* and *Majnūn* were exactly the same as

their namesakes of a thousand years ago, only *Lailā* now goes about in a cart instead of a “*maḥmil*” and *Majnūn* follows her on a bicycle instead of on foot. The tyre of the bicycle gets a puncture, and this, instead of footsoreness, prevents him from following *Lailā*. The modern *Lailā* is ordered electrical treatment instead of the opening of veins (“*faṣḍ*”), but the modern *Majnūn*’s reaction to his beloved is the same. At the moment she is undergoing the treatment he falls into a fit, as *Majnūn* of old began bleeding when *Lailā*’s “*faṣḍ*” was opened.

As the other *Majnūn* caught hold of the wild deer and kissed their eyes because they were like *Lailā*’s, so does this *Majnūn*, only he has to go to the local Zoo to find deer with *Lailā*-like eyes, there being no wildernesses now to rush out to. This *Majnūn* also like his namesake is taken to Mecca by his father to pray on the door-steps of the *Ka’ba* so that he might be delivered from his obsession, and there like that *Majnūn*, and the *Majnūns* of all times, he prays that his sufferings might never be lessened :

اور قیس نے دست دعا اٹھائے اور اتھائے حمیت، غایت
تضرع سے، اعماق دل سے نکلنے والی صدا سے، دعا مانگی، مگر کیا؟
وہی جو اس سے سیکڑوں برس پہلے مانگی تھی، اور جو ہر
قیس طبیعت، چاہے وہ کہیں ہو اور کسی زمانے میں ہو، مانگے گا:
«میں جس مصیبت میں ہوں خدا کرے وہ کبھی کم نہ ہو».

Sajjād Ḥaidar mostly wrote romantic stories. These possess a high quality of imagination and are touched with poetic beauty. ‘*Khayālistān*’ is perhaps the most typical and the best of his short-stories in the romantic vein. It has the eternal longing of the man for his mate and the woman for hers as its theme. *Nasrīn*, a girl, and *Khārā*, a boy, are brought up in different islands, where neither sees anyone of the opposite sex. *Nasrīn*’s mother and *Khārā*’s guardians are equally determined

that their charges should not come to know of love and the misery that is attendant upon it. *Nasrīn* and *Khārā* grow up unaware of life's greatest mystery and for some time are quite happy. But after a while vague longings begin to stir in them both and life becomes dull and meaningless. *Khārā* lets himself drift on in a rudderless boat which anchors at *Nasrīn's* island. And thus the plans of their parents and guardians come to nought. The language of '*Khayālīstān*' is almost that of poetry; it is in fact a prose-poem.

Sajjād Haidar's social stories are also excellent. '*Nikāh i Šānī*', '*Azdavāj i Muḥabbat*', '*Suḥbat i Nājīns*' are each perfect specimens. '*Suḥbat i Nājīns*' is a study of incompatibility of temperaments. It is extremely well done; the reader himself begins to share the nervous strain the girl is undergoing. The story consists of two letters written by two girls in which each of them tells the other of her mental sufferings due to the difference of temperament between herself and her husband.

'*Azrā* is a gay, irresponsible, vivacious girl, a regular tom-boy. She had had an entirely European education and has no taste for Urdu poetry and no knowledge of Indian literature or music. Her husband, *Gayāṣ*, is a heavy, ponderous, uncouth fellow, whose hobbies are horse-racing and cheap music halls. He has had no education and his taste for poetry leaves much to be desired. So, when '*Azrā* is playing "Mendelssohn" or "Wagner" he is singing some such doggerel as :

ترے صدقے زلفوں کے لٹکانے والے
مرے دل کو گلیوں میں بھٹکانے والے

which makes '*Azrā's* blood curdle. They have nothing in common, what one likes irritates the other profoundly. Physically and mentally they are quite incompatible. '*Azrā* is fastidious to a fault; *Gayāṣ's* vulgarity is disgusting; '*Azrā*

is a fairy-like creature, *Gayāṣ* is of "the earth earthy"; and so, '*Azrā* wildly writes to *Salma*, her friend, and asks her in despair what to do :

اب ان کی طبیعت کا حال سنئے، کبھی ٹھپلا بیٹھا نہیں جاتا،
ہربات میں دخل در معقولات کا شوق۔ سیاہ ابر کی طرح گھر پر
چھایا رہتا ہے۔ بے اتھا باتونی، مگر شاید میں دسویں حصہ کو
بھی کان دھر کے نہیں سنتی۔ کیا عمر بھر یونہی گزرے گی؟ کیا میں
اس بوجھ کو یونہی اٹھاؤں گی؟ میں ایسے خاوند کی تو تمنا
نہیں رکھتی، ایسا خاوند نہ چاہتی تھی۔ مگر انسان جو نہیں چاہتا
وہی اسے ملتا ہے۔

'*Azrā's* contempt for her husband, the revulsion she feels at sight of him, how unbearable his company is to her, her own and *Gayāṣ's* personality, all these are crystal-clear to the reader.

