HISTORY
OF THE
TAMIL PROSE LITERATURE.

RE-PRINT.

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1928.

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PREFACE.

This dissertation was written by me twenty-four years ago (1904) when I had to appear for the M. A. degree examination in Tamil. The copies then printed soon ran out of stock and I had till now neither the time nor the opportunity to revise and enlarge the book. I have merely re-printed the book as it stood.

MADRAS, 15-2-1928.

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HISTORY
OF THE
Tamil Prose Literature.

INTRODUCTION.

Successful researches are being carried out by eminent Tamil Scholars to ascertain the chronological history of the development of Tamil Literature. To trace the history of the Tamil Prose Literature with the help of scanty historical records, meagre and internal evidence from ancient, medieval and modern Tamil works is by no means easy. The bright sky of ancient Tamil Literature is hidden from our view by the cloudy overcast of want of historic spirit among the Tamilians. What the British Pindar says of the vast ocean that "Full many a gem of purest ray serene, The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear" may with equal appropriateness be said about the ocean of Tamil Literature. And with the occasional but very valuable aids that we derive from Epigraphists and Archæologists, we have been able to descry now and then glimpses of the gems of Tamil Literature; and it is a very noteworthy fact that both the oceans have a blemish in common; both of them do not suit the public taste, the one by the absence of fresh sweet water and the other by the absence of readable Prose works; the former stain is not within the capacity of human powers to be removed; but the latter one is not so; proper exhortation to the educated Tamil students can, though not in the near future, at no long time to come, make up this
sad want *. This explains why the subject 'The Tamil Prose Literature' is here taken up for our dissertation. At a time when the want of Tamil Prose is being so much felt, a dissertation on that subject will not be altogether unwelcome. It is true that the field and scope of Tamil Prose are comparatively insignificant when considered side by side with those of Tamil Poetry; yet, Tamil Prose considered by itself is a good subject and in fact a pretty long subject for a dissertation. † "Little need be said," writes Prof. Minto, "to justify taking up Prose by itself. In criticising Poetry we are met by very different considerations from those that occur in the other kinds of composition. What is more, many people not particularly interested in Poetry are anxious for practical purposes to have a good knowledge of Prose style; and when Prose and Poetry are discussed in the same volume, Prose is generally sacrificed to Poetry." These remarks of Prof. Minto apply with greater force and truth, when we take the Tamil Prose Literature into consideration. The scantiness of Tamil Prose is a known fact. Hence (1) it is one of the first duties of a Tamil Student to work for the rapid increase of the Prose sphere; there are, it is true, other duties equally important. (2) The publication of old works is a very important and at the same time a responsible duty. Arumuga Navalar and Damodaram Pillai did great good to the Literature by their publication of old classics and other works; the post of honour in this field rightly belongs also to Pandit V. Saminadha Aiyar. His editions of chintamani, Silappatikaram, Manimekalai &c. are one and all excellent and he richly deserves the high encomiums poured on him from every quarter. ‡ "M. Vinson in noticing the Pandit's edition of chilappadikaram talks of "sa science profonde, de

* Vide Addendum I.
† Minto's Prose Literature: Preface.
son zele infatigable et de son talent experimente" (his profound knowledge is seen in his indefatigable zeal and talent.)

(3) The long neglected field of the Tamil Drama has been recently taken up by scholars well acquainted with the Literature of the East and that of the West, with the result, that in the short space of a decade more than twenty dramas of high merit have been published; of these 'Manonmaniyan' and 'Kalavathi, an original drama' deserve high appreciation. (4) Biographies and Prose translation from select English works are also necessary. * "Histories describing hard stern facts and stories relating to the actual realities of life have yet to be clothed in forms suited to modern times." And (5) Tamil Scholars should help the Epigraphists in their praiseworthy endeavours. The study of Epigraphy has done immense good by throwing light on the dark periods of mediæval and modern history. "The rise in the study of Epigraphy during the last twenty years has, indeed, already yielded some direct information of importance, about the literary and religious history of India, by fixing the date of some of the later poets as well as by throwing light on religious systems and whole classes of literature" † The age of Tiru Gnana Sambandhar, for instance, was fixed to be the early years of the 7th century A.D. only with the aid of archæological researches.

We shall here give an instance where Epigraphy helps in corroborating a date already known. Niramba Alagia Desikar, the author of Setu-purānam, lived towards the close of the Sixteenth century. The basis for placing his age there is the fact that he was the teacher of Ati-vira-Rama; ‡ this poet-king came to the throne in 1565 A.D. We have

* Vide "Introduction to 'Akbar.'"
† Vide Arthur A. Macdonell's 'History of Sanskrit Literature.' p. 10.
‡ Vide Dr. Caldwell's Comparative Grammar p. 145.
another evidence which gives us the same date. Sambandha Munivar, the author of Tiruvarur Puranam, was the disciple of Niramba Alagiar. He gives 1514 Saka (1592 A.D.) as the date of having produced his work before a learned assembly at Tiruvarur. From this we are able to say that Ati-Vira-Rama and Sambandha Munivar were contemporaries; further, in the very last sentence of his Setu-Puranam, Niramba Alagiar refers to a sage called Rama Natha Munivar.

Who was this Ramanatha Munivar? When did he live? As his name is mentioned at the very close of the great work, he must have been, very probably, the teacher or Guru of Niramba Alagiar. We are glad to find definite information about this sage given in Dr. Burgess's 'Archaeological' survey of Southern India. There it is said that "in the Saka year 1520 (1598 A.D.) the learned sage Ramanatha built the victorious Adal-mandapam of the Rameswaram temple." He is also referred to as the prince of sages who is well versed in all the rites and Agamas of the Saiva

* "இரண்டு குறுக்கில் ஆலயங்களும் ராமேஸ்வரம் ஆலயங்களும் கிட்டி
பிற்பிள்ளையனைக் கூட்டி அனித்து;

"பங்குவித் தலையும் மக்களும் தர் திருமணத்தின்
பிற்பிள்ளையனைக் கூட்டி அனித்து;

Arur Puranam pp. 5, 7

† "ஏனேன்று பெருமை விஶ்வாசமாக வந்தவர்களுக்கு வசதியானது
மேளி;

Vide Setu Puranam, p. 335.

† Vol. IV. page 58.

§ "சால்லூர் திருவாசகர் ஆலயம் மறைந்தது
சால்லூர் திருமண விழாக்கள் சுமைப்பட்டது
சால்லூர் திருமண விழாக்களின் பிற்பிள்ளையனைக்
சால்லூர் திருமண விழாக்கள் பிற்பிள்ளையனை;

also,

"சால்லூர்
சால்லூர் திருமண விழாக்கள் பிற்பிள்ளையனை
சால்லூர் திருமண விழாக்களின் பிற்பிள்ளையனை"
system.' Hence we understand that Ramanatha Muniyar was a sage and scholar of the age of Ati-Vira-Rama Pandiyan. From the above facts, we arrive at the conclusion that the sage Ramanatha, the poet and commentator Niramba Alagiar, the poet-king Ati-Vira-Rama, his brother and poet Vara-tunga-Rama and the poet Sambandha Muniyar were all contemporaries who lived in the closing years of the sixteenth century. The above fact illustrates the value of Epigraphical researches.

Now, we have seen what the chief duties of the Tamil Student are. If he walks in this path of duty without swerving and renders service to his literature by making up its wants, he shall reap the fruit of his noble endeavours in as much as 'the path of duty is the way to glory.'

CHAPTER I.

A. The Dearth of Tamil Prose. B. The Utility of Tamil Prose.

C. The Province of Tamil Prose.

A. The Dearth of Tamil Prose:

The dearth of the Tamil Prose Literature strikes us all the more clearly when we just consider how vast a scope of literature, Tamil Poetry has been covering. "Whatever else she may have wanted" says Dr. Miller, "India has never wanted Poetry" and this is more true of Southern India, (especially of the Tamil Literature), 'than any other part of this vast continent'.* Grammars, dictionaries, biographies, prefaces, inscriptions, treatises on medicine, astrology, astronomy, metaphysical and moral questions were invariably written in metre, so that there was practically no prose. The only branch of Literature where we see the prose style much employed has been that of the

* Vide 'Introduction to Akbar'
learned commentaries on ancient works. Hence, the general truth that in all literature Poetry precedes Prose holds good in the case of the Tamil Literature too. "Music and Rhyme are among the earliest pleasures of the child and in the History of Literature Poetry precedes Prose." † "The metrical form of expressions is the oldest form of literary language that exists. In the early stages of society it is used for two reasons, first, because, as writing has not been invented it is the only way of preserving memorable thoughts and secondly because in primitive times what may be called the poetical or ideal method of conceiving nature predominates over the scientific method. Imagination is then stronger than reason and the poet is at once the story-teller, the theologian, the historian, and the natural philosopher of Society." The scientific spirit was something foreign to the Tamilians. The poetical method of conceiving Nature was the main characteristic of the ancient Tamil Poetry. Tamil Poetry has been in existence from the very beginning of the Christian era; whereas Tamil Prose puts in its appearance only from the time of Constantius Beschi at best (1740 A.D.)

The absence of paper and printing also accounts for the dearth of Prose-writings. To write long prose works on palmyra leaves would be very tedious and it is no wonder that our forefathers did not think it worth while to waste their time in writing stories or tales in prose. The difficulty of the writing materials necessitated them to seek after compression of expression; and this they found in poetry. This same difficulty accounts for the brevity and terseness of the commentaries on the poetical works. Adiyarkku nallar, after writing an elaborate annotation on the first two lines of the Padhigam of Silappatikaram says ‡ "Lest

† Courthope’s ‘Life in Poetry and Law in Taste.’
‡ Padhigam, Silappatikaram, p. 17.
the commentary should get too long, I refrain from annotating the whole book in this elaborate fashion. If our ancient authors had had the same conveniences that we have now, surely, we would now be in possession of elaborate commentaries and a good number of prose works.

B. The Utility of Tamil Prose:

For practical purposes Prose is to be preferred to Poetry. Most of the Tamil scholars wasted their time and energy in the composition of difficult forms of poetry. The number of such forms of composition is innumerable. One of the most difficult of such compositions is what is called the Nirottaga Yamaga Andhadi. This is a curious sort of composition fettered by hard rules; it must have all the characteristics of a Yamaga Andhadi; and in addition to these, its special characteristic must be noticed. The lips of the reader should not come in contact with each other, when he reads it, i.e., the letters  buflen, œ, œ, œ, œ must be absent. Only very great poets should try this experiment. The great Poet Sivaprakasagar has composed one Andhadi of this kind called *"உலை வ நந்து வுண்ட நந்து மார் வுண்டு நந்து." Even now some of the Tamil Pandits (who have not had the influence of Western Culture) rack their brains in the composition of 'मकिलमार.' They might with better beneficial results use their time and energy in the composition of Prose works; and thus create a liking in the minds of the Tamil speaking public for their mother-tongue. The chief reason for the neglect of Tamil is the absence of Prose works. Our Tamil Literature may be compared to a town where only gold vases are sold and where ordinary earthenware is absent.

* Here is one stanza from this Andhadi.

 VERIFYING THE TAMIL TEXT HERE
in as much as it has excellent poetry and is destitute of ordinary prose.* It is the practical utility of Tamil Prose that should be borne in mind; and every real patron of his literature must work towards its development.

