



Dr. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

# **RABINDRANATH TAGORE:**

**A STUDY OF HIS LATER WORKS**

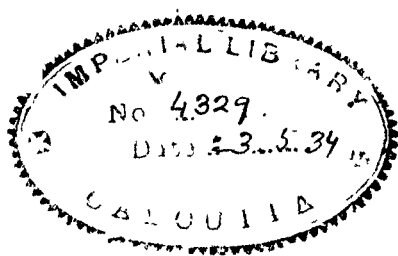
# RABINDRANATH TAGORE

A STUDY OF HIS LATER WORKS

BY

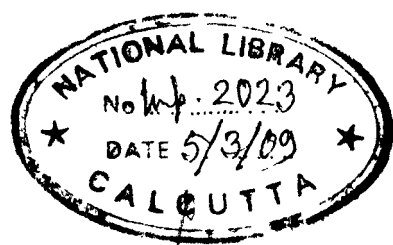
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## FOREWORD.

The aim of this volume and its companion volume is similar to that of my volume dealing with Tagore's earlier works. It is an interpretation, not originality, a critical study not an independent dissertation. I have tried to reveal the true inwardness of Tagore's mind and moods as I have understood it, and my only contribution is a synthetic interpretation. I pray that the public will accept the work in the mood in which it was born and look through it to the great heart which has evolved new and sweet music out of the discords of modern life.

I expect to publish soon a small volume summing up my study of Tagore. In that volume may be found what will be a supplement to the introductory chapter in my earliest volume on Tagore. It will, I hope, be both revelatory and prophetic, and show how Tagore combines with supreme power and charm rare insight and rarer vision. In it I have tried to speak in my own words and to give my summations of Tagore's genius and of life and art in modern India. The present volume and its companion volume pursue the humbler task of letting Tagore speak through me in his own words, my only contribution being the recording and interpretative mind of a loving student who, in a spirit of

glad self-forgetfulness, is bent upon revealing to the world Tagore's concordant and matchless combination of strength and grace, energy and peace, magic of words and profundity of thought, self-poised contemplation and quivering intensity of emotion.

I need hardly say in respect of Tagore's works that their name is legion. The fecundity of his genius is only equalled by its originality and its grace. While it is a pleasure to study each new work coming from his teeming mind, the task of collecting all his works and interpreting them as a synthetic and harmonious whole is by no means an easy endeavour. In the companion volume I have included his later volumes of poetic and dramatic work and his later fiction. I shall feel amply rewarded for my labours if the new energy of love and service and awakened intellectual and emotional power which pulses throughout Tagore's being and work is awakened in every Indian heart. For then in our beloved and beautiful and holy land will come to fruition and fulfilment Tagore's prophecy that "then, in India, province will join province, race will join race, knowledge will be linked with knowledge, endeavour with endeavour; then the present chapter of Indian history will end and she will emerge in the larger history of the world." (The Future of India.)

BELLARY,	}	K. S. Ramaswami Sastri.
11th July 1920.		

# RABINDRANATH TAGORE :

## A Study of His Later Works -

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### CHAPTER I.

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#### INTRODUCTORY

THIS book aims at presenting an interpretation of Tagore's later works that have been published since 1916. During the last five years Tagore visited Japan and America and delivered there two great series of discourses which have been published as *Nationalism* and *Personality*. During 1919 (January to March) he visited South India and delivered a large number of great addresses. I have dealt with these in my concluding chapter.

The aspects of Tagore that come into prominent view during the period abovesaid are many and of supreme value and beauty. He shows himself not merely as poet and playwright but as a prophet of a



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new age, a maker of New India, and a philosopher. His militant personality is very clear in the course of his later works. He has revealed new aspects of his nature as a world-pilgrim and as a messenger of Indian culture. A militant energy of love and peace is the outstanding feature of his later life and writings. He has revealed to us new elements of beauty and sweetness in life.

I hope to be able to reveal these great aspects in some measure. Special emphasis will be laid upon his perfecting of his unique educational institution at Bolpur. I have referred in a previous volume to the Shilaida period in the poet's life. The period now under consideration may well be called the Shantiniketan period. I shall try to show all that the Sage of Shantiniketan is doing by way of sowing the seed of the greater and happier India of the future.

The ceaseless vitality and productiveness of Tagore's genius even now is indeed as remarkable and unique a phenomenon as that of Tennyson's creative vigour all through his life. In fact there are many points of kinship between Tennyson and Tagore both in regard to their receptiveness and reaction in regard to their age. The soul of each is responsive to the beauties and joys of outer and inner life in a remarkable measure. The personality of each has a vibrant energy of nature. Neither

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has stood aloof from modernity; and neither has sacrificed the past and the future for the sake of an un-perceiving and philistine absorption in the present as if the present is the supreme moment in the life of the Universe. Each has got a soul thoroughly alive to the spiritual beauty of the Universe. The language of each consists of "jewels.....that on the stretched forefinger of all Time sparkle for ever." Each has turned bereavement and suffering into the serenity of realisation of God's purpose and design in the universe. Each has shadowed sense at war with soul but has felt no doubt as to the issue of the conflict or as to the soul's purity and victory.

The difference between the revelation of Tagore's personality in his work already dealt with by me in my earlier volume and the revelation of it in the volumes which are the subject of this study is the difference between Rothenstein's pencil sketch which is prefixed to *Gitanjali* and which brings out the elusive and delicate traits of Tagore's nature and the sculpture of Tagore's pupil Narayan K. Dewal which brings out well Tagore's intellectual power, kindling vitality, virile manhood, and militant and kinetic energy of peace and love.

His poems which will be studied in this volume reveal an even deeper insight into the truths of life and

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love than his earlier poems. They have a mellower ripeness of thought and emotion, a sweeter symphony of colour, a quieter but more fascinating imagery, a subtler rhythmic grace, and a more profound mysticism. His dramas have a wider range and deeper poignancy of emotion, and include also tragedies which soften and purify us while wringing the heart with a sense of the pitiful in life and a realisation of the storms and shipwrecks of life. His short stories show greater variety and range. His later works show also his realisation of the true mission of India and his vivid perception of life's deepest problems and their solutions. Thus his later works display an astonishing variety, range, and power.

I am pursuing in the ensuing pages the same method that I adopted before. I have tried to let Tagore himself speak through my feeble words as he has allowed India to speak through his rich and rhythmic and radiant utterance for the greater self-realisation of India, the greater happiness of man, and the greater glory of God.

## CHAPTER II.

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### MY REMINISCENCES

**T**HIS volume is of the greatest interest to all because it contains the self-revelation of the growth and efflorescence of a rare poetic genius and a rarer spiritual personality. Biography as a fine art is rare in India and autobiography as a fine art is rarer still. It is a great happiness that such a book as this has been made available to all the world so that every man may attain light and love by the swiftest and surest of means—the loving study of the inner growth of a nature that has attained light and love in a preeminent measure. As the translator says well in his preface: “In these memory pictures so lightly, even casually presented by the author, there is, nevertheless, revealed a connected history of his inner life, together with that of his varying literary forms in which his growing self found successive expression, up to the point at which both his soul and poetry attained maturity.”

Tagore himself has described in beautiful words the selective process which has given this noble work to the world. He points out how the outer events of

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life leave their marks on life which slowly emerges as a picture on the soul's vast canvas. He says: "Thus over life's outward aspect passes the series of events, and within is being painted a set of pictures. The two correspond but are not one... Why the ever-busy painter of painting; when he will have done, for what gallery his pictures are destined—who can tell?..... I then discovered, as I opened the door, that Life's memories are not Life's history, but the original work of an unseen Artist..... The variegated colours scattered about are not reflections of outside lights, but belong to the painter himself, and come passion-tinged from his heart." He then says why he offers this work to the world, "What one has truly felt, if only it can be made sensible to others, is always of importance to one's fellowmen. If pictures which have taken shape in memory can be brought out in words, they are worth a place in literature. It is as literary material that I offer my memory pictures."

The reminiscences begin with Tagore's earliest impressions of teaching. A jingling rhyme in the Bengali Child's Primer is the outstanding impression of that period. Tagore says in beautiful words why rhyme is so needful in poetry: "Because of it the words come to an end, and yet end not; the utterance is over but not its ring; and the ear and the mind can

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go on and on with their game of tossing the rhyme to each other." The next impression is that of a humorous old cashier, Kailash by name. Tagore speaks of that episode when his elders "were engaged in an attempt to start a postal service with the other world by means of a planchette." His descriptions of his early school life are full of sly and attractive humour. His early life at home was not the coddled and pampered life of the child to-day who gets too many things, and all of them too easy, to profit by them to any extent worth the name. He was a keen, noticing child and his impressions of the various types of bathers at the river including the deliberate man going home "radiating the cool comfort of his refreshed body" is very interesting. He was not allowed in his childhood to go out of his house and he says that the inner garden within the house was his paradise. "A scent of dewy grass and foliage would rush to meet me, and the morning, with its cool fresh sunlight would peep out at me over the top of the eastern garden wall, from below the trembling tassels of the cocoanut palms." The eye sees what it is gifted to see and in Tagore's case the wonder and mystery and sweetness of things were a joy in his soul from his very birth. He says:

"Looking back on childhood's day the thing that recurs most often is the mystery which used

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to fill with life and world. Something undreamt of was lurking everywhere, and the uppermost question every day was; Then, oh!, when would we come across it? It was as if nature held something in her closed hands and was smilingly asking us: 'What would you think I have?'. What was impossible for her to have was the thing we had no idea of."

Tagore speaks of the sense of lurking mysteries within the earth and beyond the sky that filled his boyhood. He speaks in a humorous way about the "servocracy" under which the servants were tyrannising over the children. The real reason for this then as now is the habit of elders not to allow children to be natural and happy. Tagore says: "If children are only allowed to be children, to run and play about and satisfy their curiosity, it becomes quite simple. Insoluble problems are only created if you try to confine them inside, keep them still or hamper their play."

The next picture is that of Tagore's life at the Normal School. The teachers were unimaginative and rude and the boys were mostly nasty in manners and habits. Though Tagore thus hated his surroundings for the best of reasons he was the first in the examination in Bengali. He then describes his budding poetry. His description of the way in which he dipped into

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varied learning is absorbingly interesting. He says: "Children's books were not full of pictures then as they are now. Moreover, at the gateway of every reading-lesson stood sentinel an array of words, with separated syllables, and forbidding accent marks like fixed bayonets, barring the way to the infant mind. I had repeatedly attacked their serried ranks in vain."

Then comes the description of his first outing. He went to the family riverside villa on the banks of the Ganges. Tagore says of a rainy day there: "Then with a rush would come the vociferous rain, blotting out the horizon ; the dim line of the other bank taking its leave in tears; the river swelling with suppressed heavings; and the moist wind making free with the foliage of the trees overhead." He speaks thus of the veiled beauty of an inner garden there: "It was like the bride of the house, in the seclusion of her mid-day siesta, resting on a many coloured quilt of her own embroidering, murmuring low the secrets of her heart."

The next picture is that of his early versification. Those *Juvenilia* have not been preserved and he says of them: "Anyhow they escaped the pangs of a passage through the printing-press and need fear no birth into this vale of woe." His description of the sweet simplicity of the amiable Srikantha Babu, a veritable Parson Adams in his goodness and unsophisticated gentleness



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is very attractive. In this portion of the book occurs a passage which should be remembered by all teachers of children : " To employ an epic to teach language is like using a sword to shave with—sad for the sword, bad for the chin. A poem should be taught from the emotional stand point ; inveigling it into service as grammar-cum-dictionary not calculated to propitiate the divine Saraswati." He says further that to begin learning in the English language is a suicidal step. If we learn in our own language taste develops from the beginning. He says: " It was because we were taught in our own language that our minds quickened. Learning should as far as possible follow the process of eating. When the taste begins from the first bite, the stomach is awakened to its function before it is loaded, so that its digestive juices get full play."

From the normal school he went to the Bengal Academy. Tagore says that its rooms " were cruelly dismal with their walls on guard-like policemen," without any decoration or touch of colour. The need for love and freedom in school is thus strongly pleaded for by him.

"I now clearly see that the mistake is to judge boys by the standard of grown-ups, to forget that a child is quick and mobile like a running stream; and that in the case of such, any touch of imper-

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fection need cause no great alarm, for the speed of the flow is itself the best corrective. When stagnation sets in then comes the danger. So it is for the teacher, more than the pupil, to beware of wrong doing."

Another great truth which he felt and expresses is that the illumination, and not the filling, of the mind is the chief glory of education. He says:

"But children and those who are not over-educated, dwell in that primal paradise where men can come to know without fully comprehending each step. And only when that paradise is lost comes the evil day when everything needs must be understood. The road which leads to knowledge without going through the dreary process of understanding, that is the royal road. If that be barred, though the world's marketing yet may go on as usual, the open sea and the mountain top cease to be possible of access."

Then comes the picture of Tagore's memorable journey with his father to the Himalayas. When he went to Bolpur with his revered father he closed his eyes so as not to spoil the freshness of the experience. Then comes his ecstatic descriptions of *The Himalayas*. "The great forest trees were found clustering closer and from underneath their shade a little waterfall trickling out, like

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a little daughter of the hermitage playing at the feet of hoary sages wrapt in meditation, babbling its way over the black moss-covered rocks." He speaks of "the distant snowy peaks shimmering dimly in the starlight." He speaks of his father's loving watchfulness which at the same time allowed him to grow in an atmosphere of freedom—a valuable quality which every man should cultivate in relation to his children. He says:

"A passive acceptance by us of the correct and the proper did not satisfy him; he wanted us to love truth with our whole hearts; he knew that mere acquiescence without love is empty. He also knew that truth, if strayed from, can be found again, but a forced or blind acceptance of it from the outside effectually bars the way in.....As he allowed me to wander about the mountains at my will, so in the quest for truth he left me free to select my path. He was not deterred by the danger of my making mistakes, he was not alarmed at the prospect of my encountering sorrow. He held up a standard, not a disciplinary rod."

Tagore's description of the grace and charm of woman's love for the young child of the house is very beautiful. He says: "In infancy the loving care of woman is to be had without the asking, and, being as

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much a necessity as light and air, is simply accepted without any conscious response; rather does the growing child often display an eagerness to free itself from the encircling web of woman's solicitude. But the unfortunate creature who is deprived of this in its proper season is beggared indeed."

Tagore could never get on in our educational mills which grind exceedingly slow though with exceedingly noise. He says that the teachers had no "reverential resignation of spirit,"—and were "in nowise above the teaching-machine variety of schoolmasters." He says:

"As it is, the educational engine is remorselessly powerful; when to it is coupled the stone mill of the outward forms of religion the heart of youth is crushed dry indeed. This powerpropelled grindstone type we had at St. Xaviers."

The following passage shows us what children's books should be—not unintelligible puzzles nor bare common places. Alas! how our boys' books err in both directions.

"The watery stuff into which literary nectar is now diluted for being served up to the young takes full account of their childishness but none of them as growing human beings. Children's books should be such as can partly be under-

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stood by them and partly not.....The child makes its own what it understands, while which is beyond leads its on a step forward."

I shall refer also to another idea of Tagore's, especially because all these experiences of his have borne golden fruit in his great Bolpur School. He says that it is not proper to offer prize in schools and create feelings of rivalry. "There is no harm in making gifts to children, but they should not be rewards. It is not healthy for youngsters to be made self-conscious."

The next picture is the poetic home environment of Tagore. He says that "the great advantage which I enjoyed in my younger days was the literary and artistic atmosphere which pervaded our house." A pronounced nationalism in life and art had awakened. Tagore's cousins and brothers were already prominent figures in the renaissance. He says: "My eldest brother was then at the height of his wonderful powers; and from his pen surged, in writing wave after wave, a tidal flood of poetic fancy, rhyme and expression, filling and over-flowing its banks with an exuberantly joyful pæan of triumph."

Another feature of those times as narrated by Tagore will come to all his readers in all parts of India as a revelation of a universal joy in India, which however

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has now vanished beyond recall owing to the meaningless stress and hurry and high pressure of modern life. People used to meet then in informal and intimate groups and not as now merely on business or as a matter of social duty. "The faculty our predecessors had of becoming the centre of groups and gatherings, of starting and keeping up animated and amusing gossip, has vanished." How true—as true as it is bitter—is what he says :

"In those days everything from furniture to festivity was designed to be enjoyed by the many, so that whatever of pomp or magnificance there might have been did not savour of hauteur. These appendages have since increased in quality, but they have become unfeeling, and know not the art of making high and low alike feel at home..... We still meet for business or political purposes but never for the pleasure of simply meeting one another.' We have ceased to contrive opportunities to bring men together simply because we love our fellowmen. I can imagine nothing more ugly than this social miserliness."

Tagore's description of his literary companions is a bright and beautiful memory-picture. He describes Akshay Babu who had a genuine delight in literature which is a rarer gift than crudition, his own brother

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Jyotirindra, and others. He says that his brother gave him full freedom and that this "was as necessary for my soul after its vigorous repression during infancy as are the monsoon clouds after a fiery summer." He says in beautiful words applicable to all departments of life "Those in authority are never tired of holding forth the possibility of the abuse of freedom as a reason for withholding it, but without that possibility freedom would not be really free. And the only way of learning how to use a thing properly is through its misuse. ...." "This experience of mine has led me to dread, not so much evil itself, as tyrannical attempts to create goodness. Of punitive police, political or moral, I have a wholesome horror. The state of slavery which is thus brought on is the worst form of cancer to which humanity is subject." Another important fact in regard to his poetic development is thus stated by him: "While we were growing to boyhood music was largely cultivated in our family. This had the advantage of making it possible for me to imbibe it, without an effort, into my whole being."

Tagore's earliest publications were in the monthly called *Gyanankur* (Sprouting Knowledge)—an appropriate name in relation to the budding poet. The Vaishnava devotional poems and songs profoundly affected him and he "went deeper and deeper

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into the unexplored darkness of this treasured house." Like Chatterton he wrote poems and published them as those of an old Vaishnava devotee *Bhanu Singha*. He adopted this name as Bhanu and Rabi both mean the sun. Tagore says humorously that Dr. Rishikanta Chatterjee wrote a thesis on the lyric poetry of India including Bhanu Singha as one of the old poets and got his degree of Ph. D. on such a thesis. Tagore says that the sentiments in it were not a natural outpouring of the heart and that "it has none of the ravishing melody of our ancient pipes, but only the tinkle of a modern, foreign barrel organ."

Perhaps the brightest picture in the book is that about patriotism. He says: "From an outside point of view many a foreign custom would appear to have gained entry into our family, but at its heart flames a national pride which has never flickered. The genuine regard which my father had for his country never forsook him through all the revolutionary vicissitudes of his life, and this in his descendants has taken shape as a strong patriotic feeling. Love of country was, however, by no means a characteristic of the times of which I am writing. Our educated men then kept at arms' length both the language and thought of their native land. Nevertheless my elder brothers had always cultivated Bengali literature. When on one occasion some



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new connection by marriage wrote my father an English letter it was promptly returned to the writer. Alas! how much these unpatriotic habits hold South India yet in their grip. Even the humbler and poorer classes interlaid their speech with English words and the so-called upper classes speak and write and even issue marriage and religious invitations in English and hold "at arms' length both the language and thought of their native land." Tagore's family organised the Hindu Mela which was "the first attempt at a reverential realisation of India as our motherland." Tagore says: "My second brother's popular national anthem 'Bharater Jaya' was composed then. The singing of songs glorifying the mother-land, the recitation of poems of the love of country, the exhibition of indigenous arts and crafts, and the encouragement of national talent and skill, were the features of this *Mela*." Tagore says that bravery always has a deep hold on the reverence of mankind and that education and life should prize this faculty and find support for its self-realisation. He says:

"There can be no doubt that closing up all outlets and barring all openings to a faculty so deep-seated in the nature of many and moreover so prized by him, creates an unnatural condition favourable to degenerate activity. It is not enough to keep

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open only the avenues to clerical employment in any comprehensive scheme of Imperial Government—if no road be left for adventurous daring the soul of man will pine for deliverance and secret passages still be sought, of which the path ways are tortuous and the end unthinkable.”

The next bright picture is his connection with the *Bharathi*. He says that this period was one of ecstatic excitement and that he contributed to the magazine a criticism on *Meghanadabadha* and also *Kavikahini* (The Poet's Story). He says that these were ornate and violent in expression and that “while yet any truth has not dawned upon one's mind and others' words are one's only stock-in-trade, simplicity and restraint in expression are not possible.” He says: “There is no better way of ensuring repentance at maturity than to rush into print too early.” He says truly however that the self-expression of that time brightened and heightened his powers by the force of enthusiasm in spite of its extravagant excesses and high-sounding artificiality. He says: “And if the fuel of error was necessary for feeding the flame of enthusiasm, then while that which was fit to be reduced to ashes will have become ash the good work done by the flame will not have been in vain in my life.”

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He then stayed at Ahmedabad with his second brother who was a Judge there. This portion of the work lets us have a glimpse into one of Tagore's traits : "From my earliest years it was my habit not to let any want of complete comprehension interfere with my reading on, quite satisfied with the structure which my imagination reared on the bits which I understood here and there. I am reaping even to day both the good and bad effects of this habit". After spending six months at Ahmedabad they went to England. He spent a happy time with his brother's children and says : "This was the first opportunity I had for giving my heart to children, and it had all the freshness and overflowing exuberance of such a first gift." His life has been one of full and free gift of himself to the children, and is there any wonder that love has begot love in such a heavenly measure? He was taken to England to study Law but God had intended him for higher things than mere wealthy mediocrity. He describes his Latin tutor's pet idea—which he also endorses—"that the minds of men are connected through some deep-lying continuous medium, and that a disturbance in one part is by it secretly communicated to others." His description of Mrs. Scott's devotion to her husband is very beautiful.

"In all her actions her reverence for her husband

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was the one thing that stood out. The memory of her sweet self-abnegation makes it clear to me that the ultimate perfection of all womanly love is to be found in reverence; that where no extraneous cause has hampered its true development woman's love naturally grows into worship. Where the appointments of luxury are in profusion, and frivolity tarnishes both day and night, this love is degraded, and woman's nature finds not the joy of its perfection."

He became an intimate friend of Loken Palit as a schoolmate. Loken Palit was in later life one of his devoted admirers. Tagore says: "Of the many lotus flowers at Saraswathi's feet the blossom of friendship must be her favourite." While in England he began another poem, *Bhagna Hriday* (The Broken heart). He says that the wild unrestraint of his early intellectual self-expression was the cause of the sanity and sweetness of his later life and later work. He says further that at that time his literary gods were Shakespeare, Milton and Byron. An acute remark is made by him that "in the social life of Englishmen passionate outbursts are kept severely in check, for which very reason, perhaps, they so dominate their literature, making its characteristic to be the working of extravagantly vehement feelings to an inevitable conflagration." He says:

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“The spirit of this bacchanalian revelry of Europe found entrance into our demurely well-behaved social world, woke us up, and made us lively. We were dazzled by the glow of unfettered life which fell upon our custom-smothered heart, pining for an opportunity to disclose itself.....In this wise did the excitement of the pursuit of English literature come to sway the heart of the youth of our time and at mine the waves of this excitement kept beating from every side.”

Tagore then gives expression to one of the profoundest of his utterances :

“And for this, the fact that in English literature the reticence of true art has not yet appeared is responsible. Human emotion is only one of the ingredients of literature and not its end, —which is the beauty of perfect fullness consisting in simplicity and restraint.....Our minds from infancy to old age are being moulded by this English literature alone. But other literatures of Europe, both classical and modern, of which the art-form shows the well-nourished development due to a systematic cultivation of self-control, are not subjects of our study; and so, as it seems to me, we are yet unable to arrive at a correct perception of the true aim and method of literary work.”

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He says further that athiesm was the dominant note of the English prose writings then in vogue,—Bentham, Mill and Comte being the favourite authors ; that India received these in the letter and as a stimulant to invite men to moral revolt; and that “athiesm was thus for us a mere intoxication.” Athiests on the one side and religious epicures luxuriating in the paraphernalia of outer worship were the usual types at that time.

A very interesting chapter of the book is that describing Tagore's impression of Indian singers who do not hide their sense of effort and do not take trouble to avoid harshness of voice or uncouthness of gesture. In the west the singers have extraordinary command over the voice and attend to outward embellishment. In India musicians begin to tune up the instruments after the performance begins but no such deficiency and waste of time are seen in musical performances in the west. Tagore says further : “In our country a correct and artistic exposition of the melody is the main object, thereon is concentrated all the effort. In Europe the voice is the object of culture and with it they perform impossibilities. In our country the virtuoso is satisfied if he has heard the song ; in Europe, they go to hear the singer.” The translator of the work adds aptly and well : “ With Indian music it is not a mere question of correctly rendering a

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melody exactly as composed, but the theme of the original composition is the subject of an improvised interpretative elaboration by the expounding Artist." Tagore gives us a perfect description of the different realms and appeals of European music and Indian music.

"Up to now I am convinced that our music and theirs abide in altogether different apartments, and do not gain entry to the heart by the self-same door. European music seems to be intertwined with its material life, so that the text of its songs may be as various as that life itself. If we attempt to put our tunes to the same variety of use they tend to lose their significance, and become ludicrous; for our melodies transcend the barriers of everyday life, and only thus can they carry us so deep into Pity, so high into Aloofness, their function being to reveal a picture of the inmost inexpressible depths of our being, mysterious and impenetrable, where the devotee may find his hermitage ready, or even the epicurean his bower, but where there is no room for the busy man of the world..... It (European music) seemed to me so romantic. It is somewhat difficult to analyse what I mean by that word. What I would refer to is the aspect of variety, of abundance, of the waves on the sea

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of life, of the everchanging light and shade on their ceaseless undulations. There is the opposite aspect—of pure extension of the unwinking blue of the sky, of the silent hint of immeasurability in the distant circle of the horizon.....It (European music) is romantic; it is translating into melody the evanescence of life. Not that we wholly lack the same attempt in some forms of our music; but it is less pronounced, less successful. Our melodies give voice to the star-spangled night, to the first reddening of dawn. They speak of the sky-pervading sorrow which lowers in the darkness of clouds; the speechless deep intoxication of the forest-roaming spring."

