

## THE EDITOR

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

WHILE my wife was alive I did not pay much attention to Probha. As a matter of fact I thought a great deal more about Probha's mother than I did of the child herself.

At that time, my dealing with her was superficial, limited to a little petting, listening to her lisping chatter, and occasionally watching her laugh and play. As long as it was agreeable to me, I used to fondle her; but as soon as it threatened to become unpleasant, I would surrender her to her mother with the greatest readiness.

At last, on the untimely death of my wife, the child dropped from her mother's arms into mine, and I took her to my heart.

But it is difficult to say whether I considered it more my duty to bring up the motherless child with redoubled care, than the daughter thought it her duty to take care of her witless father with an excess of attention. At any rate it is a fact that, from the age of six, she began to assume the role of housekeeper. It was quite clear that this little girl constituted herself the sole guardian of her father.

I smiled inwardly, but surrendered myself completely to her hands. I soon saw that the more inefficient and helpless I was, the better pleased she became. I found that even if I took down my own clothes from the peg or went to get my own umbrella, she put on such an air of offended dignity that it was clear that she thought I had usurped her right. Never before had she possessed such a perfect doll as she now had in her father, and so she took the keenest pleasure in feeding him, dressing him, and even putting him to bed. Only when I was teaching her the elements of Arithmetic, or the First Reader, had I the opportunity of summoning up my parental authority.

Every now and then the thought troubled me as to where I should be able to get enough money to provide her with a dowry for a suitable bridegroom.

I was giving her a good education, but what would happen if she fell into the hands of an ignorant fool?

I made up my mind to earn money. I was too old to get employment in a Government office, and I had not the influence to get work in a private one. After a good deal of thought, I decided that I would write books.

If you make holes in a bamboo tube, it will no longer hold either oil or water, in fact its power of receptivity is lost; but if you blow through it, then, without any expenditure, it will produce musical sounds. I felt quite sure that the man, who is not useful, can be ornamental, and he who is not productive in other fields can at least produce literature. Encouraged by this thought, I wrote a farce. People said it was good, and it was even acted on the stage.

Once having taste of fame, I found myself unable to stop pursuing it further. Days and days together I went on writing farces with an agony of determination.

Probha would come with her smile, and remind me gently, "Father, it is time for you to take your bath."

And I would growl at her, "Go away, go away, can't you see that I am busy now? Don't vex me."

The poor child would leave me unnoticed, with a face dark like a lamp whose light has been suddenly blown out.

I drove the maid-servants away, and beat the man-servants, and when beggars came and sang at my door I would get up and run after them with a stick. My room being by the side of the street, passersby would stop and ask me to tell them the way; but I would request them to take the road to Jericho. No one took it into serious consideration, that I was engaged in writing a screaming farce.

Yet I never got money in the measure that I got fun and fame. But that did not trouble me, although in the meantime all the potential bridegrooms were grow-

ing up for other brides, whose parents did not write farces.

But just then an excellent opportunity came my way. The landlord of a certain village, Jahirgram, started a newspaper and sent a request that I would become its editor. I agreed to take the post.

For the first few days I wrote with such fire and zest, that people used to point at me when I went out into the street; and I began to feel around my forehead the presence of a halo of a brilliance of the first magnitude.

Next to Jahirgram was the village of Ahirgram. Between the landlords of these two villages there was a constant rivalry and feud. There had been a time when they came to blows not infrequently. But now, since the magistrate had bound them both over to keep the peace, I took the place of the hired ruffians who used to act for one of the rivals. Every one said that I lived up to the dignity of my position.

My writings were so strong and fiery that Ahirgram could no longer hold up its head. I blackened with my ink the whole of their ancient clan and family.

All this time I had the comfortable feeling of being pleased with myself. I even became fat. My face beamed with the exhilaration of a successful man of genius. I admired my own delightful ingenuity of insinuation when at some excruciating satire of mine, directed against the ancestry of Ahirgram, the whole of Jahirgram would burst its sides with laughter like an over-ripe melon. I enjoyed myself thoroughly.

But at last Ahirgram started a newspaper. What it published was starkly naked, without a shred of literary urbanity. The language it used was of such undiluted colloquialism that every letter seemed to scream in one's face. The consequence was that the inhabitants of both villages clearly understood its meaning.

But I was hampered in my style by my sense of decency, my subtlety of sarcasm very often made only a feeble impression upon the power of understanding of both my friends and my enemies.

The result was that even when I decidedly won in this war of infamy my readers were not aware of my victory. At last in desperation I wrote a sermon on the necessity of good taste in literature, —but found that I had made a fatal mistake. For things that are solemn offer

more surface for ridicule than things that are truly ridiculous. And therefore my effort at the moral betterment of my fellow beings had the opposite effect to what I had intended.

My employer ceased to show me such attention as he had done. The honour to which I had grown accustomed dwindled and its quality became poor. When I went out into the street people did not go out of their way to carry the memory of a word with me. It even got to the point of frivolous familiarity in their behavior towards me—such as slapping my shoulders with a laugh and giving me nicknames.

In the meantime my admirers had quite forgotten the farces which had made me famous. I felt as if I was a burnt-out match which had become charred to its very end.

My mind became so depressed that no matter how I racked my brains, I was unable to write one line. I seemed to have lost all zest for life.

Probha had now grown afraid of me. She would not venture to come to me unless summoned. She had come to understand that a commonplace doll is a far better companion than a genius of a father who writes comic pieces.

One day I saw that the Ahirgram newspaper, leaving my employer alone for once, had directed its attack on me. Some very ugly imputations had been used against myself. One by one all my friends and acquaintances came and read to me the spiciest bits, laughing heartily. Some of them said, that however one might disagree with the subject matter, it could not be denied that it was cleverly written. In the course of the day at least twenty people came and said the same thing with slight variations to break its monotony.

In front of my house there is a small garden. I was walking there in the evening with a mind distracted with pain. When the birds had returned to their nests and instantly surrendered themselves to the peace of the evening, I understood quite clearly that amongst the birds at any rate there were no writers of journalism, nor did they hold discussions on good taste.

I was thinking only of one thing, namely what answer I could make. The disadvantage of politeness is that it is not intelligible to all classes of people. So I had decided that my answer must be given in the same strain as the attack. I was



not going to allow myself to acknowledge defeat.

Just as I had come to this conclusion a well-known voice came softly through the darkness of the evening, and immediately afterwards I felt a soft warm touch in the palm of my hand. I was so distracted and absentminded that even though that voice and touch were familiar to me, I did not realise that I knew them.

But the next moment when they had left me, the voice sounded in my ear, and the memory of the touch became living. My child had slowly come near to me once more and had whispered in my ear, "Father," but not getting any answer she had lifted my right hand and with it had gently stroked her forehead, and then silently gone back into the house.

For a long time Probha had not called me like that, nor carressed me with such freedom. Therefore it was that to-day at the touch of her love my heart suddenly began to yearn for her.

Going back to the house a little later I saw that Probha was lying on her bed. Her eyes were half-closed and she seemed to be in pain. She lay like a flower which

has dropped on the dust at the end of the day.

Putting my hand on her forehead I found that she was feverish, her breath was hot, and her pulse was throbbing.

I realised that the poor child, feeling the first symptoms of fever, had come with her thirsty heart to get her father's love and caresses, while he was trying to think of some stinging reply to send to the newspaper.

I sat beside her. The child, without speaking a word, took my hand between her two fever-beated palms and laid it upon her forehead, lying quite still.

All the numbers of the Jahirgram papers which I had in the house, I burnt to ashes. I wrote no answer to the attack. Never had I felt such joy as I did when I thus acknowledged defeat.

I had taken the child to my arms when her mother had died, and now, having cremated this rival of her mother, again I took her to my heart.

*Translated by*

W. W. PEARSON, WITH THE HELP AND REVISION OF THE AUTHOR.

## CHILD-STUDY IN INDIA

**W**HILE discussing the stages of growth of a child from infancy to maturity with the Teachers of the Brahma Balika Shikshalaya, preparatory to the determination of methods of teaching suited to children of various ages, I felt the need of facts and figures about the growth and development of our children. I sought in vain for light on the subject from various quarters. Beyond a few stray data collected at irregular intervals and scattered over fewer publications on medical jurisprudence and ethnographic survey, there is practically speaking very little information available. Even these data are of no use to the present problem as they mostly relate to adults and not to children. I remember to have read the result of a survey made by Dr. Ramaswamy Iyenger of Mysore of the eye-sight of

college students in 1902. He visited almost all the big towns of India having a number of colleges and examined the students thereof. His report made a serious revelation about defective eyesight in general, and the prevalence of myopia in particular, among our students. I am told some investigation as to the eyesight of school children has been made in the Bombay Presidency and the Panjab, with what results I am unfortunately not aware of. One of the objects of the Bengal Social Service League is the medical inspection of school children; it would be well to know what progress has been made by the League in this direction. If I am not wrongly informed there are a few workers carrying on some research on these lines individually. It is high time for a united effort to be made with a definite object in

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## THE DAY IS COME

Thy call has sped 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 ?  
Let her take up her burden and march with all.  
Send her, unghty 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 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 travellers' songs.

The day is come  
But where is India ?

Doors are shut in her house age-worn,  
feeble is her hope, her heart sunk in silence.  
Send thy 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 !

RAJINDRANATH TAGORE.

## WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

BY FRANK HOWEL EVANS, AUTHOR OF "FIVE YEARS," "THE CINEMA GIRL," &C.

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[Our readers are informed that all characters in this story are purely imaginary, and if the name of any living person happens to be mentioned, no personal reflection is intended.]

### CHAPTER XV.

#### THE PRETTIEST GIRL IN LONDON.

"MY dear, my dear, I see it in the paper! Oh, my dear, I'm so sorry for you! And what a shame to put 'im away for that! There! but never mind, that's nothin', there'll be no disgrace about that. Why, it's only wot might 'ave 'appened to my Ted if I'd been starvin'. But oh, my dear, my dear, I'm so sorry!"

Gladys had returned from the police-court where she had heard the sentence pronounced on Harry, together with a few remarks from the magistrate. From the dock Harry just threw one look at her, and in his eyes was the agonised pleading of love; then a touch on the shoulder, and he was taken below.

Back to the shop in the Blackfriars Road, cold and gloomy, Gladys walked blindly, instinct just taking her to the place she called home. For sorrow, grief, impotent anger had laid heavy hands on her heart, had filled her brain for the time. All she knew was that her man, her husband, had gone to prison, gone to prison just because he had been refused money to buy food for her. He had not meant to strike the officer, he had been sorry for it directly afterwards; as he had said to the magistrate, it was anxiety and fear lest his wife should starve which had sent him nearly mad. But the magistrate had

replied coldly and with judicial calm that that was no excuse for committing an assault.

Charlie, the young fellow who looked after the shop, was full of sympathy for Gladys when she returned. Up till last week his wages had been paid out of the profits from the sales in the shop; he lived with his mother in a fairly comfortable home, so he was in no want, and Gladys found that out of his own money, which she knew he wanted for a new overcoat, he had bought a little coal and some food, so there was a fire in the little parlour at the back of the shop, and there she sat, alone in her grief and despair, until it was time to shut the shop, and just as she was closing the door Meg arrived, her great womanly heart full of sympathy.

"I see it in the paper, my dear. My Ted got 'ome early and brought it in with 'im. Oh, why didn't you tell me, why didn't you let me know? I'd 'ave come to the court with you and I'd 'ave told that magistrate somethin' if they'd let me speak. Now, my dear, just you try and think as the month 'll soon be over. It won't 'urt 'im in there, and you know as 'e ain't done nothin' wrong—really wrong, I mean—so just you try and cheer up. And you never told us 'ow bad things was with you, you never come to see us on Sunday and 'ave a bit of dinner—we could 'ave managed that. Oh, you shouldn't 'ave stopped away like that."

Meg was fondling and soothing Gladys, and the poor, stricken girl-wife felt a wave of helpful sympathy enveloping her as she

agricultural societies which now exist; and the time must come when identity of interest in the economic world leads to common and distinctive action in the political.

For generations past the atmosphere of three-quarters of rural Ireland has been uniformly anti-English. In the home, the school, the market, the Government has been spoken of as an alien, hostile Government, holding Ireland by force, and indifferent or inimical to her interests. The miseries which the poverty-stricken population have so often been called upon to endure have, quite naturally, been ascribed to this remote and malign power. A child brought up in such surroundings must inevitably draw in this anti-English prejudice "with its mother's milk."

The sole thing that matters today is the fact that this feeling of Irish Nationalism exists. Whether it is founded on rational or irrational grounds cannot make the smallest difference to the fact of its existence.

In the desire to find a simple cause for this Home Rule sentiment it is often alleged that the Roman Catholic religion is at the root of it. I believe that to be a complete mistake.

If we seriously endeavor to see this question through Irish eyes we can hardly resist admitting that their traditional distrust of England finds for them some confirmation in late events. The passage of a Home Rule Act after thirty years; the practical shelving of that Act in face of the armed threats of Ulster; the open support given by a great English party to the potential rebels of the Northeast; the present uncertainty of the position of Home Rule; the frank and open threats of many party newspapers that the Home Rule Act will be repealed, that the "scrap of paper" will be torn up—surely a shocking indecency in view of the present war; the flood of abuse and cajolery, of flattery, and scolding that has of late been poured upon the Irish people by those same journals.

The political psychology of the Irish farmer class: For most practical purposes the farmer has no politics. His farm is his country, and its boundary fence his horizon. When, however, question involving the English Government arise, his sympathies are instinctively with the opposition. So far as he is concerned, "public opinion" is not on the side of the existing Government.

The Irish farmer is not a lover of disorder. His interests and his instincts are conservative, opposed to change and adventure. His native anti-English bias would make him so much the more firm a supporter of an Irish Government, which would have behind it, what the present system lacks, the public opinion of a powerful and homogeneous farming class covering the whole country, and resisting, instead of tacitly approving, disorder or political unrest.

The third great division of the Irish people comprises the great mass of the wage-earning or unemployed population—the labours of the land and the lower paid ranks in the towns. What has been said of the ingrained bias of the farmer class applies equally to those who were brought up under the same influences. Unlike the farmers, however, they have no substantial material interests to absorb them.

Almost the only excitement left to them is political demonstration; and their early training ensures that such shall be "agin the Government" and all it stands for.

The writer concludes thus:

Repression as a permanent system is impossible.

A military despotism, indifferent to public opinion at home and abroad, may hold down by force a section of its people indefinitely; but even then it is a costly and doubtful expedient. A democratic State cannot do so.

The great class of the Irish people whom we are considering are united in a common enmity to the system of government which they regard as alien. The substitution of an Irish Government for that which they "feel" as alien and remote must inevitably be followed by the dissolution of the bond which at present unites them. Domestic politics will divide them as it has divided all other peoples who possess "Self Government." Stable public opinion will take its place as the strongest bulwark of law and order; and the small remnant of irreconcilables, which we must expect to find in Ireland as in England, will be left of its power as a disturbing factor in the life of the country.

One is irresistibly forced to the conclusion that a form of government which the people can feel to be "Irish" is an absolutely necessary preliminary to the removal of the Irish difficulty.

## THOU SHALT OBEY

[TRANSLATION OF A PAPER READ BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.]

(Specially translated for the *Modern Review*.)

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**W**ITH the least sign of monsoon conditions our lane, and Chitpore Road into which it leads, are flooded. And as I have watched this happening year after year till my head has grown grey, I have often felt that we, the residents of

this lane, are hardly better fitted than amphibians for the race of life.

Thus nearly sixty years have passed. In the mean-time things have been moving. Steam, which was the steed of the *Kali yuga*, is now laughed at by the lightning

which is superseding it. The atom which had merely attained invisibility has now become unthinkable. Man, like the ant on the eve of death, has sprouted wings, and the legal profession is lying in wait for the good times when disputes for the possession of air space will be brought into the law courts. In one single night all China cut off its pigtail, and Japan has taken so prodigious a leap that the space of 500 years has been covered in 50. But the inability of Chitpore Road to cope with its rainfall has remained as bad as ever. And the burden of our national song is as mournful, now that Home Rule is about to ripen, as it was when the National Congress was not even thought of.

Accustomed as we have been to all this from our early years, it has ceased to be a matter of surprise; and what does not surprise breeds no anxiety. But after the water-logged discomfort of our road has been underlined and emphasised by tram tracks to which the repairs never seem to come to an end, the jolts which these give to my carriage wheels have brought me out of my absent-minded toleration to a more acute perception of the struggle between the stream of wayfarers and the stream of water, the splashes of which besprinkle me as I pass. I have latterly begun to ask myself: "Why do we bear it?"

That it is possible not to bear it, that one gets on ever so much better for refusing to bear it, becomes evident as soon as one passes out into the European quarter of Chowringhee. If Chowringhee had been more than three-quarter tram-line, to which perennial repairs went on and on with the leisurely gait of a drowsy elephant, the tramway authorities, I am sure, would not have been permitted to enjoy either their food or sleep. The spirit of docility, however, which is incarnate in us, will not allow us to believe that things can be made to be better than they are. Hence these tears which flood our cheeks and the rain water which floods our streets.

This is not a trivial matter. We have never been allowed to realise, anywhere, in any little particular, that we are our own masters. I have heard tell of the gold fish which continually knocked their heads against the side of their bowl, thinking the glass to be water; and when they were put into a larger piece of water they restricted themselves to the same small

circle, thinking the water to be glass. Such like fear of getting our heads knocked has been driven into our very bones.

Like Abhimanyu in the Mahabharata, who had learnt the art of breaking through the enemy's formation, but not of coming out again, and consequently had to bear the brunt of all the enemy's warriors, we, who are taught from our birth the art of getting ourselves tied up, but not the method of undoing the knots, are compelled to suffer the assaults of all the adverse forces of the world, big and small down to the pettiest infantry.

So accustomed have we become to obey men, books, suggestions, hammers, imaginary lines,—generation after generation,—that, the fact that we can do something for ourselves, in any sphere of activity whatsoever, escapes our notice, though it may stare us in the face,—even when we have our European spectacles on!

The right to be one's own master is the right of rights for man. And the country in which this great right has been systematically suppressed by book maxims, by current sayings, by rites and observances, has naturally become the greatest of slave factories;—the country in which, lest reason should err, dogmatism and ritual have been allowed to bind the people hand and foot, where paths have been destroyed so that footsteps may not stray, where in the name of religion man has been taught to humiliate and debase man.

Our present bureaucratic masters have now taken to offering us the same counsel: "You will make mistakes, you are unfit, the right to think and act for yourselves can not be placed in your hands."

This refrain from Manu and Parashar sounds strangely discordant when voiced by Englishmen. We are, therefore, roused to reply to them in a tone more consonant with their own spirit. "The making of mistakes," say we, "is not such a great disaster as the deprivation of the right of being one's own master. We can only arrive at the truth if we are left free to err."

We have yet more to say. We can remind our rulers that though they may now be proudly driving the automobile of democracy, the creaking of the old Parliamentary cart, when it first started on its journey in the night, as it jerked its way from the rut of one precedent to another, did not sound exactly like the music of a

triumphal progress. It had not always the benefit of a steam-roller smoothed road. How it used to sway from this interest to that, now of the king, now of the church, now of the landlord, now of the brewer, through faction, corruption, brawling and ineptitude. Was there not even a time when the attendance of its members had to be secured under threat of penalty?

And talking of mistakes, what a dismal tale could be unfolded of the mistakes the mother of Parliaments has made, beginning from the time of its old relations with Ireland and America, down to its recent actions in the Dardenelles and Mesopotamia,—to say nothing of the not inconsiderable list which might be compiled for India alone. The depredations of the minions of mammon in American politics are hardly of minor importance. The Dreyfus case exposed the horrors of Militarism in France. And yet, in spite of all these, no one has the least doubt in his mind that the living flow of self-government is itself the best corrective which will dislodge one error by another till it lifts itself out of each pitfall with the same impetus which led it to fall in.

But we have still a greater thing to urge. Self-government not only leads to efficiency and a sense of responsibility, but it makes for an uplift of the human spirit. 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 that they will be able to realise humanity in its larger sense. For want of this opportunity every person in this country remains a lesser man. All his thoughts, his powers, his hopes and his strivings remain petty. And this enforced pettiness of soul is for him a greater calamity than loss of life itself.

So in spite of all risk of error or mischance we must have self-government. Let us stumble and struggle on our way, but for God's sake don't keep your eyes fixed on our stumblings to the neglect of our progress;—this is our reply—the only true reply.

If some obstinate person keeps on worrying the authorities with this reply he may be interned by the Government, but he gets the applause of his countrymen. When, however, he turns with this same reply to his own social authorities and protests: "You tell us that this is the *Kali*

*yuga* in which the intellect of man is feeble and liable to make mistakes if left free, so that we had better bow our head to shabastic injunctions rather than work the brain inside it;—but we refuse to submit to this insulting proposal." Then do the eyes of the heads of the Hindu community become red and the order for social internment is passed forthwith. Those who are flapping their wings to soar into the sky of politics, would fain shackle our legs on the social perch.

The fact is that the same helm serves to steer to the right and to the left. There is a fundamental principle which must be grasped before man can become true, socially or politically. Allegiance to this principle makes all the difference between Chowringhee and Chitpore. Chitpore has made up its mind that everything is in the hands of superior authority with the result that its own hands are always joined in supplication. "If things are not in our own hands what are our hands for?" says Chowringhee, and has brought the whole world into its own hand because it believes that this is in direct connection with the hand of Providence. Chitpore has lost the world because it has lost this belief; and with half-closed eyes seeks in despair the narcotic consolations of quietism.

It is indeed necessary to shut our eyes if we have to keep up a belief in our paltry home-made rules of life. For, with eyes open, we cannot but catch glimpses of the universal law which rules the world. Power and wealth and freedom from suffering are all the rewards of mastery over this universal law, for the mass as well as for the individual. This is the axiom on which modern European civilisation is firmly based, and faith in this has given it its immense freedom.

For us, however, it still remains a case of wringing our hands and awaiting our master's voice. And in the worship of that master, be he the elder at home, the police *Daroga*, temple tout, priest, or pandit, Sitala, Manasa, Ola, or any one of the host of such demoniac dietics, we have shattered into a thousand fragments and scattered to the four winds our power of independent thought and action.

The college student will object. "We no longer believe in all that," he will say. "Do we not get ourselves inoculated for small pox and take saline injections for cholera? Have we not recognised mosquito-

borne malaria to be a microscopic germ and refused to accord it a place in our pantheon?"

It is, however, not a question of what particular beliefs are professed. The fact remains that the attitude of blindly hanging on to some outside authority has sapped the very fount of our endeavour. This mental cowardice is born of an all-pervading fear, which dominates us and overpowers our own intelligence and conscience, because we cannot put our faith in the immutable universal law expressing itself throughout the world. For it is of the very nature of fear to doubt and hesitate: "Anything may happen! why take any risk?"

The same phenomenon is noticeable among our rulers whenever, through any loophole in their administration, fear gains an entrance, making them forget their most cherished traditions and impelling them to lay the axe at the root of the fundamental principle on which their power rests so firmly. Then do right and justice retire in favour of prestige, and, in defiance of the Divine law, they think that acrid fumes will become soothing if only the tears can be hidden away in the solitude of the Andamans. This is but an instance of how the obsession with one's own particular panacea makes for a denial of the universal law. At bottom there is either petty fear, petty self-interest or an attempt at evading the straight road by petty trickery.

So does blind fear cause us to overlook the claims of humanity, while in a frantic flutter of trepidation we make our obsequies at the shrine of every conceivable authority. And howsoever successfully we may pass examinations in physical or political science we cannot get rid of our ingrained habit of waiting to be dictated to. Even where we have followed the modern fashion by founding democratic institutions, they constantly tend to be dominated by some one master for the simple reason that the rank and file are so accustomed to doing everything, to order from waking and sleeping, eating and drinking, to getting married and mounting the funeral pyre.

