IL "RĀMACARITAMĀNASA" E IL "RĀMĀYAṆA". By L. P. TESSITORI. Reprinted from the *Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana*, vol. xxiv, 1911.

Ever since Growse published his translation of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* students have recognized that that work was in no sense a slavish imitation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmiki.

"The general plan and arrangement of the incidents are necessarily much the same, but there is a difference in the touch in every detail, and the two poems vary as widely as any two dramas on the same mythological subject by two different Greek tragedians . . . The two agree only in the broadest outlines. The episodes so freely introduced by both poets are, for the most part, entirely dissimilar, and even in the main narrative some of the most important incidents, such as the breaking of the bow and the contention with Paraśurāma, are differently placed, and assume a very altered complexion. In other passages, where the story follows the same lines, whatever Vālmiki has condensed—as, for example, the description of the marriage festivities—Tulsī Dās has expanded; and where the older poet has lingered most his successor has hastened on most rapidly."¹

While students of Hindi literature have admitted the correctness of the above statements, they have had no opportunity for entering into details. Hindi literature—a discovery, to Europeans, of only some twenty or thirty years ago—was a vast and unexplored continent, and the few pioneers could do little more than map out its main features. It is encouraging to see these labours bearing fruit. Europe is beginning to recognize that the vernacular literature of India offers new regions awaiting conquest, and new subjects of investigation. In the pamphlet named at the head of this notice we have an example. Signor Tessitori has done what we have all wished to see done, but for which we pioneers never have had time or opportunity.

¹ Growse, Introduction to his Translation.

The poet himself (i, 7) says that his work is based upon Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa, "and occasionally on other sources" (*kvacid anyatō 'pi*), and taking this statement as his text Signor Tessitori proceeds to compare the two poems in detail. The question of the other sources is not touched by him, but he shows clearly that Tulasī Dāsa has on the whole followed the general path taken by Vālmiki. Omitting the first part of Book i and nearly the whole of the last book, which in the Rāmacaritamānasa are quite independent, the most serious discrepancies between the two works occur in the sixth book—the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* of Vālmiki and the *Laṅkākāṇḍa* of Tulasī Dāsa. Here there is great confusion in the accounts of the various combats, one fight being exchanged for another, and the acts of this hero being attributed to that. Signor Tessitori's explanation of this is ingenious, but to my mind not altogether convincing. It is that even we, with our clearly printed texts and modern apparatus, find it difficult to follow the complicated action of Vālmiki's *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, and that Tulasī Dāsa, handicapped by his clumsy manuscript, simply made mistakes. I shall return to this later on.

Other differences between the two poems are shown to be due to various causes. Such are, for instance, Tulasī Dāsa's desire to shorten his work. This led him to omit some episodes, and in other cases to combine two of Vālmiki's episodes into one. In making omissions he has now and then retained a few words corresponding to words in Vālmiki's poem, which were there important but which in the Rāmacaritamānasa, with the episode wanting, are quite superfluous. Another reason for the differences is the poetic originality and the command of vocabulary possessed by the later poet. He disdained to use Vālmiki's language, and substituted new and fresh similes for those of his predecessor. In spite of this Signor Tessitori has collected quite a number of instances

in which, consciously or unconsciously, he has repeated the very words of Vālmiki.

Another question raised by Signor Tessitori is what recension of the Rāmāyaṇa — the Western (*A*), the Bengali (*B*), or the Northern (*C*)—was used by Tulasī Dāsa. The main results are as follows:—

1. Tulasī Dāsa follows *C* in giving the story of Rāma down to his arrival in Citrakūṭa.
2. He follows *B* from the return to Ayōdhyā of Sumantra to the end of the *Aranyakāṇḍa*, and perhaps also for a good part of the *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*.
3. He follows *C* from the beginning of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* (T. D.'s *Laṅkākāṇḍa*) down to Rāma's ascent of Suvēla after the Crossing of the Ocean.
4. He follows *B* from the beginning of the combats with the Rākṣasas (*B*, vi, 17) to the end of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*.

