

Hindu literature as well, and gifted with the power of creative expression, was bound to exert a most powerful influence on the Indian drama.

Another instance of personal contact with European life and thought is furnished by the greatest dramatist of Bengal, Dvijendralal Ray, who visited England in 1885. What he said regarding his *Lyrics of Ind* is significant: "The principal object in the composition of the following verses has been to harmonize the English and the Indian poetry as they ought to be harmonized." The same principle he followed in his dramatic endeavour. While in England, he made it a point to see all the principal theatres, and from his enthusiasm for them arose his desire to regenerate the Bengali stage.<sup>3</sup> After coming over to India, while in Government service, he used his best efforts to create a national drama for Bengal.

So far as the producers and actors are concerned it is noteworthy that the first Indian company to visit England was led by the gifted Parsi actor-playwright, K. M. Balliwala, from Bombay, in 1885. *The Sketch*,<sup>4</sup> commenting sympathetically on 'The Irving of India', wrote: "Mr. Balliwala brought his company of about twenty-five Parsee actors to the Indian and Colonial Exhibition. . . . As it made little impression on Londoners, it went home poorer in pocket but a great deal benefited in its professional accomplishments. . . . His Indian friends in Bombay presented him with a purse and an address of congratulations on the success of his efforts to 'raise the Indian stage to a higher state of perfection'." *The Tatlers* also paid a tribute to 'the most celebrated comic actor of India': "Mr. Balliwala is very enterprising, and made up his mind to visit England at the time of the last London Exhibition (1901).<sup>6</sup> He appeared

3. Dev Kumar Ray Chaudhari: *Dvijendra lāl*, p. 189.

4. No. 111, March 13, 1895, p. 352.

5. Vol. V, No. 65, September 24, 1902.

6. It is unfortunate that at the Great Exhibition at Wembley, in 1927, Indian theatricals were poorly represented by some ignorant Tamil professionals.

at Portland Hall and performed first in Hindustani. His visit was a failure from a pecuniary point of view, but he learnt much."

*The Indian Sporting and Dramatic News*<sup>7</sup> recalled that "Mr. Balliwala has had the honour of playing by command before Her late Majesty Queen Victoria and His late Majesty King Edward VII. . . . He is the proud possessor of some thirty valuable medals from royalty and nobility all over the world". The primary object of these European tours was a desire to enlighten his actors and actresses on the technique of Western drama, and in this Balliwala greatly succeeded. Whilst the one direct result was the introduction of actresses on the Indian stage, the subtle influence on the mode of Indian productions and acting after these visits was unmistakable.

Modern thought and tendencies in drama, of which the fountain-source is Ibsen, appealed most to the late Mr. N. B. Vibhakar when he stayed in England for his legal studies, in 1910-1911. He saw a great number of plays, read a great deal about them, and wrote a series of articles on this subject. Later on he tried to embody most of the problems which gripped his imagination in a variety of Gujarati plays in Bombay. From the standpoint of modern technique, the recent European tour, especially to Russia, of the gifted artist Harindra Chattopadhyay, and the American visit of the celebrated actor Shishir Bahaduri, are fraught with the most interesting possibilities.

#### SHAKESPEARE

The subtle influence of Shakespeare has been profound in both the principal theatres of India, the distinguishing feature being that the Marathi stage is more conscious of it than the more original Bengali stage. In a characteristic preface to the historical Marathi tragedy of *Savāi Mādha-*

7. Calcutta, Vol. II, No. 7, February 16, 1913.