

THE SOCIETY OF LITERATURE OF THAILAND.

The Society of Literature of Thailand was established in 1942 through the initiative and direct patronage of His Excellency Field Marshal P. Phibun Songkhram, who is its first President. Its objects are to encourage the growth and spread of the Thai Language and its Literature, to establish and foster the quality thereof and to promote harmony and an interchange of ideas in philology and literature. Its organ, already one of our exchanges, has for its editor His Highness Prince Wan Waithayakon

The first number, published in August 1942, commences with a tribute from the President, followed up by an editorial in which is set forth the scope of the Journal. Shortly, the scope is threefold, namely: philology, literature and literary criticism. All three categories are well represented in the eight numbers under review, the second being perhaps more copiously represented than the other two. It would be indeed difficult to pick out this or that contribution as being of special interest. *Nagari Kam Chand*, the "Ballad of Nāgari," an original poetical romance by A. Bunyamanob, the gist of which has been taken however from an English translation by F. W. Bain of the Sanskrit *Ahipiditā Candrikā*, running through five volumes and still to be continued, is a lively reminder that Thai poetical genius is still very much alive and going inspite of world economic pressure upon the mind of the average man. A biographical study of Thai poets, by V. Sivasriyanond, senior, is another outstanding feature in the field of literary criticism, for it should serve as a useful nucleus for the construction of a general history of Thai literature still to make a *début* on the literary stage.

It may be well to recall that King Chulalongkorn once instituted a Society of Literature as such towards the end of his reign. He had in fact, before that, given active patronage to a social club-like *Vajirayan Library* which gave strong impetus to literary activities for several decades in that reign. King Rama VI again, before he came to the Throne,

sponsored the *Dvipanya Club*, which was tantamount to a literary club. He then instituted a Society for Literature called *Varnakadi* (Varnagati) *Society*. During the reign of King Prajadhipok, His Royal Highness Prince Damrong, then President of the Royal Institute, again started a *Varnakadi Samosorn*, many members of which have become prominent in the present Society of Literature. May the Society now started be given long life and prosperity.
