



A. R. RAJARAJA VARMA

K. M. GEORGE



*Makers of
Indian
Literature*

Broadly speaking the Golden period of Malayalam Literature was the hundred years from 1850 ; for it was during this period that stalwarts like Kerala Varma, A.R. Rajaraja Varma, Chandu Menon, C.V. Raman Pillai and the *Kavitravam Asan*, Ulloor and Vallathol lived and produced literature that was great by all standards.

Kerala Varma and Rajaraja Varma were indeed the towering figures, and they hold a unique position. Rajaraja Varma in whom we see a rare blend of scholarship and creative talent, was the moving spirit behind the great literary renaissance in Kerala.

Says Ulloor of A.R. Rajaraja Varma, "While others embellished the walls of the mansion of Malayalam literature with their paintings and drawings, A.R. worked both on its foundation and dome and made it a long enduring and imposing structure for the benefit of the people of Kerala. His fame rests on this architectural accomplishment and is bound to last for ever".

This monograph is written by Dr. K.M. George, a scholar and critic of repute who was connected with the Sahitya Akademi in various capacities. Apart from his numerous publications in English and Malayalam, Dr. George has written for the Sahitya Akademi a similar monograph on Kumaran Asan and a perceptive study on 'Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature'.

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By

K. M. GEORGE

The sculpture reproduced on the enpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodhana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.



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K. M. GEORGE

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CHAPTER I

THE BACK-DROP

If we examine the history of any literature which has flourished down the centuries, we will notice that there have been ups and downs, periods of great fertility and vitality in between epochs of barrenness and emasculation. Progress will not be continuously straight, as periods of efflorescence would alternate with those of decadence. Malayalam literature is no exception to this general rule. The great landmarks in Malayalam literature centre around stalwarts like Cherusseri (15th century), Thunchat Ezhuthachan (16th century), Kunchan Nambiar (18th century) and Unnayi Varier (18th century). The works of these great poets stand out in their formal structure, content and ideas. And they have been followed by less talented writers, most of them trying to imitate the masterpieces of these outstanding men.

There is general consensus that the earliest period in Malayalam literature is prior to the 15th century when the great classic *Krishna-gatha* by Cherusseri Nambudiri came to be written. In this period we see literary Malayalam in its formative stage when developed literatures like Sanskrit and Tamil exerted a powerful influence on it. At the same time this epoch has left us a rich heritage of folk songs, the language of which is largely the spoken form. As a matter of fact, there existed three distinct literary schools which contributed to the moulding of a classical dialect for Kerala, viz. (1) the indigenous stream, (2) the Tamil stream and (3) the Sanskrit stream. While the *pattu* type of composition as exemplified in *Ramacharitam* shows the archaic Tamil stream, early *Manipravāsa* compositions belong to the Sanskrit stream.

These three concurrent styles or streams which differed in quality and depth influenced one another. The first one, native to the soil, was shallow and colourless, but clear and fast-moving. The second was colourful and noisy, and the third one was deep but turbulent and winding, meant for the scholarly few. The tripartite interaction is seen clearly in the 14th century in *Unnunilisanandesam* and *Kannassan pattukal*. However, the evolution of a new style which indicates the healthy blending of the different styles and the forging of the spoken form is seen in the classic *Krishna Gatha*.

The tendency to accept and fuse what was best in the other schools, particularly the Sanskrit school, reached its acme at the hands of Thunchathu Ezhuthachan who made classical Malayalam at once popular and profound. His *Ramayanam* and *Mahabharatam* have put the readers in Malayalam under an eternal debt because of their unique literary grandeur and spiritual insight.

Over a century passes before we get a glimpse of the next high peak in the literary range. In fact we notice twin peaks. The first one is the doyen of Kathakali literature, Unnayi Varier, whose *Nalacharitham Attakkatha* composed to be staged in four days is known for its dramatic qualities and originality. Kathakali was a great art form but it required an audience of connoisseurs for its full enjoyment. The vivacious and witty Kunchan Nambiar realised the need of the masses and moulded an art form called *Thullal* and produced a substantial body of literature which would be enjoyed equally by the low-brow and the high-brow. Though Nambiar used only Puranic themes, his genius was such that every story and every sequence was made contemporary and breath-takingly delightful. He belonged to the 18th century.

The originality of these stalwart was such that they were able to rise above the formalistic patterns and give something of their own. The period between Kunchan Nambiar and the middle of the 19th century is a comparatively sterile era in Malayalam literature. Later, we find several writers coming up, many of them in the beaten track of Sanskrit tradition. The *Mahakavya*, the *Champu* and the *Sandesha Kavya* were the classical patterns in which they experimented. Side by side we see the influence of Western literature also. Some of them propagated an ornate style incorporating Sanskrit words and forms. Others preferred the pure vernacular, choosing the racy, vigorous diction of colloquial speech.

GOLDEN PERIOD OF LITERATURE

We see several prominent writers of poetry and prose in the six decades after 1850. The more outstanding among them are :—

- Kerala Varma (1845-1915) . . . Poet and Scholar
 A. R. Rajaraja Varma (1863-1918) . . . Scholar and Critic

Kodungalloor Kunjikuttan Thampuran (1865-1913)	}	Poet and Translator
Chandu Menon (1847-1900) C. V. Raman Pillai (1858-1922)		Novelists
Kumaran Asan (1873-1924) Ulloor (1877-1949) Vallathol (1878-1958)	}	Poets of the modern age

We notice that all of them were born in the 19th century (mostly the latter half) and their best works were produced between 1880 and 1930. This can be considered as the period of renaissance in Malayalam literature. Broadly speaking the golden period of Malayalam literature is a century after 1850.

Though we have mentioned only eight names, there were quite a few others who made magnificent contribution. In the garden of Malayalam literature, hundreds of flowers bloomed in the period making it a real spring season. Though many contributed to the general awakening by introducing new forms and themes, new approaches and fresh insights, the real pioneers were only a few. Among them Kerala Varma Valia Koyil Thampuran and his nephew A. R. Rajaraja Varma Thampuran hold a unique position. They were acknowledged as the towering figures of this new age of literature.

Kerala Varma was considered a *Sahitya Samrat*—an emperor of literature. His deep scholarship in Sanskrit and Malayalam, his poetic gifts and his keenness in serving the cause of literature and education, together with the great prestige he commanded as a close relative of the ruling family gave him an eminence which no one has enjoyed before or after. As a poet he realised the charm and profundity of Sanskrit tradition. But he was also influenced by the English type of education and as a member of the Textbook Committee he encouraged simple and direct prose compositions for the students. But when he himself wrote for the elite, he thought it proper to write in an ornate and artificial style as seen in the novel *Akbar*. A. R. Rajaraja Varma was grammarian, poet and critic, and he had great respect for his uncle; but they disagreed fundamentally on many aspects of literary composition and evaluation. In the following pages, we shall have occasion to examine the stand of each one with reference to rhetoric and imagination and the relevance of the Sanskrit type of formalism.

In his comprehensive history of Malayalam literature,* Mahakavi Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer has summed up the life and achievements of A. R. Rajaraja Varma in the following words: 'While others embellished the walls of the mansion of Malayalam literature with their paintings and drawings, A. R. worked both on its foundation and dome and made it a long enduring and imposing structure for the benefit of the people of Kerala. His fame rests on this architectural accomplishment and is bound to last for ever. During the modern age there is no one else in Kerala with such developed powers of observation, originality and discretion. Such superhuman beings are bound to be rare at any place and any time.'

CHAPTER II

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

The full name of our subject is A. R. Rajaraja Varma Koyithampuran. The terms *raja*, *varma*, *thampuran* and *Koyithampuran*¹ (Koyil+thampuran) refer to persons connected with the royalty and indicate a close connection with the ruling class viz. Kshatriyas. These terms also figure prominently in Malayalam literature, which shows how substantial is the contribution this small community has made to the cultural life of Kerala. Rajaraja Varma was born in 1863 in the Lakshmipuram Palace at Changanasseri, a populous town about 140 kilometres north of Travandrum. The correct date of birth according to the Malabar Era is 9 Kumbham 1038. It is customary to name royal personages with reference to the star of their birth, which in this case is Puruttatti (Purvabhadram—25th Star).

The Koyithampurans of Changanasseri had their family connections with Parappur Swaroopam in South Malabar, which was well-known for its prestige and traditional culture. History records the great migration of families from the Malabar area to Travancore in 1768 to escape the onslaught of Hyder Ali's invasion. Some branches of the Parappur Swaroopam also had fled at that time and they took refuge in the erstwhile Travancore State. The benevolent Maharaja of Travancore treated them so well that even when peace was restored, most of them did not want to go back. Not only that, the generosity and patronage were such that in due course, some of them were invited to have matrimonial connections with certain branches of the ruling family. Rajaraja Varma's family was one such.

Rajaraja Varma was born of highly cultured parents. His mother, Kunjikkavu Thampuratti, a maternal cousin (mother's elder sister's daughter) of the Sahitya Samrat Kerala Varma, was a woman of sterling character. His father Vasudevan Nambudiri of Pattiyal Illam, was a great Vedic scholar and a man with a

¹ Thampuran = lord— a term of respect. Koyil— a term referring to royalty or temples. Koyithampuran: a term used to refer to the consort of a princess.

* Kerala Sahitya Charitram—Vol. V.

remarkable sense of humour. In those days Nambudiris had matrimonial connections with prestigious families of Kshatriyas and Nairs.

When Kochappan, as young Rajaraja Varma was called, was only about two years old, owing to a serious difference of opinion and dispute in the Lakshmipuram palace, some members decided to move over to Karthikappally, about 20 miles from Changanasery. Here Kerala Varma and his elder brother Rajaraja Varma faced difficulties of many kinds. Later they moved to a new house in Haripad with the help of the ruling Maharaja. The new house was called 'Anantapuram Palace'. It was here that our young hero spent his childhood.

Though it was on the whole a happy period for him under the loving care of the learned uncles and the kind mother, Kochappan met with two accidents that nearly cost him his life. In one he was about to be drowned. In a large and deep pond near the house, during the rainy season, the boy wanted to have a boat ride along with one of his young cousins. There was only a servant maid in the boat to assist the boys. The small boat overturned and all the three were cast overboard. By the time the youngsters were rescued they were nearly dead. But fortunately, by administering proper first-aid they were brought to life. Kochappan who was then hardly seven recollected in later years the bad incident and the scolding which the women folk received for their indifference while taking the boys to the pond.

The second incident happened while the boy was having a spree in a grove which was infested with snakes. He felt that his right foot had hit against something sharp. Before long he felt heaviness in the leg; still he ran up to the house. No serious wound could be discovered; but there was continuous pain and stiffness in the foot. It was positively a snake bite. Somehow the boy had a miraculous escape.

Early Education

Rajaraja Varma had his early education in the traditional manner under well-known teachers. The first gurus were Chunakkara Achutha Varier and Sankara Varier. They taught him the three Rs. The next stage was the learning of Sanskrit Kavyas. The boy was very playful and mischievous. His interest was more in games than in study. He was acknowledged as their leader by

the youngsters because of his superior skill in the indigenous games, which were then popular, and the healthy boy easily outshone his companions. Though he did not pay much attention to his studies he could imbibe in no time everything the teacher taught because of his quick intelligence and grasp. So the gurus also liked him.

By this time Rajaraja Varma's uncle Kerala Varma, who was 18 years his senior, had become well-known as a gifted writer. However, he was under house arrest because of some misunderstanding with the ruling Prince. So, from Alleppey he was sent to Haripad. This unhappy episode eventually proved beneficial to Malayalam literature. Rajaraja Varma could get his lessons in Sanskrit and versification direct from the illustrious uncle. This helped to develop the personality of the nephew along right lines and to create an academic bent of mind in him. Moreover, this bitter experience of Kerala Varma, was responsible for the creation of the *Mayoora Sandesam*, a well-known message poem addressed to his consort from whom he was separated by royal displeasure.

Rajaraja Varma got the help and guidance of his uncle in learning kavyas and composing poems for full six years (1875-1881). There were two other disciples who were also close relatives. The manner in which the lessons proceeded and the genius of Rajaraja Varma flowered is brought out by a particular incident which is worth narrating here. One day the Guru ordered the three sishyas to compose an *ashtakam* (eight verses) on Ganapati and bring it to him the next day by 3 p.m. The other two disciples started work straightaway, scratching their heads and trying laboriously to spin out verses. The playful Kochappan did not bother about it till the last moment. When it was about 2 p.m. he remembered the assignment and started scribbling something. Later at the appointed time the guru came and Rajaraja Varma followed his colleagues. The first one who had floundered was excused; the second one was complimented on his satisfactory performance. Then came forward Rajaraja Varma, diffident and nervous. He was asked to read out the *Ashtakam*, which he did with some hesitation. He was asked to read it again. The guru then asked the pupil to bring the *Ashtakam* which he, the guru himself, had composed and read it aloud. Then they looked at each other and smiled, because both in form and content there was considerable similarity between the works of the teacher and the student. The uncle was mightily pleased with the performance of his nephew and the nephew

felt elated. The guru did another trick. He copied out both the compositions and sent them to his elder brother without revealing the authorship. The scholarly brother easily identified the composition of his brother, the seasoned poet; but he also complimented the unknown poet and declared that his *Ashtakam* was nearly as good. Later when the identity of the new poet was disclosed, everyone enjoyed the joke and Rajaraja Varma received nice gifts. All this happened when he was only 15 years old.