But the fate of *Salma*, the girl whom '*Azrā* is writing to, is no better. She is married to a man who irritates her as profoundly as *Gayāṣ* irritates '*Azrā*. *Salma* is imaginative, sensitive, and poetic. *Hamīd*, her husband, is dry as dust, cold and hard. *Salma* lives in a land of dreams, he in one of stark reality. *Salma* wants fire, colour and romance in life, to her life means to love, to suffer and to feel. To *Hamīd* life is a matter of dull routine which nothing should disturb, emotion whether it be of joy or sorrow has no place in his scheme of things. He has never known a quickening of the pulse or what her heart-throb means. *Salma's* life with her husband, who has as much feeling as a carved statue, is as meaningless as '*Azrā's* with a vulgar and uncouth husband. '*Suḥbat i Nājīns*' ranks with '*Madame Bovary*' as a study of incompatibility of temperament.

'*Azdavāj i Muḥabbat*' and '*Nikāh i Šānī*' are both extremely well-written stories by Sajjād Haidar. The plot in each case

is good, there is no unnecessary expansiveness, the stories are well-written and completely hold the interest of the reader. 'Cīṛe Cīṛyā kī Kahānī', 'Ḥaẓrat i Dil kī Savāneḥ 'Umrī' and 'Saudā e Sangīn' are stories in a more romantic and more whimsical vein, but they are all extremely readable.

Sajjād Ḥaidar's was the most prominent name in connection with the short-story in the first two decades of the twentieth century; he has not written anything of any literary merit for the last ten or fifteen years.

Khājā Ḥasan Nizāmī is one of the most interesting figures in Indian public life. Apart from being a religious and political leader and a social reformer, he is the most successful journalist of his time. He was among the first few writers of short-stories which had any literary merit in Urdu. His "fasānas" have a charm and style of their own. There are three volumes of them: 'Begmāt ke Āsū', or 'Āsū kī Būdē' as they are sometimes called, 'Angrezō kī Biptā' and 'Jag Bītī Kahānīā'. 'Begmāt ke Āsū' and 'Angrezō kī Biptā' are based on the events of the Mutiny. Each of the plots is based on fact. 'Jag Bītī Kahānīā' are purely imaginative and are written in a delightfully whimsical manner which recalls Barrie.

'Begmāt ke Āsū' is a record of what befell the Prince and Princess of the royal house of Timur after the rule of their dynasty was over. It contains twenty-three different stories; each of them is based on truth, but such imagination has been shown in the handling of the matter that the book rivals the best works of fiction in the interest it evokes.

The "fasānas" are told in different ways. Some of them are just plain narrative, but even these have a charm of style and directness that make it a pleasure to read them, e.g., 'Bint i Bahādur Shāh' or 'Shāhzādī kī Biptā'. These are in the first person and are told with utter simplicity. In 'Shāhzādī kī Biptā', Princess Sulṭān Bāno, a granddaughter of Bahādur Shāh, begins her story in these words:

ہونے کو تو غدر پچاس برس کی کہانی تھی، مگر مجھ سے پوچھو تو کل کی سی بات معلوم ہوتی ہے۔ ان دنوں میری عمر سولہ سترہ برس کی تھی، میں اپنے بھائی سے دو برس چھوٹی اور مرنے والی بہن ناز بانو سے چھ سال بڑی ہوں۔ میرا نام سلطان بانو ہے۔ ابا جان مرزا قریش بہادر ظل سبحانی حضرت بہادر شاہ کے فرزند تھے۔

Sentiment never palls in it or in any of these narratives that are in the first person. There is no mawkishness or plea for pity in them. They have the dignity and restraint of true tragedy.

But only a few are direct narrative. In most of the others incidents are selected and arranged by Ḥasan Nizāmī with a view to dramatic effect.

'Becārī Shāhzādī kī Khākī Chaparkhaṭ', 'Kafnī', 'Fāqe mē Roza', 'Yatīm Shāhzāde kī 'Id', all have their pathos heightened by the manner in which the story is told.

Khājā Ḥasan Nizāmī is a true artist and knows just how to present a story to gain the maximum of effect. In 'Becārī Shāhzādī kī Khākī Chaparkhaṭ' nothing is said of what happened to Gul Bāno after the Mutiny or how she came to die of cold and hunger at the foot of her father's tomb. Only the scene of her early luxury is described, but with such vividness and imagination that it becomes one we might have witnessed with our own eyes:

جب گل بانو نے پندرہویں سال میں قدم رکھا تو شباب نے بچپن کی خداداد شرارتیں تو رخصت کر دیں، مگر دلربائی کی شوخیاں اس قسم کی ڈھائیں کہ محل کا بچہ بچہ پناہ مانگتا ہی۔ سونے کی چہرکھٹ پر دوشالہ تان کر سویا کرتی تھیں۔ شام کو

