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Michael and His English Sonnets

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DECLARATION

I hereby would like to declare and confirm that this research work entitled “Michael and His English Sonnets” was undertaken by me in partial fulfillment for M.A. in English degree to be offered by the University of East West (EWU). I also declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation and no part of the material offered in this dissertation has previously been submitted by me for a degree in the present or any other Universities.

(Signature of Researcher)

This work is dedicated to my parents, Nimai Lal Chakraborty and Mira Chakraborty, whose constant love and care has helped me to reach this present stage.

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I remember my friends whose encouragement enabled me to accomplish a long held dream.

Finally, I take responsibility for all the shortcomings of this paper.

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ABSTRACT

The Primary concern of this study is to have a broader view of Michael's English Sonnets and his contribution to the South Asia creative writings. It is the need of time to comprehend the dedication and essence behind Michael's endeavour to creative English writing. It is hoped that his intellectuality and creativity will inspire creativity for the later generation.

Chapter-1

Michael's Life and works

Michael Madhusudan Dutta occupies a permanent place in the history of modern Bangla literature. His literary creation has an ever artistic value. He is also notable for a broader and permanent influence in literature in his later days.

In January 25, 1824 he was born at a village named Sagardari in the district of Jessore of Bangladesh. His father Rajnarayan Dutta was versed in French languages as per an aristocratic trend. As a lawyer he earned much fame and money in the high court of Calcutta city. Madhusudan was only seven when his father sifted the family to Calcutta. His mother was Jahambi Devi who taught her child in his childhood. Perhaps the poet grows a infatuation to Ramayan Mahabharat from then on. Madhusudan had some knowledge in French language also.

After reaching Calcutta he got admitted himself into Hindu College which was regarded as one of the prominent Colleges of the then Indian subcontinent. This institutions conceives various modern and liberal through ideas and Knowledge from the western world. He was one of the best products of the college by being an outstanding talent in creative writings.

But a sudden change happened to him. In February 9.1843 he became converted into Christianity by the father of Archdicon Diyaltry in the Church, Mission Roo-A Old. Thus he has his new identity, Michael.

Michael had a romantic affair with a christian lady, Deboky. They were both infatuated to each other but much in not known from the development of their relationship.

By this time Michael established himself as a teacher, journalist and also a poet in Madras now Mumbai. As a journalist and a poet he is appreciated in a Knowledgeable English society. He contributed his writings to some periodicals such as 'Madras

Circulator and General chronicle' 'Athenaeum' 'Spectator' etc. In 1841 he wrote 'Albeyons land', a poem in which he expressed his intense feelings to go abroad.

In July 31, 1848 he came in Contact with Rebeca Tompson, a student of Asylum School. Madhusudan was a teacher of that School and after some days he developed a love affair with her. After a few months he married Rebeca. But they were not happy in their conjugal life. Their relationship ended up with an estrangement in a month. By this time the poet was introduced with Henreata, another Christian lady whom he married later. They had four children.

In July, 1862 Michael went to London to become a Barrister leaving his family in Indian. But his wife with two children fell in economic constraints and they reached England in May 2, 1863.

In the middle of the year 1863 Madhusudan with his family left for France. There they lived in Paris first and then in Versailles. After a year the family fell in a severe economic crisis. Finally in the month of February 5, 1867 the poet decided to go back to his motherland.

After returning to India Madhu's life ended with a tragedy. He dies in the midst of illness, Poverty, Debt and want of care and nursing. Finally he was hospitalized in very critical condition. His wife Henreata was also ill at that time. In June 26, 1873 Henreata died. Hearing this news the poet was shocked greatly. His all hopes have been shattered. But the most saddening event occurred when he left for a land from where nobody returns.