If I say that the water in the pail of the Brahmin carrier is in a filthy state, unfit to drink, but that the one brought by the untouchable person straight from the filter is pure and wholesome, I shall

be rebuked for talking mere, paltry reason, for such doctrine has not the master's sanction. If I venture to question: "What of that?" I am promptly boycotted. They cease to invite me to dinner. They will even refuse to attend my funeral! The wonder is that those who welcome such cruel tyranny in every detail of life, as beneficial to Society, feel no compunction in asking for the most absolute political freedom!

And yet there was a day in India when the *Upanishad* declared of the Divine law—*Yathatathyato than vyadadhat shashwatibhyah samabhyah*—that it is immutable and adaptable to each and every circumstance. It is for all time and not dependent on the whim of the moment. Therefore is it possible for us to know it with our intellects and use it in our work. And the more we can make it our own the less shall obstacles be able to obstruct our path. The knowledge of this law is science, and it is because of this science that Europe today can say with superb assurance: "Malaria shall be driven off the face of the earth. Lack of food and lack of knowledge shall not be allowed in the homes of men. And in politics the commonweal shall harmonise with the rights of the individual."

India had also realised that in ignorance is bondage, in knowledge freedom and that in gaining the truth lies salvation. What was meant by untruth?—The looking upon oneself as separate. To know oneself in one's spiritual relations to the universe is to know truly. Today it is difficult even to conceive how such an immense truth came to be grasped. Then the age of the Rishis—the lovers of the simple life in their forest households—passed away, and the age of the Buddhist monks took its place. And this great realisation of India was relegated to a place apart from its every-day life, when salvation was declared to be in world renunciation.

Thus came about a compromise between truth and untruth, and a partition wall was erected between the two. So today from the side of truth there comes no protest, whatsoever degree of narrowness, grossness or folly may invade the practices and observances of social life. Nay, they are condoned. The ascetic under the tree proclaims: "He who has realised the universe in himself and himself in the

universe has known the truth." Whereupon the householder, profoundly moved, fills the ascetic's bowl with his best. On the other hand when the householder in his chamber rules that the fellow who cannot keep the universal law at a respectable distance must not have access to barber or washerman, the ascetic in turn beams approval and bestows on him the dust of his feet and his blessing: "May you live for ever, my son!" That is how the decadence of our social life has come about, for there was none to raise a protest in the name of Truth. That is why for hundreds of years we have had to bear insult after insult, and weep.

In Europe it is not so. The truth there is not confined to the intellect, but finds a place in practice. Any fault that may come to light in society or the state has to face public examination and rectification in the search-light of truth. And the power and freedom thus gained becomes available to all and gives them hope and courage. The expression of this truth is not hidden in a mist of esoteric incantation, but grows in the open, in full view of all, assisting them to grow with it.

The insults which we allowed ourselves to suffer for hundreds of years finally took shape as subjection to foreign dominion. And as the hand always seeks the painful spot, so has the whole of our attention become rivetted on the political system of our Western rulers. Forgetful of all else we clamour:—"Let our Government have some reference to our own will, let not all rules and regulations be showered upon us from above whether we like them or not. Put not the full weight of power on our shoulders as a burden, let there be some sort of contrivance on wheels which we can also assist in pushing along."

From every part of the world, today, rises the prayer for deliverance from the rule of irresponsible outsiders. It is well that, stirred by the spirit of the times, we have added our voice to this prayer. It would have been to our undying shame had we not done so,—bad we still clung to our accustomed acquiescence in the dictates of governmental authority. It shows that there is at least some chink left through which a ray of truth has been able to penetrate our being.

It is because what we have seen is a glimpse of the truth that I confidently hail the self-respect which impels us

forward as a good thing, and as confidently cry shame on the vain self-glorification which would keep us tied to the stake of immobility like an animal destined for sacrifice. Curiously enough it is the same feeling of pride which when it looks ahead says: "Give us a place in your councils of Empire" and which when it turns homewards says: "Beware lest in religious or social observances or even in your individual concerns you depart even by one step from the path prescribed by the master."—And this we call the renaissance of Hinduism! Our Hindu leaders, it appears, would prescribe for us the impossible commandment to sleep with one eye and keep the other awake!

When the cane of God's wrath fell on our backs our wounded patriotism cried out: "Cut down the cane jungles!" forgetting that the bamboo thickets would still be there! The fault is not in cane or bamboo, but within ourselves, and it is this: that we prefer authority to truth and have more respect for the blinkers than for the eyes. Till we can grow out of this disposition of ours some rod will be left in some wood or other for our punishment.

In Europe also there was a time when the authority of the Church was paramount in all departments of life, and it was only when they had succeeded in cutting through its all-enveloping meshes that the European peoples could begin to step out on the path of self-government. The insularity of England was England's opportunity and it was comparatively easier for her to elude the full might of a church, the centre of which was at Rome. Not that England is yet completely free from all traces of church domination, but her church, like an old dowager, is now only tolerated where once she was all-powerful.

But though England was thus able to shake off the Old Woman, Spain was not. There was a day when Spain had the wind full in her sails. Why was she unable to maintain the start this gave her? Because the Old Woman was at the helm.

When Philip of Spain waged war against England it was discovered that her naval tactics were as rigidly ruled as her religious beliefs. So that while the navy of England, under the command of her most skilful sailors, was as mobile and adaptable to the free-blowing winds, as the waves on which it floated, the Spanish



naval command went by caste, and was unable to extricate itself from the iron-grip of immovable custom. So in Europe only those peoples have been able to raise their heads who have succeeded in loosening the shackles of blind obedience to an organised church and learnt to respect themselves. And Russia, which failed to do so, remains bristling with a very forest of authorities, and her mabhood is wasted in bending the knee, alike to the meanest modern government official and the pettiest ancient scriptural injunction.

It should be remembered that religion and a church, or religious organisation, are not the same. They are to one another as the fire to its ashes. 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 aspect becomes desert-like. And when in this circumstance men begin to take pride then are they indeed in a bad way.

Religion tells us that if man is despitefully used it is bad both for him who commits and him who suffers the outrage. But religious organisation tells us: "If you do not carry out without compunction each and every one of the elaborate rules and injunctions which oppress and insult man, you will be excommunicated." Religion tells us that he who needlessly gives pain to a living creature hurts his own soul. But religious organisation tells us that parents who offer water to their fasting widowed daughter on a particular day of the moon commit mortal sin. Religion tells us that repentance and good works alone may serve to wash away sin; religious organisation tells us that to take an immersion in a particular piece of water during an eclipse washes away not only one's own sins but those of fourteen generations of one's forebears. Religion tells us to fare forth over mountain and sea and enjoy the beautiful world, for that will enlarge our minds; religious organisation tells us that he who overpasses the sea shall have to roll in the dust in expiation. Religion tells us that the true man in whatever household he may have been born is worthy of homage; religious organisation tells us that he who is born a Brahmin may be the veriest scoundrel yet he is fit to shower on others' heads the dust of his feet. In a word, religion preaches freedom, religious organisation chants of slavery.

Faith, even if blind, has its aspect of external beauty. This beauty the foreign traveller passing through India sometimes loves to dwell on, like an artist who enjoys the picturesque possibilities of a ruined house, but gives no thought to its tenantable qualities, During the bathing festival I have seen pilgrims in their thousands, mostly women, coming from Barisal to Calcutta. The suffering and insult, which they had to put up with at each changing station from steamer to train and train to steamer, was unending. Their pathetic resignation had no doubt a kind of beauty, but the God of their worship has not accepted that beauty. He has not rewarded, but punished them. Their sorrows are ever increasing. The children they rear amidst their futile rites and observances have to cunge to all the material things of this world and tremble at all the shadows of the next; their sole function in life being to go on raising barriers at each bend of the path which they will have to tread; and all they know of growth is in making these barriers tower higher and higher.

The reason for this punishment is that they have misspent the greatest of God's gifts to man,—the power of self-sacrifice. When called upon to render their account they can only show a heavy debit balance. I have seen, elsewhere, a stream of hundreds of thousands of men and women hurrying along to some place of pilgrimage to acquire religious merit, but a dying man, lying by their road-side, had none to tend him *because his caste was not known*. What a terrible insolvency of humanity has come upon these spendthrift seekers after merit, whose blind faith appears so beautiful! The same blindness which impels them to rush to bathe in a particular stream, renders them indifferent to the sufferings of their unknown fellow-men. God does not appreciate this prostitution of his most precious gift.

In Gaya I have seen women pouring out their wealth at the feet of some temple priest who had neither learning, piety nor character. Has this generous self-privation led them a step nearer to pity or to truth? It may be said in reply: "They gave of their substance for the sake of what they believed to be the holiness of the Priest. Had they not this belief they would either not have parted with the money

at all, or spent it on themselves." Be it so. But in that case they would at least have had the benefit of the money, and what is more they would not have deluded themselves into believing that in spending on themselves they were doing a pious act. They would have remained free from this slavery to a delusion. He who has trained himself to die in docile obedience to his master's bidding finds it impossible, when he becomes his own master, manfully to give up his life for the right.

Thus it happens that in our villages foodstuffs, health, education and the joy of life are all on the ebb. Feeling that the only hope for the villagers was in rousing them to a sense of their own powers I once made the attempt in a certain village. There was a part of the village where not a drop of water was to be had. A fire had broken out and all that the neighbours could do was to join in the lamentation while the flames were raging. Said I to them: "If you will give you labour to dig a well I will pay for the masonry work." They admired my cunning in attempting to acquire merit partly at their cost, but declined to be taken in by it! That well never got made, the water scarcity there remains as bad as ever, and fires are perennial.

This shows that the main reason for our village distresses is that nothing gets done except with the idea of acquiring religious merit. So that every want must await providence, or some casual visitor in search of merit, for its fulfilment. If the latter is not forthcoming the village will remain thirsty rather than dig its own well. I do not blame the villagers, for the Old Woman keeps them half asleep with her opium. But I am struck speechless when I see educated young men singing the Old Woman's praises. "What a splendid nurse," say they. "What a proud sight to see our country in her arms! From that high seat her feet never even touch the ground. How pretty it would look if she held in her hands the sceptre of self-government while still perched in her old nurse's arms."

Privation, pestilence and famine obtrude themselves only too patently. But just as the government refuses us a license for arms to withstand the attacking tiger or dacoit, so also does the Hindu social leader deny us the means of defending ourselves against these calamities. "But

surely," the latter will protest in reply, "you are allowed to acquire the means of defending yourself. Nobody prevents your learning and applying science for self-protection." True, it would be an exaggeration to say that we are deprived of weapons of defence. But every precaution is taken to prevent our learning how to use them. So incapable have we become by the constant fear of transgression of the multitudinous rules with which we are hedged in both on the side of our country as well as on that of the government, that we are more likely to get hurt by the gun, if we have it, than by the dacoits!

Now let us examine the contention that it is foreign domination which is responsible for keeping us in this distressful state. The fundamental principle of British politics is the participation of the people in their own government. This principle has always hurled its shafts against the irresponsible domination of any outsider and this fact has not been hidden from us. We openly read of it in government schools and memorise it for our examinations. They have no means now of taking back this knowledge.

Our congresses and leagues are all based on this principle. And as it is the very nature of European science to be available to all, so also is it of the essence of the British political creed to offer itself for acceptance to the people of India. One, or ten, or five hundred Englishmen may be found to say that it is not expedient to allow the Indian student access to European science, but that same science itself will shame these Englishmen by calling upon *all*, irrespective of birth-place or colour, to come to it, and partake of its boons. So also if five hundred, or even five thousand Englishmen preach from platform or press that obstacles should be placed in the way of the attainment of self-government by the Indian people these words of these thousands of Englishmen will be put to shame by the British political creed itself which thunders out its call to all peoples, irrespective of birth-place or colour, to become its votaries.

I know that we are open to the rude retort that British principles do not take into account the likes of us. Just as the Brahmin of old had decreed in his day that the highest knowledge and the larger life were not for the Sudra. But the Brahmin had taken the precaution to consolidate

his position. Of those whom he sought to cripple externally he also crippled the mind. The roots of knowledge having been cut off from the Sudra all chance of his blossoming out into independent action withered away, and no further trouble had to be taken to ensure the Sudra's head being kept bowed to the dust of the Brahmin's feet. But our British rulers have not completely closed the door of knowledge—the door that leads to freedom. Doubtless the bureaucracy are repentant and are fumbling about in a belated endeavour to close this window and that—but for all that, even they are unable to forget altogether that to sacrifice principle at the altar of expediency is only a step towards moral suicide.

If we can only grasp with all our strength this message of hope that our rights lie latent in the deeper psychology of the British people, then it will become easier for us to bear sorrow and make sacrifices for its realisation. If we allow our habitual weakness to overcome us under the baleful influence of the first article of our creed—"Thou Shalt Obey," then indeed the black despair will be our lot of which we have seen two opposite forms of expression—the violent methods of secret societies, and the inane discussions of our chamber politicians as to the merits or demerits of this viceroy or that, and whether a John Morley at the India Office will bring about any improvement in our conditions, or will not rather the domestic cat, when it takes to the jungles, become as wild as the wild cat.

Nevertheless we must not mistrust humanity. Let us aver with conviction that its power is not the only thing great in the British Empire, but that the principles on which it is broad-based are even greater. Doubtless we shall see this contradicted at every turn. We shall see selfish considerations and the lust of power, anger, fear and pride at work. But these enemies of humanity can only defeat us where they find their like within us, where they find us afraid of petty fears, lusting after petty desires, full of jealousy, mistrust and hatred of each other. Where we are great, where we are brave, where we are self-denying, devoted and reverential, there we shall find ourselves in touch with the best in our rulers. There we shall be victorious in spite of all enemy assaults,—Not always externally, it may

be, but assuredly in the depths of our being.

If we are petty and cowardly we shall bring down to our level the great principles of our rulers and help their evil passions to triumph. Where there are two necessary parties the strength of each must contribute to their common elevation, the weakness of each to their common downfall. When the Sudra joined his palms in submission to the Brahminical decree of inferiority, on that very day was dug the pit for the fall of the Brahmin. The weak can be as great an enemy of the strong as the strong of the weak.

A high Government official once asked me: "You always complain of the oppression of the police. Personally I am not inclined to disbelieve in it. But why not confront us with facts and figures?" True, there should be at least some in our country who have courage enough to dare to expose all wrongs, to repeatedly proclaim them to the world. This should be so, although we know that the meanest constable is not an individual but the representative of a terrible power, which will spend thousands upon thousands from public funds to shield him from obloquy,—a power which therefore practically tells us that if we are oppressed it will be healthier for us to continue to be oppressed in silence,—for is not prestige, at stake? Prestige! That familiar old bogey of ours, the unseen master who has eternal hold of our ears, the *Manasa* of the *Behula* epic, the *Chandi* of Kavikankan, to whose worship we must hasten, trampling over right, justice and all else, or be mercilessly crushed! So to Prestige be our salutations:

*Ya devi rajyashasane  
Prestige-rupena samsthita!  
Namastasyai namastasyai  
Namastasyai namonamah!!*

This however, is nothing but *Avidya*, *Maya*. We must not believe in it for all that it appears before our material eyes. The real truth is always behind it, that we are the most vitally concerned in our own government. This truth is greater than the government itself. It is this truth which gives its strength to the British Empire. In this truth, also, lies our strength. If we are cowards, if we cannot bravely put our trust in British ideals, then the police needs must go on oppressing, and the magistrate be powerless to protect us.

The goddess of Prestige will continue to claim her human victims, and British rule to give the lie to British tradition.

To this I shall be told in reply that it is all very well from an idealistic standpoint to talk of principle being greater than might, but in practical life an adherence to this belief will get us into trouble.

"We may get into trouble," say I, "but still we must act as we truly believe."

"But your countrymen will be bribed or intimidated to bear witness against the truth."

"Be it so. But still we must profess what we believe to be the truth."

"But your own people will be lured by the hope of praise or reward to hit you on the head from behind."

"That may be. But still we must trust in the truth."

"Can you hope for so much?"

"Just so much must we hope for, not one jot less will do."

If we ask our rulers for great things we must also ask for greater things from our countrymen—else the first prayer will not be fruitful. I know that all men are not courageous and that many are weak. But in all countries, and at all times, there are born men who are the natural representatives of their race, and who must take up all the sufferings of their country on themselves; who must cut a way through all opposition for the rest to follow through; who can keep up their faith in humanity in the face of all apparent contradictions, and watchfully await the dawn through the blackest night of despair; who scoff at the fears of the timid with the words: *Swalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat*—the least bit of right in the centre will vanquish a multitude of terrors at the circumference. If there be any the least righteous principle in politics to that shall we bow the head, not to fear, not to fear.

Suppose my child is ill. I have sent for a European specialist at great cost. He comes and begins to make passes and mutter incantations in the manner of our witch-doctors. Must I not speak out and tell him: "Look here, I called you in to treat the patient, not for this kind of thing?" If he waxes indignant and says: "What do you know? I am a doctor, whatever I choose to do is the proper treatment!" Must I not nevertheless persist in my

objection and tell him that his medical science is greater than himself,—that is what I have paid for and insist on having? He may knock me down and depart with my money in his pocket, but when he is alone in his carriage he will be ashamed. So I say that if I do not acquiesce in the dicta of the British bureaucracy but hold on to the ideals of the British people, I may bring trouble on myself today, but tomorrow I shall win my way through.

Just fancy that after a hundred and fifty years of British rule we hear today the extraordinary doctrine that Bengal has not even the right to sigh over the distress of her sister province of Madras. We so long thought that the fact that under the unifying influence of British rule, Bombay, Madras, Bengal and Punjab were growing into internal and external uniformity was accounted one of the brightest jewels of the British Crown. When in the West the news is abroad that Great Britain bleeds for the troubles of Belgium and France, and has faced death for their sake, is it to be proclaimed in the same breath in the East that Bengal must not bother her head about the joys or sorrows of Madras? Are we going to obey such a command? Do we not know for certain, despite the vehemence of its utterance, of the load of shame which lurks behind it?

We must bring about a compromise between this secret shame of the bureaucracy and our open defiance. England is bound to India by her pledged word. England came here as the responsible representative of European civilisation. The message of that civilisation is the word she has plighted. This, her only title to Empire, shall be glorified by us. We shall never let her forget that she has not crossed the seas to slice up India into fragments.

Any people which have gained the wealth of a great civilisation 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 Englishman may point to his his-

tory and tell us: "This great prize of self-government have I earned only after many a struggle and with infinite toil and trouble." I admit it. Each pioneer race has arrived at some particular truth through much sorrow and error and sacrifice. But those who follow after have not to tread the same long path of tribulation. In America I have seen Bengali youths becoming experts in the manufacture of machinery without having to retrace all the historical stages of the Steam Engine beginning from the boiling kettle. What it took ages of shower and sunshine for Europe to mature, Japan was able to transplant in no time, roots and all, in her own soil. So if in our character the qualities necessary for successful self-government appear to be in defect, it is all the more reason that practice in that art should be the sooner commenced. If we begin by the assumption that there is nothing in a man, we can never discover anything in him. No worse crime can be committed against us than to allow a contempt for our people to close the door to the development of their better nature and thereby compel them to remain for ever contemptible in the eyes of the world.

When morning dawns in history the light does not gradually creep up from the East but at once floods all the four quarters. If the peoples of the world had to acquire greatness inch by inch then nothing short of eternity would serve for its attainment. Had it been true that men must first deserve and then desire, then no people in the world would ever have attained freedom.

The West boasts of democracy to-day. I have no wish to stir up the repulsive mire which is still so plentiful beneath the surface glamour of the Western peoples. Had there been some paramount power to rule that while such state of things prevails no democracy is to step into its rights, then not only would the foulness have remained where it is but all hope of its ever being cleansed away would vanish.

So in our social life and our individual outlook there are no doubt blemishes. I could not hide them even if I would. But still we must be our own masters. Because the lamp in one corner is dim that is no reason why we should not light another lamp in another corner. 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.

The god of the festival calls us to-day. Shall the priest be allowed to deny us admittance,—the priest who has all his bows and smiles for the wealthy, who hastens up to the railway station at the bare news of the arrival of Australia or Canada? This deference of treatment will not be permitted, for the god of the festival is not blind. If conscience does not manifest itself from within as shame, it will do so as wrath from without.

Our hope lies both in the British people and in ourselves. I have great faith in the people of Bengal. I am sure our youths will not consent to peer forever through the borrowed mask of age. We know of great English souls who are willing to suffer insult from their own countrymen so that the fruit of England's history may become available to India. We also want men of India, real men, who will dare to face the frowns of the foreigner and the sneers of their countrymen, who will be ready to take all risks of failure, in their eagerness truly to express themselves as men.

The wakeful, ageless God of India calls today on our soul,—the soul that is measureless, the soul that is undefeated, the soul that is destined to immortality, and yet the soul which lies today in the dust, humbled by external authority, in the fetters of blind observances. With blow upon blow, pang upon pang, does He call upon it "*Atmanam Viddhi*: know thyself!"

( ) self-mistrusting coward, worn out with premature old age, bowed down with a foolish burden of blind belief! this is not the time for petty quarrels with your own people, for mean hates and jealousies. The time has passed for squabbling like beggars over trivial doles and petty favours. Let us not, either, console ourselves with that false pride, which can only flourish in the darkness of our secluded corners, but which will be shamed on facing the vast assemblies of the world. Let us not

indulge in the cheap consolation of the impotent, of casting the blame on another. Our sins, accumulating through the ages, have crushed our manhood under their load and paralysed our conscience. The time has come to make a supreme effort to rid ourselves of their dead weight. Behind us lies the greatest obstruction to our forward progress. Our past overcomes our future with its hypnotic influence, its dust and dead leaves obscure the rising sun of the new age, and befog the activities of our awakening youthfulness. We must ruthlessly relieve our backs of this clinging obstruction, if we would save ourselves from the shame of utter futility, if we would keep pace with the stream of ever-progressing humanity—the ever-vigilant, ever-exploring humanity which is victorious over death; which is the right hand of the Great Architect of the universe, and of which, as it ceaselessly journeys along the knowledge-lighted road to truth, the

triumphal progress from epoch to epoch is hailed with acclamations which resound throughout the world.

Deeply stained as we are by the repeated showers of insult and sorrow that have been unceasingly poured on us from outside, we must today undergo purification—the purification of the *homa* of self-sought travail, voluntarily borne. In the sacred flame of that sacrificial fire our sins will be burnt away, the fumes of our folly dissipated, and our inertness reduced to ashes. O Great God! thou art not the God of the poor in spirit! That in us which is not mean and miserable, that which is indestructible, masterful, god-like, of that art thou the Over-Lord,—that dost thou call up to the right hand of thy kingly throne. Let our weakness be scorned, our folly censured, our servility punished, till they depart from us for ever.

Translated by  
SURENDRANATH TAGORE.

## NOTES

### Science in Secondary Schools.

The report of the conference of directors of public instruction held in Delhi in January last gives some idea of the place of science in the secondary schools of the different provinces of India.

In Madras object lessons are given in elementary schools. In the middle classes of secondary schools subjects verging on science are studied, and in the higher classes elementary science is obligatory; in the higher classes of secondary schools physics, chemistry, botany and natural history are taught. Additional science courses can also be taken in the two highest forms.

In Bombay science is compulsory in Government high schools throughout the course, except for the school final candidates. The University demands for matriculation the study of science in the two high standards and a certificate from the headmaster that the course has been accomplished, but there is no examination in science conducted by the University.

In the United Provinces physics and chemistry together constitute one of the alternative subjects for the matriculation. The teaching is based on a text-book without any practical work and is, therefore, to a large extent valueless. Laboratories have been provided in schools in connection with the school leaving certificate and, it is said, "have created a revolution in science teaching." This science teaching occupies four years, bifurcation taking place four years before the examination. It was thought suitable to prescribe other courses, e. g., a classical course as alternative to science.

In the Punjab science is compulsory in the science matriculation and is optional in the arts matriculation, but it is commonly taken as an optional subject in the latter. Mr. J. C. Godley, Director of Public Instruction, Punjab, has expressed the opinion that in his province the popularity of science is increasing.

In the North-West Frontier Province science is compulsory in the middle stage

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## THE MEDIUM OF EDUCATION

(Translation of a paper read by Rabindranath Tagore).