C. The Province of Tamil Prose:

It is of essential importance to consider this question, especially, so far as our Tamil Prose Literature is concerned. There are pieces of old prose writings which do not have the essential elements of prose. Now the question arises ‘what is prose?’ The ordinary definition of Prose is ‘the common language of men unconfined to poetical measures.’ In this sense, of course, almost all our old prose writings are no prose; for example, let us examine the prose passages in the ancient epic Silappatikaram: the rules of scansion can very well be applied and they can be brought under the general heading of the Tamil metre called ‘Asiriappa;’ the definition which Coleridge gives of Prose may serve our purpose here. Coleridge has ‘I wish our clever young poets would remember my homely definitions of Prose and Poetry, that prose is ‘words in their best order,’ poetry ‘the best words in their best order.’’† ‘As the medium in which the Poet works is language, execution in his case is the arrangement of the best words in the best order, the best order being in all but a few anomalous cases, a rhythmical one. The technical laws of verse, however, deal only with ‘the best order.’ There remain as a part of execution ‘the best words.’ This section of the definition covers all the intellectual propriety, the moral passion, the verbal felicity, the myriad charms and graces of which ‘the best order’ is but the vehicle.’ Now applying this definition to our ancient prose, we may safely assert that it comes under the compass of Prose; for, there we find ‘words in their best order’ but

* Vide Addendum II.
† Chambers’s Encyclopædia Vol. VIII. p. 262.
not ‘best words in their best order.’ Hence: Prose passages where we discern only poetic flow are all to be included in the Province of Prose. It is noticeable that even the prose writings in the commentaries have always a tinge of poetic flow in them; and, in fact, the Tamil writers ancient as well as modern have had a great taste for this peculiar style and most of the commentators including * the commentator on Erayanar Agapporul, † Nachchinarkkiniyar, ‡ Parimelalagar, & § Adiyarkku Nallar very often indulged in making use of this peculiar style. This style, which is peculiar to Tamil, does not in any way mar the excellence of good prose; on the other hand, our pleasure is enhanced when we read passages which have the balanced poetic flow. It is noticeable that this poetic flow does not suit the English Language; and passages, which have poetic

* The style of the Agapporul commentary has a classic poetic flow. eg

P. 27 ‘அழுங்கள் வணவை உண்டு ஏற்பித்தேனிக் உவர் தமிழு கன்னுக்கு கீழ் கட்டுப்படுத்தி கேள்வி மற்றும் கேள்வியாக்கிய பாதுகாப்பு முவனையா போன்றாகும்.’ P. 605, Chintamani.

† Nachchinarkkiniyar’s style has a simple and fine poetic flow.

‡ The terse style of Parimelalagar has also the poetic flow. He defines தமிழ் thus:

‘நேற்றையா பார்வையிலை எளிக்கும் நல்லைத் தமிழ் பாடல் எளிதிற்கு எளிதின் பாடல் எளியும் பாடல் எளியும்.’

§ Adiyarkku Nallar’s style has much poetic flow in it. His notes on the first two lines of the Padhigam of Silappatikaram have extreme poetic flow. Pandit Saminatha Aiyar has noted this in his preface (P. 12,) ‘இன்னும் என்று பார்வையிலை எளிதின் பாடல் எளிதுடன் வந்துப் பாடும் முக்கியமாகவும் வேண்டும் கூறுவையா கூறுவேற்பும் வேண்டும்.’
flow in them, are not much appreciated by English Writers. "The rhythm of prose must, in order to be good of its species, be unrecurrent. No greater fault can be committed in prose than the intentional or even accidental introduction of passages which can be read as verse, that is, as recurrent rhythm."

The Grammar Sutram which defines the province of Prose is put in the Seyyul Iyal of Tolkappiyam. How could a sutram which defines the province of Prose have found a place in the Seyyul Iyal of Tolkappiyam? This question naturally leads us to examine the original meaning of the word 'Seyyul.'

**History of the word 'Seyyul':**—The first meaning of the word 'Seyyul' (Seyyul) is to be got from its derivation. + 'Seyyul' means that which is made or composed; hence a composition or work. This primeval meaning of the word 'Seyyul' may also be noticed in the expression 'Seyyulūt - செய்யுலுத் சொல்லும் அம்மையும்' applied to such works as Perundevanar Bharatam and Silappatikaram. If we give 'Seyyul' the present meaning of Pattu (பாடல்) poetry, பாடலும் சொல்லும் makes no sense. சொல் is prose, பாடல் is poetry, and சொல்லும் is composition; hence, பாடலும் சொல்லும்


† It has been recently found out that the printed commentary on the Seyyul Iyal of Tolkappiyam is Perasiriyar's, not Nachchinarkkiniyar's, as was hitherto believed. i. Vide Perasiriyar's commentary, Seyyul Iyal. P. 687, [L. 16] Tolkappiyam, "பாடலும் சொல்லும் கூறுவோர் உருவம் சொல்லும் சொல்ிங் கூற்றில் வைக்க வைத்து." ii. Note Ilakkana Vilakkam [P. 838. L. 27] சொல்லும் கூறுவோர் கூற்றுக்கூட் வைக்கும். iii. Note Ilakkkanakkottom Urai, pp. 90-1. நூர் சொல்லும் கூறையில் "பாடலும் சொல்லும் கூறையில் வைக்கவியோர் கூறுவோர்."
means 'composition in which the poems are interspersed here and there with prose, i.e. poetical composition in which prose is intermixed. That 'Seyyul' meant only written composition, without regard to its quality, may also be noticed from the old use of such expressions as

* "பால்கர் கோய்ப்பாடு, போர்க்கீர்க்கு வர்த்தகப் பொழுது." Vide P. 3, பெரசியர் சொல்லுறுப்பு, போர்க்கீர்க்கு வர்த்தகப் பொழுது என்று கூறுவர்.

† Vide p. 739. Porul Adikaram, Tolk.

‡ Vide Illustration (at the close of this dissertation.)

§ 'துறண்டியச் சந்திரன் பைசியாரிக் பலவே; மாரியானே காமரு தலை கோயிலேசுபாரா.' P. 742 L. 32.3. Porul Adhikaram, Tolk.
into which it is divided; nor has a species apart from the containing genus."* And this justifies the use of the expressions

But the word 'Seyyul' began to narrow in its meaning and it is one of those cases where specialisation in meaning has taken place. Poetry being the most difficult of compositions, the term 'Seyyul' came to be restricted to poetry alone.

The author of Vira Soliyam includes under 'Seyyul' both Poetry and Prose; and, as he chiefly followed the rules of Sanskrit grammar he gives the names of पाद्यम (Padyam) and संप्रतिक (gadyam) to Pattu and Urai, respectively. He says,

"पाद्यमं प्रथमं सम्बन्धितं विद्यासम्बन्धितं प्रमाणम्
 संप्रतिकं प्रथमं सम्बन्धितं विद्यासम्बन्धितं
 संप्रतिकं रत्नं ज्योत्सनं निष्ठुरं कवित्वम्
 गद्यम् गद्यम् निष्ठुरं ज्योत्सनं कवित्वम्।"

It is noticeable here that the word 'Seyyul' is first used in the original sense of 'Composition' and secondly in the narrowed sense of 'Poetry'. This shows that the Vira Soliyam age marks the transition stage in the meaning of 'Seyyul'.

The next stage reveals that 'Seyyul' almost lost its original meaning. Vaidyanatha Desikar, the author of Ilakkanvilakkan follows the plan of Tolkappiyar and he speaks of Prose in the very last sutram of Seyyul Iyal. Since he gives a place for Prose in the chapter on Seyyul, we are led to think that the 'Seyyul' in Seyyul Iyal has its original sense, viz, composition. But his son Tyagaraja Desikar, the writer of Pattiyal (which only means 'the chapter dealing with the several kinds of Poetry') wrongly took रङ्ग

† Virasoliyam. Yappuppulam, 6.
to be the equivalent of prose-poetry and he speaks of
the province of prose in his Pattiyal. Properly speaking
the 143rd. Sutram ʻ-printam  gozhc dhikpavulamʼ of
Pattiyal (Ilakkana vilakkam) ought to have found a place
in the preceding chapter (Seyyul Iyal.)

The acute brain of Æsana Desikar, the writer of Ilak-
kanakkottu clearly perceives that ‘Seyyul’ has narrowed in
its meaning. In the last sutram of his Ilakkanakkottu he
discusses the question how Prose and Sutrams can be called
‘Seyyul.’ A keen study of his own commentary on his sutram
will clearly reveal to us that he tries to reconcile the original
meaning of Seyyul with the narrowed meaning; in fact,
he argues that Prose is ‘Seyyul’ in both its meanings.
This is the line of his argument. * The use of the term
vazh pambu in the sense of ‘Prose composition’ is justi-
fiable since we have the sanction of usage and since the very
derivation of the word ‘Seyyul’ allows its usage. † The
use of the term vazh pambu in the sense of “Prose-poetry”
is allowable since prose passages are invariably written
with the poetic flow.

During Beschi’s time (1780 A. D.) the present notion
that Seyyul and Pattu are equivalent crept in. In the
commentary on sutrm 250 of Tonnul Vilakkam we notice
that gadyam or prose is considered to be prose-poetry.
Hence it is that the work Konrai-Vendhan (கொன்றைவேந்தன்)

* ‘vazh pambu vellum padam snehan’ vavakk;
‘pambu kovil vellum vallikol vakkalkku’ vavakk.
Notes on Sutram 131, Ilakkanakkottu.
† ‘vazh pambu kovil vellum, “vazh kovil vellum
vallikol vakkalkku,” “vallikol vellum vellum
kavum” ene ilamkumkum pambu kovil
vallikol vellum kavum. Notes on Sutram 131,
Ilakkanakkottu.'
is given as an example of gadyam work.* Since Beschi’s time, ‘Seyyul’ has always been used in its narrow sense of ‘Poetry;’ The writer of the History of the Tamil Language says ‘It is a pity that Prose should thus be regarded as a kind of Poetry; it is this crooked notion that hinders the free development of the Tamil Prose Literature.’ † But we have noticed, by a careful inquiry into the meaning of the word ‘Seyyul,’ that the term ‘செய்யுல்’ originally meant ‘Prose Composition,’ that it did possess a separate sphere for itself as a species of composition, and that the confusion in the writings of the later writers was due to their not noticing the original meaning of the word ‘Seyyul.’ Since the word ‘Seyyul’ has now the definite meaning of ‘Poetry,’ the term ‘செய்துல்’ for ‘Prose’ has almost become obsolete. Anyhow, Prose has now begun to create a new sphere for itself and it is on the right lines of improvement.

CHAPTER II.

History of the Tamil Prose Literature.

Early Period—Before 200 A. D.