Modhusadan wrote many English poems which were published in different dailies and periodicals. But the poems were not compiled in a book. Perhaps they were published in titles like 'Poems' and other Poems in course of time. Some Essays written in his earlier life were compiled in separate titles. However some of his other English creative writings are published by different publications. They are as follows:

- i. The Captive ladie (An Indian tale) in two cantos. Madras: The advertiser, 1849.
- ii. Rizia, The Empress of Inde (an Unfinished lay) published in the weekly Eurasian (Madras), from November 1849 to January 1850.
- iii. The Anglo-Saxon and the Hindus, lecture 1. Madras: Pharaoh and co., 1854.
- iv. Ratnavali : A drama in four Acts translated form the Bengali by Michael Modhusudan Dutta. Calcutta: Calcutta Printing and Publishing co., 1858.
- v. Sermista: A drama in five Acts, Translated from the Bengali. Calcutta: I.C Bosh and co., 1859.

Chapter-2

Michael' English Sonnets

1. Sonnet to Futurity

Oh! how my heart doth shrink,-while on thy sky,
Futurity! I mark the gathering gloom,
Nursing the dreadful tempest in its womb-
The tempest rude of woe and misery!
Though Fancy, with her ever-pleasing hue,
Lends a sweet charm to thy dim, distant scene;-
Yet oh!-When the dark mists, that lie between
There and the Present,-vanish from the view,
And sober Reason,-like the vivid light,
That bursting from the storm fiend's angry eye,
Paints to the mariner's affrighted sight,
The yawning waves,-their dreadful revelry-
Divests thee of thy fairy colours bright,-
What scenes appalling in thee I desirery!

-19th August, 1842

Summary

In this sonnet the poet is talking about a very gloomy future. He can force a dreadful tempest packed up with woe and misery is that waiting for him. Though fancy often lulls him with pleasant dreams, the reason makes him see the ugly face of reality. Thus the poet records a note of unease frustration while he broods over tempestuous future.

Diction of language

In his passionate poem the poet uses similes, metaphors, personifications and transferred epithets liberally. "Nursing the dreadful tempest in its womb" is an example of metaphor which senses a lot of expressions of the mind simultaneously. Personification, another rhetorical device, works in the line "Though fancy with her ever planning hue, Lends a sweet charm to they dim". The gloomy picture on the sky is compared to an unmindful imaginative object. It becomes a simile when the poet explicitly compares the vivid light from the rude storm to the affrighted sight of the mariners. A transferred epithet is in the yawning waves. It is because the word 'yawning' which is strictly applicable to some particular objects is now enacted with waves.

2.

Oft like a sad imprisoned bird I sigh
To leave this land; though mine own land it be;
Its green robed meads, -gay flowers and cloudless sky
Though passing fair, have but few charms for me.
For I have dreamed of climes more bright and free
Where virtue dwells and heaven-born liberty
Makes even the lowest happy; -Where the eye
Doth sicken not to see man bend the knee
To sordid interest: -climes where science thrives,
And genius doth receive her guerdon meet;
Where man in all his truest glory lives,
And Nature's face is exquisitely sweet:
For those fair climes I have the impatient sigh,
There let me live and there let me die.

-Kidderpore, 1842

Summary

The poet is obsessed with the thought of settling down somewhere in overseas. He is at the some time conscious of his dear mother and his dear motherland. Unfortunately they do not profoundly influence him. Rather he suffers from mental agony that tortures him in almost all respects. The beauty and charms of his motherland are of no attraction to him. The poet has already set up his mind to depart for the farthest places where he believes all the knowledge of the world is in store. All intellectuals are duty paid honor and respect for their feats in such a land. To him, the nature of that country has a soothing effect where he wishes to live and lie.

Comment on the art of description:

The poet here resorts to simple and lucid words and phrases rather than rhetorical devices. In this poem a simile like “oft like a sad imprisoned bird I sigh” is used to show the intensity of the crisis of his heart.