IT is superfluous to talk of the utility of learning. Yet, even from the viewpoint of utility controversies arise. We often hear doubts expressed as to its tendency to detract from the efficiency of the agriculturist at his plough, or to hamper the woman in her worship of her lord and master, and of her god. The idea, that the darkness of bandaged eyes is better than the light outside for the bullock which has to turn the mill, is only natural. And in a country where to go on turning the mill of routine is accounted the highest duty, wise men may well look askance at all light as an enemy.

Nevertheless we may regard daylight as greater even than an assistant in our daily work—as an awakener to wit. And it is a yet more important thing that in light men come together, and in darkness they separate. Knowledge is the greatest unifying principle in man. The student in a remote corner of Bengal may be nearer to the educated person at the furthest extremity of Europe than the latter to his illiterate neighbour. Let us leave aside, for a moment, the question of the supreme utility of this world-wide kinship in knowledge, which bridges all gaps of time and space, to consider the unthinkableness of depriving any human being, on any pretext whatsoever, of the supreme joy of it.

When we realise how dim and far between are the torches of this knowledge in this India of ours, we can understand how difficult for us is this path of union through knowledge, the path that all the world is seeking to tread today. And though occasional measures have been taken to improve the method of imparting education, the difficulties in the way of its spread are as immense as ever.

The river courses only along the edge of the country, the rain showers from all

over the sky, and that is why as a friend to the crops the place of the river is much lower. Moreover the very depth and strength of the river depend on the rains. Those who now occupy in our country the throne of thunder-bearing Indra are as sparing of their showers as they are profuse in their thunderings, with which flash the lightning of their derisive scorn against the educational results of Babudom. If only our educational authorities had had to go through the same artificial ripening as have the unfortunate Babus, they would not have delayed to furnish scientific reasons to show that this softening at the top and immaturity at the core can only be due to the want of sunlight in the process.

They may retort that when the West was West, and had not yet got astride the East, the latter hardly showed a deeper culture in the dialectical wrestling and grammatical snare-weaving which used to go on in its *chatuspathis* and *tols*. These were there, I admit, but therein I see nothing different from the empty and barren academical habit which dies hard in all countries, except perhaps that in a fallen country the outward appendages of learning tend to loom larger than its inner strength. But it was only of such academical lore that the pandits in their corners had the monopoly; on the other hand, the life-blood of the culture of the time used to flow unimpeded through the veins of the whole of Society, strong and living. Be it the ryot at his plough or the woman in her *zenana*, there were various approaches through which this life-giving stream could reach and vitalise them. So, whatever its other defects may have been, the body politic was sufficient unto itself.

Not so our foreign learning of today, which remains so much a thing of the school or college that it is kept hung up

like a sign board and does not become part of our life; or remains in our notebooks and fails to get transcribed into thought and action. Some of our learned men ascribe this to the mere fact of its being foreign. But this I cannot admit, for truth has no geography. The lamp that was lit in the East will illumine the continents of the West: if that be not so, it had no light. If there be any light which is claimed to be good for India alone, then I emphatically say it is not good at all. If India's god be for India only, then will he effectually bar for us the gates of the kingdom of the universal God.

The fact of the matter is that our modern education has not found its proper vehicle and so is unable freely to move onwards. The universality of knowledge is acknowledged all the world over, but be the reason what it may, it has not found acceptance in this province. The great Gokhale was the champion of this cause but I am told he had to encounter the greatest opposition in Bengal. It seems that, though we are determined to fly forward in the sky of political ideals, we have made up our minds to walk backwards in the field of our social life.

Deprived as we thus are of that mass education which needs must supply the nutritious juices to the roots of our higher education, we have recently had another worry superadded. As if the insufficiency of our educational institutions was not bad enough, they are to be made still narrower in scope by cutting down space and increasing furniture. Let there be a dearth of pupils if there must, but none of appliances,—so say the authorities!

I quite understand that food and utensils to eat it out of are both needful to man. But where there is a shortage of food, a parsimony in regard to utensils also becomes necessary. When we shall see free kitchens distributing mental fare throughout India, then may we begin to pray for plates of gold. To make expensive the educational part of our poverty-stricken lives would be like squandering all one's money in buying money-bags. We can enjoy our social gatherings on a mat spread in the yard. Plantain leaves suffice for the feasts of our wealthiest. Most of the great ones of our land, to whom we bow the head, were brought up in cottages. So that in our country the idea will not be accepted that Saraswati's

seat owes any of its splendour to appurtenances borrowed from Lakshmi.

We in the East have had to arrive at our own solution of the problem of Life. We have as far as possible made our food and clothing unburdensome, and this our very climate has taught us to do. We require openings in the walls more than the walls themselves. Light and air have more to do than the weavers' loom with our wearing apparel. The sun makes up for the heat-producing qualities which elsewhere are required from foodstuff or kitchen. All these natural advantages have moulded our life to a particular shape which I cannot believe it will be profitable to ignore in the case of our education.

I do not seek to glorify poverty which I admit to be *tamasik*,—of the lowest order. But simplicity is of greater price than the appendages of luxury and is *satwik*,—of the highest. The simplicity of which I speak is not merely the effect of a lack of superfluity, but is one of the signs of perfection. When that dawns on mankind the unhealthy fog which now besmirches civilisation will be lifted. It is for lack of this simplicity that the necessities of life have become so rare and costly.

Most things in the civilised world,—eating and merry-making, education and culture, administration and litigation,—occupy more than their legitimate space. Much of their burden is needless and in bearing it civilized man may be showing great strength, but little skill. To the gods, viewing this from on high, it must seem like the floundering of a demon who has got out of his depth, but knows not how to swim, and who, as he keeps muddying the whole pool by his needlessly powerful efforts, cannot get rid of the idea that there must be some virtue in this display of strength.

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; the barbarities and excesses of their dress will find refuge in their museums; and their sky-scrapers will hang their towering heads in shame. Then work, enjoyment and education 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 the extent that forms and appendages are the outgrowth of the soul, to ignore them is to be impoverished,—this I know. But though Europe has been trying, she has not yet discovered the golden mean. Why, then, should obstacles be placed in the way of our attempting to find it out for ourselves? 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.

The adopted sons of the West, I suppose, needs must go one better than their adoptive father. In America I saw many vast educational institutions run by the state, where the pupils had to pay next to nothing in the way of fees. In Europe, also, there is no lack of cheap educational facilities for poor students. Is it then because of the greater poverty of our country that our education must be made more costly? And yet in India there was a time when education was not bought and sold.

Elsewhere we find education accounted to be an anxious duty of the state. Thus in Europe, Japan or America there is no miserliness in regard to the expenditure of public funds thereon so that it may become readily available to the greatest number. Therefore the higher the seat from which it is proclaimed in India, and the louder, that the more expensive and difficult education is made the greater the benefit to the country, the faster will it sound.

Increase of weight with the growth of age is the sign of a healthy child. It is not good if the weight remains stationary, it is alarming if it decreases. So in our country, where so much of the field of education lies fallow, its well-wishers naturally expect an increase in the number of students, year by year. They are not easy in mind if the numbers remain the same, and if they decrease, they feel that the scale turns towards death,—as we understand it.

But when it was found that the

number of students in Bengal was decreasing an Anglo-Indian paper gloated over it. "So this is the limit of the Bengali's enthusiasm for education," it chuckled. "What a tyrannical measure would have been Gokhale's compulsory education for poor, unwilling Bengal!" These are cruel words. No one could have said such a thing about his own country. If today the desire for education should spontaneously diminish in England, this very same paper would have anxiously advocated artificial means of stimulation.

Of course I should be ashamed to expect these people to feel for India as they do for their own country. Nevertheless it may not be too much to expect a small surplus of good feeling to remain over, after satisfying all the demands of patriotism, and take shape as love of humanity. In the present stage of development of the human conscience, it remains possible to desire power and wealth for one's own country even at the cost of depriving other parts of the world. But surely it should not be possible to say of any country in the world, of which we may find the health declining owing to natural causes, that it would be cheaper to provide it with undertakers, than with physicians.

On the other hand it cannot be gainsaid that it is the fact of our own national consciousness not being sufficiently awake which leads others to value our material and educational needs so meanly. 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,—a deception, moreover, which deludes nobody, but, like the loud bargaining which goes on in China Bazar, it only entails a great waste of time. And this is all that we have been doing, so far, with great vociferation, in the markets of the Empire.

We have begged and prayed for education, but felt no real anxiety about it. We have taken no pains in regard to its spread. Which means, I suppose, that what we are clamouring for is the feast to be spread for ourselves, recking nothing whether or not the hungry ones outside our circle are to receive any of its leavings. Those of us who say that it is not desirable that too large a proportion of the masses should be educated, lest it should do them harm, richly deserve to be told

by the authorities that for Bengalis, in general, too much education is not only not required, but will have pernicious effects. If it be allowable to urge that our servant difficulty will be increased if mass education is encouraged, the apprehension, is equally well grounded that the education of the upper classes of Bengal will prejudicially affect their docile servility.

It will serve as an indication of the real state of our feelings if we recall the fact that, in the political institution called the Bengal Provincial Conference, this simple point was overlooked for years that its proceedings should be conducted in the Bengali language. The reason is that we do not realise our countrymen to be our very own with the whole of our consciousness. That is why we are unable to pay the full price for our country. And if we do not get what we demand in full measure, that is not so much due to any unwillingness in the giver but because we do not truly desire.

When we come to consider the question of the spread of education with the requisite attention, we discover that the foremost difficulty lies in English being the medium of education. The foreign ship may bring imported goods into a port, but she cannot help to distribute them amongst inland markets. So if we insist on pinning our whole faith to the foreign ship our commerce must needs be restricted to the city. So long we have seen nothing wrong in this; for, whatever our lips might have uttered, in our hearts the city was all we knew of our country. When we felt very generous towards our own language we entertained the thought of giving some crude sort of primary education through the vernacular, but whatever the Bengali language aspired higher it was sure to get scoffed at.

How long is this timid self-mistrust of ours to last? Shall we never have the courage to say that high education is to be made our very own by being imbibed through our mother tongue? That Japan was able to assimilate what she needed from the West, within so short a time, was because she had first made western learning captive in her own language. And yet it cannot be said that Japanese is a richer language than ours. The power which Bengali has to create new words is infinite. Moreover European culture

is less foreign to us than it was to the Japanese.

But Japan boldly vowed: "We must and shall install European science in our own temples of learning." And she not only said so, she did it, and is reaping the reward. We have not yet been able to muster up courage even to say that high education should be given through our own language, and to believe that only when so imparted can it become truly fruitful in the land.

It is superfluous to state that we must also learn English, and that by no means only for the purpose of earning a living. Why English alone it would be still better if we could also learn French and German. But it is equally superfluous to point out that the great majority of Bengalis will never be able to learn English. Are we prepared to say that starvation or semi-starvation of the mind is to be the lot of these hundreds of thousands of Bengali-speaking unfortunates?

Any alteration in the complicated machinery of our present education entails no end of pulling and pushing and hammering, and moreover wants a very very strong arm to get it done. The valiant Sir Asutosh essayed one such enterprise and succeeded in getting a little vernacular pulley inserted. What Sir Asutosh Mukherji has achieved, however, only amounts to this: that no Bengali's education, however high the English part of it may have reached, shall be deemed complete without the addition of proficiency in Bengali. But this only makes for the rounding off of the studies of those who *do* know English. What of those who know Bengali but *do not* know English? Will the Bengal university have nothing to say to them? Can such a cruelly unnatural state of things exist anywhere outside India?

I shall be told that my poetising will not do; that I should make some practical suggestion; that I should not expect too much. Expect too much, indeed! Do I not know only too well that one has to give up all hope when attempting to enter the realm of practical suggestion! Anyway, I shall be quite satisfied for the present if any the least stir is visible in any mind, nor shall I object even if that should take shape as abuse or an attempt to assault me.

So let me descend to practical proposals.

Our University was formerly a wrestling ground for examinees. Now a broad fringe area has been added round it where the wrestlers may recover their breath, in every-day garb, between their bouts. Famous professors from abroad are being invited to lecture here, and chairs have been offered to our own men of learning. The credit for this last act of courtesy, I understand, was also due to the gallant Sir Asutosh.

Now, I say, let the old central institution of the University go on in its old way, but what harm if these extension lectures be made over to the Bengalis for their very own? Let those who come to the feast of learning by special invitation be given seats inside; but allow at least those who have flocked in at the good news to be served in the outskirts. Let the English table be reserved for the insiders. The outsiders will make good use of their own plantain leaves. If you persist in making the porters chuck them out, will that not mar the festivity? Will not their curses be heard in heaven?

If, like the sacred confluence of the Ganga and the Jamuna, the university becomes the meeting place of two streams of learning through English and Bengali, then will it become a veritable place of pilgrimage for all the students of Bengal. And though the dark and pale waters of these two different streams may continue to be distinguished separately, they will nevertheless flow on together making the culture of the country wider, deeper and truer.

If there is only one street in a town it is bound to become over-crowded. And so in town-improvement schemes new streets are provided. My proposal of adding a second main thoroughfare to our university culture will likewise have the effect of preventing the overcrowding of the old road, now complained of.

So far as my own experience of teaching goes, a considerable proportion of pupils are naturally deficient in the power of learning languages. Such may find it barely possible to matriculate with an insufficient understanding of the English language, but in the higher stages disaster is inevitable. There are, moreover, other reasons also why English cannot be mastered by a large majority of

Bengali boys. First of all that language is naturally a hard nut to crack for those whose mother tongue is Bengali. For them it is as much of a feat as fitting an English sword into the scabbard of a scimitar. Then again very few boys have the means of getting anything like a proper grounding in English at the hands of a competent teacher—the sons of the poor certainly have not.

So like Hanuman who, not knowing which herb might 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. Those who have extraordinary memories may thus manage to carry on to the end, but this cannot be expected of the poor fellows with only average brain power. These can neither get through the closed doors of the language barrier, nor have they any means of escape by jumping over it.

The point is, is the crime committed by this large number of boys, who owing to congenital or accidental causes have been unable to become proficient in the English language, so heinous that they must be sentenced to perpetual exile by the University? In England at one time thieves used to get hanged. But this penal code is even harsher, because the extreme penalty is imposed for not being able to cheat! For 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?

However I do not wish to lay any charge against those fortunate crammers who manage to get across. But those who are left behind, to whom the Hooghly Bridge is closed, may they not have some kind of ferry boat,—if not a steam launch, at least a country boat? What a terrible waste of national material to cut off all higher educational facilities from the thousands of pupils who have no gift for acquiring a foreign tongue, but who possess the intellect and desire to learn.

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.

I know very well that the English course will nevertheless attract by far the larger number of students, and it will take a long time for the adjustment of normal values between the two. The imperial language has more glamour, and so may continue to have a higher value both in the business as well as in the marriage market. Be it so. The mother tongue can put up with neglect, but not with futility. Let the rich man's child latten at the wet nurse's breast, but do not deprive the poor man's child of its mother's milk.

Having borne in my time the brunt of many an onslaught I try to be very circum-spect now-a-days in what I say. But the force of habit is too strong and truth will out at the end. I congratulated myself on having begun very cunningly indeed, with only a plea for a toothhold in the fringe area. I felt like goody-goody Gopal of our Bengali primer who used to eat only what was given to him. This proposal our university authorities might have rejected, but they would not have felt offended. But in spite of his exemplary manners even Gopal cannot help raising his voice as his hunger increases. And my demand on behalf of our language has also grown somewhat big. The result is sure to be fatal both for the proposal and its author. However that is nothing new. In this country of high infant mortality a hundred and twenty-five per cent of proposals die in their infancy. But so injured am I to fatal blows that I have ceased to believe in their fatality.

I know what the counter-argument will be. "You want to give high education in Bengali, but where are the text books in that language?" I am aware that there are none. But unless high education is given in the language how are text books to come into existence? They are not ornamental plants cultivated by *diletanti* for aesthetic reasons; nor are they weeds which encumber the ground through sheer exuberance of life. If higher education has to await text books, then may trees as well await their foliage, and the river its banks.

If it be a deficiency to be regretted that there are no text books for high education in Bengali then, I repeat, to make this language the vehicle for such education is the only way to remove it. The Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (Bengal Academy of Literature) for some time has been laying

the foundation for text books by collecting and coining technical terms suited to different branches of learning. We hear complaints that its work is slow,—the wonder is, rather, that it does any work at all. Where is the incentive? Where is the scope for the use of these technical terms? We cannot very well expect a mint to go on working if the coins are refused circulation. If ever the University opens up a road to education through Bengali, then will come the Parishad's opportunity.

But it is ever so much more to be regretted that, whereas we have the means and the materials for a veritable feast of education in our own language, we have no place for it. We have our Jagadish Bose, our Prafulla Roy, our Brajendra Seal, our Mahamahopadhyaya Shastri, and a host of other Bengalis of the same calibre, both prominent as well as retiring. And yet are we never to be able to assuage the intellectual hunger of those who know only Bengali? Are such students only to have the privilege of being proud of these fellow-countrymen of theirs, but never to be allowed to make use of them? The hospitality of our University makes it possible for foreigners to come across the seas to sit at their feet, but the Bengali student, who knows only his mother tongue, is not to be deemed worthy to have a place by their side!

In Germany, France, America and Japan, modern Universities have sprung up of which the object is to nurture the mind of man. They are forces which are creating their country, by developing the intellect and character of the people. Such creative work cannot be done through the medium of a foreign language. Nothing makes our education here more futile than that the knowledge we gain does not enrich our language, and that being left forever outside the highest thought, the growth of our mother-tongue fails to keep pace with the growth of our minds.

The result of this state of things has been that though we have been enjoying high education we have not been thinking high thoughts. Like our academic costume the academic language of our education is cast aside as soon as we are back home from college, and all that we have gathered there is left in its pockets as it hangs on the peg. Then we gossip and talk scandal, play at making and unmaking kings, tran-

slate and plagiarise and publish cowardly trash in wretched rags of newspapers—all in the vernacular.

I do not deny that in spite of this our literature has made some progress, but none the less does it betray many a sign of starvation. Like a dyspeptic who may eat a large quantity but remains emaciated, our literature has not been able to assimilate the bulk of what we have learnt. What we imbibe does not increase our vital force, for we do not taste it with our tongues; what goes down our gullets only loads our stomachs, but fails to nourish our bodies.

Our University is modelled on the University of London—that is to say it is only a huge di-stamping machine. Its object is not to make men but to hall-mark them. It assists the business world to ascertain market values. We have thus become accustomed to be satisfied with receiving the impress of the pattern without troubling ourselves as to what has been learnt in the process. This has been all the easier for us because our manners and customs have all along blindly followed ready-made patterns, and we have ceased to be able to realise that any better forms can be evolved than those cast in the pristine moulds which we have apotheosized.

So it seems to me that though this proposal of mine may not meet with the approval of the average Bengali guardian, its adoption will have an advantage even greater than that of catering for boys unable to pass through the meshes of the English course,—and that is the freedom it will give to growth along natural lines. Its very absence of market value will effectually release it from all servitude to market conditions. And for this reason it may come to pass that many who are compelled to take up the English course for gain, will also be tempted to avail themselves of the other for love. For it is certain that in a very short time the lecturers in the mother-tongue will begin to express the whole of their true genius, and those who are now occupied only with raising the dust of synonyms and annotations in the process of explaining the English text, will then be able to scatter vivifying ideas over their famishing country.

There was a day when the English-educated Bengali, in the pride of his new acquisition, looked down on the Bengali

language. Nevertheless, in some mysterious fashion, the seed of our literature sprouted from within the very heart of Bengal. In the beginning it was still easy to sneer at its tiny, frail shoot. But a living thing, however small, is not to be kept down by obloquy. Today it has reared its head so high that it can smile at the essays in English composition of these same English-educated Bengalis. To this result no patronage of the ruling powers contributed; rather it was in spite of being ignored by them—no small drawback for a dependent people—that it flourished in the joy of its own life till it achieved world-recognition.

As I have said it is hardly possible to change the machinery of our existing University with the means at our disposal. The reason is two-fold. Firstly this machinery is designed for a particular purpose and it cannot be made to serve a different purpose without radical alteration from top to bottom. Secondly our form-worshippers have become so enamoured of its particular form that whether they found National Councils of Education, or Hindu Universities, they cannot get rid of the pattern it has indelibly imposed on their minds.

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.

But why do I at all plead for any kind of compromise with the lumbering old machine? Let it be relegated to a place among our Law Courts and Offices, Police stations, Gaols and Asylums, and other paraphernalia of civilisation. If our country wants fruit and shade, let it come off brick-and-mortar erections down to the soil. Why cannot we boldly avow that we shall nurture our own university with our own life-force, as naturally as the pupils used to gather round the teachers in the forest retreats of the Vedic age, or at Nalanda or Taxila during the Buddhist era, or as they gather even now, in the

day of our downfall, in our toils and *chatuspathis*?

The first step towards creation is to desire. Can it be that there are no stirrings of such desire in our country, to-day? Cannot the desire to give of those who are wise, who are learned, who are studying, making researches, meditating, find its counterpart in the desire to receive of those who would learn, and mingling therewith—as clouds mingle with the as-

ending vapours to descend in fertilising showers—melt into their mother-tongue to flood the motherland with water for the thirsty and food for the hungry?

These last words of mine are not practical; they merely express an idea. But upto now practical propositions have only resulted in patchwork, ideas alone have created.

Translated by  
SURENDRANATH TAGORE.

### BRITAIN'S FIRST 'BABY WEEK'

**B**RITAIN dedicated the first seven days of July to the consideration of the means that can be employed to cut down the rate of infant mortality and to give children opportunities to grow into healthy, useful, and happy men and women. Throughout that week I could not put out of my mind the thought that a much higher percentage of babies die in India than in Britain, and that those who live have far poorer opportunity before them than do the children of Britain: yet no Baby-Week has ever been held in India to stimulate efforts for baby-welfare. Perhaps an account of the attempt made in this country may lead to practical results in India.

The idea of focussing the national attention upon baby welfare for a whole week came from the United States of America—the land of my birth. The first Baby-Week was held there last year through the combined efforts of the women's clubs that are dotted all over the country and have a membership of over 1,000,000 women, and the Children's Bureau maintained by the national government at Washington, D. C., of which Miss Julia C. Lathrop—an Illinois woman—is the chief. The experiment proved so successful that it was repeated in America a few months ago, and proved once again a great success.

The British do not always welcome innovations with extended arms—especially innovations that originate in the United States of America. But a devastating war has been going on for well-nigh three years,

and thoughtful persons realize that the one practical way to repair the wreckage of war is to save the babies. That made the British receptive of this American idea.

Could the British have saved, since the hostilities began, the babies that died at or before birth and those that died during their first year, the nation would have more than recouped the losses that it has suffered in manhood at all the fronts. Adding together the pre-natal and post-natal deaths, Britain is losing 4,000 babies under one year of age every week, or 208,000 every year. The death casualties of soldiers have not been higher.

In some towns the rate of infant mortality is scandalously high. Ince-in-Makerfield, with 288 deaths out of 1,000 infants under five years of age in 1915-16 being the worst offender. All the large and small industrial towns, where the adults are poor and ignorant, and most of the mothers have to go to work every day, leaving their children to get along as best they may in a creche or under the care of an older child or an old woman, have a shocking death rate of infants. Burnley lost 257, Wigan 254, Liverpool 235, Manchester 214, and Nottingham 206 babies under five year of age out of every thousand in 1915-16. There were 40 towns where from 208 to 288 babies per 1,000 died in that year. One of these towns, by an irony of fate, was named Khondda.

British medical authorities have been crying themselves hoarse to make the

"The subject has a nose. The restored organ looks enough like a nose not to attract attention. It is asymmetrical, regular, and its possessor is perfectly content. And it is suitable here to emphasise the profound psychological change undergone by the

wounded man. At first somber, taciturn, melancholy, and discouraged, he has become, as his nose improved, gay, active, animated, and happy."—*The Literary Digest*.

## THE CONCLUSION

BY KABINDRANATH TAGORE.