Tagore then describes his *Valmiki Pratibha* and says that "from this mixed cultivation of foreign and native melody was born the Valmiki Pratibha." "The tunes in this musical drama are mostly Indian but they have been dragged out of their classic dignity; that which soared in the sky was taught to run on the earth." Indian melodic modes were harnessed in it to the service of the drama. He says: "The pleasing task of loosening the chains of melodic forms and making them adaptable to a variety of treatment completely engrossed me." The songs are the musical text of the play which is really "a little drama set to



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music" and whose "significance is lost if it is not heard sung and seen acted." Tagore played the part of Valmiki in the play. He explains the origin of the idea of the musical element of the play. He had read in Herbert Spencer that speech takes on tuneful inflexions whenever emotion comes into play and he wanted to act a drama in which emotion is expressed by chanting and by an emotional interpretation of the text through its means and without conforming to "the more rigorous canons of tune and time required by a melodic composition." He wrote another similar play called *Kal Mrigaya* (The Fateful Hunt) based on the story of the accidental killing of the blind hermit's only son by King Dasaratha and an yet another operetta called *Mayar Khela* (The play of Maya). In *Mayar Khela* the songs were important, not the drama. "In the others a series of dramatic situations were strung on a thread of melody; this was a garland of songs with just a thread of dramatic plot running through. The play of feeling, and not action, was its special feature. In point of fact, I was, while composing it, saturated with the mood of song." The very rapture of creative genius coming into its own under the most favourable environment is described in the following passage :

"In our house, at the time, a cascade of musical

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emotion was gushing forth day after day, hour after hour, its scattered spray reflecting into our being a whole gamut of rainbow colours. Then, with the freshness of youth, our new-born energy, impelled by its virgin curiosity, struck out new paths in every direction. We felt we would try and test everything, and no achievement seemed impossible. We wrote, we sang, we acted, we poured ourselves out on every side. This was how I stepped into my twentieth year."

The poems of this marvellous period of a marvellous life were published under the title of the *Heart-wilderness* in Mohita Babu's edition of Tagore works. Tagore says in a beautiful passage: "In the first flood-tide of that joy I paid no heed to the grounds of metrical form, and as the stream does not flow straight on but winds about as it lists, so did my verse..... Freedom first breaks the law and then makes laws which bring it under true Self-rule." The *Evening Songs* came into existence in this mood of glad and glorious freedom.

The next picture is a word-painting of the appeal and the nature and the value of music. Tagore says: "The song being great in its own wealth, why should it wait upon the words! Rather does it begin where mere words fail. Its power lies in the region of the

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inexpressible ; it tells us what the words cannot. So the less a song is burdened with words the better..... vocal music reaches its perfection when the melodic form is allowed to develop freely, and carry our consciousness with it to its own wonderful plane."

Then comes the sweet and soothing picture of riverside quietness: "This Bengal sky full of light, this south breeze, this flow of the river, this right royal laziness, this broad leisure stretching from horizon to horizon and from green earth to blue sky, all these were to me as food and drink to the hungry and thirsty. Here it felt indeed like home, and in these I recognised the ministrations of a Mother.....In the mid-day glare of modern life even our hours of mental siesta have been narrowed down to the lowest limit and, hydra-headed unrest has invaded every department of life. May be this is for the better, but, I for one, cannot account it wholly to the good".....These lovely days of mine at the riverside passed by like so may dedicated lotus blossoms floating down the sacred stream." The poet wrote his *Evening Songs* in a round tower with windows opening on every side in the riverside house and he wrote of his room:

" There, wherein the breast of limitless space  
clouds are laid to sleep,  
I have built my house for thee, O Poesy."

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Tagore says: "The sadness and pain which sought expression in the *Evening Songs* had their roots in the depths of my being"...Where the pain of discord strives to attain and express its resolution into harmony, there does poetry break forth into music, as breath through a flute."

Tagore wrote also prose pieces and published them with the name *Vividha Prabandha* (various topics.) He says: "When spring comes within, many—coloured short-lived fancies are born and flit about in the mind, ordinarily unnoticed." He began also his first novel *Bauthankuranir Hat*.

Now comes a wonderful picture of a new self-revelation. One evening the glory of the evening took away the cover of triviality from the world and revealed the beauty of things. The self "which was rampant during the glare of the day" was put into the background and the world was seen as it is in all its beauty and glory by a loving and humble seer. Tagore says: "Then I gained a further insight which has lasted all my life.....One morning I happened to be standing on the verandah looking that way. The sun was just rising through the leafy tops of those trees. As I continued to gaze all of a sudden a covering seemed to fall away from my eyes, and I found the world bathed in a wonderful radiance, with waves of beauty and joy

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swelling on every side. This radiance pierced in a moment through the folds of sadness and despondency which had accumulated over my heart and flooded it with this universal light. That very day the poem, *The awakening of the waterfall*, gushed forth and coursed on like a veritable cascade. The poem came to an end, but the curtain did not fall upon the joy-aspect of the universe.....From infancy I had seen only with my eyes, I now began to see with the whole of my consciousness.....I could see the fathomless depths of the eternal spring of joy, from which numberless sprays of laughter leap up throughout the world." This spirit of joy surged forth in his *Morning Songs*. Then follows a very precious and profound description of what a poem really is.

"But does any one write poetry to explain any matter! What is felt within the heart tries to find outside shape as a poem.....This utterance of feeling is not the statement of a fundamental truth or a scientific fact or a useful moral precept. Like a tear or a smile it is but a picture of what is taking place within. If Science or Philosophy may gain anything from it they are welcome, but that is not reason of its being."

Then Tagore explains *The Echo* which was the last of the *Morning Songs* and what he says about it is

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valuable as showing the mood in which the loving admirer and interpreter of his genius should approach his works.

“When from the original fount in the depths of the universe streams of melody are sent forth abroad, their echo is reflected into our heart from the faces of our beloved and the other beauteous things around us. It must be, as I suggested, this Echo which we love, and not the things themselves from which it happens to be reflected..... This experience seemed to tell me of the stream of melody issuing from the very heart of the universe and spreading over space and time, re-echoing thence as waves of joy which flow right back to the source. When the artist sends his song forth from the depths of a full heart that is joy indeed. And the joy is redoubled when this same song is wafted back to him as hearer. If, when the creation of the Arch-Poet is thus returning back to him in a flood of joy, we allow it to flow over our consciousness, we at once, immediately, become aware, in an expressible manner, of the end to which this flood is streaming. And as we become aware our love goes forth; and our *selves* are moved from their moorings and would fain float down the stream of joy to its infinite goal. This is the

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meaning of the longing which stirs within us at the sight of Beauty. The stream which comes from the Infinite and flows towards the finite—that is the True, the Good; it is subject to laws, definite in form. Its echo which returns towards the Infinite is Beauty and Joy, which are difficult to touch or grasp, and so make us beside ourselves. This is what I tried to say by way of a parable or a song in *The Echo*."

Tagore says; "From my earliest years I enjoyed a simple and intimate communion with Nature." The hunger of the heart interposing its barrier between this play of inside and outside was mourned by him in *The Evening songs*. He says:

"In the *Morning Songs* I celebrated the sudden opening of a gate in the barrier, by what shock I know not, through which I regained the lost one, not only as I know it before, but more deeply, more fully by force of the intervening separation. Thus did the First Book of my life come to an end with these chapters of union, separation, reunion."

During this period he wrote also the prose pieces called *Alochana* (Discussions) which were full of this new spirit.

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The next picture is the stay at Karwar along with his brother who was a Judge there. The silent walk after a boating excursion in the moonlight and the homecoming full of the spirit of silence and the enchantment of the mystery of things are described by him in thrilling words. That experience culminated in a poem and what he says about it gives one of the great laws of poetic self-expression :

“Just as it does not do to have the writer entirely removed from the feeling to which he is giving expression, so also it does not conduce to the truest poetry to have him too close to it. Memory is the brush which can lay on the true poetic colour. Nearness has too much of the compelling about it, and the imagination is not sufficiently free unless it can get away from its influence. Not only in poetry, but in all art, the mind of the artist must attain a certain degree of aloofness—the *creator* within man must be allowed the sole control. If the subjectmatter gets the better of creation, the result is a mere replica of the event, not a reflection of it through the artist's mind.”

It was in Karwar that he wrote *Prakritir Pratishodha* (Nature's revenge) which is the play called *Sanyasi* discussed in a later chapter in this work. He



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was then twenty-two years of age. He wrote at this time *Chabi O Gan* (Pictures and Songs). Even trifling things were coloured in them "with feelings straight from the heart". He says: "When the string of the mind is properly attuned to the universe then at each point the universal song can awaken its sympathetic vibrations. It was because of this music roused within that nothing felt trivial to the writer"...The harp of the universe has its variously tuned strings everywhere stretched and the nearest may serve as well as any other for our accompaniment, there is no need to seek a far". He says further:

"A faculty of many-sightedness possessed me at this time. Each little be separate picture I ringed round with the light of my imagination and the joy of my heart. Everyone of them, moreover, being variously coloured by a paths of its own. The pleasure of thus marking off each picture was much the same as that of painting it, both being the outcome of the desire to see with the mind what the eye sees, and with the eye what the mind imagines".

In the next period he wrote the little serial story *Rajarshi* for the child's magazine called *Balaka*. We have also got beautiful and inspiring descriptions of Rajendra Lal Nitra and Bankin Chander Chatterjee in this portion of this wonderful book. But

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the most profoundly moving picture in the book is that describing his bereavements. He was a child when his mother died. His recollection of her love was a perpetual benediction: "When in later life, I wandered about like a madcap, at the first coming of spring, with a handful of half-blown jessamines tied in a corner of my muslin scarf, and as I stroked my forehead with the soft, rounded tapering buds, the touch of my mother's fingers would come back to me; and I clearly realised that the tenderness which dwelt in the tips of those lovely fingers was the very same as that which blossoms every day in the purity of these jessamine buds; and that whether we know it or not, this tenderness is on the earth in boundless measure". But his later bereavements left a deep and lasting effect on his nature. They did not sour it and narrow it but sweetened and broadened it. He says, in his own inimitable words:

"Just as a young plant, surrounded by darkness, stretches itself, as it were on tiptoe, to find its way out into the light, so when death suddenly throws the darkness of negation round the soul it tries and tries to rise into the light of affirmation.....And yet in the midst of this unbearable grief, flashes of joy seemed to sparkle in my mind, now and again, in a way which quite

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surprised me.....That we were not prisoners for ever within a solid stone wall of life was the thought which unconsciously kept coming uppermost in rushes of gladness.....With the loosening of the attraction of the world, the beauty of nature took on for me a deeper meaning. Death had given me the correct perspective from which to perceive the world in the fulness of its beauty, and as I saw the picture of the universe against the background of death I found it entrancing".

He then contrasts the Rainy season of his childhood and the Autumn of his youth—"the autumn which ripened for me my songs as it ripens the corn for the tillers ; the autumn which filled my granary of leisure with radiance, the autumn which flooded my unburdened mind with an unreasoning joy in fashioning song and story". The centre of joy is shifted and a more consummate art and a deeper rapture are attained. He says in a passage of superb beauty disclosing his very soul :

"My poems have now come to the doors of men. Here informal goings and comings are not allowed. There is door after door, chamber within chamber. How many times have we to return with only a glimpse of the light in the window, only the sound of the pipes from within the

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palace gates lingering in our ears! Mind has to treat with mind, will to come to terms with will, through many tortuous obstructions, before giving and taking can come about. The foundation of life, as it dashes into these obstacles, splashes and foams over in laughter and tears, and dances and whirls through eddies from which we cannot get a definite idea of its course".

The last of these marvellous memory pictures relates to *Kadi O Kamal* (sharps and flats). Tagore says that it is "a serenade from the streets in front of the dwelling of man, a plea to be allowed an entry and a place within that house of mystery". It is full of the passion of desire to enter into the play of the larger life of the world. It is not content with the gorgeous cloudland of the early poems but is full of the fruitfulness and intimate beauty of life. He says: "Then, in the commerce with the world of reality, both language and metre attempted definiteness and variety of form". He explains why he has stood aloof from the noisy elements of movements which were not rooted in the national consciousness.

"My mind refused to respond to the cheap intoxication of the political movements of those days, devoid, as they seemed, of all strength of national consciousness, with their complete

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ignorance of the country, their supreme indifference to the real service of the motherland. I was tormented by a furious impatience, an intolerable dissatisfaction with myself and all around me".

Here ends the gallery of memory pictures of a memorable part of a memorable life. Tagore is now amidst the fulness of life in the fulness of his powers of love and service. He is too near the events to treat them as pictures now and we hope that he will complete the gallery by adding the great pictures of his later life. He concludes his great book thus :

"I have not the power to disclose and display the supreme art with which the Guide of my life is joyfully leading me through all its obstacles, antagonisms, and crookednesses, towards the fulfilment of its innermost meaning. And if I cannot make clear all the mystery of this design, whatever else I may try to show is sure to prove misleading at every step. To analyse the image is only to get at its dust, not at the joy of the artist. So having exorted them to the door of the inner sanctuary I take leave of my readers".

Thus this beautiful work which is the gift to the world of a true Nature's child is an authentic self-revelation of a great and godly life. It gives us an insight into the elements of humour in Tagore's nature

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and shows us also the springs of his inexhaustible poetic power. Above all it shows to us the elements of divine sweetness in his fundamental nature. His pilgrim heart has been "gliding past all the numerous landing-steps of ever-changing" life and yearns to arrive at "the consummation of the perfect fulness of truth". As he moves in his shining orbit of poesy in the firmament of our national life we not only see the illumination of godliness but feel also the life-giving warmth of his patriotic love of our beloved motherland. His very soul breathes forth with a passion of desire, a rapture or adoration and an ardour of achievement in the following passage :

" The life of our country has its high banks, and its flight of steps, and on its dark waters falls the cool shade of the ancient trees, while from within the leafy branches overhead the *Koïl* coos forth its ravishing old-time song. But for all that it is stagnant water. Where is its current, where are the waves, when does the high tide rush in from the sea ?"

### CHAPTER III.

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#### SHANTINIKETAN.

**I**T will not be out of place if I make a brief study here of W. W. Pearson's book entitled *Shantiniketan* for two reasons, first, because it shows how Tagore's experience of school life as recorded in his *Reminiscences* led him to achieve the regeneration of India by a new type of educational institution, and next, because the book contains an introduction and two concluding addresses by Tagore, a story by Tagore's beloved pupil Satish Chandra Roy, and a description of Shantiniketan as approved by Tagore. The opening poem by Tagore strikes the keynote of the school and of the book.

"She is our own, the darling of our hearts, the  
Shantiniketan.

Our dreams are rocked in her arms.

Her face is a fresh wonder of love every time  
we see her,

For she is our own, the darling of our heart.

In the shadows of her trees we meet,

In the freedom of her open sky.

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Her mornings come and her evenings  
Bringing down heaven's kisses,  
Making us feel new that she is own I the dar-  
ling of our heart.  
The stillness of her shade is stirred by the  
woodland whisper ;  
Her amalaki groves are aquiver with the rap-  
ture of leaves.  
She dwells in us and around us however for we  
may wonder.  
She weaves our hearts in a song making us one  
in music,  
Tuning our strings of love with her own fingers,  
And we ever remember that she is our own, the  
darling of our heart."

In his famous Bolpur School Tagore has sought to carry forward the great but interrupted traditions of Indian education as adjusted to modern conditions and requirements. As he says in his Introduction to this work by Mr. Pearson: "The greatest teachers in ancient India, whose names are still remembered, were forest dwellers". They "lived in the bosom of primeval nature, meditated upon the deepest problems of the soul, and made it their object in life to grow in sympathy with all creation and in communion with the Supreme Being. There students flocked round



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them and had their lesson of immortal life in the atmosphere of truth, peace and freedom of spirit". These forest sanctuaries have no doubt disappeared but their ideals and method are a light and an inspiration for all time. As Tagore says: "All our great classic poets in their epic verses and dramas looked back with reverence upon that golden daybreak of the awakening of India's soul". In modern India we have to build the ideals of that great age of "simplicity and wisdom of pure life" into the fair fabric of the future India if we are to retain our energy of distinctiveness and preserve our beloved motherland unsubdued in her soul. The mission of India is the unfaltering purpose which has always shone in her heart and which she has tried to realise and express in the heaven of her religion and art and in the peaceful earth of her co-ordinated and self-protective social and secular life. Tagore says truly and well where lies our true work today and how the modern era in its passion for mere change has forgotten or ignored the basic attempts at regeneration: He says: "I seemed choked for breath in the hideous nightmare of our present time, meaningless in its petty ambitions of poverty, and felt in me the struggle of my motherland for awakening in spiritual emancipation. Our endeavours after political agitation seemed to me to be un-

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real to the core and pitifully feeble in their utter helplessness. I feel that it is a blessing of providence that begging should be an unprofitable profession, and that only to him who hath shall be given. I said to myself that we must seek for our own inheritance and with it buy our true place in the world". What does it matter what betterments of outer life we have if we have lost the graces of our inner life? Tagore felt the urgency of our Mother's call and his heart leapt to the call with elation and readiness and the true dedicatedness of a noble and strenuous life. Let me state his feeling in his own words as stated in the Introduction :

"The truth became clear to me that India had cut her path and broadened it for ages, the path that leads to a life reaching by and death, rising high above the idealisation of political selfishness and the insatiable lust for accumulation of materials... My heart responded to that call and I determined to do what I could to bring it to the surface, for our daily use and purification, the stream of ideals that originated in the summit of our past, flowing underground in the depth of India's soil, the ideals of simplicity of life, clarity of spiritual vision, purity of heart, harmony with the universe, and consciousness of the infinite personality in all creation".

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The remainder of the foreword is a touching tribute to the genius of Satish Chundra Roy who dedicated his life to the school but was cut off in the flower of his youth, whose joy in life blossomed as renunciation, who was aglow with love of beauty in nature and in art, who was not a mere vehicle of text-books but bore their riches on the current of his forward-moving personality, and who was not a pedant but a human perfection.

Mr. Pearson's sketch is written by him as a fitting introduction to Satish Chandra Roy's story entitled *The gift to the Guru*. He visited Bolpur in 1912. Bolpur is "remote from the distractions of town life and yet within easy reach of the stimulating activities of an intellectual centre." He felt that he was "a pilgrim visiting the shrine of a saint rather than a visitor to a school." He says: "There I knew was an atmosphere in which self realisation was possible and a place where I could feel the throbbing heart of Bengal, the land of poetry and imagination." The place is truly an "abode of peace" where time seems to hold its breath "in the expectation of the daily wonder of the sunrise" and at the mystery and rapture of the sunset. The tranquility of the place passes into the heart and shines there with a steady flame which the fitful gusts of life's joys and woes can never

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extinguish. The educational ideal is the combination of the best traditions of the ancient Hindu system of teaching with the healthiest aspects of modern methods. The first aspect that deserves prominent attention is the high and noble conception of the scope and ideal of education that is understood and practised there. Mr. Pearson says: "Education consists, not in giving information which the boys will forget as soon as they conveniently can without danger of failing in their examinations, but in allowing the boys to develop their own characters in the way which is natural to them." His indictment of the Indian system of examinations is as just as it is severe. He says: "The younger the boys are the more original they show themselves to be. It is only when the shadow of a University Examination begins to loom over them that they lose their natural freshness and originality, and become candidates for matriculation. When the small boys take up an idea and try to put it into practice then there is always a freshness about it which is spontaneous and full of the joy of real creation". Mr. Pearson refers to two characteristics of the Bengali boys which are real traits of all Indian youths from the farthest north to the farthest south—their peaceful and affectionate nature and their receptivity to spiritual things. The second aspect which is prominently mentioned by Mr. Pear-

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son and which deserves our attention is the idea that the spread of education and the bringing of higher influences into human lives are of infinitely greater importance than following the modern fad of efficient and expensive equipment which is raised to the rank of a fetish and which, in its conjoint action with our loveless and soulless system of education, has been an enemy of light and love and progress in our beloved motherland. Mr. Pearson says: "The emphasis on efficient and expensive equipment which is a characteristic feature of institution of learning in the west has never been accepted in India, where simplicity of living is regarded as one of the most important factors in true education". While it is true that science should be largely studied in well-equipped laboratories the present instance on vast buildings and other matters which are unimportant or only slightly important has been the cause of want of extension in education, while intensive education has been rendered fruitless by the banishment of Indian culture, art, religion, and history, by the neglect of Indian languages, by the unrelatedness of education to life, and by the prevailing commercial conceptions of life and education. We must also remember the truly democratic spirit and the constant encouragement of self-help, self-confidence, and self-respect that are such noteworthy features of

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the noble educational institution at Bolpur. It is not possible to describe in this brief sketch the daily routine of the school life at Bolpur, but I must not omit to mention here that the classes are held in the open air and encourage a spirit of love and responsive sympathy towards nature, that there are only annual examinations, that there are frequent excursions arranged by teachers and pupils, that the Bengali is the medium of instruction while English is taught as a second language, that the boys are encouraged to conduct magazines in the Bengali, that they are induced to take an active interest in field sports, that the boys are allowed to punish all improprieties and transgressions by holding a Juvenile court, and that the general atmosphere of trust and happiness is such as to make education as love-bringer and a joy-bringer to the heart as well as a light-bringer to the mind. A few facts however deserve special and prominent mention. The younger boys take their meals in the homes of the married teachers, thus reviving the old Gurukula system in some measure. Only small classes are held so as to ensure the individual attention to each student by the teacher. There is no headmaster, and the school is managed by an executive committee elected by the teachers themselves, from among whom one is elected each year as the executive head. "In each

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subject one of the masters is elected as director of studies, and he discusses with the other teachers in that subject the books and methods of teaching to be adopted, but each teacher is left to work out his own methods in the way he thinks best". Mr. Pearson says further that "one of the things that strike visitors to the school is the look of happiness on the boy's faces". The prominence given to music is another very noteworthy feature. The boys are awakened to the sound of songs by boy choristers singing in the early morning the supremely devotional lyrics of Tagore, and go to sleep each night after the band of boy singers go round singing his songs. Mr. Pearson says: "To be able to spread the spirit of song is a great gift, but when together with it one is able to spread the ideals of a great spiritual teacher then the gift is one precious beyond words". The boys thus sing Tagore's songs, enact his plays, hear his discourses, and watch his saintly life. As Pearson says very well: "In this way the ideas of the poet are assimilated by the boys, without their having to make any conscious effort. In fact they are being educated into his thought through the sub-conscious mind, and this is one of the root principles of Rabindranath Tagore's method of education". Each boy is induced to acquire the habit of meditation. Mr. Pearson says:

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“There is no instruction given as to the method of meditation, the direction of their thoughts being left to the influence of the idea of silence itself and to the Sanskrit texts which are repeated by the boys together at the close of the period of silent meditation. That many boys form the habit of such daily silent worship is enough”. The most attractive and important feature about this ideal school is its general spiritual atmosphere. About this Mr. Pearson says well: “I say religious atmosphere because there is no definite dogmatic teaching, and for the development of the spiritual side of the boys’ natures the ideal has always been to leave that to the natural instinct of each individual boy. In this considerable help is expected from the personal influence of the teachers, and from the silent but constant influence of close touch with Nature herself, which in India is the most wonderful teacher of spiritual truth”.

Mr. Pearson’s account, though accurate and illuminating, yet lacks many great features. It does not tell us how the school is a carrying forward of the great ideals and methods of education of the golden age of India, how it is one of the choicest blossoms of the Indian Renaissance, how it is a product and a manifestation of the race consciousness, and how it has been maintaining, fostering, and perfecting the spiritual heritage



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of the Indian race. The life of the school is not only bound up with the poet's life and the life of Bengal but with the intense and vital life of a self-conscious and self-reverent India. The most beautiful aspect about the school is the way in which it reflects the poetic vision of Tagore and the national life of a risen people.

The beautiful idyll that follows the abovesaid description of the Bolpur school by Mr. Pearson is a translation of Satis Chandra Roy's *The gift to the Guru*. The idyll narrates the well-known story of Utanka and makes that an occasion for reconstructing imaginatively the Ashram life of India's great past. I shall quote here only Utanka's words to his Guru. Would it were possible for every pupil to say the same when leaving his school and college: "Today my time of discipline has been finished. I have by your love gained strength. *My body has become strong and my mind bright and happy.* I have seen the glory of the sun and the moon and have felt a Power in the glowing fire. I have tasted the joys of the six seasons of the year. The peace and tranquility of the forests have taken up their abode in me and the fresh living spirit of the birds and beasts, of the trees and creepers, has entered my heart. I have come to understand that that the food which we eat and the wood of the

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trees which we burn in the fire are to be deemed sacred because they do us good. Air, water, sky, and light are sacred also, and all are filled with divine sweetness and goodness". Equally beautiful is Satis Chandra Roy's closing benediction which breathes the very spirit of Indian life and culture:

"My prayer is that you also may learn to appreciate the deep mysteries of this universe, that you may be able to admire the beauty of a pure and noble life, and treasure at times the blessing of your teachers. May their blessing, uniting with the clouds, fall upon you like gentle rain. Mingling with the sunlight every day at dawn may it manifest itself to your eyes. Breathing in the wind, may it bring deep peace into your hearts. May your minds be happy and filled with the joy and energy of the universe. May your lives in the world be fruitful—may nobility of purpose ever blossom in your hearts. May you also be strong, fearless, and pure, and may you accomplish your spiritual destiny by devoting yourself to God. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti, Om Peace, Peace, Peace".

The book concludes with two exquisite discourses by Tagore called *Paradise* and *Parting*. The former is an address by him before the Japanese teachers and students in Tokyo. It represents the ideals of Shanti-

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niketan and describes the spirit in which Tagore comes into touch with those who teach and learn in his school. He says there: "I believe in an ideal life.....I believe that there is an ideal hovering over the earth,—an ideal of that Paradise which is not the mere outcome of imagination, but the ultimate reality towards which all things are moving". The words of advice given by him to teachers should be engraved in letters of gold on the tablets of every teacher's heart: "One thing is truly needed to be a teacher of children—it is to be like children; to forget that you are wise or have come to the end of knowledge. In order to be truly the guide of children, you must never be conscious of age, or of superiority, or anything of that kind. You must be their elder brother, ready to travel with them in the same path of higher wisdom and aspiration. This is the only advice I can offer to you on this occasion,—to cultivate the spirit of the eternal child, if you must take up the task of training the children of Man".