3. On the Ochterlony Monument

[Dedicated as usual, to G.D. Bysack]

Lo! raised upon this vast aerial height,
This realm of air free, uncontrolled I stand:
Behold! beneath me how the grovelling band
Of this poor earth like emmets, whom the sight
Can scarce perceive, -are passing sadly by!
But what are they? -poor things of mortal clay!
Thus pomp -thus pow'r -thus glory flit away
Like the bright meteor-glances of the sky.
When the black clouds do veil it. Round me now
The boundless sea of air, in calm profound
Is sleeping gently: -and the silent queen
Of swarth complexioned night, pale and serene,
Is rising brightly! oh! how sweetly round
Falls the bright silver light of her calm brow!

-Kidderpore, 1842

Summary

Here the poet, regarding the monument, compares the unelaborated, simple and unadorned people. The monument is now elevated above the common consideration with full of three impulses and liberated sense. While on the other hand, below the monument there is the groveling band who are like little ants scarcely perceived by the eyes and affected by the sad experience of this earth. It is pathetic that while the person in the monument is now raised upon the vast aerial height and in the realm of air, the poor things are in contrast made of mortal clay. The mortal clay cannot be paralleled with its glory. The earthly people of mortal clay have become inglorious as their pomp and power fly away like the bright glancing meteor of the sky or the black clouds that cover it. The figure in the monument is now able to perceive clearly the black complexioned night with its original paleness, serenity. Another bright figure of the earth of the boundless sea of air in clam profound way is sleeping gently or the brightness of the silver bright with its clam brow is exactly perceived by the monument.

Rhetorical Devices

In this poem the writer uses similes, transferred epithet and lots of adjectives to reshape his feelings in the treatment of reminiscences of Ochterlony monument. We find a striking simile when the poet compares man's earthly possession to the meteor glances of the sky in the line-“Thus pomp-thus pow'r-thus glory flit away like the bright meteor-glances of the sky”. A transferred epithet is found when he says “Behold! beneath me how the groveling band of this poor earth” to convey the humbleness of humans.

4. Evening in Saturn

[A Sonnet in Blank-verse dedicated to a pigmy]

Preface

Reader! who ever publishes a sonnet with a preface? I hear, or fancy that I hear, you say, 'none'! Well! I publish. I am an enemy to what men call "custom". But be that as it is, I publish my sonnet with a preface; I have to teach the world something new. Don't get offended. Behold! I have written a Sonnet in Blank-verse. What a rare experiment! Believe me, Reader, the Muse appeared not to resent this "breach of etiquette" towards her. O Joy! O Glory! O Happiness! that I have done successfully what none dared do before me! Excuse this short outbreak of impassioned exclamation. I have laid my scene in the planet Saturn, because I despise everything earthly.

A beauteous veil of burning gold did hide.
The Day-god's brow resplendent: and the sky
like to canvass on its bosom wore
Sweet forms, the pencil of meek Even drew!-
Now many a bird,-not Kokils-Philomels-
But of diviner kinds-began to sing
So sweet a dirge above the bier of day.
As might have made, ye, sons of this poor earth!
Sign for a death that is so fondly mourned.
Now from the west rose six moons hand in hand-
Like a soft band of beauties-blushing-fair-
Oh! how their beams did brighten all the scene;
Their lights fell on the lakes and murmuring rivers,
Like silver mantles:-Here the Sonnet endeth!

Synopsis

The poet here highlights the beauty of his imagination to glorify his destined dedication to a pigmy. In the objects of glorifications there are the elements introduced from the divine objects or due to the despising of the earth by the poet, the earthly object, he selects in his poem by saying that he has laid his scene in the planet Saturn. The object of earth is given farewell replacing the beautiful scene of the moon hand in hand. He says also the soft band of beauties. The passing of the day and the morning over it is also well glorified. The poet describes how the beings of the moon have brightened all the scenes. The poet uses beautiful similes in this connection when he compares the beam of the moon like the silver mantles. Not only that the beams are given with especial significance or velocity which falls on the lakes and murmuring river.