TRANSLATED BY C. F. ANDREWS.

**A**PURBA had got his B. A. degree and was coming back home to his village. The river, which flowed past it, was a small one. It became dried up during the hot weather, but now in the July monsoon the heavy rains had swollen its current and it was full up to the brim.

The boat, which carried Apurba, reached the ghat whence the roof of his home could be seen through the dense foliage of the trees. Nobody knew that he was coming and therefore there was no one to receive him at the landing. The boatman offered to carry his bag, but Apurba picked it up himself, and took a leap from the boat. The bank was slippery, and he fell flat upon the muddy stair, big and all.

As he did so, peal after peal of very sweet laughter rose in the sky, and startled the birds in the neighbouring trees. Apurba got up and tried to regain his composure as best as he could. When he sought for the source of his discomfiture, he found, sitting upon a heap of bricks lately unloaded from some cargo boat, a girl shaking her sides with laughter. Apurba recognised her as Mrinmayi, the daughter of their neighbour. This family had built their former house some distance away, but the river shifted its course cutting away into the land; and they had been obliged to change their quarter and settle down in the village only about two years ago.

Mrinmayi was the talk of all the village. The men called her 'madcap,' but the village matrons were in a state of perpetual anxiety because of her untractable wildness. All her games were with the boys of the place, and she had the utmost contempt for the girls of her own age. The favourite child of her father, she

had got into these unmanageable ways. Her mother would often complain to her friends of her husband's spoiling the child. But, because she was well aware that the father would be cut to the quick if he saw his daughter in tears, the mother had not the heart to punish the girl herself.

Mrinmayi's face was more like that of a boy than a girl. Her short crop of curly hair reached down to her shoulders, and her big dark eyes showed no sign of fear or shyness. When the boat, carrying the absentee landlord of the village, was moored at the landing stage, she did not share the feeling of awe which possessed the neighbourhood, but shook her curly mane and took up a naked child in her arms and was the first to come and take her observation of the habits of this strange creature.

Apurba had come in touch with this girl on former occasions, and he had got into the habit of thinking about her from time to time during his leisure, and even while at work. Naturally, therefore, this laughter, with which she greeted his arrival, did not please him, in spite of its musical quality. He gave up his bag to the boatman and almost ran away towards his house. The whole setting of things was romantic,—the river bank, the shade of the trees, the morning sunshine with birds' songs, and his youth of twenty years. The brick heaps hardly fitted in with the picture, but the girl who sat on the top of them made up for all deficiencies.

### 2.

The widowed mother was beside herself with joy when her son returned unexpectedly. She at once sent her men to all parts

of the village to search for milk and curds and fish. There was quite a stir among the neighbours. After the mid-day meal, the mother ventured to suggest to Apurba that he should turn his thoughts towards marriage. Apurba was prepared for this attack, as it had been tried before, and he had then put it off on the plea of examinations. But now that he had got his degree, he could have no such excuse to delay the inevitable. So he told his mother that if a suitable bride could be discovered, he could then make up his mind.

The mother said that the discovery had been already made, and therefore there was no further excuse for deliberation. But Apurba was of opinion that deliberation was necessary, and insisted on seeing the girl before consenting to marry her. The mother agreed to this, though the request seemed superfluous.

The next day Apurba went out on his marriage expedition. The intended bride lived in a house which was not far from their own. Apurba took special care about his dress before starting. He put on his new silk suit, and a fashionable turban much affected by the Calcutta people. He did not forget to display his patent leather shoes and silk umbrella. His reception was loudly cordial in the house of his would-be father-in-law. The little victim,—the intended bride,—was scrubbed and painted, be-ribboned and be-jewelled, and brought before Apurba. She sat in a corner of the room, veiled up to her chin, with her head nearly touching her knees, and her middle-aged servant at her back to encourage her when in trouble. Her young brother sat near closely observing Apurba,—his turban, his watch-chain, his newly budding moustache.

Apurba solemnly asked the girl: "What text books are you reading in your school?"

No answer came from this bundle of bashfulness wrapped in coloured silk. After repeated questionings and secret pushings in the back by the maid servant, she rapidly gave the names of all her lesson books in one breath.

Just at this moment the sound of scampering feet was heard outside, and Mrinmayi burst into the room very much out of breath. She did not give the least heed to Apurba, but at once caught hold of the hand of Rakkhal, the young brother, and

tried to drag him outside. But Rakkhal was intently engaged in cultivating his faculty of observation and refused to stir. The maid-servant tried to scold Mrinmayi, keeping the pitch of her voice within the proper limits of decorum. Apurba retained his composure and sat still and sullen, fondling the watch chain with his fingers.

When Mrinmayi failed in her attempt to make Rakkhal move, she gave the boy a sounding smack on the shoulder, then she pulled up the veil from the face of the intended bride, and rushed out of the room like a miniature tornado. The maid-servant growled and grumbled and Rakkhal began to laugh inmoderately at the sudden unveiling of his sister. He evidently did not take ill the blow he had received, because they had with each other a running account of such amenities. There was once a time when Mrinmayi had her hair long enough to reach her waist, and it was Rakkhal who had ploughed his scissors through it one day, till the girl in disgust had snatched them from the boy's hand and completed the destruction herself, leaving a mass of curls lying upon the dust like a bunch of black grapes.

After this cataclysm, the business of the examination came to a sudden stop. The girl-bride rose from her seat and changed from a circle of misery into a straight line, and then disappeared into the inner apartment. Apurba got up, still stroking his moustache, only to discover that his patent leather shoes had vanished. A great search was made for them, but they were nowhere to be found. There was nothing else to do, but to borrow from the head of the house a pair of old slippers, which were sadly out of keeping with the rest of his attire.

When Apurba reached the lane by the side of the village pool, the same peal of laughter rang through the sky which he had heard the day before; and while he stood shame-faced and irresolute, looking about him, the culprit came out of her ambuscade and flung the patent leather shoes before him and tried to escape. Apurba rushed after her quickly and made her captive, holding her by the wrist. Mrinmayi writhed and wriggled, but could not set herself free. A sunbeam fell upon her mischievous face through a gap in the branches overhead, and Apurba gazed intently into her eyes, like a traveller peering through the limpid water of a rushing



stream at the glistening pebbles below. He seemed to hesitate to complete his adventure, and slowly relaxed his hold and let his captive escape. If Apurba had boxed Mrinmayi's ears in anger, that would have seemed more natural to the girl than this silent incompleteness of punishment.

## 3.

It is difficult to understand why a young man of culture and training like Apurba should be so anxious to reveal his worth to this strip of a village girl. What harm would there be, if, in her pitiful ignorance, she should ignore him and choose that foolish poor Rakhal as her companion? Why should he struggle to prove to her, that he wrote a monthly article in the journal, *Vishvradip*, and that a MS. book of no mean size was waiting for publication in the bottom of his trunk, along with his scent bottles, tinted note-paper, harmonium lessons, etc.

In the evening Apurba's mother asked him: "Have you approved of your bride?"

Apurba said with a slight hesitation: "Yes, I like one of the girls."

"One of the girls!" she asked, "why, what do you mean?"

After a great deal of heating about the bush she found out that her son had selected Mrinmayi for his bride. When she grasped this fact she gently lost her respect for the B. A. degree. Then followed a long struggle between them. At last the mother persuaded herself that Mrinmayi was not wholly impervious to improvement. She began to suspect also that the girl's face had a charm of its own, but the next moment the cropped head of hair came to her mind and gave her a feeling of disgust. Recognising, however, that hair is more amenable to reason than human nature, she felt consoled, and the betrothal was made.

Mrinmayi's father got the news. He was a clerk in an office at a small distant river station of a Steamship company. He was engaged all day in selling tickets and loading and unloading cargo, living in a small hut with a corrugated iron roof. His eyes overflowed with tears, when he got the letter telling him what had happened. How much was pleasure and how much was pain would be difficult to analyse.

Ishan applied to the Head Office in

Calcutta for leave of absence. The reason of the betrothal seemed insufficient to the English Manager of the Company and the application was rejected. Ishan then asked for a postponement of the marriage till the autumn holidays; but he was told by the mother of the bridegroom that the most auspicious day for the marriage that year fell in the last week of the current month. So Ishan went on selling tickets and loading and unloading cargo with a heavy heart,—his petitions rejected from both sides. After this, Mrinmayi's mother and all the matrons of the village began to admonish the girl about the future household duties. She was warned that love of play, quickness of movement, loudness of laughter, companionship of boys and disregard of good manners in eating would not be tolerated in her husband's house. They were completely successful in proving the terrible cramped constraint of married life. Mrinmayi took the proposal of her marriage as a sentence of life-imprisonment, with hanging at the end of it. Like an unmanageable little pony, she took the bit between her teeth and said, "I'm not going to be married."

## 4.

But she had to marry after all. And then began her lesson. The whole universe shrank for her within the walls of her mother-in-law's household. The latter began at once her reformation duties. She hardened her face and said:

"My child, you are not a baby. The vulgar loudness of your behaviour won't suit our family."

The moral which Mrinmayi learnt from these words was, that she must find some more suitable place for herself,—and she became invisible that very afternoon. They went on vainly searching for her till her friend Rakhal played the traitor, and revealed her hiding place in a deserted, broken down wooden chariot once used for taking out the image of the god for an airing. After this, the atmosphere of her mother-in-law's home became intolerably hot. Rain came down at night.

Apurba, coming close to Mrinmayi in his bed, whispered to her: "Mrinmayi, don't you love me?" Mrinmayi broke out: "No, I shall never love you!"

"But what harm have I done you?" said Apurba.

"Why did you marry me?" was the

reply. To give a satisfactory explanation to this question was difficult, but Apurba said to himself: "I must win, in the end, this rebellious heart."

On the next day, the mother-in-law observed some signs of petulance in Mrinmayi and shut her up in a room. When Mrinmayi could find no way to get out, she tore the bed sheet to rags with her teeth in vain anger, and flinging herself on the floor burst out weeping and calling in agony: "Father, father!"

Just then somebody came and sat by her. He tried to arrange her dishevelled hair as she turned from side to side, but Mrinmayi angrily shook her head and pushed his hand away. Apurba, (for it was he) bent his face to her ear and whispered:

"I have secretly opened the gate; let us run away by the back door."

Mrinmayi again violently shook her head and said "No."

Apurba tried to raise her face gently by the chin saying: "Do look who is there." Rakkhal had come and was standing foolishly by the door looking at Mrinmayi. — But the girl pushed away Apurba's hand without raising her face.

He said: "Rakkhal has come to play with you. Won't you come?"

She said: "No." Rakkhal was greatly relieved to be allowed to run away from this scene.

Apurba sat still and silent. Mrinmayi wept and wept, till she was so tired that she fell asleep; then Apurba went out silently and shut the door.

The next day Mrinmayi received a letter from her father, in which he expressed his regret for not being able to be present at the marriage of his darling daughter. He ended with his blessings. The girl went to her mother-in-law and said: "I must go to my father."

A scolding began at once:—"You father! what a thing to ask. Your father has no decent house for himself,—how can you go to him?"

Mrinmayi came back to her room in despair and cried to herself, "Father, take me away from this place! I have nobody here to love me. I shall die, if I am left here."

In the depth of the night, when her husband fell asleep, she quietly opened the door and went out of the house. It was cloudy, yet the moonlight was strong

enough to show her the path. But Mrinmayi had no idea which was the way to reach her father. She had a belief that the road, which the post runners took, led to all the addresses of all the men in the world.

So she went that way, and was quite tired out with walking when the night was nearly ended.

The early birds doubtfully twittered their greetings to the morning, when Mrinmayi came to the end of the road at the river bank, where there was a big bazaar. Just then she heard the clatter of the iron ring of the mail runner. She rushed to him and in her eager, tired voice cried: "I want to go to my father at Kushiganj. Do take me with you."

The postman told her hurriedly that he did not know where Kushiganj was and the next moment awakened up the boatman of the mail boat and sailed away. He had no time either to pity or to question.

By the time Mrinmayi had descended the landing stairs and called a boat, the street and the river-bank were fully awake. Before the boatman could answer, some one from a boat near at hand called out:

"Hallo, Minul! How on earth could you get here?"

The girl replied in all eagerness:

"Bonomali, I must go to my father at Kushiganj. Please take me in your boat!"

This boatman belonged to her own village and knew all about the wild untamable girl. He said to her:

"You want to go to your father? That's good. I'll take you."

Mrinmayi got into the boat. The clouds thickened and the rain came down in showers. The river, swollen by the monsoon, rocked the boat, and Mrinmayi fell asleep. When she woke up, she found herself in her own bed in her mother-in-law's house.

The maid-servant began scolding her the moment she saw her awake. The mother-in-law came next. As she entered, Mrinmayi opened her eyes wide and silently looked in her face. But when the mother-in-law made a reference to the ill breeding of Mrinmayi's family, the girl rushed out of her room and entered the next and shut the door from the inside.

Apurba came to his mother and said: "Mother, I don't see any harm in scolding

Mrinmayi for just a few days to her father's house."

The mother's reply was to scold Apurba in unmeasured terms for selecting this one girl from all the suitable brides who might have been had for the mere asking.

5.

In the middle of the night, Apurba awakened Mrinmayi and said: "Mrinmayi are you ready to go to your father?" She clutched his hand and said: "Yes." Apurba whispered:

"Then come. Let us run away from this place. I have got a boat ready at the landing. Come."

Mrinmayi cast a grateful glance at her husband's face, and got up and dressed, and was ready to go. Apurba left a letter for his mother, and then both of them left the house together hand in hand.

This was the first time that Mrinmayi had put her hand into her husband's with a spontaneous feeling of dependence. They went on their journey along the lonely village road through the depth of the night.

When they reached the landing stage, they got into a boat, and in spite of the turbulent joy which she felt Mrinmayi fell asleep. The next day,—what emancipation, what unspeakable bliss it was! They passed by all the different villages, markets, cultivated fields, and groups of boats at anchor near some ghat. Mrinmayi began to ply her husband with questions about every little trifle,—where were those boats coming from, what were their cargoes, what was the name of that village?—questions whose answers were not in the text books which Apurba studied in his College. His friends might be concerned to hear, that Apurba's answers did not always tally with the truth. He would not hesitate for a moment to describe bags of linseed as 'Rainagar,' and the village of Kachwar as 'Rainagar,' or to point out the district magistrate's court as the landlord's office. Whatever answer she got, Mrinmayi was fully satisfied, never doubting its accuracy.

The next day the boat reached Kushi-ganj. Ishan, seated on his office stool, in his hut dimly lighted with a square oil-lantern, was deep in his accounts before his small desk, his big ledger open before him, when this young pair entered the room. Mrinmayi at once called out:

"Father!"

Such a word, uttered in so sweet a voice, had never sounded before in that corrugated iron room. Ishan could hardly restrain his tears and sat dumb, for a moment, vainly seeking for some greeting. He was in great confusion how fitly to receive the young married couple in his office, crowded with bales of jute and piled up ledgers, which had also to serve him for a bed-room. And then about the meals,—the poor man had to cook for himself his own simple dinner, but how could he offer that to his guests? Mrinmayi said, "Father, let us cook the food ourselves."

And Apurba joined in this proposal with great zest. In this room, with all its lack of space for man and food, their joy welled up in full abundance, like the jet of water thrown up all the higher because the opening of the fountain is narrow.

Three days were passed in this manner. Steamers came to stop at the landing stage all day long with their noisy crowd of men. At last, in the evening, the river bank would become deserted and then,—what freedom! And the cooking preparations, in which the art of cookery was not carried to its perfection,—what fun it was! And the jokes and mock quarrels about the meek deficiencies in Mrinmayi's domestic skill,—what absurd carryings on! But it had to come to an end at last. Apurba did not dare to prolong his French leave, and Ishan also thought it was wise for them to return.

When the culprits reached home, the mother remained sulkily silent. She never even blamed them for what they had done so as to give them an opportunity to explain their conduct. This sullen silence became at last intolerable, and Apurba expressed his intention of going back to college in order to study Law. The mother, affecting indifference, said to him, "What about your wife?"

Apurba answered, "Let her remain here."

"Oh, no, no!" cried the Mother, "you should take her with you."

Apurba said in a voice of annoyance:

"Very well."

The preparation went on for their departure to the town, and on the night before leaving, Apurba, coming to his bed, found Mrinmayi in tears. This hurt him greatly and he cried:

"Mrinmayi, don't you want to come to Calcutta with me?"

The girl replied, "No!" Apurba's next question was, "Don't you love me?" But the question remained unanswered. There are times when answers to such questions are absolutely simple, but at other times they become too complex for a young girl to answer.

Apurba asked, "Do you feel unwilling to leave Rakkhal behind?"

Mrinmayi instantly answered, "Yes." For a moment this young man, who was proud of his B. A. degree, felt a needle prick of jealousy deep down in his heart, and said:

"I shan't be able to come back home for a long time."—Mrinmayi had nothing to say. "It may be two years or more," he added. Mrinmayi told him with coolness, "You had better bring back with you, for Rakkhal, a good Sheffield knife with three blades."

Apurba sat up and asked, "Then you mean to stay on here?"

Mrinmayi said, "Yes, I shall go to my own mother."

Apurba breathed a deep sigh and said:

"Very well: I shall not come home, until you write me a letter asking me to come to you. Are you very, very glad?"

Mrinmayi thought this question needed no answer, and fell asleep. Apurba got no sleep that night.

When it was nearly dawn, Apurba awakened Mrinmayi and said:

"Mrinu, it is time to go. Let me take you to your mother's house."

When his wife got up from her bed, Apurba held her by both hands and said:

"I have a prayer to make to you.—I have helped you several times and I want to claim my reward."

Mrinmayi was surprised and said:

"What?"

Apurba answered:

"Mrinu, please give me a kiss out of pure love."

When the girl heard this absurd request and saw Apurba's solemn face, she burst out laughing. When it was over, she held her face for a kiss, but broke out laughing again. After a few more attempts, she gave it up. Apurba pulled her ear gently as a mild punishment.

### 7.

When Mrinmayi came to her mother's house, she was surprised to find that it was not as pleasant to her as before.

Time seemed to hang heavily on her hands, and she wondered in her mind what was lacking in the familiar home surroundings. Suddenly it seemed to her that the whole house and village were deserted and she longed to go to Calcutta. She did not know that even on that last night the earlier portion of her life, to which she clung, had changed its aspect before she knew it. Now she could easily shake off her past associations as the tree sheds its dead leaves. She did not understand that 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 Mrinmayi looked at it in wonder. The young girl, who used to occupy the old bedroom in this house, no longer existed; all her memory hovered round another bed in another bedroom.

Mrinmayi refused to go out of doors any longer, and her laughter had a strangely different ring. Rakkhal became slightly afraid of her. He gave up all thought of playing with her.

One day, Mrinmayi came to her mother and asked her:

"Mother, please take me to my mother-in-law's house."

After this, one morning the mother-in-law was surprised to see Mrinmayi come and touch the ground with her forehead before her feet. She got up at once and took her in her arms. Their union was complete in a moment, and the cloud of misunderstanding was swept away leaving the atmosphere glistening with the radiance of tears.

When Mrinmayi's body and mind became filled with womanhood, deep and large, it gave her an aching pain. Her eyes became sad, like the shadow of rain upon some lake, and she put these questions to her husband in her own mind.—Why did you not have the patience to understand me, when I was late in understanding you? Why did you put up with my disobedience, when I refused to follow you to Calcutta?

Suddenly she came to fathom the look in Apurba's eyes when, on that morning, he had caught hold of her hand by the village pool and then slowly released her. She remembered, too, the futile flights of that kiss, which had never reached its goal,

and was now like a thirsty bird haunting that past opportunity. She recollected how Apurba had said to her, that he would never come back until he had received from her a message asking him to do so; and she sat down at once to write a letter. The gilt-edged note-paper which Apurba had given her was brought out of its box, and with great care she began to write in a big hand, smudging her fingers with ink. With her first word she plunged into the subject without addressing him:

*"Why don't you write to me? How are you? And please come home."*

She could think of no other words to say. But though the important message had been given, yet unfortunately the unimportant words occupy the greatest space in human communication. She racked her brains to add a few more words to what she had written, and then wrote:

*"This time don't forget to write me letters and write how you are, and come back home, and mother is quite well. Our deer-coloured cow had a calf last night!"*

Here she came to the end of her resources. She put her letter into the envelope and poured out all her love as she wrote the name, Srijuta Babu Apurba Krishna Roy. She did not know that anything more was needed by way of an address, so the letter did not reach its goal, and the postal authorities were not to blame for it.

## 8.

It was vacation time. Yet Apurba never came home. The mother thought that he was nourishing anger against her. Mrinmayi was certain that her letter was not well enough written to satisfy him. At last the Mother said to her daughter-in-law, "Apurba has been absent for so long, that I am thinking of going to Calcutta to see him. Would you like to come with me?"

Mrinmayi gave a violent nod of assent. Then she ran to her room and shut herself in. She fell upon her bed, clutched the pillow to her breast, and gave vent to her feelings by laughing and excited movements. When this fit was over, she became grave and sad and sat up on the bed and wept in silence.

Without telling Apurba, these two repentant women went to Calcutta to ask for Apurba's forgiveness. The mother had

a son-in-law in Calcutta, and so she put up at his house. That very same evening, Apurba broke his promise and began to write a letter to Mrinmayi. But he found no terms of endearment fit to express his love, and felt disgusted with his mother-tongue for its poverty. But when he got a letter from his brother-in-law, informing him of the arrival of his mother and inviting him to dinner, he hastened to his sister's house without delay.

The first question he asked his mother, when he met her, was:

"Mother, is everybody at home quite well?"

The mother answered: "Yes I have come here to take you back home."

Apurba said that he thought it was not necessary on her part to have taken all this trouble for such a purpose, and he had his examination before him, etc., etc.

The brother-in-law called out smiling:

"All this is a mere excuse; the real reason is that he is afraid of me for a rival."

His sister replied: "Indeed there is good cause to be afraid of you. The poor child may get a terrible shock when she sees you."

Thus the laughter and jokes became plentiful, but Apurba remained silent. He was accusing his mother in his mind for not having had the consideration to bring Mrinmayi with her. Then he thought that possibly his mother had tried, but failed, owing to Mrinmayi's unwillingness, and he felt afraid even to question his mother about it; the whole scheme of things seemed to him full of incorrigible blunders.

When the dinner was over, it came on to rain and his sister said, "Dada, you sleep here!"

But Apurba replied, "No, I must go home. I have work to do."

The brother-in-law said, "How absurd! You have no one at home to account for your absence and you needn't be anxious."

Then his sister told him that he was looking very tired, and it was better for him to leave the company and go to bed. Apurba went to his bed-room and found it in darkness. His sister asked him if he wanted a light, but he said that he preferred the dark. When his sister had left, he groped his way to the bedstead and prepared to get into bed.

All of a sudden a tender pair of arms, with a jangle of bracelets, were flung

found 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.

## A MODEL VILLAGE IN THE BARODA STATE

BY RAO BAHADUR GOVINDBHAI H. DESAI.

**B**HADRAN is the name of the headquarters of a Peta-Mahal in the Baroda District of the Baroda State. It is one of the oldest villages. Tradition runs to the effect that it was founded on the 11th Sudi of Vaishakh, Samvat year 1232. It is named after the Goddess Bhadra Kali whose ancient temple exists even now in the village. According to the Census of 1911, the number of inhabited houses is 1418, and the population 4824, out of which 2742 are males and 2081 females. There are 4430 Hindus, 265 Mahomedans and 128 Jains. The Hindu population consists mainly of Patidars—a very intelligent and industrious class of people following mainly agriculture as their hereditary profession. The liberal and far-reaching educational policy of His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar has produced within the last 20 years very remarkable results, and Bhadrans has now become a model village in the Baroda State. A brief account of the wonderful results obtained by the people of Bhadrans is given here in the hope that it may stimulate other places to follow its example.