The second address is conceived in a lofty religious key. He says that in God's creation there is no end to anything. "All that is true is continuous..... So all true relations, all true happiness are continuous." But in his purblindness man enters upon unmeaning activities: "Our energies are employed in

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supplying ourselves with things and pleasures. They have no eternity in the background. Therefore we try to give things an appearance of permanence by adding to them". But truth does not die by coming to an end, just as a poem does not die but fulfils itself by completion. Men are real when they meet in truth but are shadows if they meet in the unrealities of life. "When we meet each other in God, then our life is continuous in truth.....The true relationship with man is creative.....From death, lead us to the deathless. From all that is perishable, lead us to the truth that is eternal".

It will not be out of place if I say a few words here on the ideals and methods of education in India. The two fundamental concepts that influenced the scope and intensiveness of education in India were the rareness (Durlabhathva) of the human embodiment and the essential divinity of human nature. Hence an attempt—systematic and sustained—was made to develop harmoniously all the faculties of human nature on a spiritual basis. Personal and social life was so regulated as to develop the *sattvik* nature, which was not the negation, but the blossoming and fulfilment, of an active life. From this followed all the distinguishing traits in ancient Indian education. It was spiritual in con-

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ception, method, and aim. It took equal and simultaneous notice of the here and the hereafter. It was in touch with the cultural life of the everyday world and the higher cultural life enshrined in the scriptures. It ensured a decent wage and social status to the teacher without poisoning the springs of education by commercialising the aims and ambitions of the predominant partner in the great national enterprise of education. It ensured continuous discipline and freedom of self-devolpment to the student, keeping his eyes always fixed on the spiritual life as the point of convergence of all lines of secular life. The corrective and inspiring and joy-giving influence of nature was always near to prevent narrowness, bookishness, and joylessness. The education of the people was in the hands of those who were true embodiments of the racial culture. It was in harmony with the past, full of intimate touch with the present, and full of infinite potentialities in the future.

But now education, though it had infinite possibilities by virtue of the larger life brought to us by England, has become inimical to our racial culture. It is not a blossoming of the national spirit and has led to various cleavages between our life and the realities of the spirit. It has led to a distaste for Indian art and literature, and the necessary result of it, is the decline and

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delay of these perfect self-manifestations of the Indian spirit. It has ignored and killed by neglect the courtesies and ceremonial codes of our social life. It has created a tradition of barrack life amidst dirty and crowded surroundings and consequently generated a morbid and melodramatic attitude towards life even during the impressionable period of youth when mental habits, moral tendencies, and emotional preferences are formed for ever. It is costly ; it is examination-ridden ; it does not pay any attention to the abiding joys and reverences of life ; it is not subjected to control of those who are the most affected by it ; and it moves on like a machine that turns out what are fondly regarded and advertised as finished products but what are really misshapen masses of diverse degrees of uselessness.

We want many, many schools of the type of the Bolpur school where the deficiencies of the modern system would be set right, where the traditions of the ancient Indian education would be carried forward to higher stages, and where the new enlightenment of the modern scientific democratic age would be welcomed into our sanctuaries of learning as an equal and as an ally and not as superior and as a tyrant. The young men and women of the land must be taught the great spiritual *intuitions* of the race and the great languages, literatures and arts of the land ; they should

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have the heaven of the *real* Indian history opened to their loving and reverent gaze ; they should be taught the graceful courtesies of Indian social life ; they should be taught the value and meaning of the beautiful ceremonials in which are symbolised and enshrined the spiritual ideals of the race ; the inter-relations of the teacher and the taught should be based on love and reverence as before ; the ascetic ideal of renunciation as the fruitage of a fulfilled life of regulated enjoyment should be ever kept before the eyes of both as the consummation and glory of life ; the larger unities of thought and love must be proclaimed and realised to assimilate all differences in an all inclusive national feeling and universal love ; education must attain to the dignity of a synthetic appeal to the all elements of our nature ; it must lead to the attainment of our immemorial virtues of balance, serenity, simplicity, and refinement which would be in harmonious combination with efficiency and power ; and it must enable India once again to re-attain her ethical and spiritual leadership of the world while bringing to her all the sweets of a higher national life in a full and abundant measure.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PERSONALITY.

**T**HIS volume contains six great discourses on some of the deepest problems of life and is full of Tagore's ripest and most mellow thought on the inter-relations of life's deeper things and of the outer world with the inner universe. It is a clarion call to humanity to rise from competition to co-operation, from efficiency to reciprocity, from the oppression of cruel and greedy nationalism to the harmony of fraternal life among the races of the world, from law to love, from the vulgarisation of women as the standard bearers of man's civilisation of war to their glorification as the guardian of the diviner elements in man, from the vulgarisation of children by the present loveless and godless education to their ennobling as the workers of God's will in the plan of the universal life, from the conception of men as parts of social and political machinery to the conception of men as persons who are in the vital relationship of unity to the Supreme Person, the Eternal Father, the attainment of whose love is the real crown and glory of life.

The first discourse is on *What is Art?* The pro-



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blem has been stated and discussed ever since man began to realise and render the beauty of the universe and the beauty of the soul. As Tagore says with subtlety and truth, man has not merely a body which requires physical satisfactions and a mind which seeks the elements of order and unity in life for its intellectual satisfaction but also a personality which enters into emotional relations with life. The expression of this emotional relation of the personality to the universe is Art. Hence we cannot realise the fulness of art if we seek to find it in a philosophical interpretation of life, or in any conception of utility, or in any similar other idea. As Tagore says this is like judging of the excellence of a river by the point of view of a canal. No definition of Art can satisfy us, because "definition of a thing which has a life-growth is really limiting one's vision in order to be able to see more clearly". Art does not owe its origin to any social purpose or the need of catering for our æsthetic enjoyment but is due to "some impulse of expression, which is the impulse of our being itself".

Tagore then shows that the modern objection in some quarters to Art for Art's sake is due to the reaction of puritan and ascetic ideals. He says : "When enjoyment loses its direct touch with life, growing fastidious and fantastic in its world of elaborate conventions,

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then comes the call for renunciation which rejects happiness itself as a snare..... When a man tries to thwart himself in his desire for delight, converting it merely into his desire to know, or to do good, then the cause must be that his power of feeling delight has lost its natural bloom and freshness." Indian rhetoricians have laid down that *enjoyment* is the soul of literature. But as Tagore says "enjoyment" should be used with caution. Its spectrum contains an endless series of rays but only some of these belong to the realm of art. To realise the very soul of art, we must realise that man differs from animals in that their activities, knowledge, and pleasure are never beyond their needs while man has a surplus of energy not exhausted by his needs. Man earns a great deal more than he requires. It is his pure enjoyment of knowledge that is the basis of science and philosophy. His goodness is not merely for race preservation but for the sake of goodness and not for the sake of policy, and it is on this that ethics are founded. Animals have emotion but a "man has a fund of emotional energy which is not all occupied with his self-preservation. This surplus seeks its outlet in the creation of Art, for *man's civilisation* is built on his surplus." This is the reason why music and decoration and "the splendour of the temple and the rich ceremonials of worship" are craved by man in

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expressing the primary emotions of love and war and religion. Tagore says well.

“When a feeling is aroused in our hearts which is far in excess of the amount that can be completely absorbed by the object which has produced it, it comes back to us and makes us conscious of ourselves by its return waves.....This is the reason why, of all creatures only man knows himself, because his impulse of knowledge comes back to him in its excess.....This efflux of the consciousness of his personality requires an outlet of expression. Therefore in Art man reveals himself and not his objects.”

The world is not a mere stage for the operation of forces but is in relation to man's personality. Its relation to man's intellectual nature is the relation of a guest. But it becomes his own when it comes within the range of his emotions. Tagore points out that the Sanskrit word *Rasa* brings out this aspect very well. It means that element of pervasive sweetness that kindles a sweetness of emotion in us. Tagore says: “It is like our touch upon the harp-string ; if it is too feeble, then we are merely aware of the touch, but; if it is strong, than our touch comes back to us in tunes and our consciousness is intensified.” Then in a passage full of the acutest insight and the rapture of realisation of beauty he says:

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"The plainest language is needed when I have to say what I know about a rose but to say what I feel about a rose is different. There it has nothing to do with facts, or with laws, it deals with taste which can be realized only by tasting. Therefore the Sanskrit rhetoricians say, in poetry we have to use words which have got the proper taste—which do not merely talk, but conjure up pictures and sing. For pictures and songs are not merely facts—they are personal facts. They are not only themselves but ourselves also. They defy analysis and they have immediate access to our hearts."

The self-revelation of personality takes place also in the world of use but that is not man's primary object there.

"In every day life, when we are mostly moved by our habits, we are economical in our expression, for then our soul-consciousness is at its low level,—it has just volume enough to glide on its accustomed grooves. But when our heart is fully awakened in love, or in other great emotions, our personality is in its flood-tide. Then it feels the longing to express itself for the very sake of expression. Then comes Art, and we forget the claims of necessity, the thrift of usefulness,—the spires of our temples

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try to kiss the stars and the notes of our music to fathom the depth of the ineffable."

Thus in this subtle and beautiful analysis of the nature of art, Tagore has disclosed to us the heavenly radiance of the entire cosmos of art. Many are the beautiful definitions of art given to us by great seers and poets but Tagore's perceptive insight and picturesque power of presentation are in a class apart.

Tagore then shows two special applications of art in life. The civic love of a people will express itself naturally in the beauty of the public buildings. The diverseness of utility and sentiment and their taking different lines of self-expression are seen in the diverseness of the dress of man and the dress of woman. Woman's dress and manners are decorative and picturesque. "She has to be picturesque and musical to make manifest what she truly is,—because, in her position in the world, woman is more concrete and personal than man. She is not to be judged merely by her usefulness, but by her delightfulness. Therefore she takes infinite care in expressing, not her profession, but personality."

Tagore then proceeds to show us some other very vital aspects of art. It is an error to suppose that the object of art is the production of beauty. "Beauty in art has been the mere instrument and not its complete and

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ultimate significance." Hence the discussion as to whether manner is more important than matter or vice versa is meaningless, matter is the subject of science and manner is the subject of rhetoric. "When they are one then they find their harmonies in our personality" and "the true principle of art is the principle of unity." The choice of words by the poet is governed by the law that they appeal to personality by having the flavour of personality. He says: "This is the reason why poetry tries to select words that have vital qualities, —words that are not for mere information, but have become naturalised in our hearts and have not been worn out of their shapes by too frequent use in the market." The words which can find entrance into the magic circle of art should be full of the colour and taste and melody and fragrance and softness of life.

Art is thus the self-revelation of personality. "The scientist seeks an impersonal principle of verification... ..but the artist finds out the unique, the individual, which yet is in the heart of the universal." The revelation of the infinite personality in the radiance of the illumination of feeling is of the essence of artistic achievement. Tagore points out that in India this truth was realised with vivid intensity and that this is the cause of the art of India being predominantly religious in tone and in appeal. Art grows with the conquests

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made by the human personality in the realm of truth. Tagore says: "Thus art is signalizing man's conquest of the world by its symbols of beauty, springing up in spots which were barren of all voice and colours." He prophesies that "the encroachment of man's personality has no limit" and that under the transmuting touch of art even the markets and factories and schools and jails will be mellowed and lose their "rigid discordance with life."

In concluding this great discourse on art Tagore sums up his great ideas in a masterly manner. He says: "Where our personality feels its wealth it breaks out in display. What we devour for ourselves is totally spent. What overflows our need becomes articulate. The stage of pure utility is like the state of heat which is dark. When it surpasses itself, it becomes white heat and then it is expressive".....In our life we have one side which is finite, where we exhaust ourselves at every step, and we have another side, where our aspiration, enjoyment, and sacrifice are infinite. This infinite side of man must have its revealments in some symbols which have the elements of immortality. There it naturally seeks perfection.....For men are the children of light. Whenever they fully realise themselves they feel their immortality. And, as they feel it, they extend their realm of the immortal into every region

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of human life. This building of man's true world, the living world of truth and beauty,—is the function of Art." Art is thus the expression of the truest and highest in man—the Infinite divinity which is at the heart of creation and which expresses itself in the joy of creation and the freedom of love ; and man when he rises into this diviner atmosphere of freedom and love becomes a creative artist. "Man is true, when he feels his infinity, where he is divine, and the divine is the creator in him. Therefore with the attainment of his truth he creates. For he can truly live in his own creation and make out of God's world his own world." In the fulness of self-expression of this highest and deepest in us, the tyranny of facts vanishes and we have the rapture of a glad soaring in this unlit heaven of freedom and love. Beauty overflows the limitations of fact; hence art is personal unlike science. "Personality surpasses facts on every side. When social life, nationality, or religion curbs the human personality by the tyranny of amorphous blinding abstractions, it prevents our perfect self-expression. A school that views children as students and not as personalities will not be hurt when it sees " children's lives crushed in their classes, like flowers pressed between book leaves." A government that deals with generalisations and not with men will be callous and even brutal, as it lacks the saving



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grace of sympathy and love. Our outlook on the world in the light of the scientific maxim of the survival of the fittest “transforms the whole world of human personality into a monotonous desert of abstraction where things become dreadfully simple because robbed of their mystery of life.” Tagore then makes the bold but true claim that “in these large tracts of nebulousness Art is creating its stars,—stars that are definite in their forms but infinite in their personality.” It shows us that we are the immortal children of light and freedom and love. “In Art the person in us is sending its answers to the Supreme Person, who reveals Himself to us in a world of endless beauty across the lightless world of facts.” It is in the light of the illumination of this truth that the highest Indian art and its symbolism and appeal can be properly understood. Tagore says :

“Yes, it is that Supreme Person, who has made himself known to man and made this universe so deeply personal to him. Therefore, in India, our place, of pilgrimage are there, where in the confluence of the river and the sea, in the eternal snow of the mountain peak, in the lonely sea-shore, some aspect of the infinite is revealed which has its great voice for our heart, and there man has left in his images and temples, in his

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carvings of stone, these words,—Hearken to me,  
I have known the Supreme Person."

This beautiful discourse naturally leads us to the next solemn and noble discourse on *The world of Personality*. With an affluence of illuminative thought which can be showered upon us only by one who is a poet and a philosopher and a saint at the same time, he reveals the innermost soul of personality. The world is restlessness and motion if seen in parts. It is unagitated self-poise if seen as a whole. Each star moves but the whole starland is like a "chain of diamonds hanging on the neck of some god of silence." Tagore says of the stars "that they are unmoved in the plane of the distant and they are moving in the plane of the near . . . The distant and the near are the keepers of two different sets of facts, but they both belong to one truth which is their master." Each book moves in its chapters but is still as a whole. A rose leaf under a microscope ceases to be a roseleaf. Everything depends upon our adjustment of the measures of time and space; the mind is not a mere mirror but is the principal element of creation. The mortification of the body under the ascetic impulse has given exalted joy under this transmuting touch of the mind. Changes in value result in changes of resultant delight. "Therefore what is valuable to a man

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when he is bad becomes worse than valueless when he is good." It is in the light of this central fact of personality that the world is revealed in its fulness. Music is not the sum of the black and white keys of the keyboard and of the movements of fingers but is in its ultimate reality the revelation of personality. A book is not the sum of its pages but is the illumination of personality, "The nature of reality is the variedness of its unity."

It is when we contrast the world of personality with the world of science that we realise the limits of both well and fully and comprehend the true nature of personality as the revelation of the Infinite in the finite and through the finite while preserving its infiniteness. "Science sets up an impersonal and unalterable standard of space and time which is not the standard of creation" . . . . You can never come to the reality of creation by contemplating it from the point of view of destruction." The ultimate processes of analysis lands us in abstractions and sometimes even in negations. The real untruth of the scientific postulate of the unknowable is thus expressed in perfect words by Tagore "Not only the world but God Himself is divested of reality by Science, which subjects Him to analysis in the laboratory of reason outside our personal relationship, and then describes the

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result as unknown and unknowable. It is a mere tautology to say that God is unknowable, when we leave altogether out of account the person who can and does know Him. It is the same thing as saying that food is uneatable when the eater is absent." Science that laughs at the realisations of personality is "like a general grown intoxicated with his power, usurping the throne of his king." It deals with the laws of perspective and colour-combination and not with the real pictures which are the creations of a personality and appeal to personality. It deals with the medium of creation and not with the creation itself. The medium is the self-imposed limitations of time and space and form and movement set by the Infinite Being before Him for the purpose of His self-expression. Tagore says:

"This law is Reason, which is universal,—Reason which guides the endless rhythm of the creative idea, perpetually manifesting itself in its ever-changing forms. Our individual minds are the strings which catch the rhythmic vibrations of his universal mind and respond in music of space and time . . . . Because of the mind instruments which we possess we also have found our place as creators. We create not only art and social organisations, but our inner nature and outer

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surroundings, the truth of which depends upon their harmony with the law of the universal mind. Of course, our creations are mere variations upon God's great theme of the universe. When we produce discords, they either have to end in a harmony or in silence. Our freedom as a creator finds its highest joy in contributing its own voice to the concert of the world—music."

The remainder of this second chapter is devoted to the illumination of Tagore's central idea of personality by certain beautiful verses from the *Isāvāsya-panishad*. Without this central fact of personality life is "like a lamp without its light, a violin without is music." "The infinite and the finite are as song and singing are one." Our relational world is individual yet universal. "It is not in my own individual personality that this reality is contained but in an infinite personality." Then in a magnificent passage full of the greatness of revelatory utterance Tagore says:

"When in its place we substitute law, then the whole world crumbles into abstractions; then it is elements and force, ions and electrons; it loses its appearance, its touch and taste; the world drama with its language of beauty is hushed, the music is silent, the stage mechanism becomes a ghost of

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itself in the dark, an unimaginable shadow of nothing, standing before no spectator . . . The prosody of the stars can be explained in the class room by diagrams but the poetry of the stars is in the silent meeting of soul with soul, at the confluence of the light and the dark, where the Infinite prints its kiss on the forehead of the finite, where we can hear the music of the Great I Am pealing from the grand organ of creation through its countless reeds in endless harmony."

The Infinite reveals itself in finite and definite and ever-changing forms and we must attain a perfect and personal relationship with it. The world movements are not blind or capricious but are the expressions and manifestations of the will of a Supreme Person. In our crucible of reason the world of appearance vanishes and we call it illusion. This is the negative view. But our enjoyment is positive. A flower is nothing when we analyse it; but it is positively a flower when we enjoy it ' This joy is real because it is personal. And perfect truth is only perfectly known by our personality." Then in a magnificent outburst of expression fired by the infinite vision he says :

"From this we find our ideal. Perpetual giving up is the truth of life. The perfection of this is our life's perfection. We are to make this life our

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poem in all its expressions; it must be fully suggestive of our soul which is infinite, not merely of our possessions which have no meaning in themselves. The consciousness of the infinite in us proves itself by our joy in giving ourselves out of our abundance. And then our work is the process of our renunciation, it is one with our life. It is like the flowing of the river which is the river itself. Let us live. Let us have the true joy of life, which is the joy of the poet in pouring himself out in his poem. Let us express our infinity in everything round us, in works we do, in things we use in men with whom we deal, in the enjoyment of the world with which we are surrounded. Let our soul permeate our surroundings and create itself in all things, and show its fulness by fulfilling needs of all times. This life of ours has been filled with the gifts of the divine giver. The stars have sung to it, it has been blessed with the daily blessing of the morning light, the fruits have been sweet to it, and the earth has spread its carpet of grass what it may have its rest. And let it like an instrument fully break out in music of its soul in response to the touch of the infinite soul."

Tagore then says that our work must be such as

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will not cling to and impede and repress our personality but will reveal and exalt and express it in a perfect manner. Activity should not be aimless or convulsive but purposive and rhythmic and reposeful. Life must express the Eternal throughout the procession of the fleeting moments of our earthly career: He says: "Life is a perpetual creation, it has its truth when it outgrows itself in the infinite." We must bring out the immortal truth hidden amid the isolated facts of life and set it in the radiance of the Infinite. The soul finds its perfection in its unity with other souls. "When I love, in other words, when I feel I am ~~trier~~ in some one else than myself, then I am glad, for the One in me realizes its truth of unity by uniting with others, and there is its joy." We must grow from the self into the soul, from bondage into freedom, from sorrow into joy, from ignorance into wisdom, from desire into love. "The gift is the soul unto the soul, therefore it can only be realized by the soul in joy, not analysed by the reason in logic." "Therefore the ~~money~~ of the personal man has been to know the Supreme Person." The soul of man has always striven to realise and reveal Him in the gracious acts of individual and social life, in the joys of art, and in the sanctities and raptures of the spiritual life. The uttermost joy of realisation is however in the paradise of



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Consciousness where the soul gazes upon the lotus face of the Eternal God and is fully of the music of silence. This chapter closes with a rapturous outburst of poetic and spiritual feeling :

“Have I not known the sunshine to grow brighter and the moonlight deeper in its tenderness when my heart was filled with a sudden access of love assuring me that this world is one with my soul? When I have sung the coming of the clouds, the pattering of rains has found its pathos in my songs. From dawn of our history the poets and artists have been infusing the colours and music of their soul into the structure of existence. And from this I have known certainly that the earth and the sky are woven with the fibres of man’s mind, which is the universal mind at the same time. If this were not true, then poetry would be false and music a delusion, and the mute world would compel man’s heart into utter silence. The Great master plays; the breath is his own, but the instrument is our mind through which he brings out his songs of creation, and therefrom I know that I am not a mere stranger resting in the the wayside inn of this earth on my voyage of existence but I live in a world whose life is bound up with mine.”

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In the next discourse entitled *The Second Birth* the great ideas above referred to attain their fruition and consummation. "Man's second and divine birth is in love. The dualism of life and nature is a dualism of unity and love and not one of hostility and exclusion. In the animal kingdom elements of separation and diversity are greater than in the vegetable kingdom and this results in a richer and more complex unity of relationship with the world. In man his intellect and his more varied needs of food and sex result in a far greater richness and complexity of unity. The range of his self-consciousness is wider and deeper. The ethical element in man is however the factor that dowers on him his real second birth. He rises from the life of desire to the life of moral purpose. Tagore says well. "In this moral world we come from the world of nature into the world of humanity. We live and move and have our being in the universal man. A human infant is born into the material universe and into the universe of man at the same time. This latter is a world of ideas and institutions, of stored knowledge and trained habits. It has been built by strenuous endeavours of ages, by martyrdoms of heroic man. Its strata are deposits of the renunciations of countless individuals in all ages and countries." Then comes a great passage full of revelatory vision:

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"This is the world of man's second but in the extra-natural world, when the dualism of the animal life and the moral makes us conscious of our personality as man. Whatever hinders this life of man from establishing perfect relationship with its moral world is an evil. It is death, a far greater death than the death of the natural life."

In the outer world man conquers matter but in the inner he has a harder task—the conquest of passion. Our institutions are our aids in this great battle. "They are giving directions to our will and digging channels for it in order to allow its course to run easily without useless waste of power." When our moral life is able to embrace all men and all time, we realise the Truth which gives its real meaning to goodness. Love is not addition of personalities but the completion and perfection of personality. "This perfection is not a thing of measurement or analysis, it is a whole which transcends all its parts." What do we gain by this moral perfection: "This feeling of perfection in love, which is the feeling of perfectness, opens for us the gate of the world of the Infinite One, who is revealed in the unity of all personalities."

"Life is the relationship of the That and the This. In the world of things and men, this rhythm of That and This flows on in countless channels of

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metres, but the meaning of it is absent, till the realisation is made perfection the Supreme 'That and This.'

Tagore has so far explained with heavenly clarity of idea and golden clarity of expression what is man's real second birth—the birth into the world of light and love and creative freedom. The child, though protected and sheltered and fed in the mother's body, finds its fulfilment in the self-creative and self-conscious life after birth. Man's birth into the heaven of love brings him into clash with the earthly law of struggle for existence. The world of nature is concerned only with pain and pleasure but the world of soul is concerned with sin and holiness. "Crime is against man, sin is against the divine in us." In the kingdom of life, it is man alone that refuses to accept nature as final and seeks the supernatural through the blessedness of renunciation, and creative freedom. Man alone is created helpless and naked and has to create the satisfactions of his needs. "For creation is freedom." Man studies and remakes the mechanism of the universe and refuses to accept the tyranny of matter as final and inevitable. Tagore then shows us the great part that science is destined to play in this enfranchisement of the human spirit :

"Science guides man's rebellion of freedom

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against Nature's rule. She is working to give into man's hand Nature's magic wand, of power; Science has a materialistic appearance, because she is engaged in breaking the prison of matter and working in the rubbish heap of ruins . . . . But the day will come when some of the great powers of nature will be at the beck and call of every individual, and at least the prime necessities of life will be supplied to all with very little care and cost. To live will be as easy to man as to breathe and his spirit will be free to create his own world."

Then will he "be born from Nature's womb to the world of spirit—the world where he has his freedom of creation; where he is in co-operation with the infinite, where his creation and God's creation are to become are in harmony." But this is not severance from nature but is the perfectness of realisation wherein nature is illumined by spirit and ceased to be matter and becomes a Goddess. Man's second birth in freedom is not mere extension "but its true perfection is in its intensity, which is love." Man is not a feeding organism but is a free personality realising the infinite in love. Self-consciousness begins with a feeling of separateness and is perfected in the feeling of unity with all. "The whole object of man is to free his

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personality of self into the personality of soul, to turn his inward forces into the forward movement towards the infinite, from the contraction of the self in desire into the expansion of soul in love." Human personality is the true centre of all relationships and realises itself fully in love towards the infinite centre to which all the personalities are related and which is Supreme Bliss. "Our highest joy is in love." In a great and beautiful passage he says: "The revelation of unity in its passive perfection, which we find in nature, is beauty; the revelation of unity in its active perfection, which we find in the spiritual world, is love. This is not in the rhythm of proportions, but in the rhythm of wills . . . . 'Beauty is the harmony realised in things which are bound by law. Love is the harmony realized in wills which are free.'" Thus man's second birth is in "the surrender of his self to be turned for the music of the soul."