The Tamil word for Prose is ‘Urai-Nadai’ ‡ (உறை-நாடை) which means ‘the speech on foot;’ and it will be interesting to observe that the Latin expression ‘Oratio pedestris’ for Prose means also ‘speech on foot,’ i.e. ‘the language that walks and does not profess to fly;’ and as this was the style that could possibly be used in writing commentaries, they were also given the name of ‘Urai;’ and Tamil Prose has

* செய்தொல் விளக்குக்கு மேல் பயன்படுத்து மறுநிலையம் காண்பதோடு நூற்றாண்டில் குறிப்பிட்டு ‘செய்துல்’ வைக்கும் காலமும் காண்பதோடு”’ P. 188. Sutram 250. Tonnul Vilakkam.
† History of the Tamil Language, P. 144; L. 16.
‡ உறை-நாடை பொறுத்து ‘உறை’ The derivation of the word ‘உறை’ (style) strongly reminds...
had its origin mainly, if not solely, in commentaries. We have no grounds for asserting that there were separate prose works before the beginning of the 17th century. That commentary was not the only province of prose in our ancient literature, we may boldly assert; for, prose was used in a particular species of composition, the characteristic feature of which is called ‘Tonmai’ (டொன்மை)-Narration of ancient story; and it almost corresponds to the Epic Poetry. The Tonmai composition, like the epic, “is one of the earliest poetical forms in which the primitive imagination has found expression.”* The 238th sutram of Seyyul Iyal, Tolkappiyam, defines its characteristics thus, “அம் நந்தை கண்டைய, பற்றுகைய பூத்தைய பெறுவேன் என்னை.” The Bharatam of Perundevanar and Thagadur Yadrai are given as examples. Perundevanar Bharatam, Thahadur Yadrai and Silappatikaram are the only three works where we have prose intermixed with poetry. “The epic poem treats of one great, complex action, in a grand style and with fulness of detail.”† These main requisites of an epic are present in the above three Tamil works. Of these, we shall first notice the Bharatam of Perundevanar.

1. Perundevanar’s Bharatam:—Perundevanar was one of the Sangam Poets. He was great both as a poet and as

us of the beautiful stanza of Kambar where he puns upon the two meanings of the word வாக் viz. (gait and style). Sri Rama says to Hanuman that Sita’s gait can be compared, rightly, only to the style of the great poet.

“இன்றாலே கம்பர் பாரதே ராலே தியாலே லெல்லே
தெய்கோலே மனெறே என்றே யசை உள்ளே அதோலே
பரதமே தெய்கோலே கம்பரதே தியாலே தியாகோலே பாரே
சைவேலே தியாலே கம்பரதே தியாலே தெல்லே வாக்.”

[Kishkindakandam. Nadavitta Padalam. 64.]

* Chambers’s Encyclopædia. P. 395.
† T. Arnold’s ‘History of English Literature’, P. 484.
a prose-writer. Whenever a compilation of the stanzas on Agapporul or Purapporul was made, this author, it seems, was invariably asked to prefix his invocatory stanza. This shows that he was held in great respect by his colleagues of the Tamil Board both on account of his erudition as a scholar and his piety towards God. The first invocatory stanzas of Iyngurunuru (இயந்திருணுரு), Agananuru, and Purananuru are Perundevanar's and they are addressed to Siva. His invocation in Narrinai (நறினையை) is to Vishnu, his address in Kuruntogai (குருந்தோகை) is to Murugan, and his prayer in Bharatam is to Vinayakar. Besides Bharatam and the five invocatory stanzas, he was the author also of one stanza in Narrinai, one in Agananuru, and one in Tiruvalluva mala. His Bharatam is also known by the name of Bharata Venba, as the major portion of the work consists of Venbas,* there were also Agavals* and Prose. The commentary on the Tolkappiyam sutram on Tonmai reveals that in Perundevanar's Bharatam there were intermixed choice prose passages. That Perundevanar wrote nearly the whole of Bharatam may be inferred from the stanzas (which Nachchinarkkinayar quotes in his commentary on Purattinai Iyal) where we find descriptions of the later events of the Maha Bharata. The following Agaval from Bharatam is a graphic description of the horrid slaughter which Asvattama committed on Dhrushta dhumnan and the five sons of Panchali.

"... மன்னன் போன்று தவிள்ளாந்து விசைத்தா்
ஆனான் வாழ்வாங்க கொண்டைத் தவிள்ளாந்து
முருகன்தான் சிவனுக்குச் சுட்டையைத் தவிள்ளாந்து

... முருகன்தான் சிவனுக்கு சி கொண்டைத் தவிள்ளாந்து
ஆனான் புருணனுக்குச் செய்து தவிள்ளாந்து

* pp. 150, 154, 770. Porul Adhikaram. Tolk."
வருடந்த பிறம் கொண்டு காண்டு வருகிறது
மேனவ குறல் குறாகையிலே
சுல்பூர்த்தி புராந்து காண்டும்
என்னிடம் கொண்டு வருகிறதுரோளின்
சுத்தம் கொண்டு கிருட்க நம்மாள்

We see here that there is only a very small percentage of Sanskrit words; but in the prose passages found in the Bharatam Mss. extant now, we find that the style is replete with Sanskrit words and expressions; e. g., we have, “இயற்று நீதியான சுத்தியான செய்றுறையில் அத்தனை
கண்டு கைக்கள் பிள்ளை கேட்டம் கண்டு கேற்றுக்கொண்டு வணங்க என்று செய்து நம்பப்பட்ட”
That this is the prose style of a writer of the sangam age is absurd. We have to strongly doubt the genuineness of the Bharatam Mss. extant now. Surely there must have been wholesale interpolations. Judging from the style of the above stanza, we may safely assert that the prose passages also were written in a simple and classic style. Now, as regards the author, Nachchinarkkiniyar always refers to him as Perundevanar. After he wrote the Bharatam, he came to be called ‘ஆரம் பாரம் பாண்டிகையார்;' and this epithet serves to distinguish him from காவி மாரா செய்தகையார் (Kavi Sakarap Perundevanar) and the later Perundevanar (the commentator on Vira Soliyam). He was the first Tamil Poet that composed the Bharatam in Tamil. That Perundevanar was a native of the Tondai-nadu, ever the famous land of the great, that his Bharatam, containing 12,000 stanzas, was well appreciated by his colleagues of the Tamil Board we learn from the stanza of the Tondai-mandala-sathagam which says,

“இழுதும் வரலாறு என் பாரம் பாண்டிகையார்
நூறுநாற்று நம்மால் செய்துக்கொள்ளுகின்றே
மேனவ குறல் குறாகையிலே
என்னிடம் கொண்டு வருகிறது நம்மாள்

* P. 156. Porul Adhikaram, Tolk.
2. The Thagadur Yadrai (தககாடர் யாதிரை) : Thagadur yadrai was not the work of a single author. It is the product of the conjoint authorship of at least two authors (1) Ponmudiyar* and (2) Arisirkkirar.* The work consists of a graphic description of the campaign of Cheraman (சேராமன் காவல் போராட்டமாக்கல்) against Adiyaman, the feudatory king of Thagadur and patron of the 'Dravidian Sappho' Auvvayar. Adiyaman remained within the precincts of his fortress at Thagadur, when Cheraman advanced against him with a mighty force;† and, at the end, Adiyaman was completely routed by Cheraman.‡ Ponmudiyar § and Arisirkkirar § were intimate friends; both were true poets; Ponmudiyar describes certain portions of the expedition, while Arisirkkirar takes up certain other portions. The description of the city of Thagadur is Ponmudiyar's.§ There are 3 stanzas of Ponmudiyar's in Purananuru and one in Tiruvalluva malai. Arisirkkirar was the author of the 8th decade of the புராணநுரு மலை; there are also 7 stanzas in Purananuru and one in Tiruvalluva malai, written by him.

† P. 125 Porul Adhikaram. Tolk. "ஏற்றுறையர் வேறுபாடு எளிதில் முதல் கொண்டு வைத்தார்."
‡ Patirruppattu, 8th Decade.
§ "Arisil-kilar (A. D. 110-140). Several of his stanzas occur also in the Thagadur yathirai. "Pon-Mudiyar (A. D. 110-140) a war bard who accompanied the army of the Chera king Perum-Cheral-Irum Porai, when it marched against Thagadur. His verses are full of martial spirit and describe vividly and graphically stirring scenes on the battle-field"

§ P. 139. Porul Adhikaram commentary. Tolk.
The city of Thagadur: "Mr. V. Kanakasabhai Pillai, has identified Thagadur with Dharmapuri, the headquarters of a Taluka in the Salem District.* This statement is corroborated by two Chola inscriptions (Nos. 307 and 308 of 1901) in the Mallikarjuna temple at Dharmapuri, according to which Tagadur, the modern Dharmapuri, was the chief town of Tagadur-nadu, a sub-division of the Ganga country (ganga-nadu), a district of Nigarili-Sola-Mandalam."† There is another village named Tagaduru in the Nanjana Gudu Taluka of the Mysore District. Sundara-Moorthi Swamigal, in his Devaram, mentions one Tagadur‡ which is most probably the present Dharmapuri:

That the prose portion is the major one in this work we learn from the notes on the 174th Sutram of Seyyul Iyal (Tolk.)§ Besides Prose there are poems of the Agaval metre.§ The Tagadur Yadrai also has the special characteristic 'Tonmai'. The whole work was written in a spirited style, since the subject-matter requires it. Ponmudiyar very graphically describes the preparations for scaling the walls of the Tagadur fortress thus.

† Epigraphia Indica. Vol. VI. July 1901.
‡ 'சத்தமண் பாடர் பாரசூர் குறும்பு'; (this முறையா is a shrine in the Tanjore District.) Vide விசாைக்கைகுறும்பு.
§ "பாரை அதரு நில் பாரம பாடலிக. அம் இரு நிறுத்தின் குறும்பு.
§ Vide stanzas quoted in the commentary on Purattinai Sutrams 8-12. Tolk.
Examining the style of this metrical portion, we may safely say that the prose of the Tagadur-Yadrai is also of an elevated chaste diction.

3. Chilappatikaram: (The Epic of the Anklet.) The writer of this great epic was Ilangovadigal,† brother of the Chera king Senkuttuvan. The author was the contemporary of the poet Sittalai Sattanar (the author of Manimekalai) and the king of Ceylon, Gayavahu, who is referred to in this work as "நெய்யார் முலையும் முனை வியாரும்."‡ The Gayavahu referred to here is Gajabahu I. of Ceylon who began his reign in 113 A. D.§ Senkuttuvan the author's brother was a Saivite.§ Ilangovadigal led an ascetic life and it is a matter of dispute to which religion he belonged. He speaks with an equal regard to Aruga, Siva and Vishnu. At இளங்சாரம், where Ilangovadigal

* P. 137. Porul Adhikaram.
† "Ilango-adikal (A. D. 110-140) was the second son of the Chera king, Athan, and grandson of the Chola king Karikal, by his daughter Sonai. In his youth he renounced the world and became a monk of the Nigrantha sect." P. 208 "The Tamils 1800 Years ago."
‡ 30-உடைதிரக்கையுடைதிரக்கை. L. 160; also சூடைதிரக்கையுடைதிரக்கை.
§ "The reign of this Satakarnin (A-D. 77-133)" referred to in the Chilappatikaram "covers the entire period of the reign of Gajabahu, king of Ceylon, which lasted 12 years from A. D. 113 to 125 according to the Mahawanso." P. 8. "The Tamils 1800 Years ago."
§ 26-நெய்யார் முலையும் முனை வியாரும். L. 54-7, 62-7 &c.,
resided, there was also a Saivite temple; Tiru Navukkarasu Swamigal mentions one சோலாயிரம். This work was undertaken by its author with the set purpose of inculcating the three grand truths, viz., (1) that Justice punishes kings who swerve from the path of righteousness, (2) that a chaste woman is held in veneration even by the great and (3) that Fate has its own way of working and that its course can never be stopped.