چراغ جلے اور بانو چہرہ رکھٹ پر پہنچیں۔ ماں کہتیں: «چراغ میں بقی پڑی لاڈو میری تخت چڑھی»، تو وہ مسکرا کر، انگڑائی اور جمائی لے کر، سر کے بکھرے ہوئے بال کو ماتھے پر سے سمیٹ کر، کہتیں: «اچھا، بی، تم کو کیا سوتے ہیں، وقت کھوتے ہیں، تمہارا کیا لیتے ہیں، تم ناحق کوٹلوں پر لوٹی جاتی ہو»۔

And after it just a few paragraphs tell us of her "*Khāḳī Chaparkhat*". By this juxtaposition of the two an effect is created which would not have been achieved had *Khājā Ḥasan Nizāmī* related in detail what befell *Gul Bāno* till the time of her death.

Some "*afsānas*" begin with a scene from the early life of the hero or heroine. As for instance, "*Kafnī*" opens with a description of *Māh Jamāl*, being aroused with great ceremony by her slave-girl. Then comes the story of the reversal of her fortune in detail. *Māh Jamāl* loses her mother, and her wealth, and even the people she has taken shelter with are killed. She is taken in by a milkman, and on her first morning there she is aroused from sleep by the milkman's wife with these words:

اری مردار، کب تک سوتی رہیگی، اٹھی نہیں، جھاڑو دینے کا وقت ہے۔

The reader at once remembers the earlier scene and how *Māh Jamāl* used to be awakened from her slumbers, thus:

«دلشاد، گدگدیاں نہ کر، سونے دے، نماز قضا ہوتی ہے تو کیا کروں، آنکھ کھولنے کو دل نہیں چاہتا»۔ «بیوی، گدگدیاں میں نے نہیں کیں، یہ گلاب کا پھول تمہارے تلووں

سے آنکھیں مل رہا ہے»۔ «میں اس پھول کو مل ڈالوں گی، اتنے سویرے مجھے کیوں جگاتی ہے، میرا دل ابھی سونے کو چاہتا ہے۔ ذرا سندری کو بلا، بانسری بجائے، ہلکے سروں میں بھیروین گائے، گل چمن کہاں ہے، چپی کرے، تو کوئی کہانی شروع کر»۔

سندری بانسری بجا رہی تھی کہ ماہ جمال نے آنکھیں کھول دیں، بالوں کو سمیٹا، مسکرائی، کلمہ پڑھا، نرگس نے سلام کیا، جواب میں اس کے ایک چٹکی لی گئی، انگڑائی لے کر اٹھ بیٹھی اور کہا، «دلشاد، ہم نے نرگس کی چٹکی لی، تو یہ ہنسی نہیں، منہ بنا دیا، آ تو آ، ترے کان پکڑوں اور تو خوب ہنس»۔

In the eleventh "*fasāna*", "*Fāqe mē Roza*", the pathos in *Mirzā Shahzōr's* being forced to accept the "*iftār*" of charity becomes, because of its contrast with the description of the sumptuous "*iftār*" of his pre-Mutiny days, more significant.

Some of the "*fasānas*" open with a scene of great humiliation for the hero, e.g. "*Thelevālā Shāhzāda*". In this first comes description of an accident between a "*thela*" and a car which resulted in the *Thelevālā* being beaten by the driver of the car. The *Thelevālā* does not submit to this insult and thrashes the driver in return. The case is brought before a magistrate and there the *Thelevālā* makes this sensational statement:

میرا نام ظفر سلطان ہے، میں مرزا بابر بہادر شاہ کے بھائی کا بیٹا ہوں۔ میرے دادا ہندوستان کے شہنشاہ معین الدین اکبر شاہ تائی تھے۔ غدر کے بعد میں ہزاروں پریشانیوں کے

بمد ملکوں ملکوں پھرتا ہوا دہلی میں آ گیا، اور ٹھیلہ چلانے کا کام کرنے لگا۔

۱۱ مئی سنہ ۱۹۱۷ء جو ۱۱ جون سنہ ۱۸۵۷ء کی طرح گرم اور سخت تھی، اس واقعہ کی تاریخ ہے۔ میں بہرا ہوں، میں نے موٹر کی آواز نہیں سنی، موٹر والوں نے میری عمر اور حالت پر رحم نہ کیا اور میرے چار کوڑے لگائے۔ میرے بدن میں جو خون ہے اس کو مار کھانے کی اور ظلم و جور سہنے کی اب تو عادت ہو گئی ہے، پر پہلے نہ تھی۔ جس جگہ عدالت کی کرسی ہے اس مقام پر غدر سے پہلے میرے حکم سے بارہا بہت سے شہریوں اور سرکشوں کو سزائیں دی گئی ہیں۔

The detailed story of his life comes after that.