The next discourse deals with Tagore's school at Shantiniketan. It is based upon "the great truth that man's true relationship with the world is that of personal love" and is intended to generate and sustain and develop the ideal of "union with all in an infinite bond of love." Tagore says of the ordinary school:

"The young mind should be saturated with the idea that it has been born in a human world

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which is in harmony with the world around it. And this is what our regular type of school ignores with an air of superior wisdom, severe and disdainful. It forcibly snatches away children from a world full of the mystery of God's own handiwork, full of the suggestiveness of personality. It is a mere method of discipline which refuses to take into account the individual. It is a manufactory specially designed for grinding out uniform results.'

Tagore says that he was sick of "the wooden benches and straight walls staring at me with the blank stare of the blind." "I was not a creation of the school master,—the Government Board of Education was not consulted when I took birth in the world." He extricated himself before insensibility set in and thus preserved the sweetness and originality of his nature by being spared the serving out of "the full penal term which men of my position have to undergo to find their entrance into cultured society." But what on the other hand should be the proper attitude towards children and what should be the ideal of their education? We must realise that "children are God's own creation" and that "the highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence." The education

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of sympathy is quite essential though it is ignored in the modern schools. Tagore says: "We rob the child of this earth to teach him geography, of language to teach him grammar. His hunger is for the epic, but he is supplied with chronicles for facts and dates. He was born in the human world but is banished into the world of living gramaphones, to expiate for the original sin of being born in ignorance." Tagore protests also against the modern habit of tying up human feet in sock and slippers "of all prices, and shapes and misproportions." "The earth has her subtle modulations of contour which she only offers for the kiss of her true lovers—the feet . . . For even the flattest of earth surfaces has its dimples of diminutive hills and dales only discernible by educated feet." He wants an atmosphere of the idealisation of poverty in the school, because 'poverty brings us into complete proxy with life and the world, for living richly is living mostly by touch and thus living in a world of lesser reality." Tagore says that under the modern system "the children suffer, and in the young man is produced world-weariness, while old men forget to grow old in peace and beauty, merely becoming dilapidated youths, ashamed of their shabbiness of age, full of holes and patchwork." He says further:

"Therefore, in my school much to the disgust of



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the people of expensive habits, I had to provide for this great teacher,—this bareness of furniture and materials,—not because it is poverty, but because it leads to personal experience of the world.”

Tagore brings up his boy in full knowledge and love of the varied colour and movement of life. He says: “At first they must gather knowledge through their love of life, and then they will renounce their lives to gain knowledge, and then again they will come back to their fuller lives with ripened wisdom.” For this there must be the glad removal of “the screens of wealth and respectability between himself (the boy) and the world of nature.”

Another great idea realised by Tagore in his school is the supreme importance of the unity of truth. In modern schools intellect is attended to and the spirit is starved. The spiritual world is the innermost core of truth in the universe and our existence is not “a momentary outburst of chance, drifting on the current of matter towards an eternal nowhere.” In ancient India “boys grew up in an intimate vision of eternal life before they were thought fit to enter the state of the householder.” Tagore says:

“This ideal of education through sharing a life of high aspiration with one’s master took possession

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of my mind . . . We must make the purpose our education nothing short of the highest purpose of man, the fullest growth and freedom of the soul."

He pleads for the "wealth not of things but of inner light, not of power but of love." In a passage full of the beauty of high and noble aspiration he says :

"In India we have the inheritance of this treasure of spiritual wisdom. Let the object of our education be to open it out before us and to give us the power to make the true use of it in our life, and offer it to the rest of the world when the time comes as our contribution to its eternal welfare."

Tagore shows how his school has grown with his growth and has taken colour and sweetness from the mellowing of his own personality. "Because the growth of this school was the growth of my life and not that of a mere carrying out of my doctrines, its ideals changed with its maturity like a ripening fruit that not only grows in its bulk and deepens in its colour, but undergoes change in the very quality of its inner pulp." As he grew in spiritual vision he realised the essence of religion and tried to kindle in his boys the flame of love that shone out in the very centre of his being. He says !

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“In our spiritual attainment gaining and giving are the same thing ; as in a lamp, to light itself is the same as to impart light to others.....If (religion) is the truth of our complete being, the consciousness of our personal relationship with the infinite, it is the true centre of gravity of our life.”

Tagore who is the guiding spirit of the ‘Ashram’ and all the others who are there are thus inspired by “the message of self-dedication in the perfect beauty of worship.”

Tagore says that the subconscious mind which is more active than conscious intelligence in children is attended to and trained and guided in his school. “Experiences of countless generations have been instilled into our nature by its agency, not only without causing any fatigue but giving as joy.”

Tagore tells us how he has set all his “resources to create an atmosphere of ideas in the Ashram.” Most of his *Gitanjali* songs and other poems and plays were written at Bolepur and were read and sung to the boys of the *Ashram*. The boys breathed the divine atmosphere of art and there was kindled in them by an unconscious process a burning love of Indian art.

Peshaps the most beautiful passage in this chapter is that in which Indian education, Indian natural

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scenery, and Indian spirituality are blended in an exquisite piece of illuminative description.

“It will be difficult for others than Indians to realize all the associations that are grouped round the word *Ashram*, forest sanctuary. For it blossomed in India like its own lotus, under a sky generous in its sunlight and starry splendour. India's climate has brought to us the invitation of the open air; the language of her mighty rivers is solemn in their chants; the limitless expanse of her plains encircles our homes with the silence of the world beyond; there the sun rises from the marge of the green earth like an offering of the unseen to the altar of the unknown, and it goes down to the west at the end of the day like a gorgeous ceremony of nature's salutation to the Eternal. In India the shades of the trees are hospitable, the dust of the earth stretches its brown arms to us, the air with its embraces clothes us with warmth. These are the unchanging facts that ever carry their suggestions to our minds, and therefore we feel it is India's mission to realize the truth of the human soul in the Supreme Soul through its union with the soul of the world. This mission had taken its natural form in the forest schools in the ancient time. And it

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still urges us to seek for the vision of the infinite in all forms of creation, in the human relationships of love, to feel it in the air we breathe, in the light in which we open our eyes, in the water in which we bathe, in the earth on which we live and die."

By a natural transition the thought in the book moves on to the next chapter on *Meditation*. Tagore says of it ; "There are things we get from outside and take to ourselves as possession. But with meditation it is just the opposite. It is entering into the very midst of some great truth, so that, in the end, we are possessed by it." We acquire money ; we acquire knowledge ; but "the highest truth is that which we can only realise by plunging into it. And when our consciousness is fully merged in it, then we know that it is no mere acquisition, but that we are one with it. Thus through meditation, when our soul is in its true relation to the Supreme Truth, then all our actions, words, behaviour, become true." Hence meditation is not adding anything to ourselves, but renunciation and realisation and attainment of unity with all creation. The human personality is in a vital relation of unity with God and not in a mere mechanical relation with the world. Law takes no account of man as a personal being. "Law is about the physiology of our body, the

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psychology of our minds, the mechanism of our being. And when we come to our personal nature, we do not know any law which explains it. Therefore Science ignores the very basis of truth about ourselves." Mere force cannot be the object of worship but God is our father and our mother who can be loved and adored by us. Man is not mere body or mind but is spirit bound by Eternal Love to the Eternal Father. The perfection of personal relationship is in love. "Because we have loved and find in love the infinite satisfaction of our personality, therefore we have come to know that our relationship to the infinite personality is that Love. And in this way man has learned to say 'our father,' not merely King, or Master, but father. That is to say, there is something in Him which we share,—something common between this Eternal Person and this finite person

. . . . We now that we are born of love—our relationship is love, and we feel that our father and mother are the true symbols of our eternal relationship with God." Therefore it is that man's love finds its fulness in self-surrender to God in a passion of adoration. Tagore quotes and explains certain prayers from what he calls "the immortal storehouse of inexhaustible wisdom—the Vedas and Upanishads" as expressing in a perfect form this pas-

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sion of adoration towards God and as invaluable aids to meditation. Many yearns for infinite freedom and prays for holiness to be saved from spiritual degradation so that he may soar on the wings of love and purity into the heaven of the ecstacy of God-realisation.

The last discourse in the book is on *Woman*. The place of man and woman in nature's economy is thus stated by Tagore:

“Thus, though in the vital department of humanity woman still occupies the throne given to her by Nature, man in the mental department has created and extended his own dominion. For this great work detachment of mind and freedom of movement were necessary. Man took advantage of his comparative freedom from the physical and emotional bondage, and marched unencumbered towards his extension of life's boundaries. In this he has travelled through the perilous path of revolution and ruins . . . . Through this repeated experience of disasters man has discovered, though he has not fully realized, the truth, that in all his creations the moral rhythm has to be maintained to save them from destruction; that a mere unlimited augmentation of power does not lead to real progress, and there must be balance of proportion, must be the harmony of the structure

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with its foundation, to indicate a real growth in truth."

On the other hand woman is the great conserver and preserver: she is the guardian of the emotional and spiritual elements in human nature; and she is the Godgiven and faithful guardian of the racial type.

"This ideal of stability is deeply cherished in woman's nature. She is never in love with merely going on, shooting wanton arrows of curiosity into the heart of darkness. All her forces instinctively work to bring things to some shape of fulness,—for that is the law of life. In life's movement though nothing is final yet every step has its rhythm of completeness.

What is woman's great function to-day? She has to enter into the warring world of men and calm their wranglings with her invincible power of tenderness and peace. Tagore has expressed this with his golden facility of phrase embodying the golden radiance of his penetrative vision:

"At the present stage of history civilization is almost exclusively masculine, a civilization of power in which woman has been thrust aside in the shade. Therefore it has lost its balance and is moving by hopping from war to war . . . And at last the time has arrived when woman must step in



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and impart her life rhythm to this reckless movement of power. For woman's function is the passive function of the soil, which not only helps the tree to grow but keeps its growth within limits. The tree must have life's adventure and send up and spread out its branches on all sides, but all its deeper bonds of relation are hidden and held firm in the soil and this helps it to live. Our civilization must also have its passive element, broad and deep and stable. It must not be mere growth but harmony of growth. It must not be all tune but it must have its time also. This time is not a barrier, it is what the banks are to the river; they guide into permanence the current which otherwise would lose itself in the amorphousness of morass. It is rhythm, the rhythm which does not check the world's movements but leads them into truth and beauty."

Tagore therefore rightly condemns the new feminine restlessness in the West which seeks the surprises of a spurious and tinsel originality and not the satisfactions of true self-realisation. Women must not become slaves of the evil habit of "continual dram—drinking of sensationalism" which dulls and deadens sensibility and kills the bloom of the rose of womanhood. Woman's gracefulness is in her

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harmony with things and her joy in "the subtle and unobtrusive beauty of the commonplace" whose radiant beauties are invisible because they are spiritual. The modern woman whose love of the ordinary—but infinitely valuable and divine—elements in life has been deadened by the new life is "frantically busy not in utilising the time, but merely in filling it up," and thus "smothers the voice of the Infinite by the unmeaning rattle of ceaseless movement." "Our everyday world is a like a reed, its true value is not in itself, but those who have the power and the serenity of attention can hear the music which the Infinite plays through its very emptiness." In the domestic world the value of the individual is not the market value but the value of love and "this domestic world has been the gift of God to woman." Woman is the radiant divine centre of human relationships and God has sent her to love the world and to teach love to the world. Modern civilisation sacrifices the individual at the bloody altar of organisation but the spiritual leaders of mankind have proclaimed and proved the infinite worth of the individual. "At the present stage of civilisation, when the mutilation of individuals is not only practised but glorified, woman are feeling ashamed of their own womanliness. For God, with his message of love, has sent them as guardians

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of individuals, and, in this their divine vocation, individuals are more to them than army and navy and parliament, shops and factories. Here they have their service in God's own temple of reality, where love is of more value than power . . . In the present age they feel that their pride is hurt when they are taken as mere mothers of the race, as the ministers to the vital needs of its existence, and to its deeper spiritual necessity of sympathy and love." Civilisation is now growing disproportionately masculine. "Organisation is encroaching upon the prince of personal relationship and sentiment is giving way to law." The home is crowded out by the office. Woman cannot afford to become a mere bright patch in man's decorative scheme of life to relieve the tension of his social and political striving. She is the goddess of beauty and beneficence and love. The maimed and crushed and insulted individual has to be won into love of God through her love. "She must protect with her care all the beautiful flowers of sentiment from the scorching laughter of the science of proficiency." The material civilisation of nationalism based on economics and politics and militarism can be transformed into the spiritual civilisation of co-operation and reciprocity only by her magic wand of love. Let me finish this loving study of thi great work with the following great passage :

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“Woman is endowed with the qualities of chastity modesty, devotion and power of self-sacrifice in a greater measure than man is. It is the passive quality in nature which turns its monster forces into perfect creations of beauty—taming the wild elements into delicacy of tenderness fit for the service of life. This passive quality has given woman that large and deep placidity which is so necessary for the healing and nourishing and storing of life. If life were all spending, then it would be like a rocket, going up in a flash and coming down the next moment in ashes. Life should be like a lamp where the potentiality of light is far greater in quality than what appears as the flame.”

## CHAPTER V.

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### NATIONALISM.

**I**N this work Tagore has given us his most mature view on the great feature of modern life—Nationalism. In the rebuilding of the world after the cataclysm of the French Revolution the national spirit emerged as the primary basis of the reconstructed social and political life of modern Europe. It is the very pivot of modern civilised life. The nationalistic idea was by no means alien to the genius of India as shown by me already in the chapter on Indian Renaissance in another work. But England the champion of freedom, the liberator of slaves, the protector of the integrity of small states and treaty obligations, and the helper of other races to attain a great political life—has been providentially brought into India to intensify and unify our national life so that India might preserve her racial graces and glories and at the same time be in the vanguard of human progress.

If we try for a moment to understand the evolution of the idea of citizenship, the matter will become abundantly clear. Citizenship “is the status of the

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freeman in the social organism." Man passed from the horde to the nomadic tribe, from the nomadic tribe to the agricultural group, from the village economy to the city economy and thence to life in states. The federated city states of Greece and Rome slowly decomposed and disappeared. The middle ages were more religious and feudal than political and democratic. It was only after the French Revolution that great national states and democratic ideals emerged into vital and vigorous life. The basis of social life is not kinship as in the ancient world or religious faith as in the mediaeval world but community of political interest. The Renaissance and Reformation foreshadowed the change but the French Revolution precipitated it and the new scientific and democratic era following it perfected it and made it a dynamic social principle.

It is not my purpose or province here to go into the essential elements of national life and decide whether these last in India. It has been pointed out that such elements as have been observed elsewhere—community of race, community of language, community of traditions and ideals, community of laws, a common government, etc.—are not indispensable singly or in combination for the birth of the national spirit. If a real national self-consciousness has risen, then there is the spirit of nationality there, though some of

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the elements abovesaid may not be present. The world is not built and does not evolve upon the same stereotyped pattern everywhere.

The real danger of nationalism as of other good things in life is that of making a fetish of it and sacrificing equally valuable or more valuable things at its grim altar. The theory that the individual exists for the state dwarfs and eventually stifles the God in man. The theory that the state exists for the individual exalts the individual unduly and is sure to give rise to an inflated and unhealthy individualism. The Indian ideal that the individual and the state both exist for God and that the goal of the individual is the attainment of the God through the disciplines of social life is the only true and noble ideal. Social and political life must be based on the principle of co-operation and individual life must be based on the principle of duty, if the Kingdom of God is to be realised on the earth

We must never forget that modern Indian Nationalism has many aspects and not merely the political aspect. It is upon our maintaining the purity and efficiency of our individual and social ideals in loyal obedience to the spirit of the race that our future of greatness depends. We must not allow any fallacious views of nationalism elsewhere to undermine this steady self-devotedness. As a matter of fact history

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*never* repeats itself though it often approximates to itself. The Indian problem is special and unique and we must exercise the utmost care and caution so as to preserve the soul of India in undiminished and unfading bloom. India has to preserve her immemorial social and spiritual ideals and has at the same time to come into the front spaces of the modern era by scientific and liberal education and by industrial and commercial expansion. The new political institutions so kindly given to us by England in the course of the performance of her God-given task of India's political regeneration can flourish only if a proper and effective public opinion comes into existence and gains solidity and permanence by a widespread realisation of civic duties and responsibilities. British valour has stood between India and anarchy and British political genius has guided the growth of liberal education and political life in our holy land, and if India sets her heart upon the reattainment of her greatness, the only way open to her is to preserve her Indianness and come into the modern era with the strength born of scientific education and industrial and commercial expansion.

Thus to enable India to fulfil her mission among the races of the world and fill worthily her lofty place in the federation of humanity we have to attend to the preservation of our social and spiritual ideals and the



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attainment of scientific education and industrial progress. The Indian spirituality which has been the real source of our vitality by keeping us in touch with the Centre of life has to be made a real and living portion of our lives. Our education has to be saturated with it through and through. We have great world-ideas and have to maintain our great institutions designed to realise those ideas. We have to spiritualise our education, our social and political life, and our industrial and economic life. For all this the fundamental need is the spiritualisation of our conception of the motherland. India is not a particular area of mud, so many square miles of earth,—she is a goddess who is crowned with the Himalayas, whose lotus feet are washed by the smiling seas, whose silken robe of diverse colours is the variegated beauty of her hills and plains. The word “spiritualising” is in the heart and on the lips of all, but very few know all that it implies and expresses. Political economy views man as a money-making machine. Politics view him as a servant of the state. Art views him as a lover of the beautiful. Science views him as a physical link in the chain of organic life. But religion regards him as soul whose deepest joy is in the realisation of the oversoul and tests economics, politics, art, and science by their contribution towards such realisation.

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The study of Indian languages, Indian literature, Indian art, Indian ideals of life, Indian history, and Indian religion must be an integral portion of education and a predominant portion of the life work of all, if this attainment and spiritualisation of national life are to become an accomplished fact in India. The future of India is not in the hands of the mere reformers who turn their backs on the past or the cosmopolitan *literate* who are odd mixtures of many things but are not real living personalities, but in the hands of those who build themselves into solidity on the basement of the past and seek to build the future India on the same solid foundation. India's world-ideas and the social means devised in the shape of institutions to realise them must be understood and preserved and perfected. The vital force of the race expresses itself in the race-consciousness, reveals itself in the racial institutions. Hence it is that we have to distrust and denounce a nationalism that is alienated from our social and spiritual ideals by the most grievous of all forms of alienation—the alienation of sympathy. A nationalism that has not got *Brahmacharya* as its basis of national education, that has not got the individual, communal, and ceremonial sanctities and dedications of domestic and civic life, and that has not got the discipline and austerities of meditative and ascetic life in the supra-social self-

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dedicatedness of life's ripe fruitage is not Indian at all, whatever else it may or may not be, Nationality is racial individuality and is a precious blossom in the garden of God. The Indo-Aryan has always realised as his goal cooperative and synthetic diverseness in social life and spiritual rapture in individual life. Here it is that the entire area of life has to be electrified and vitalised by this illuminative and magnetic Indian conception as to the plan and purpose of life.

The greatest duty before us to-day is the revelation of the message of India through her history and the bringing up of India's manhood in the light of that revelation. The Indian social polity was and is a composite harmony and in the Indian conception of the state we find harmonised all the helpful elements of political life found elsewhere in the world. As I have said in my commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*:

"The written and unwritten rules of the constitution bound king and subject alike and there was a harmonious combination of central control and local self-government. We must not forget that democracy is only a means and not an end and that the true end is the self-realisation of the soul. Hence the disciplines of individual and social life were always conceived of from a larger and diviner stand point in this holy land of ours. Life is not passivity but active discipline ;

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but the discipline is in the direction of the increasing supremacy of soul over sense of spirit over matter: Conceived in this way patriotism stands not as an isolated peak but as a great and sublime peak amidst a wonderful mountain range of higher life illumined by the sun of spiritual life. Thus Indian nationalism has to grow into its radiance and perfection of manhood according to the law of its own being and show to the world how true self-respect and self-reliance can and must and will be in harmony with love of other races and obedience to the will of God."

Tagore's first lecture is on nationalism in the west. It begins with a great utterance about the forces making for racial distinctiveness: "Man's history is being shaped according to the difficulties it encounters. These have offered us problems and claimed their solutions from us, the penalty of nonfulfilment being death or degradation. These difficulties have been different in different peoples of the earth, and in the manner of our overcoming them lies our distinction." What are obstacles in the kingdom of animals are opportunities in the kingdom of man. In India the great problem has been to attain unity and efficiency by harmonising the various races born in India or come to India. Tagore says well: "*Neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatry*

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*of nation-worship is the goal of human history. And India has been trying to accomplish her task through social regulation of differences on the one hand, and the spiritual recognition of unity on the other."* The leaders of Indian thought have always tried "to set at naught all differences of man by the overflow of our consciousness of God." Tagore says :

"In fact, our history has not been of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of fights for political supremacy. If our country records of these days have been despised and forgotten, for they in no way represent the true history of our people. Our history is that of our social life and attainment of spiritual ideals. But we feel that our task is not yet done. The world-flood has swept over our country, new elements have been introduced, and wider adjustments are waiting to be made."

It is upon such an India—so spiritual, so full of the meek spirit of adoration, so gentle and inoffensive—"that the Nation of west burst in." Tagore then points out the difference between Nation and Society : "A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organised for a mechanical purpose; Society as such has no ulterior purpose. It is an end in itself. It is a spontaneous self-expression of man

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as a social being. It is a natural régulation of human relationships, so that men can develop ideals of life in co-operation with one another. It has also a political side, but this is only for a special purpose. It is for self-preservation. It is merely the side of power not of human ideals." Thus a nation is a mechanical organisation and not a living bond. The result is that even in the relations of men and women where there should be the "completeness through the union based upon mutual self-surrender" we have elements of wasteful and unnatural conflict. The real meaning of life is forgotten in the craze for efficient organisation. Anarchism and strikes are only the natural results of the state of things where "the wholeness and wholesomeness of human ideals" are entirely absent. "For greed of wealth and power can never have a limit and compromise of self-interest can never attain the final spirit of reconciliation..... When this organisation of politics and commerce, whose other name is the Nation, becomes all-powerful at the cost of the harmony of the higher social life, then it is an evil day for humanity."

Hence the assimilation of the best principles of western civilisation must be always distinguished from western nationalism. The spirit of the West is nobler than the Nationalism of the west which is based on conflict and not on co-operation. In the modern scheme

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of life the personal man is giving way to the professional man. The search is not for reality but for law. "Reality is the harmony which gives to the component parts of a thing the equilibrium of the whole." The true glory of man is not in power but in perfection. We have to stop the process of dehumanizing commerce and politics and to humanise and then spiritualise them. To those who glory in the organised selfishness of nationalism Tagore says: "Be more good, more just, more true in your relation to man, control your greed, make your life wholesome in its simplicity, and let your consciousness of the divine in humanity be more perfect in its expression."

The next discourse is on *Nationalism in Japan*. Tagore says: "The worst form of bondage is the bondage of dejection, which keeps men hopelessly chained in loss of faith in themselves." He points out how Japan "rose from her dreams, and in giant strides left centuries of inaction behind, overtaking the present time in its foremost achievement." The torpor that had befallen Asia where "great kingdoms were founded, philosophy, science, art and literature flourished, and all the great religions of the world had their cradles" was shaken off by Japan in the course of a generation. Tagore says:

"The truth is that Japan is old and new at the

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same time. She has her legacy of ancient culture from the East,—the culture that enjoins man to look for his true wealth and power in his inner soul, the culture that gives self-possession in the face of loss and danger, self-sacrifice without counting the cost or hoping for gain, defiance of death, acceptance of countless social obligations that we owe to men as social beings. In a word, modern Japan has come out of the immemorial East like a lotus blossoming in easy grace, all the while keeping its firm hold upon the profound depth from which it has sprung. And Japan, the child of the Ancient East, has also fearlessly claimed all the gifts of the modern age for herself . . . Thus she has come in contact with the living time and has accepted with eagerness and aptitude the responsibilities of the modern civilisation. This it is which has given heart to the rest of Asia."

But Japan's greatness has been due not to imitation but to assimilation. "You can borrow knowledge from others, but you cannot borrow temperament . . . The living organism does not allow itself to grow into its food, it changes its food into its own body. And only thus can it grow strong and not by mere accumulation, by giving up its personal identity,"



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Any other attitude would be "the pride of the fop who sets more store on his new headdress than on the head itself." The new nations of the world must avoid the evils and weaknesses of the nationalism of the west viz. "the conflict between the individual and the state, labour and capital, the man and the woman, the conflict between the greed of material gain and the spiritual life of man, the organized selfishness of nations and the higher ideals of humanity; the conflict between all the ugly complexities inseparable from giant organizations of commerce and state and the natural instincts of man crying for simplicity and beauty and fulness of leisure." The spirit of eastern civilisation seems strange and primitive to the western mind. "To a western observer our civilisation appears all metaphysics, as to a deaf man piano playing appears to be mere movements of fingers and no music. He cannot think that we have found some deep basis of reality upon which we have built our institutions." But the East has to preserve and intensify her own culture while assimilating the new efficiency of the west and avoiding its social evils and dangers. As Tagore says well: "Our civilisation is not a nebulous system of abstract speculations, it has achieved a something which is a positive truth,—a truth that can give man's heart its shelter and sustenance. It has

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evolved an inner sense,—a sense of vision, the vision of the infinite reality in all finite things.”

This mood of intense self-consciousness is the very essence of our racial vigour and must be preserved for ever; we have had a vision of the reality that gives a new meaning to life, that scorns the trials of life, that conquers death, and that attains the highest peace and rapture in renunciation and meditation and devotion. “Its value is not in its multiplication of materials, but in its spiritual fulfilment.” The East will always keep her treasures of beauty and love and meekness and patience and faith and wisdom for the hurrying west when the latter gets tired of its breathless and purposeless self-wastage of life in the pursuit of the butterflies of pleasure. The west is great—great in her cascade of beauty and truth in literature and art “fertilising all countries and all time”, great in her mind which is “sweeping the height and the depth of the universe” and in the application of the mind to the service of man, great in her coaxing and compelling the great forces of nature into man’s service.” But the East has something which she cannot let go and which the world is waiting for and she must preserve it while acquiring from the west the higher arts of industrial and political life and the intellectual acquisitions of modern science. Not dormancy not

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imitativeness but manly assimilation—should be our watch-word.