The writer himself says that his work is an epic where the poems are interspersed with prose, and that it was read out before Sattanar of Madura.† The prose portion is comparatively very small. The truth of the statement that "the best of prose is often poet's prose because the poet's mind is stored with good choice of figures and has also a disciplined habit in the use of them"‡ may be noticed in Ilangovadigal's Prose. The style is exceedingly grand and picturesque. The felicity of expression is markedly outstanding; and the passages have a thorough poetic flow, with alliterations and rhyme; e.g. the second paragraph of the சோலாயிரம் வான் runs thus:—"ஏற்றோட்டா சுமரியில் குறை நார் தம்மும் தவிரத்து கல்லு கூந்து, ஊட்டியும் மற்றும் கூந்து கூந்து, ஊட்டியும் மற்றும் கூந்து கூந்து."  

The சோலாயிரம் வான் is the only prose portion of the work. The passages which are called 'Uraippattu,' & 'Uraippattu madai,' have the least claims to be included in the Province of Prose.

It can be safely said that the above three works were written before 150 A. D. To this period belongs also the

* "சோலாயிரம் வானையின் வரச்சங்கள் பதிலற்று தம்மூ மோசம் என வானையின்." பொல்லென், பதிலற்று தம்மூ மோசம்.
† Vide padigam, L, 88-9.
‡ Prof-Earle's English Prose. P. 246.
commentary of Nakkirar (the celebrated poet, author of Tirumurugarruppadai, Nedunalvadai, stanzas in Purananuru, &c.,) (A. D. 100-130)* on Irayanar Agapporul. We shall speak of this commentary in detail in the next period since it assumed its written shape only then.

This early period was a period of very great literary activity. The writer of 'The Tamils 1800 years ago' says "The Augustan period of Tamil Literature was, I should say, in the first century of the Christian era; and the last College of Poets was then held in Madura in the court of the Tamil king Ugra Pandya. The works of not less than fifty authors of this period have come down to us.†

The Medieval Period.
I. A. D. 200 to A. D. 600.

During this period, the Jain ascendency was great; and its influence on the Tamil Literature was equally great. Most of the Jain Epics were written at this time. Chintamani, Chulamani &c., belong to this period. The Jains were also Sanskrit Scholars; we are greatly indebted to them for their zeal and labour towards enrichment of our Tamil Literature; and there is no exaggeration when it is remarked that "it was through the fostering care of the Jains, that the South first seems to have been inspired with new ideals and its literature with new forms of expression." ‡ It was the Jains that first began to use to any large extent the bilingual style in writing their religious works. The works which we have now to consider here are the Jain prose works of this 'mongrel sort of diction,' known as Manipravalam style, which is pleasing neither

* 'The Tamils 1800 years ago' P. 195.
† Ibid : P. 3.
‡ Vide 'A Literary History of India,' by R. W. Frazer, LL. B., pp. 310-11.
to the purely Tamil nor the purely Sanskrit ear; of these prose works, Sri Puranam and Gadya Chintamani deserve mention.

1. Sri Puranam is the Jain biography of the 24 Tirtangaras; in the biography of the Tirtangara Sri Virittamanar, the story of Jeevaka (the hero of Chintamani) is related, though with much variation in the narration. There is a proportionate intermixture of Sanskrit words with the Tamil words. We shall give a specimen of the style here.

"..." The purity of the Tamil diction is entirely absent in this style; still, the dignity derived from the use of Sanskrit words is not lost.

2. Gadya Chintamani, as the name itself reveals, is a prose work. It is also in the manipravalam style. Pandit Swaminatha Aiyar is of opinion that Tiruttakka Dever might have got the materials for his Jeevaka Chintamani from this work.

II. A. D. 600 to A. D. 1500.

This period is a period of great religious and literary activity in South India. It was during this age that the great sages and devotees of the Saivite and Vaishnavite creeds flourished; it was during this age that most of the great sectarian works were written; it was during this period that the Skanda Puranam of Kachehiappar, the Ramayanam of Kambar and the Peria Puranam of Sekkilar made their appearance; and it was during this age that the great commentators Nachchinarkkiniyar, Parimelalagar, and
Adiyarkkunallar exerted their utmost for the elucidation of the classic works of the Sangam age. Reinhold Rost regards the period between the 9th and the 13th centuries as the Augustan age of Tamil Literature. As there is not even a single prose-writer who belonged to this period, we shall have to notice only commentators and their commentaries. It is a remarkable fact in the history of the Tamil Literature that commentaries have been, from a very long time, occupying a prominent place. Following the Tamil Grammar Tolkappiam we include commentaries also in the Province of Prose.*

I. The first commentary we have to notice is Nakkarar's commentary on Irayanar Agapporul written by Nilakkandan of Musiri: Before we say anything about this commentary known as Irayanar Agapporul urai, (also known as Kalaviyal urai), one knotty question meets us at the very outset. Tamil scholars doubt the authenticity of Nakkarar's commentary. Prof. Sundaram Pillai was of opinion that the commentary was not Nakkarar's. After seriously doubting from internal and other evidences the authenticity of the poems of the 11th. Tirumurai ascribed to Nakkarar (of course with the exception of Tirumuruganarpadai) he writes, "Equally apocryphal appears to me the commentary on Braiyanar Agapporul also ascribed to Nakkarar. It is doubtful whether there existed any Prose Literature at all in the days of Nakkarar. Among quotations given to illustrate the text, a few are from Chilappatikaram, a work of his own age at best. But the bulk of the illustrations cannot be even so old. The stanzas serially numbered uniformly celebrate the prowess of a Pandya; diversely named Arikeseari, Varodaya, Paramkusan, Vichari (all of sanskrit origin) * * *. But the opening passages of the commentary leave no room

* Vide Illustration at the close of the dissertation.
2. The next commentator is Ilampuranar. As he was the first commentator on Tolkappiyam, he was given the distinguishing title of ‘The commentator’ (குறுக்கியாளர்) and he is always known by that name. Only a portion of his commentary is now extant. Both Senavarayar and Nachchinarkkiniyar refer to his commentary and often criticise it.* Sivagnana yogigal, when he speaks of the Tolkappiyam commentators, begins his list with Urai-Asiriyar. That Ilampuranar was not acquainted with Sanskrit we understand both from his commentary and from what Sivagnana swamigal says of him.† His commentary on orthography is considered very valuable. The title of ‘Adigal’ (அடிபத்தியா) attached to his name is significant; Adiyarkkunallar writes “அன்னச்சிக்கிண்ணம் குறுக்கிய ஐதர்க்கும்.” This suggests to us that he was probably a scholar held in great veneration. His style is good; it is often brief.

3. Kalladar was one of the five commentators on Tolkappiyam; his commentary is not now extant and it was not much read.

4. Perasiriyar was one of the five Tolkappiyam commentators. Besides his commentary on Tolkappiyam, he has written commentaries on the great ‘Tirukkovayar’ and ‘Kuruntogai’ (with the exception of 20 stanzas). In his commentary on Porul Adhikaram, Nachchinarkkiniyar refers to Perasiriyar’s commentaries on Tolkappiyam and Kuruntogai.‡ The Seyyul Iyal portion of the printed Tolkappiyam is Perasiriyar’s, not Nachchinarkkiniyar’s. In his in the earlier half of the eighth century”. p. 9. “The Tamils 1800 Years ago.”

* Vide their commentaries on Etymology, Tolk.
† P. 26. குறுக்கியாளர். “அன்னச்சிக்கிண்ணம் குறுக்கிய ஐதர்க்கும்.”
commentary on Kovayar, he quotes twice from the Devaram of Appar Swamigal* and hence we are enabled to say that Perasiriyar lived after the beginning of the 7th century A.D., for “the two great Saiva devotees Appar (573 A.D.) and Tiru Gnana Sambandha were contemporaries of the two Pallava kings Mahendravarman I. and Narasimhavarman I. Sambandhar was a contemporary of a general of the Pallava king, Narasimhavarman I. whose enemy was the Western Chalukya king Pulikesan II.†” That Perasiriyar was a Saivite needs no proof. Perasiriyar was master of an elegant and easy style. His style is grammatical, graphic, and simple. Here is a specimen from his commentary on Tirukkovayar.

P. 295, “அப்போர் நாட்டு, செய் செயத்தும் என்னும்”.

“நான் பல்லவ நாட்டில் செய்தெடுக்க வனைக்க உண்டானது, ஆண்டாண்டானது காட்டுதல் போன்று மேய்த்தும் போன்று உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது.” This is the best specimen of elegant and simple prose; and this is the true prose style. In his commentary on Tirukkovayar alone, Perasiriyar quotes from ten standard works. “He had a special taste for the Agapporul and he made a clear study of its grammar.

* One from அப்போர் நாட்டு, செய் செய்தும் என்னும்,

“நான் பல்லவ நாட்டில் செய்தெடுக்க வனைக்க உண்டானது, ஆண்டாண்டானது காட்டுதல் போன்று மேய்த்தும் போன்று உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது, மேலும் மேலும் என்றுப் புறித்தும் இருந்து உண்டானது.”

of words; wherever necessary he gives apt quotations; wherever he feels that his view of a question is the correct one he boldly criticises the other commentators. He freely uses Tamil idioms and proverbs. He can scan things wonderfully well. He finds beauty where an ordinary eye sees nothing. A keen sense of perceiving beauty coupled with an analysing faculty is the prominent characteristic of Nachchinarkkiniyar. His style is simple and fine; the occasional poetic flow; the balance of style, and the unembarrassed flow of the diction are the outstanding features of his writings and it may well be said that 'Good prose writing commences with Nachchinarkkiniyar.' His mode of analysing a stanza is simply admirable; all the aforesaid beauties of Nachchinarkkiniyar may be noticed in his commentary on the following stanza of Chintamani.

If any other commentator came across this stanza, we are sure, he would pass it over alleging that the meaning is explicit. A commentator like the terse Parimelalagar would make a curt remark like this "இறை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய" and pass over it. Not so with our Nachchinarkkiniyar; he explains to us how Ilakanai deserves these endearing epithets. This is his beautiful commentary on the stanza. "இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய ஓவிய. இறையை பொழையை பண்ணிரும் ஓவிய ஓవ
We see in this passage the clear style of an intelligent commentator. The above passage is the best specimen of Tamil Prose, free from all mannerisms. Were it not for the great service rendered to Tamil Literature by this prince of commentators, we could hardly see at present even that little taste which the Tamil students bear towards their mother-tongue; and no better eulogy can be bestowed on this great patron of Tamil Literature than that short sentence pregnant with sense which says,—
“சார் சுருக்கு, காண்பவர் நீங்கள் ஒருவர் அன்பும் பெரும் வானும் கேள்வி.”

