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SIX PORTRAITS
OF
SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE



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Six Portraits
of
Sir Rabindranath Tagore

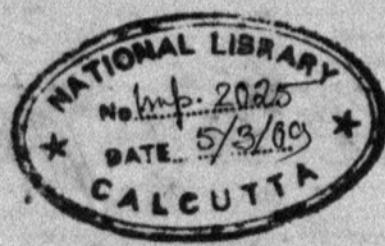
BY W. ROTHENSTEIN

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE BY MAX BEERBOHM

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1915

RARE BOOK



THE COPYRIGHT OF THESE DRAWINGS IS STRICTLY RESERVED

TO
DR. BRAJENDRANATH SEAL AND BHAI PROMOTTO LOLL SEN
THESE SIX DRAWINGS OF THEIR FRIEND
ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

THE thanks of the Artist are due to the HON. SYBIL
AMHURST, LORD HENRY BENTINCK, MR. F. GIBSON,
SIR WILMOT HERRINGHAM, MRS. A COURT REPINGTON,
and MR. C. L. RUTHERSTON for the ready loan of their
Drawings for reproduction by the Oxford University Press.

NOTE

WITH all deference to photographers, and to such artists as hopefully vie with them on their own ground, one may take it to be rather through the eyes of Mr. William Rothenstein that posterity will regard the sages of our day. For more than twenty years he has been drawing his friends ; and during that period few of the eminent in thought or in art or in scholarship have not moved into the circle of his friendship. The eminent are drawn to him as well as by him ; for he has not merely an eye to see them and a hand to limn them : he has a brain to understand them. Nay more, he helps them to understand themselves and to be understood by us others. His own art aside, he is handy both as a spiritual and as a temporal force. Many of the gifted young, bewildered as to just how they should go about their work, have been set, and even kept, in the right path by him. And—what is more remarkable and amusing—several of the gifted elderly have won, blinkingly, a belated fame through Will Rothenstein's unrelenting championship of them. He is a born organiser. He pulls wires with the strength and the precision that come of reasoned faith and altruistic temper. Such intensity as his is apt to become parochial. Not so his. Four or five years ago he visited Asia and met there a modest sage whom he liked very much. Soon after his return to England he learned that this sage was a poet also, and wrote to him begging that he would send over some translations. Mr. Rabindranath Tagore complied and—well, there it was, and here Sir Rabindranath is. And here in this book is the essence of him, for you and me. I have not seen him in the flesh. I was abroad when, two years ago, he visited England. From certain photographs I gathered that he was one of those men who rather resemble their souls and their work. That coincidence is not usual. Most men are not at all like themselves. The test of fine portraiture is in its power to reconcile the appearance with the reality—to show through the sitter's surface what he or she indeed is. I take it that Tagore was for Rothenstein a comparatively simple theme. The surface here was rather a guide than an obstruction. But my

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memory of those photographs helps me to see how subtly much has been needed to achieve the perfect fusion that I find in every one of these six dulcet drawings. Brilliant Rothenstein was from the outset of his career. Very young men often are that. Their happy slapdash tends to go, leaving nothing in its stead. Gone is the brisk "attack" you so much applauded in Rothenstein's early work. But finer qualities have been coming all the while; and it seems to me that here in this book are exemplified as well as anywhere those added graces of delicacy, that profoundness and—but you are already turning the page. Proceed. There the good wine is, and I will not expand this wholly unneeded bush.

MAX BEERBOHM.

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