Tagore then says that in Japan the human side of things is valued highly : “I have travelled in many countries and have met with men of all classes, but never in my travels did I feel the presence of the human so distinctly as in this land.” Deftness and gracefulness and kindness and courtesy are in profusion everywhere in Japan. Japan has “the vision of beauty in nature and the power of realising it in life.” Her attempt is not to conquer nature but get into the heart of nature by reverent adoration—not to subdue nature by the forces of intellect but win her heart by the offerings of love. This feature of Japan’s national life is rooted in the hearts of all the inhabitants of Japan. He point out that “it (Japanese nation) is not an outcome of the necessity of organisation for some ulterior purpose, but it is an extension of the family and the obligations of the heart in a wide field of space and time.” It is this love that speaks in the sweet language of reticent beauty which is so universal in Japan. Tagore says in a great passage:

“What has impressed me most in this country is the conviction that you have realised nature’s secrets not by methods of analytical knowledge, but by sympathy. You have known her language

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of lines, and music or colours, the symmetry in her irregularities, and the cadence in her freedom of movements ; you have seen how she leads her immense crowds of things yet avoids all frictions; how the very conflicts in her creations break out in dance and music ; however exuberance has the aspect of the fulness of self-abandonment, and not a mere dissipation of display. You have discovered that nature reserves her power in forms of beauty; and it is this beauty which, like a mother, nourishes all the giant forces in her breast, helping them in active vigour, yet in repose. You have known that energies of nature save themselves, from wearing but by the rhythm of a perfect grace and that she with the tenderness of her curved lines takes away fatigue from the world's muscles. I have felt that you have been able to assimilate these secrets into your life, and the truth which lies in the beauty of all things has passed into your souls. A mere knowledge of things can be had in a short enough time but their spirit can only be acquired by centuries of training and self-control. Dominating nature from outside is a much simpler thing than making her your own in love's delight, which is a work of true genius. Your race has shown that genius not by acquirement but by

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creation ; not by display of things but by manifestation of its own inner being."

Tagore then warns Japan against allowing her sense of beauty and sympathy and her reverence for things that are "modest and profound and have the subtle delicacy of life" being over-thrown by the new enlightenment. He points on the radical difference between modernising and modernism. Modernism is not European dress or language or style of architecture or forms of social intercourse but in freedom of mind, in efficiency, in scientific thoroughness and accuracy. The acquisition of the western spirit must be strictly limited to the needs of self preservation. Our vital culture must be preserved. "Things that are living so easily hurt ; therefore they require protection." Japan must preserve her allegiance to the moral law in the course of her national growth. "Man becomes all the truer the more he realizes himself in others." Japan must never forget that the mainspring of her civilisation is the bond of human relationship. He points out that "in political civilisation, the state is an abstraction and relationship of men utilitarian", Japan should never allow herself to be subdued in her soul. "We must not vitiate our children's minds with the superstition that business is business, war is war, politics is politics. We must know that man's business has to be more

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than mere business, and so should be his war and politics." We must learn from the west her sense of public good, her civic conscience, her philanthropy her sense of respect for law, her efficiency of organisation, and her mastery of science but we must at the same time preserve the dissinctions and distinctiveness of our soul.

The last discourse in the book is on *Nationalism in India*. Tagore says at the very outset : "Our real problem in India is not political. It is social . . . I do not believe in an exclusive political interest." He says further.

"In finding the solution of our problem we shall have helped to solve the world problem as well. What India has been, the whole world is now. The whole world is becoming one country through scientific facility. And the moment is arriving when you also must find a basis of unity which is not political. If India can offer to the world her solution, it will be a contribution to humanity. There is only one history-the history of man. All national histories are merely chapters in the large one. And we are content in India to suffer for such a great cause."

India has always had "the moral power of love and vision of spiritual unity" and should hence evolve

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not the old type of nationalism but a newer and higher type of nationalism. Her power of love and clarity of vision will give her the necessary energy and vigour for this great task.

Tagore points out that this work is the great duty before the spirit of man in the future. "Therefore man will have to exert all his power of love and clarity of vision to make another great moral adjustment which will comprehend the whole world of men and not merely the fractional groups of nationality." Tagore says that in this great work America is destined to have a predominant and glorious share—a prophetic utterance so amply fulfilled later by America's part in the great war just ended and in the peace conference now going on. He says :

"Therefore of all countries of the earth America has to be fully conscious of this future, her vision must not be obscured and her faith in humanity must be strong with the strength of youth. A parallelism exists between America and India—the parallelism of welding into one body various races."

Tagore then says that 'India has never had a real sense of nationalism.' He means of course nationalism in the sense of aggressive and militant nationalism which regards the country as greater than the ideals of

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humanity. He says with the certainty born of prophetic vision: "We must know for certain that there is a future before us and that future is waiting for those who are rich in moral ideals and not in mere things."

He says further:

"India is no beggar of the West. And yet even though the West may think she is, I am not for thrusting off western civilisation and becoming segregated in our independence. Let us have a deep association. If providence wants England to be the channel of that communication, of that deeper association, I am willing to accept it with all humility. I have great faith in human nature, and I think the West will find its true mission."

Tagore then proceeds to say that West not against any one nation in particular but is against the general idea of all nations. He says: "What is the nation? It is the aspect of a whole people as an organised power." India must not forget her special history and her special mission. She has never exterminated races in India as other countries have done. "India tolerated difference of races from the first, and that spirit of toleration has acted all through her history." Her caste system is the outcome of his spirit of toleration. He then continues:

"For India has all along been trying experiments



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in evolving a social unity within which all the different peoples could be held together, while fully enjoying the freedom of maintaining their own differences. The tie has been as loose as possible yet as close as the circumstances permitted. This has produced something like a United States of a social federation, whose common name is Hinduism."

He however denounces the caste system as it obtains in India to-day. This is a matter on which there are acute differences of opinion and this is not a suitable place or occasion to discuss them. He points out the better organisation of industrial life as of social life in India as compared with the West. "In India the production of commodities was brought under the law of social adjustments. Its basis was co-operation, having for its object the perfect satisfaction of social needs."

Tagore then gives us the quintessence of sociological wisdom. He says:

"The ideals that strive to take form in social institutions have two objects. One is to regulate our passions and appetites for the harmonious development of man, and the other is to help him to cultivate disinterested love for his fellow-creatures. Therefore society is the expression of those

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moral and spiritual aspirations of man which belong to his higher nature."

Political freedom in combination with greed of power is not real freedom. "In the so-called free countries the majority of the people are not free, they are driven by the minority to a goal which is not even known to them. This becomes possible only because people do not acknowledge moral and spiritual freedom as their object." Again, unwieldy organisations of commercial and political life are ugly and inhuman. Tagore says well: "The vast powers of nature do not reveal their truth in hideousness but in beauty. Beauty is the signature which the Creator stamps upon His works when He is satisfied with them." Tagore's message to India in the light of these great ideas is thus concluded :

"Let our life be simple in its outer aspect and rich in its inner gain. Let our civilisation take its firm stand upon its basis of social co-operation and not upon that of economic exploitation and conflict... I will persist in believing that there is such a thing as the harmony of completeness in humanity, where poverty does not take away his riches, where defeat may lead him to victory, death to immortality, and where in the compensation of Eternal justice those who are the last may yet

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have their insult transmuted into a golden triumph."

I wish however to point out that this great picture of national life as it has moved in procession through the world must be taken in its proper setting of other great ideas upon which sufficient emphasis has not been expressly laid, though probably intended, by Tagore. Cosmopolitanism is the ideal to aim at but the world is now not pure or safe enough for it. Racial individuality which is only another name for nationalism must be preserved but it must be definitely turned in the direction of love instead of hate. The solution of the modern evils of false nationalism is not so much in a league of nations as in a general pervasion of society by a humanism and a spirituality of a higher type. Then only will society cease to be "a marionette show of politicians, soldiers, manufacturers, and bureaucrats, pulled by wire arrangement of wonderful efficiency." Of all the nations of the world it is the British and American nations that have approximated nearest to the proper conception of a true nation which balances the claims of country and humanity and God harmoniously and well. As Tagore says India's historical antecedents fit her for achieving the humanisation and spiritualisation of modern nationalism. The cult of Motherhood feels it as a grievous psychic wound if

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even one of the races forming her children is hurt in any the slightest degree. Our vision of the mother behind the country and the society gives us a new insight, a new love, a new yearning, a new rapture. Tagore's sweeping condemnation of the co-operative social organisation of India is however not consistent with his praise of her synthetic vision of social and national unity. The fact is that the Indian social polity is pervaded by spiritual unity and the trouble arises, as in every other sphere of life, when we shift the centre of love from the spirit to the outer things of life. If each man and each society turns the dynamic force of love Godward, then will come the power of vision and the energy of service which will enable us to have the perfection of individual and communal self-expression for the greater happiness of man and the greater glory of God.

Thus in Tagore's book we see a poignant and perfect expression of the stirrings of the new life in India. He not only expresses the new life but guides it wisely and well. He has based his life, and seeks to base the national life, on the religious *life* which is more than the discords of religious *faith*. He says: "When religion has to make way for religious organisation, it is like the river being dominated by its sand-bed; the current stagnates and its aspects become

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desert-like." But in this view he forgets that the thin, vague stirrings of joy at the recognition of the divine basis of things is no means of discipline and self-realisation. The Hindu religion is not merely a philosophy but a practical code of life and an inexhaustible store of spiritual *sadhanas*. We can understand and appreciate the ideal of tolerance; but we cannot understand and appreciate the attempt to find a greatest common measure of all religions which will only land us in a vague feeling that there is God, that there is man, and that there is nature, and will not lead us into the blissful realm of God-realisation through the royal road of discipline through love, through prayer, through action, and through meditation and through wisdom.

Hence it seems to me that the fulness of the Indian national life is attainable by the religious life being attained in its *fulness* while keeping in view the idea of the *harmony* of religions and the consequent need of toleration. In regard to the social ideal also, I am unable to agree with his sweeping condemnation of India's social structure. He takes his stand on the old-standing myths of Aryan and Dravidian races which I have tried to expose elsewhere. The Indian organisation of society provided for a full application of the racial energy to life and at the same time pre-

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served the tradition of looking up as the highest human manifestation to the ideal which regards renunciation as the crowning glory and joy of life and which harmonises the life of action with the life of contemplation. The existence of a sense of hierarchy of values in social endeavours is no hindrance to unity or progress or efficiency. The scale of values is measured by psychic greatness and not by physical greatness. You cannot abolish strife and competition so long as your estimates of values are governed by the measure of money and not by the measure of soul. The Indian social organisation is rooted in unity, blossoms into diversity, and has the fruitage of unity. Tagore thinks that the time is now come for the caste system to go. With all respect to him there is a confusion of ideas here. If that system is the only means of love and co-operation, the time is come not for it to go but for other races to arrive at it. He thinks that it bars reverence for personality on the score of attainment as distinguished from birth. But this is a mistake. Reverence for personal spiritual greatness has always been in existence in India wherever and in whatever group the body may be born.

Tagore's nationalism is however quite sound when it takes its stand on what may be called human nature as opposed to the economic nature. We must

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pursue towards men not an economic policy born of selfishness but a policy of love born of spiritual vision. India must preserve her individuality in this respect and keep her soul sweet awaiting the Grace of God to add all other things. Let us not buy a mess of pottage by bartering away our souls. India is not a new nation to be formed into a civilisation. Hers is an ancient and sacred civilisation based on spiritual realisation and expressing itself in social unity. The glory of life is not a decorated *existence* but a spiritual *living*. Increase in material possessions followed by a devitalisation of spirit is no gain at all. Political life is a part of national life and should not be made the whole of national life. The state is the heartpoint of the social body and not the entirety of the social body. It is Tagore's realisation of the distinctive graces and glories of India that is the secret of his burning love for India. He says: "I shall be born in India again and again ; with all her poverty, misery, and wretchedness, I love India best." This does not mean that he does not want modern progress. We want a synthetic integration of spiritual realisation and modern progress. India must assimilate, not imitate. Her royal sign-manual must be on whatever is taken into the treasury of her genius. She has always had this power of assimilation and synthesis. Let her not lose

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it now. She must have self-confidence in her own greatness and attain self-transcendence through self-consecration. Let the recovery of our spiritual selfpossession be attained and everything else will follow.

Tagore's nationalism can never become an accomplished fact unless our modern educational ideals and methods are radically changed. Hence it is that the poet is the inaugurator of a new educational era as well. The modern Indian is not a real person but an echo; he is not an original thought but a dead quotation; he is not a child of God but a machine moulded and numbered in the manufactory of things. Tagore says in one of his letters: "These are all so many shadows, flitting about out of touch with the world." Men are becoming artificial flowers, gorgeous to behold but not rooted in life and devoid of real fragrance and fresh loveliness. Education does not take note of individual variations but is a factory for producing results. Indian history, art, literature, and religion find no place in the modern scheme of studies. The royal highways of the Indian genius have become deserted by the modern Indian students. Tagore says well: "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.....The object of education is to

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give man the unity of truth." (*The Spirit of Japan*). The ancient Indian Asram was home and school and temple and forest and developed a whole man out of each boy. Culture in its fulness is impossible without piety and art. It must be imparted through our languages and our literatures. Only then will the diverce in feeling between the upper classes and the masses cease and there will be reborn perfect unity of purpose and will in the unity of love.

In the industrial world also, beauty must not be sacrificed to machinery. The west is working its way towards the ideal of garden cities, of the restoration of the art and handicrafts, and of the proper equilibrium of agriculture and industry. We should not avoid machinery but implant a soul within it and effect a spiritual union between industry and art. Art is vanishing from India because of the vulgarisation and materialisation of life. Government may preserve ancient monuments but only Indian genius rooted in spirituality can make new monuments. Let us therefore create a soul within the ribs of industry and give wings to the clipped life of Art. Life is not a mere tavern of pleasure but is a temple of joy. Life should not be mere bustling and hustling but should be peace and perfection.

The true Indian ideal is not freedom from action

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but freedom in action. Indian spirituality is not negation but peace and joy. If man makes his own chains he can also break them. Freedom is self-expansion till man touches God through love and service and renunciation. This is the basis on which the future of India has to be built. Education has to become a joy and a process of self-fulfilment. Social love should reign supreme and the social organisation of India should retain diversity but remove depression of any class within the social polity. Co-operation and co-ordination should reign for ever and should banish into the limbs of nothingness all sense of superiority and all sectarian pride.

Fortunately for us we have come under the sway of Britain at a time when but for her protective love there would have been grave danger of the Indian culture setting in a sea of blood. We have learnt from the west the new worship of reason, the passion for freedom, and the ideal of social service which are the outstanding features of the higher western life of today. The great war of this age has been waged by England to establish the eternal truth and value of the idea of a commonwealth of free nations. We shall surely have, as we rightly expect, a higher era of life in this country in every realm of activity, because the two greatest cultures of the world have met and

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mingled in India to be a blessing to both and to the world at large.

The west has achieved great ideals of law and order and progress and freedom and has set before herself and the world lofty ideals of civic duty and political progress. She abolished caprice from social and political life as fully as she realised the absence of caprice in the realm of nature. She has consistently striven for justice and fair play and equality for herself and for others. But a mechanical conception of the universe is slowly replacing the spiritual conception of the universe in the west, and civilisation is becoming predominantly political and powerful and not religious and peaceful. In this respect India has to bring a new idealism into the individual and social life of the west. Again, in the west woman is losing her God-ordained function of tranquil and sweet domesticity. But man and woman are not antagonistic forces but supplementary sweetness. Man's mind moves in straight lines of thought while woman's mind moves in sweet curves of emotion. Marital life is not a *profession* for her but a self-fulfilment. But now she seeks to break man's monopoly of business and to exchange the home for the factory. The acquisition of masculine energy does not sit beautifully on her. Her rebellion is due to the character of modern civilisation

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which is built not on peace but on power. The office and the restaurant are taking the place of the home. In all these respects a new idealism must be introduced by India into western domestic life. Woman has to insist upon love being given a higher place than power. Then only will the west cease "to hop from war to war" and attain true spirituality and peace. The seeds of the great war were sown long ago and have borne bitter fruit. "The fifth act of the tragedy of the unreal" is over and the *Divina Commedia* has to be commenced. The intellect has to be brought into proper relation with the other faculties of man and should not be allowed to usurp from the soul her seat of sovereignty. The nationalism which the future humanity will tolerate is that which will love itself without hating others. Any other nationalism is sure to react and generate a moral catastrophe. We cannot sow the wind yet refuse to reap the whirlwind. The peoples of the world have distinct personalities and all are necessary for the sweetness and perfection and enrichment of universal culture. They should be organised not for power but for perfection. All the races of the world should strive for love and beauty and truth and joy and freedom which do not diminish but increase with sharing and should give up the hunt for the earthly treasures which diminish with division and

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have to be bought at the price of the soul. All are necessary to the world and all are dear to God. International morality means the subordination of nationality to humanity just as morality means the subordination of the individual to the community. The state must bow to God and to humanity and God must cease to be a hypothesis and must become a realisation. On the basis of spiritual democracy must be rebuilt the life of righteousness and holiness and Godward love and adoration which is the true crown and glory of the life of man. The flower of nationalism that can be offered to God is that which blossoms on the tree whose root is internationalism based on disinterested love and self-sacrifice.

This great book of Tagore's closes with a poem called *The Sunset of the Century*, written on the last day of the last century. It contains a prophetic vision of the great conflagration of war that has been since then and the heavenly reign of brotherhood and love hereafter.

### I.

The last sun of the century sets amidst the blood-red clouds of the west and the whirlwind of hatred.

The naked passion of self-love of Nations, in its drunken delirium of greed, is dancing to the clash of steel and the howling verses of vengeance.

II.

The hungry self of the Nation shall burst in a violence of fury from its own shameless feeding.  
For it has made the world its food  
And licking it and crunching it and swallowing it  
in big morsels,  
It swells and swells  
Till in the midst of its unholy feast descends the sudden shaft of heaven piercing its heart of grossness.

III.

The crimson glow of light on the horizon is not the light of thy dawn of peace, my motherland.  
It is the glimmer of the funeral pyre burning to ashes the vast flesh—the self-love of the nation-dead under its own excess.  
Thy morning waits behind the patient dark of the East,  
Meek and silent.

IV.

Keep watch India.  
Bring your offerings of worship for that sacred sunrise,  
Let the first hymn of its welcome sound in your voice and sing  
“Come, Peace, thou daughter of God’s own great

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suffering.

Come with thy treasure of contentment, the sword  
of fortitude,

And meekness crowning thy forehead."

### **V.**

Be not ashamed, my brothers, to stand before the  
proud and the powerful

With your white robe of simpleness.

Let your crown be of humility, your freedom the  
freedom of the soul.

Build God's throne daily upon the ample bareness  
of your poverty

And know that what is huge is not great and  
pride is not everlasting.



## CHAPTER VI.

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### MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.

A remarkable fact about Tagore as about Tennyson is his wonderful vigour of creative imagination active throughout life. Even now he is composing, singing, writing, and speaking with a fertility of mind which is truly astonishing. It is only those who are endowed with true poetic discernment and passionate patriotism and who are fully conversant with the glories of Sanskrit literature and also know the Bengali language and literature well that can perfectly interpret the spirit and the message of Rabindranath. I know my unfitness for doing this great work in an adequate measure and hope that I shall be able to do it later on in a manner and with a fulness worthy of the supreme poet of Modern India.

### Poems and Songs.

It will not be out of place if I begin this study of Tagore's published poems with quoting from three



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poems on Tagore. In Mr. Yone Noguchi's poem published in the *Modern Review*, August 1916, we have the following beautiful lines :

"What a bird and flower leave unsung  
Thou shalt at once take up ; symphony born, not  
fashioned.

Oh, to have thy song without art's rebellion  
To see thy life gaining a simple force that is  
itself creation

Oh, to be forgotten by the tyranny of intellect."

In simplicity  
Thou hast thine own emancipation ;  
Let us be sure of our true selves.  
There is no imagination where is no reality ;  
To see life plain  
Is a discovery or sensation.

Thou, a light born of dream and hope,  
Thou, singer of life's thrill,  
Let thy magic of meditation,  
Thy witchery of song, play  
On the vastness of silence !

The following is Mr. F. G. Pearce's poem on the occasion of Tagore's visit to South India :

His presence was among us as the Sun,

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Slanting his gilded beams at morning's birth,  
Shadowing fair shapes where darkling eyes saw  
none,

Waking new wonders from the dreaming earth.  
His voice brought peace, for in each heart was  
stilled

The pulse of passion ; and his gentle power  
Drew forth new seeds of thought, to be fulfilled

In future years refreshed by memory's shower.  
Most skilled of gardeners ! Most calm, most kind !

We saw not half the blossoms of the heart  
Till thou didst give sight to the groping blind,

Rewakening vision with thy sacred art.  
For, as a gardener serveth many seeds

So in a hundred hearts thy song waked fire,  
Doers unknown to spur to undone deeds,

Music-makers to fashion their desire,  
O, in each garden, with thy Master-hand  
Bless thou the seedlings that thy love hath  
found—

So may we be the Garland for our Land  
Which thou, great gardenet, hast with thy  
blossoms crowned,

Mr. E. E. Speight's poem published in the December (1916) issue of the *Modern Review* is as follows:—  
Thou comest with the winsomeness of spring

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Upon a frozen land ; thy wandering feet  
Are heralded by the glad wakening  
Of moss and herb ; choirs of singers sweet  
From far-strewn islands range over scarped hills  
And warble thine own songs ; waters resound  
With sunny joy ; the air a murmur fills,  
Echoing the holy rapture thou hast found.  
O master, when our hands are locked in strife,  
When men are scattering strength that might have  
made

This world a happy home, we turn to thee  
To charm us from our wrath and agony  
Into the paths of love, whence we have strayed  
Long years, spurning the heavenly gift of life.

Tagore has been dowered, like Tennyson, with the ecstasies of poetic composition throughout his life and even to-day songs and poems and plays and prose works and lectures and addresses are coming from him to the world in a golden shower of lyric beauty and true wisdom. I shall refer here to a few of his poems that have appeared since 1916. The following poem describes the divine dower of the seemingly disinherited. It is called *The Song of the Defeated*.

My master has asked of me to stand at the road-  
side of retreat and sing the song of the  
Defeated,

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For she is the bride whom He woos in secret.  
She has put on the dark veil, hiding her face from  
the crowd,  
the jewel glowing in her breast in the dark.  
She is forsaken of the day, and God's night is  
waiting for her,  
with its lamps lighted and flowers wet with dew.  
She is silent with her eyes downcast ;  
she has left her home behind her, from where  
comes the wailing in the wind.  
But the stars are singing the love-song of the eter-  
nal to her whose face is sweet with shame  
and suffering.  
The door has been opened in the lonely chamber  
the call has come,  
and the heart of the darkness throbs with the  
awe of the expectant tryst.

(*The Modern Review*, April 1917, page 421).

In the December number of the *Hindustani Student* there is an article by Professor A. R. Seymour, Ph. D., which contains the following poem of Tagore's:

"Those who walk on the path of pride  
Crushing the lowly life under their tread,  
Spreading their foot-prints in blood  
Upon the tender green of the earth,  
Let them rejoice, and thank thee, Lord,

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

For the day is theirs.  
But thou hast done well in leaving me with the  
humble,  
Whose doom it is to suffer  
And bear the burden of power,  
And hide their faces and stifle their sobs in the  
dark.  
For every throb of their pain  
Has pulsed in the secret depth of thy night,  
And every insult has been gathered  
In thy great silence  
And the morrow is theirs."

I have already referred to the poem called *The Sunset of the Century* in the chapter dealing with Tagore's Nationalism. I may refer here to the poem called "the Blood-red line" published in the *Independent*. He says there: "On the sea-shore of the west the funeral pyres are emitting the last flames caught from the torch of a selfish decadent civilisation. The worship of energy in the battlefield or factories is not worshipping the Protector of the Universe..... Yes, the rays of thy light and joy are lying latent in the east to liberate the soul of the world." The following is the poem called *India's Prayer* recited at the Calcutta Congress in December 1917.

"Thou hast given us to live.

*MISCELLANEOUS WORKS*

Let us uphold this honour with all our strength  
and will,  
For thy glory rests upon the glory that we are.  
Therefore in thy name we oppose the power that  
would plant its banner upon our soul,  
Let us know that thy light grows dim in the heart  
that bears its insult of bondage,  
That the life, when it becomes feeble, timidly  
yields thy throne to untruth,  
For weakness is the traitor who betrays our soul.  
Let this be our prayer to thee—  
Give us power to resist pleasure where it en-  
slaves us,  
To lift our sorrow up to thee as the summer holds  
its midday sun,  
Make us strong that our worship may flower in  
love and bear fruit in work,  
Make us strong that we may not insult the weak  
and the fallen,  
That we may hold our love high where all things  
around us are wooing the dust.  
They fight and kill for self-love, giving it thy  
name,  
They fight for hunger that thrives on brother's  
flesh,  
They fight against thine anger and die.

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But let us stand firm and suffer with strength,  
For the True, for the God, for the Eternal in Man,  
For Thy Kingdom which is the union of hearts,  
For the Freedom which is the soul.  
Our voyage is begun, Captain,  
We bow to Thee,  
The storm howls and the waves are wicked and  
wild,  
But we sail on.  
The menace of danger waits in the way to yield  
To Thee its offerings of pain,  
And a trice in the heart of the tempest cries;  
"Come to conquer fear!"  
Let us not linger to look back for the laggards,  
Or benumb the quickening hours with dread and  
doubt,  
For Thy time is time and Thy burden is our  
own, and life and death are but Thy breath  
playing upon the eternal sea of life.  
Let us not wear our hearts away in picking small  
help and taking slow count of friends.  
Let us know more than all else that Thou art  
with us and we are Thine for ever.  
The following is his great poem on *Victory to  
the Builder of India's Destiny*.  
Ruler of people's minds and builder of India's destiny'

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Thy name rises in the sky from summits of the  
Himalayas and Vindhya,  
flows in the stream of the Ganges and is sung by  
the surging sea.