Figure of Speech

In this sonnet the poet incorporates metaphor, metonymy, simile to picturize his thought and emotion. In the very first line of the poem—"A beauteous veil of burning gold did hide", The poet establishes an implied comparison between a beauteous veil and burning gold nicely. It becomes a metonymy when "Day-god" suggests the bright sun. "And the sky like to canvass on its bosom wore sweet forms" shows a simile between canvass and bosom. Again moons are glorified when the poet enacts a simile by comparing them with a soft band of beauties in the line 'Now from the west rose six moons hand in hand-like a soft band of beauties'. It strikes an image of simile further, which is evident in "Their lights fell on the lakes and murmuring river, like silver mantles".

5. Composed During A Morning Walk

I love the beautiful infancy of day,
The garlands that around its temples shine;
I love to hear the tuneful matin lay
Of the sweet kokil perched upon the pine:
I love to see you streamlet gaily run
And blush like maiden Beauty meek and fair,
When the bright beams of your refulgent sun
Crowd on her trembling bosom pure and clear;
I love to see the bee from flow'r to flow'r,
Sucking the sweets, to him they smiling yield;
I love to hear the breezes in the bower
Singing melodious, or along the field;
All these I love, and Oh! in these I find
A balm to soothe the fever of my mind.

Summary

In the sonnet like the previous one the poet expresses his heartfelt feeling making the net of his imagination scanning the glory of early morning. From the part of the poet it is called the emergence of beauty as the infancy of day when garlands are seen, when the morning lies to hear the singing of the kokils perched upon the pine. The morning beauty is seen blushing like the meek and fair maiden besides the Joyful running of the streamlet. The poet envisions the movement of bees from flower to flower sucking sometimes the sweet things producing the smiles. Along with this the poet also is interested to hear the breezes in the bower? with its melodious singing. The poet wants to pacify his favourish trouble after all these beautiful objects.

Figure of Speech

In this lyric the poet manoeuvres simile, epithet and onomatopoeia to shape his heart felt feelings. He compares the radiance of streamlet to the beauty of a maiden when he says "I love to see you streamlet gaily run and blush like maiden Beauty meek and fair". There are some brilliant use of adjectives such as refulgent sun, trembling bosom, smiling yield etc. We see an onomatopoeia in the line "A balm to soothe the fever of my mind" which suggests the sense of his mental tribulation.

6.

I wandered forth alone, I knew not where,
For it was in that maddened mood of mind,
When, like the impetuous tide that rennet blind
Beckoned by the pale queen of Night from far,
A thousand feelings rush from out their springs,
And deluge the sad heart: I looked around,
'Twas midnight calm, and there arose no sound
To meet mine ear, save the low murmurings
Of the sad night-winds: tears rushed from mine eye,
Oh! those were soothing tears, they gave relief!
And like the clouds that gather on the sky
But soon dissolve in rain-drops, darkening grief
Retired, and, lo! Tranquility
Succeeded that most painful fit tho' brief!

Synopsis

The poet once was in the midst of a painful night. It was a sad night when he was gloomy. The impetuous tide which goes fast, produces lots of feelings which overflow the sad heart of the poet. The midnight was clam and there was no sound over there

except only the low murmuring of the sad night-winds. At this his heart breaks down. But soon he finds reliefs since the clouds gather on the sky disappears as the way clouds dissolve in rain-drops. Finally the darkening grief eases and tranquility comes. It was a most painful experience for him though the span of it was very short.

Art of narration

In this sonnet the composer introduces onomatopoeia, simile and some common epithets to his readers. The first two lines of the lyric are a specimen of onomatopoeia in which maddened mood of mind suggests the wandering state of his mind. A simile is apparent when “Like th’ impetuous tide that runneth blind” offers an explicit comparison between the swiftness of poet’s mind and that of an impetuous tide. It is vivid again when a time being suffering of the lyricist is compared with the temporary gathering of clouds on the sky. Apart from these rhetoric devices the poet displays some common words and phrases as usual.