7. Parimelalagar was the famous commentator on ‘the Universal code’—The Tirukkural. He is believed to have lived at Conjeeveram, since, in the Tondai-mandala-sathagam, we have “தேவார்மன் அயக்கிய போற்றல், அமுக்கு தன்னை அதிகம் காண்பவர் மன்னர்”; but this remains a matter of dispute. He refers to king Bhoja in his introduction to Kamattuppal. Probably he was a Vaishnavite; he refers to the sacred work ‘Tiruvaimozhi’. He knew Sanskrit also. His Prose, unlike that of Nachchinarkkiniyar, is very terse and in some places too brief to be easily intelligible. There is one thing very remarkable about his style in this commentary. Like the style of the great Poet whose work he is annotating, his style also is so much compressed in form that one word in a sentence cannot be removed or substituted without at the same time damaging the compactness of the style. Not a single word he uses unnecessarily. The quotations he gives are very apt; in his whole commentary on Kural he gives quotations from about twenty select works. His style gets often poetical in its flow, as it cannot but become, when its master seeks after compression of expression. The very first line of his Uraip-payiram has
this flow with alliteration and rhyme;* and on the whole it may be said that his prose style, though not very simple, is dignified and classic.

8. Perundevanar was the commentator on Virasoliyam. Both the author and the commentator were contemporaries.

9. Adiyarkkunallar was the commentator of the old epic Chilappatikaram. He lived in the latter half of the 12th century A.D. We have his commentary only on a portion of the book. Most probably Adiyarkkunallar was a Saivite; wherever he has to speak of Siva, he refers to him as ‘@f the ‘omnipresent’.† If the use of the epithet ‘Nachchinnarkkiniyar’ for Siva in the Devaram hymns is one of the arguments for saying that the commentator who bore that name must have been a Saivite, the use of the epithet ‘Adiyarkkunallar’ in the Devaram must also help us in pronouncing that the commentator whose name was Adiyarkkunallar must have been a Saivite; we have “. . . aepangum, . . .” ‡

The work which Adiyarkkunallar undertook to annotate was a very difficult work; for Chilappatikaram is not a mere Iyal Tamil composition; one who undertakes to annotate it should have a clear knowledge of the three branches of Tamil Literature, Iyal, Isai and Natakam. The Arangerru Kadai requires a knowledge of the Nataka Tamil; and portions of the Kadadalai Kadai, Kanal Vari &c. require a knowledge of Isai Tamil. That Adiyarkkunallar wrote this commentary only after a careful study of the works on

* ‘ஒவ்வைத் தனியும் பெருமானும் பக்தகளும்’ again, ‘தெய்வத்தும், பிள்ளையும் உத்தவியும் விளக்கமும்’.
† pp. 164-5, 214, 294 &c.
‡ இல்லாதை காலம் பொய்த்து, 2-நிமீர்க்க, 30 மலக்க.
Iyal, Isai and Natakam, available to him then, is quite clear. He seems to have been a voracious reader of books; and he gives quotations wherever he can; in his commentary, he refers to about 56 works in all; of these 39 belong to the province of Iyal Tamil, 7 to Isai and 10 to Natakam. His prose sentences are often long, and they, now and then, have the poetic flow. His style is always clear.

The Modern Period: 1500 A.D.-X.

During the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there was much religious activity especially of the Saiva Siddhanta system and the 14 philosophical treatises were written during that age. Speaking of this Cycle of the Literary Revival, Dr. Caldwell says, "Perhaps the most valuable, certainly the most thoughtful, compositions of this period were the Philosophical treatises in explanation of the Vedantic and Saiva Syddhantic doctrines, some of these translations from Sanskrit and some imitations."

1. The modern period starts with the name of Niramba Alagia Desikar who lived about the close of the 16th century. There is one thing remarkable about him. He was both a poet and commentator. As a poet he holds high rank. The Parangirippuranam and Setupuranam were written by him; and he was the commentator on the Tiruvarutpayan of Uma-pathi-Sivachario. His name, tradition tells us, is an instance of 'Lucus a non lucendo'; but, it may be noticed that Manikka-Vasagar refers to Siva as 'Niramba Alagiar.'* He writes a simple and beautiful style.

2. About the middle of the 17th. century, there appears for the first time in the history of our Tamil Literature a

* Dr. Caldwell's Comparative Grammar, P. 144.
† நீரம் உலகிய கல்வி ஐக்கியத் தோட்டங்கள், தரைமுறை தமிழ்ச்சாரை விளையாடும். --உலகிய ஐக்கிய, தமிழ்ச்சாரை.
foreigner—Robert de Nobilibus—who learnt Tamil and wrote Tamil prose works. A short history of his life and works is found in the Madura District Manual (pp. 116, 180. Part iii). “Fired with a noble zeal for Christianity and emulous of the heroism of St. Paul, he resolved to dedicate his whole life to one object and to become himself a Hindu in order to save Hindus.” He assumed the name of Tatouva. Bodaga Swami (সেং গুরু স্বামী). The following are his chief works. (1) “The Kandam—a Tamil work in 4 large volumes; it forms a complete body of theology, and was intended to be used as a means of converting the heathen and confirming neophytes in the principles of the faith. The style is simple and somewhat diffuse, in conformity with the taste of the Hindus for whom it was written. (2) An abridgment of the Kandam with 32 meditative sermons added. (3) The Attuma Nireiyannam or knowledge of the soul, a Tamil work of severer and closer style than the Kandam, replete with words unavoidably borrowed from the Sanskrit; and (4) “The Touchananakkaram” or refutation of calumnies, a Tamil polemical work as indicated by the title”. It is said of the works which he wrote in Tamil that they are ‘most remarkable for both grammatical and idiomatic elegance’.

Towards the close of the 17th. century, a group of writers sprang up, a good number of them being grammarians.

3. Mayilerum Perumal Pillai of Tinnevelly (1670 A. D.) was the commentator on the first 37 agavals of Kalladam (a poetical work of very high merit written about the 10th. century A. D.). He was the teacher of Swaminatha Desikar, the writer of Ilakkannakkottu.

4. Vaidyanatha Desikar of Tiruvarur (1680 A. D.) was the writer of the grammar Ilakkana Vilakkam and its
commentary; it treats of the five-fold division of Tamil grammar. The Pattiyal of the work was written by his son Tyagaraja Desikar. Vaidyanatha Desikar’s style is an imitation of the old classic style and rises above the ordinary prose style; e.g. “சென்றூரை மன்னர் கூறுவது மூன்று” என்றும் வைத்தூரையின் கூறும் நிகழ்த்தும், வைத்தூரையின் வைத்தூரையின் செல்வுக்கு உள்ளிட்டு “சென்றூரை மூன்று” &c. (P. 10-வது. பக்த. புது.)

5. **Subramanya Deekshatar** of Kurukoor (1680 A.D.) was the writer of the Tamil Prayoga-vivekha. He wrote its commentary also.

6. **Swaminatha Desikar** (1680 A.D.) also known by the name of CEsana Desikar was the writer of Ilakkanakottu with its commentary. From one of his Urai-Sutrams (P. 15. உரை. வக. வக.து.) we learn that both the work and its commentary were written by him; and to justify his position he cites the two cases of Vaidyanatha Desikar and Subramanya Deekshatar who wrote commentaries on their own works. Although he was a great Tamil Scholar, he seems to have had very crooked notions, in some cases, about his own Tamil language and literature. He was a good prose-writer. His style is very lucid and vigorous; e.g. see the passage beginning “தொன்று வேட்டைவாசல் காட்டு. பார்த்து வர்த்தம் அல்லது தூரை வர்த்தம் முன் வில்லியம்.........அழிக்கொள்ளத்தொகை அகட்டவ விளிப்பு வேட்டையற்று, பார்த்து வர்த்தம் அருள்மிகு அழிக்கொள்ளத்தொகை அம்பு வர்த்தாய்க் கொடுப்பான் வர்த்தம் வேட்டையற்று நம் அண்மிக்கல் வர்த்தம்” (செந்தவுத் தொகை.)

7. **Sankara Namasivaya Pulavar** (1700 A.D.) was the student of Swaminatha Desikar. He has written a fine commentary on the Nannul of Pavananthiar.
The last five writers were specialists in Tamil Grammar and they were contemporaries.

8. Two decades after the opening of the 18th century there again appears a foreign author Constantius Beschi who wrote fine Tamil Prose works. He was born at Castiglione (in North Italy) on the 8th November 1680. He was educated at Rome, and in due time became a Professed Brother of the Order of Jesuits. His great natural endowments and extraordinary facility in the attainment of languages soon pointed him out as a fit person to be employed in the Indian Mission; and in ‘holy obedience’ to his vows, he embarked for the East and arrived at Goa in the year 1707. Beschi was highly skilled as a linguist. In addition to Italian, his mother-tongue, he had mastered Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish and French; and of the Indian Languages, he was learned in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Hindustani and Persian. The two latter he is stated to have acquired in the short space of three months for the express purpose of obtaining an interview with Chunda Sahib, the Nabob, who was so astonished at his genius that he presented him with a palanquin and bestowed on him the name of Ismatti Sunnyasi. In addition, the Nabob made him his Dewan. He held his Dewanship until 1740; and in 1742 his constitution, broken by the effect of climate, gave way and he died at Manapar. The name adopted by Beschi after he arrived in the Tamil country was Dhairya Natha which is a free translation of his name Constantius but we are told that after the publication of his Tembavani, the title of Viramamuni was conferred upon him by Pandits of the Tamil country. The following is a list of his chief works; (1) In the year 1726, he wrote his Tembavani, a fabulous mythological poem in 30 cantos on Scriptural subjects. (2) In 1727 his prose work Vediar Orukkam, also styled ‘Dharmapuranam’ was written. The book consists
of a series of considerations touching the duties of one called to an apostolical life. The style of this work is said to be rich and sparkling. Dr. Pope writes, "Of his prose writings the very admirable Vediar Orukkam ‘The Duties of Catechists’ is the best; it is the best model for the student of Tamil Prose." (3) In 1728 his "Veda Vilakkam, Illustration of Religion" was published. It is free from verbosity. (4) In 1729 he wrote the commentary on his, Teabavani. (5) The Gnama-Unarttal, in prose, is a didactic and doctrinal work of a very elevated style. (6) ‘The adventures of Guru Simple (Noodle)’ Tale of the foolish priest and his disciples, is a prose satire. It consists of a collection of stories, all very funny. The stories are nicely woven together. The style is simple and natural. (7) Tonnul-Vilakkam is a treatise on the five-fold divisions of Tamil Grammar. (8) Sadur Agaradhi is a dictionary of the High Dialect. (9) He wrote also a Tamil Grammar of the Common Dialect (in Latin), 1728 A D. His other works are Adeikkala Malai, Tiruchabai Canidam, Vamen Cadei, a Tamil and Latin Dictionary, A Latin Translation of the first two parts of Kural &c.