### LIBRARIES.

One of the oldest and most prominent of the public institutions of Bhadrans is the Library which was founded in 1895 by the first batch of its educated youths. It was built at a cost of Rs. 6000, out of which Rs. 3000 were contributed by the principal inhabitants and Rs. 3000 were raised by a loan which was gradually repaid from donations and gifts on festive occasions such as marriages and fees paid by life members. This Library was originally intended for both the sexes, but as the taste for reading increased more and more, women began to take advantage of the Library and it was

ultimately found necessary to establish a separate library for them under the name of "Mahila Pustakalaya." The foundation of the building was laid by Dewan Tekechand, I.C.S., Revenue Commissioner in 1912; and the building when completed cost Rs. 6000, out of which Rs. 2000 were received as a grant from the Government of His Highness the Maharaja Gaekwar and the rest, namely Rs. 4000, were collected by the people. A third library called "Bal Pustakalaya" has been opened this year and is intended mainly for children. It owes its existence to the generosity of Mr. Maganlal Dalpatram Khakhar, J.P. of Bombay who, pleased with the Bhadrans people's public spirit and self-reliance, made a gift to them of his father's valuable collection of school children's books.

### SCHOOLS.

A Vernacular School for boys and another for girls have been established by Government. A building for the Boy's School has been built by Government, but the Girl's School being in want of one, it has been recently erected at a cost of Rs. 30,000, out of which the villagers gave Rs. 6000, and Mr. Tulsibhai Bakorbhai, one of the leaders of the place, donated Rs. 10,000, and the rest, viz. Rs. 14,000, was contributed by His Highness' Government. There is a separate school for the boys and girls of the depressed classes with a special building of its own. An English Class teaching upto the first two Standards was opened in 1906, by a few of the leaders. It received a monthly grant of Rs. 25 from Government. In each succeeding year, the leaders went on adding a new Standard till 1909 when it was converted into an Anglo-Vernacular School maintained solely by Government. But the zeal of the people had not abated. They

of nervous excitation that reaches the central perceiving organ. It would theoretically be possible to change the tone or quality of our sensation, if means could be discovered by which the nervous impulse would become modified during transit. Investigation on nervous impulse in plants has led to the discovery of a controlling method, which was found equally effective in regard to the nervous impulse in animal.

Thus the lines of physics, of physiology and of psychology converge and meet. And here will assemble those who would seek oneness amidst the manifold. Here it is that the genius of India should find its true blossoming.

The thrill in matter, the throb of life, the pulse of growth, the impulse coursing through the nerve and the resulting sensations, how diverse are these and yet how unified! How strange it is that the tremor of excitation in nervous matter should not merely be transmitted but transmuted and reflected like the image on a mirror, from a different plane of life, in sensation and in affection, in thought and in emotion. Of these which is more real, the material body or the image which is independent of it? Which of these is undecaying, and which of these is beyond the reach of death?

It was a woman in the Vedic times, who when asked to take her choice of the wealth that would be hers for the asking, inquired whether that would win for her deathlessness. What would she do with it, if it did not raise her above death? This has always been the cry of the soul of India, not for addition of material bondage, but to work out through struggle her self-chosen destiny and win immortality. Many a nation had risen

in the past and won the empire of the world. A few buried fragments are all that remain as memorials of the great dynasties that wielded the temporal power. There is, however, another element which finds its incarnation in matter, yet transcends its transmutation and apparent destruction: that is the burning flame born of thought which has been handed down through fleeting generations.

Not in matter, but in thought, not in possessions or even in attainments but in ideals, are to be found the seed of immortality. Not through material acquisition but in generous diffusion of ideas and ideals can the true empire of humanity be established. Thus to Asoka to whom belonged this vast empire, bounded by the inviolate seas, after he had tried to ransom the world by giving away to the utmost, there came a time when he had nothing more to give, except one half of an *Amlaki* fruit. This was his last possession and his anguished cry was that since he had nothing more to give, let the half of the *Amlaki* be accepted as his final gift.

Asoka's emblem of the *Amlaki* will be seen on the cornices of the Institute, and towering above all is the symbol of the thunderbolt. It was the Rishi Dadhichi, the pure and blameless, who offered his life that the divine weapon, the thunderbolt, might be fashioned out of his bones to smite evil and exalt righteousness. It is but half of the *Amlaki* that we can offer now. But the past shall be reborn in a yet nobler future. We stand here today and resume work tomorrow so that by the efforts of our lives and our unshaken faith in the future we may all help to build the greater India yet to be.

## THE SMALL AND THE GREAT

[TRANSLATION OF A PAPER READ BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.]

INDIA, in the throes of long suffering from the barrenness of political drought, was anxiously scanning the skies; political weather-prophets had reported that a strong Home-rule monsoon had crossed the Arabian Sea, and forecasted

heavy showers; when lo! and behold! showers descended in Behar of rioting of Hindus against Mahomedans,—heavy showers!

We hear of sectarian quarrels in other countries as well, owing to rivalry or

spite ; but in our country these are chiefly on religious grounds, for all our low professions of our religious toleration, which, say we, has no equal in all the world ! Dissensions in Modern Europe are at bottom economic. There the miners, the dock- and railway-workers now and again make a great to-do. They have to take all kinds of steps about it ; to make laws, to suspend laws, to call out the military, to shed blood. There, however, in the case of such quarrels we see only two parties : one which makes the trouble, and the other which tries to quell it ; but not, as we have here, an exquisitely humorous third party to mock those in trouble with their jeers.

There was a time in England, while its political machine had yet to be perfected, when a conflict was raging between Protestant and Roman Catholic. During that conflict it cannot be said that justice was done to either party by the other ; on the contrary, the Catholics had to suffer numerous disabilities for years. But to-day, though the establishment of one religious sect is still a standing injustice to the others, how is it that such external causes of trouble and unrest have been rendered harmless ? Simply because all sections of the people are now united in governing themselves. There was also a day when the differences between Englishmen and Scotchmen were not a little rancorous owing to their real divergence in race, language, taste and tradition ; and here again these were reconciled because of the eventual union of England and Scot in a self-government in which they were able to utilize their energies in co-operation to ensure progress and repel calamity. But why is it that between Great Britain and Ireland such union has not yet been fully consummated ? Just for want of this same equality of political rights.

It has to be admitted that in our country there is a difficult element of conflict between the Hindu and the Mohamedan. Wherever there is any departure from the whole truth, there there is sin ; wherever there is sin, there is punishment. 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. European history is red with the bloodshed for the sake of dogma. If

*Ahimsa* (non-destruction) be your religion, it may remain an impossible ideal, but nevertheless it may be cherished as such and a gradual advance made towards its realisation. But if you yourself slay one kind of animal in the name of religion, and then prepare to slay men if they likewise slay another kind of animal in the name of religion, then that attitude cannot be called by any other name than tyranny. It is our hope that our religion will not remain ritual-ridden for ever. We have also another hope, and that is that if our political life can become truer by the working out of the same political ideal by both Hindu and Moslem, then such union of minds will make all external differences trivial. So far for the story of our own griefs and hopes. Let us see what part is played therein by the third party, the looker-on.

I met an Englishman in the train the other day, who *apropos* of Home Rule, told me a story about how an Indian zamindar, somewhere in Behar, was nonplussed by an English Captain who scoffed at him saying : "You cannot control your own *ryots*, and yet you people want Home Rule !" The story did not tell of the zamindar's reply. Very possibly he made a low salaam and said, "Unworthy that we are, O sahib, take away your Home Rule, but save me from my *ryots* !" For he must have felt that while Home Rule was yet in some shadowy dreamland across the seas, the Captain was there, right before him, and the infuriated rioters were threatening his rear. My reply to my fellow-passenger was : "These Hindu-Mahomedan riots have not occurred under our Home Rule. How could the poor zamindar help casting piteous glances at the Captain's troops, for this is the first time I hear of a division of labour where one is to have the weapons and another to do the fighting ! During the days of the Swadeshi agitation, not only in distant mofussil places like Jamalpur, but also in Barabazar, the very heart of Calcutta, Mahomedans were allowed to oppress Hindus—that is a stigma which stains the rulers, not only the ruled. If this kind of thing had been as frequent in the Nizam's dominions, or in Mysore or Baroda, it might have been more difficult to reply to the Captain's sarcasm."

That is just our complaint. We lack all responsibility of power, for our rulers have



taken it on themselves to protect us from without. This is making us more and more ill-equipped and helpless within. And when this result makes our rulers all the more contemptuous, we dare not reply to them, it is true, but the language of our thoughts is not parliamentary. Had we power, both Hindu and Moslem would have felt it equally incumbent on them to unite in their endeavour to maintain and justify it, and to be cautious in avoiding disruption. And thus the British Empire in India would have become stable, not only for the time, but for all time.

But if it should so happen that when, on the turning of the next page of History, the British Nation should leave behind, amidst the decaying remnants of its "good government", these enfeebled, inefficient millions, unused to self-reliance, unfit for self-defence, ignorant of their true self-interest; and leave them, moreover, with neighbours awakened to a new life, indomitable with new acquirements; then whom should these helpless men, women and children blame for the endlessness of the sufferings to which they are handed over? Or even if we imagine that amidst the ever-changing World History, the history of British rule in India alone will remain a fixture, then is it to be our fate to be kept an eternally disunited people, with no bond of common endeavour in the service of our country, with hopes doomed to everlasting pettiness, powers cramped and scope narrow, and a future ringed in with the high wall of the will of others?

We have been under one rule, but not under one responsibility. So that our unity is external: it does not bring us together, but merely ranges us side by side; and the least shock knocks us against each other. It is not a living, moving unity,—it is the unity of men lying asleep on the same ground, not of waking men marching along the same road. There is nothing to be proud of in this unity, nor anything to rejoice at, either. It may make us sing pæans of praise in unison, bend low together, but it cannot uplift us.

In the old days our social organisation used to keep us alive to our duty to our community. That was a narrow field, no doubt, in which the village of our birth was all that we meant by our Mother Country. Nevertheless, within its limits, the wealthy felt the responsibility of their wealth, the learned of their learning. Each

one's surroundings had their claims on whatever powers he had. In such a life of endeavour and responsibility men can rejoice and glory.

But our responsibilities have been shifted away from our social life. Now the Sarkar alone judges us, protects us, physics us, punishes us; decides as to what is Hindu and what is non-Hindu; maintains distilleries for supplying us with intoxicants; and when a villager gets eaten by a tiger, provides the local Magistrate and his friends with the opportunity for a shikar party. Naturally our social regulations have become too heavy for us to bear. The Brahmin still extorts his honorarium, but no longer imparts instruction; the Landlord squeezes his tenants, but has nothing to offer in return; the upper classes accept respect from the masses, but are unable to afford them protection. Our ceremonials have become, if anything, more costly, but have ceased to contribute to the amenities of social life, and are only for conformity or show. Meanwhile the clash of caste rivalry and the deprivations of priestcraft are going on with full vigour. In a word, the social cow whose provender we have to provide has ceased to give milk, but has not forgotten how to toss with her crumpled horns!

Whether the way in which our affairs are now regulated from without is or is not more efficient than the old way from within, is not the point. Had men been stocks and stones, the question of how to arrange them so as to make the best of them would, no doubt, have been the most important one. But men are men: they must live, and grow and progress. So it cannot but be admitted that the dismal depression which is weighing down the spirits of our people by reason of their being kept apart from the affairs of the country, is not only cruel but unstatesmanlike. We are not asking for power to boast of, or tyrannise with; we are not looking out for an instrument with which to tap the wealth of the rest of the world; we have not the vaulting ambition to acquire the greatest power to kill the greatest number. We are willing to wear as a diadem the epithet of "Mild Hindu" which is contemptuously flung at us; and well content to hug to our bosoms till the end of our days the scathing scorn which our spirituality seems to inspire. All we want is power to

serve our Mother Country; the natural right to take up its responsibilities, for lack of which the torments of the degradation of hopeless futility are becoming too unbearable within our breasts.

That is why, of late, we see the eagerness of our youths to thrust themselves forward to render social service. Man cannot go on living in a hot-house of inane peacefulness; for his 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. In the history of all great peoples the irresistible progress of this struggle foams and roars and splashes over the ups and downs of success and failure, breaking through all obstacles. It is impossible to keep hidden, even from political paralytics such as we, the grand panorama of this history. To a youth, instinct with the enthusiasm of Life, inspired by the words of the Great, taught by the lessons of History, enforced inactivity is worse than death itself,—as is only too clear in the heart-rending letter written by the one-time detenu, Sachindra Das Gupta, on the eve of his suicide.

But only the opportunity for rendering occasional service during flood or famine is not enough to give scope to the inner promptings of man's complex nature, which can only find fulfilment in the constant and various expression of everyday work, failing which they get confined within, there to fester and become poisoned, and originate the secret activities from which the country is suffering. Wherefore we see the suspicions of the authorities most keenly directed towards those who have ideals and are trying to act up to them. Those who are selfish and unprincipled, inert and indifferent,—under the present-day spy-system it is they who have the least to fear, it is they who are rewarded and rise to the top. Unselfish activity for the sake of others is so difficult of explanation! How is one to reply to this question of inquisitorial authority: "What business have you, forsooth, with great deeds? When the way is open for you to eat, drink and live easily upon the fat or lean wages you may earn by hiring yourself, what possesses you to indulge in a wild goose chase at your own expense?"

But whatever authority may say, is this underground tunnel, where there is neither light nor sound, nor justice, nor

legitimate way of escape, is this, I ask, a good path for Government to follow? You may bury without trial all the best activity of the country,—but can you in this way lay its ghost? To try to give an outward aspect of respectability to inward hunger by force of punishment can neither be called good nor wise.

While this underground policy is rampant, the news comes from over the seas that a draft scheme of self-government is being prepared. I can but suppose that the higher authorities have begun to perceive that simple repression will not exorcise the disturbing spirit, but that conciliation is also needful. This country is my country, not only because I happen to be born in it, but because it has a claim to the best of my striving and achievement—the British Empire in India can only become permanent if it can encourage the realisation of this truth by its people. To keep so vast a country enfeebled, inefficient, indifferent to its affairs of state, is to make their help in an emergency worthless, and their weight of inertia unbearable. Moreover, placing even the weakest in a constant attitude of antagonism is like leaving the smallest leak in a boat. In calm weather baling may serve to keep it going, but when in a storm all hands are busy with rudder and oar and sail, the tiny leak may make all the difference. To get angry then, and pound it with regulation or non-regulation police *à la* this will only make matters worse. The trifling cost of mending a small leak in time will save much greater loss later on—this is a truth which I cannot believe British statesmanship does not understand. It is because it does, that the question of granting self-government has arisen today.

But the baser side of human nature is blind. It only attaches importance to the present, and ignores what is yet to come. It thinks it mere weakness or silly sentimentality to talk of Truth and Right. Buoyed by high hopes India is making too light of this enemy of British Rule. The Anglo-Indian, who whether as government official or merchant stands for the greed of power or money, is too close to India to see clearly. To his near-sightedness it is his power, his prosperity which towers, and the 300 millions of India with their joys and sorrows are only so many shadows, faint and unsubstantial. This

makes me afraid that any boon, such as may have served to give back to India her strength of manhood, will be clipped and curtailed and bloodless when it does come, or perhaps, will perish on the journey and add to the skeletons of the unfruitful good wishes which strew the desert path of India's fate.

The Anglo-Indian who wields the weapon of obstruction is intoxicated with power, and out of touch with the life of India by layer upon layer of accumulated official tradition. To him India is but a Government or Mercantile office. While, on the other hand, he is connected by blood with those Englishmen over the seas who shape our destinies; his hand is in their hands, his lips at their ears; he has a seat in their council chambers, and access to the green room behind the political stage; he is constantly going back home to leaven the country with his ideas and is altering its very psychology. He swears by his grey hairs and the length of his experience, and claims special indulgence because of the pinnacle to which he claims to have raised the Empire. Where can our words, our hopes, even our existence be seen behind this towering self-assertion? How can we hope for any Englishman to have such abnormal keenness of insight as to succeed in spying out the humanity in these 300 millions over the encircling walls of officialdom?

The distant Englishman who, by reason of the free atmosphere of Europe is able to escape the illusions of blind self-interest and can see India with a breadth of vision, is cautioned by the Anglo-Indian that it is only through the dust-laden nether sky that a practical view can be obtained, and that the distant view from the pure upper sky is visionary. For the distant Englishman to take an interest in Indian affairs is reckoned by the Anglo-Indian to be a piece of impudent meddlesomeness. Therefore the Indian should always remember that he is not governed by the Great English People of whom he has heard tell, but that he is the subject of an official sect who have been corroded into artificiality by the acid of Indian Government offices in which they have soaked for ages—not of men who are men in mind and heart and life, but who have been artificially docked and stunted for a special purpose.

The camera may be called an artificial eye. It sees very distinctly, but not the

whole view; it cannot see what is not immediately before it. So we may say it sees blindly. The natural eye, behind which there is a living person, however imperfect its vision may be for a particular purpose, is much better adapted for dealings between man and man. So we may thank God that He has not given us camera lenses in the place of eyes. But what is this that He has given us in the Government of India? The great Englishman, who is really and fully a man, lives, such is our fate, on the opposite shore; and before he comes over to this side he passes through the shears of expediency which lop off three quarters of his manhood, carefully cutting out all that makes man grow himself and cause growth in others. These expurgated men fail to understand why these perfect and expensive cameras of theirs are charged with seeing incompletely, because imagination also is one of the things they have left behind them.

Why is it that the inmates of workhouses in England are so discontented and try to run away if they can? Because the workhouse is neither a proper home, nor perfect homelessness. It gives only a bare minimum of shelter, rigidly calculated. Shelter is doubtless a very necessary thing, but because men are men they pine for a home, that is to say, they cannot live without many a thing which is not absolutely necessary, over and above the bare minimum; and if they cannot get these, they want to escape. The strict workhouse guardian, who is not a whole man with a complete vision, feels surprised and angry at this ingratitude of the indigent, and fails to understand their unwillingness to barter the boundless hope which agitates their soul for the peace of bare shelter, and so tries to suppress sorrowing by punishment.

The great Englishman is not in direct contact with India,—between them is interposed the small Englishman. So, for us, the great Englishman exists only in History and Literature; and India exists for him only in Offices and Blue books, in other words, India is for him only a set of statistics in which are to be found exports and imports, income and expenditure; the number of births and deaths, of policemen to keep the peace, of goals to punish the turbulent; the length of railway lines, the height of educational edifices. But creation is not

sky-filling mass of statistical figures, and no account of the vital immensity of India beyond these figures reaches any living personality.

Nevertheless, whatever may be the difficulties in the way of believing it, I ask my countrymen to know for certain that there is a geographical locality where a people rightly called the great British people really exist. The injustice which the weak do to the strong is only a further proof of their weakness,—it will rebound to our glory if we can avoid such weakness. I can swear it that these great Englishmen are in every way true men. It is also certainly true that the same greatness of character which has made all great peoples great has also made these great Englishmen great. It is no use saying in a fit of pique that they have raised themselves on the points of their swords, or by mounting their money-bags. It is utterly unworthy of belief that any people can become great merely because they are good at fighting, or money-making; and the proposition can be dismissed, without calling for proof, that any people have become truly great without achieving moral greatness. These great Englishmen sincerely cherish the ideals of Right and Truth and Freedom; they are expressed in various ways in their literature and their history; and these same ideals are giving them strength in the present-day war.

These great Englishmen are not stationary, they are progressing; their lives are changing and expanding through their history. They are busy not only with their Empire and their commerce, but their national life flows on in a full stream of literature, science and art, social life and religion. They are creative; and are of the high priests of the great European sacrifice. The lessons of the war have not been lost on them, and they are learning to read the history of man anew in the soul-searching light of their martyrdom. They have seen the catastrophe that must inevitably result from the insistent setting up of false patriotic pride against insulted humanity. Consciously or unconsciously they are realising that the god of one's own country is the God of all countries, and that to bring Him human victims is to see Him in His terrible wrath. And even if they have not understood it today, they will understand it someday, that the storm-centre is always where the air is thinnest; and there, where

are the weakest of the world's peoples, will always be the centre of struggle of contending nations, drawn into the vortex by the lust of spoil; there man does not shine in his greatness, but grows laxer and laxer, carelessly allowing his manhood to slip away from him; there Satan usurps a seat and dares mock God for his weakness! The great Englishman, I say, needs must understand that castles cannot be built on sand, and their power made permanent on the weakness of others.

But the small Englishman does not move on. He has remained tied for long centuries to the country which he has condemned to stagnation. On one face of his life he bears the imprint of office, on the other of pleasure. In the former aspect he keeps India at the length of his sceptre of power or his measuring rod of commerce; the other face, like the other side of the moon, is entirely beyond our ken. And yet he claims value for his experience in the measure of the length of its years. In the beginning of British Indian History he did some creative work, but ever since he has simply been watching over and enjoying a well-established political and commercial predominance. His continual turning of the mill of routine has made him immensely wise in worldly wisdom, and he thinks the achievement of efficiency in his office to be the greatest event in the world. His constant intercourse with a weaker people makes him feel that he is the maker of the future as he is the master of the present. He does not stop at the assertion that he is here, he follows it up with the boast that he has come to stay.

Relying on the generosity of the great Englishman, as a talisman, our countrymen have begun to talk back to the small Englishman, forgetting the strength of the power wielded by the latter; forgetting also that sometimes the cost of propitiating the priest below has to be even greater than the value of the boon vouchsafed by the god above. Let us recall instances of the power of this intermediary, the quality of his characteristic mood. Granted, for the sake of argument, that Annie Besant was at fault;—but the great Englishman had pardoned her. For this the earthquakes engineered by the small Englishman reached and shook the Houses of Parliament. The small Englishman cannot overlook the crime of forgiveness, though

he may omit to call for explanations in the case of irregular punishments. Where a punishment has been awarded, the crime must be there to fit it, says he. He who holds the contrary is an Extremist! Then again, when in the Imperial Council chamber the Panjab Lieutenant Governor made indiscreet attacks on the people of India and the Viceroy felt compelled to read him a mild homily, it gave the small Englishman a shock from which he finds it impossible to recover. On the other hand, when Mr. Montagu, before taking up his office indulged in some plain speaking about the Indian Bureaucracy, there was such a cyclone of vituperation that it knocked the spire off the State Secretary's power and freedom of action. We have witnessed the power of the small Englishman, not only in the time of Lord Ripon and to some extent in that of Lord Hardinge, but also so far back as in the time of Lord Canning and of Lord Bentinck.

That is why I repeatedly warn my countrymen: "What makes you so defiant? Your strength? You have none. Your voice? It is not so loud as you think. Any supporter? He is imaginary. If your cause be righteous then that alone you may thoroughly rely on. None can deprive you of the right of voluntary suffering. The glory of consecrating yourselves to Truth and Right awaits you at the end of a stony road. And if, at length, you get any boon at all, it will be from your own conscience—the god that is within. Have you not seen how, unsuspecting the Government of India to be in collusion in regard to the proposal for a boon to India, the Anglo-Indian is inquiring with a sardonic smile: "What makes the Government so jumpy? What awful thing can have happened that the thunderbolt department should have taken to showering rain?" And yet when mere schoolboys are thrust into the lawless underground regions of darkness, then this same Anglo-Indian cries: "The state of things is so awful that British justice must confess defeat, and wild Tartar methods imported to take its place!" That is to say, the apprehension which is true when you strike, is false when you are called upon to apply balm to the wound,—for the balm costs money! But, say I, the bill of costs for hitting hard has a way of exceeding that of trying to heal. Secure in your strength you fancy that the portion of Indian History which

concerns the Indian is not progressing onwards, but goes round and round in an eddy which tends downwards. And when one day, on coming out of your office, you find the current passing beyond the line which was assigned to it in your plan, you fly into a rage and shout: "Stop it! Bind it! Hem it in!" Then indeed does the current sink beneath, and in your frantic efforts to check its hidden course you rip and tear the breast of the whole country.