Some "fasānas" are dealt with more imaginatively than others. Most of them are confined more or less to the actual happenings and imagination is used merely in the grouping of them. Others are more freely dealt with.

'Pirjī Ghasyāre', 'Gadar kī Zacca', 'Gadar kī Saidānī', 'Kafnī' and 'Gadar kī binā Galatfahmiā', are stories with a plot based on actual fact. But the author has used his imagination in the development and the dénouement of the story. 'Gadar kī binā Galatfahmiā' is the story of a young man named Yūsuf who is persuaded by the Mutineers to help them to break into the artillery magazine and get some secret documents. He is led to believe that he would be serving his religion and country by doing so. He is completely ignorant of the Mutineers' intentions and was a mere tool in the hands of the designing villains. But after the Mutiny, on account of his being an accomplice, he is arrested and hanged.

No doubt this is what happened in many cases and in the case of many innocent persons. Ḥasan Nizāmī has used a

probable or very likely an actual incident and woven a pathetic story round it. The scenes of Yūsuf's interviews with the Maulvī Shāhib and with the Mutineers are obviously imaginary ones, as is the farewell scene between Yūsuf and his bride. This has such pathos in it that it cannot be read without tears. Ḥasan Nizāmī never gives harrowing details, he does not ladle out his tragedies, he knows the secret of the economy of words, and consequently his description has greater poignancy:

جس وقت یوسف رخصت ہوا تو اس کی ماں بےقرار ہو گئی اور اس نے رو رو کر کہا کہ یہ میری بیس برس کی کمائی ہے، یہ میرا اکلوتا بیٹا ہے، اس کے بغیر میں زندہ نہیں رہوں گی۔ کل اس کی شادی ہوئی ہے، اس نے تو ابھی اپنی دلہن کا چہرہ بھی نہیں دیکھا۔ تم اسے کہاں لئے جاتے ہو اور کیوں لئے جاتے ہو؟

ایک سوار نے جواب دیا کہ یہ بہت بڑا باغی ہے، اس کو پھانسی دی جائیگی، تم اس سے آخری بار ملو، کہ اب دوبارہ یہ تمہارے پاس نہیں آئے گا۔

'Angrezō kī Biptā' is a collection of eleven "fasānas" dealing with the indignities and injuries suffered by the English during the first four months of the Mutiny. These have not the charm and pathos of the "fasānas" in 'Begmāt ke Āsū' and are more or less just bald narratives. Khājā Ḥasan Nizāmī here could not select and arrange his material to secure the best possible effect, as his knowledge of English life was too sketchy. He had to confine himself to relating the incidents and did not attempt to portray the reactions of the "characters" to them. These "fasānas" are also

extremely pathetic but do not come anywhere near ' *Begmāt ke Āsū* ' in charm, pathos or characterisation.

' *Jag Būlī Kahāniā* ' has eight " *fasānas* " in it. They are all written with extreme whimsicality and do not follow accepted lines of delineation of character and construction of plot ; nevertheless, they make delightful reading and have the charm of originality. Some of them are in the first person, e.g. ' *Āsū kā Jhūlā* '. It escapes being just narrative as it has the delineation of a mood of wistfulness as its objective. The mood of wistfulness that comes over those who have once known happiness in certain scenes and seasons recalls those days. " *Barsāt* " in India has the same significance as Spring in England. It is the season when Nature is reborn and this spectacle of perennial youth brings a measure of hopefulness to the human heart as well ; songs are sung and swings are put up under trees, but those which *Garhar Begam* puts up are swings of tears, and that is how the title of the " *fasāna* " is derived.

' *Furniture Merchant kā Pahlā Tūr* ' is a humorous sketch showing what extravagance leads to. When looking through his papers before his furniture is auctioned, a man finds the first cable from a firm intimating to him that goods worth ten thousand rupees have been sent as per order. This brings to his mind his early simple life in the villages ; he remembers his first trip to town and his own *faux pas* on that occasion. The glimpse of the elaborate life of the city-dweller stirs up in him a longing for a similar life. The encouragement of his friend strengthened his resolution to come and live in the city. A house was bought and an order placed with a firm of decorators and furnishers to furnish it. This wire was the one that informed him that his house and furniture were ready. This was the beginning of the extravagant life which had brought him to bankruptcy, and this, and ironically this first, memento of extravagance comes to hand on the day he is paying the final price of his foolishness.

' *Faqīr Shāhzāde kī Daulat* ', ' *Jāzib kāqaz kā Afsāna* ' and ' *Shām mē do Bilāl* ' are stories with an admixture of realism and whimsicality. The whimsicality is really due to the introduction of the doctrine of " *taṣavvuf* ". The fact that the mysteries of " *taṣavvuf* " are an accepted thing by the Muslims of India brings the story quite within the compass of probability.