Beschi’s prose works are much read, because the style is very simple. It sparkles with life and is never dull. Unlike Robertde Nobilibus, he was averse to introducing many Sanskrit terms and expressions into his Tamil works. It is believed that the marks by which the long e and o are now distinguished from the short were first introduced by Beschi. Speaking of Beschi’s works, Dr. Caldwell writes “His prose style in the colloquial dialect, though good, is not of pre-eminent excellence. It is a remarkable illustration of the difference in the position occupied in India at present by Poetry and Prose respectively that Beschi’s poetry, however much admired, is now very little read; while his prose works, particularly his grammars and
dictionaries of both the Tamil Dialects are in great demand."*

9. The next writer we have to consider is the great Sivagnana Swamigal; he was a poet, philosopher, critic and commentator, who lived in the latter half of the 18th. century (d. 1785 A. D. Visvavasu). He was a great genius of whom the Tamilians are ever proud. "The famous Adhinam at Thiruvavaduthurai has produced very many great sages, poets, and writers in its days but it produced none equal to Sivagnana Yogi. The Tamil writers do not think that any praise is too lavish when bestowed upon him. He was a great poet and rhetorician, a keen logician and philosopher and commentator and a great Sanskrit scholar."†

1. Sivagnana Swami as a poet: He was the author of the first canto of the famous Kanchi Puranam, a work remarkable for the imagery of its description and great originality. The stanzas in this work are composed in difficult metres; Metrical somersaults are also present. His minor works are about 16 in number, the most widely-read of them being (1) Someswar Mudhumori Venba, a work illustrating the Tirukkural stanzas from stories in the Ramayanaam, Peria puranam &c., and (2) Amudhambikai Pillai-Tamil (அமுத்தம்பிகை பிள்ளை தமிழ்) a work of high poetic excellence:

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† Vide Translation of Sivagnana Botham: p. xvi.
II. Sivagnana Swami as a commentator: As a commentator he holds the most respectable place in our literature. His elaborate commentary on the Sivagnana Botham of Meikand Deva has won very high admiration and it is known as the ‘Dravida Maha Bhashyam’ and the author was hence called the ‘Dravida Maha Bhashya Munivar.’ He has written also a short commentary on the same work. His profound knowledge of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy for the elucidation of which he worked so much may be noticed in these commentaries. He has also translated into Tamil the Sanskrit Tarka-Sangraham.

III. Sivagnana Swami as a critic: He was a very bold critic. His Ilakkana-Vilakka Churavali is a criticism on Vaidyanatha Desikar’s Ilakkana-vilakkam. He has written an elaborate commentary on the Payiram and the first sutram (orthography) of Tolkappiam; there, he criticises the views of the various commentators, points out where they have gone wrong and establishes his own view. His ‘பேராமையார் வேலகர்’ as the name itself indicates, is a polemical dissertation. His ‘நீர்வாக்கவள் வாசகம்’ is also a book of criticism disproving the views of Gnanaprakasara, a commentator on Sivagnana Siddhiah. He has also written a commentary on the 1st. stanza of Kamba Ramayanan; it contains objections with answers. His master-skill becomes prominent when we notice that he has written a very long disquisition for the purpose of defending his view of the meaning and grammar of the single word ‘இலங்கை’ which occurs in a stanza of Sivagnana Siddhiah. The very title of the disquisition is pedantic and infusing awe in the minds of his opponents. He styles it ‘இலங்கை சொல்லுடன் கேள்வியும் நம்பும்’—the adamantine armour equipped for the defence of the word ‘இலங்கை.’ In his philosophical treatises, we find many words unavoidably borrowed from Sanskrit.
IV. *Sivagnana Swami as a Teacher*: He had twelve disciples under him. The greatest of his students was Kachchiappa Munivar, the author of ‘கச்சிக்கப் பொருளி’ a classical work. Sivagnana Swami was a specialist in Tamil Grammar. The twelve students of Sivagnana Swami followed the noble example set by their worthy master and they exerted their utmost for improving the Tamil language and literature.

V. *Sivagnana Swami as a Prose-writer*: His prose writings are his philosophical discussions and commentaries. His style has great vigour and free flow; the use of apt words and the excellence of diction are very admirable. We shall here give a specimen of his style. The following passage is a direct and bold criticism on Gnanaprakasar’s view that in the expression ‘நாகரகியம்’ as applied to Vinayakar there is தியா. “என் என் என் பல்களுக்கு தந்தியம்” ‘நாகரகியம்’ இல்லையாது, ‘நாகரகியம்’ கூட்டுகள் வேலைச்செய்வதில்தே பிரபலர் காதே குறிப்பிட்டு பார்க்க, ‘ஆங்கில நல்ல நல்ல வலையம்’ காதே. ஆண்டவர் போக்குவரும் போன்று மேல்பாசு உருவடி உருவடி மத்தியில் உருவடி மத்தியில் உருவடி உருவடி உருவடி உருவடி. மண்டல விளையாடிய போன்று விளையாடிய போன்று விளையாடிய போன்று விளையாடிய.

"Sivagnana Yogigal was one of those rare exceptions that had the fortune of possessing both the creative and the critical spirit in them. He is one of the very chief glories of Tamil Poetry; and by nothing is the Tamil Land so glorious as by its Poetry."

11. *Chokkappa Navalar* was the commentator on Tanjai-Vanan-Kovai; his commentary is much appreciated. His style is clear and distinct.

12. and 13. With the opening of the 19th. Century there commences a rapid development of Prose Literature.
Visagapperumalaiyar and Saravanapperumalaiyar (sons of Tiruttani Kandappaiyar—a student of Kachchiappa Munivar) were both Prose-writers. Visagapperumalaiyar has written a grammar for beginners called ‘Bala Bodhi Ilakkanam’; and a small treatise on the usefulness of Education ‘அச்சாவியம்’. Saravanapperumalaiyar has written two grammatical works, one treating of ‘Prosody’ and the other of the ‘Figures of Speech’. He was a commentator too; he has written commentaries on (1) Tiruvalluva malai, (a) a portion of the Naidatham of Ati-Vira-Rama, and (3) a portion of the Prabu-Linga-Leelai of Sivappakasar. Besides these commentaries, he has written several pamphlets; some of these were discussions (on grammatical points) with Thandavaraya Mudaliar, whose great work we shall presently consider.

14. Thandava Raya Mudaliar was born at Villinallur (Villiampakkam) near Chunampet. He belonged to the Siddhanta Saiva Sect. His father was Kandaswami Muddaliyar; his elder brother was Muniappa Mudaliyar. His father died while he was yet young. He then went to வாணி வந்து வந்து காண்டார் and remained there under the guardianship of his uncle Kumarasami Vadyar; he received his primary education from his uncle. From his very youth, he had a special taste for his mother-tongue. He studied Tamil Literature and Grammar under Velappa Desikar (உயிர் வல்ல பூம்பு சென்று), the fourth descendant of Andhaga Kavi Vira Raghava (உண்டுகக் காவி வைரா ராகவா). He then came to Madras; and, here, he drank deep of the Tamil Literature with the aid of Visvanatha Pillai (விஷுவாதா பிள்ளையார்) and Vidhvan Ramanuja Mudaliar of Kunimedu. He made a special study of Tolkappiyam; he studied orthography and etymology under that specialist, always known by the name of Tolkappiyam Varadappa Mudaliar and for the study of the difficult but very interesting portion Porul-
Adhikaram, he repaired to the great Pandit of SriKari (SriVallabha) - Vaduga-natha Thambiran, who belonged to the family of Arunachala Kavirayar, the author of the famous Rama-Natakam. He also learnt Sanskrit, Telugu, Canarese, Hindustani, Maharashtra and English; and like the hummingbees that gather together and enjoy the sweet honey from fragrant flowers, our author derived great intellectual pleasure from his knowledge of more than half a dozen languages. He was appointed Tamil Pandit in the Government College (Madras), and when that college ceased to work, he was made Judge in the Court at Chingleput in 1843 A.D. As a Judge, he did his duties very conscientiously. When he was Tamil Teacher in the Government College he had, on several occasions, to enter into hot discussions on literary topics with Ramanuja Kavirayar and Saravanapparamuliyaar. Besides his famous Panchatantrim, he wrote also a collection of stories (सरस्वती); his other works are Tiruttanikai Malai, Tirupporur Padigam, Ilakkana Vina Vidai &c. He also prepared, by a careful examination of the cadjan books, correct copies of Tirukkural (Parimelalagar’s commentary), Naladiyar, Jeevaka Chintamani, Kalladam, Divakaram and Tolkappiyam; and some of these he printed. He was of great help to Kottayur Sivakkolundu Desikar in his preparation of Kotechura Kovai (Konipondi Garuva). It is also said of him that, at the request of some Christian Missionaries, he wrote, under the nom-de-plume of Muttusami Pillai, a pamphlet called Veda-Vikalpa-dikkaram (वेदाविकल्प दिक्करम्) a refutation of Veda-vidikaram, a work written against the Bible by one Ponnambala Swami of Purasawakkam. He has also written some minor works on the subject of Love (Agapporul.) This prince of Tamil Prose writers passed away in the year 1850 A.D.*

* A free translation of the Tamil preface to Panchatantram, edited by V. G. Suryanarayana Sastriar.
The Panchatantram. ('The hand-book of practical moral philosophy'): The Panchatantram, so called because it is divided into five books, is from the literary point of view, the best among Tamil Prose works. Speaking about the origin of the Panchatantram, Prof. Arthur A Macdonell writes, "If not actually a Buddhistic work, the Panchatantram must be derived from Buddhistic sources. This follows from the fact that a number of its fables can be traced to Buddhistic writings and from the internal evidence of the book itself. Though now divided into only five books, it is shown by the evidence of the oldest translation to have at one time embraced twelve. What its original name was, we cannot say; but, it may not improbably have been called after the two jackals Karataka and Damanaka, who play a prominent part in the First Book, for, the title of the old Syriac Version is Kalilag and Damnag; and that of the Arabic Translation Kalilah and Dimnah."

The first book, entitled 'Separation of Friends' (� "$\text{मृण्मृत्यु}$" - sowing discord among friends) gives the story of a Bull and a Lion who are made friends by two Jackals; afterwards, one of the Jackals feeling itself neglected by the Lion starts an intrigue by telling both the Lion and the Bull that each is plotting against the other, and its artful device brought about the end it desired; the Bull was killed by the angry Lion and the Jackal, as prime-minister of the latter, enjoys the fruits of its machinations. The second book, called 'Acquisition of friends' (रोधलोकस्थवर्यम्) relates the adventures of a Tortoise, a Deer, a Crow and a Mouse; 'it is meant to illustrate the advantages of judicious friendship.' The third book entitled "$\text{सन्ततिः करस्व} $" ('Associating with a foe and ruining him') gives the story of 'the war of the Crows and the Owls.' It points out the danger of friendship concluded between those who are old enemies. The

fourth book entitled 'Loss of what has been acquired' (अभिषेक रत्नम्) contains the story of the Monkey and the Crocodile. It points out how fools can be made by flattery to part with their possessions. The fifth book called 'Inconsiderate action' (अर्थोप्य अपराधम्) contains a number of stories illustrating the evils resulting from nonattention to all the circumstances of a case.

"The book is pervaded by a quaint humour which transfers to the animal kingdom all sorts of human action. Thus, animals devote themselves to the study of the Vedas and to the practice of religious rites. They engage in disquisitions about god, saints and heroes or exchange views regarding subtle rules of Ethics; but suddenly their fierce animal nature breaks out."* The story of the pious Cat that was called upon to act as umpire is an example of this. The story of the conceited musical Donkey is very humorous.