I myself have recently fallen foul of the small Englishman. Some days ago I happened to write a short letter on the harshness of imprisoning hundreds of young people without trial. I was promptly charged with circulating falsehoods and dubbed an Extremist by the Anglo-Indian papers. These are, after all, government officials in multi, so I forgive them their epithets. But even those of my countrymen who find no meaning in my poetry and no substance in my prose, but who nevertheless happen to have read my writings, will be constrained to admit this much, that from the days of the Swadeshi agitation to this day I have always written against Extremism. I have consistently urged this one thing that the wages of wrong-doing are never found to be worth-while in the long run, for the debt of sin always ends by becoming the heavier. Moreover, I have never been scared by ink-slinging, be it Indian or English. I emphatically assert that the Extremism which is neither decent, nor legal nor open, which means forsaking the straight road and taking to tortuous paths in the hope of sooner gaining a particular end, is always utterly reprehensible. I have consistently told my countrymen this with the full strength of my conviction, and so I claim the right to say with equal emphasis that this Extremism is also woefully wrong, even as a policy of government. The high road of law may sometimes prove a round-about way of reaching the goal, but like riding roughshod over Belgium's rights, the Extremism of shortening the legitimate road is never seemly.

The taking of short cuts was the usual practice in ancient history. "Bring me his head!" was a favorite method of cutting the gordian knot. Europe prides herself on her discovery that the cutting of the knot is not the same as undoing it, and that much damage is wrought by the former process.

Civilisation has responsibilities to which it is incumbent on her to do justice even in times of trouble and stress. 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. I admit that the times are difficult. We are ashamed of the methods by which some of our youths have attempted to get rid of the obstacles to their country's progress. We are all the more ashamed of it because the idea of the divorce of Expediency from Right was taught us by the West. The open and secret lies of diplomacy, the open and secret robberies sanctioned by statecraft are looked upon in the West as the inevitable alloy in the gold which serves to strengthen the metal. Thus have we come to learn that it is foolish and feeble—mere silly sentimentalism—to allow Righteousness to bother and worry where Patriotic self-interest shows the way. We, also, have become convinced that civilisation requires to be stiffened by an admixture of barbarism, and the Right to be tempered by the expedient. This has not only led us to tolerate unrighteousness, but also to bend the knee to what is most unworthy in our teachers. We have lost the courage and independence to say from a higher platform than that of even our teachers:

अवश्यं वैभवे दास्यं वदती ब्रह्मणि यदिति ।  
ततः अवदास्यं जयति यदुच्यते विजयति ॥

*Men flourish by unrighteousness, in unrighteousness appears their welfare, by unrighteousness they overthrow their enemies, but they are destroyed at the root.*

So I say that it is the greatest shame of all that our ideals should have owned such complete defeat at the onslaught of the teachings of the West. What high hopes had we that when the lamp of Love of Country should be lighted in our country, the best that was in us would be illuminated and shine forth; our age-long accumulation of error flee from the shelter of its dark corner; a fountain of hope gush forth through the stony crust of our despair; our awakened energies carve out for us, step by step, a way over the apparent hopelessness of our future; and

our people stand shoulder to shoulder, with upraised heads, relieved by the buoyant joy of mutual love from the weight of cruel conventions that have crushed and insulted our manhood.

But alas! what trick was this that our fate played us? The lamp of patriotism was lighted, but what was this scene it revealed of theft and robbery and secret murder? Did the god of our prayers appear before us to be worshipped by offerings of sin? Does not the same spiritlessness and inertia, the same self-mistrust, which led us to look to political begging as a panacea for all betterment and so to perfect ourselves in the art of petition-writing, now make us take to political crime in order to hasten the millenium? There is no cross-road where robbery and bravery meet. In Europe there may seem to be such a meeting of the ways, but the sign-posts on its roads have not yet been passed as correct in the survey of Providence. And let us pray to God, even if the whole world should believe immediate gain to be the be-all and end-all, that India may not share in such belief. If without it we can attain political freedom, well and good. If not, let us at least abstain from choking the way to a greater freedom with the garbage of political untruths.

But one thing we must not forget. If in the light of our awakened love of country we have seen robbery and murder, we have also seen brave men. We have never seen the divine power of self-sacrifice so resplendent in our youths as we have seen it to-day. They are ready with a wonderful devotion to cast aside all worldly prospects and consecrate their lives to the service of their motherland—a service which not only does not lead to advancement or Government favour, but bristles with the antagonism of their own kith and kin. It makes my heart thrill to see that there is no lack of young pilgrims on this strait and troublous path, and that their response was immediate when the call came from above. In more fortunate countries, where numerous avenues to the service of country and mankind spread in all directions, these unworldly, imaginative, determined, selfless boys are accounted the greatest assets. One has only to read the last letter of the detenu, Sachindra, who killed himself in despair, to feel sure that if he had been born in the country of

the Englishmen who punished him, he would there have lived a glorious life and died even a more glorious death.

In the past and in the present it was and is open to any king or any official of a king to paralyse a country from one end to the other by suppressing the vitality of its youth. That is easy enough; but it is not civilised, and, so far as I know, it is not English either. To cripple for life those who are innocent and likewise great, or even those who in a momentary perversion of a great enthusiasm have fallen, but only need a helping hand to rise again and justify their life,—what could be a more cruel waste of human life? What kind of statesmanship is it which can afford to hand over such youths and boys to the tender mercies of the secret service? It is like letting loose a herd of buffaloes in the night upon the tender shoots of springing corn; and while the owner of the field beats his breast in despair, the keeper of the herd exults that not a weed will be left showing!

And what makes the calamity greater is that any tender shoot once bitten by the police thrives no longer, and will bear neither flower nor fruit, for there is poison in their touch. I know a boy whose intelligence was as keen as his diligence in study, and equally noble was his character. He managed to get let off after having been mauled by the police, it is true; but he is now, in the first bloom of his youth, the inmate for life of a madhouse in Berhampore. I can swear that the British Government never had anything to fear, but our country much to gain, from him.

Some time ago when my Shantiniketan boys went up for their examination to the Birbhum Zilla school, the police used to take down their names. They had no need to do anything else to cause young spirits to droop; for none know the nature of their secret records nor can divine the purpose of their stealthy methods. Just as no one cares to eat a snake-bitten fruit, so none dare to hold commerce with a police-tainted person. Even that most desperate of creatures, the Bengali father with an unmarried daughter to get rid of,—to whom neither ugliness nor vice, nor age nor disease is a bar,—even he refrains from sending the matchmaker to him. If the one-time police-suspect tries to do business, the business fails. If he begs for charity, he may rouse our pity, but cannot

overcome our dread. If he joins any good work, that good work is doomed.

The authorities in charge of this Department of Terror are after all only men of flesh and blood, they are not saints, risen superior to passion and prejudice. And as we, in a state of excitement or fear, mistake shadow for reality, so do they. Their profession being to suspect all men, mistrust of all men becomes ingrained in their character; and to take action on the least trace of doubt gets to be their favourite policy; for they are not checked from above, their surroundings have been terrorised into silence, and the small Englishman behind them is either apathetic, or else hounding them on. If, to a lack of natural sympathy, prevailing passion or panic, and power practically boundless, there be added secret methods and stifled laws, then, can even the small Englishman really bring himself to believe that a situation has arisen in which strict justice and a righteous policy can be counted upon? I am absolutely certain that he does not believe any such thing, but what he believes is that all this is a convenient method of suppressing disturbance; just as we have seen, in Germany, the avoidance of international obligations reckoned to be the easiest way of winning the war, because there the small Germans predominate over the great Germans. The state policy of "Bring me his head!" may serve for a time, but not for all time. The policy which is good for all time is the policy for which great Englishmen have so often fought; and fired by their whole-hearted abhorrence for the opposite policy of the Germans, great young Englishmen, to-day, are rushing in their thousands to give up their lives on the field of battle.

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. With this in my mind, I have not hesitated to accept the services of devoted Englishmen offering to consecrate their lives to this work. But we live unnatural lives; our present scope, our future prospects, are both narrow; our latent powers are feeble in expression for lack of stimulus and want of facility. Any result we may achieve in our restricted field, overshadowed as it is by the might of the wielders of all power and

prestige, are so dwarfed and stunted as to be of but little use or value in the markets of the world,—which however is declared to be the best reason for continuing to keep us in a deeper shade! An utter depression due to this state of things is weighing down our whole being; and for this reason hardly any one in this country is inclined to attach any value to the Greater Freedom from one's baser nature which great men extol. And yet I make bold to believe that our endeavours in the Shantiniketan School have not been entirely fruitless. For however serious the obstacles in the way may be, if the supreme truth be held before our countrymen, they cannot find it in their hearts to thrust it aside altogether,—not even the most modern of our boys! And, as to this trait in our character, I am happy to be in agreement with the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab.

But at times it becomes terribly difficult. Things happen which make even the meekest of Bengali boys rebellious against the higher teaching, for baser passions attract their like. We have two little fellows in our Shantiniketan School, whose guardians were fairly well-to-do and paid the school dues regularly. Some time ago three men of the family were arrested in one haul, and interned. The boys can no longer pay their way and have to be supported from the school funds. The little fellows are not only feeling the humiliation of their position, but they are not unaware, also, of the misery that has befallen their home. Their father was stricken with malaria, and their distracted mother moving heaven and earth in the endeavour to get him imprisoned in a healthier locality,—all these anxieties tormented their infant minds. They do not utter a word, nor do we speak to them, on the subject. But it somehow sticks in my throat to talk in their presence of Right, Justice and Universal Love, for the sneering faces come athwart my vision of those who, like the Punjab Lieutenant Governor, have no use for these spiritual exaggerations. Thus are the sparks flying in this clash between the baser passions of both parties; and in all parts of Bengal outward suffering is driven inwards, there to be stored up as a permanent factor influencing character. The bombs which are being dropped into the bosom of whole families from the high cloudland of authority are exacting their

toll of women and children,—but may not these, at least, be classed as non-combatants?

If you ask me about the root of this vicious problem, I say at once it is the want of self-government. We are so foreign to Englishmen. One of their learned travellers has said that he felt the Chinese and Japanese to be nearer. It seems our spirituality stands in the way,—a malady with which the Britisher disclaims to be afflicted. What more radical difference can there be between man and man? Over and above that, they do not know our language; they do not mix with us socially. Where there is so vast an intervening distance, so little of knowledge to bridge it, watchful suspiciousness can be the only possible policy. The poison disseminated by those who are selfish and crafty, who know that to play the honorary spy is a way to rapid advancement, is permenting and vitiating the whole administration. Those who value self-respect more than patronage, who prefer the good of the country to their own promotion, they try, so long as the police will let them, to give all government concerns as wide a berth as they can.

The bureaucratic administrator who lives in an atmosphere of walking on tiptoe, talking in whispers, glancing furtively at every shadow and lurking behind cover, an atmosphere, moreover, that is tainted with the proximity of the police,—what is to prevent his habitual suspicion taking shape as direful action, for to him we are only an abstraction—the Governed? So when in our homes the mother weeps, the brother trembles, the wife commits suicide, and the children have to go untended and untaught; when at a sign from the C.I.D., institutions representing the patriotic labour of years crumble to the dust; that makes no difference in the appetite for dinner, or soundness of sleep, of the ruling power, nor does it even affect his zest for his game of Bridge. I do not say this in anger. The conditions being what they are, it is but natural. Bureaucracy always implies dealings, not with the real world as a whole, but with that part of it which is a product of its own regulations. In a free country no bureaucracy is allowed to occupy the whole space, so that the people get an opportunity of growing through the gaps left in it. In a dependent country it is careful to leave no gap.



And if we busy ourselves searching for an outlet to the open sky, there is such a stormy flutter in all its branches right to the tips of its foliage, that we, also, grow disquieted and feel we would rather forego the outlet than risk being broken by the buffetings of these branches. Nevertheless let me say my first and last word. There is no nation so powerful that it can keep unnaturalness balanced on the point of its bayonet. The weight grows, the muscles relax, and the gravitation of the great world brings all bolstered up anomalies to the dust.

What then is natural? That whatever may be the character of the government it should be responsible to the people governed, so that they in turn may be lovingly loyal to it as their own. The apathy of the people in regard to an irresponsible outside government in which they have no share, cannot but degenerate into antipathy. And those who try to suppress such antipathy by force needs must convert it into antagonism. That is how the problem waxes more and more complex.

The British Nation has come to India as the messenger of the spirit of the age. The wealth of great truths gained by Humanity in each era is bound to be distributed in one shape or the other throughout the countries of the world. Those who are the carriers of this wealth are false to their trust if they are miserly in its distribution; then they hamper the design of Providence and spread misery. But they cannot hide under a bushel the light they carry. What they have been commissioned to give, give they must, for they are but the instruments of the gift which is the gift of the age. Unnaturalness comes in when they turn their light side to one part of their history and their dark side to another. But they cannot go on for ever allowing one side of their nature to cheat the other. If the small Englishman persists in hemming in the great Englishman with a wall of self-interest, only sorrow and calamity will follow. The game of History is not played with the cards exposed. The *dénouement* often comes in a surprising fashion, upsetting all calculations. Anyhow, it may be asserted as a general truth that, if after a prolonged period of giving rein to unnaturalness, it is imagined that the regulations of one's own making are the laws of the universe,

then all of a sudden will History stumble over some slight obstacle, and topple over completely. For centuries East and West have been brought together, but have failed to establish human relationships; West would rule the East but cannot make it kin; the barriers of the East are broken down and the West is right inside its granaries, and yet the refrain continues to be chanted: "Never the twain shall meet!" Can the dead-weight of such unnaturalness remain for long in stable equilibrium? If no natural solution can be found then the curtain will descend on the Fifth Act of an Historical Tragedy.

The Tragedy of India's past history was worked out just in this way. We, also, saw men come together, only to contrive elaborate methods of keeping them permanently asunder. We, also, tried to keep from others Rights which we prized as the most valuable for ourselves. We, also, insulted humanity by giving the high-sounding name of Special Privilege to privileges which should have been universal. But with all the weight of our sacred scriptures at their back we were unable to secure the permanence of this unholy unnaturalness in our past history. The system in which we thought lay our strength, proved our weakness. And so have we been dying through centuries of self-inflicted wounds.

Whatever may be the seeming of the present, I am firm in the hope that East and West shall meet. But towards this end we, also, have our duties to perform. If we are small and entertain fear, the Englishman will become small and parade frightfulness. The whole power of the small Englishman rests on the smaller side of our own nature. But that future age is coming upon the Earth, when the unarmed shall have to stand up against the armed, when the victory will be not on the side of him who can strike, but of him who knows how to die. In that age he who causes suffering will be vanquished and the glory be his who has suffered. In that age, as the result of the war between the soul and the flesh, the soul and the machine, man will declare that he is no beast, and is superior to the laws of natural selection. The duty is cast upon us to prove this great truth.

If the East and the West do meet, it will be upon some great Ideal; not upon the ground of favour; not upon some man-of-

war bristling with big guns. If death be made an ally, then shall the Lord of Death come to our help. If we do not achieve power for ourselves, then the alliance between the weak and the powerful cannot be a real one; the union in which one part predominates is no union at all, but the greatest of all disunions. The Empire in the building of which we are only as the bricks and mortar cannot be our Empire. That Empire, alone, can be ours of which we are the architects also. Only within such an Empire can we gain life; for such an Empire can we lay down life. Oh, let not the power with which we would ally ourselves with the powerful be that acquired by begging or borrowing. May it be our own inherent power, the power of righteousness. May it be the power to bear unflinchingly endless sorrow and suffering. There is no power on earth which can bind in chains the power to suffer, to sacrifice self,—the power of righteousness. In defeat it is victorious, in death immortal.

*Translated by*  
SURENDRANATH TAGORE.

#### Note by the Author

Since the reading of this paper there has been a reference by H. E. Lord Ronaldshay, in a speech of his in Council, to a letter which I wrote to an English friend.

I should like to make it clear that neither in that letter nor in this paper has it been my object to pronounce any opinion on the innocence or guilt of all or any of those who have been punished under the Defence of India Act.

What I want to say is that the policy of secret condemnation and punishment hitherto pursued has naturally led a very large number of my countrymen to conclude that a great many of those punished are innocent. Imprisonment in gaols, in some cases in solitary cells, savours to the public at large more of vengeance than of precaution. Moreover the harassment to which a detenu is subjected, even after his release, by reason of continued shadowing by the police, may not be admitted by those who are responsible, but is too painfully patent to those who share the suffering.

The natural outcome of this policy is a widespread panic which paralyses the innocent, whether in their efforts for self-advancement or to render public service. In this unnatural state of things it has become difficult for us to maintain our accustomed relations with those whom we do not know well, with the further disastrous result that both hospitality and charity have succumbed to an all-pervading suspiciousness.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## ARATAMA SAN

BY E. E. SPEIGHT, OF KANAZAWA, JAPAN.

**A**S I stole out of the gates of the compound a blinding flash of lightning over Vladivostock way spread along the horizon and filled me with awe. It was not yet four of a winter's morning, and the stars were cold. I stumbled down the steep brookside to the frozen rice-fields and made for a cluster of bamboos in which nestled a Japanese village with Polynesian roofs and a haunted shrine. One long building was dimly lighted.

I call: "Aratama San!"

A burly figure moves silently out of the blackness and greets me, grasping my hand

firmly. He is young and sturdy, with a bull-neck and high cheek-bones: his face suggests the tenacity of the Negro and the dignity of the Mongol, but there is a strange gentleness in his manner and speech.

He leads me into a building where two haggard youths clad only in shirt-like garments are attending to a furnace. There are tiny bottles of milk everywhere, a thousand of them in sight, and they are taking turn to be steamed to boiling-point. Aratama gives some orders in another and deeper voice, and brings me fire in a brazier. Then he surprises me by handing

who contribute largely to the earnings of these Tramways and they should in all conscience, be worked mainly in their interests; and surely the Municipality which maintains with efficiency the huge water-works of the city, can fairly be expected to work with equal efficiency the Tramways in the city, the earnings from which will contribute so largely to the reduction of Municipal rates and taxes which are really a burden in many instances to the poorer middle classes living

in Calcutta. Now that this has been pointed out, if our Municipal Commissioners fail to do it they will only show that the charges not unoften levelled against our countrymen that they are not fit for self-government has a valid ground to stand upon and not barely based upon the interested whims and prejudices of our amiable Anglo-Indian critics.

RAICHARAN MUKERJEA.

Oct. 25, 1917.

## IN THE NIGHT

TRANSLATED BY W. W. PEARSON, WITH THE HELP AND REVISION OF THE AUTHOR.

"Doctor. Doctor."

I started out of my sleep in the very depth of night. On opening my eyes I saw it was our landlord Dokhin Babu. Hurriedly getting up and drawing out a broken chair I made him sit down and looked anxiously in his face. I saw by the clock that it was after half-past two.

Dokhin Babu's face was pale and his eyes wide-open as he said, "To-night those symptoms returned—that medicine of yours has done me no good at all." I said rather timidly, "I am afraid you have been drinking again." Dokhin Babu got quite angry and said, "There you make a great mistake. It is not the drink. You must hear the whole story in order to be able to understand the real reason."

In the niche there was a small tin kerosene lamp burning dimly. This I turned up slightly, the light became a little brighter and at the same time it began to smoke. Pulling my cloth over my shoulders I spread a piece of newspaper over a packing case and sat down. Dokhin Babu began his story.

About four years ago I was attacked by a serious illness, just when I was on the point of death my disease took a better turn till after nearly a month I recovered.

During my illness my wife did not rest for a moment day or night. For those months that weak woman fought with all her might to drive Death's messenger from the door. She went without food and sleep,

and had no thought for anything else in this world.

Death, like a tiger cheated of its prey, threw me from its jaws and went off, but in its retreat it dealt my wife a sharp blow with its paw.

My wife was at that time enceinte, and not long after she gave birth to a dead child. Then came my turn to nurse her. But she got quite troubled at this, and would say, "For heaven's sake don't keep fussing in and out of my room like that."

If I went to her room at night when she had fever and (on the pretence of fanning myself) would try to fan her, she would get quite excited. And if, on account of serving her, my meal-time was ten minutes later than usual, that also was made the occasion for all sorts of entreaties and reproaches. If I went to do her the smallest service, instead of helping her it had just the opposite effect. She would exclaim, "It's not good for a man to fuss so much."

I think you have seen my Garden house. In front of it is the garden at the foot of which the river Ganges flows. Towards the South just below our bedroom my wife had made a garden according to her own fancy and surrounded it with a hedge of Hena. It was the one bit of the garden that was simple and unpretentious. In the flower pots one did not see wooden pegs with long Latin names flying pretentious flags by the side of the most unpretentious looking plants, Jasmine, tube rose, lemon flowers,

and all kinds of roses were plentiful. Under a large tree there was a white marble slab, which my wife used to wash twice a day when she was in good health. It was the place where she was in the habit of sitting on summer evenings when her work was finished. From there she could see the river but was herself invisible to the passengers on the passing steamers.

One moonlight evening in the month of April, after having been confined to her bed for many days she expressed a desire to get out of her close room, and sit in her garden.

I lifted her with great care and laid her down on that marble seat under the bokul tree. One or two bokul flowers fluttered down and through the branches overhead the chequered moonlight fell on her worn face. All around was still and silent. As I looked down on her face, sitting by her side in that shadowy darkness filled with the heavy scent of flowers, my eyes became moist.

Slowly drawing near her I took one of her hot thin hands between my own. She made no attempt to prevent me. After remaining like this in silence for some time, somehow my heart began to overflow, and I said, "Never shall I be able to forget your love."

My wife gave a laugh in which there was mingled some happiness, and a trace of distrust, and to some extent also the sharpness of sarcasm. Without her having said anything in the way of an answer, she gave me to understand by her laugh that she neither thought it likely that I would never forget her, nor did she herself wish it.

I had never had the courage to make love to my wife simply out of fear of this sweet sharp laugh of hers. All the speeches which I made up when I was absent from her seemed to be very commonplace remarks as soon as I found myself in her presence.

It is possible to talk when you are contradicted, but laughter cannot be met by argument, so I had simply to remain silent. The moonlight became brighter, and a cuckoo began to call over and over again till it seemed to be demented. As I sat still I wondered how on such a night the cuckoo's bride could remain indifferent.

After a great deal of treatment my wife's illness showed no signs of improvement.

The doctor suggested a change of air, and I took her to Allahabad.

At this point Dokhin Babu suddenly stopped and sat silent, with a questioning look on his face he looked towards me, and then began to brood with his head resting in his hands. I also remained silent. The kerosene lamp in the niche flickered and in the stillness of the night the buzzing of the mosquitoes could be heard distinctly. Suddenly breaking the silence Dokhin Babu resumed his story :

"Doctor Haran treated my wife, and after some time I was told that the disease was an incurable one, and my wife would have to suffer for the rest of her life.

Then one day my wife said to me, 'Since my disease is not going to leave me, and there does not seem much hope of my dying soon, why should you spend your days with this living death. Leave me alone and go back to your other occupation.'

Now it was my turn to laugh. But I had not got her power of laughter. So, with all the solemnity suitable to the hero of a romance I asserted, 'So long as there is life in this body of mine ....'

She stopped me saying, 'Now, Now. You don't need to say any more. Why, to hear you makes me want to give up the ghost.'

I don't know whether I had actually confessed it to myself then, but now I know quite well that I had even at that time, in my heart of hearts, got tired of nursing that hopeless invalid.

It was clear that she was able to detect my inner weariness of spirit, in spite of my devoted service. I did not understand it then, but now I have not the least doubt in my mind that she could read me as easily as a children's First Reader in which there are no compound letters.

Doctor Haran was of the same caste as myself. I had a standing invitation to his house. After I had been there several times he introduced me to his daughter. She was unmarried although she was over fifteen years old. Her father said that he had not married her as he had not been able to find a suitable bridegroom of the same caste, but rumour said that there was some bar sinister in her birth.

But she had no other fault, for she was as intelligent as she was beautiful. For that reason I need sometimes to discuss with her all sorts of questions so that it was often late at night before I got back home, long past the time when I should have

given my wife her medicine. She knew quite well that I had been at Doctor Haran's house but she never once asked me the cause of my delay in returning home.

The sick room seemed to me doubly intolerable and joyless. I now began to neglect my patient and constantly forgot to give her the medicine at the proper time.