7. To a Star During a Cloudy Night

Shine on, sweet emblem of Hope’s lingering ray!
That while soul’s bright sun-shine is o’er-cast
Gleams faintly thro’ the sable gloom, the last
To meet beneath Despair’s dark night away!
Tho’ lawless clouds rest round thee, and they seem,
As if impatient to enshroud thy brow,
Yet, O sweet star! thy dim and struggling beam,
That, like the weed which angry Tempests throw,
Far from their native soil in the dark wave,
Now sinking, as if buried, disappears,
Now bursting forth from its dark cloudy grave,
Sails trembling on pale with a thousand fears,
Has charms that still may please the gazer’s eye
Thou solitary tenant of the sky!

Summary

While the cloudy night fades all other objects of the earth or makes a ceaseless effort to fade the stars which is the emblem of hope, the stars can stand and stay as the only one solitary tenant of the sky. The stars of the cloudy night always try to throw away the blowing tempest against it or who are impatient to fade its existence from the visualization of crippled eyes, yet the stars struggle to stand in it. Sometimes the whole existence of the stars is about to finish. Suddenly it rises from their dark cloudy grave. The clouds are lawless or inconsiderate to do all these than the stars still are visualized due to their extremity of hopefulness. The despair of the dark night is gone for ever to height in contrast with the stars. Even while a man's soul is overcast or forever is lost to renew hope, only stars can awakens the sense of freshness and glory in the mind.

Figure of Speech

The poet employs transferred epithet, epithet, simile and personification to sketch his momentary feelings in this poem. In the very first line a transfused epithet is noticeable when he associates a rather far idea with stars. The seventh and eighth lines of the poem contain a simile which exhibits an explicit comparison between the dim and struggling beam of the star and the weed of an angry tempest. Stars are personified as solitary tenants of the sky in the last line of the lyric. The lyricist also manipulates some common adjectives in his writing.

8. Composed During An Evening Walk

I love to see those clouds of golden dye.
Float graceful O'er yon blue expanse, serene,
Like sweet remembrances of days gone by
In memory's atmosphere; Those meadows green
Tinged by the fading flushes of the sun,
(Who now behind the west path hid his head);
You brooke, that warbles low as it doth run,
Quite uncontrolled, by its own sweet will led;
The breezes, that with innocence and glee,
Sing to you lisening grove, an audience fair;
Yon distant cot, that group of children there;
The kokil's heart-enthraling melody,
All these, meek even, do belong to thee,
And all these are thy earthly dowers here.

Synopsis

In his poem the poet loves to relive through his glorious past experience in the mist of Nature mid story. He reminds that clouds of his golden days like sweet memories are passing away. He calls up green meadows colored by the fading flushes of the sun. The Brooke was quite uncontrolled, led by his own sweet will. Again, the breeze with its impotence and glee creates greatest music in the lap of grove. The kokil's heart-enthraling note is enjoyed by the group of children. To the poet all these varieties are only the gift of nature.

Figure of Speech

In this sonnet the poet relates simile and some other common adjectives to his poem. *In the second and third lines of the poem a simile is enacted by showing a comparison between the floating graceful clouds of the sky and the forgetting of sweet memories of his days.*

9.

I saw young Zephyr pass from flower to flower,
While each, by turns, did softly bow its head,
And the fond pearly tears of rapture shed,
A sweet and tender welcome! Beauteous hour!
The boundless heaven, bathed in the brightening shower
Of early sun-shine, was now faintly spread
With smiles. The lark, springing from his bed,
With loud acclaims to every grove and bower,
Did trumpet forth the Day's nativity;
Now come the morning breeze, cool, fresh and gay,
Singing his heart-entrancing melody:
The green leaves rustled, while from every spray
Rose the sweet matin-music joyously
To hail the bright and glorious birth of day.

Summary

In this poem the poet glorifies the diversifications of Nature. In the midst of nature the senses young Zephyrs pass from flower to flower and the flower elegantly bows its head to welcome the beauteous hour. The boundless profundity of Nature baths in the brightening shower of early sun-shine. The lark, an early riser, heralds the beginning of the day with the sounding praise in the greenery. Then blows the cool and fresh morning breeze along with heart-entrancing melody of the lark. The green leaves rustle and the sweet matin-music is heard from every corner. It is to hail the bright and glorious birth of the day.