In thy name woke Punjab and Sind, Maratha and  
Gujrat,

Dravid, Utkal, and Vanga.

They gather thy feet asking for thy blessing and  
singing Thy Victory.

Victory to thee, giver of good to all people,

Victory to thee, Builder of India's destiny.

There sounds Thy call and they come before Thy  
throne,

the Hindus and Budhists, the Jains and Sikhs,

the Parsees, Musulmans, and Christians.

The East and the West meet to unite their love at  
thy shrine.

Victory to thee who makest one the minds of all  
people.

Victory to thee, Builder of India's destiny.

Pilgrims pass from age to age on the road of Time un-  
even with the rise and fall of races.

It resounds with the thunder-roar of Thy wheels,

Thou Eternal Charioteer,

Through the wrecks and ruins of Kingdoms.

Thy conch-shell sounds breathing life to death.



**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

Victory to thee who guidest people to their purposes,

Victory to thee, Builder of India's destiny,

In the night of fear, in the still hour of pain

Thou didst keep Thy watch in silence.

When the dreams were evil and menaces cruel and  
strong,

Thou heldest, mother Thy suffering children in thine  
arms.

Victory to thee who leadest people across their insult  
into triumph.

Victory to thee, Builder of India's destiny.

The night dawns, the sun rises in the East,

The birds sing and the morning air carries the  
breath of life.

The light of Thy mercy wakens India from her sleep,  
who bows her head at Thy feet

Victory to Thee, King of all Kings,

Victory to thee, Builder of India's Destiny".

Equally great and inspiring and equally full of a  
precious message is the following poem entitled, *The  
Day Is Come*.

"Thy call has spread over all countries of the  
world and men have gathered around thy seat.

The day is come,

But where is India?

Does she still remain hidden, lagging behind?

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Let her take up her burden and march with all.  
Send her, mighty God, Thy message of Victory!  
O Lord ever awake!

Those who defied suffering  
have crossed the wilderness of death  
and have shattered their prison of illusions.  
The day is come  
But where is India?

Her listless arms are idle and ashamed  
and futile her days and nights, lacking in the joy  
of life.

Touch her with thy living breath  
O Lord ever awake!

The morning sun of the new age has risen.  
Thy temple hall is filled with pilgrims.  
The day is come  
But where is India?

She lies on the dust in dishonour,  
deprived of her seat,  
Remove her shame  
and give her a place in thy House of man,  
O Lord ever awake!

The world's highroads are crowded,  
resounding with the roar of thy chariot wheels.  
The sky is trembling with traveller's songs.  
The day is come

*RABINDRANATH TAGORE*

But where is India ?  
Doors are shut in her house age-worn,  
feeble is her hope, her heart sunk in silence.  
Send they voice to her children who are dumb,  
O Lord ever awake !  
Peoples there are who have felt thy strength in  
their own hearts and sinews and have earned life's  
fulfilment,  
Conquering fear.  
The day is come  
But where is India ?  
Strike thy blow at her self-suspicion and despair !  
Save her from the dread of her own pursuing shadow,  
O Lord ever awake !

Two other poems relating to India might well be  
referred to here. One was sung at the dedication of  
the Bose Institute.

I

'Tis to the Mother's temple ye are come  
Her sacred inner courtyard; light ye then  
Her precinct, ye who are her favour'd sons  
Make here your dwelling; and with omen fair  
The conch-shell, horn auspicious, sound, O, sound!  
Accepting this initiation bright,  
The deep, dark night of waiting terminate.  
O bond of pilgrims all be ready girt;

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**The conch-shell, horn auspicious, sound O, sound !  
Say: " Victory to this peerless man of men,  
This Kingly sage, school'd in austerities !"  
And " Victory !" still, shout " Victory ! Victory !"**

### II

**Come with the mother's blessing, ye whose minds  
Unshakeable throne on the thunder bolt !  
Come, all who struggle upward and aspire,  
To glory this our dear country, come!  
All ye who meditating, on one thought  
Your souls centre, all who have renounced,  
Come ye whose lot insufferable is woe ;  
Come ye whose earn'd wealth is unconquered strength ;  
Come brotherhood of freedom, in the soul,  
Come ye who know, come ye who work, destroy  
Together the long shame of Bharat-land !  
Come, O thou blessedness, thou glory come !  
Thou fragrant of unfading righteousness,  
Come, burning sun, blazing amidst the sky  
Of deeds, in strength of virtue's heroism  
And righteous acts, live thou, thou, chiefly thou,  
Pulse in the heart and centre of the world.  
The conch-shell, horn auspicious, sound, O, sound!  
Say ' Victory to this peerless man of man  
This Kingly sage, school'd in austerities !'  
And " Victory", still, shout, " Victory " Victory !"**

**RABINDEANATH TAGORE**

The following poem, *To India*, brings to our heart of hearts the true vision of India's innermost soul :

" O India, thou hast taught rulers of men to leave their crowns and sceptres, to renounce their thrones and Kingdoms, and take the garb of poverty.

Thou hast taught the brave to forgive their enemies at every step in the upward conflict, and forgetting defeat and Victory to break their arrows in pieces.

Thou hast taught the worker to pursue his toil with steadfast mind, surrendering to Brahma the desire for the fruits thereof.

Thou hast taught him that ruleth his own house to open wide his doors to neighbours and friends, to welcome the stranger and the helpless.

Thou hast taught them that live at ease to accept the cords of restraint, the poor ascetic thou hast made glorious in his poverty, and to the virtuous and upright thou has founded honour.

Thou hast taught us to yield up our selfish desires and to lay our world of joys and sorrows before the face of the Eternal Brahma."

I shall refer here to a few other poems. In the poem called *Elusive* we have the very quintessence of the spirit of beauty whose radiance is from a diviner

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sphere, who gives a new meaning and sweetness to the southern breeze and the moon and music, who is beyond the touch or gaze of our thirsting spirits.

“She came for a moment and walked away,  
leaving her whisper to the south wind and crushing  
the lowly flowers as she walked away.”

I searched for the mystery of her thought in her eyes  
and her lips silent with the burden of songs.

The moonlight fell like an answering kiss as she  
flung her glance at the sky and walked away.

While her steps left a memory of music along the  
grassy path,

I wondered if the secret she held in her heart were  
happy or sad,

If she would ever come back or follow the track of  
dreams as she walked away.

The poem called *Adventure* reveals a mood found often in Tagore's poesy—the mood of the glad seeking of the fulfilment of life by an eager and active guest.

▼ I shall not wait and watch in thy house for coming,  
but will go forth into the open,

For the petals fall from the drooping flowers and  
time flies to its end,

The wind is up, the water is ruffled,—be swift and  
cut the rope, let the boat drift in mid-stream, for  
time flies to its end.

**RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

The night is pale, the lonely moon is plying its  
ferry of dreams across the sky.

The path is unknown, but, shall heed it not, my  
mind has the wings of freedom and I know that  
I shall cross the dark.

Let me but start on my Journey, for 'time flies to  
its end."

The poem *Reckless* is conceived in an even gladder and more buoyant spirit which recalls the 42nd poem in *The Gardener*.

For once be reckless, prudent traveller, and utterly  
lose thy path.

Let a mist descend upon the wideawake light of  
thy day.

There waits the Garden of Lost Hearts at the end  
of the wrong road,

There the grass is strewn with the wrecks of red  
flowers,

There goes on the game of breaking and mending at  
the shore of the troubled sea.

Long hast thou watched over thy store of weary  
years;

Let it be stripped bare.

Like a tree of its leaves in a storm.

Put on thy forehead the triumphal crown of losing  
all in heedless haste."

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Two poems called *Despair not* and *Hope* make us realise in what spirit of indomitable hope we must start on our quest. The poem *Hope* says:

"I can never believe that you are lost to us, my king,  
though our poverty is great and deep our shame.  
Your will works behind the veil of despair, and in your  
own time opens the gate of the impossible.  
You come like unto your own house in the unprepared  
hall and on the unexpected day.  
Dark ruins at your touch become like a bud in whose  
bosom grows unseen the flower of fulfilment.  
Therefore I still have hope, not that the wrecks will  
be mended,

But a new world will arise.

The poem *Despair not* runs as follows :

"Thy kindred shall forsake thee,  
and thy fruitage of hope lie dead in the dust ;  
yet despair not.  
The gloom of night shall frown upon thy road,  
and thy light fail thee again and again.  
yet despair not.  
Even birds and beasts will gather round thee to  
hear thy voice.  
While men of thine own house remain unmoved, yet  
despair not.  
The gate is shut in silent menace to turn thee back ;



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knock and knock it may never open at all ;  
yet despair not."

Two poems called *The Captain Will Come to His Helm* and *Speak to me, my Friend, of Him* disclose to us the certainty of God's coming to lead our hearts to him in fulfilment of our quest and the infinite sweetness of speaking and hearing and thinking of His Love and His Mercy.

"I have sat on the back in idle contentment and not  
yet stepped into the boat to launch it for the  
farther shore.

Others proudly travel to the King's house across the  
far-away dimness,  
But my call does not sound in the rumbling of their  
wheels.

My boat is for crossing the deep water,  
and perchance in the dead of night when the  
breeze springs up,  
the Captain will come to his helm,"

"Speak to me, my friend, of Him and say that he  
has whispered to thee.

In the central hush of the storm and in the depth of  
the peace.

Where life puts on its armour in silence.

Say that thy utmost want is of Him and that He ever  
seeketh thy straying heart through the tangle of paths.

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Shrink not to call His name in the wood,

The real conquests of life that are the result of  
rich high endeavour are the white victories of love.  
Tagore says in his poem called *The Conqueror* that all  
other victories—the red victories of war and the black  
victories of selfish hate—are fleeting and die away.

From triumph to triumph they drove their chariot  
over the earth's torn-breast,

Round them Time's footsteps were muffled and slow,  
and bird's songs lay gathered in the bosom of night,

Drunken of red-fire their torch spreads its glare,

Like an arrogant lotus floating upon the blue,

With stars above as bees enchanted.

They boasted that the undying lights of the sky fed  
the flame they carried,

Till it conquered the night,

And won homage from the sullen silence of the dark.

The bell sounds.

They start up to find they had slept dreaming of  
wealth

And pollution of power and the pillage of God's own  
temple,

The sun of the new day shines upon the night's sur-  
render of love.

The torch lies shrouded in its ashes, and the sky  
rings with the rejoicing:

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"Victory to Earth ! victory to Heaven !

Victory to All-conquering Light.

For we need to turn our eyes

To the heart of things to see the vision of Truth and  
Love building,

The world anew with its wreckage.

Speak to me, my friend, of Him and make it simple for  
me to feel that He is."

The following chorus in the poem called *Spring* is full of the ecstasy of the Eternal Spring attained by God's grace as the fruit of the soul's quest.

Men. Come Spring, with all thy splendour of songs  
and lavish life,

Women. Squandering perfume upon the air till it over-  
flows,

Men. Stirring the heart of the earth with a shiver  
of awakening.

Women. Come in a hurricane of joy,  
In a tumult of dance,

Men. Burn away the bonds of languor,  
Striking life's dimness  
Into a flame-burst.

Women. Come into the tremulous shade of *Malati*, a  
thrill with the urge of new leaves and out-  
break of flowers.

Men. Eager Pilgrim, hurrying on thy endless

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quest of Paradise, following thy path of  
song, through passionate hearts.

Women. Come into the glimmer of day-fall,  
Into the midnight hush,  
Into the laughter of the rushing water,  
Into the lake's dark dumbness.

Men. Like a swordstroke of lightning,  
Like a storm upon the sea,  
Come into the midst of the clamorous  
morning,  
Of the busy town and field,  
Of all works and words,  
And efforts of Man.

Women. Let thy anklets keep rhythm and  
Thy breath break into music.  
Come decked with jasmines and  
Mantle of gleaming green.

Men. Come impetuous youth,  
Proud warrior with locks flying,  
In the air like a flame,  
Rush into the fight  
And Conquer death."

The following is Tagore's poem about *Autumn*.

"To-day the peace of autumn pervades the world.  
In the radiant noon, silent and motionless, the  
wide stillness rests like a tired bird

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Spreading over the deserted fields to all horizon its  
wings of golden-green.

To-day the thin thread of the river flows without song,  
leaving trace on its sandy bank.

The far-distant villages bask in the sun with eyes  
closed in idle and languid slumber.

In the stillness I hear in every blade of grass, in every  
speck of dust, in every part of my own body, in the  
visible and invisible words, in the planets, the sun  
and the stars, the joyous dance of the atoms through  
endless time,—the myriad waves of rhythm sur-  
rounding thy throne ! ”

Tagore's *Mother's Prayer* is a translation by him  
of his Bengali poem wherein Dhritarashtra advises  
Duryodhana to seek the solid foundation of truth and  
justice for sovereignty. He says: “Calumny dies  
weary, dancing on the tongue-tips Do not drive it  
into the secret shelter of the heart to grow in strength.”  
Gandhari's concluding words are as follow :

“Be calm, my heart, and patiently wait for God's  
Judgment. The oblivious night wears on, the morn-  
ing of reckoning comes, and time wakes up to mend its  
rents. The thundering roar of its chariot I can hear.  
Woman, bow your head down in the dust, and for  
your sacrifice fling on its way your heart to be tram-  
pled under its wheels. And then the darkness will

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shroud the sky, the earth will tremble, and a wailing will rend the air. And then will come the end, silent and cruel, the terrible peace, and a great forgetting, the awful extinction of hatred, the supreme deliverance rising from the fire of death."

The following poem was sent by Tagore to Mr. Gandhi on 12th April 1919.

#### I.

"Let me hold my head high in this faith—that thou art our shelter, that all fear is mean distrust of thee.

Fear of man? But what man is there in this world, what king, O king of kings, who is thy rival, who has hold of me for all time and in all truth?

What power is there in this world to rob me of my freedom? For do not thy arms reach the captive through the dungeon walls, bringing unfettered release to the soul?

And must I cling to this body in fear of death, as a miser to his barren treasure? Has not this spirit of mine the eternal call to the feast of everlasting life?

Let me know that all pain and death are shadows of the moment; that the dark force which sweeps between me and thy truth is but the mist before the sunrise; that thou alone art mine for ever and greater than all pride of strength that dares to mock my manhood with menace.

II.

Give me the supreme courage of love, this is my prayer, the courage to speak, to do, to suffer at thy will, to leave all things or be left alone.

Give me the supreme faith of love, this is my prayer,—the faith of the life in death, of the victory in defeat, of the power hidden in the frailness of beauty, of the dignity of pain that accepts hurt, but disdains to return it."

Tagore's recent poem called *Prayer* contains the expressions of a mood of self-surrender to God by a soul called to great duties in life. The poem concludes thus:

" If it is thy will let us rush into the thick of conflicts  
and hurts.  
Only give us thy own weapon, my Master, the power  
to suffer and to trust.  
Honour us with difficult duties, and pain that is hard  
to bear.  
Summon us to efforts whose fruit is not in success and  
to errands which fail and yet find their prize.  
And at the end of our task let us proudly bring before  
thee our scars  
And lay at thy feet the soul that is ever free and life  
that is deathless."

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### III.

#### Dramas.

His *Autumn Festival* is of great beauty and spiritual meaning. The story is as follows. Upananda goes to Luckeswar to pay a debt due by his master. Boys of his own age ask him to join them in the Autumn Festival along with Thakurdada. But he refuses as he was to pay his debt. The following fine song occurs here :

“The bees forget to sip their honey ; drunken with light they foolishly hover and hum.....Let us take the blue sky by storm and plunder space as we run. Laughter floats in the air like foam on the flood.” A Sanyasi comes there and agrees to help him in illuminating manuscripts to pay off the debt. Luckeswar turns up and sees Upananda sitting on the spot where he had hidden his pearl. He drives him away. On learning away that the Rajah is coming, he asks the Sanyasi to sit on the spot so that the Rajah may not carry away the treasure. The Raja comes there as he wants to learn from the Sanyasi if he can humble the Emperor Vijayaditya. The Sanyasi replies that he also is attempting to do the same work. The Rajah then goes away, Luckeswar turns up again in joy. On learning that the Sanyasi is in quest of the golden lotus of Lakshmi he



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is torn between his love of his treasure and his love of the supreme treasure but finally refuses to follow the Sanyasi. Upananda then brings to the Sanyasi three *Kahans* earned by him to be used to repay his master's debt to Luckeswar. The *Sanyasi* is pleased with the boy's devotion and keeps the money. Meantime the followers of Emperor Vijayaditya come in search of him and find him in the Sanyasi. The Rajah is humbled and gives up his presumptuous scorn. Luckeswar is given back his treasure and also the debt due to him by Upananda's master. The Emperor adopts the noble-hearted Upananda. Luckeswar wishes that he is younger so that he may have a chance of being adopted by the Emperor. Thus this beautiful play shows the beauty of duty and renunciation and service, and the ugliness of greed and pride, and gives the whole a setting of loveliness in the autumn festival. The following pregnant dialogue occurs in the play.

*Sanyasi.*

I know why this world is so beautiful,—simply because it is ever paying back its debt. The rice field has done its utmost to earn its fulfilment and the Betasini river is what it is because it keeps nothing back.

*Thakurdada.*

I understand father 'There is one who has given

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Himself in creation in his abundance of joy. And  
Creation is every moment working to repay the gift,  
and this perpetual sacrifice is blossoming everywhere  
in beauty and life.

*Sanyasi.*

Wherever there is sluggishness, there accumulates  
debt, and there it is ugly.

*Thakurdada.*

Because where there is a breaking in the gift, the  
harmony is broken in the eternal. Try then of the  
payment and repayment."

Equally beautiful are the following songs in  
the play.

"The breeze has touched the white sails,  
the boat revels in the beauty of its dancing speed.  
It sings of the treasure of the distant shore,  
it lures my heart to the voyage of the perilous quest.  
The captain stands at his helm with the sun shining on  
his face

and the rain clouds looming behind.

My heart aches to know how to sing to him of tears  
and smiles made one in joy."

"I have spread my heart in the sky  
and found your touch in my dreams.

Take away that veil from your face,  
let me see your eyes.

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There rings your welcome at the doors of the  
forest fairies ;  
Your anklet bells sound in all my thoughts filling  
my work with music."

IV.

**Novels and Stories.**

The number of his miscellaneous short stories is very large and each of them has a grace and distinction of its own. I may refer here to the story called *Giribala* translated by himself in the *Modern Review*, May 1917 : He says, "Gribala is over-flowing with the exuberance of youth that seems spilling over in spray all around her in the folds of her soft dress, the turning of her neck, the motion of her hands, in the rhythm of her steps, now quick, now languid, in her tinkling anklets and ringing laughter, in her voice and glances." She was married when young. Her husband Gopinath began to lead a life of riotous youth and was the centre and hero of a wasteful set. Tagore says : "There is a dangerous fascination to be leaders of men to which many strong minds have succumbed. To be accepted as the leader of a small circle of sycophants, in his own parlour, has the same fearful attraction for a man who suffers from a scarcity of brains and character." Giribala's maid Sudha praises her beauty and charm and Giribala's vanity is touched and tickled by

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this. Gopinath was however paying court to the actress Lavanga and finally left his wife for her. Girbala went to the theatre to see the actress and felt her release from the joyless home and her entry into the theatre as an emancipation and a rapture. "She had entered a region where dreams and reality had clasped their hands in friendship, over the wine cup of art." In her house she used to revel in day dreams and deck herself everyday in shinning silks and flashing jewels. "For these costly gems were like wine to her—they sent heightened consciousness of beauty to her limbs; she felt like a plant in spring tingling with the impulse of flowers in all its branches." One day her husband came and asked for the keys. She said that she would give them if he listened to her words. He refused to hear her words and wrenched the jewels from her and kicked her and went away. She left her house the next morning and took to the stage. In the play of Manorama she acted with wonderful power and "shot a fiery glance of exultation at Gopinath." Gopinath tried to rush upon the stage and the police came and dragged him away while the curtain dropped.

Tagore's short story called *The Conclusion*, which is published in the *Modern Review*, November 1917, has been translated by Mr. C. F. Andrews. In it we see Tagore's magic touch illuminating the daily family life

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of millions of Hindus. Apurba was a graduate and and his mother asked him to marry. He wanted to see the proposed girl who was "scrubbed and painted, be-ribboned and be-jewelled and brought before him." The girl could not answer his questions out of bashfulness. At that time Mrinmayi—a boisterous slip of a girl, came in and he eventually liked her and married her. Her father was unable to attend the marriage as he could not get leave just at that time. But Mrinmayi hated the new life of tongue-tied obedience and sought to fly away to her father but in vain. Her husband himself then noticed her grief and took her secretly to her father's house which was but a room. "In this room, with all its lack of space for man and food, their joy welled up in abundance, like the jet of water thrown up all the higher because the opening of the fountain is narrow." They then went back to Apurba's village. When Apurba went to Calcutta to study for law, Mrinmayi could not leave her old boisterous life in the village and would not go with him. In his absence she felt how the change in her life had changed her nature imperceptibly. "Her destiny had struck the blow and severed her youth from her childhood, with its magic blade, in such a subtle manner that they kept together even after the stroke; but directly she moved, one half of her life fell from the other and

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Mrinmayi looked at it in wonder." She and her mother-in-law went to Calcutta to her husband's sister's house. Apurba came there without knowing that his wife was come. He went to his bed-room that night and in darkness touched his bed. "All of a sudden a tender pair of arms, with a jingle of bracelets, were flung round his neck, and two lips almost smothered him with kisses wet with tears. At first it startled Apurba greatly, but then he came to know that those kisses, which had been obstructed once by laughter, had now found their completion in tears."

Tagore's short story, entitled *The Shattered Dream*, appears in the *Modern Review*, July 1917. A muslim Princess speaking in words which "were like the morning breeze upon the shimmering fields of golden corn" tells in it the story of her life—how she loved a Brahmin who fought in the days of the Mutiny, how he fled to escape punishment, and how after many decades of search she found him living old and grey-haired with a Bhutia woman and family about him. The story has been translated by Mr. C. F. Andrews with the help of the author and has a quick rush of movement and fine felicity of phrase.

In the *Modern Review* for August 1917 is the story called *The Editor*. It describes in humorous way the woes of those who take to literature and journalism

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and shows how the simple joys of a life of domestic duty and affection spent in the discharge of man's primary and universal duties are for higher than the desperate mudslinging that is often one of the exhibitions of journalism.

*In the sight* is the name of Tagore's short story which appears in the *Modern Review*, December 1917. In it he describes how a man neglected his sick wife on learning that her disease was incurable, how he committed suicide, and how when he made love to his second wife—the derisive laughter of his deceased wife to whom he had made love similarly seemed to pursue him.

In the *Modern Review*, March 1918, appears his *The Parrot's Training*. It ridicules with inimitable banter the modern system of education. A King wanted to educate his parrot. A golden cage was made for it, and the Pandit and his scribes prepared innumerable manuscripts for its schooling. "As for any complaint from the bird itself, that simply could not be expected. Its throat was so completely choked with the leaves from the books that it could neither whistle nor whisper." "The bird thus crawled on, duly and properly, to the safest verge of insanity. In fact its progress was satisfactory in the extreme. Nevertheless nature occasionally triumphed over training, and when

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the morning light peeped into the bird's cage it sometimes fluttered its wings in a reprehensible manner. And, hard as it is to believe, it pitifully pecked at its bars with its feeble beak!" What was the end of it all. "The bird died.....it neither moved nor uttered a groan. Only its inner stuffing of book leaves rustied. Outside the window, the murmur of the spring breeze amongst the newly budded Asoka leaves made the April morning wistful."

The *Runaway* is another short story by Tagore. It describes a boy who ran away from his home as "he was as impatient of bondage as a young deer, and as susceptible to music." His passion for music led him to the stage and to ballad-singers. "His eyes, his limbs, his mind were always on the alert. Like nature herself, he was in constant activity, yet aloof and undistracted. Every individual has his own fixed standpoint, but Tara was just a joyous ripple on the rushing current of things across the infinite blue. Nothing bound him to past or future, his was simply to flow onwards." He stayed with Moti Babu and his wife Annapurna for some time and they proposed eventually to give their girl Charu in marriage to him. "Before the conspiracy of love and affection had succeeded in completely hemming him in, the unattached free-souled Brahmin boy has fled, in the rainy night, with the



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heart of the village which he had stolen, back to the arms of his great world-mother, placid in her serene unconcern."

*The Debt cleared* is a poetic tale in prose. The story is about a foreigner, Bajrasena by name, accused falsely of robbing the King's treasury and saved by Shyama who fell in love with him at first sight and who induced her devoted but unloved lover Uttiya to take the guilt upon himself. When he learnt the truth he was full of loathing and renounced his love. In it occurs the following beautiful passage. "The lamp was put out, and in the southern breeze under the boat's window deep-breathing Shyama reclined on the shoulder of the youth. A mass of her dishevelled fragrant tresses fell at random in soft, crisp, gloomy abundance on the foreigner's breast like the magic web in a deep drowsiness." The story is in *The Indian Review* for January 1920 but the translation is of poor quality and more ambitious than beautiful.

**Essays in Art and Literature.**

His essay on *The Object and Subject of a story* was written in answer to the letter of a lady criticising the publication of his novel *At Home and Outside*. He says that "the true object of writing a story is story-writing," though it may be "that the age in which he

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is born expresses its object through the other." He says further :

"It cannot be gainsaid that the age acts, consciously or unconsciously,, upon the author's mind ; nevertheless, I assert that this action is that of an artist, not of a teacher. The age is weaving in our minds its web of many-coloured threads simply for the purpose of creation. If you must utilise it, then the object becomes yours. This modern age of our country's history has secretly touched with its brush the present author's mind, and the impressions of that touch have come out in this novel. These impressions are artistic impressions."

Hence "in a poet's works, the individuality and the environment are vitally blended." He says further: "When I am writing a story, my contemporary experience is woven into its fabric and also my personal likes and dislikes. But their coloured threads, tinged with life's own colour, are simply the materials which the artist has in his hands to use. If you read any object into the work, it is not mine but your own....., In a story, the question of opinion does not matter ; it is the enjoyment which is important."