The Doctor used sometimes to say to me, 'For those who suffer from some incurable disease death would be a happy release. As long as they remain alive they get no happiness themselves, and make others miserable.'

To make such a remark in the ordinary course of events could be tolerated, but with the example of my wife before me such a subject ought not to have been mentioned. But I suppose doctors grow callous about the question of life and death of men.

Suddenly one day as I was sitting in the room next to the sick chamber I heard my wife say to the Doctor, 'Doctor, why do you go on giving me so many useless medicines? When my whole life has become one continuous disease, don't you think that to kill me is to cure me?'

The doctor said, 'You shouldn't talk like that.'

As soon as the doctor had gone I went into my wife's room, and seating myself beside her began to stroke her forehead gently. She said, 'This room is very hot, you go out for your usual walk. If you don't get your evening constitutional you will have no appetite for your dinner.'

My evening constitutional really meant going to Doctor Haran's house. I had myself explained that a little exercise is necessary for one's health and appetite. Now I am quite sure that every day she saw through my excuse. I was the fool, and I actually thought that she was unconscious of this deception."

Here Doklin Babn panted and burying his head in his hands remained silent for a time. At last he said, "Give me a glass of water," and having drunk the water he continued:

"One day the doctor's daughter Monorama expressed a desire to see my wife, I don't quite know why, but this proposal did not altogether please me. But I could find no excuse for refusing her request. So she arrived one evening at our house.

On that day my wife's pain had been

rather more severe than usual. When her pain was worse she would lie quite still and silent, occasionally clenching her fists. It was only from that one was able to guess what agony she was enduring. There was no sound in the room, I was sitting silently at the bedside. On that day she had not requested me to go out for my usual walk. Either she had not the power to speak, or she got some relief from having me by her side when she was suffering very much. The kerosene lamp had been placed near the door lest it should hurt her eyes. The room was dark and still. The only sound that could be heard was an occasional sigh of relief when my wife's pain became less for a moment or two.

It was at this time that Monorama came and stood at her door. The light coming from the opposite direction fell on her face.

My wife started up and grasping my hand asked, 'O Key, who is that?' In her feeble condition she was so startled to see a stranger standing at the door that she asked two or three times in a hoarse whisper, 'O Key? O Key? O Key?'

At first I answered weakly, 'I do not know,' but the next moment I felt as though someone had whipped me, and I hastily corrected myself and said, 'Why it's our doctor's daughter.'

My wife turned and looked at me. I was not able to look her in the face. Then she turned to the newcomer and said in a weak voice, 'Come in.' And turning to me added, 'Bring the lamp.'

Monorama came into the room, and began to talk a little to my wife. While she was talking the doctor came to see his patient.

He had brought with him from the dispensary two bottles of medicine. Taking these out he said to my wife, 'See, this blue bottle is for outward application and the other is to be taken. Be careful not to mix the two, for this is a deadly poison.'

Warning me also, he placed the two bottles on the table by the bedside. When he was going the doctor called his daughter.

She said to him, "Father, why should I not stay. There is no woman here to nurse her."

My wife got quite excited and sat up saying, 'No, no, don't you bother yourself. I have an old maidservant who takes care of me as if she were my mother.'

Just as the doctor was going away

with his daughter my wife said to him, 'Doctor, he has been sitting too long in this close and stuffy room, won't you take him out for some fresh air?'

The doctor turned to me and said, 'Come along, I'll take you for a stroll along the bank of the river.'

After some little show of unwillingness I agreed. Before going the doctor again warned my wife about the two bottles of medicine.

That evening I took my dinner at the doctor's house, and was late in coming home. On getting back I found that my wife was in extreme pain. Feeling deeply repentant I asked her, 'Has your pain increased?'

She was too ill to answer, but only looked up in my face. I saw that she was breathing with difficulty.

I at once sent for the doctor.

At first he could not make out what was the matter. At last he asked, 'Has that pain increased? Haven't you used that liniment?'

Saying which, he picked up the blue bottle from the table. It was empty!

Showing signs of agitation he asked my wife, 'You haven't taken this medicine by mistake have you?' Nodding her head she silently indicated that she had.

The doctor ran out of the house to bring his stomach pump, and I fell on the bed like one insensible.

Then just as a mother tries to pacify a sick child, my wife drew my head to her breast and with the touch of her hands attempted to tell me her thoughts. Merely by that tender touch she again and again said to me, 'Do not sorrow. All is for the best. You will be happy, and knowing that I die happily.'

By the time the doctor returned, all my wife's pains had ceased with her life."

Dokhin Babu taking another gulp of water exclaimed, "Ugh, it's terribly hot", and then going out on to the verandah he paced rapidly up and down two or three times. Coming back he sat down and began again. It was clear enough that he did not want to tell me, but it seemed as if, by some sort of magic, I was dragging the story out of him. He went on.

"After my marriage with Monorama, whenever I tried to talk affectionately to her, she looked grave. It seemed as if there was in her mind some hint of suspicion which I could not understand.

It was at this time that I began to have a fondness for drink.

One evening in the early autumn I was strolling with Monorama in our garden by the river. The darkness had the feeling of a phantom world about it, and there was not even the occasional sound of the birds rustling their wings in their sleep. Only on both sides of the path along which we were walking the tops of the casuarina trees sighed in the breeze.

Feeling tired Monorama went and lay down on that marble slab, placing her hands behind her head, and I went and sat beside her.

There the darkness seemed to be even denser, and the only patch of sky that could be seen was thick with stars. The chirping of the crickets under the trees was like a thin ribbon of sound at the lowest edge of the skirt of silence.

That evening I had been drinking a little and my heart was in a melting mood. When my eyes had got used to the darkness, the gray outline of the loosely-clad and languid form of Monorama, lying in the shadow of the trees, awakened in my mind an undefinable longing. It seemed to me as if she were only an unsubstantial shadow which I could never grasp in my arms.

Just then the tops of the casuarina trees seemed suddenly to be on fire. Gradually I saw the jagged edge of the old moon, golden in her harvest hue, rising above the tops of the trees. The moonlight fell on the face of the white-clad form lying on the white marble. I could contain myself no longer. Drawing near her and taking her hand in mine I said, 'Monorama, you may not believe me, never shall I be able to forget your love.'

The moment the words were out of my mouth I started, for I remembered that this was the exact expression I had used to someone else long before. And at the same instant from over the top of the casuarina trees, from under the golden crescent of the old moon, from across the wide stretches of the flowing Ganges, right to its most distant bank—Ha Ha,—Ha Ha,—Ha Ha,—came the sound of laughter passing swiftly overhead. Whether it was a heartbreaking laugh or a skyrending wail, I cannot say. But on hearing it I fell on to the ground in a swoon.

When I recovered consciousness, I saw that I was lying on my bed in my own

room. My wife asked me, 'Whatever happened to you?' I replied trembling with terror: 'Didn't you hear how the whole sky rang with the sound of laughter—Ha Ha,—Ha Ha,—Ha Ha?' My wife laughed as she answered, 'You thought that was laughter? All that I heard was the sound of a flock of birds flying swiftly overhead. Do you get so easily frightened?'

Next day I knew quite well that it was a flock of ducks migrating, as they do, at that time of year, to the South. But when evening came I began to doubt again, and in my imagination the whole sky rang with laughter piercing the darkness on the least pretext. It reached such a pass that at last after dark I was not able to speak a word to Monorama.

Then I decided to leave my garden house and took Monorama for a boat trip. In the keen November air all my fear left me, and for some days I was quite happy.

Leaving the Ganges and crossing the river Khoray, we at last reached the Padma. This terrible river lay stretched out like a huge serpent taking its winter sleep. On its north side were the barren, solitary sand banks which lay blazing in the sun; and on the high banks on the south side the mango groves of the villages stood close to the open jaws of this demoniac river. The Padma now and again turned in its sleep and the cracked earth of the banks would fall with a thud into the river.

Finding a suitable place I moored the boat to the bank.

One day we both went out for a walk and went on and on till we were far away from our boat. The golden light of the setting sun gradually faded and the sky became flooded with the pure silver light of the moon. As the moonlight fell on that limitless expanse of white sand and filled the vast sky with its flood of brilliance, I felt as if we two were alone, wandering in the uninhabited dreamland, unbounded and without purpose. Monorama was wearing a red shawl which she pulled over her head and wrapped round her shoulders leaving only her face visible. When the silence became deeper, and there was nothing but a vastness of white solitude all around us, then Monorama slowly put out her hand and took hold of mine. She seemed so close to me that I felt as if her hand surrendered into my hands, her body and mind, her life and youth. In my yearn-

ing and happy heart I said to myself, 'Is there room enough anywhere else except under such a wide, open sky to contain the hearts of two human beings in love?' Then I felt as if we had no home to which we had to return, and that we could go on wandering thus, hand in hand, by a road which had no end through this moonlit immensity, free from all cares and obstacles.

As we went on like this we at last came to a place where I could see a pool of water surrounded by hillocks of sand.

Through the heart of this still water pierced to the bottom a long beam of moonlight like a flashing sword. Arriving at the edge of the pool we stood there in silence, Monorama looking up into my face. Her shawl slipped from off her head, and I stooped down and kissed her.

Just then there came from somewhere in the midst of that silent and solitary desert in solemn tones a voice saying three times, 'O key? O key? O key?'

I started back, and my wife also trembled. But the next moment both of us realized that the sound was neither human nor superhuman—it was the call of some water fowl. It had been startled from its sleep on hearing the sound of the aliens so late at night near its nest.

Recovering from our fright we returned as fast as we could to the boat. Being late we went straight to bed, and Monorama was soon fast asleep.

Then in the darkness it seemed as if someone, standing by the side of the bed, was pointing a long, thin finger towards the sleeping Monorama, and with a hoarse whisper was asking me over and over again, 'O key? O key? O key?'

Hastily getting up I seized a box of matches and lighted the lamp. Just as I did so the mosquito net began to flutter in the wind and the boat began to rock. The blood in my veins curdled and the sweat came out in heavy drops as I heard an echoing laugh, Ha Ha,—Ha Ha, Ha Ha—sound through the dark night. It travelled over the river, across the sand banks on the other side, and after that it passed over all the sleeping country, the villages and the towns, as though forever crossing the countries of this and other worlds. It went on growing fainter and fainter, passing into limitless space, gradually becoming fine as the point of a needle. Never had I heard such a piercingly faint sound, never



had I imagined such a ghost of a sound possible. It was as if within my skull there was the limitless sky of space, and no matter how far the sound travelled it could not get outside my brain. At last when it had got almost unbearable, I thought, unless I extinguish the light I shall not be able to sleep. No sooner had I put out the lamp than once more close to my mosquito curtain I heard in the darkness that hoarse voice saying 'O key? O key? O key?' My heart began to beat in unison with the words, and gradually began to repeat the question, 'O key? O key? O key?' In the silence of the night, from the middle of the boat my round clock began to be eloquent and pointing its hour hand towards Monorama ticked out the question, 'O key? O key? O key?'

As he spoke Dokhin Babu became

ghastly pale, and his voice seemed to be choking him. Touching him on the shoulder I said, "Take a little water." At the same moment the kerosene lamp flickered and went out, and I saw that outside it was light. A crow cawed and a yellow hammer whistled. On the road in front of my house the creaking of a bullock cart was heard. Then the expression on Dokhin Babu's face was altogether changed. There was not the least trace of fear. That he had told me so much under the intoxication of an imaginary fear, and deluded by the sorcery of night seemed to make him very much ashamed, and even angry with me. Without any formality of farewell he jumped up and shot out of the house.

Next night when it was quite late I was again awakened from my sleep by a voice calling, "Doctor, Doctor."

## INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF H. H. THE NIZAM'S DOMINIONS

By G. A. CHANDAVARKAR.

**T**HE world of science is progressing, and industry, the hand-maid of science, is keeping pace with its march. The wave of industrial development that swept over countries like England, America or Japan is touching the shores of India too. But the day for the industrial evolution of the type noticeable in those countries seems yet distant. Consequent on the impact of western civilisation there are unmistakable signs of industrial awakening throughout the length and breadth of this country. While the British Government is doing what it can for advancing the cause of industries in India, the governments of the different native states too are evincing great interest in utilising their raw products to the best advantage and are earnestly endeavouring to accelerate the growth of industries in their respective states. Social and economic conditions in some of these native states render the process of industrial evolution a slow and a difficult one. But the fact that there is an awakening is undeniable. Equally incontrovertible is the fact that the cause of

industries in the native states is the cause of the industries of British India, nay, of the whole of the British Empire. Of the many factors that go to form the basis of national greatness, economic prosperity of that nation is the one. That economic prosperity depends mainly on the following items:—

(i) Physical resources, (ii) Industrial ability, (iii) Financial organisation, (iv) Progressive Government, (v) Highly developed transportation facilities, (vi) Sufficient industrial leaders, (vii) Popularity of technical education, and (viii) Skilled labour.

In this paper we propose dealing briefly with some of these factors as affecting the vast area comprising His Highness the Nizam's Dominions.

### AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES:

The physical resources of this state are abundant and agriculture is the main industry. But the agricultural labourers suffer from various disabilities, chief of them being their illiteracy and indigence. Scientific methods of agriculture are prac-



granted that the cocoanut gas can be obtained in an industrial scale and it is a useful and valuable industry, want of luminosity of the flame is not an insuperable obstacle since the gas can be made to burn brightly by what are known as 'Carbaretting processes,' which are generally adopted to increase the illuminating power of ordinary coal gas, to render non-luminous combustible gases, as water-gas, luminiferous and so to load non-combustible gasses with hydro-carbon vapour as to make the combination at once luminiferous and a supporter of combustion.

In Malabar, Ceylon and the Laccadives the cocoanut trees are so numerous that the shell and the fibre, of which a very large quantity is left behind after being used for chair making, are burnt as fuel.

In various parts of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore the most frequently used form of fuel is the cocoanut shell. That there is plenty of the shell and the fibre for gas making seems to be certain if the gas is to be used for lighting or in working gas-engines. Even a slight increase in the price of the cocoanut products must be an incentive for the greater cultivation of this most beautiful and wonderful tree, which, as the earthly representative of the divine Kalpaka Vriksha has been specially given to India and the East.

May I request those who have greater facilities for carrying on experiments to produce the gas on a large scale and try to increase the luminosity of the flame by any of the processes used for the purpose.

P. LAKSHUMANAN.

## SONG

SUNG AT THE DEDICATION OF THE BOSE INSTITUTE.

[Translated from the Bengali of Rabindranath Tagore by Prof. M. Ghose.]

### 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

The conch-shell, horn auspicious, sound,  
O sound !

Accepting this initiation bright,  
The deep dark night of waiting terminate.  
O band of pilgrims all be ready girt :

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  
Unshakable throne on the thunderbolt !

Come, all who struggle upward and aspire,  
To glorify this our dear country, come !  
All ye who, meditating, on one thought  
Your souls concentrate, 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 fragrance of unblading 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 men  
This kingly sage, school'd in austerities !"  
And "Victory !" still, shout "Victory !"  
Victory !

"A Country which defends itself wins the respect of everyone and cannot perish." Addressing his parliament on August 4, 1914, after Germany had violated Belgian Territory, the Belgian King used this expression. What a contrast to the German Chancellor's expressions, "Necessity knows no law", and "a scrap of paper". The Belgian King's phrase preaches the gospel of peace and goodwill, and the German Chancellor's phrases preach the gospel of crime.

"Gott strafe England." When Germany came to know that England was not going to watch and stand aside, while she was going to crush Belgium, France and Russia, Keitschke gave vent to his pent-up feelings of hatred in this phrase. Now one hears in London such phrases as "I shall strafe you if you don't listen to me."

"Narpoo." It is a corrupted form of the French phrase meaning "doing nothing", and is used as a substitute for "doing nothing" in such phrases as "I asked my girl friend to come out with me, but got the 'narpoo'", i.e., she politely refused to go out with me.

"Merci boko." A corrupted form of the French phrase "merci beaucoup" meaning thanks very much.

"Après la guerre." It means after the war. This phrase has "caught on" with the people in England, and is in common use.

"Compray." A corrupted form of the French word meaning I understand.

"Blighty." It is a corruption of the Indian word "Vilati." It is used for a

serious wound which necessitates the sending of a British soldier to England for treatment in a hospital, in the language of the Tommy in the trenches. But it has come to be used in its original sense, namely home, and is in common use in this sense in England.

"Anzacs." A term for colonial soldiers. It is really an endearing term. It came into use at the Gallipoli Expedition.

"Brew up tea." The Tommy in the trenches uses the expression "brew up tea" instead of "make tea." It arises out of the fact that the Tommy in trenches has very little time in which to make it, and, therefore, he really "brews up" tea instead of making it.

"Cusy". From cushion which is very soft. It is used in such phrases as "I have got a cushy work to do" meaning I haven't got hard work to do.

This is by no means a complete or exhaustive list of words, phrases and expressions which have found their way into common use in England. There are any number of other words, the common use of which we owe to this war. I have given some most important of them, and those which I have often heard in talk and repeatedly read in papers. For instance, "fear God and serve the King and the Empire" is another sweet expression in common use. Then we hear the word "rotee" for bread. And so on. A philologist, I am sure, would, after the war, write a book on such expressions, and make them familiar to a large class of English-knowing readers.

## TO INDIA

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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 hast rendered 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.

Translated by  
W. W. PEARSON & E. E. SPEIGHT,

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WHOLE  
No. 133

## FOUR POEMS

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE, D. LITT.

### ELUSIVE.

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.

### ADVENTURE.

I shall not wait and watch in the house for  
thy 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 midstream,  
for time flies to its end.

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

### RECKLESS.

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.

### SPRING.

Men. Come Spring, with all thy splend-  
our of songs and lavish life,  
Women squandering perfume upon the air  
till it overflows,

Men. stirring the heart of the earth  
with a shiver of awakement.

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*, athrill with the urge of  
new leaves and outbreak of  
flowers.

Men. Eager Pilgrim, hurrying on thy  
endless quest of Paradise,  
follow thy path of song  
through passionate hearts.

**Women.** Come into the glimmer of dayfall,  
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 clam-  
orous 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 VERNACULAR MEDIUM VIEWS OF AN OLD TEACHER

### § 1. Charges against our graduates.

**I**N all civilised countries, next to religion educational questions provoke the greatest differences of opinion and even engender heat. If this criticism of the educational system and methods prepares the ground for constructive reform, it should be welcomed; because such discontent with the existing system is a healthy sign of interest in education and of the spirit of progress in the community.

But judging from the public discussions on the subject, there seems to be something essentially wrong with the present system of education in India; the evil is deeper than the mere unsuitability of this or that detail. The whole system is denounced for inefficiency and barrenness. We are told that the first products of English education in India,—namely, the scholars of the old Hindu College of Calcutta and of Dr. Duff's missionary college; were giants; they produced masterly writers of English prose, leaders of society, and creators of new branches of vernacular literature. But the numerous graduates turned out of our University factories now-a-days are a puny race, whose slovenly English is kept in countenance only by the slipshod style of European journalism in India. The new race of our graduates, it is asserted, lack originality and depth; they are fit to be clerks and pleaders, but not masters of literature, either in erudition or in creative power.

The second proof of the alleged rottenness of the present educational system is the heavy "massacre" of B.A. candidates,—sometimes amounting to 80 p.c., as in

Madras and Allahabad in recent years. We are not concerned today with investigating the cause of such excessive "ploughing,"—whether it is due, to irrational severity on the part of the examiners, inefficiency on the part of the teachers, or a cruel leniency in the lower examinations leading up to the B.A. We only desire to point out the frightful waste of young lives and energy that such heavy failures at examinations involve. Who is responsible for it, and how long will it continue without being remedied? Where lies the remedy? *That* is worth inquiring into.

The aim of education is not to pump information into a man, but to develop his latent faculties. If we study two plays of Shakespeare at college, it is only to train ourselves in the art of understanding other plays of the same writer without the help of a teacher. Then, again, the educated man must prove himself fitter for his duties than his uneducated brother, otherwise his education has no justification.

How far has this been the case with us during the last generation? The charges brought against our graduates, by our own countrymen even oftener than by foreigners, are—

(a) Our studies are not kept up after leaving college; and, hence, English education does not become a *part of our life*, nor does it influence our outlook upon the world. The chasm between the (English) school and the (Oriental) home remains unbridged.

(b) We acquire too much of *book learning*, mere knowledge of the theory of things, but lack general intelligence and

and Turpentine into India for 5 years for 1907-08 to 1911-12 were about 3,000 tons and 2,27,000 gallons respectively. It then follows that the future of the Indian turpentine industry is very bright.

In addition to the Chir there are forests (in Assam and Burma) of other species of pine (*Pinus Khasya*, *Pinus Merkusii* and *Pinus excelsa*) which have not been worked as yet. The resins of these trees on distillation yield excellent oil, especially that of *Pinus excelsa* and *Pinus Khasya*, which is said to be equal in quality to the best grades of French and American turpentine.

Apart from resin a medicinal oil can be manufactured from Pine-needles (i.e. leaves of pine). In Europe and America the distillation of oil from Pine-needles is an established industry. Nothing of this kind has been started in India as yet. According to Mr. Pearson a tree of 5-girth yields 400 lbs. of needles. The oil content as determined by Mr. Puran Singh is 0.57 per cent. The Kumaon circle (United Provinces) could alone produce 45,600 lbs. of oil.

The question of distilling oil from needles is worthy of consideration.

#### 11. SALAR (*Boswellia serrata*).

This is reported to be common on dry hills throughout India. The resin of the tree, like that of the Pine, on distillation yields an oil. In 1915 a sample consignment of oil distilled from this gum-resin was sent to London for valuation. It was pronounced of very good quality. It resembled closely American turpentine, excepting in the smell. It was further stated that the *Boswellia* oil could be suc-

cessfully employed, like ordinary turpentine, in the manufacture of varnishes. A London firm valued it at about 30s. per cwt. A tree on tapping yields 2 lbs. of gum resin. The exports of this product from India during 1913-14 amounted to over Rs. 68,000.

The following publications are recommended for further study in this connection:—

1. Note on the Uses of Rusa Oil by R. S. Pearson.
- Note on Constants of Geranium Oil by Puran Singh (Indian Forest Record Vol. V. Part VII.)
2. Note on Resin Industry in Kumaon by E. A. Smythies. (Indian Forest Bulletin No. 26).
3. Note on *Pinus Khasya*, *Pinus Merkusii* and *Pinus excelsa* by Puran Singh. (Indian Forest Bulletin No. 24).
4. Note on Eucalyptus Oil Industry in the Nilgiris etc., by Puran Singh (Indian Forest Record Vol. V, Part VIII).
5. Memorandum on the Oil Value of Sandal Wood by Puran Singh (Indian Forest Bulletin No. 6).
6. The Volatile Oils by Gildemister and Hoffmann, 1900.
7. The Chemistry of Essential Oils by E. J. Parry. 1908.
8. The Indian Forester, 1911-17.
9. The Indian Essential Oils by D. Hooper
10. The Bulletin of the Imperial Institute, London 1915-16.
11. The Work of the Forest Department in India by R. S. Troup, 1917.

K.

## AUTUMN

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

To-day the peace of autumn pervades the world.

In the radiant noon, silent and motionless, the wide stillness rests like a tired bird spreading over the deserted fields to all horizons its wings of golden-green.

To-day the thin thread of the river flows without song, leaving no 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 worlds, in the planets, the sun and the stars, the joyous dance of the atoms through endless time—the myriad waves of rhythm surrounding Thy throne!

Translated by W. W. PEARSON.

## FREEDOM

(By RABINDRANATH TAGORE)

Set me free, set me free, my Lord, from  
the bondage of praise and blame so  
hard to break asunder.

Let this heavy burden fall from me, and  
easy will be my return to the work  
that lieth among the world of men,  
—let only Thy command, Lord,  
prove triumphant.

Prostrating myself at Thy feet I will offer  
up in the secrecy of my soul all my  
rewards and afflictions.

With silent going will I seek the field of  
labour, carrying to my countless  
tasks a heart steadfast in eternal  
devotion and strong to a thousand  
efforts.