Figure of Speech

In this the poet tries his hand with some common words and phrase and epithets and introduces his inner feelings.

10.

Love, I have bask'd me in thy summer-lay;
And Disappointment! thy stormiest night
Of grief I've known! and joys, all sweet and bright,
(But vanishing as flow'rs that fade away
Within the self-same hour that gives them birth,)
With vernal beauty once did bloom along
My path of life! Yes, once this green-robed Earth,
Yon boundless heaven, the lark, his matin song,
The purling rills, the distant hills the trees
(W
The spreading Banian's shade, the warbling breeze,)
Could charm my soul! But oh! man's brightest day
Is e'er succeeded by a night of gloom;
And peace and rest for thee is only in the tomb!

Summary

The poet here portrays realities of both pleasant and saddening sides of Nature simultaneously. He enjoy lying in the warm sunshine of Nature's summer. On the contrary, he is somewhat disappointed by a gusty night wind of the season. But he is not disheartened at this night since it is very transient visa hours within which flowers get birth and wither away. He goes on to say variegated brilliances of the nature that once attracted him. There were the beauty of spring, green-robed earth, boundless heaven, the lark's matin song, parking rills, the distant hill, the spreading Banana's shade, the warbling breeze and so on. He concludes saying that happiness can only be found in the tomb.

Figure Speech

In this poem the poet resorted to simile and metaphor. A simile is found when we see him comparing the span of a sad effect with that of a flower. He uses some common adjectives such as vernal, boundless, parking, distant, spreading, warbling etc.

11

Beloved Lake, how oft I think of thee:
How oft I dream of thy calm silver breast,
Where the moon-beams undisturbed ever rest,
And see themselves reflected beautifully.
Where no rude gales, with boisterous revelry,
Disturb the Lotus, thy sweet daughter coy;
But many a breeze, with perfumes gallantly
Comes to woo her, infusing purest Joy
To every heart. Oh! How I love to live,
Beloved Lake, on thy sweet margin green,
There, in thy dear society, cease to grieve,
Nor brood on sorrows, none could sympathize;
And mid thy lovely and endearing scene,
No longer breathe such unrewarded sighs.

Summary

In this poem the poet glorified the homely blessings of his beloved lake. The breast of the water body, to him, is calm and silvery and there the moon projects her light *uninterruptedly*. It seems beams are on rest forever and a beautiful reflection out of them is over there. In the heart of the lake there are no natural force and boisterousness to vex the lotus, a sweet daughter of the lake. There sweet scented breezes from all around improve to love her (the lotus) by transmitting purest joy in third hearts. The poet passionately wants to live on its green sweet surface. In such an endearing abode of become history. There is none to sympathize and repent or there.

Rhetorical Devices

Here the poet uses simple, lucid and common words and phrases.

12

I am not rich, nay, nor the future heir
To sparkling gold or silver heaped on store
There is no marble blushing on my floor
With thousand varied dyes: no gilded chair,
No cushions, carpets that by riches are
Brought from the Persian land or Turkish shore:
There is no menial waiting at my door
Attentive to the knell: and all things rare,
Born in remotest regions, that shine in
And grace the rich man's hall are wanting here
These are not things that by blind fate hath been
Allotted over to the poorman's share:
These are not things, these eyes have ever seen,
Though their proud names have sounded to this ear!

Summary

In this sonnet the speaker bears his heart telling his simple means and ordinary status. He proclaims he is a person with simple means and has no possibility of becoming a hearer of brashest gold or a silver treasure in the day to come. He has a residence of which floors are without marble blushing. He possesses unguided chairs and dispossesses cushions, carpets brought from the lands like Paris or Turkey. Precious metals that grace a rich man's house are also absent. The other has never seen these valuable assets though their glorious names have rung to his ear.

