

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Phillip Meadows Taylor, born in 1808 and migrated to India at the age of 16, first served in the British army and later in the army of Nizam of Hyderabad and became a British Resident at Shorapur and lived there upto 1856 and returned to England. He was nabob in true sense of term, imbibing the Indian ways of life. He was an Indian in Victorian England and Victorian in British India. His contribution to British literature, Indian administration, culture, religion, geography, irrigation and reforms was most remarkable. With his great sense of reform and social welfare of his natives, he was to be considered as a great Victorian like Benjamin Disraeli, the contemporary British Prime Minister.

In this concluding chapter, theme and technique of Taylor's first historical romance "Confessions of a Thug" have been analysed in sufficient detail. It has been noticed how Taylor effectively uses the old picaresque form of the historical romance for the equally old theme of blood and horror, of the barbarism rooted in a historical past, represented by the historical characters, Ameer Ali and Cheetoo, the heads of the Thugs and the Pindharees respectively. He portrays uncivilised social conditions and strongly focuses on the achievement of the British police for rehabilitating the sufferers and efforts to prevent the crimes like that of Thugees. The adventures of Ameer Ali bloody activities of such magnitude as of killing seven hundred and nineteen

innocent persons, including his own sister paints the barbaric image of India in the darkest possible colours.

The author's good intention is to show the successful suppression of the Thugs and the Pindharees by his British police officer. As the civilized life of the Indians lay in the background and as the barbarous activities overshadowed the civilized life in India. The Britishers mistook the whole country to be barbarous and uncultured.

To remove that misunderstanding from the mind of his readers Taylor undertook to portray both sides the uncivilized of India, concentrating on the civilized life of the Hindus and the Muslims in his other historical romances. There is a picture of half-barbarous and half-civilized India in his very next historical romance *Tippoo Sultaun*. The achievement of the British is that he looked after the natives without partiality and discrimination between the people of one and that of the other. He inculcated a sense of justice, love of truth and justice among them. Justice, love for truth, sacrifice were the values of the imperial England of Queen Victoria.

In this chapter Taylor's trilogy, consisting of Tara, Ralph Darnell and Seeta, has been studied in detail with a view to bringing out the civilized aspects of Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities which promoted inter-caste marriages. Taylor's strong sense of social reform is obviously visible. He makes marriages between the fiherghees and the natives widows. Love and marriage is a major themes in almost all of his novels. In Taylor's fiction, the fulfillment

of love results in marriage. His couples in love represents a great variety and come from different nations, races and communities and cultural backgrounds and embraces a period of about four hundred years from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century.

There is an architectonic beauty about the pattern of the whole trilogy - there is a Hindu-Muslim marriage in Tara, a Muslim-Christian marriage in Ralph Darnell, and a Hindu-Christian marriage in Seeta - which is based on experimental mixed marriages which are also widow remarriages intended to bring about social harmony in the Indian society consisting as it does of different communities. This was conceived as a national and international solution, more particularly as the desideratum for the Hindu community which treated its widows as worse than a criminal, and they were condemned to die a slow but sure death. In all the three novels Taylor's intention has been more than aesthetic since he aims at social reformation. The inter-caste marriage can take place only in a civilized society. Tara and Fazil, Ralph and the Begum, and Seeta and Cyril Brandon live happily and peacefully in spite of their religious differences. The lovers show high respect to the women which certainly is a special trait of a civilized society. More than this, they have mutual love and affection, honour and respect, and are moved by a desire to learn the fine arts both western and Indian. All of them become broad - minded by being exposed to a new life, 'new ideas' coming from Western art and literature. There is perfect harmony, faith and tolerance in all of them. Religion never became an impediment in

understanding one another. Their fidelity and their sense of duty are also admirable. Thus all of them represent civilized qualities like mutual love, respect, tolerance and understanding. Taylor presents India, as a civilized country with its different communities living in harmony through appreciation of other cultures and religions, the inter-caste marriages being the experimental bridges towards such a synthesis.

While Hinduism disapproved of widow remarriage, both Islam and Christianity upheld widow remarriage on humanitarian ground. The impact of Western culture on Indians was so much that it changed the life-style of many Indians. The legalization of widow remarriage at the same time by the British Government was an important land-mark in the regeneration of Indian society under the British regime. Though it was against Orthodox Hinduism, it was welcomed whole-heartedly by enlightened Hindus, whom Tara's mother, Anand Bye and Seeta's grand father, Narendra properly symbolize.

There seems to be little variety in the plot construction of the novels in the trilogy, since we find in them variation of one and the same theme - mixed & widow remarriage. Though the trilogy displays poverty of plot-construction, it is certainly rich in characterization, for Taylor's art of characterization reaches its perfection in the last of the trilogy.