Another anecdote which has pleasing overtones is connected with the visit of Elathoor Ramaswami Sastrikal to the palace. Sastrikal was the teacher of Kerala Varma and he wanted to test the talent and capacity of his disciple's students. He recited the sloka commencing with 'Adyapi tishtati...' from *Kusalayandam* and asked the students to explain the meaning. The old scholar was agreeably surprised at the manner in which young Rajaraja Varma interpreted certain lines, and revealed their inner delicacy. He complimented the boy on his performance. This kind of encouragement naturally helped the blossoming of the young 'sahridaya'.

Thus we see that even as a teenager Rajaraja Varma showed great gifts of craftsmanship as a poet in Sanskrit. He also mastered Sanskrit grammar and rhetoric, and started composing poems in Sanskrit which not only reached the connoisseurs in the family circle, but the Travancore Maharaja himself through the kind introduction of his beloved uncle.

When Vishakhom Thirunal became the ruler of Travancore in 1880, the wheel of fate turned in favour of Kerala Varma. Thus the inmates of Ananthapuram Palace got the encouragement they deserved. Very soon Kerala Varma changed his residence to Trivandrum and closely associated himself with Vishakhom Thirunal, who was also a scholar and writer. Before long the suggestion was made that the budding poet A.R. should also go to Trivandrum and continue his studies there. Along with two other students, Rajaraja Varma stayed at 'Changanasseri Mootathu Mathom' in Trivandrum and prosecuted his formal education in a regular high school. Needless to add that this was arranged by Kerala Varma, who continued his guidance with unflagging enthusiasm.

The high school education continued from 1881 onwards. Though Rajaraja Varma was generally very good at studies, he

had his weak points too. Mathematics was a nightmare for him. Even when he scored digit marks in Mathematics, his general average was about 70 per cent. So he got his promotion to the next higher class only as a special case on the recommendation of the European Principal. He took Sanskrit as his second language, but had to learn Malayalam also. It was now that his attention towards Malayalam grammar was roused for the first time. As regards Sanskrit, his competence was such that the Munshi considered him his equal. They used to consult each other on problematic points. Malayalam language in those days had only an inferior position, and the Sanskrit enthusiast Rajaraja Varma also thought it was right. The textbooks in Malayalam then were so dull that there was some kind of justification for this opinion of the mother tongue.

The enlightened Maharaja wanted to encourage new talents. As a specific case, he offered an attractive prize to the best essay written in Sanskrit on a subject decided by the Maharaja himself and the students had to write an eight-page essay. The essays were first seen by the Maharaja himself and then they were passed on to Kerala Varma. Our young poet was also a competitor. Both the Maharaja and Kerala Varma came to the conclusion that the best essay was the one written by Rajaraja Varma. This was another incident which enhanced the interest of the high dignitaries in the young writer. While education in the high school was progressing, Kerala Varma found time to give his nephew lessons in advanced Sanskrit.

University Education

The playful Rajaraja Varma was enjoying his life in Trivandrum with his friends. But still he got through his Matriculation Examination without any difficulty. And when he was about to commence his University education, a serious calamity put a sudden brake. His mother died (1884) and this upset him in more than one sense. Apart from the obvious affliction caused by his beloved mother's untimely demise, he was obliged to discontinue his formal studies for one year as custom imposed certain restrictions on his public appearance. He had to go unshaven for a full year and do certain *karmas* at home. The young man did not want to waste a year of studies and he represented the situation to Kerala Varma and others. No one was courageous enough to advise him to go against

established conventions. Finally the problem came to the notice of the Maharaja himself whose solution was welcomed with a sense of relief and gratitude. The Maharaja's own son Sri Narayanan Thampi had to appear for the F.A. examination of the Madras University and private tuition was being arranged for him at the palace. The royal order was that Kochappan also be given the same tuition as Thampi. This was indeed a welcome solution and a blessing as Kochappan could get gratis the best tuition available in the country. Special permission for appearance in the examination had to be got from the University of Madras and this would have been no problem when the ruler of the state was interested. But unfortunately Vishakhom Thirunal passed away soon and hence Rajaraja Varma had to join the Maharaja's College later. He passed the F.A. examination in 1886.

He then joined the B.A. class. As before, he was interested in games. He took special interest in Tennis, a game which was just getting popular in Trivandrum. He also took delight in swimming. Rather than spending time on textbooks, he read interesting literary works and enjoyed composing verses and participating in *Aksharasloka* competitions. Thus there was an all round development of personality, though the curricular studies did not get adequate attention. For the B.A. degree examination he passed creditably in English and Sanskrit; but failed in Chemistry which was his optional subject. The failure was in the practical examination. But as a private candidate he appeared for Chemistry and passed at the next examination. Rajaraja Varma's diaries of those days clearly show that he was not quite happy with the attention he gave to academic subjects. But when he did concentrate on a subject, he could master it with ease. That is why he got the first place in the examination at the end of the Junior B.A. class and annexed the prize. He also took pleasure in surprising the examiners by answering Sanskrit papers in verse. All this shows that he was an extraordinary student.

The failure in the B.A. degree examination caused a rather deep wound in Rajaraja Varma's heart. But he found some consolation, by composing 28 slokas in Sanskrit giving vent to his feelings. The small elegiac poem is entitled *Bhanga Vilapam*. The notes²

² 'I couldn't do anything useful today. I felt ashamed of my laziness. Lazy people will never acquire knowledge.'

in his personal diaries show his disappointment in not being able to concentrate on his studies. About his first trip to Madras to sit for the practical examination in Chemistry, there are interesting jottings in his diary describing the hazardous journey. It took a full week for the small group of students to reach Madras from central Travancore. In those days they could get the train only from Shoranur. Up to this place, the journey was undertaken partly by country boat and partly by bullock cart. So we can imagine the trouble which students from far flung areas had to undergo in order to get higher education in recognized universities in those days.

Marriage

Rajaraja Varma being such an eligible bachelor, even the ruling Prince Vishakhom Thirunal had an eye on him for his own daughter. But the untimely demise of the ruler and other factors shaped destiny otherwise. The elder Koyithampuran took the initiative at the right moment and things were so planned that the marriage of his third daughter 'Swati Thirunal Mahaprabha Thampuratti' with Rajaraja Varma was held in the traditional manner in 1889. It was a very happy marriage and the Thampuratti had deep love and veneration for her husband.

Rajaraja Varma, who was 26 then, was a mature man, a scholar and a budding poet. He had yet to get through his Chemistry which he did without difficulty at the next attempt. Thus our young hero became the first graduate in the community of Malayalee Kshatriyas. No doubt this community was proud of its scholars and savants, but they shunned education in formal institutions and were usually given private tuition at home. That had altogether a different set of standards. So when Rajaraja Varma became a graduate of the Madras University³ there was sincere jubilation among the members of the community. He received several presents and tributes on the occasion; but the most valuable one was a jewel studded gold bracelet from the ruler, Sri Moolam Thirunal Maharaja.

³ In those days there was only one university for the whole of South India.

Early Compositions

We have already referred to certain early attempts of the author at composing verses in Sanskrit. *Vimanashtakam* was composed immediately after his return from Madras after appearing for the M.A. degree examination. This is based on an experiment conducted by a European at Madras to rise in the sky in a gasfilled aircraft. The excitement of onlookers is well described. *Pithru Pralapam* as the very name indicates is the lament of a father. This is a moving elegy in Sanskrit on the untimely death of Rajaraja Varma's second daughter. There are other minor poems also of this period written sometimes at the suggestion of friends and at other times for some periodicals. *Devimangalam*, *Saraswati-stavam*, *Ragamudrasaptakam*, *Sripadmanabha Panchakam* and *Devidadakam* are some of them. Then there is the One Act play entitled *Galrvanivijayam* glorifying the role of Sanskrit in comparison with English. The prose rendering of *Othello* takes the title *Uddalacharitam Gadyam*.⁴ What is specially noteworthy is the fact that all these works are in Sanskrit. It took some more time for the savant to turn his attention to his own mother tongue. His diary of 1894 reveals that the aim of his life was the development of Malayalam, his mother tongue.

At the suggestion of Kerala Varma he started contributing articles to quite a few periodicals in Malayalam like *The Malayala Manorama*, *Brahma Vidya*, *Vignana Chintamani*, *Vidyavinodini*, etc. He wrote in Sanskrit, in Malayalam and occasionally in English too.

⁴ For more details vide Chapter VI.

CHAPTER III

TEACHER AND RESEARCHER

The high connections of Rajaraja Varma did not place him in affluent circumstances. During his student days what he got as allowance from his family was hardly enough for his legitimate expenses. No doubt his dear uncle Kerala Varma used to help him frequently. The Maharaja also gave him generous aid. But Rajaraja Varma wanted to be independent. Therefore after graduation, he desired to get into State Government service. In those days it was against the convention for members of the Kshatriya community to enter Government service. So the orthodox reactionaries raised their eyebrows when they came to know that Rajaraja Varma was seeking Government employment. But A.R. did not bother very much about this meaningless prejudice.

The State Government at that time decided to start a Sanskrit school (Samskrita Pathasala) in Trivandrum. Though Rajaraja Varma was an obvious choice to guide the destinies of this institution, his young age was pointed out as a drawback. But finally he was appointed as the head of the school (1890). There was no specific syllabus, time-table or pattern of courses. Rajaraja Varma planned all this and raised the status of the Sanskrit school. This school was particularly responsible for giving Sanskrit lessons to non-Brahmins.

The new job made it necessary for A.R. to have a permanent residence in Trivandrum. He got the assistance of two well-known scholars, Narayana Sastrikal and Ganapathi Sastrikal as instructors in the school. At the instance of Kerala Varma, Rajaraja Varma had already registered for the M.A. degree examination in Sanskrit as a private candidate. But because of these preoccupations, private study did not progress satisfactorily. Nor was he willing to 'shun delight and live laborious days'. He must have his game of chess, cards, riding or other hobbies. As a part of the M.A. course he had to prepare a dissertation and the subject chosen was 'Narayana Bhatta and His Works'. His two distinguished colleagues helped him to an extent. Though they were good scholars of the traditional type, they had neither training nor competence to do research. They were also deficient in critical acumen. So, A.R.

had to depend largely on himself. He delved deep into the useful materials available in the issues of periodicals like the *Indian Antiquary*. At last he managed to produce in time a first-class dissertation. He appeared for the examination in 1891 and passed with the first rank in the University, though the class awarded was only second. In those days it was extremely hard even for such brilliant students to get a first class. However, the Chief Examiner, Seshagiri Sastri, was so much impressed by the quality of A.R.'s answers that he advised the University to preserve his answer papers. In one question, the candidates were asked to give 12 words adopted by Sanskrit from Greek. This student gave 30 instead of 12 which amazed the examiner. For translation of certain passages from Milton's poems, the candidate gave the rendering in superb verse. He annexed the 'Ross gold medal' and the 'Muniswamy Chetty medal' for proficiency in Sanskrit.

The Sanskrit College

In 1894 Rajaraja Varma was appointed the head of the Sanskrit College. There he devoted his attention mainly to the development of the college and improvement of its curricular content. He made several recommendations to the Government, some of which received assent only much later. He wanted the inclusion of Literature, Ayurveda and Astrology in the course. The arts, sciences and literature of the nation were to be given prominence according to him. In the syllabus he included geography, history, algebra and trigonometry. He not only took classes on Algebra and Trigonometry, but also translated the texts into Sanskrit. In those days, the opinions of European professors and others who toed their line had supremacy in decision-making bodies. But history has revealed that all the recommendations of this great savant came to be accepted step by step, though it took nearly 25 years.

Galvancee Vijayam on the one hand and *Uddalocharitam* on the other reveal how the mind of the author worked in relation to the two great languages of the world, Sanskrit and English. Both these languages had many things to contribute to the flowering of his less developed mother tongue, Malayalam. He gave tuition in English to both the Sastris, one of whom viz. Ganapathi Sastri became a reputed editor of classics. The diary notes and letters of those days reveal that A.R. was quite anxious to improve his

position in the academic field and that he received several pin-pricks from the authorities. He also tried for suitable positions in the Madras area. The regional languages in those days had a comparatively inferior position. 'What is there to learn in Malayalam?' used to be a frequent question among many English-educated high-brows. The Sanskrit specialist A.R. had the long range vision to see the future of Malayalam. In this he was helped by his uncle Kerala Varma. The next stage in A.R.'s career gave him a great opportunity to realise that literature had more important roles to perform in life than mere entertainment.