Figure of Speech

Here the poet uses commonplace words and phrases. He hardly tries his hand with rhetorical devices in this poem. The only allusion he uses is “born in remotest regions that shine in and grace the rich man’s hall”. Here it refers to precious metals like diamond.

13

But oh! I grieve not; for the azure sky
With all its host of stars that brightly shine,
The green-robed earth with all her flow’rs divine,
The verdant vales and every mountain high,
Those beauteous meads that now do glittering lie
Clad in bright sun-shine, all, oh! all are mine!
And much there is on which my ear and eye
Can feast luxurious! Why should I repine?
The furious Gale that howls and fiercely blows,
The gentler Breeze that sings with tranquil glee,
The silver Rill that gaily warbling flows,
And even the dark and ever-lasting Sea,
All, all these bring oblivion for my woes,
And all these have transcendent charms for me!

Synopsis

In this sonnet the poet says that he is remorseful no more for he has lots of things to enjoy. He has in his memory depiction of a sky with all its stars shining brightly. The earth with all her greenery and charming flowers, the fresh and green vales and mountains increase the pleasure of his past. The meadows that glitter in bright sun-shine also stir his mind. At this he realizes he should not repent for some inconvenient experiences he had. Among them there were furious gales, a dark and ever-lasting sea. Side by side he had also tranquil breeze and silver rill that flows gently. Now these mixed happenings bring forgetting for his misery. Rather they are extremely great charms to him.

Figure of Speech

Here the poet takes him apart from using rhetorical devices. He uses simple, lucid and common words and phrases only.

14.

Oh! how my heart exulteth while I see
These future flow'rs, to deck my country's brow,
Thus kindly nurtured in this nursery!
Perchance, unmark'd some here are budding now,
Whose temples shall with laureate-wreaths be crown'd
Twined by the Sisters Nine: whose angel-tongues
Shall charm the world with their enchanting songs.
And time shall waft the echo of each sound
To distant ages:-some, perchance, here are,
Who, with a Newton's glance, shall nobly trace
The course mysterious of each wandering star;
And, like a God, unveil the hidden face
Of many a planet to man's wondering eye,
And give their names to immortality.

Synopsis

In this sonnet the poet sings in praise of his country's proud fellows with immense possibilities highly. He compares them to flowers because, like flowers, they will adorn the country's brow. Some of these future talents are budding now and their forehead will be crowned with laureate garland. To him, their divine tongues shall charm the earth with their enchanting notes and time shall carry its grandeur to a long distance. Of them some shall trace the mystery of the wandering stars like the way Newton experienced in other respect. The poet also considers them as a supreme power so that they can explore the hidden mystery of planets. Thus they become immortals to the world.

Rhetorical Devices

Here the poet uses two similes. He compares his promising country men with the magnanimity of flower when he says "These future flowers, to deck my country's brow". Again, by comparing them with God he attributes a super human power to them in the line-"And, like a god, unveil the hidden face of many a planet to man's wondering eye".

15. NIGHT

How lovelily yon solitary star
Shines-like a radiant being pon a throne
Of beautiful blue sapphire-from afar
Shedding on gently twilight gray-his own-
Soft, tender glances! Tis the quiet hour
When with bright gems upon her sable brow,
In solemn majesty-calm-silent-slow
Night comes t' apert on earth gently pow'r-
The smile that sat ere long upon the sky-
The clouds that floated on the air serene
On golden wings of flaming radiance
Have melted off as if they ne'er had been-
Like recollections lingering round a tomb
Awhile, then sink in oblivion's gloom!

Summary

In this poem the poet glorifies the significance of a starry night. To him stars shine so brightly as if they are living beings. In night they cast brilliance of twilight gray which is soft and tender. It is the time when bright stars stay upon the gloomy forehead of the night in solemn majestic manner. It seems that a smiling existence is upon the sky. During the night clouds float away gently. For the radiance of the sky it seems that they are passing away on golden wings. But, alas! They dissolve in a moment like the way and memories lie round a monument and suddenly sink in forgetting.