The Panchatantram was written in Tamil first in the metrical form by one Veera-mardha-thanda Devar. Though the poem is in a very easy style, it has not been much read; hence arose the need of a prose Panchatantram. We shall here enumerate the chief characteristics of this prose work. (1) The inculcation of moral principles is the primary object of the work. (2) The way in which the stories are interwoven and made to bear relation to the thread of the main story is very admirable. (3) In the various dialogues that take place, we notice judgment based upon profound reasoning. (4) Common-place sayings are introduced very skilfully here and there; and there is an astonishing command of Tamil proverbs and idioms in their right places. In the small book on अभिषेकरत्नम् alone, there are more than 20 proverbs and common sayings. (5) The great charm of

* History of the Sanskrit Literature. Prof. Macdonell.
the book is the constant play of wit and humour. (6) A masterly style is noticeable throughout the book. It is simple, it is grammatical, it is elegant and it is dignified. The free unaffected movement coupled with clear distinctness is remarkable. (7) There is an intelligent choice of Tamil and Sanskrit words. (8) There is the variety of expression specially prominent; and, (9) The peculiar characteristic of this book is that its style gets more and more difficult, by slow degrees; until in the last book we have a fairly difficult style.

Dr. Caldwell writes, "In the present century an entirely new style of composition has appeared viz, good colloquial prose, which, through the spread of European influences, seems likely to have a struggle for the mastery with Poetry in the Tamil literature of the future. The name of the father of this species of composition (in so far as Tamilians are concerned) deserves to be remembered. It was Tandavaraya Mudaliyar, at one time a teacher in the college of Madras. To him we are indebted for the Tamil prose version of the Pancha-tantra, and, through the influence of his example, for versions of Ramayana, the Maha-Bharata, &c., in the same style of flowing and elegant yet perfectly intelligible prose". This prose version of the Panchatanram is an excellent work in all respects and we are sure that it will ever continue to be a fountain of pleasure to the learned and the unlearned, and to the young and the old.

15. Arumukha Navalar.

* Dr. Caldwell's Comparative Grammar, P. 150.
Arumukha Navalar was born at Nallur in Jaffna in 1823 A.D. In his youth he underwent a regular course of instruction. He was first taught Arithmetic; he then studied Nigandu, Nidatham, Bharatam and Kanda-puranam. He was for some time learning English also under the Rev. Peter Percival of Jaffna who admiring his scholarship in Tamil, soon made him his Tamil Pandit. In compliance with Rev. Percival's request, he prepared a correct edition of the Tamil prose version of the Bible. Before he was 20 years old, he studied all the Saiva Siddhanta Philosophical works, besides Devaram, Tiruvachakam &c. From his 24th year he commenced his habit of delivering lectures on Saivaism and at Tiruvavaduthurai, His Holiness the then Pandara Sannidhigal conferred upon him the title of Navalar in great admiration of his ability as a lecturer. He established two schools (Vidya Salai) one at Chidambaram and the other at Vannar-pannai (in Jaffna), where young pupils are even now being taught Tamil with the special intent of making them understand the truth and value of the Saiva system of religion. In 1867, while he was at Madras, he was in the habit of delivering lectures, every Friday, on Saivaism. His lectures were very well-attended and the benign influence they infused in the minds of the audience was strikingly remarkable. Navalar had one printing-press of his own known as Vidyanupalana yandra salai.
The books he printed are Soundarya Lagari, Nigandu, Tirukkural, Tarkka Sangraham, Setu-puranam, Ilakkanakkotturai, Prayoga viveka, Periapuranam, Kandapuranam and several other works. The following are the works which he printed with his commentaries: (1) Koil-puranam (2) Nannul (Kandigai) (3) Saiva Samaya Neri (4) Vakkundam, Nalvaizhi, Nanneri &c. He wrote also prose versions of Periapuranam, Kandapuranam, Tiruvilayadal puranam &c; and, for beginners, he wrote the 4 parts of Balapadam and the 2 parts of Saiva Vina Vidai. He was a great prose writer. The characteristic feature of his prose style is clearness. Even when he writes on philosophical topics, his style has the same simple elegance and clearness. Here is a specimen of his style. Speaking of 'நல்ளே' (kindness, love) he says “அன்று வருங்காமே, நல்லே வருங்காமே ஏனேனும் வந்து வந்து வருங்காமே மகர்ணம்; இன்று வருங்காமே ஓவியும் பார்த்து பெருங்காமே கல்லாயும், அதன் எமண்கள் இந்த அளவை வாடு வாடு மறு வாடு மறுமலர்ந்து பெருங்காமே பார்க்கவும். ‘அன்று வருங்காமே வந்து வந்து வருங்காமே மகர்ணம் மகர்ணம்; இன்று வருங்காமே ஓவியும் பார்த்து பெருங்காமே கல்லாயும், அதன் எமண்கள் இந்த அளவை வாடு வாடு வாடு மறு வாடு மறுமலர்ந்து பெருங்காமே பார்க்கவும்’. (தன்னூ, வருங்காமே மகர்ணம், P. 128). Navalar was a bachelor throughout his lifetime. In his travels between Jaffna and Madras, he visited almost all the sacred shrines of South India. Mahalingaiyar who wrote the small treatise on grammar for beginners and Ramalinga Swamigal, the writer of (1) Manu-murai-Kanda Vasagam—an excellent, beautiful little prose work and (2) Jeevakarunya Orukkan—a were his contemporaries. Navalar was an intimate friend of the great poet Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai.

After his 50th year, he began to lose his health. He quietly spent his last days (in Jaffna) in prayer and meditation; and in his 56th year [Dec. 1879] he freed himself from this mortal coil and took shelter beneath His Holy
Feet.* Our Tamil Land lost in him a great prose writer, an excellent lecturer and a noble-hearted and true patron of Saivism and Tamil Literature.

“He is gone who seem’d so great, 
Gone; but nothing can bereave him 
Of the force he made his own 
Being here.”

We now reach the prose of times so near to us of which the estimates are so often not only personal but personal with passion. Hence, we shall here note merely the authors and their respective works without venturing any remarks favourable or unfavourable. We shall not speak anything about the living authors. (1) The veteran scholar Damodaram Pillai (1832—1901) wrote Chulamani (prose), besides his introductions to Virasoliyam, Kalittogai &c. He did great good by his valuable editions of Tolkappiyam, Virasoliyam, Irayanar Agapporul, Ilakkana—Vilakkam, Kalittogai, Thanikaippuranam &c. (2) Prof. Sundaram Pillai (1853—1897) was the writer of a prose work entitled ‘An Introduction to Science’ (அகாதத்மங் ஓரணம்). His death was a great loss both to literature and historical research. (3) Sabapathi Navalar (d. 1903) was the writer of ‘Dravidapprakasikai, (தமிழ் பேரசுவையும்) a valuable History of the Tamil Literature, and, lastly, (4) V. G. Suryanarayana Sastriar (1873—1903 A.D.) was the writer of a History of the Tamil Language, besides a classical novel entitled ‘Mathivanan’ and other works of poetry, prose, and drama.

Recent years have witnessed a very rapid out-growth of the Tamil Prose Literature. Novels and Dramas are increasing rapidly in number; Histories, Biographies and

* From a Tamil metrical biography of Navalar.
Translations from select English works are also slowly creeping in; Journals almost all written in a flawless style are being published. The best among these is the ‘Sen-Tamil’ published monthly by the present Madura Tamil Sangam which is a great boon to our Literature; thus every effort is being made to up-lift and ennoble our Literature; and we hope, that in the course of a few years, we shall see the Tamil Literature as remarkable for its Prose as for its Poetry.

"There is a good time coming yet,
A good time coming;
The proper impulse has been given;
Wait a little longer."

CHAPTER III.

The Leading Characteristics of the Tamil Prose Diction.

It is of supreme importance to consider here the essential characteristics of a good Tamil prose style. We have seen that the best Tamil Prose work is the Panchatantram; we find in it a happy choice of expression, a good selection of vocabulary and grammatical correctness. Now, we shall see what the chief features are; (1) The needful qualities for a fit prose are regularity, uniformity, precision, balance.* The balance of style is noticeable in Nachchinarkkiniyar’s commentary on Chintamani. (2) Prose diction should be distinct from colloquial diction; and it requires a moderate elevation. ‘Poetry soars, prose moves upon the ground; it moves with dignity but it does not spurn the ground'.† It must be remembered that there

are degrees and shades of elevation according to the condition of the writer, the subject and the occasion. This peculiar dignity of style may be noticed in Sivagnana Yogigal’s prose. (3) “Much of the charm of good prose is due to mere explicitness. “Evidentia in narratione” says Quintilian, ‘est quidem magna virtus’—clearness in statement is certainly a great quality.” * This principle virtue has been much overlooked by some of the modern prose-writers. It is the lucidity of style that greatly contributes to the simple charm and excellence of Arumukha Navalar’s prose. (4) Another essential element of good diction is ‘variation which should pervade every part, words, phrases, idioms, sentences.’ This is the outstanding characteristic which contributes to the excellence and pleasantness of the Panchatantram. Mere adherence to this rule without proper care or skill will mar the perspicuity of the style. (5) The choice of expression is a pretty difficult art to acquire; and it holds a prominent place in writing Tamil, since our language has a copious vocabulary. Dr. Caldwell writes, “The extraordinary copiousness of the Tamil vocabulary is shown by the fact that a school lexicon of the Tamil language published by the American Missionaries at Jaffna, contains no less than 58,500 words; notwithstanding which, it would be necessary to add several thousands of technical terms, besides provincialisms, and thousands upon thousands of authorised compounds in order to render the list complete.”† Tamil words, wherever possible, should be preferred to sanskrit words. A prose passage, where Sanskrit words are conspicuous by their absence, will be exceedingly sweet and homely; e.g. the sentence ‘என் வாழ்த்துக்கள் தான் பதிவு செய்தார்’ is more homely and pleasing than the sentence ‘உங்கள் வாழ்த்துக்கள் பதிவு செய்தார்.’ So

† Dr. Caldwell’s Comparative Grammar pp. 84-5.
long as the meaning of a sentence is not rendered obscure, we may freely use Tamil words. (6) It is necessary for a writer to learn to appreciate the various colours and shades of words. To write good Tamil Prose, one ought to be in complete touch with the Tamil vocabulary and have experience of literature and life, of hearing, reading, writing; in fact, all these should guide one; else, it will lead one to ridiculous results. We have heard of a Western scholar who tried to speak Tamil with the help of the English-Tamil dictionary; when he had to order his servant to 'put the things in the sun,' he said to him 'மேயை காண்பற்றார்கள் அப்பதை விளைந்து!' (7) We should take care to use the right word in the right place. There are words 'which are not so entirely equivalent that they may be used indifferently and at hap-hazard;' e. g. the words குறுக்கிருக்கும் and குறுக்கிருக்கும் ought not to be used indiscriminately nor are the words முதல் and முதல். There is a slight difference in their meanings; Nachchinar Knicks defines குறுகும் and குறுகும், முதல் and முதல் thus:—"சம்பவத்தில் விளையாட்டு நிதியான நிச்சயம், குறுக்கிருக்கும் நிதியில் நிச்சயம்; முதல் முதல் நிச்சயம் நிச்சயம் முதல்":—Enmity and Rancour (புத்தாண்டு 23, 88). (8) Unusual words should be shunned 'as as a ship would shun a reef.' We should not use in ordinary prose, such unusual words as வழியாடி in the sense of வழியாடி, வழியாடி in the sense of வழியாடி வழியாடி வழியாடி &c. (9) Sober words should be chosen in preference to those which are elevated; in ordinary prose we should not write e. g. கொண்டாடும் விளங்கும் அன்றியே where we can write in the simpler form கொண்டாடும் பெறும் பெறுமென். (10) The coining of new words will enrich our vocabulary; but it is not easy to produce satisfactory examples of novelty. "Words, like other tools, wear out (as) Horace said) and new ones are wanted to keep the language going." * This truth was perceived by