Superintendent of Vernacular Studies

During the period 1896-1898, the Government turned down the proposal to co-ordinate the duties of the Principal with those of the head of the Ayurveda institution. Later a similar proposal to link Sanskrit College with the Archaeological Department when the Director's post fell vacant met with the same fate. Rajaraja Varma's scholarship and ability had become well recognized throughout South India by then. But what was important was the favour of the Dewan in power. His claim came to be recognized when Krishnaswamy Rao became the Dewan of Travancore. Rajaraja Varma was appointed as the Superintendent of Vernacular Studies in the Maharaja's College. In 1899 A.R. handed over charge of the Sanskrit College to Ganapathi Sastri and accepted the new job.

The new job opened up fresh possibilities to our great scholar. He realized that the position of Indian languages in higher education was far from satisfactory. The syllabus was ill-planned, the textbooks were unsatisfactory and the students were not serious when they came to the language classes. It is here that Rajaraja Varma's contribution becomes really momentous and memorable. Better books were prescribed from the available stock, new books were caused to be written and the syllabi were reformed. He himself took several classes for the F.A. (First Examination in Arts) and B.A. students. New books on Grammar, Prosody and Poetics were written by him to serve the needs. He guided his own colleagues, some of whom were his own pet students like Sahitya Panchananan P. K. Narayana Pillai, in imparting instruction to the pupils. We shall discuss the important books written by A.R. later.

Champion of Indian Languages

The study of the mother tongue which was a 'second language' in those days was usually relegated to the background. The first language and the most important subject of study was English. Students gave special attention to the study of this language. When it came to a question of their own language, the normal reaction of the students was one of indifference. One cannot put the whole blame on the students. It was the cumulative effect of various factors, some of which have been already pointed out. There was even a movement to eschew the study of the second language from the university and it succeeded for a short while. But the situation changed soon. It was at the time of Rajaraja Varma that Malayalam came to be considered as a worthy subject of study at the university level. The great scholarship, the admirable vision and the unstinted labour of this savant was responsible for creating a turning point in this regard. He fought for the recognition of Indian languages both in the press and on the platform and also in the academic bodies of the university. It will need some imagination to fully understand the position which obtained in those days, as our languages have been in a different climate after Independence.

Not only as a great planner and visionary, but even as a teacher Rajaraja Varma was outstanding. Several of his students like P. Ananthan Pillai and P. K. Narayana Pillai have recorded their great appreciation of his talent for teaching. Intelligent students used to sit in his class spell-bound. Even the less intelligent found the classes sufficiently interesting. In those days too it was not unusual for students to sleep or while away their time in language classes. A distinguished old boy has recorded his experience in Thampuran's class thus :

'I went to Trivandrum to join the B.A. class. As usual I thought I could either sleep or write personal letters in the Malayalam class. It was then that I had the pleasant surprise of a great figure on the platform. His words were so full of meaning and charm that he cast a spell on me. Only later did I come to know that the teacher was the well-known Kerala Paniri, Professor Thampuran. For the next two years, I changed my ways in his class. It was a rare thrill that I experienced in his class.'

Thampuran's sense of duty was well-known. Teaching and supervision of teaching was his first commitment. He encouraged

the students to organize extra-curricular activities as in the Malayala Samajam. Students of the college as well as distinguished scholars would deliver lectures and participate in the discussions. Even though the terms seminar and symposium were not current in those days, the spirit of it was there. Thampuran used to attend these gatherings regularly and sit through till the end. This was a great encouragement for the students, among whom there were budding authors too.

It is but natural that good teaching goes side by side with good learning. Just as Rajaraja Varma was one of the best teachers that Malayalam had ever had, he was also one of the best students that the language could claim down the centuries. He believed in life-long education. Though originally he started as one wedded to Sanskrit and discountenanced Malayalam, circumstances were such that in the last 25 years of his life he wrote much more in Malayalam. But the source of knowledge and inspiration continued to be Sanskrit and English. Among the books that he read daily were *Mahabharata* and *Bhagavad-Gita*. He continued his research in Astrology. As regards poetics and other aspects of the science of literature, he made frequent use of works in Sanskrit and English. He believed that familiarity with the vast English literature would be highly beneficial to any one who wanted to enrich modern Malayalam literature. Shakespeare's plays, Froude's essays, Macaulay's History of England, the novels of Scott and Thackeray, Schopenhauer's *Wisdom of Life* are among the works which get appreciative references in his diaries.

He also used to discuss interesting linguistic and literary problems with other scholars whenever there was an opportunity. While he was working on the monumental Malayalam Grammar *Kerala Paniniyam*, he showed the list of verb-roots to the great poet Kunhikuttan Thampuran and ascertained his views. His verse compositions were usually seen by Thuravoor Narayana Sastrikal. All this shows his humility and desire to produce the best for his language. That he was not a dry scholar is seen from all his writings. He enjoyed producing plays and acting in them. Quite a few Sanskrit plays were rendered into Malayalam by him, first as a relief from the taxing research work and secondly as entertainment for his associates and close friends.

CHAPTER IV

THE CLIMAX OF A CAREER

The academic career of Rajaraja Varma, which lasted for 28 years, started almost from the lowest rungs of the ladder and reached the highest point in about 20 years. To become a Professor in a first-grade college in the days when it was by and large the close preserve for the Europeans, and that too from the neglected discipline like the Indian languages was indeed a rare achievement. This unusual honour came to Rajaraja Varma in a natural way. He was appointed the first Professor of Sanskrit and Dravidian Languages in 1910. Kerala Varma was so happy to get this news that he sent to his nephew a congratulatory telegram which was much cherished by the recipient. No doubt several messages flowed from well wishers and friends and the whole family was in a jubilant mood.

During the five years of his professorship (1910-1915) things did not run all that smooth. At the meetings of the College Council, the European professors did not see eye to eye with Thampuran. To start with he wanted to create two posts of Tutor, one for Sanskrit and the other for Malayalam. There was opposition, but finally he won. It was thus that the well known scholars Nantyar Veetil Parameswaran Pillai and Attoor Krishna Pisharoti got their appointments in the Maharaja's College, Trivandrum. Such scholars and devoted teachers attracted several good students who came to specialize in Malayalam. This led to the improvement of the general standard of the Department.

Between the European professors and Indian professors there was discrimination in salary grades. While European professors were given Rs. 750, Indian professors were paid only Rs. 450 per month. It took about 3 years of representation and arguments to abolish this difference. In those days only Europeans were appointed as Principals. In 1913 when Rajaraja Varma was appointed acting Principal for a period of eight days, it was considered an event of great significance. There were two other opportunities for Rajaraja Varma to function as Acting Principal, for 7 months in 1916 and for 3 months in 1918.

Zeal for Reform

Rajaraja Varma was not at all happy with the manner in which the University of Madras treated the Indian languages. He did not miss any opportunity to condemn this attitude in no uncertain terms. In 1914 Rajaraja Varma presided over the College Day meeting. His carefully prepared presidential address in English was printed and copies were sent to all members of the Senate, Syndicate and other academic bodies of the University. Here below are some relevant extracts from the address, particularly about the move to abolish the compulsory study of a second language in Madras University :

... In some of the South Indian vernaculars there were not indeed at the time reading-books, at least in prose, worthy of the high standard of the examinations and, even in cases in which there were such books, they were often not of a quality to bear any comparison with the masterpieces of English literature. To make matters worse, the Boards of Studies were not always careful to make the best of a bad bargain by prescribing the best available books as textbooks for the various examinations. Again, the pundits who were responsible for teaching the books prescribed, were unable to handle them on modern critical lines, and this circumstance naturally created in the minds of the students concerned a prejudice against the subject itself. The examiners of the University in their turn not infrequently set silly and vexatious question papers and added to the unpopularity of the subject.'

This is a fair and just analysis of the situation that obtained in those days which amounts to an admission of failure. The advocates of indigenous culture agitated for a re-consideration of the whole question. About this Rajaraja Varma continues :

'They urged that the study of second languages required to be mended, not ended... It (the failure) was not the fault of the languages themselves; it was simply because no fair trial had ever been given to them. In many of the colleges adequate provision had never been made for the efficient teaching of the second languages. The subject was generally entrusted to half-starving, old-fashioned pundits who offered their services for a nominal pay. Consequently the subject lost prestige in the eyes of the students in more ways than one... This was how the disaster was brought

about. The real remedy therefore lay in removing the defects of the system and not in doing away with the subject altogether.'

He then continues to give a résumé of the progress made by his own mother tongue.

'Mark the very recent but considerable prose literature which has arisen in Malayalam as in other vernaculars which is undoubtedly the direct or indirect work of the University. Observe the rise of works on literary criticism, popular science and such other subjects of modern interest in the vernaculars which would never have been heard of but for the graduates of the University who have received somewhat of a co-ordinate training and instruction in English and their own vernaculars . . . The scheme of these "Titles" (Oriental Title examinations) will show that they are meant only to modernize the Pundit, to break down his bigotry and to make him powerless for evil . . .'

'I wonder why even in the new curricula of the University, "translation" from English into vernacular and vice-versa, was not made a compulsory subject in all groups . . .'

He then points to the dangers of nurturing two mutually exclusive and uncompromising sections of people, the majority unacquainted with English and general knowledge and minority proud of its western education, but denationalised cutting themselves adrift from the moorings of the ages.

And finally he says :

'As the vernacular must always remain the language of the masses, it would be desirable to supplement the civilizing process that English education is directing in India by corresponding work in the vernaculars. It is thus necessary that the vernaculars should be so improved as to bear the weight of at least some portion of western knowledge and culture that we expect an English-educated Indian of average attainments to possess. Who can do this indispensable work better than the graduates of our Universities? And how can they do it if they are not properly trained for it, in regard to language no less than subject matter?'

The presidential address also touches other aspects of education as well as the great role played by Sanskrit in moulding the rich and ancient Indian culture. Several educationists in the whole of South India complimented Rajaraja Varma on the strength, clarity and long-range vision of the address as well as the excellent manner

in which he championed the cause of Indian languages. He advocated the starting of a B.A. honours course in Indian languages also. In another context he suggested that a separate university may be set up in Travancore so as to avoid the pitfalls of the Madras University and to serve the special needs and ideals of the State. Sixty years ago, it must have sounded a wild dream; but later events have proved how right he was. The B.A. (Hons.) course in Malayalam was started in the Maharaja's College, Trivandrum, in the year 1935. The University of Travancore was set up in the year 1937 and this later became the University of Kerala.

Scholastic Preoccupations

In addition to his normal duties as Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit and Dravidian languages, Rajaraja Varma had to accept various other responsibilities in connection with language courses and general education. As member of the Board of Studies of the University and the Textbook Committee of Travancore State he had to do considerable work, being the most active and useful member there. He was also a member of the Language Improvement Committee (Bhasha Parishkarana Committee) consisting of officials and non-officials. Besides, he had to function as Secretary of the Public Lecture Committee which arranged lectures by distinguished scholars. In quite a few committees he had to function as chairman and guide the deliberations.

Despite these preoccupations he found time for writing books. It was a period of tremendous productivity. During the last eight years of professional work, when pressure was very heavy on him, he wrote *Sahitya Sahyam*, *Malayala Sakuntalam* (a rendering of Sakuntalam in simple Malayalam), *Laghupaniniam* II Part, translation of the plays *Malavikagnimitram*, *Charudathan* and *Swapnavasavadatham* in addition to the preparation of Readers for schools. His monumental work *Kerala Paniniam* (Malayalam Grammar) was thoroughly revised and the new edition published in 1917. We shall evaluate these books later.

How was he able to do all this in the limited span of eight years? It remains a wonder. What was his daily routine?

He gets up in the morning between 6 a.m. and 6-30 a.m. Has a cup of cocoa at 8 a.m. The bath is at 10 a.m. After bath he is particular about the performance of the pooja and prayers. Only

on special occasions does he visit the temple. The main meal is at 11 a.m. Then he lies down on a mat spread on the floor and plays with the children for some time. If he feels sleepy he will go inside and rest for an hour or an hour and a half. Then he should have something to munch, some fruits or special preparations. Then he will be at his desk reading or writing. At 3-30 p.m. he has his coffee. After that some time is spent on correspondence. At about 5 p.m. he begins to walk about in the courtyard or he goes to the club for a game of tennis. After dusk he returns and takes his bath. Then commences the reading of periodicals and books. Between 8 and 8-30 p.m. he has his dinner. After that there is some relaxation when the members of his family gather around him. He goes to bed only after 10 p.m.