Apart from presenting a rich variety of characters - kings, queens, noblemen, noble ladies, administrators, judges, common men, heroes, heroines, Hindu saints, Muslim Fakeers, villains and clowns drawn from Hindu, Muslim

and Christian communities, the trilogy illustrates, Taylor's insight into human nature, is as much as he dramatizes the inner conflicts going on within characters minds, as in the case of Tara and Seeta. As the finest creations of Taylor's imagination could be mentioned the three pairs of lovers – Fazil and Tara, Ralph and Noor-ool-Nissa, and Cyril and Seeta, who make ideal couples and resemble some of Shakespeare's heroes and heroines even in their beauty, tenderness, and understanding, especially the heroines Tara and Seeta, who are comparable to Shakespeare's paragons of virtue and beauty – like Rosalind, Miranda and Imogen. While Taylor's heroine are paragons of beauty, his heroes are like the medieval chivalrous knights, good and generous, jelly and gentle and full chivalrous.

Taylor's lovers, who play an important role in the unity of the East and the West, are really strong. They never cared for birth, breed and border which are after all, petty considerations. Transcending the barriers of caste, creed and colour, and the shackles of social system, custom and tradition, they were united by true love and understanding. True love triumphs over everything. Understanding, which is essential for the union of individuals, communities and countries, strengthens their bonds. The love of such pairs is 'pure without the dross of passion'. Such pure and strong love, which is based on mature understanding, alone can unite individuals and can conquer and combine different cultures, religions and civilizations. Taylor has purposively quoted as epigraph Shakespeare's sonnet, True love on the title page of the Seeta.

In this historical trilogy, changing images of India have been mirrored, with greater emphasis on the depiction of the civilized aspects of Hindus, Muslims and Christians during the long span of two hundred years ranging from the death of Afzool Khan in 1657 to the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. In this phase we hardly find the barbaric excesses of first phase.

The author deliberately avoids sickening details of the Mutiny in Seeta and concentrates mostly on the romance of history. In this way, the trilogies reveals the cultured and civilized life of the Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities at that time whom together enriched the civilization of India. After having dealt with ethos of Victorianism in India in different novels separately, Taylor tries to present an integrated image of India in his last novel *A Noble Queen*.

In this chapter the integrated image of imperial India was presented in the novel has been brought out through the analysis of the form, the theme and the technique. The analysis of the form, the theme and technique has been attempted in order to obtain a comprehensive view of the real India which, as a civilized country stood for religion and spiritualism, in addition to social and religious harmony, Peace and justice; as a barbarous and semi-barbarous country, which, in certain parts, it still remained, was marked with treason, invasion etc. These shades of barbarism and semi-barbarism, instead of marring the beauty of India enhanced it, as 'beauty spots' add to the attractiveness of a charming face. It has been noticed that the theme of heroism and spiritualism illustrated through the

examples of the Queen and other noble and pious characters like Abbas Khan, the Syud, D'Almeida, Z Maria and others (who are civilized in every respect) has be embedded in the portrayal of a civilized society .

Chand Beebee's love for her subjects, her tolerance, benevolence, kindness, bravery, courage and justice, etc. are the hallmarks of civilized life. The spiritual leader, the Syud and his grand daughter reveal true Indian culture by preaching and practicing the tenets of Islam. So also do Francis D'Almeida and Maria represent Christianity and their culture.

Taylor has again emphasized the unity of the East and the West, not through the mixed-marriage, as he had done in the previous novels, but through proper understanding, genuine affection and broad-mindedness. This is possible only through tolerance, harmony and peaceful co-existence. As characteristics of the medieval Dekhan, there were instances of barbarism in the form of intrigues, treason, invasion, abduction and superstition, practiced by characters like Osman Beg, Dom Diego and King Ibrahim Adil Shah I. The reformation of the diabolical Beydars is evident in the character of Rungs Naik who combines in himself the nobility of the high-born and the humility of the low-bor Taylor's conservatism is fused with a Liberal Humanitarian. He learnt this from Bentick who was responsible for the suppression of Thuggee and Sati. William Bentinck was in the tradition of the Liberal Utilitarian. Taylor admired Bentinck's Sincerity and simplicity. He certainly shared the latter views on interracial marriages and that became an important theme in his trilogy.

Besides Bentinck, Taylor was impressed equally by Lord Macaulay, the law member of Bentick's council and chairman of the Education Committee, who advanced his views on education. As a result of his contact with Bentick and Macaulay Taylor found himself endorsing their views on the need for social reform and western education. He advocated western education for Indians as he felt that it would elevate them economically and morally. Taylor's commitment to the ideal of spreading western education was such that he established many schools in Shorapoor and other places under his charge, on Macaulayan Principles. In Seeta Cyril Brandon establishes a school at Shah Gunje in memory of his wife. The plaque at the entrance of the school states.