* John Earle’s English Prose. P. 156.
Tolkappiyar himself. He says 'Novelty ought not to be condemned; it is admissible' ("நவூதவம் வந்த்யை காள்வதையும் அளித்து"). Pavananthiavar is more explicit. He has 'நூறுவர் குறுவர் புரீஸ்த்தே புதிததும்; உன்றல் கொள்வே குறிப்பி அலைய.' Old things which have once been pleasing lose their popularity and are cast aside; new things make their appearance and are taken up. We shall give here one illustration of each. i. The expression 'குறிவிதை' was once ordinarily used to denote the male among horses. In Tolkappiyam we have 'ஏனை குறிவிதை கொட்டெரு குமி, ... குறிவிதை அன்புரை ஈரு குமிதை, ... வேண்டு விதை வெளிப்பு, குறிவிதை குரு குமி.' In his commentary, Nachchinarkkiniyar writes 'ஒரு அன்புரை செறியும் குறிவிதை எழுப்பும்.' Here is an illustration of novelty. The letter ந was not originally used as an initial letter; but, afterwards, such words as சல், சுமா நற்கு நற்கு நற்கு நற்கு; நற்கு நற்கு நற்கு நற்கு. There are instances of word-coining, e.g. the term தச்சாம் for psychology, புராச்சாம் for biology &c. The expression 'சல்லு தரை' may be taken as an example of word-revival. (11) Special attention must be paid to Tamil idioms; 'குறிவிதை குறியே என்'—here we have an example of a Tamil idiom. (12) An accurate study of the Tamil Grammar is very essential; for, it is grammar that helps us in understanding the nature of words and the manner of their usage. (13) Punctuation, and the paragraph system must be adopted, since their usage greatly helps the reader. (14) The introduction of foreign words, wherever necessary, should be freely allowed. Some

* சொன்னது 56. Tolk.
† சுறுண்மு, 68. Tolk.
‡ வுருட்சிசுருள். 62 கைசுருள்.
of the Hindustani words like மன்னர் மன்னர் மகள் மகள் have already found place in standard works. English words are also creeping in. A growing language cannot but take up words and expressions from other languages with which it comes in daily contact. (15) The 'Limitation of Sandhi' also deserves our attention. If 'Sandhi' were to be used at all places arbitrarily, the lucidity of the style is sure to be destroyed; for instance, the sentence நீ வந்துள்ள மனைந்த வேலையர்கள் என்று இருக்கும் சார்பு வளர்ச்சி காட்டும் presents roughness both to the eye and to the ear; but if we just break up the Sandhis and write நீங்கள் வந்துள்ள மனைந்த வேலையர்கள் என்று இருக்கும் அலபாயிற்று காட்டும் we find the meaning clear. (16) The study of Philology must be encouraged. "This at least is certain that Philology is one of those studies which must be taken into account in a treatise which has Prose for its scope, because it is one of the instruments whereby a man's mind may be made better acquainted with the material out of which Prose is constructed." § Philology is an interesting subject in many respects. It reveals to us old customs; e.g. (1) The words பையல், 'பையல்' (sorrow, affliction) have an interesting origin. Originally, criminals were punished thus—they were let into a sack; the mouth of the sack was tightly closed; and the sack was then rolled on thorny grounds. Hence பையல் (பைய+ல்) and பையல் (பைய+ல்) have had their origin from the sack (ல்) and signify pain or suffering.

The word 'பைல்' for 'wall' has also an interesting derivation. Houses (in the Tamil Land) are built on

* கால் வரையானது சுமார் கல்லறை, தமிழ் வாசத்து கல்லறையை புரட்டுவது-சுமார்கக்.

† 'இரண்டு விளக்கம் என்று வாசித்த பலிகை-கொண்டு மேடு.

† 'பைல் பைல் ... பைல் பைல் பைல் பைல் பைல் பைல் பைல் பைல்' குர்றோன் மீண்டுது.

certain principles of structure and the names of the human organs are given to the various structures of the building. Tamil Poets often compare our body to a nest, and the soul to the bird that rests in it; the word உடையே has both meanings (1) house and (2) body. Our legs support the body while standing; the pillars of a house correspond to our legs; hence, the word நா கை signifies (1) leg and (2) pillar. Again it is the cross-beam which, like our arm, can bear weight. Hence, the cross beam is known by the name of நாகை. குதும்பை意味着 cross beams, rafters. The entrance of a house corresponds to our mouth and is called வால் (வாலை = வால் + வால், வால் = house + வால் = entrance). The windows of a house correspond to our eyes—the organ of vision: கூட்டுமுடையை is used in the sense of ‘window’ of. கூட்டுமுடையை மூக்கை எவண்பின், மூக்கை பால் மூக்கை எவண்பின். The upper part of the shoulders and the arms bear weight; similarly the walls and beams support weight; hence ‘walls’ have been called வால் from வாலி which means ‘the upper part of the shoulder’ e.g. வாலி மாச்செய் நாற்றையண்;↑ Hence we clearly see that Philology deserves the greatest attention of a Tamil Student; and (17) The Tamil Student must have unbiased views concerning things old and new. Let him bear in mind the wise advice given in Sivaparakasam-(26) “மூக்கையூத்தும் புனித குமாரன்; மூக்கை காட்டுப்படு சோதையூத்தும் வாலை.” Everything old is not necessarily good and everything new is not necessarily bad.

CONCLUSION.

In the course of our dissertation we noticed that the Tamil Prose Literature began not with commentaries as is usually believed, but with regular prose passages interspersed in considerable poetical compositions; next, prose

* சோதையூத்தும். 2. குமார. 23-24. ↑ வாலி மாச்செய். L. 183.
came to be used in commentaries; it was used by other Jains in their Manipravala works; it may also be noted here that the commentaries on the Vaishnavite religious works (Vaishnavite religious texts) were also written in the Manipravala style. Later on, prose was used in criticisms and philosophical disquisitions, and lastly, prose has been used in stories, translations &c. The exclusive attention hitherto paid to the branch of Poetry is slowly giving way and, now, scholars who, in addition to their love for their mother-tongue, have had the western culture, devote their time and attention for the development of the Tamil Literature by supplying its two wants, (1) in its sphere of Drama and (2) in its sphere of Prose.

The Tamil Language has been, for the last two or three decades, slowly gaining high appreciation at the hands of Western scholars. “Wherever approbation falls there we cannot help recognising merit” says Martineau; and our literature has received the highest approbation from various quarters. We shall quote two authors who understood the high excellence of Tamil. Able Hovelacque writes thus, “Dravidian Literature is particularly rich in moral poems and in collections of wise saws and aphorisms, which constitute the most ancient monuments of Tamil Poetry. But in any case the Tamil Literature remains the most copious, the most fruitful, the most interesting, and at the same time, the most ancient.”* William Dwight Whitney writes, “the author has been informed by an American who was born in Southern India and grew up to speak its language vernacularly along with his English, a man of high education and unusual gifts as a preacher and writer that he esteemed the Tamil a finer language to think and speak in than any European tongue known to him.”†

When our Tamil Literature is so much praised in spite of its two wants (Prose and Drama), we have every reason to hope that, if these wants are made up and if proper attention be concentrated on such principles as are calculated to promote the development of Prose Literature, we shall soon be in possession of a rich supply of fresh materials and our Literature will ‘combine in it all that is best and purest in the literature of the West and in the ancient literature of the East and will, in the words of the Poet, be “A thing of Beauty and a Joy for ever.”’

* Introduction to Kalavati.
**ILLUSTRATION.**

THE PLACE GIVEN TO PROSE IN TOLKAPPIYAM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. பாமையான புலத்தொல்லல்</td>
<td>B. பாமையான பலூர்த்தொல்லல்</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Poetry.]</td>
<td>[Not-Poetry.]</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>(1) பாமையான</td>
<td>(6) கருணா வெளுகை</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) குறிப்பிட்டியம்</td>
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<tr>
<td>(3) குறிப்பிட்டியம் { தொட்டிய குறிப்பிட்டியம் }</td>
<td>(1) பாமையான குறிப்பிட்டியம்.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) குறிப்பிட்டியம் { பாமையான }</td>
<td>(Prose intermixed with Poetry.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) பாமையான { பாமையான }</td>
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1. பாமையானத்தொல்லல். |
2. பாமையான குறிப்பிட்டியம். |
3. பாமையான குறிப்பிட்டியம். |
4. பாமையான பாமையான குறிப்பிட்டியம். |
5. சிற்றிய வெளுகை |


5. † Vide வரலாறு 659. சிற்றிய.
1. இந்த விமர்சனத்தில் உள்ள வலைத்துறையான
செயற்கைகளின் பின்வடிவில்—(1) அனைத்து
வலைக்கடும் புத்தகவளிகள் காண முடிகிறது
வலைப்பதிவு போன்று உள்ளது.

2. (2) உரையில் குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள செயற்கைகளின்
குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள புத்தகவளிகள் கடைசியாக
வருகிறது.
(3) வலைப்பதிவு போன்று பரிமாறுவதற்கு
பதில் வலைப்பதிவு போன்று வருகிறது.

3. (4) பதிவு வருகிறது என்று விளக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டது.
என்று கதை செய்யப்பட்டது உண்டு. வலைக்கடும்
பதிவு கொண்டு வருகிறது வலைப்பதிவு.

4. (5) பதிவு வருகிறது என்று விளக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டது.
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கொண்டு வருகிறது வலைப்பதிவு.

5. (6) பதிவு வருகிறது என்று விளக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டது.
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கொண்டு வருகிறது வலைப்பதிவு.

*விளக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டது என்று விளக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டது என்று
கூறப்பட்டது. என்று கதை செய்யப்பட்டது
பதிவு வருகிறது என்று விளக்கம் செய்யப்பட்டது

*செயற்கைகள் உள்ளது. 'செயற்கைகள் போன்று'
என்று செய்யப்பட்டது.
திட்டம் - மிள்ளு.

*திட்டம் = (புத்தகவளிகள்) + புத்தகவளிகள் + புத்தக
வளிகள். புத்தகவளிகள், "செயற்கைகள் போன்று வருகிறது
என்று.
ADDENDUM, II.

1. நூற்றாண்டுகள் நிற்பால் நூற்றாண்டுகள் நிற்பதற்கு வாழ்க்கை முழு வைப்பதற்கு வாழ்க்கை முழு வைப்பதற்கு வாழ்க்கை முழு வைப்பதற்கு.

2. உண்மையை எண்ணென்று முக்கியம் வெளிப்படுத்தும் வரையறுக்கப்பட்ட பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல்.

3. உண்மையை எண்ணென்று புத்தறுக்கப்பட்ட பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல்.

4. உண்மையை எண்ணென்று புத்தறுக்கப்பட்ட பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல்.

5. உண்மையை எண்ணென்று புத்தறுக்கப்பட்ட பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல் முதல் பட்டியல்.


town press, Conjeeveram.