This is the routine on holidays. On working days, the bath and meal will be over by 9 a.m. Light lunch is taken at the College itself. After 4 p.m. he goes to the Union Club straight from the College and returns home only after dusk after a game of tennis and cards.

The Domestic Aspect

Thampuran had an ideal family life. He looked after his wife and children with great care and consideration. He was keen on making life pleasant and easy for them. He had seven daughters and six sons of whom four daughters and two sons are alive now. One of the living daughters is the mother of the Union Minister Sri G. Ravindra Varma. Here is an extract from his Diary (1918) which shows the humane outlook of this great scholar: 'In the evening took wife and daughters to the Observatory, the terrace from which the view of the western sea and the eastern hills was simply splendid. Also observed the young moon, the setting sun, Jupiter, Saturn with their moons and some double stars. The children were astonished by the observation.'

The youngest daughter once wanted to see the College where her elder brother studied. So one day the Professor took her with him to the college and let her remain in one of his classes for a whole period. This gives an insight into the softer side of the Professor-poet's character. In 1915 his preceptor and revered uncle passed away. This was a great blow to him.

But life passed inexorably. Even when he was very busy

he did not neglect any of his domestic commitments. In 1918 he celebrated the wedding of his son Raghava Varma.

Death crept on this great scholar almost unawares. A bad cold was the beginning of the end. There was diarrhoea also to make matters worse. Within three days Thampuran became quite weak. The temperature rose to 103° and there was delirium. Once when the doctor came he remarked—'Doctor, I feel bored. The fever still persists. Your patient is impatient.' The sense of humour was second nature to him. When the doctor left, the patient wanted his daughter to sing *Geeta Govindam*. He then wanted her to jot down the plot of a new drama he was planning to write; but finally the daughter persuaded him to take rest. The fever went up and down, and later symptoms of typhoid developed. The efforts of the doctors proved unavailing. On 18th June 1918, about two weeks after he was bed-ridden, Rajaraja Varma passed away plunging not only his own family but the whole of Kerala into uncontrollable grief.

CHAPTER V

TREATISES ON LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

We have made incidental references to the many-sided talent of Rararaja Varma and to some of the books he has written. Now we must make a more comprehensive and objective assessment of his literary works which number over forty. This can be better done by grouping the works under three broad heads. The first one viz. Treatises on Language and Literature is the subject of this chapter.

As a literary language Malayalam has a history of over eight centuries, and as a spoken tongue it must have been in existence for several centuries more. However, till about the eighteenth century, it had practically no basic instruments which would facilitate a systematic study, such as grammatical works and dictionaries. Even in the eighteenth century the efforts in this field were meagre and we have to come to the middle of the nineteenth century for something substantial. This is said without ignoring the 14th century *Lilathilakam*, a treatise on *Manipravalam* written in Sanskrit wherein there are valuable references to Malayalam grammar and rhetoric.

Thus lexicography and grammatical works have a history of less than 250 years' duration. A truly scientific approach to the study of Malayalam started with the advent of European scholars. That a language as developed as Malayalam should remain without these basic instruments till the Europeans came to study it may surprise many.

But when one seriously thinks of the question, there is nothing surprising in it. Learning a language as mother tongue or first language is different from learning it as a second language. A child learns the first language without obvious effort, by mere listening and imitation. It gets the sound clusters, common vocabulary and sentence patterns naturally and without questioning. An adult learns a language with a conscious effort and he is prone to be more logical, critical and selective in his absorption. It is on account of this that he would welcome a grammar-based study which helps him to understand more quickly the structure of the language.

When the Europeans came to Kerala either for trade or for missionary work, they were faced with the problem of communication, which meant learning a new language. Therefore it was quite natural for them to compile lists of basic Malayalam words (with equivalents in Latin, Portuguese or English) and to record essential points of Malayalam grammar for their own use and that of their successors. These first efforts were in due course improved upon by later students, some of whom had a flair for learning new languages as well as for figuring out their grammatical structure.

Rararaja Varma is considered to be the most outstanding grammarian Malayalam has produced so far and his work *Kerala Paniniyam* is universally accepted as a monumental work. To properly evaluate his contribution to this particular field, we should get an idea of the grammatical works before the publication of *Kerala Paniniyam*.

Works by European Scholars

1. Robert Drummond .. *Grammar of Malabar Language* (1799).
2. F. Spring .. *Outlines of a Grammar of the Malayalam Language* (1839).
3. Joseph Peet .. *A Grammar of the Malayalam Language* (1854).
4. Gundert (& Garthwaite) . *Catechism of Malayalam Grammar* (1860).
5. Gundert .. *Malayala Bhasha Vyakaranam* (1868).
6. L. J. Frohnmeyer .. *A Progressive Grammar of Malayalam for Europeans* (1889).

Works by Kerala Scholars

1. Anonymous .. *Lilathilakam* (14th century).
2. Rev. George Mathan .. *Malayalmayute Vyakaranam* (1863).
3. Pachu Moothathu .. *Keralabhasha Vyakaranam* (1876).
4. Kovunni Nedungadi .. *Kerala Kaumudi* (1878).

Of the ten works noted above, the most scholarly works are two viz. Dr Gundert's *Malayala Bhasha Vyakaranam* (1868) and Rev. George Mathan's *Malayalmayute Vyakaranam* (1863 ?). All the works in the first category except that of Dr Gundert are meant for Europeans. They are elementary treatises meant to initiate the foreigner into the intricacies of the language. The European savants were conversant with the European technique of approaching the structure of languages and this influenced them while they took up a language which belonged to an entirely different family. Similarly the indigenous scholars were familiar with important grammatical works in Sanskrit. Thus the terminology and approach of Sanskrit grammarians influenced them also to an appreciable extent while they undertook this task. In this connection, one should not fail to mention the celebrated work of Bishop Robert Caldwell 'A Comparative Grammar of Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages' (1856). It was Caldwell who established beyond the possibility of a doubt that the South Indian languages belong to a separate family having no genealogical connection with Sanskrit or any member of the Indo-Aryan family. He therefore approached the subject of structure without succumbing to the Indo-European structural pattern even while employing the technique developed in Europe.

Kerala Paniniyam

Important works dealing with the grammar of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam written after the publication of Caldwell's masterpiece have had a definite advantage, though it took some time for native scholars to appreciate the intrinsic worth of this great work. Coming to Malayalam grammar, Dr Gundert and Dr Caldwell worked in close association with each other though they did not agree on some of the linguistic problems. Rajaraja Varma studied carefully the views of these two scholars as well as the contribution of Rev. George Mathan. But having been brought up in the Sanskrit tradition, his first effort was to construct a grammar for Malayalam on the Sanskrit pattern. This he did rather early in his academic career and named it *Kerala Paniniyam* (1896). Why did he name it *Kerala Paniniyam*? Panini, as is well known, is the most celebrated grammarian of Sanskrit, so well known is he that the word 'Panini' or 'Paniniyam' has come to mean 'grammar'

in the Indian tradition. Therefore *Kerala Paniniyam* should mean the grammar of the Kerala language written in the Paniniya tradition. One important feature of the Paniniya tradition is the *Sutra-Vritti* style. The *sutras* are formulae which are brief and convenient for memorisation; but then unless there is a *vritti* or commentary for each *sutra* it will not make much sense. This grammar was in use for nearly two decades; but the author realised that modern students who wanted to specialize in Malayalam should have a grammar which was different. This conviction came to him while he was handling classes for optional B.A.—Malayalam. The lecture notes on Malayalam grammar prepared then finally evolved into a revised grammar which was published in 1917. Rajaraja Varma did not want to retain the old title *Kerala Paniniyam* for the revised work as it had undergone almost a rebirth; but his friends thought the goodwill for that name need not be lost and thus the new edition came to retain the title. This work has been considered an authority for the last 60 years and it is not likely to be superseded in the foreseeable future. The popularity of the work was so great that the author used to be referred to as *Kerala Panini*. A short biography of Rajaraja Varma written by P. Ananthan Pillai, one of his pupils, also bears this title.¹

Rajaraja Varma was a profound scholar of Sanskrit who had a good knowledge of Tamil and a fair working knowledge of Kannada and Telugu. He consulted authoritative grammars in these languages, not to speak of the works of Caldwell and Gundert to which he frequently referred. Among all the scholars, he had the greatest respect for Caldwell. That he felt uneasy to disagree with Caldwell is clear from several portions of the work; but he does oppose the European savant when he is really convinced that Caldwell is wrong. If the title *Kerala Paniniyam* is suitable for the earlier work, the new version should have been called *Kerala Caldwelliyam*; such is his dependence on Caldwell in many parts of the work. But objectively speaking both these titles are inappropriate, for he is not a blind imitator of Panini or Caldwell. He has combined the traditional and modern methods in such an

¹ The Dravidian Linguistic Association has thought it proper to name its office in Trivandrum as Kerala Panini Buildings to commemorate the services of Rajaraja Varma.

exquisite manner that the work has become an epoch-maker in the grammatical literature of Kerala.

In the new edition, Rajaraja Varma has rejected *in toto* the *utras* of the earlier edition and replaced them with convenient verses that do not require long interpretations, and whenever an explanation is necessary he himself gives it. He has employed a large number of Sanskrit terms which have been found suitable, but he has imported only Sanskrit terms and not Sanskrit grammar as Nedungadi has done. He has adopted a few terms from Tamil grammar on considerations of merit. However, the over-all approach and the manner in which the native tools are handled appear to be notably Western. But he has not given a Western tinge to Malayalam grammar as Gundert and George Mathan have done.

The work has its demerits too. There are a few contradictions and mistakes. He lived hardly for one more year after the publication of the revised version. Had he lived longer he would have considerably improved upon the work. *Kerala Paniniyam* does not follow the analytic method; its quotations from old works are not so numerous as those of Gundert. The author has not devoted as much attention to colloquial forms as Rev. Mathan has done. The long introduction termed *pithika* is a substantial addition to the work, comparing in particular linguistic features of Tamil and Malayalam. There the author discusses the evolution of Malayalam as an independent language and its relationship with Tamil.

In the masterly Introduction to the new edition contributed by his erstwhile student and colleague, P. K. Narayana Pillai (who later became a High Court Judge in Travancore State), we get a superb evaluation of the great work: 'From the very alphabet to derivation, there is not a single phase of grammar on which his extraordinary powers of generalisation and keen observation have not been brought to bear. He has said many new things and said many other things in a new way . . . The division of the parts of speech into five is again an original idea, departing from the three-fold classification of the preceding grammarians who simply followed the Sanskrit lead . . . Panini is more logical than historical. Probably it may not matter at all in view of the fact that he was dealing with a dead language. But will such a groundwork equally suit a language like Malayalam ever spreading and growing, with such a chequered career in the past? Hence we

see in this edition that the groundwork is wholly recast, the historical aspect has superseded the logical, though logic itself has not been sacrificed . . . We may pride ourselves on this valuable addition to the study of our language and congratulate the author for the heavy indebtedness under which he has placed the Malayalam speaking people by this excellent publication.'

The Introduction to the earlier version was written by the author's uncle Kerala Varma. Both the versions have been dedicated to him. Despite a few inaccuracies and shortcomings, *Kerala Paniniyam* has eclipsed all other works on Malayalam grammar and still reigns supreme even after the lapse of six decades.

OTHER GRAMMATICAL WORKS

We have seen that between the two editions of *Kerala Paniniyam*, there was an interval of 21 years. Throughout this period, the subject of Malayalam grammar had been engaging the mind of Rajaraja Varma. *Kerala Paniniyam* is no doubt a scholarly work; but from the point of view of school students simpler treatises were necessary. Therefore Thampuran decided to fill up the lacunae.

Sabdāsodhini

Sabdāsodhini, published in 1902, is the result of three months of concentrated work. The intention of the author was to produce a simpler grammar for the use of high school students, who found *Kerala Paniniyam* a hard nut to crack. More lucid treatment and more homely examples made the work popular. It contains 175 sections divided into phonology, morphology, syntax and etymology. The author himself says that it is a summary of *Kerala Paniniyam* incorporating some revision and useful changes.

Prathama Vyākaranam

Even after the publication of *Sabdāsodhini*, Rajaraja Varma felt the need for grammars for the lower classes. The Director of Public Instruction also made a similar suggestion. Thus he prepared two more grammars, the first one being *Prathama Vyākaranam* (1906). As the very title indicates, this grammar is meant for the primary stage of education.

Madhyama Vyakaranam

In the same pattern another book entitled *Madhyama Vyakaranam* was prepared in 1907 for the use of middle school students. The fundamentals of Malayalam grammar have been explained very clearly in these two works. Both the teacher and the taught found these works more useful and easy for assimilation. That another edition had to be published within a month and a third edition during the next year shows the popularity of the book.