' *Jāzib kāqaz kā Afsāna* ' explains the mystery of " *majzū-byāt* " in a most original manner in connection with the plot of the story. A Raja brings a case against a *Shāh Ṣāhib* (that is, a saintly man) for having attempted to poison his wife. But the case is disproved by means of the evidence of some writing on a piece of blotting paper. Blotting paper is called " *jāzib* " in Urdu and the words " *majzūb* " on it were " *majzūb* " words. The *Shāh Ṣāhib* when called upon to give his defence takes that as an example to explain to the court what a " *majzūb* " is. " *Majzūb* ", he said, " are like those half-written words on the blotter that have their use some time ". The plot of this " *fasāna* " is an ingeniously constructed one and the *dénouement* has all the necessary elements of surprise.

Most of the " *fasānas* " of these three volumes were published in various magazines from 1900 to 1920 and were later collected in book-form. They had an enormous popularity,—' *Begmāt ke Āsū* ' having gone into fourteen editions, and have been translated into several vernaculars.

' *Āsū kī Būdē* ' is of interest from a point of view other than that of its being one of the best collections of short-stories in the Urdu language. It contains the best historical stories as well. History has been approached by numerous authors since Sharar for plot and character, but not one author has succeeded in painting the period he has chosen with such vividness or conviction as to make it live. Nor have any managed to endow their " characters " with any semblance of reality, the reason being their lack of knowledge of the period coupled with the poverty of their imagination.

Khājā Hasan Nizāmī has a thorough knowledge of the period he chose to write his stories about. He had made the study of the causes of the Mutiny his subject and had met hundreds of people who remembered it. His family had connections with the royal house of the Moguls and from his earliest childhood he knew numerous first-hand anecdotes about the various personages of Bahadur Shah's family. Thus, like Walter Scott, he was thoroughly familiar with his period and has, therefore, succeeded in making it alive and interesting for his readers. It is to be regretted that he did not attempt a full-length novel of this period. Like Sayyid Sajjād Ḥaidar Khājā Hasan Nizāmī also has not written any fiction for the last fifteen years or so.

Rāshid ul Khairī, though later in life he wrote mostly novels, made his début with short-stories. His short-stories are of the same style and on the same subjects as his full-length novels—the subjects being either a portrayal of the unfortunate life of women or the consequences of the headlong imitation of the West: around these two motifs most of his short-stories are written. They have the same merits and demerits as his full-length novels, that is to say, the tragedy is of a highly emotional, harrowing type, the "characters" are painted white or black and not with any certainty. They are obviously didactic in aim and sometimes strain the credulity of the reader—so unnaturally good are his good "characters" and so fundamentally bad are the bad ones.

Nevertheless, they were extremely popular and it cannot be denied that they are very readable. The style is attractive for the Urdu is the choicest Delhi Urdu. Rāshid ul Khairī's dialogue at times was extremely good and sometimes a phrase or a sentence would lift the story to a tragic plane. His earlier stories have been published in the collections "*Jauhar i 'Ishmat*" and "*Qatrāt i Ashk*". These were the ones that appeared in "*Makhzan*" and other magazines in the first quarter of the twentieth century. These stories are better

knit and carry more conviction than those written in his last years. The stories written in his later years have also been published in several volumes: '*Sailāb i Ashk*', '*Tūfān i Ashk*', '*Vilayātī Nankhā*', '*Nānī 'Ashu*', '*Arūs i Mashriq*'. These were written under pressure of demand and after the author's genius had begun to flag.

Though still a young man and belonging to the group of the modern writers of short-stories, yet Imtyāz 'Ali Tāj produced some of his best work before 1925 and must therefore be classed amongst the writers of the first two decades of this century.

Imtyāz 'Ali Tāj began writing at the age of fifteen, and some of his best short-stories, such as '*Tārā*', '*Māyūs*', '*Anna*', '*Salma*' and '*Lāvāriṣ Baccha*', were written before he was twenty. In recent years he has turned his attention to drama and other forms of literary composition; but the short-stories of his earlier period show such mastery of technique, such excellent characterisation and such maturity that it is a pity he did not continue along this avenue.

Among all the younger writers his works approximate closest to Prem Cand's in style. His stories are of domestic interest and he has chosen his "characters" from the same strata of society as Prem Cand. '*Anna*', one of his short-stories, has a definite resemblance to Prem Cand's short-story called '*Bhūrī Kākī*'. '*Anna*' is a story of the devotion of an old nurse to her ungrateful charges. *Anna* had brought up *Mahmūd*, she loved him with all her heart and soul. She was now very old, her mind had begun to wander; her old master and mistress, the parents of *Mahmūd*, were dead. They had respected her and knew the value of her love, but *Mahmūd* had no use for her. *Mahmūd* and his wife, *Hashmat*, were too busy and too happy in their present life to spare any time for memories of the past. *Anna* lived alone and neglected in a small outhouse.