“These school rooms, for the education of the boys and girls of Shah Gunje, were the gift of seta Bye, wife of the Honorable Cyril Brandon, commissioner of Noorpoor” Begun 1858 and finished 1859 (Seeta: 429)

Taylor observed that Dalhousie was “...the most practically useful and single minded ruler that India had ever possessed.... To him India owes electric telegraphs, railways, extension of practical education, large, irrigation projects, roads, and the removal of many disabilities under which natives suffered (SML:263).

The influence of Liberal Utilitarian reformer, especially Bentinck and Dalhousie Who largely contributed to what Bearce calls the era of Reforms (1828-1856) was considerable on Taylor.

Taylor looked up to Sir Walter Scott as a model to fuse history and romance in his worker. As T.O.O.Dunn Points out it is impossible for any writer of historical romance to escape scott's influence. Taylor could not have escaped his influence. One can agree with Dunn's statement that.

“Taylor learned in the school of scott to conjure up the past as a romantic pictures to create alternately the ideal and the realistic human Type...” (T.O.O. Dunn, “Meadows Taylor’ His autobiography and Novels”, the Calcutta review (January 1918):29.

Taylor does have an individuality of his own for all his adherence to the discourse of colonialism and his obvious relation to the literary traditions of romanticism and Victorianism. The heroes of Taylor do not hail from the generals, poets, philosopher or thinkers. They come from the middle class and are steeped in Victorian morality and discipline. Taylor's heroes have a Victorian code of honor and chivalry humble parentage. Above all they are gentlemen a value particularly of Victorian.

The significance of the heroic ideal is further underscored by the perception with Victorian values of devotion to duty and passion for hard work. Taylor's heroes provide a launching pad for that development.

Devotion to duty is part of the Victorian ideal. From his long stay in India and study of its history Taylor noticed some common traits among its various communities. He observed that a sense of loyalty towards one's master was ingrained in the servants even when they belonged to the different faith. The servants have great faith and affection for their masters and regarded them as "Ma-Bap". The servants are even prepared to sacrifice their lives for their masters. In Tara Bulawnt Rao worried about his master Shivaji even though he was severely wounded. In Noble Queen similar kind of loyalty and sacrifice is displayed by Runga Naik. In Seeta Baba Sahib is very loyal to his British master Cyril Brandon.

Taylor's heroes are then Victorian gentlemen in addition to being romance heroes. Indeed the Victorian Gentleman saw himself as the manly hero of mediaeval romance and this subtle combination is encapsulated in Taylor's heroes.

Manliness, an open mind, sincerity in social relations are part of the idea of a Victorian gentleman, Thackeray defines a gentleman thus;

“What is it to be gentleman? Is it have lofty aims, to lead a pure life, to keep your honour virgin, to have the esteem of your fellow citizens.... To bear good fortune meekly, to suffer evil with constancy and through evil or good to maintain truth always?”

The idea of a gentleman was a major thematic concern for these writers of the Victorian period and Taylor is not an exception to this. His men are young, handsome and gallant warriors who attracts women with their handsome personality, noble and cosmopolitan outlook. They are all kind and sympathetic and try to understand the feelings of their beloved and treat them with much respect and never try to dominate on them. Like the heroes of romance they remain faithful and loyal to their beloveds even when separated for a long time.

Fidelity in love is another characteristic of Taylor's heroes. It is interesting to note that Taylor's muslim heroes also love only one lady and remain faithful to her. This trait in Taylor's characters is in tune with the Victorian morality which he promoted in his fiction. Victorian literature shows reticence where passionate love is concerned and so does Taylor.

Taylor follows Scott's use of the double heroine and his conception of woman as both virgin and mother. (Free, Anatomy, 195). In this context it is necessary to see Taylor's women as conforming to the Victorian ideal of the angel in the House too. These angels possess beauty and are skilful in household duties.

(Charles Dickens, David Copperfield) Taylor's women combine in themselves Hindu docility and steadfastness along with the Victorian qualities.

Taylor's women are also very young and generally in age group of fifteen to seventeen years. They are all cultured and educated. They are beautiful, well behaved and accomplished in music. They are also skilled in nursing the sick and wounded. They are docile, intelligent, religious minded and kind hearted and have a cosmopolitan and catholic outlook. They mix freely with the women of other religions and cultures without any inhibitions and complexes.

Broadly speaking, the study of Taylor has two dimensions; one is his participation in the colonial paradigm and the other is his literary relationship with the romantic, Gothic and Victorian traditions. Taylor's novels are an amalgam of romance, history and reality. He follows certain Victorian literary conventions like excessive padding, resistance to conclusion and portrays the hero as embodiment of discipline and hard work.

Finally, it has been proved that Taylor by his great art of historical and social fiction, instead of showing signs of decay, appears to have ripened in the later years of his life. His fiction reflects Taylor's adherence to the Victorian values and their propagation. In this sense, he emerges as a great Victorian novelist in India, being the first of them in the field of British literature on British India.