Thus the creative impulse fashioning and re-fashioning the fluid elements of civic and social life looks to the perfection of creation and not the preach-

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ing of a moral. Tagore says further : "It is the paramount duty of the author to fix his attention only on the perfecting of his story, not on the applause of his reading public.' Another valuable idea which he gives us is that a story is a creation not a transcript, a growth from within not a gossip about external conversations and events. He says :

"The possibilities that lie deep in human nature are the basis of the plots of all the best stories and dramas in literature. There is eternal truth in human nature itself, but not in mere events. Events happen in a different manner in different places. They are never the same on two occasions. But man's nature, which is at the root of these events, is the same in all ages ; therefore the author keeps his eye fixed on human nature and avoids all exact copying of actual events."

Tagore shows us further that literature presents living pictures and not dead and labelled puppets and toys. "If in literature heroes and heroines are introduced according to certain classified types, then such literature becomes a toy shop, not an ideal world of living creatures."

In his great address on *The Message of the Forest* delivered during his South Indian tour he gave expression to many great ideas about the origin, inspiration,

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and master-ideas of our literature. He said : " Every race of people has its tradition of the golden age in the past, because we never can trust our future, if it does not carry some great promise bequeathed to it..... Every great people holds its history so valuable because of this, because it contains not mere memories, but hope, and therefore image of the future..... *And all history is man's credential of his future, signed and sealed by his past.*" Just as the physical organisation of the race has got its vital memories regulating its face and figure and stature, so each race has got memories and inmate desires and ideals " that secretly and inevitably fashion the future of a people and give characteristic shape to its civilization..... Any people which lacks in its racial mind these inherited aspirations merely drifts till it sinks in the current of time ; it never creates its own history..... Therefore, it is of great importance for us to know, whether, as a people, we carry in our sub-conscious mind some primal aspiration, which alone can guarantee us a definite future of our own....." Indian literature has ever had the inspiration of the message of the forest. " The memory of these sacred forests is the one great inheritance which India ever cherishes through all her political vicissitudes and economic disturbances." In Northern Europe literature is resonant with the association of the sea which was

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“the challenge of untamed nature to the indomitable human soul.” In India there was no sense of hostility of nature and soul ; there was perfect harmony. The world is not a mechanism for the production of results to us : it is *Sachidananda*. “For us the highest purpose of this world is not merely living in it, knowing it and making use of it, but realising our own selves in it through expansion of sympathy and emancipation of consciousness, not alienating and dominating it but comprehending and uniting with it in blissful union.”

“Your friend is neither a machine nor a psychological necessity,.....his ultimate value lies in his giving you opportunity to lose yourself in his love.....And to know the highest truth of all existence as that of a friend is truly Indian. This view of the world as the world of life and love, as the manifestation of the Supreme Soul whose nature is to realise his unity in the endlessness of the varied, has come to us from the great peace of our ancient forest.” Tagore then proceeds to illustrate this truth from Indian literature. “In Kalidasa’s drama *Sakuntala*, also, the hermitage, which dominates the play, overshadowing even the King’s place, has the same idea running through the recognition of the Kinship of man with conscious and unconscious creation alike.” “In the drama of other countries, where the human characters violently drown

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our attention in the vortex of their passions, Nature occasionally peeps in, but she is almost always a trespasser, who has to submit urgent excuses, or bow apologetically and depart. But in all our dramas, which still retain their fame, such as *Mrichakatika*, *Shakuntala*, *Uttara-Ramacharita*, Nature stands on her own right, proving that she has her great function, to impart the peace of the eternal to the human passions and to mitigate their violent agitations which often come from the instability of spiritual lameness." Tagore's description of the place of nature in Kalidasa's *Ritusamhara* and *Kumara sambhava* is equally true and beautiful. In regard to the latter he says: "Kalidasa has shown a true reverence to the divine love-making of Sati by making his narration of it as a central white lotus floating on the world-wide immensity of youth, in which the animals and trees have their rhythm of life-throbs. It is a sacred flame of longing whose lamp is the universe." Tagore explains the significance of *Kumarasambhava* in his own way though to the ordinary Hindu mind the divine story has got a powerful spiritual and a devotional appeal of a different type. He says: "When gain is completed by giving up, when love is fulfilled by self-sacrifice, when passion is purified by the penance of the soul, then only is heroism born,—the heroism which can save

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mankind from all defeat and disaster.....only from the union of the exuberant freedom of the Real with the tranquil restraint of the Good comes the fullest strength." Tagore then takes up Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsa* and shows how in it the Goddess of Poesy yearned amidst the luxury of her golden bower in the zenith of India's civilisation for the eternal message of the forest. It opens with the forest scenes of simplicity and self-denial but ends "in the palace of magnificence, in the wealth and luxury which divert the current of energy from the truth of life to heaps of things." Tagore shows how Kalidasa in all his works "has depicted this break of harmony between enjoyment and renunciation, between the life that loses itself in the sands of the self and the life that seeks its sea of eternity." Though in some of his suggestive critical utterances Tagore seems to lay too heavy a burden of meaning upon the situations and the dialogues in Kalidasa, yet there is a great deal of truth in what he says about *Malavikagnimitra* and *Sakuntala*.

Tagore thus sums up his view in regard to the message of the forest: "Our *tapovana* was just such a vital centre of our social body." Renunciation was for the enjoyment of truth. "It is the renunciation of the cocoon for the freedom of the living wings." "The emotional quality peculiar to the forest-retreat is Peace,

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the peace which is the emotional counterpart of perfection, just as the mingling of the colours of the spectrum gives us white light, so when the faculties of our mind, instead of being scattered, flow in a united stream, in harmony with the universal purpose, then does peace result, the peace which pervaded India's forest retreats where man was not separate from, and had no quarrel with, the rest of his surroundings." Tagore then illustrates his great idea with a wonderful wealth of illustration from the *Ramayana*. He says: "Sita's abduction robbed the forest of the most beautiful of its blossoms, the ineffable tenderness of human love, that which imparted the mystery of a spiritual depth to all its sounds and forms."

Tagore then proceeds to point out in the same address how in Shakespeare's play there is "the gulf between nature and human nature owing to the tradition of his race and time." "It cannot be said that beauty of nature is ignored in his writings; only he fails to recognise in them the truth of the interpenetration of human life and the cosmic life of the world." As regards Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* Tagore says: "In the *Meghaduta*, the exiled Yaksha is not shut up within himself in his grief. The very agony of his separation from his loved one serves to scatter his heart over the woods and streams, enriched by the



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prodigality of the rains. And so the casual longing of a love sick individual has become part of the symphony of the universe. And this is the outcome of the spirit of teaching which springs from the ancient forest."

He points out another cherished and precious truth when he says: "India holds sacred and counts, as places of pilgrimage, all spots which display a special beauty or splendour of nature.....India has gained the world through worship,—through communion of soul. And this is her heritage from her forest sanctuary.....The wisdom, which grew up in the quiet of the forest shade, came out of the realisation of this greater—than—all in the heart of the all." He says further with his usual penetrative vision and perfection of phrase: "For India to force herself along European lines/of growth would not make her Europe, but only a distorted India. That is why we must be careful to-day to try to find out the principles, by means of which India will be able for certain to realise herself. That principle is neither commercialism nor nationalism. It is universalism. It is not merely self-determination but self-conquest and self-dedication."

### **Essays on Education.**

In Tagore's article or *Indian Students and Western Professors* he gives us a true and vivid

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picture of college life and ideals. "Students, at the College stage, are always in a state of transition. For the first time, in their lives, they have come out of school discipline into freedom. And this new freedom is not merely outward. Their minds, also, have left the age of syntax, and spread their wings into the open air of ideas. They have gained their right to question, and their right to judge for themselves. This transition period of life is full of sensitiveness. The last insult pierces to the quick. On the other hand, the simplest suggestion of love makes the heart glad. This is the time, therefore, when the influence of human contact is most powerful, because this is the time when man is moulded by man."

Thus, in the life of the college and the university the ideals of self-respect and freedom should be harmonised with the ideals of reverence and discipline. Tagore says well: "At the adolescent stage it is necessary for the growth of life, that the son should know his father as a man, and not as an engine of discipline. This is the reason why, in all countries, university students are raised to a level, where they come nearer to their teachers and have living contact with them. This is the age when students, having completed the rudiments of education, begin to assimilate humanity itself; and such a living process can never be gone through.

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except with freedom and self-respect." The students, having the joys and disciplines of collegiate and university life thus need sympathy and inspiration and a large atmosphere of life. Hence teachers should not be entrusted with them if they are "gaolers, drill-sergeants, and exorcists." Tagore then proceeds to reveal in wise and weighty words the inner life and possibilities of the students of to-day.

"The minds of students are always expanding. The spirit of growth is ever doing its work in the core of their life-buds. The process of development has not stopped in them. They still carry about with them this suggestiveness of perfection. For that reason, the true teacher respects them, and suffers them to come near to him in love. He forgives them all their short-comings and patiently helps to open out their minds towards freedom and light. But those who, in their pride of greater knowledge or of social and racial position, are ready to insult the student at every step, will never receive homage from them; and so in despair they will attempt to extort obedience and reverence by the help of stringent regulations and official myrmidons. . . . Therefore our students will never be satisfied merely with scraps of lecture notes and logic and grammar. They will stand out for their own life of self-respect. They will never take themselves to be mere puppets, or

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allow themselves to be unjustly coerced into submission. This attitude of mind has become a fact to-day. It is possible to treat it as a delusion ; it is possible to abuse it ; but it is impossible to ignore it. By striking a blow at it, you only give it an opportunity of proving itself all the more true".

From this point Tagore takes our mind to the large world of which the students' world is an integral part. The culture of the world is a composite harmony consisting of the sweet notes of individual racial cultures. In India there has been a variety of races and the attempt of Indian culture has been to effect a fusion and a synthesis in a spirit of love and reconciliation and harmony. The shock of the new enlightenment is creating a cosmos out of chaos in this land. " Our history belongs to no one race. represents a fusion of forces.' He says further: "We must keep ever in mind, that our country is not England nor Italy nor America but India. The history of other countries would never fit ours. The difference lies at the very root. Those other countries had some sort of unity to build their history upon. We had to deal with diversity from the very beginning. History, in other countries, is naturally concerned with neglecting whatever is alien. The History of India is naturally concerned with assimilating all that has come from the outside".

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Hence the English must not be thinking of the land from the outside but must love it from the inside. They should not be thinking of "the white man's burden" but should experience the living joy of the creation to the new India.

The land must have not merely internal and external peace but also the fulness of life and the joy of self-expression. India should not be a land of regrets, but it should be a land of hopes and realisations. Love should take the place of duty and energy of service should take the place of routine. "Therefore, the problem of history in India is not to throw off England, but to make England's relation to ourselves living and natural.....We want Englishmen; otherwise Indian History will remain incomplete,—its purpose unfulfilled. And because we want Englishmen we must have entrance into their hearts, not merely to their office rooms." The best place for such entrance into their hearts is not in the trade markets or in the political arena but in the universities where the "festival of knowledge is a feast of joy." Tagore says: "For ideas unfold hearts. And when hearts are open, then comes the best opportunity for reaching them."

Such being our clear duty and such being the great possibilities, the end is easy to attain, because our students "are eager to worship their teacher and

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their hearts are extremely easy to win." Then Tagore proceeds to describe how the ideal is being realised in his own Bolpur school.

"My *Ashram* has become sacred by the communion of English teachers and Indian boys. This sacred union, for which God has been waiting in India for so long, has put forth one little flower in one corner of India's vast expanse."

The ideal is not the acquisition of perfect English about but the attainment of our perfect self-expression. Tagore asks: "Could I hope to meet God's judgment, —on the strength of a perfect English accent?"

In the course of his South Indian tour in 1919 the poet emphasised the need for new and high ideals of education. In his addresses on Indian culture, and education delivered at various centres in South India he pointed the attention of Indians to the significance of the new desire for change in educational methods and ideals. The attempt should be not to transplant Western and European universities but to bring about the organic and natural growth of university life and university spirit in India. In Europe the universities were parts of the organic life of Europe. Patching up small fragments was allowed and achieved in modern surgery but to build up a whole man by piecing together foreign fragments was beyond the resource of

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not science only for the present but for all time to come. By merely founding a university and keeping it under our control, it would not become our own. We have not yet got out of the English school which we entered 100 years ago and we have remained permanent school-boys. That was the real education which acknowledged the mind to be a living thing and enabled it to give out more than it received. We cannot be, should not be, on the debtor side in regard to the culture of the world. But our education till now has only enabled us to be receivers and not givers in all departments of mental activity. We have been only clerks, officials, lawyers, physicians and engineers but have contributed nothing original in any of the many realms of cultural life. There was a period when we made our own observations and experiments, discovered new principles and built new hypotheses, and were not content with merely receiving from the outside. Where had those natural powers gone? The real reason was that we had the furniture of the European University in India but not the human teacher. Our mind is not in our studies. The feat of engineering skill has been marvellous and the cost considerable, in digging the canal with its numerous locks, but only the water refuses to flow through it. The engineers condemn the water, we condemn the engineers. The natural drai-

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nage has been tampered with, and for the perfect irrigation of learning the foreign language could not be the true medium. When we are compelled to learn through the medium of English, the knocking at the gate and the turning of the key takes away the best portion of our lives. This is not the only defect. It is the presence of learned men that draws students around them; if there were no chances of supply, there would be no demand. The work is now begun at the wrong end—students come first and cast about for the teachers. It is like seating the guests at the table and then finding that the cooking had not begun. The new age of co-operation and co-ordination of all cultures is coming in all its glory. The proposed centres of our culture should be in centres where all cultures could flourish in harmony. We must study botany, natural history, and ethnology in our own land and not in other countries. We must break open the treasure of our ancestors and make the future our-house own and not continue our existence as the eternal beggar of the universe.

Now the fine arts which are the highest modes of our self-expression are like miserable outcasts deprived of their places in the festival of national culture. The perfection of colour, form, and expression belongs to the perfection of vitality. We must also face the



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economic question by devising some scheme by which a truly national organisation would earn its necessities by its own efforts and thus keep in real touch with the life of future ages and not continue in existence like a parasite. Thus for the perfection of our mental life the co-ordination of all our cultural resources is necessary. The present English education is a kind of food which contained only one ingredient, it is not even fresh, but dry and packed in tins. It cannot fully sustain us. In our true food we must have the co-ordination of different ingredients as organic things. Our material poverty could only be solved through the co-operation of individual powers. There should be perfect harmony between producers and consumers, not a perpetual attempt to get the better of each other. The basis must be co-operation. Sanitation and improvement of mental and moral life should be unceasingly attended to. With regard to religious teaching, though the world was full of different religions with sects formed in every country and age owing to diversity of historical causes due to tradition and temperament, there is certainly a wide meeting-place where all could forget mutual differences and work for their common good in the light of our immemorial ideal of spiritual unity.

Among the great and valuable ideas given by

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Tagore in the course of his addresses in 1919 all over India must be mentioned prominently the following fruitful thoughts. True university education must be a growth of the soil and not an importation. At present we have only bad imitations of western universities without the environments and traditions of those universities. Again, education is now more costly than efficient. Culture should further be imported in the living mother tongue and there should be free play and scope for all cultures in our centres of learning. We must regard our lost central unity of idea, our concentration; and we must get over our present evil habit of dissipation of mental powers. Unity of mind is even more urgent than political unity. "Just as in the case of an individual, who is to be taught truly, the first step is to get released from dissipation of mental powers and to get trained in concentration of the mind, so in the case of a nation whose mind wanders, not being able to find a life-centre of its own, the first thing necessary is to recover the organic unity of its mind. In the present age. India does not truly know herself. This is the cause of her present weakness, political and social, as well as intellectual." An education not grounded on our own culture is an embellishment or a burden we must have not mere accumulation but assimilation. "If India has a living culture of her own—

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an organic centre of all her cultures co-ordinated,—then only can she receive this knowledge of the west, not as an abstract thing unrelated to her own life, but as a concrete thing, fit for all her various uses of life and giving an added strength to her own mind,” In India there have been many different streams of culture which must be reunited. “We need, more than anything else, that those who have really been disciplined as learners in the different branches of Indian culture, those who have gone on intently with their own work of exploration and discovery, should meet at a common centre and settle down there, and thus from the foundation of a seat of learning, which would spring up, as it were, from within, in all the truth of life and not be imposed from without”. Vedic, Puranic, Buddhist, Jain, Zoroastrian, Muslim, and European cultures have met and mingled in India. “The urgent necessity is to control their aggressive flood of western culture, and make it fertilising rather than destructive.” “Furthermore, all great intellectual movements of the mind of man have their atmosphere, their artistic development. Poetry, music and the other fine arts have been neglected in modern India with the result of making us inarticulate like the dark stars. So in the proposed centres, or centre of learning, music and the fine arts must have their seats of honour side by side with those

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of the mind." "It was in her forest retreats that India first made her discoveries of learning. The discipline came first, and then the teacher, and then the disciple." What, therefore, was to be the ideal of education in India? Upon each race the duty was laid to keep lighted its own lamp of the mind as representing its own thought in the illumination of the world. To break the lamp of any people was to deprive it of its rightful place in the world festival. He who had no light was unfortunate enough, but utterly miserable was the man who, having had a light, had been afterwards deprived of it or had forgotten its existence. India had proved to the world that it had a mind of its own which had deeply thought and felt, and tried to solve according to its own light the problems of existence. The education of India ought to be such as to enable this mind of India to find out truth—to make this truth its own and to give expression to it in such a manner as only it could do. In order to carry this out the mind of India had to be concentrated and made conscious of itself. Then only could it accept education from its teachers in a right spirit; and then only could it judge education by its standard, and make use of it by its own creative power. The fingers of the hand had to be joined together to take as well as to give. So when the people of India could bring to-

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gether the scattered mind of India into co-ordinated activity then they would be both receptive and creative, and the waters of life would cease to slip through the gaps to make sodden the ground underneath. The second point is that in education the most important factor should be the inspiring atmosphere of creative activity; and therefore the primary function of a University in India should be the constructive work of knowledge. Men should be brought together and full scope given to them for their work of intellectual exploration and creation. The teaching should be like the overflow of water issuing from the spring of culture, spontaneous and inevitable. Education could only become natural and wholesome when it was the direct fruit of a living and growing knowledge. Lastly education should be in full association with the complete life of a man, economic, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual. Indian educational institutions should be in the very heart of Indian Society, connected with it by the living bonds of varied co-operation. True education was to realise at every step how their training and their information had organic connection with their surroundings.

In the February number for 1919 of *The Mysore Economic Journal* we have the notes of an interview with Tagore on some important educational questions.

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Tagore pointed out then that University professors should be the leaders and directors of thought and men of originality and genius and not mere teachers. "It is because of this defect in our universities that most of them have not been the success that they should otherwise have been." "There should be travelling scholarships to enable the students to visit different provinces in India collecting materials for their special studies observation and submitting them to proper authorities." Universities ought to be places of specialisation. The medium of instruction should be the vernacular, but the adoption of this principle should be gradual. Instruction in Fine Arts is an urgent necessity. "For these arts develop a province of the mind, which remains untouched by modern Indian education. This defective development of the mind of our times has seriously stunted the growth of national life." Sanskrit education must be widely given. Woman's education cannot be the same as man's education for the reason that women have a special duty to discharge towards society and humanity.....The courses that have such an aim can be best given in the vernacular." In regard to primary education "there is something to be said in favour of the old Hindu method of teaching pupils one subject after another." "The mother-tongue should be the medium of instruction. The

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fewer the text-books the better in the Primary and the Lower Secondary stage. In the High school stage Vernacular text books for all subjects should be prepared, without any further delay." "All educational development must proceed from within outwards. It is really a spiritual process, not merely an intellectual or a mechanical one. The spirit being greater than the body and even the individual mind, education is a process covering the widest area. Education is in a real sense, the breaking of the shackles of individual narrowness. The aim must, therefore, be to develop not only the *individual* aspect of the mind but also the *universal* or the *spiritual*, which is the chief characteristic of the ancient Hindu system. It is therefore necessary to bring *together* in every educational organization, *all* the different cultures found in India and, as far as possible, all the cultures of the world, all the phases of religion and art in which the universal mind has expressed itself in different ages and countries, *i.e.* to co-ordinate these various cultures without attempting the suppression of the natural differences. The highest aim of education should be to help the realization of unity, but not of uniformity. Uniformity is unnatural. And in fact, its attainment is impossible. A sound educational system should provide for the development of variety without losing the hold on the basic or spiritual unity.

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Hence the idea underlying the Bolepur school is to bring together pupils of all creeds and cultures and to help them to realise their spiritual brotherhood and to develop, freely and fully at the same time, their individual and racial characteristics "There must be a place if not in every province, at least in one centre in this vast country, to which the best intellects of India and even of the world outside, could be induced to resort, where they could meet, stay temporarily or permanently and impart their knowledge to the public. It will help to kill racial, sectarian, caste and other prejudices and be a real fountain of universal light. It is only Hindu States, whose rulers have in their veins flowing the ancient Aryan spiritual culture based on unity and universality, can realize its importance and organize a real university of this type, which will be India's educational contribution to the world's progress".

In the issue for November 1918 of the *Modern Review* there appears a letter in which Tagore pointed out that the neglect of the vernaculars by the official universities has been a blaming in disguise. "For this our language and literature have had the opportunity of natural growth, unhampered by wordly temptation, or imposition of outside authority". The vernaculars of India are 'still in a fluid stage, continually trying to adopt themselves to new accessions of



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thought and emotion and to the constant progress of our national life." In *the Modern Review*, October 1917, appears an article on the *Medium of Education* which is the translation of a paper read by Tagore. In it he begins by saying that "knowledge is the greatest unifying principle in man." Knowledge is not mere "dialectical wrestling and grammatical snare-weaving." He says about the modern shibboleth of efficiency which is a bar in the way of the universalisation of knowledge. "Let there be a dearth of pupils if there must, but none of appliances, so say the authorities! To make expensive the educational part of poverty—stricken lives would be like squandering all one's money in buying money-bags. In our country the idea will not be accepted that Saraswathi's seat owes any of its splendour to appurtenances borrowed from Lakshmi." we must retain our ideals of simplicity while overcoming poverty. He says in a powerful passage:

"When the simplicity of fulness awakens in the west, then from the walls of its drawing rooms will be cleared away the Japanese fans and China plates and antlers of stags; and all the bric-a-brac rubbish from their corners; the hats of their women will be divested of birds' feathers, artificial flowers, and such like oddities; and their sky scrapers will hang their towering heads in shame. Then work, enjoyment, and education

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will alike find their true strength in becoming easy. When this will happen I have no idea. Till then we must, with bowed heads continue to listen to lectures telling us that the highest education is to be had only in the tallest edifices . . . . To be simple without becoming poorer is the problem which each must solve according to his temperament. But while we are ever ready to accept the subject matter of education from outside, it is too bad to thrust on us the temperament as well."

He points out that in other progressive countries education is cheap and that it is the anxious duty of the state to secure this end in India. He points out further that our backwardness is due to our own unenthusiastic sloth and weakness and cowardice. He says: "Indeed it is a kind of deception to try to make others value our country higher than the price we ourselves are prepared to pay . . . we have begged and prayed for education but felt no real anxiety about it. We have taken no pains in regard to its spread." He says further that high education must be in the mother tongue. "The foreign ship may bring imported goods into a port, but she cannot help to distribute them amongst inland markets." He says about the present university system in India. "Our university was formerly a wrestling-ground for examiners. Now a broad fringe area has been

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added round it where the wrestlers may recover their breath, in everyday garb, between their boats." It is only when the two cultures meet and mingle in the modern university like the Ganga and the Yamuna that it will become a place of pilgrimage. He says about the modern wasteful study in the English tongue: "So like Hanuman who, not knowing which herb may be wanted, had to carry away the whole mountain top, these boys, unable to use the language intelligently, have to carry in their heads the whole of the book by rote." He says further in his happy humorous vein: "If it be cheating to take a book into the examination hall hidden in one's clothes, why not when the whole of its contents is smuggled in within the head?" Tagore then gives us the following valuable and well-considered scheme:

"So my proposal is to have a bifurcation of the language media beginning from the preparatory class before matriculation, so that each may choose the portal through which he would enter into his university course. This, as I have said, would not only tend to lessen the crowding along the old course, but also make for a much wider spread of higher education."

He says that text-books in the vernaculars will come into existence if the scheme is begun to be realised. "If higher education has to await text-books, then

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may trees as well await their foliage, and the river its banks." At present " though we have been enjoying high education we have not been thinking high thoughts." He says again about our universities : "Our university is modelled on the university of London that is to say it is only a huge die-stamping machine. Its object is not to make men but to hall-mark them. It assists the business world to ascertain market values." He points out that it is impossible to change the existing universities and that even our new universities are modelled on the same basis by our form worshippers. He then asks in a beautiful and eloquent passage.

" So the only way of improving it is to ask for a little space to plant beside its machine-house a living thing. Then without fuss or argument will the latter one day raise its head and overshadow its unsightly neighbour with a wealth of foliage and bloom. And while the education mill is noisily grinding out its bales for the market, the living tree by its side will give fruit and shade to the country and shelter among its numerous branches to any number of singing-birds. . . . The first step towards creation is to desire. Can it be that there are no stirrings of such desire in our country to-day?"

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### His Views on History and Sociology.

The *Hindu Message* in its issue dated 13th June 1918 publishes from *The Manchester Guardian* Tagore's views on *The Meeting of the East and the West*. He says that in the west men "furiously seek for some change in organisation and system, as if the human world were a mere intellectual game of chess where winning and losing depended upon the placing of pawns." "Now began their career of history with a faith in a Personal being in relation to whom they had their unity among themselves. This was no mere belief in ghost but in the deeper reality of their oneness which is the basis of their moral ideals. This was the one great comprehension of truth which gave life and light to all the best creative energies of man, making us feel the touch of the infinite in our personality." The cult of the nation has caused enough harm to humanity. "We have observed that when the West is visited by a sudden calamity, she cannot understand why it should happen at all in God's world. The question has never occurred to her, with any degree of intensity, why people in other parts of the world should suffer. But she has to know that humanity is a truth which nobody can mutilate and yet escape its hurt himself." Europe's search for the soul was diverted by science. "Science has its own great meaning for man. It proves

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to him that he can bring his reason to co-operate with nature's laws, making them serve the higher ends of humanity; that he can transcend the biological world of natural selection and create his own world of moral purposes by the help of nature's own laws. It is Europe's mission to discover that nature does not stand in the way of our self-realisation, but we must "deal with her with truth in order to invest our idealism with reality and make it permanent." But science has unfortunately inflated human ambition and obscured moral vision. "They (Europe's children) explored the secrets of existence, measured and mastered them; they discovered the principle of unity in nature not through the help of meditation or abstract logic, but by boldly crossing barriers of diversity and peeping behind the screen. They surprised themselves into nature's great storhouse of powers and these they had their fill of temptation." "Hence Europe must save herself and save the world by finding "her soul and her God."