A new ray of hope shone at the birth of *Mahmūd*'s son.

She knew nothing of it and only when the callers began to arrive did she realise that something was afoot. When she heard that a son had been born to *Mahmūd*, her joy knew no bounds. *Hashmat* had fallen ill after the child's birth and so none interfered with *Anna*, who took charge of the child completely. Life once more took on meaning for her and she was extremely happy. When *Hashmat* recovered, she began to ponder how to transfer the child from old and untidy *Anna* to a spick and span nurse. Alleging as excuse a slight cold she took the child away. The light of *Anna's* life was once more extinguished, now never to be lit again.

This simple story is told by Imtyāz 'Alī in a manner that brings tears to the eyes. The pathos of *Anna's* position is brought out so well, the loneliness and the darkness of her life are contrasted subtly with the richness and fulness of that of *Mahmūd* and *Hashmat*. The stupidity and utter insensibility of the two young people are also conveyed admirably. In short, '*Anna*' is a masterpiece of its type.

'*Lāvāriṣ Baccha*' has the most ingeniously constructed plot of Imtyāz 'Alī Tāj's stories. *Naṣīr*, a young man, is returning home after some months. Just one station before his home an old woman gets into the compartment with a baby. She plants the baby in his hands, asking him to hold it for a minute, while she goes and gets her shawl which she has forgotten on the bench. While she is away, the train starts and *Naṣīr* finds himself saddled with the baby. He does not know what to do with it except take it home. His wife refuses point-blank to allow him to keep it in the house and so he gives it to an old nurse of his. When he returns after giving the child away, he discovers that it is his own child. He goes back to the woman he left the child with, but she has meanwhile gone out to see a sick sister in another village. With the greatest difficulty he finally seeks her out and gets the child back. And all is well again.

Apart from the ingenuity of the plot, the story is delight-

fully told. The indignation of the young wife at the sight of the young baby, the predicament of poor *Naṣīr*, the anxiety of the nurse, are all described so well. The scene in the village where *Naṣīr* goes to enquire about the address is so typical of village life,—the stolid indifference of the villagers to an outsider, the vague and casual answers given in the intervals of carrying water or smoking the "*hukka*"!

Imtyāz 'Alī Tāj is good at painting loneliness and pathos. In '*Anna*' he had admirably described the pathos of neglected old age. In '*Tārā*' he has shown the loneliness of a neglected child. *Tārā*, because she has no looks, is neglected by her parents, and humiliated by her sisters. Parental embraces, gaily coloured toys, trips to fairs, sweets and flowers, none of these come her way. Her little heart yearns for these, but the cruel and vain mother has no love to spare for the ugly little child.

Tārā grows up and so do her sisters, *Sushilā* and *Rādihā*. They are prettier than ever and soon get married. *Tārā* is now more than ever a nuisance to her parents; how are they to get rid of her? At last a marriage is fixed up with a newcomer to the town who already has a wife, and poor *Tārā* says good-bye to the home which was never her home in the true sense. Her husband is not pleased when he sees how plain *Tārā* is, and some years of further loneliness follow. But *Tārā's* love at last triumphs and her devoted nursing of her husband when ill and deserted by his first wife wins his heart.

'*Salma*', '*Māyūs*', '*Bin Mā kā Baccha*' are extremely well-written stories and it is surprising that no collection has been published of them.

'*Husn kī qīmat aur dūsre afsāne*', first published in 1922, is the first collection of stories of the type that has been gaining popularity during the last few years. Short-stories hitherto had been a simple, straightforward recounting of some event or events in the life of one or more persons. '*Husn kī qīmat*' introduced the psychological and analytical element

into the short-story, and made it the means of presenting and probing into a social problem of the time. In the last few years, the short-stories have been written more and more on these lines and with this object in view. The language of '*Husn kī qīmat*' was more frank and more direct than authors had yet dared to use; in this respect also '*Husn kī qīmat*' was a precursor of the modern story.

'*Husn kī qīmat*' is the usual tale of a husband who forsakes his wife in the heyday of his youth, and on losing youth, looks and wealth realises that true love can only be found in the heart of a wife. But this very hackneyed plot has been used by Aḥmad Shujā' in a remarkably original manner. The pivot of the story is the mental and spiritual state of *Mas'ūd* and *Yūsuf* rather than what they actually do. Like Mirzā Muḥammad Sa'id's '*Khāb i Hastī*' and '*Yāsmīn*', a difference of approach makes '*Husn kī qīmat*' an unusually interesting story to read. *Yūsuf*'s philosophy of life is the most significant thing in the story. His creed, though superficially that of every young man of this generation, is in reality quite different. He believes in happiness, in living his life to the full, in tasting all the experiences life has to offer. He cannot brook any restrictions on his ideas and considers all religious and moral codes as just hindrances to a man's enjoyment of life. In all this he is not very different from the average young man of this generation. But *Yūsuf* has his own philosophy of life as well, and it is that which saves him from the fate of *Jamīl* and *Mas'ūd* and which enables him to retain his health and good looks and his money in spite of his philanderings. This is *Yūsuf*'s "Art of Sin". He practises what is called sinful living with the detachment of objectivity of a Professor. He merely experiments, never allows himself to be carried away by it. He leads *Mas'ūd* into the primrose path of sin. But he had not meant him to become an addict like *Jamīl*. He wanted him to be as heartless and as detached as himself. He wanted *Mas'ūd* to play the game of love-