Dr Gundert's grammar, though scholarly had some drawbacks viz. lack of proper arrangement of subject matter and the unseemliness of technical words employed. The earlier *Kerala Paniniyam* also suffered from certain drawbacks of the antiquated system. *Sabdasodhini* incorporates the English method to a considerable extent. *Madhyama Vyakaranam* is written in the analytical method and *Prathama Vyakaranam* in the synthetic method. Kerala Panini was able to present Malayalam grammar to Malayalees in a more assimilable and lucid form.

Manideepika

For a proper understanding and appreciation of literary works in certain branches of Malayalam literature like the *Champu*, *Attakatha* etc., a good grasp of Sanskrit language is indispensable. Therefore the Malayalam scholar should have a fair grasp of Sanskrit grammar, but it was difficult for all scholars to master Panini. Thus a simple grammar of Sanskrit written in Malayalam would meet a long-felt need. Rajaraja Varma realized this quite early and was intent upon writing such a book. However, this could be accomplished only in 1908. He worked incessantly for three months and brought out *Manideepika*—'mani' meaning Sanskrit as in *Manipravalam*. The script was seen by the grammarian Thuravoor Narayana Sastrikal and approved by Kerala Varma to whom it was dedicated. Since then the students of Malayalam have been initiated into the intricacies of Sanskrit grammar through this work.

Laghu Paniniyam

Four or five months after completing *Manideepika* A.R. launched upon another scheme to write a simple grammar of Sanskrit in the footsteps of Panini. The diaries reveal the constant encouragement

and advice the author received from Kerala Varma in taking up this important work. In five months' time the work was completed (1910). The Preface in Sanskrit and the Introduction in English reveal the aim of the author. Here is an extract from the Introduction :

'It is true that Panini who remains now, as in ancient times, without a peer, as a grammarian, by the very perfection of his aphorisms and their comprehensiveness, created difficulties for their understanding by any one not blessed with the requisite leisure and ascetic inclinations to engage on the arduous study of his eight chapters (*Ashtadhyayi*) and that the great commentators like Patanjali, the Vartika-kara, and the author of the *Karika*, have added to the difficulties of the study by clouding the meaning of Panini in a very mist of words. Nevertheless, it has always struck me, that if it were possible to prepare an elementary grammar in Sanskrit itself on the basis of Panini's unmatched aphorisms simplifying his principles and interpreting them in accordance with modern tendencies so as to form an introduction to Panini and to the ordinary classical literature generally, the attempt would be worth making.'

Experience has shown that the attempt was well worth making. This is the opinion of both students and scholars of the subject throughout India and even abroad. Professor Jacobi of the University of Bonn (Germany) wrote to the author :

'I am convinced of the excellence of your work and I have decided to use it instead of "Siddhanta Kaumudi", when I shall have to read the Panini with my pupils, as I shall do next summer.'

Prof. M. M. Bhadkamar of Wilson College, Bombay wrote :

'The work is excellently planned and seeks not only to give in a very lucid manner a knowledge of Sanskrit grammar but also to introduce the student to the language and mind of Panini himself.'

Prof. R. C. Ranade of Deccan College, Poona, gave the following compliment :

'As I went through the book, I was greatly struck by the new mould in which the sutras of Panini have been once again entirely recast.... The elegant introduction which you have appended to the book clearly shows that the Sanskrit language in the hands

of scholars like yourself, need no longer bear the stigma of a "dead" language. One feels indeed that it has the entire freshness of life restored to it once again.'

2978 sutras of *Ashtadhyayi* were reduced to 1959. The author also published a second part of *Laghu-paniniyam* (1912) consisting of 'Vaidika Kandam', 'Swara Kandam' as well as a discussion on language by authorities both Eastern and Western.

THE SCIENCE OF LITERATURE

For the study of language the most important tools are grammars and dictionaries. So far we have been dealing with the contributions of Rajaraja Varma to the field of grammar. He had also a keen desire to compile a dictionary to supersede the works of Bailey and Gundert. But he was so much preoccupied that he could not get the required time. And he thought it more important to write a few basic books which will help the serious students of literature as well as practitioners in the art of writing. Poetics and prosody are important branches dealing with verse composition. Both the West and the East have substantial contribution in this realm. Rajaraja Varma was quite conversant with both and he was for an assimilation of what is best in both. He also felt that poetry and prose in Malayalam need not necessarily have an identical approach towards apparatus and form. Poetry in Malayalam had a longer tradition than prose and hence there was justification in leaning more towards Sanskrit poetics and prosody as far as verse composition was concerned. This was without prejudice to the content which should not have any limitation whatsoever. However, prose in Malayalam would benefit considerably by leaning towards English both in form and content. This attitude is clearly seen in the three books *Bhashabhushanam*, *Vritta-manjari* and *Sahitya Sahyam* which A. R. wrote.

Bhashabhushanam

Bhashabhushanam published in 1902 is a manual on the nature and practice of poetry. *Bhushanam* means *Alankara* or adornment. The Sanskrit equivalent for poetics is *Alankara Sastra*. In the introduction to *Bhashabhushanam* the author details the genesis of the work. Relevant extracts (rendered into Malayalam) are reproduced here :

'When I was given the responsibility of teaching Indian languages in the Trivandrum College, I realized the poverty of books on *Alankara Sastra*. The question papers of the Madras University expected a high standard from the candidates... It was therefore felt that the students of the B.A. classes should possess a rudimentary knowledge of poetics. As no suitable teaching aid was available in Malayalam, I started teaching the subject with the help of Sanskrit books. But soon this was found rather inadequate... Therefore for two years (1900, 1901) I prepared copious notes and translations of select passages from standard works in Sanskrit regularly for the B.A. class. Later these notes were revised and published in book form as demanded by friends and students who were lovers of literature.'

The author also states that he has consulted all important works on the subject available in Sanskrit and that he has not followed any one work in particular. As regards citing examples, he has preferred those from well-known classical works. And when that effort was not very successful, he has had recourse to modern compositions. Many a time he had to compose his own verses which are specifically indicated.

A.R. admits that he could not make the work exhaustive. The work is dealt with in six *prakaranas* as follows :—

Alankara
Dosha
Guna
Sabdārtha
Dhwani
Gunibhuta Vyanga

He has followed the system of Rudrata in dividing *Alankaras* into 4 categories viz. *Atisayam*, *samyam*, *slesham* and *vastavam*.

The author was hoping that he could make the work more comprehensive in the next edition and even though a second edition was published in 1910 he could not do it as his schedule of work was tight. There has been comments and criticisms of *Bhashabhushanam* by later scholars particularly by Kuttikrishna Marar whose *Sahityabhushanam* also covers the same field. But while introducing the NBS version of the book edited by him in 1968, Marar himself testifies to the great achievement of Thampuran,

Vrittamanjari

Vrittamanjari, (1905) as the very name indicates, is a treatise on Prosody (vritta = metre). This was also composed to meet the needs of University students and others who were specializing in literary craft and technique. As is well known, poets in Malayalam have been making free use of Sanskrit metres as well as indigenous metres. As regards Sanskrit metres, there was no dearth of definitions and examples of various types. *Vrittaratnakaram* and *Vrittaratnavali* have been largely drawn upon for the two types, one based on *chandas* (syllables) and the other on *matra* (time measure). The author's rendering of the definitions and examples is excellent. In many instances he has given examples from well-known Malayalam compositions.

As regards indigenous metres, there were no definitions available in the language. So Rajaraja Varma had to do considerable original research in finding measuring rods for the popular Malayalam metres, which had a musical slant. It was no doubt a very difficult and puzzling field and as a pioneer he has cleared the ground and progressed considerably. But one has to admit that a lot more work remains to be done in this trying and disconcerting area of study. There are quite a few attempts by later scholars like Appan Thampuran, Kuttikrishna Marar and K. K. Vadhyar who could claim only partial success. *Vrittamanjari* still remains a landmark in the field of prosody in Malayalam.

Sahitya Sahyam

Sahitya Sahyam first published in 1911 is a guide to craftsmanship in prose writing. As pointed out already, Malayalam prose flowered into literature later than poetry in point of time, and particularly after its contact with Western literatures. Though there were some scholars who thought that even for prose, Malayalam should depend on Sanskrit for its embellishment and grandeur, Rajaraja Varma felt otherwise. He thought it better for the language to be free of the tutelage of Sanskrit both in content and form so that it could profitably learn many aspects from English and other languages. Yet he was keen that the idiom of the language should maintain its purity and not be influenced by outside agencies. With this intent he prepared *Sahitya Sahyam* with great zeal. The actual writing and compilation took only about five

months. But he consulted his own colleagues and his mentor Kerala Varma while preparing the drafts. The manuscript was submitted to the great scholar Appan Thampuran of Cochin who contributed a valuable foreword.

In Sanskrit, as everyone knows, poetry dominates and prose has only a secondary status. That used to be the case with modern Indian languages too till about the middle of the 19th century, when there came a change in the direction of the wind. Great seers like Rajaraja Varma saw the future of prose, both creative and informative, in the regional languages. But prose compositions were increasing in his time without a proper sense of direction. The composition tended to be artificial, bombastic, loose and rambling. At this juncture, he thought it necessary to give some kind of guidance to promising writers. What are the qualities of good prose? What are the usual pitfalls that one finds in prose compositions? What are the categories of prose, both creative and critical? The answers to these questions will be found in *Sahitya Sahyam*, presented in a systematic manner.

The well-known critic Kuttipuzha Krishna Pillai who has contributed a modern introduction to the NBS Edition of *Sahitya Sahyam* (1969), states that the work is of lasting value not only to the student of Malayalam language, but to prose writers, even mature writers, who want to be effective and pleasing. Writing acceptable prose is even more difficult than writing poetry. Good prose has to be direct, concise, elegant and striking. A mere collection of words without metrical restriction is not good prose, let alone literary prose.

In the first part of the work, A.R. has divided prose into four categories: *Ākhyānam* (Narrative), *Varṇanam* (Descriptive), *Vivaraṇam* (Explanatory) and *Upapādanam* (Argument). The special significance of each category has been succinctly described quoting suitable examples. The second part dealing with purity of expression, idioms of the language, propriety of usage and the punctuation system, is also useful and interesting. A glossary of equivalents given at the end adds to the value of the work. What Fowler has done for the English language, A.R. has done for Malayalam in this excellent manual.

CHAPTER VI
TRANSLATIONS

Rajaraja Varma lived only for 56 years and this period can be divided equally, the first half was a period of preparation and the second half, one packed with strenuous official work, literary excursions and the fulfilment of obligations to his family and the community at large. It therefore remains a wonder how he was able to achieve so much in so short a time. He had his own problems, official as well as domestic. When problems were challenging and disconcerting, he used to divert himself by taking to creative writing. Under such circumstances, other people may find themselves utterly unfit to do any worthwhile work. Writing of treatises and dissertations on serious subjects which require considerable research, thinking and reading is no doubt a vexatious occupation. We have seen in the last chapter the variety, number and quality of works that Rajaraja Varma produced. He wanted a kind of relaxation in between such exacting exertions, and the relaxation he chose was not idling the time; but engaging himself in a comparatively lighter literary exercise *viz.* translation. He translated six classics from Sanskrit and one from English. Translation was an enjoyable literary diversion for this scholar-researcher with a creative genius.

Meghadut

Early in his career he undertook the translation of Kalidasa's *Meghadut* into Malayalam verse. This was completed in about four months in 1894. It is his first major work in Malayalam verse. The circumstances under which he decided to undertake the translation have been pointed out in the preface. He was deeply engrossed in writing *Kerala Paniniyam* and at one stage he thought it would be a good and revealing exercise to ascertain the difference between the syntax of Malayalam and that of Sanskrit, if a classic like *Meghadut* is rendered into Malayalam.

Diary notes reveal that every day he used to translate a few slokas. Even while the author was on a walking trip to Haripad it was found an interesting diversion to translate a few slokas.

Rajaraja Varma was keen on translating the verses into simple Malayalam so that readers who have no scholarship in Sanskrit could enjoy the poem. He was equally keen on making the rendering faithful to the original. However he did not feel any need to render the verses in the same metre. The original is in *Mandakranta* metre, but the rendering is in *Sardoola vikriditam*. He also did not follow consistently the rhyme in the second syllable of each line (*dvitiyakshara Prasa*), so popular in Malayalam. He thought these restrictions were unnecessary, particularly in translations. Even though this is his first attempt at translating Sanskrit poetry into Malayalam verse, it is a commendable success.