Figure of Speech

The author uses similes and epithets to unfold his heart in this poem-In the line-“like a radiant being ‘pon a throne of beautiful blue sapphire” he personifies stars. “Like recollections lingering round a tomb, A while and then sink in oblivion’s gloom” tells the transience of clouds on the sky. The poet uses some common adjectives as well in the poem.

Chapter-3

Michael's overall impression in his poems

If we have a close study of his poems we will see that the poet tends to be biased to some aspects. These noticeable traits are discussed below.

3.1. Nature and its glorification: In almost all his poems the writer resorts to different objects of Nature to manipulate them to express his poetic vision. Nature, to him, is a source of mixed blessing - gloom, suffering, hope, delight, beauty etc. The subject matter of his poems revolves round personal and past experiences. He highlights them with splendid scenery of Nature. Through the beautiful and impressive qualities of Nature he discloses his heart felt emotions lively.

3.2 Surfeit of ornaments: Madhusadan's use of rhetorical devices are sometimes excessive and unnatural. It is undeniable that he is a genius but it does not really find true expression since he has chosen a medium with which he is not always at ease. Sometimes he appears imitative and stiff. His imageries and rhetorical devices sometimes appear forced. When writing in Bangla Michael ended with producing remarkably beautiful sonnets but his English sonnets, at the best, are mediocre in quality. They are often repetitive.

3.3 A confused mind: The poet shows the state of restlessness of his mind through the depiction of his poems. His is unsettling motto and thus cannot assert his aims and objectives. He is not satisfied with his present status in the society nor is certain of his desires or deserving achievements.

3.4 Identity crisis: Like some other South Asian Writers the poet has not a close identity between him and his country men. Though born with much talent and potentialities in the arena of intellectuality, he was uncertain of who he was or of his place in the society. His individual characteristics, feelings and beliefs make him remain aloof from his community.

3.5 Not rooted to the soil: The poet suffers from a conflict of allegiance. As a result his sonnets are often not rooted to the soil. Instead of evaluating and appreciating his own country and his fellow beings Madhusadhan sings highly in praise of overseas in his literary works. To him, the other side of the river is greener.

3.6 Imitative rather than innovative: Madhusadhan's Poems are very interesting from the historical point of view though they are not highest in quality always. His poems encourages imitative treatment rather than discovering new thoughts and ideas and giving them shape in some new styles.

3.7 Forerunner for other non-native writers: The poet is actually a pioneer who paves the ways for other south Asian writers who were remarkably successful in their creative English writings. His poems often show a great intellectual power though he could not reach much close to an international audience.

3.8 Not always Comfortable with the language: Michael tries heart and soul to have wider community of readers. Perhaps for this, he compromises a little with his natural instinct in dealing with the language. He pens his creative writings with such a languages which is not his mother tongue. But it does not necessarily mean that he consciously take it for granted. As a result, sometimes we find his expressions are unidiomatic and clumsy.

Chapter4

Concluding Remark

To conclude, Michael Madhusudhan Dutta is a writer with great potentials. Though his performance could reach close to his competence in his creative writings in Bangla, it is not the same story when he uses English as a vehicle of expression. His sonnets definitely are interesting accounts of his yearning. He could not really excel in producing fine specimens of literature. His Bangla sonnets, on the other hand, demonstrate the sterling qualities of the poet. But the sonnets under my study are marked by paradoxes. Often they demonstrate the brilliance of a creative thinker while at times they tend to seem tedious and forced. However, we must not lose sight of the historical value of these poems. As a precursor Michael M.S. Dutta established a ground on which his successors could undertake a more productive venture in creative writing through English. He tries to establish the point that it is possible to be engaged in creativity in a language other than one's mother tongue. This point has now been firmly established by later sub-continent writers who established themselves as internationally recognized creative writers in English.

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