

Book Reviews

Isles of Wonder! (A Visit to England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales) Text by Ragini Ramachandra, Photographs by S. Ramachandra, Dhvanyaloka Publication, Mysore, 2013, pp. 80, Price Rs.800/-

That Ragini Ramachandra is a connoisseur and a scholar is evidenced in the range and variety of places she visits (Shakespeare's England, Yeats's Ireland, Walter Scott and R.L. Stevenson's Scotland and the history-ridden land of the Prince of Wales) and the objects which invite her meticulous observation. From Eastgate Clock in Chester, to Ten Welsh Commandments, Yeats's statue and grave, Cliffs of Moher, numerous art objects loaded with aesthetic appeal, the homely insouciance of Jane Austen Centre, the Elgin Marbles that evoked the immortal ode symbolizing the affinity of Beauty and Truth, the enchanting Stratford, the London Bridge and the majestic London Globe.

Mozart's wonted craving was, "Let me have all that is genuine and beautiful". Ragini Ramachandra's *Isles of Wonder* presents much that is good, genuine and beautiful. Every chapter of the travelogue is embellished with an appropriate quote.

S. Ramachandra gracefully captures in camera all that the gifted mind and sensitive heart of Ragini conceives. Together they have already taken us to 'Magic Casements', and 'Dream Destinations'. Now they have brought us to 'Isles of Wonder'. We can rightfully look forward to "new heavens, new earths" in order to use Ragini's poetic expression, to quench our 'soul's hunger for beauty'. The book reminds us of Tennyson's Ulysses asserting: "I will drink life to the lees"!

Vikram Chopra

Isles of Wonder! Text by Ragini Ramachandra and Photographs by S. Ramachandra, Dhvanyaloka Publication, Mysore, 2013, pp.80, Price Rs.800/-

This Travelogue is the author's third, the first two published in 2008 and 2012 respectively. The three-volume series makes an appreciable contribution to the genre of travelogue literature in Indian English. Dr. Ragini Ramachandra believes that writing about her travel experiences is like undertaking another journey, a mental journey suffused with nostalgia and reminiscence. To her a travel experience is complete only when one "recollects", "re-lives" and passes it on as a written "gift" to other travellers. Both Mrs. and Mr. Ramachandra have performed with astounding competence and proficiency in literary grace and amazing visual perspective respectively in the three volumes that might be described as "cultural chronicles". Their zest for exploration and passion for travel takes them all over Europe and urges them to "drink life to the lees".

The present volume which unravels the innumerable beauties and charms of England, Scotland and Wales enhanced by literary allusions proves an inspiring prologue to the general traveller as well as the curious reader of English literature. As such we get descriptions of not only castles, forts, towers, palaces, museums and

cathedrals but also places of literary interest such as Shakespeare's Birthplace in Stratford, the Globe Theatre in London, the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, Wordsworth's Lake District, Dublin's famed Trinity College and Yeats' Memorial in Sligo and Drumcliffe besides many places in Scotland and Wales fraught with literary associations.

The volume is commendable for its clarity, lucidity and grace of style embodying in itself the past and present of England for the reader through a medium that is both verbal and visual.

A.P. Dani

Basavaraj Naikar, *The Folk Theatre of North-Karnataka*, Authors Press, New Delhi. 2012. Pp.110. Rs. 300.

India is a land of remarkable diversity. Geographically its terrain comprises snow-capped peaks, lovely lakes and resounding rivers, verdant valleys as also arid plains, inhospitable marshes and infertile lands. Even as this diversity makes the life and people of the country, around 80% of them living in villages lead a quiet life bound by the thread of folklore, legends and myths. While they till their lands to eke out a meager living they look for some entertainment provided by the folk dancers and singers. Almost everywhere folk literature is replete with songs and snatches of love, separations, battles, praise of Nature, adulation of heroes and heroines and encomiums to the prowess and wisdom of gods and goddesses. The folk theatre of Karnataka is no exception.

Basavaraj Naikar's monograph on the Folk Theatre of North-Karnataka is a commendable effort in the direction of propagating knowledge about the theatre of that region as also an attempt at correcting the misconception spawned by Balant Gargi's book, *The Folk Theater of India*. Gargi's book, as Naikar notes, prompted him into doing this monograph. Gargi's cursory reference, to what in Naikar's opinion is a vibrant presence in North-Karnataka, is probably due to oversight or inadequate information or both. Gargi's otherwise fine book has thus been faulted and led to Naikar's well-documented monograph.

The Folk Theatre of North-Karnataka reveals how well entrenched the theatre has been on both sides of the Sahyadri mountain range for centuries; it was the only source of entertainment for the starved imaginations of the area. With motion pictures and T.V. now acquiring fighting potential, survival of the folk theatre all over India has been in danger and North Karnataka is no exception. Nevertheless it continues to thrive in the teeth of all odds.

The folk theatre of Karnataka, known in native Kannada as *bayalata* (open-air play), manifests itself mainly in two forms: *bidiyata* and *attadata*, meaning street-play and stage-play respectively. But each of these categories has several sub-categories and even sub-sub-categories. While *bidiyata*, has an open form and can be played both by professionals (called *bahurupis*) and amateurs (*pagarana*-players), *attadata*, on the other hand, too has two categories: *paduvalapaya* (western mode) and *mudalapaya* (eastern mode). While the former of this category is played more commonly in coastal