Kumarasambhavam

The reception Rajaraja Varma got for the translation of *Meghadut* was so encouraging that he launched on another similar work within a short period. He had to teach *Kumarasambhavam* to a student in 1894 for which some notes had been prepared. Simultaneously he engaged himself in translating the poem. Though the tuition discontinued, the translation continued and the work was finished in 1895 and published in 1897.

He translated only 6 sargas out of the first 8, which all critics agree are the work of Kalidasa. The fourth sarga on *Ratipralapa* has been condensed and the eighth one being excessively erotic was omitted. This translation is even more attractive than that of *Meghadut*. It has been approved as a textbook for various classes and thus several editions have already appeared. According to some orthodox critics, there is a preponderance of spoken forms in both these translations; but the author had deliberately used them.

Sakuntalam

The translation of Kalidasa's *Sakuntalam* was taken up by the author under special circumstances. This great classic has charmed and defied the poets and scholars in Malayalam down the ages. During the past one hundred years over a dozen poets in Kerala wrestled with it to produce an equivalent in their language. But the success has been only partial in every case. Such is the excellence of the original. The very first attempt at translation was undertaken by no less a person than Kerala Varma. Published in 1882, this translation was hailed as a tremendous success. But the ornate

diction and the preponderance of Sanskrit words and compounds made it a favourite of the high-brows only. Rajaraja Varma while acknowledging the merit of the achievement thought that the genius of the Malayalam language suffered in many places. The uncle therefore asked him to prepare a revised version. A.R. made his own suggestions, but the author could not accept many of them. Thus a revised version as approved by Kerala Varma was published in 1912 under the title *Manipravala Sakuntalam*. But Rajaraja Varma thought that a simpler version of the classic should be produced for the benefit of the less scholarly reader. He immediately started translating the work and the work came out under the title *Malayala Sakuntalam* (1912).

It is difficult to make a comparative assessment of these two translations. Each has its own merits and demerits and together they have contributed to a better understanding and enjoyment of the great drama. Rajaraja Varma's ideal of faithfulness to the original was different from that of others like Kerala Varma, who aimed at faithfulness in externals like metre and idiom. A.R. cared more for the *bhava* or imagination and spirit, and to capture this in a fuller measure in a language of lesser development like Malayalam, he considered it appropriate to allow more freedom in the matter of form like metre, rhyme, etc. A work like *Sakuntalam* exploits the great range and richness of a language like Sanskrit to the maximum and that is why we find the connoisseurs in modern Indian languages struggling to get the feel of it in their own medium.

Malavikagnimitram

Sakuntalam is not only great poetry, but great drama too. Kerala Varma's *Abhignana Sakuntalam* first published in 1882, though couched in Sanskritised *Manipravala*-style, made a tremendous appeal on the stage also. It inaugurated translations of other Sanskrit plays into Malayalam, and drama soon became a recognised literary medium. Rajaraja Varma's version of *Sakuntalam* also was well received both on and off the stage. He therefore felt encouraged to translate more Sanskrit plays and the next work chosen was Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitram* (1916). In fact when his *Sakuntalam* was staged at Mavelikkara in 1915, it was so much of a success that A.R. promised to give them a new play every year.

In the foreword to *Malavikagnimitram*, he states: 'To my mind which had to wander about in the inaccessible and pathless forest

of grammar, what a great relief it is to rest a while in the beautiful garden park of drama! The craze for that pleasure cannot be contained and it is on account of this craze that I have translated *Malavikagnimitram*, successfully or not.' (English rendering by the present author).

The work of translation begun even while at Mavelikkara, continued with zest in Trivandrum and the work was ready in two months. The scholar-friends who heard the translation of important slokas even went to the extent of saying that some of them excelled the original. That must have no doubt been an exaggeration. In the summer of 1916, *Malavikagnimitram* was staged by the Kalavilasam drama troupe and that too was a splendid success.

Charudattam

In the summer of 1917 the same Kalavilasam drama troupe of Trivandrum wanted a fresh drama from Thampuran. This time he wanted to give a play which had more action and a wide variety of characters. Sudraka's *Mrichhakatikam* was first considered for the purpose. But then certain scenes were too long. He also considered *Charudattam* by Bhasa, which according to the author had inspired his play. So he decided to translate the first four Acts of *Charudattam* and to give a condensed version of the later portion of *Mrichhakatikam* as conclusion. As usual he first translated the verse portions and then the prose. His preoccupations as acting Principal caused a slight delay initially, but the work got its full momentum soon. His keenness and enthusiasm can be understood from his Diary:

'Got up early and translated a dozen verses before bath time. Fully knowing that the muse had to be coaxed and kept in good humour, neglected every business other than the class work at college. Even at the tennis court my mind wandered in the regions of poetry. Had no sound sleep at night. But many a difficult verse was translated with ease.'

'Lived in the imaginative land of poetry from morning. Sudraka's verses had neither the natural beauty of Bhasa nor the artistic perfection and finish of the later poets. Hence I had full scope for improving upon the verses before they were rendered into Malayalam.'

Actually the work progressed with clocklike precision; translation, checking and proof correction went on side by side and the

book got published in record time. The translator has taken a lot more freedom in this case than in other translations.

Swapna Vasavadattam

The translation and production of a new play became an annual feature and for 1918, the play chosen was Bhasa's *Swapna Vasavadattam*. The play was a success but there was less of humour in it than in other plays. The clown makes his appearance only in the fourth Act. The atmosphere on the whole is less jubilant.

The translation was done with ease and delight. A.R. was able to identify himself with the spirit and temper of Bhasa so well that the translation rose to the level of transcreation. That explains the excellence of this work which happened to be the last translation of our great author. He lived only for three more months.

All these translations from Sanskrit had several reprints. They got prescribed as textbooks in schools and colleges several times. Even in the present day the prestige continues. These works are held in great esteem as the works of a master craftsman.

Uddalacharitam

Now we come to an entirely different type of translation, from a different source and into Sanskrit prose. The original is Shakespeare's *Othello*. This is one of the earlier works of Rajaraja Varma (1898). Strictly speaking it is not a translation but an adaptation. The purpose of the exercise was to give readers in Sanskrit who are unfamiliar with Shakespeare, a taste of the great poet's creative imagination. The names of characters have been modified (*Othello*—Uddala, *Desdemona*—Doshadamana, etc.) so that readers uninitiated into European culture do not feel irritated. The whole drama has been condensed and rendered into simple Sanskrit prose, resembling Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*.

CHAPTER VII

CREATIVE AND CRITICAL WRITING

In the last chapter we have been dealing with the translations by Rajaraja Varma. Translation, in the ordinary sense, is just a faithful rendering of some work in a different language. The original work can be creative or merely informative. When it is creative, a good translation has to go a step further and become a kind of 'transcreation'. That is what A.R. has done with the great classics of Sanskrit and that is why translation of poetry can be done well only by people of creative talent. However, even 'transcreation' cannot be equated with the creation of original works, because for transcreation the original functions as the source for kindling the necessary inspiration. In original creative works, the creative energy has to be independent, spontaneous and usually at its zenith. Now let us examine the contributions of Rajaraja Varma as an original poet.

WORKS IN SANSKRIT

We have already seen that Rajaraja Varma started his writing career as a poet in Sanskrit and that he switched over to Malayalam when he was thirty-one years old. He produced 22 works in Sanskrit, most of them comparatively small. We have already referred to the play *Gairvaneevijayam* and the prose adaptation of *Othello*. *Angalasamrajyam* Mahakavya is the major work to be considered in some detail. We have also touched upon *Bhavgavilapam* and *Pitrupralapam*, two small works of the elegiac type. Then there are a few poems which come under either the *stotra* (devotional) or *prasasti* (in praise of kings, nobility) types. Most of these compositions are to be taken as the early exercises of an enthusiastic poet. Though they evince gifts of scholarship and poetic talent, still they are to be taken only as the works of a maturing poet. We shall take up only just a few of the Sanskrit compositions to understand how a thorough-bred classicist changed into a rebellious romanticist.

Sahitya Kutubalam

This is a collection of some of the early poems of A.R. published with suitable notes by the scholar Thuravoor Narayana Sastri.

It contains *Saraswatistavam* (1890), *Vināshatakam* (1887), *Rāga-mudrasaptakam* (1889), *Vimānāshatakam* (1891), *Hindupadavyut-patti* (1890) *Pitrupralāpam* (1892) and *Devīdaṇḍakam* (1888). All the poems show the ability of our author as a craftsman; but *Pitrupralāpam*, according to poet Ulloor, is a fine piece of poetry in every way.

Gairvancevijayam

As already pointed out, this is a One-Act play in verse, the main characters are *Gairvāni* (Sanskrit) and *Hauni* (English). This has been written in pursuance of the request made by the Sanskrit savant Punnasseri Nampi for the periodical he was editing viz. *Vijnana Chintamani*. The request was so pressing that the work had to be completed in six days. Written in 1889 when the Sanskrit Pathasala was set up in Trivandrum, the play reflects the prevailing situation also.

The difference in ideology between Sanskrit and English and the desire of English to subjugate Sanskrit form the theme of the play. Bharati Devi the mother of Sanskrit wails over her sorrowful plight. This gives an opportunity for the author to detail the merits and demerits of English. In a fine sloka, Gairvani ridicules English for the paucity of letters in its alphabet. Though such arguments and dialogues would appear trite to the modern reader, it unveils the tension that existed in those days in the Education department.

Vita Vibhavari

This is probably one of the most interesting of the Sanskrit poems of Rajaraja Varma. The theme is nothing but the coming together of Radha and Madhava described in four *sargas* indicating four periods of night. In diction, choice of words and expressions, A.R. displays consummate skill and artistry. Translation into English can in no way capture the beauty of the original and hence no attempt is made here.

Angala Samrajyam

This long poem written in the *Mahakavya* style has a pre-eminent position not only among the poems of Rajaraja Varma, but even among the Sanskrit kavyas written by modern poets. *Āngala sāmrajyam* means British empire and the poem deals with the story

of the empire till the diamond jubilee of the reign of Queen Victoria. The jubilee was celebrated in India in the year 1895 with all pomp. During the grand celebration of the event, Rajaraja Varma thought it would be a fine idea to write a long poem on the British Empire on the lines of the celebrated Mahakavya *Raghuvamsam*. Though the immediate incentive was the jubilee itself, he thought that students of Sanskrit in the *Pathasalas* should learn subjects like history and geography and the dearth of suitable textbooks in Sanskrit could be mitigated to an extent with the publication of such a book based on actual history though couched in poetic language. He consulted his mentor Kerala Varma who agreed with him and thus he commenced the work about two weeks before the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The work which consists of 23 *sargas* was completed in just over two years and published in 1900.

The work commences with a detailed description of the City of London. Even though the author had not seen the city, his imagination worked on what he had heard and read and it turned out to be a convincing and beautiful description. Then it deals with the adventures of the East India Company and goes on step by step through all important historical incidents bringing in important personages both British and Indian, the conflicts, the exploits, the fightings, the surrender and the comparatively peaceful reign which ensued with all the modern developments and growth of India as a nation. In the 11th *sarga* Tippu Sultan's invasion of Kerala is described prominently.

Rajaraja Varma based his facts on the following books as seen from his Diary. Hunter's *History of India*, *The Retrospects and Prospects of Indian Polity*, Macaulay's *Essays on Clive and Warren Hastings*, Richard Temple's *Picturesque India*, *The History of the Nineteenth Century* by Mackenzie. This is as regards history. He was keen on making the description lively and interesting. Some of the similes that he has employed remind one of Kalidasa; some are original while others indicate the influence of other Sanskrit Mahakavyas.

Generally speaking *Angala Samrajyam* is a grand poem in Sanskrit. It has been translated into Malayalam by A.R.'s contemporary and friend Mahakavi K. C. Kesava Pillai. A modern reader may wonder why a national poet who sang the glory of Sanskrit, Indian languages and Indian culture, should launch upon

such a scheme glorifying the brighter side of an empire which had denied freedom to India. To understand the position better, he should remember the period when the idea was broached, and the kind of sentiments educated Indians held towards the empire a hundred years ago. The spirit of Indian nationalism as we understand it now, had not germinated. In any case, the writing of a poem on the history of an empire does not provide significant ground to brand the poet as a stooge of the mighty empire.

POEMS IN MALAYALAM

The author's poetic output in Malayalam is by no means substantial. There are only two poems worth mentioning and these two are significant though not voluminous. They exhibit two utterly different facets of the poet's personality.

Malaya Vilasam

Composed in 1895, *Malaya Vilasam* is a lyric written on the Western Ghats. While the poet was returning partly by train and partly by road from Madras in 1895, he was struck by the beauty of the Western Ghats. The panoramic sight of the Western Ghats that would attract a traveller while journeying from Valliyur to Aruvamozhi in a mail coach moved the poet so much that he could not resist the temptation to describe it in imaginative verse. This poem consisting of 24 verses, was appreciated by connoisseurs. Poetry with a lyrical emphasis was not known to Malayalam then. Therefore the fresh flavour provided by *Malaya Vilasam* was welcomed by one and all. We can say that this small poem opened out possibilities of a new genre in the language and that is its special significance.