making as lightheartedly as he himself did, to get the best price possible for his money and to give his time and charm to the highest bidder, and that is why he did not take him again to the first girl *Mas'ūd* was attracted by. But *Yūsuf* realised the sentimentality in *Mas'ūd*'s make-up and knew that he would not be able to remain as detached and unaffected as himself. So with the coldness of a philosopher or a scientist he experiments with *Mas'ūd*. He leaves him at the doorstep of sin and goes away to wait and see how his experiment will end. The fact that *Mas'ūd* lost his all in the experiment is of no consequence to *Yūsuf*. According to his way of thinking *Mas'ūd* is richer for the experience he has undergone and *Yūsuf* has done him a service :

مسعود مجھ سے دور بھاگنے کی کوشش مت کرو، میرا شکر یہ ادا کرو، میں نے تم پر احسان کیا ہے، تمہیں ایک ابدی عذاب سے بچالیا، پہلے تم معصوم تھے، اب نیک ہو۔ معصومیت اور نیکی میں بڑا فرق ہے۔ گناہ کے بغیر انسان نیک نہیں ہو سکتا۔ سنو، یہی شیطان کی پیدائش کا راز ہے۔ یہ کھکر یوسف مسعود کو اسی طرح حیران و ششدر چھوڑ کر ایک گہنی جھاڑی میں غائب ہو گیا۔

The other "*fasānas*" of this volume are: '*Ārām Shāh kī Betī*', '*Andhā Deotā*' and '*Gunāh kī Rāt*'; they are all distinguished by outspokenness of language and their difference in the presentation and conception of "characters". The story of '*Ārām Shāh kī Betī*' is an imaginary legend. These were very popular at the time. 'Abd ul Majīd Sālik has also written two or three stories of the time. The "characters" are the inhabitants of an entirely imaginary country and the story is placed in a pre-historic era. It had no special significance except as an indication of the trend of that time—a trend that did not develop. '*Andhā Deotā*' is the '*Husn kī*

qīmat' type of "*fasāna*". The character and philosophy of life of its hero, *Aslam*, are an unusual and psychological interest, like *Yūsuf*'s. *Aslam* has searched all his life for love, and when he had almost given up the search, he seems to have found it in the eyes and a single gesture of feminine tenderness of a village girl. This manifestation of love has a profound effect on *Aslam*. Hitherto he had thought that he would possess the woman he loved; but now he decides that true love should never be possessive but just selfless adoration, and so with a gesture of humility, such as that with which a Brahmin puts a garland of flowers at the feet of the idol, he gives *Dhanyā* 50,000 rupees and a house as a wedding present.

The conception of the character of *Yūsuf* and of *Aslam*, and the whole theory of '*Husn kī qīmat*', that "*husn*", like all other commodities, has a price and that its possessor has a right to demand the highest market price for it, was still a new thing in Urdu literature in 1922. They pointed the way towards the turn the Urdu short-story was taking.

'Abd ul Majīd Sālik was one of the well-known writers of short-stories of this period. He wrote simple, straightforward stories of domestic interest. Their merits lie in the simplicity of their style and their sincerity. These stories also reflect the change that was gradually coming over Indian society, for the plots arise out of the situations that came in the wake of the change. The stories of '*Campā*' and '*Raushnak Bānu*' can both happen only in a society such as existed in 1920. '*Campā aur dūsre afsāne*' contain those "*fasānas*" of Sālik which appeared in 1918 and 1919 in "*Kahkashān*", "*Naqqād*" and "*Shabāb i Urdū*". He wrote in "*Tahzīb i Nisvān*" and "*Makhzan*" as well, and some of his best stories are to be found in their pages. In the collection entitled '*Campā*', there are many stories of the legendary type which were very popular then; '*Viṣāl i Arvāh*', '*Himālaya kī Coṭī*' and '*Ishq kī Dulhan*' are all of this type. But most of them are of social interest. '*Khāb i Parīshān*' is the best from the

point of view of plot and successful *dénouement*. The incidents are well-knit and it possesses that quality which only the very best short-stories possess, that is, of making a definite impression of character and situation in the reader's mind. Only one incident in the life of the hero and heroine is described but in such a way that the entire background out of which the situation arose becomes quite clear. The whole tragedy was the result of a very trivial action, as so often in life it is.