In his article on *The nation* (published in the Modern Review, July 1917) Tagore describes the new cult of the nation. He says, "The people are living beings having their distinct personalities. But nations are mere organizations of power. And therefore their inner aspects and outward expressions are monotonously the same everywhere. Their differences are merely the

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difference in degree of efficiency." There is a monotony about the modern towns ; they show "no faces but merely masks." He says further : " The peoples being living personalities must have their self-expression and this leads to creations. These creations are literature, art, social symbolism, and ceremonials. . . . But the nations do not create, they merely produce and destroy." The modern " professionalism is the region where men specialise their knowledge and organise their power, where they mercilessly elbow each other in their struggle to come in front." He says further about the social ideals in ancient India with perfect clearness and truth : "In ancient India professions were kept within limits by social regulation. They were considered primarily as social necessities and secondarily as the means of livelihood for the individuals, thus man being free from the constant urging of unbounded competition could have leisure to cultivate the completeness of his nature." Nationalism is only "the professionalism of the people." Man becomes the menace of man and living peoples are forced "to stiffen into nations." "Crowd psychology is a blind force. Like steam and other physical forces it can be utilised for creating a tremendous amount of power." He says further : "The instinct of self-preservation of a people has to be made the dominant one at particular times of

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its crisis . . . . But in the nation this hyperconsciousness is kept alive for all time by all kinds of artificial means. . . . Nationalism is the training of a whole people for a narrow ideal and when it gets hold of their minds it is sure to lead them to moral degeneracy and intellectual blindness.....The idea of the social man is unselfishness, but the ideal of the national, like that of the professional man, is selfishness." Then he says in a great passage: "Creation is the harmony between the eternal ideal of perfection and the infinite continuity of its realisation. So long as the positive ideal of goodness keeps pace with the negative incompleteness of attainment, so long as there is no absolute separation between them, we need not be afraid of suffering and loss.....therefore I do not put my faith in any institution but in individuals all over the world, who must think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth."

Tagore had already shown in his earlier writings the vital principle of Indian social organisation referred to above. He has said: "It is not the case in Europe that all classes do their respective legitimate functions, and thus try by their collective efforts to maintain the social organisation; on the contrary, they are mutually antagonistic; every class is always on the alert to prevent others from growing stronger. Thus the



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social harmony is destroyed...India has tried to reconcile things that are mutually alien to each other...She set limits to and fenced off all the rival conflicting forces of society, and thus made the social organism one, and capable of doing its complex functions." (*Modern Review*, December 1918). As I have already pointed out in my first volume, he has been wavering between this view and the view that the absence of social struggle has crushed individual manhood and national efficiency.

In his paper *At the Cross Roads* published in the *Modern Review*, July 1918, he says: "At the present moment the World Drama is at the change of its acts, and we do not know towards what denouement it is moving." In it also he denounces the new nation-worship. He says: "For political and commercial ambition is the ambition of cannibalism, and through its years of accumulation it must get ready for its carnival of suicide." He points out: "We must confess that, in spite of considerable exceptions, the Hindu population of India does not consist of martial races... Some of our modern disciples of the west may blush to own it, but it is true that the religious training which we have got for ages has made us unfit to killing man with anything like a zest. No doubt, war was held to be a necessity, but only a particular body of men was

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specially trained for this work, and, for the rest of the members of Society even the killing of animals was held to be a sin...and if, for the want of natural ferocity in our blood, we cannot excel in this the Europeans, who at present hold the world in their grasp, our soldiers' training will merely entitle us to fight in a subordinate position, which, from a material point of view, will bring us meagre benefits and from a higher one will be productive of evil." Moral good is a higher end than mere political good, He says: "For nations also it is wise not to indulge in cannibalism even at the risk of non-survival. For true survival is to live beyond life...The political ambitions of fighting races leave no other legacy to humanity but the legacy of ruins." He then shows the goal of India: "The dawn of a great morrow in breaking through its bank of clouds and the call of New Life comes with its message that man's strength is of the spirit, and not of the machine of organisation.....If India must have her ambition, let it not be to scramble for the unholy feast of the barbarism of the past night, but to take her place in the procession of the morning going on the pilgrimage of truth, the truth of man's soul."

*The Small and the Great* published in the *Modern Review*, December 1917, is a translation of a paper read by Tagore. He therein refers to Hindu-moslem

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riots and says: "If religion, instead of being the manifestation of a spiritual ideal, gives prominence to scriptures and external rites, then does it disturb the peace more than anything else can." He then says that man's "most intimate want is the scope to struggle towards growth, of which the expression is the consecration of self, in suffering, to a great idea." He says with equal justice: "There is an element of ferocity in all punishment which is allowable in civilised society only after it has been softened, so far as may be, by passing through the filter of law, cleansed of all anger, spite and partiality; otherwise the rod of the Judge and the cudgel of the hooligan remain insufficiently differentiated." He says about his ideal in the Bolpur school: "It has been my steadfast endeavour, that the boys of my Shantiniketan school should acquire a true vision of the history of humanity as a whole, broad and untainted with race-hatred." Tagore pleads for a policy of mutual trust and love and respect between the East and the West.

*Thou shalt Obey*, published in the *Modern Review* September 1917, is the translation of another paper by Tagore. In it he pleads for the same great policy. He says: "Those who are confined within the parochial limits of village or community, it is only when they are given the opportunity of thinking and acting imperially

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that they will be able to realise humanity in its larger sense." He is however unnecessarily bitter upon our social and ritualistic ideals which require a little careful study and reflection to realise their truly spiritual basis. He says further about England and India ; "Any people which have gained the wealth of a great realisation have been permitted to do so that they may impart it to the world at large. Should they turn miserly, they will only deprive themselves. The great realisations of Europe have been—Science and the rights of man. With this wealth as her gift to India the divine mandate sent England to these shores. The duty has also been cast upon us to hold her to her mission. And unless each party does its duty forgetfulness and downfall will be inevitable.....The great festival of Man is in progress but in no country are all its lamps ablaze—nevertheless the festivity proceeds apace. If our lamp has gone out for some little while, what harm if we light its wick at Britain's flame? To wax indignant and disdainful at such a request cannot be accounted to the good, for while it would not diminish Britain's lustre, it would add to the world's illumination."

### Religious Addresses

During his South Indian tour he delivered a great religious address under various names such as

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*Folk Religion in India, The Spirit of Popular Religions in India, The Spirituality in the popular Religions of India*, etc. He said in it that just as in our sub-conscious mind we often found our deepest thoughts below the surface of the conscious mind, so also among the people of a country the deeper spiritual yearnings were frequently found not in the upper ranks of society nor in the trained intellectual circles but among the common village people who were often illiterate and forgotten by the world. Men born and bred up in the upper slopes of society were apt to remain unconscious of the work going on its lower religions unaided by any special ministry of the elaborate organisation of culture. In their lust for power the people who lived in the fenced areas of life did not see and feel the vital activity persistent in those parts of society that remained neglected by the officiousness of the guardians. The source of all history was hidden in the mysterious regions of human nature which were not merely buried in the introductory chapter of annals but were the soil on which they stood and built their future. Town life was not the only barrier to progress. The self-consciousness of class distinction, the walls of exclusion with which the country's sky was crowded out, the artificial distances created among the people, lack of self

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knowledge and the indifference of the people in the upper social life,—all these had been crushing the life of the nation and were the greatest of barriers to complete self-realisation in politics and other departments, of life. Hence the necessity to obtain a direct and complete knowledge of our own people in order to realise vividly our past and to clearly find out our path to the future was urgent.

The poet then proceeded to say that he had had the experience of the deepest spiritual yearnings of the common village folk. At first he had not been aware of the deep religious experiences which were going on beneath the surface in Bengal, but afterwards he had come in touch with the Vaishnavite mendicant religious sects, especially the Bāṭl sect of religious singers and he had been startled and surprised to see the beauty of the thoughts expressed in their songs. Those Bairagis did not seem to be very important, or to have any of glorious associations either with the past, or even with the political unity of India. The poet then said that their thoughts could not be given in all their beauty by a bare translation in a foreign tongue. Those songs had deeply touched the minds of the villagers in Bengal and they could understand them and love them. Their essence was the living realisation of the divinity of God in the living man. They unite

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the limitlessness of the ideal and the concreteness of reality. It was brought home to him by the message of those Bairagis that the unity which lay in the depths of the human heart was not based on differences in cultured social life. He then translated some of the most beautiful passages in those simple poems and entered at great length into the meaning of the "Baul" song beginning "There shall I meet him the man of my heart," which refers by "the man of my heart" to the divine personality in each of us which we could realise in our spirit. He then described the different attitudes of the religions mind towards the idea of God. The Baul minstrels were devotional in their temperament and personal in their idea of the divine. The poet then quoted from the *Isopanishad* to show that the man who dwells upon the infinite only in his thoughts and the man who dwells upon the finite only in his thoughts about God both alike enter into the darkness. The true joy is in the union of the finite and the infinite. Tagore then spoke about the idea of suffering among the Baul poets and showed the intimate relation in their poems between suffering and joy. Renunciation was with them not mere asceticism but the pathway which led to fuller and deeper and more spiritual joy. The poet then stated that these religious mendicants showed how the spirit of

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freedom was deeply grounded in the hearts of all Indians, and while in Europe political freedom was the goal, in India freedom of the religious life found a chief place in their thoughts and ideals. No country need be despondent which could produce age after age such high and noble thinkers among its poorest and illiterate classes. In the political life the idea of democracy was being vitally felt. It gives each man trust in his own humanity. The poet then referred to Buddhism and showed how the infinite wisdom of life manifested itself in Budha. In modern India the spiritual movement had not made its appearance yet. People saw human nature slowly and painfully finding its way like imprisoned truth to assert the inborn dignity of man. Darkness could not be the birthright of India's life. Human eyes could only see the dust but if that could be seen with a feeling heart the joy that lay even in the dust could be felt by man.

The poet ended his inspiring address by further quotations which showed that the ragged mendicants despised by the world regarded themselves as admitted into the audience chamber of the Divine. They were able to pity even the learned scholars and the man of worldly fame and pomp. They were kingly in dignity, for God himself had bestowed his royal grace upon them.



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Tagore's religious views are thus full of true insight into some of the finest and sweetest aspects of Indian religion. But his non-acceptance of the beautiful Indian doctrine of Incarnation, his lack of devotional and spiritual interest, as distinct from poetic and emotional interest, in our stories and our symbols and images, his practical and ill-disguised rejection of the Indian conception of Dharma as based on revealed truth, and his resolute turning away from the dazzling altitudes of realisation described in Adwaita Vedanta are factors that have hampered him in realising to the full the highest and deepest truths of Indian spirituality. The raptures of Vaishnava devotional poetry and song cling round the ineffably sweet and loving personality of God. But identity, and not mere similarity, of mood is required to enter into the innermost spirit of that devotional poesy. Tagore's thrilling raptures of emotion centre in a vivid poetic realisation of the Infinite in its panoromic play throughout the universe. It lacks however the rainbow-tinted charm of the colours of emotion as resolved and refracted by the prism of devotion out of the white radiance of divine love and the pure dazzling single undivided radiance of the Adwaitic realisation of the Absolute as described in Sankara's verses and prose and Sadasiva Brahmam's songs. The modern Indian new Theism has

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many charming features and many elements of enchantment. But we cannot help feeling that all these have been included and transcended in the spiritual realisations of India's immemorial and ever-memorable past.

### Letters.

Tagore is no less remarkable as a letter-writer than he is as a poet and as a dramatist. His letters are full of charm and humour and delicate sentiment and insight into the human heart. In one of them he describes thus his room during his absence.

"My books are peering out of their glass-enclosed zenana, at whom? My empty-hearted easy-chair is awaiting there night and day with out-stretched arms, but there is none to heed its silent call. The clock is ticking away, not given to much regard for others, absorbed in keeping court of the footsteps of time? And the harmonium? With its silent music muffled in its baize cover, it is at a loss to make out to what on earth the clock, perched on its bracket, is so busy keeping time. And lastly, the walls are looking on, wondering where the principal piece of furniture can have gone off to."

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The following are a few of the brightly and spicy things in the letters.

“Professional critics have a habit of bearing false witness against themselves—even when they are pleased they labour to prove the reverse.”

“Bring into your pictures that untiring life-stream with its liquid song of human hopes and fears, unions and separations, flowing unheeded through the cool shades of mango topes, by the banks of village pools, to the cooing of *Koels*, amidst the peace of morning and evening. Accompany them with the music of stirrings of hearts, sheltered by a peaceful nature in their nests among these shady groves, of which the yearning cry ever and ever rises to the skies with note of *Koel* and yellow-bird. Do not allow any complex character analysis or unusual fury of passion to muddy its sweet limpidness.”

“No one has achieved immortality by writing for newspapers.”

“The immense page of the book of the universe which the sun every time silently turns up from the East when it rises, and as softly turns over against the western sky when it sets, what wondrous writings are to be read thereon, and this thin flowing summer stream, with its bed of sand

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stretching to the horizon banked up on one side, and its picture—like shore on the other, what a marvellous silent school is here!

"The model forms and features of the *Bhairavi* conjure up a peculiar aspect of the universe, from which a deep melodious pain seems to be wrung by dint of the continuous grinding of the wheel of law."

"In one place a freshet indulged in some highly absurd gambols, swelling and boiling and foaming and swirling, snatching up pebbles and rushing along, knocking its head against a boulder, wrestling with it, jumping over it, dancing round it, and altogether carrying on in a perfectly mad way, the like of which I have never seen."

"Oh, how I love this great, old earth of ours, lying there so quietly! I feel I want to clasp in my arms the whole immensity of her, with her trees and foliage, rivers and fields, her sounds and her silences, her mornings and evenings."

"I rest my head on the window hedge, and the breezes, like Nature's loving fingers gently pass, through my hair; the water soughs and sobs past; the moon shines on; and at times tears start unhidden to my eyes. The constant hidden sorrow—of life unfulfilled which the mind inwardly

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nurses, thus expresses itself in silent tears, whenever the least affectionate overture is made by Nature; and therefore she comforts us with more and more caresses; and with all the greater poignancy of loving reproach we hide our faces in her breast."

"How then can the music of mankind be in other than India's mournful modes?"

"When I was living in this boat in the hot weather, I would sit by the window, all lights out, in silent repose; and with my thoughts ranged round me in entrancing shapes, stay up till late in the night in an ecstasy of delight."

"Nature becomes really and truly intimate in strange and lonely places."

"Hustling and fighting and wrangling and gnashing of teeth are not of shady, secluded, river-embraced Bengal."

"One individual and the infinite are on equal terms, worthy of looking upon one another, each from his own throne."

"Humour is a dangerous thing. It is well if it surrenders itself willingly with a smiling face, but a catastrophe may result if you try to take it by storm."

"I wonder why the writing of pages of prose does

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not give one anything like the joy of completing a single poem. One's emotions take on such perfection of form in a poem, they can be taken up by the fingers, so to speak. While prose is like a sackful of loose material, heavy and unwieldy, incapable of being lifted as you please.

"If I could finish writing one poem a day my life would pass in a kind of joy, but though I have been busy tending poetry for many a year it has not been tamed yet and is not the kind of winged steed to allow me to bridle it whenever I like! The joy of art is in its freedom. It can take a distant flight at its fancy and even after its return within the world-prison an echo lingers in its ear, an exaltation in its mind."

"All my plays except Chitra were written in the winter. In that season lyrical fervour is apt to grow cold, and one gets leisure to write drama."

"What little of beauty and peace is to be found in the societies of men is owing to the daily performance little duties, not to big doings and tall talk."

"It sometimes strikes me how immensely fortunate I am that each day should come into my life, some reddened with the rising and setting sun, some refreshingly cool with deep, dark clouds,

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some blooming like a white flower in the moonlight. What untold wealth they hold?"

"The light of the stars travels millions of miles to reach the earth, but it cannot reach our hearts, so many millions of miles further are we!"

"Our lives are famished for want of neglected joys within our reach, while we are busy perusing chimerical impossibilities."

"At the beautiful autumn mornings, how they pour honey on the senses! The breeze is as sweet as the song of the birds."

"India has two aspects, being in one a *Grihasta*, in the other a *Sanyasin*."

"The world is ever new to me, like a loved old friend of this and former births, the acquaintance between us being both long and deep."

"They all eat and drink, do their office work, smoke and sleep, and chatter nonsensically. When they touch upon emotion they grow sentimental, when they reason they are childish. One yearns for a full-blooded, sturdy and capable personality; these are all so many shadows, flitting about out of touch with the world."

"How richly true for us is our India of the ages, how cheap and false the hollow courtesies of an English dinner party."

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"If we begin to attach too much importance to the applause of Englishmen, we shall have to get rid of much that is good in us, and to accept much that is bad from them. We shall get to be ashamed to go about without socks on our feet, but cease to feel shame at the sight of their ball dress. We have no compunction in throwing over-board our ancient manners, nor any in emulating their lack of courtesy. We shall leave off wearing our *achgans* because they are susceptible of improvement, but think nothing of surrendering our heads to their hats, though no headgear could well be uglier. In short, consciously or unconsciously, we shall have to cut our lives down to their measure of the clapping of their hands."

"Consciously or unconsciously, I may have done many things that were untrue, but I have never uttered anything false in my poetry: that is the sanctuary where the deepest truth of my life find refuge."

"Curiously enough, my greatest fear is lest I should be reborn in Europe! For, there, one cannot be like this with one's whole being laid open to the infinite above,—one is liable, I am afraid, to be soundly rated for lying down at all. I should probably have been hustling strenuously in some factory or bank or in parliament. Like the roads there, one's mind has to be stone-metalled for heavy traffic,—geometrically



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laid out and kept clear and regulated."

"*Success in Life* is an unmeaning phrase,—Nature's commandment being simply to live."

"To enjoy a thing properly one has to hedge it round with a barrier of leisure.....The desire to be happy hurries so in its haste that it outruns the happiness."

"But as I grow older I am beginning to see that the degree of getting depends on the capacity of the receiver. Complaints about the meagreness of the gift do no manner of good, the defect lies in the scantiness of the power to take. It needs much training, much striving, much restraint, to be able to grasp fully what comes to hand."

"Reason tells us that creation can never be perfectly happy. So long as it is incomplete, it must do with imperfection and sorrow. It can only be perfect when it ceases to be creation, and is God."

"Nature was smilingly drying her hair in the light breeze, after her bath, gaily sporting her newly washed spring-coloured *Sari*."

"You can never reach composition point unless you are making faces; song composition, as you know, is not an act of reasoning, but a manifestation of the purest frenzy."

"Poetry is not a mere matter of feeling or expres-

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sion; it is the creation of form. Ideas take on shape by some hidden, subtle skill at work within the poet. This creative power is the origin of poetry. Perceptions, feeling, or language are only its raw material. One may be gifted with feeling, a second with language, a third with both. But the other, who has these as well as creative genius, alone is a poet."

"In the *Modern Review*, July 1919, wherein we have Tagore's *Letter from An Onlooker*, we have bright and precious ideas side by side with a curious want of insight into the Indian conception of *shakti* and of society."

"Egoism is the price paid for the fact of existence.

"Restraint is the gateway of the good."

"By going on increasing the volume and pitch of sound we can get nothing but a shriek. We can gain music only by restraining the sound and giving it the melody and rhythm of perfection."

"In old India one thing was plentiful—a thing we knew to be invaluable, the broad mental leisure permitted of the pursuit and realisation of Truth. But that large leisure for meditation is lost to us to day."

"All the fire of the war has not served to purge this *Kaliyuga* of its sin nor has the psychology of Europe undergone a change."

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“Factories can make many things, but I refuse to believe in a factory-made peace.”

“In countries where each individual has value, the whole nation grows to greatness by itself.”

“Obstacles and opposition from without there always will be, but they become dangers only when there are also obstacles and opposition within. Only if true endeavour should replace beggary will all insult disappear and fruition be ours.”

In the same issue of the *Modern Review* appears Tagore's reply to Romain Rolland's letters to him. He says therein.

“It is enough for me to know that the higher conscience of Europe has been able to assert itself in one of her choicest spirits through the ugly clamours of passionate politics, and I gladly hasten to accept your invitation to join the ranks of those free souls, who, in Europe, have conceived the project of a Declaration of Independence of the Spirit.”

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In the *Modern Review* for March 1916 we have the translations by Tagore of two Bengali poems by Devendranath Sen. In one of them occur the following fine lines :

“Your laughter is a song whose words are drown-

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ed in the tunes, an odour of flowers unseen. It is like the moonlight rushing through your lips' window when the midnight moon is high up in your heart's sky.

I ask for no reason, I forget the cause, I only know that your laughter is the tumult of insurgent life."

In the *Modern Review* for May 1916 we have his translation of the same poet's poem on the unnamed child;

"She is a child of six months lacking the dignity of a name.

She is like a dewdrop hanging on the tip of a *Kamini* bud;

like the peep of the first moon through the tresses of the night;

like a pearl in the earring of the tiniest little fairy."

Tagore has written also a precious introduction to the recent edition of Sister Nivedita's great book, *The Web of Indian life*. He says in it:

"The vast accumulation of calumny against India, continually growing and spreading over the earth, secretly and surely obstructs the element of heart from finding an entrance into our government. One can never do justice from a mere

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sense of duty to those for whom one lacks respect. And human beings, as we are, justice is not the chief thing that we claim from our rulers. We need sympathy as well, in order to feel that we have human relationship with them and thus retain as much of our self respect as may be possible."

Then he says about Sister Nivedita :

"She had won her access to the inmost heart of our society by her supreme gift of sympathy . . . She lived our life and came to know as by becoming one of ourselves."

He then says in conclusion :

"The mental, sense by the help of which we feel the spirit of a people, is like the sense of sight, or of touch—it is a natural gift. It finds its objects, not by analysis, but by direct apprehension. Those who have not this vision merely see events and facts, and not their inner association. Those who have no ear for music, hear sounds, but not the song . . . It is a truism to say that shadows accompany light what you feel as the truth of a people, has its numberless contradictions, just as the single fact of the soundness of the earth is contradicted by the innumerable facts of its hills and hollows. Facts can easily be arranged and

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heaped up into loads of contradiction ; yet men having faith in the reality of ideals hold firmly that the vision of truth does not, depend upon its dimension, but upon its vitality. And Sister Nivedita has uttered the vital truths almost Indian life."

The following message was sent by him to the boys of the Wood National College, Madanapalle, in July 1918.

"Every morning the messenger of light comes to the flower-buds with the message of hope for their blossoming. Every morning the same light also come to us raising our curtain of sleep. The only word which it daily repeats to us is : "See." But what is that message of expectation which this word carries? What is that seeing which is as the flowering of our sight? The scene which the light brings before our eyes is inexpressibly great. But our seeing has not been as great as the scene presented to us. We have not fully seen. We have seen mere happenings, but not deeper truth, which is measureless joy. And yet the morning light daily points its finger to the world. It bends down upon a grass blade with a smile that fills the sky and say to us : 'See.' "

In his introduction to Paul Richard's *To The*

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*Nations*, Tagore points out that "the peoples are living beings. They have their distinct personalities . . . . But the nations are not living beings they are organizations of power . . . . Their differences are merely the differences in degrees of efficiency." The modern towns are not faces but masks. Tagore points out further that the peoples, being living persons, have their self-expression which leads to creations; and that these creations are literature, art, philosophy, social symbolism, and ceremonials. He says: "They (such creations) are different in different peoples, but they are not antagonistic. They are like different dishes in one common feast, adding richness to our enjoyment and understanding of truth. They are making the world of man fertile of life and variedly beautiful. But the Nations do not create, they merely produce and destroy." Peoples grow nations have only augmentation. Peoples have inner ideals; but nations have not. "The ideal of the social man is unselfishness, but the ideal of the nation is selfishness." Then he finally says: "All creation is the harmony of the contradiction between the eternal ideal of perfection and the infinite incompleteness of realisation. So long as the positive ideal of goodness keeps step with the negative incompleteness of attainment, so long as there is no absolute separation between them, we need not be

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afraid of suffering and loss.".....It is the power of self-sacrifice, the moral faculty of sympathy and co-operation which is the guiding spirit of social vitality. Its function is to maintain a beneficent relation of harmony with its surroundings." The only solution of the evils of to-day consists in purity in thought, feeling, and will and is in the hands of "individuals all over the world who must think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly and thus become the channels of universal moral truth," and whose faces are "beaming with the lights of the new dawn" and whose voices are "vibrating with the message of new life."

Such in brief, is Tagore's great message to his times, and the words that best sum it up and form a fitting finale to this book are "the new dawn" "and the new life".



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## LIST OF ERRATA.

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Page	Line	For	Read
7	14	is	are
8	12	tyranising	tyrannising
18	2	writer	writer"
18	5	interlaid	interlard
34	12	a for	afar
36	18	thutted	shifted
37	4	foundation	fountain
38	15	ontagonisms	antagonisms
46	16	instance	insistence
54	last line		omit
57	13	childern	children
63	3		;
65	15	this unlit	the sunlit
73	21	money	one cry
79	13	rhythm	rhythm of
87	19	toush	proxy
85	14	alter	altar
88	16	emotiona	emotional
89	19	facility	felicity.
95	19	last	exist
99	8-9	literate	literati
101	2	sense	sense,
123	13	limbs	limbo
138	6	mother	mother,
141	23	man	men,
142	25	quintezece	quintessence
148	last line	prlgrim	pilgrim
150	17	tips	tips,
155	10	eternal Trvthen	eternal rhythm
160	4	mudshinging	mudslinging
174	4	to	of
185	21	blaming	blessing
211	8		omit
211	12		omit
216	7	People grows	Peoples grow;