Prasadamala

After *Malaya Vilasam*, though verse composition continued, it was mainly for translation. The next original poem in Malayalam was composed in 1918, just a few months before the author's demise. The *shashtipoorthi* of the ruling Prince Sri Mulam Thirunal was celebrated in 1918 and the occasion was made use of by A.R. to pay tributes in verse to his great benefactor. But the fairly long poem is not merely a *prasasthi* type of poem in the ordinary sense.

It is a very scholarly poem consisting of suitable prayers to several gods strung together. The poems have been composed after a thorough study of *Rigveda* as the eight *mantras* reveal. After exhausting the Hindu pantheon, the poet invokes the Buddha, Jina, Christ and Muhammad. This incidentally indicates the catholicity of the poet's mind and his spiritual and philosophical leanings.

PROSE WORKS

We have seen that Rajaraja Varma had undoubted poetic talent; but the full flowering of his genius is to be seen in his prose compositions. He was a master prose writer who evolved a model of modern prose for others to emulate. He wrote prose of various kinds, informative, expository, critical and creative. The major portion of his prose writings consists of treatises on grammar and rhetoric where the natural tendency is to be dry and matter of fact. Even there we find Rajaraja Varma different. He brings in homely similes and allusions to explain difficult linguistic and philosophic conundrums. There is a special glow in the prose he writes, which others have found hard to emulate while writing on such scientific subjects. The long introduction to *Kerala Paniniyam* (revised version) is a classic example of this special genius.

In this section we may concentrate on his essays and works of literary criticism, quantitatively not much, but qualitatively top-class. His prose writings are noted for their compactness, precision, logical arrangement of ideas, clarity and beauty of expression.

LITERARY CRITICISM

In Malayalam, literary criticism as such was in its infancy at the time of Rajaraja Varma. Scholars were conversant only with the traditional method of analysing and assessing the external apparatus of verse compositions and writing commentaries and explanatory notes. The idea of highlighting the internal worth of literary works arose from the impact of Western literature.

Nalacharitam—New Edition

When Rajaraja Varma wrote an appreciation of the well-known Kathakali classic *Nalacharitam* (1905) by Unnayi Variet it was

an eye-opener to literary connoisseurs. He showed how an old classic could be subjected to modern critical assessment. *Nala-charitam Attakkatha* is a difficult work and careless printing had made it harder. So Rajaraja Varma decided to correct the obvious mistakes and prepare a commentary and notes on difficult portions. The edition thus prepared carried a scholarly and illuminating introduction by him which still remains a classic in literary appreciation. The commentary has been called *Kāntāratārakam* (a star in the dense forest). Here we see an independent critic and cultured *sahridaya* analysing and explaining the innate charm of a work of classical grandeur.

FOREWORDS TO OTHER GREAT WORKS

As we have already seen, a revised version of Kerala Varma's translation of *Sakuntalam* was published in 1911. This carried a foreword by Rajaraja Varma which contains a profound treatise on *rasas*. Rajaraja Varma also contributed a scintillating introduction to Kerala Varma's *Mayura Sandesam*, accepted as an unusual work in the genre of message poems. Even allowing for a slight bias in favour of an intimate relative, the introduction is no doubt a critical appraisal of great worth.

Nalini Highlighted

But when we come to the foreword contributed by A.R. to Kumaran Asan's *Nalini*, it opens a new chapter in the history of Malayalam poetry. Kumaran Asan is now recognized as an outstanding Malayalam poet of the modern period. But at the time when Rajaraja Varma introduced his romantic poem *Nalini* (1912), he was little known. Of course the publication of *Oru Veenapuvu* (A Fallen Flower, 1907) had made him worthy of attention; but that was hardly enough, particularly as he belonged to the backward community of Ezhavas and the poets and scholars of the higher castes were chary of praise for such writers.

It goes to the credit of Rajaraja Varma that he was quick to detect the streak of a fresh light in *Nalini* and that he was willing to announce publicly in clear terms that the poem blazes a new trail. *Nalini* is a love story with a difference. The deviation from the stereotyped treatment has been highlighted by A.R. He saw in Kumaran Asan a poet of great promise and he declared

that *Nalini* was an outstanding romantic poem, something for which Malayalam had been waiting for long. What an encouragement it was to Kumaran Asan! Future history has proved beyond doubt how true Rajaraja Varma was. Now everyone admires his deep insight, modern outlook and prophetic perception. But in those days most of the established poets and scholars thought A.R. was imprudent.

Other Forewords

V. Krishnan Thampi, a well-known poet and dramatist was a distinguished pupil of Rajaraja Varma. His novel *Kapala kundala* (1914) though an original work, by and large, owes its inspiration to Bankim Chandra's novel of the same name. Rajaraja Varma contributed an illuminating foreword to this novel.

Another foreword contributed by him is for the novel *Saudamini* (1914) by K. Rama Kurup. This is also interesting and instructive. It points out the significance of highlighting moral values indirectly through such stories for the edification of the readers.

ESSAYS

Rajaraja Varma did extensive and intensive research in Astrology which was almost a craze for him. He wrote a scholarly dissertation on 'The Astrology of Kerala' and 'Panchanga Suddhi Paddhati'. He also contributed an essay in appreciation of the translation of the *Mahabharata* by Kunhikuttan Thampuran. A.R. also wrote quite a few essays for inclusion in school readers and college textbooks. These have helped to set the pattern of prose essays in Malayalam.

CHAPTER VIII

HARBINGER OF LITERARY RENAISSANCE

We have had a somewhat fragmentary picture of Rajaraja Varma's achievement in the field of letters. In this chapter we shall try to piece together some of the threads and present a more comprehensive, over-all picture. We have seen that he had a well-packed life particularly during the second half when he was teacher and organiser of academic courses in Sanskrit and other Indian languages, besides attending to his self-chosen avocations as researcher, planner, poet, grammarian and critic. Pursuit of knowledge was second nature to him. His was an unusual combination of traits which do not generally go together. We know of great scholars and researchers who are not blessed with the slightest trace of creative talent. We also know of creative geniuses who shun the laborious process of acquiring scholarship. We know of those who work long hours on their pet subjects and are either incapable of or indifferent to recreation and light hearted fun. But here is a man who was a true researcher, poet and *rasika*, a person who worked hard and enjoyed life.

As his literary output shows, there seems to be a dichotomy in his personality. Rajaraja Varma was brought up in the traditional school under the direct supervision of the brilliant scholar-poet Kerala Varma. All his early compositions were in Sanskrit and during those days he must have considered it *infra dig* to compose verses in his mother tongue Malayalam, which was considerably less developed. He almost revelled in Sanskrit compositions trying to emulate the great masters of that literature. Some years later, we see the same Rajaraja Varma arguing for simple Malayalam eschewing Sanskrit compounds and expressions. We also see his victory in convincing Kerala Varma to revise his heavily adorned translation of *Sakuntalam*. Not only did Rajaraja Varma start composing and translating poetry in simple Malayalam but he switched over to Malayalam prose, which in those days was the field for less creative writers. Kerala Varma also, once in a way, used to write prose; but it was high-flown and flamboyant as we find in the novel *Akbar*. No doubt when he wrote for school

students, he resorted to simpler prose; but then it was a matter of condescension for him.

In the case of Rajaraja Varma it was not so. He preferred simple and direct Malayalam prose making use of Sanskrit words and expressions only when absolutely necessary. He was so much preoccupied with his work in prose, that writing poetry was considered a hobby and recreation. We can even say that the scientist and critic in him pushed the poet to the periphery. From the stereotyped, ornate diction of the earlier Sanskrit compositions, when we come to the translation of *Kumara Sambhavam* and *Sakuntalam* we see a great change in taste. His prose works like the critical edition of *Nalacharitam* and *Sahitya sohyam* reveal a metamorphosis in his personality and approach to literature. There are two Rajaraja Varmas, the earlier one is a traditionalist and the latter one a modern. How and when did this re-birth take place? It is difficult to give an answer. It is at once an evolution and a revolution. Generally speaking the difference between the earlier Rajaraja Varma and the later Rajaraja Varma is the difference between the 19th and the 20th centuries. Considering the literary works it may not be wide of the mark to say that a definite change in approach is recognizable around 1900.

LITERARY RENAISSANCE

The metamorphosis can be better understood in the context of political and social changes. An individual, however great and towering, is shaped to a considerable extent by the society around him. While this is true, certain individuals do give a new sense of direction to the society of which they are a part. To understand the role of leaders of thought like Kerala Varma, Rajaraja Varma, Chandu Menon and C. V. Raman Pillai, we have to realise that Malayalam literature is part of Indian literature and Indian literature itself is based on Indian life, political and cultural. Literature, being as large as life, must both portray the conventional and activate the revolutionary aspects of life.

The British impact started with the glamour of Western civilization; but soon there was an inevitable reaction. There was a re-awakening of the pride in our own heritage. This resulted in a general renaissance. Originally it started as a renaissance in the

religious and cultural realm in response to English education and the period of the revival may be taken as 1857-1905. The second stage corresponds to the Nationalist upsurge and the Home rule agitation: 1905-1920. The third stage is obviously the Gandhian revolution: 1920-1947.

These stages had their respective repercussions on literature, sometimes a little delayed, sometimes in advance. That is what we find in all the Indian literatures. Kerala history reveals that the most crucial period of the modern awakening is 15 years before and 15 years after the turn of the present century (1885-1915). Westernization served to purge Hinduism of outmoded customs and superstitions, to raise the status of women, discredit caste and polygamy. The socio-religious awakening in Kerala is evident in the Malayalee Memorial (1891) submitted to the Travancore Maharaja against Brahmin monopoly in services, and the Ezhava Memorial (1896) highlighting the disabilities of the Ezhava community. Soon the awakening led to the formation of organizations like the S.N.D.P. Yogam (1903) for Ezhavas inspired by Sri Narayana Guru and the Nair Service Society (1914) for Nairs founded by Mannath Padmanabhan. Nambudiris, the top caste, also organized themselves and founded Yogakshema Sabha (1908) to solve their own social problems. The social climate can be assessed from these. The thinkers and writers were alive to the social conditions and the need for a drastic change both in life and letters. No doubt some were more sensitive than others to feel the wind of change. Here we see the genesis of a general renaissance.

KERALA VARMA AND RAJARAJA VARMA

Though in his own way Kerala Varma inaugurated certain aspects of the literary renaissance, to a certain extent he suffered under the pressure of tradition. But Rajaraja Varma not only felt the need for a total revolution, he gave a positive lead and provided a sense of direction to writers of his generation. This is understandable as Kerala Varma belonged to an earlier generation being 18 years his senior. Even otherwise, the royal connection and the prestige which he enjoyed placed Kerala Varma on a different pedestal. He moved among the elite; but A.R. as a teacher in educational institutions had to deal with all kinds of

people and he was happy to mix with every one irrespective of caste or status. Their aptitudes and attainments were also not identical though there was a lot in common between the two.

Their relationship was of a very special kind, the like of which we do not get elsewhere in the history of Malayalam literature. The uncle and nephew were *guru* and *sisya* in a real sense. The uncle had great affection for the nephew and the nephew had great respect for the uncle. The uncle was adviser, patron and sustainer. They both grew up in more or less the same atmosphere. Yet they were different, strikingly different. The nephew grew fast and developed his own individuality and prowess. And the uncle recognised his accomplishments so well that he started taking his advice on literary matters. They associated with each other so much and so intimately that it created history in the annals of Malayalam literature. There were also pin-pricks, veiled challenges and lack of understanding in their long association; but all this emanated from differing ideologies, not personal jealousy or rancour.

Kerala Varma used to be called 'Kerala Kalidasa' because of his early rendering of *Sakuntalam* and his capacity for poetic images akin to those of Kalidasa. But in diction his great ideal was Sri-harsha. In the case of Rajaraja Varma, Kalidasa was his ideal both in poetic content and diction. As already pointed out Kerala Varma incorporated Sanskrit words and expressions freely in his poems which were in *Manipravala* style. He was fastidious about figures of speech and rhyme and was excessively conscious about external form and grandeur of expression. One could even say that he now and then succumbed to the pressure of rhetoric. All the same he was a highly talented poet, a scholar-poet. Rajaraja Varma could not equal his uncle in poetic genius. He was a scholar-critic who had a developed taste for art. His diction was simple. For him imagination and the spirit of the poem were more important than rhetoric. He even ridiculed the cheap verbal acrobatics which were quite common among poets of his days. For him variety in theme and content, freshness of imagination, diversity of treatment and above all freedom of the spirit were the guiding elements. That was the true romantic spirit of the age which he inaugurated and firmly supported. This new orientation is clear in his critical writings also. The tension between differing ideologies sparked off a literary controversy which fluttered the dovescots

of literary connoisseurs for quite some time. We shall briefly refer to it as it is relevant to our subject.