Mas'ūd and *Salma* were a newly married couple who were very happy in the first three months of their married life. Then a note of discord appeared through an invitation from an uncle of *Mas'ūd* who had been on very bad terms with *Salma*'s father. *Salma* agrees to accept the invitation and promises not to, in any way, show any rudeness, but fails at the actual party to keep her promise and, though she does not openly slight the old people, her extreme aloofness is in itself an insult. This irritates *Mas'ūd* and when *Salma* breaks her silence at the dinner table only to warn him not to eat the fish as it does not agree with him, he feels further irritated and deliberately takes another helping. They quarrel on their return and go to sleep without being reconciled.

At night *Mas'ūd* has a nightmare and kills *Salma*. For a long time after he wakes he cannot realise that it is not a bad dream and that he has actually killed her. When he does, he commits suicide by drinking a bottle of iodine.

Tremendous improvement in the quality of short-stories in recent years makes the work of 'Abd ul Majīd Sālik appear very ordinary in comparison, but the Urdu short-story had hardly taken shape at the time he began writing, and his stories together with those of Sultān Haidar Josh formed a stepping stone in the development of the short-story in Urdu.

Sultān Haidar Josh was amongst the group of writers who made their début in the journalistic world through the pages of "*Makhzan*", and was amongst the prominent writers in "*An Nāẓir*", "*Shabāb i Urdū*" and "*Zamāna*" as well.

His name is still sometimes to be seen in the pages of " *Sāqī* ", " *Adabī Dunyā* " and other literary organs of the present day. His collection of short-stories was published in 1926 entitled " *Fasāna e Josh* ". There are nine stories in it and four or five articles. Several of the earlier collections of short-stories in Urdu incorporated essays as well, perhaps because the distinction between literary essays and short-stories was not established in the minds of the writers and they were thought of as interchangeable terms.

Some of the stories are written with a didactic aim, e.g. ' *Musāvāt* ' and ' *Umr i Qaid* '. The author addresses the reader direct in these, and advocates his point of view supporting it with the incidents from the story. They can almost be regarded as articles incorporating real or imaginary stories to give the argument greater force. ' *Musāvāt* ' attempts to show how unpleasant will be the consequence of granting women equality. ' *Umr i Qaid* ' is a most unsavoury story about the immodesty and selfishness of modern girls. ' *Talāsh i 'Ajīb* ' and ' *Tauq i Adam* ' are the two best stories in the collection. They are in a humorous vein and about common occurrences in family life and amongst friends. They are told in a manner which awakes interest, and there is a definite plot in them.

' *Ittifaqāt i Zamāna* ', ' *Nargis i Khudparast* ', ' *Pahlā Gunāh* ' and ' *Ijāz i Muḥabbat* ' are stories without any special merit. ' *Nargis i Khudparast* ' is based on a very well-known legend, and ' *Pahlā Gunāh* ' is the type of story which was very popular during this period. Examples of it are found in Sālik and in Rāshid ul *Khairī*, and even writers of recent years sometimes write in that vein. ' *Inqilāb i Zamāna* ' and other stories that came out in " *Makhzan* " were in Rāshid ul *Khairī*'s style.

The intrinsic merit of Sultān Ḥaidar Josh's work is very little. It has historic interest as it serves the purpose of showing the stages by which Urdu short-stories have achieved their present position.

CHAPTER XIV

WOMEN SHORT-STORY WRITERS

As during the intermediate period in the development of the novel the best works were by the women writers, so in the intermediate period in the development of the short-story also some excellent work was done by women.

'Abbāsī Begam and Nazr i Sajjād Ḥaidar were the best known journalists and novelists amongst the women between the years 1900 and 1925. No collection has been published of their works, but they are to be found in the pages of the old numbers of " *Tahzīb* ", " *Iṣmat* " and " *Tamaddun* ", and other magazines as well.

'Abbāsī Begam has written some very good short-stories. ' *Gariftār i Qafas* ' in 1915, which relates the story of " *purdah* " life in the terms of a caged bird, is a clever bit of inventive writing. ' *Zulm i Bekasān* ' is a simple but touching story, showing the injustice and cupidity of men. ' *Do Shāhzādiā* ' is a delightful tale based on history. It is the story of the two daughters of Prince Shujā' who, because of their father's opposition to Aurangzeb, had lost all their wealth and were living in a small hut on the edge of a forest. Their only friend was a half-witted but extremely jolly boy who did all their work and kept them amused by his silly pranks. The younger of the two princesses was particularly fond of ' *Alia* ' and he specially endeavoured to keep her happy. After a few weeks, however, the local " *Navāb* " came to know of the princesses' stay in his territory and sent for them. They said good-bye to ' *Alia* ' with regret; the little princess gave him a ring to remember her by.

They were received with great ceremony at the " *Navāb* 's " palace and presented to the " *Navāb* " himself. The " *Navāb* "