Now, all this is interesting and important. It throws much light on the origin of the Rāmācaritamānasa, and also on the question of what version of the Rāmāyaṇa was current in Audh and Benares in the days of Tulasī Dāsa, i.e. in the latter half of the seventeenth century,¹ but it seems to me that there is a probable explanation of the discrepancies between the two poems which has not been taken into account by Signor Tessitori. He has gone on the assumption that Tulasī Dāsa had a manuscript of the Rāmāyaṇa by him, and that he consulted it as he went along. That hence his variations, except in the *Laṅkākāṇḍa*, were deliberate. This method of writing, with a manuscript within reach, is the way a student in Europe would go to work, but it cannot be thought that an Indian poet would labour on such lines. Tulasī Dāsa was a Vaiṣṇava ascetic, brought up by a Guru in the fear and love of Rāma. Under this Guru he received his education and, if that was anything

¹ In regard to this it is worth remembering that Tulasī Dāsa wrote the *Bāla*-, *Ayōdhyā*-, and *Aranya-kāṇḍas* in Ayōdhyā, but the remaining *kāṇḍas* in Benares. Cf. iv, 1.

like the education of a literary Vaiṣṇava of the present day, he learned the whole of the Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa off by heart while yet a boy, and was also familiar with the numerous other versions of the story. When he wrote his poem it was unnecessary for him to consult any manuscript. When he followed Vālmiki it was merely a case of conscious or unconscious memory, and when he departed from it it was either unconscious failure of memory or else a deliberate choice of the account given in some other work. We have seen that Tulasī Dāsa states in so many words that he consulted other sources besides the epic of Vālmiki. The commentators agree in mentioning three works as having been used by him — the *Adhyātma - Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Bhusuṇḍi-Rāmāyaṇa*, and the *Vasiṣṭha-saṁhitā*. Although Signor Tessitori draws attention also (p. 110) to points of agreement with the Raghuvamśa, I venture to think that he has laid too little stress on the importance of these extraneous sources. The *Bhusuṇḍi-Rāmāyaṇa* I have never seen, nor do I know if MSS. of it exist, but the other two works are well known and easily obtainable. An examination of these would very probably explain differences between the works of Tulasī Dāsa and Vālmiki in a manner more simple than that employed by Signor Tessitori. Of one thing I am certain. Tulasī Dāsa wrote his poem with his whole being saturated not only with Vālmiki's Rāmāyaṇa, but also with all the other then existing Vaiṣṇava works dealing with the history of the Master whom he adored. The idea of checking his literary references was unknown to him. If he quoted he often no doubt quoted with verbal incorrectness, as learned Paṇḍits do at the present day, and I daresay that he himself would often have been puzzled to say on what particular work he founded the expressions used by him in any particular passage.

In one respect I heartily agree with Signor Tessitori.

He lays stress upon Tulasī Dāsa's originality. Tulasī Dāsa was a great poet, and though here and there his memory may have played tricks with him and led him to make unintended quotations, as a whole he deliberately avoided copying Vālmiki's language or borrowing his similes. On the other hand, I cannot look upon the variations of the sixth book as due to misunderstanding of Vālmiki's sequence of events or to mental confusion. If my belief is right, Tulasī Dāsa was familiar with every step in the sequence of events from his boyhood. If his account differs from that given by the recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa now available to us, it can only be that either he had been taught a recension unknown to us, or else that he deliberately abandoned Vālmiki and adopted the account of some other authority.

Although I have ventured to differ from Signor Tessitori in one not unimportant particular, I would strongly recommend all students of Tulasī Dāsa to study his paper. It is full of valuable comparisons and of suggestive remarks, and it must necessarily be taken into serious account in all future investigations as to the connexion between the two great poets of the Glory of the House of Raghu.

GEORGE A. GRIERSON.

CAMBERLEY.

March 26, 1912.

- A CATALOGUE OF THE TAMIL BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM. Compiled by L. D. BARNETT, M.A., Litt.D., and the late G. U. POPE, D.D. London, 1909.
- A CATALOGUE OF THE KANNADA, BADAGA, AND KURUGU BOOKS in the same. Compiled by L. D. BARNETT, M.A., Litt.D. London, 1910.
- A CATALOGUE OF THE TELUGU BOOKS in the same. Compiled by the same. London, 1912.

I spare my readers the usual remarks that should commence a notice of such works as the above. We all