CONTROVERSY ON RHYME

There are various kinds of rhymes practised by poets in Malayalam as in other Indian languages. But there is a special kind—rhyme on the second syllable of each line called *dvitiyakshara prasa*—which became a favourite of most poets in the language. Why this rhyme alone should get special treatment and appeal is a matter for research. But the convention thus established continued unabated for several generations. No doubt this rhyme sounds attractive; but insistence on this has become a cause for damaging other aspects of a poetic composition which are more important. The merits and demerits of sticking to this rhyme on the second syllable of each line were discussed by poets in one of the literary periodicals as early as 1891. Important poets differed in their approach to the question, but it did not reach the level of a controversy for the next few years. Kerala Varma was no doubt for maintaining the rhyme of the second syllable and A.R. was against such insistence. According to him, it was the hallmark of an immature literature.

It was in 1908 that the difference of opinion rose to the level of a tempestuous controversy. The circumstances which led to the sparking off may be given briefly here. Rajaraja Varma thought it would be a good idea to present the arguments against the maintenance of the special rhyme in the immediate presence of Kerala Varma and get his spontaneous reaction. An opportunity came when the Maharaja's College (Trivandrum) planned to celebrate the Annual Day of the Malayala Samajam in 1908. Rajaraja Varma directed the Samajam Secretary P. Ananthan Pillai to invite Kerala Varma to preside over the function and the poet K. C. Kesava Pillai to speak on the occasion. In collusion with Rajaraja Varma, K. C. Kesava Pillai who was his ardent supporter in many ideological conflicts, prepared a paper on 'Bhasha Kavita' (Poetry in Malayalam) and presented the same at the meeting. Though the subject was Malayalam poetry in general, the thrust of the paper was against the insistence on rhyme. It was a well-argued out dissertation. The President immediately understood the game and the strategy behind; but while addressing the gathering he

practically stuck to his prepared speech and also incidentally met the arguments in his own characteristic manner. He expressed the view that his opponents were incapable of writing good poetry. He even argued that the most pleasing verse would have the second syllable of each foot identical in consonant and vowel.

Later Kesava Pillai's paper was published in *Bhashaposhini*. But the next issue carried not only Kerala Varma's presidential address, but also another article by poet Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer criticising the arguments of K. C. Kesava Pillai. This turned out to be the inauguration of an acrimonious controversy in the press and on the platform in which many scholars and poets took part in the next three years. *Samaryas* and poems came to be composed with and without this *prasa* by distinguished poets in support of either contention. Influenced by his nephew, the magnanimous Kerala Varma composed *Dalvayogam* without sticking to this special rhyme. But still the battle continued, the second rate poets entering the fray. And at last both sides agreed that Rajaraja Varma might publish an article on the subject in a spirit of compromise.

TRADITION VERSUS MODERNITY

Actually rhyme was only one of the points of difference in the clash though no doubt it was the moot point or the focus where it burst. It was a trial of strength between the traditional approach and the modern approach in the matter of composing poetry. To understand the true nature of the renaissance, we must ascertain the traits of Malayalam poetry upheld by the traditionalists.

They are briefly indicated below:¹

(1) A poem should be built around a well-known story, puranic or historical.

(2) It should abound in elaborate descriptions: among them, certain stock ones—of the mountains, the sea, the seasons etc.—are considered indispensable.

(3) There should be a plethora of *Alankaras* (figures of speech), the more fanciful the better.

¹ Vide Chapter X of *Western Influence on Malayalam Language and Literature* by K. M. George.

(4) Alliteration and rhyme are essential features of good poetry—rhyme on the second syllable of each foot is a must.

(5) The metres employed should be chosen from among the Sanskrit metres.

(6) The poem should evoke a sense of wonder, and each stanza should convince the reader of the poet's scholarship and mastery of the poetic craft.

In other words, rhetoric rather than imagination had the upper hand. The great influence of Sanskrit Poetics and Sanskrit *Mahākavya* is clearly seen in the characteristics enumerated above.

Poets vied with one another to produce something extraordinary and clever. Naturally stagnation set in. Rajaraja Varma and a few others of his persuasion who had assimilated the spirit of renaissance wanted to arrest this trend. As their spokesman, Rajaraja Varma declared the basic differences in the new approach which are noted below :

(1) Malayalam had by and large only objective poetry of the narrative (epic and ballad) and the dramatic (*Attakkatha*) types. There should be no limitation on the choice of the subject. Any subject is suitable for poetry provided it fires the imagination of the poet. As a welcome change, subjective poetry of the kind popular in the West should be introduced.

(2) Descriptions for their own sake are undesirable. They are apt only if they serve the general spirit and aim of the poem.

(3) Too many *Alankaras* make the poem laboured and artificial. The poet should not consciously introduce figures of speech as if they are indispensable. If they come naturally they have a place in the poem. In other words, poetry should be freed of frothy figures of speech.

(4) The choice of words with suitable sounds, is certainly appropriate in verse ; but to think that this is mechanically bound up with a particular cycle or that it always rests on the repetition of the second syllable in each foot is silly. Subservience to any such rigid system may lead to unnecessary stretching and twisting of the natural syntax and word formation. An undue emphasis on a particular sound will become a temptation to sacrifice sense for the sake of sound.

(5) The poet should be free to choose any metre he likes. There is no need to stick to the rigid Sanskrit metres. The indigenous Malayalam metres evolved from folk tunes are particularly suitable for lyrical pieces as they are more musical and flexible.

(6) Though it is good to build on past achievements, writers should not become imitators of formalistic patterns. In poetry it is imagination (*bhava*) that is important, not fancy (*kalpana*). Art should have prominence over craft.

So great was his role in the controversy that the new principles enunciated is styled 'Rajaraja Varma Prasthānam'

A NEW ORIENTATION TO LITERARY WRITING

Though these principles were specially aimed at poetic composition, the general spirit was applicable to prose also. The new emphasis on freshness and freedom was welcomed by the younger generation, particularly the English-educated writers and connoisseurs of literature. On a careful examination of the principles enunciated and the examples produced and encouraged, we realise that Rajaraja Varma gave a new orientation to literary writing and appreciation in Malayalam. He rebelliously struck at the constricted view of poetry with its rules and formulas and dry insistence on classical models. Whether prose or poetry, technique should be subservient to inspiration, he declared. This is a great thing particularly in the wake of the cold war from reactionaries and orthodox pandits. This is Rajaraja Varma's main contribution to modern literature. Coming to language, we have already seen that he has laid the foundation for a scientific study by writing an excellent grammar which has stood the test of time. As observed by poet Ulloor, Rajaraja Varma has strengthened the foundations and adorned the superstructure of *Kairali*, the language and literature of Kerala. He was indeed a pioneer in many fields, an outstanding genius and liberator of mental faculties. More than any other stalwart it is he who paved the way for the great efflorescence in Malayalam literature in the last half a century. In other words, it fell to his lot to spearhead the renaissance movement in Malayalam literature.

Not only was he great, he was able to detect and appreciate greatness in others. He had an uncanny ability to discover creative

talent even though hidden or clouded by circumstances. We have already seen how quick he was to detect the new romantic trend in Kumaran Asan's first major poem *Nalini* and how willing he was to proclaim it in unmistakable terms. His dealings with colleagues, students, friends and those who came for help were ideal. He never bothered about their station in life nor their caste or creed. That is why Joseph Mundassery observes that, knowingly or unknowingly, he was able to become a MAN more than a THAMPURAN. For a man of his social and cultural background to be unself-conscious about his own superior caste and education was not a small thing in those days. He deliberately patronized all deserving and promising writers who approached him and inspired his colleagues and friends.

We may close this memoir by referring to the famous elegiac poem *Prarōdanam*² written by Kumaran Asan, a work which brims with gratitude, respect and affection. 'Prarodanam' means excessive mourning and this poem is one of the significant elegies in Malayalam, written by a great poet on a great scholar and benefactor. Rajaraja Varma's death was unbearable to Kumaran Asan, as he knew that no one else understood his aspirations and stand as well as he. The elegy was written to unburden his heart.

Here is the poet's homage to the great savant in a typical sloka :

Dedicating to goddess Saraswati
 An intellect that never flagged
 A golden pen that never went dry
 Many are the gifts you earned
 Many the miracles you accomplished
 In theory and practice
 Your enemies felt ashamed
 And mother Kairali brightened up
 And hailed her liberation.

On behalf of succeeding generations of Malayalam writers Kumaran Asan pays this glowing memorial tribute :

To lose everything
 To submit to Fate

² See Chapter 9, *Kumaran Asan* (Sahitya Akademi) by K. M. George.

And end life at the Funeral pyre—
 That may be the Lord's will
 But we will plant your sacred name
 Water it with our tears and tend it
 It will grow and spread
 And bless all around
 With the fragrance of its flowers
 Even the fire of final destruction
 Will not touch it.

A. R. RAJARAJA VARMA

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1863 Birth at Changanasseri.
 1865 Family shifts to Karthikappally.
 1877 Kerala Varma's tuition commences.
 1881 Joins the Maharaja's High School.
 1885 *Thulabhara Prabandham*.
 1888 *Devidandakam, Bhangavilapam*.
 1889 B.A. Degree, (1889—Marriage).
Vitavibhavari, Meghopalambham.
 1890 Accepts job in the Sanskrit School.
 1891 M.A. Degree in Sanskrit.
 1892 *Pithrapralapam*.
 1894 *Meghadut* (Tr.), Principal of Sanskrit College.
Kumarasambhava (Tr.).
 1895 *Malayavilasam*.
 1896 *Kerala Paniniyam* (First version).
 1899 Superintendent of Oriental Studies—Maharaja's College, Trivandrum.
 1900 *Angala Samrajyam*.
 1902 *Bhashabhushanam, Sabdasodhini*.
 1905 *Nalacharitam* Commentary, *Vrittamanjari*.
 1906 *Pradhama Vyakaranam*.
 1907 *Madhyama Vyakaranam*.
 1908 Controversy on Rhyme.
 1909 *Manideepika*.
 1910 *Laghupaniniyam*; Professor of Sanskrit and Dravidian Languages,
 Maharaja's College.
 1911 *Sahitya sahyam*.
 1912 *Malayala Sakuntalam*.
 1914 Acting Principal, Maharaja's College, Member, Bhashaparishkarana
 Committee.
 1915 Kerala Varma passes away.
 1916 Acting Principal, Maharaja's College, *Malavikagnimitram* (Tr.)
 1917 *Kerala Paniniyam* (Revised version).
Charudatham. (Tr.)
 1918 *Swapnavasavadattam*. (Tr.) Death.

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AID TO PRONUNCIATION OF SOME WORDS

Akshara sloka	Akṣara śloka
Angalasamrajyam	Āngalasāmrājyam
Ashtadhyayi	Aṣṭādhyāyī
Attakkatha	Āṭṭakkatha
Bhashabhushanam	Bhāṣābhūṣaṇam
Charudattan	Charu tattan
Devidandakam	Dēvidandakam
Dvitiyakshara prasam	Dvītiyākṣara prāsam
Kapala Kundala	Kapāla Kuṇḍala
Kerala Paniniyam	Kēraḷa Pāṇinīyam
Koyithampuran	Kōyittampurān
Krishnagatha	Kṛṣṇa gāthā
Līlātilakam	Līlātilakam
Malayala bhasha vyakaranam	Malayāḷa bhāṣā vyākaraṇam
Manideepika	Māṇḍīpīka
Manipravala	Māṇḍipravāḷa
Mayoora sandesam	Mayūrasandēśam
Malaya vilasam	Malaya vilāsam
Mrichhakatikam	Mṛichhakatīkam
Nalacharitam	Nalacaritam
Nalini	Nalīni
Pattu	Pāṭṭu
Pithaka	Pīthāka
Pithrupralapam	Pīthrupralāpam
Prarodanam	Prarōdanam
Prasada mala	Prasāda māla
Ramacharitam	Rāmacaritam
Sabdasodhini	Śabdāsōdhīni
Sahitya Kutubalam	Sāhitya Kutūhalam
Sahitya sahyam	Sāhitya Sāhyam
Sahitya samrat	Sāhitya sāmṛāt
Thullal	Thullal
Uddalcharitam	Uddāḷacaritam
Unnunilisesam	Unṇunilīsandēśam
Veena Puvu	Vīṇā Pūvu
Vimanashtakam	Vīṇāṣṭakam
Vinashtakam	Vīṇāṣṭakam
Vrittamanjari	Vṛttamāñjarī