So shall my moving onward be sure as  
that of the river that flows by a  
myriad abodes of men, completing  
its manifold work as it bears its  
unfettered waters to the sea.

Translated by  
W. W. PEARSON  
& E. E. SPEIGHT.

## THE RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF ANCIENT HINDU POLITY

BY NARENDRA NATH LAW, M.A., B.L., PREMCHAND ROYCHAND SCHOLAR

## XVII.

THE MINOR POLITICO-RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES  
MAINLY ATHARVA-VEDIC.

It was the special charge of the royal priest to perform the minor political ceremonials which had their basis principally in the *Atharva-Veda* and were intended to avert State evils and promote State welfare. According to *Gautama's* injunction, he should perform in the fire of the hall the rites ensuring prosperity and connected with *ānti* (propitiation), festivals, march, long life, auspiciousness, as also those causing enmity, subduing, distressing or destroying enemies<sup>1</sup>. Astrological forecasts, and interpretations of omens should also share the king's attention<sup>2</sup>. The propitiation of the planets is expressly mentioned by *Yājñavalkya* as one of the duties of the royal priest in addition to the performance of the other rituals<sup>3</sup>. Several other works mentioned in the previous

chapter advert also to this portion of his charge. A few of the *mantras* from the *Atharva-Veda* intended to be used with appropriate rituals at the prescribed times are detailed below<sup>1</sup> :

Hymns I, 2 ; I, 19-21 were *sāmgrāmika* (battle hymns) used in rites for putting enemies to flight, or avoiding wounds by arrows ;

I, 9, 29 ; III, 3 for the restoration of a king ;

I, 19, 23 ; III, 6, 27, VI, 134, 135, VII, 62 against enemies ;

III, 1, 2 for confounding enemy's army :

III, 19, IV, 22, VI, 65-67 ; 97-99, 103, 104, VII, 8 for gaining victory over a hostile army ;

V, 20 (addressed to the war-drum) and VII, 118 (used while arming a king or *Kshatriya*) for terrifying the same and VI, 40 for inspiring it with courage ;

VI, 125, (used with VII, 3, 4, 110) addressed to the war-chariot for its success and VI, 126 to the war-drum for success against the

<sup>1</sup> *Gautama*, xi, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xi, 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Yājñavalkya*, i, 313.

<sup>1</sup> The references for the hymns and directions for their use are taken from the translation of A. V. (Harvard Oriental Series)

- |                            |                                   |  |                                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| (4) Physical Geography     | (b) History and Political Economy | (2) Composition in a Vernacular  | (b) History                     |
| (5) One of the following : | (c) Mathematics                   | (3 & 4) Two of the following subjects one of which at least must belong to group A : | (c) Political Economy           |
| (a) Physics                | <i>Science</i>                    |  | (d) Mental and Moral Philosophy |
| (b) Zoology                | <i>B</i>                          |  | (e) Mathematics                 |
| (c) Botany                 | (1) English                       | <i>A</i>   |                                 |
| (d) Geology.               | (2) Mathematics                   | (a) One of the following languages :—  | <i>B</i>                        |
| 1882                       | (3) One of the following          | Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic,  | (a) Physics                     |
| <i>Arts</i>                | (a) Physics                       | Persian, Hebrew, Classical Armenian, Greek, Latin, French, German                    | (b) Chemistry                   |
| <i>A</i>                   | (b) Chemistry                     |  | (c) Physiology                  |
| (1) English                | (c) Physiology                    |  | (d) Botany                      |
| (2) Philosophy             | (d) Geology                       |  | (e) Zoology                     |
| (3) One of the following   | 1906                              |  |                                 |
| ing.                       | (1) English                       |  |                                 |
| (a) A classical language   |                                   |  |                                 |

P. N. CHATTERJEE.

## INDIA'S PRAYER

## I

Thou hast given us to live.  
 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 enslaves 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 brothers' flesh,  
 They fight against Thine anger and die.  
 But let us stand firm and suffer with strength  
 for the True, for the Good, for the Eternal in man,  
 for Thy Kingdom which is in the union of hearts,  
 for the Freedom which is of the Soul.

## II

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 voice 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 our 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 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.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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WHOLE  
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## “VICTORY TO THEE, BUILDER OF INDIA'S DESTINY”

Ruler of peoples' minds and builder of India's destiny,  
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 wake Punjab and Sind, Maratha and Gujrat,  
Dravid, Utkal and Vanga.  
They gather at 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 Buddhists, the Jains and Sikhs,  
the Parsees, Musalmans 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 uneven  
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 conchshell sounds breathing life into death.  
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.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

[The following is the original Bengali song of which the above is a translation  
by the Author himself.]

जनमन्त्र-मन्त्र-अधिनायक जय हे भारत-भाग्य-विधाता !  
पञ्चाय दिव्य गुजरात मराठा द्राविड उल्का बह,  
विन्ध्य हिमालय बसुन्दा गङ्गा उल्का जलधि-तरङ्ग,  
तव युग बाने जागे, तव युग आगिरी मागे,  
गाहे तव जय-गाथा ।

अद्वैत तव आह्वान प्रचारित, शुनि तव उदार वाणी  
हिन्दु बौद्ध शिख जैन पारसिक मुसलमान खट्टानी,  
पूरव पश्चिम आगे तव सिंहासन पाये,  
प्रोमद्वार हय गाँथा ।

जनमन्त्र-मन्त्र-अधिनायक जय हे भारत-भाग्य-विधाता !  
जय हे, जय हे, जय हे, जय हे, जय हे, जय हे ॥

जनमन्त्र ऐक्य-विधायक जय हे भारत-भाग्य-विधाता !  
जय हे, जय हे, जय हे, जय जय जय जय हे ॥



पतन-सम्भू दुःख-र-पन्था, युग युग भावित याची,  
 जे चिर-सारथि तव रथ-चक्रे सुखरित पथ दिनरात्रि !  
 दाहक विषय भाजे तव मङ्गलनि वाजे,  
 सङ्कट-दुःख-धाता ।

जनसङ्घ-दुःख-त्रायक जय जे भारत-भाग्य-विधाता !  
 जय हे, जय हे, जय हे, जय जय जय जय हे ॥

घोर तिमिर-घन निविड निमीये पौडित मूर्च्छित देशे  
 जायत क्लिब तव अविचल मङ्गल नत-नयने अनिमेषे ।  
 दुःखघ्ने आतङ्गे, रक्षा करिले अङ्गे,  
 सै हृदयौ तुमि माता ।

जनसङ्घ-सघ-परिचायक जय हे भारत-भाग्य-विधाता !

जय हे, जय हे, जय हे, जय जय जय जय हे ॥

राशि प्रभातिल उदित रविचक्रि पूर्व उदय-गिरिभाशि,  
 गाढे विद्वङ्गम, पुण्य समीरक जवजीवन-रस टाशि ।  
 तव कवचाह्व-रागे निद्रित भारत जागे,  
 तव चरके नत भाषा ।

जय जय जय हे जय राजेश्वर भारत-भाग्य-विधाता !

जय हे, जय हे, जय हे, जय, जय, जय, जय हे ॥

## PERMANENT ASSESSMENT OF LAND REVENUE IN BENGAL

IN recent times it has been frequently contended by some Anglo-Indian journalists and others that the landholders of Bengal should be made to contribute more to the public treasury than they do at present. In support of their contention they bring forward a comparative table of the land-revenue contributions of Bengal and the other provinces, and show that, area for area, Bengal pays less than the other provinces. Whether Bengal ought to pay more, or the other provinces less, is certainly a question worthy of investigation. But it is also necessary to enquire whether Bengal has been unjustly favoured, or whether the permanent fixing of her land revenue was necessitated by her history.

To understand why the land revenue was permanently assessed in Bengal in 1793, it is necessary to know the condition of Bengal in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, as well as the causes that produced it.

The Battle of Plassey, fought on the 23rd of June, 1757, did not confer any rights of conquest on the East India Company. By it they got better terms for their trade (for as yet they were only merchants and not rulers in India), and those who participated in the battle were very handsomely rewarded. For eight years after that battle, although the military occupation of Bengal was in their hands,

they were not the civil administrators of the country. From 1765, when they secured the grant of the Dewany of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the Moghal Emperor of Delhi, they became the virtual masters of the country. One would expect that the portion of the country over which the Company had obtained jurisdiction would be governed on those received principles of statecraft which every government, professing to be civilized, acts upon. But though it is possible that among the Anglo-Indians of the days of Clive and Warren Hastings there were men who had a sense of honour and honesty in them, they must have been in an ineffective minority. Most Anglo-Indians of those days behaved like a pack of hungry wolves or vultures in their dealings with the people of this country, which had been entrusted to them for purposes of administration. It was on this account, that Burke described them as "birds of prey and passage in India," and Herbert Spencer wrote of them :—

"The Anglo-Indians.....showed themselves only a shade less cruel than their prototypes of Peru and Mexico. Imagine how black must have been their deeds, when even the Directors of the Company admitted that 'the vast fortunes acquired in the inland trade have been obtained by a scene of the most tyrannical and oppressive conduct that was ever known in any age or country.' Conceive the atrocious state of society described by Vansittart, who tells us that the English compelled the natives to buy or sell at just what rates they pleased, on pain of flogging or confinement.....A cold-blooded treachery was the established policy of the authori-

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WHOLE  
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## DESPAIR NOT

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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

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## THE POSTULATES OF INDIAN ECONOMICS\*

[*Specially contributed to the Modern Review.*]

BY RADHAKAMAL MUKERJEE, M.A., P.R.S.

*Lecturer in Economics, Calcutta University.*

IN my lecture this evening on the Postulates of Indian Economics I shall be able to give you only a rough outline of the Indian economic order and ideals with a view to indicate very generally the scope and method of a new and independent school of Indian economics, that I have attempted to formulate in the course of my lectures in Indian Economics at the Panjab University. I believe that an independent school, working a genetic and comparative method with its live studies and regional experiments, will not only help in the solution of Indian economic problems, but also contribute valuably towards the formulation of an universal system of economics.

The postulates of economics which

\* A lecture delivered at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, under the presidency of the Hon'ble Sir Sankaran Nair, C.I.E., on November 26, 1917.

Western economists have given us are only partially true being based on insufficient analyses, and however much they try to explain away their invalidity and inapplicability to all regions and races in different stages of economic evolution and under different environmental conditions by the hypothesis of economic friction or unsurmountable barriers of custom and uneconomic or extra-economic standards, the fact remains that, based as they are on the data supplied exclusively by the socio-economic evolution represented by the Graeco-Roman type, they do not show a full, sufficient and comprehensive insight. For social evolution is of different types, and an economics finding its hypotheses and principles from one type cannot be universal, but can furnish only universal generalisation. It is only on the basis of a

## THE PARROT'S TRAINING

*(Translated from the original Bengali ).*

1

ONCE upon a time there was a bird. It was ignorant. It sang all right, but never recited scriptures. It hopped pretty frequently, but lacked manners.

Said the Rajah to himself : "Ignorance is costly in the long run. For fools consume as much food as their betters, and yet give nothing in return."

He called his nephews to his presence and told them that the bird must have a sound schooling.

The Pundits were summoned, and at once went to the root of the matter. They decided that the ignorance of birds was due to their natural habit of living in poor nests. Therefore, according to the Pundits, the first thing necessary for this bird's education was a suitable cage.

The Pundits had their rewards and went home happy.

2

A golden cage was built with gorgeous decorations. Crowds came to see it from all parts of the world. "Culture captured and caged!" exclaimed some in a rapture of ecstasy, and burst into tears. Others remarked : "Even if culture be missed, the cage will remain to the end, a substantial, fact. How fortunate for the bird!"

The goldsmith filled his bag with money and lost no time in sailing homewards.

3

The Pundit sat down to educate the bird. With proper deliberation he took his pinch of snuff as he said : "Text-books can never be too many for our purpose!"

The nephews brought together an enormous crowd of scribes. They copied from books, and copied from copies, till the manuscripts were piled up to an unreachable height. Men murmured in amazement : "Oh, the tower of culture, egregiously high! The end of it lost in the clouds!"

The scribes, with light hearts, hurried home, their pockets heavily laden.

The nephews were furiously busy keeping the cage in proper trim. As their

constant scrubbing and polishing went on the people said with satisfaction : "This is progress indeed!"

Men were employed in large numbers and supervisors were still more numerous. These, with their cousins of all different degrees of distance, built a palace for themselves and lived there happily ever after.

4

Whatever may be its other deficiencies, the world is never in want of fault-finders. And they went about saying that every creature remotely connected with the cage flourished beyond words, excepting only the bird.

When this remark reached the Rajah's ears he summoned his nephews before him and said : "My dear nephews, what is this that we hear?"

The nephews said in answer : "Sire, let the testimony of the goldsmiths and the pundits, the scribes and the supervisors be taken, if the truth is to be known. Food is scarce with the fault-finders and that is why their tongues have gained in sharpness."

The explanation was so luminously satisfactory that the Rajah decorated each one of his nephews with his own rare jewels.

5

The Rajah, at length, being desirous of seeing with his own eyes how his education department busied itself with the little bird, made his appearance one day at the great hall of learning.

From the gate rose the sounds of conch-shells and gongs, horns, bugles and trumpets, cymbals, drums and kettledrums, tomtoms, tambourines, flutes, fifes, barrel organs and bagpipes. The Pundits began chanting *mantras* at their topmost voices, while the goldsmiths, scribes, supervisors, and their numberless cousins of all different degrees of distance, loudly raised a round of cheers.

The nephews smiled and said : "Sire, what do you think of it all?"

The Rajah said: "It does seem so fearfully like a sound principle of education!"

Mightily pleased, the Rajah was about to remount his elephant, when the fault-finder from behind some bush cried out: "Maharajah, have you seen the bird?"

"Indeed, I have not!" exclaimed the Rajah, "I completely forgot about the bird."

Turning back he asked the Pundits about the method they followed in instructing the bird. It was shown to him. He was immensely impressed. The method was so stupendous that the bird looked ridiculously unimportant in comparison. The Rajah was satisfied that there was no flaw in the arrangements. 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. It sent a thrill through one's body to watch the process.

This time, while remounting his elephant, the Rajah ordered his state car-puller to give a thorough good pull at both the ears of the fault-finder.

## 6

The bird thus crawled on, duly and properly, to the safest verge of inanity. In fact, its progress was satisfactory in the extreme. Nevertheless nature occasionally triumphed over training, and when 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 impertinence!" the Kotwal growled.

The blacksmith, with his forge and hammer, took his place in the Rajah's

Department of Education. Oh, what resounding blows! The iron chain was soon completed, and the bird's wings were clipped.

The Rajah's brothers-in-law looked black, and shook their heads saying: "These birds not only lack good sense, but also gratitude!"

With text-book in one hand and baton in the other, the Pandits gave the poor bird what may fitly be called lessons!

The Kotwal was honoured with a title for his watchfulness, and the blacksmith for his skill in forging chains.

The bird died.

Nobody had the least notion how long ago this had happened. The fault-finder was the first man to spread the rumour.

The Rajah called his nephews and asked them, "My dear nephews, what is this that we hear?"

The nephews said: "Sire, the bird's education has been completed."

"Does it hop?" the Rajah enquired.

"Never!" said the nephews.

"Does it fly?"

"No."

"Does it sing?"

"No."

"Bring me the bird," said the Rajah.

The bird was brought to him, guarded by the Kotwal and the Sepoys and the Sowars. The Rajah poked its body with his finger. It neither moved, nor uttered a groan. Only its inner stuffing of book-leaves rustled.

Outside the window, the murmur of the spring breeze amongst the newly budded *Asoka* leaves made the April morning wistful.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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## THE CAPTAIN WILL COME TO HIS HELM

I have sat on the bank 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.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## SPEAK TO ME, MY FRIEND, OF HIM

Speak to me, my friend, of Him and I 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.  
Shrink not to call His name in the crowd, 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.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## INTERNATIONAL LAW IN ANCIENT INDIA

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### I. SOURCES.

#### INTRODUCTORY.

**T**HE year 1914 witnessed the beginning of a horrible war which still continues. It were a sad tale to recount the deeds of cruelty and atrocity, the burning of

cathedrals and the ravages of cities, not to mention the enormous loss that humanity has suffered in dedicating the best of energies, the mightiest of armies and the most valiant of sons to deeds more worthy of barbarians than of the 'civilised' powers of Europe.

INDIAN LABOUR IN FIJI

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THE CONQUEROR

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 spread 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 surrender of love.  
The torch lies shrouded in its ashes, and the sky sings with the rejoicing :  
"Victory to Earth ! Victory to Heaven !  
"Victory to All-conquering Light !"

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

INDIAN LABOUR IN FIJI

HEALTH CONDITIONS.

ON March 12th 1917 the Viceroy of India announced in Delhi, by means of an Order in Council, that all recruiting for indentured labour in India had been suspended for the period of the war. On the 27th of March, in his reply to the women of India, he went further, and declared that he could not himself regard it as conceivable that recruiting should be resumed after the war. Last of all, on May 25, 1917, the Viceroy was able to take the final step and proclaim publicly, that the indenture system of Indian labour had been finally abolished.

The present enquiry starts with the recognition of this accomplished fact. Its

primary object will be, not to reconsider the evils of the old system, but to find out by what means the past mistakes and failures can be remedied, now that indenture has been brought to an end.

Sixty thousand Indians are settled in Fiji, at the present time, who will very rapidly become the prevailing population of the Islands. Some of the questions which have to be faced are as follows :— How are these people of a foreign race and climate to become acclimatised ? How is their social system, which has broken down, to be built up again ? What kind of education will be most suitable for their children ? How can all that is best in

Accordingly, the matter of the proper use of color, or, rather, the use of proper colors, becomes a very important factor in the painting of protective markings and outline distortions."

—*The Literary Digest.*

An official statement, recently published in England, declares that it has been stated at various times in the Press that the Admiralty have not realised the value of camouflage as a means of assisting to defeat the attacks of enemy submarines on mercantile shipping, and that such camouflage as has been tried is not of British origin.

The official document continues: It can be stated that the Admiralty are fully alive to its value, and several months ago a system of camouflage was originated. The principles governing it cannot be divulged at present, but it may be said that it has not invisibility for its basis.

The theory of rendering ships invisible at sea by painting them various colours is no longer tenable. Endless endeavours have been made in this direction, and numerous schemes have been given fair trial by the Admiralty under actual conditions at sea. The results of these trials have invariably been disappointing and it has been finally established that unless a vessel and her smoke can be rendered absolutely invisible no useful purpose is served.

The application of Thayer's Law is most commonly put forward as a means of obtaining invisibility. This, broadly speaking, is an adoption of Nature's means for eliminating shadows and so reducing the visibility of birds and animals at close quarters either for purposes of attack or defence, and it is stated that this can be applied to ships by painting the ceilings of promenade decks or other projecting structures white in order to eliminate all shadows. Actual experiences at sea have proved that this is a fallacy, and that the paint itself, being dependent on the light of the sky, will not overcome shadows.

The scheme now in use has been extensively taken up not only by the British, but also by the Allied Governments, and no stone is being left unturned to utilise this important asset, which is only one of the many devices which are used to combat the enemy's submarine activity.—*The Bengalee.*

## The Meeting of the East and the West

BY SIR RAJENDRANATH TAGORE.

For over a century and a half India has borne a foreign rule which is western. Whether she has been benefited by it, whether her arts and industries have made progress, her wealth increased and her opportunities of self-government multiplied, are a matter of controversy which is of very little material interest to the present generation of our countrymen, as it cannot change facts. Even from the point of view of historical curiosity it has a very imperfect value, for we are not allowed to remember all facts except in strict privacy. So I am not going to enter into any discussion which is sure to lead to an unsatisfactory conclusion or consequences.

But one thing about which there has been no attempt at concealment or difference of opinion is that the East and the West have remained far apart even after these years of relationship. When two different peoples have to deal with each other and yet without forming any true bond of union, it is sure to become a burden, whatever benefit may accrue from it. And when we say that we suffer from the dead weight of mutual alienation we do not mean any adverse criticism of the motive or the system of

government, for the problem is vast and it affects all mankind. It inspires in our minds a awe verging upon despair when we come to think that all the world has been based open to a civilisation which has not the spiritual power in it to unite, but which can only exploit and destroy and dominate and can make even its benefits an imposition from outside while claiming its price in loyalty of heart.

Therefore it must be admitted that this civilisation, while it abounds in the riches of mind, lacks in a great measure the one truth which is of the highest importance to all humanity; the truth which man even in the dimmest dawn of his history felt, however vaguely it might be. This is why, when things go against them, the peoples brought up in the spirit of modern culture 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. They forget that for a man winning a game may be the greatest of his losses.

Men 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.

Naturally the consciousness of unity had its beginning in the limited area of race—the race which was the seed-plot of all human ideals. And therefore, at first, men had their conception of God as a tribal God which restricted their moral obligation within the bounds of their own people.

The first Aryan immigrants came to India with their tribal gods and special ceremonies and their conflict with the original inhabitants of India seemed to have no prospect of termination. In the midst of this struggle the conception of a universal soul, the spiritual bond of unity in all creatures, took its birth in the better minds of the time. This heralded a change of heart and along with it a true basis of reconciliation.

During the Mahomedan conquest of India, behind the political turmoil our inner struggle was spiritual. Like Asoka of the Buddhist age Akbar also had his vision of spiritual unity. A succession of great men of those centuries, both Hindu saints and Mahomedan sufis, was engaged in building a kingdom of souls over which ruled the one God who was the God of Mahomedans, as well as Hindus.

In India this striving after spiritual realisation still shows activity. And I feel sure that the most important event of modern India has been the birth and life-work of Ram Mohan Roy, for it is a matter of the greatest urgency that the East and the West should meet and unite in hearts. Through Ram Mohan Roy was given the first true response of India when the West knocked at her door. He found the basis of our union in our own spiritual inheritance, in faith in the reality of the oneness of man in Brahma.

Other men of intellectual eminence we have seen in our days who have borrowed their lessons from the West. This schooling makes us intensely conscious of the separateness of our people giving rise to a patriotism fiercely exclusive and contemptuous. This has been the effect of the teaching of the west everywhere in the world. It has roused up a universal spirit of suspicious antipathy. It incites each people to strain all resources for taking advantages of

others by force or by cunning. This cult of organised pride and self-seeking, this deliberate falsification of moral perspective in our view of humanity, has also invaded with a new force men's minds in India. If it does contain any truth along with its falsehood we must borrow it from others to mend our defect in mental balance. But, at the same time, I feel sure India is bid to give expression to the truth belonging to her own inner life.

Today the western people have come in contact with all races of the world when their moral adjustment has not yet been made true for this tremendous experience. The reality of which they are most fervidly conscious is the reality of the Nation. It has served them up to a certain point, just as some amount of boisterous selfishness, pugnacious and inconsiderate, may serve us in our boyhood, but makes mischief when carried into our adult life of larger social responsibilities. But the time has come at last when the western people are beginning to feel nearer home what the cult of the nation has been to humanity, they who have reaped all its benefits, with a great deal of its cost thrown upon the shoulders of others.

It is natural that they should realise humanity when it is nearest themselves. It increases their sensibility to a very high pitch, within a narrow range, keeping their conscience inactive where it is apt to be uncomfortable.

But when we forget truth for our own convenience, truth does not forget us. Up to a certain limit, she tolerates neglect, but she is sure to put in her appearance, to exact her dues with full arrears, on an occasion which we grumble at as inappropriate and at a provocation which seems trivial. This makes us feel the keen sense of the injustice of providence, as does the rich man of questionable history, whose time-honoured wealth has attained the decency of respectability, if he is suddenly threatened with an exposure.

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. Modern civilisation has to be judged not by its balance-sheet of imports and exports, luxuries of rich men, lengths of dreadnaughts, breadth of dependencies and tightness of grasping diplomacy. In this judgment of history, we from the East are the principal witnesses, who must speak the truth without flinching, however difficult it may be for us and unpleasant for others. Our voice is not the voice of authority, with the power of arms behind it, but the voice of suffering which can only count upon the power of truth to make itself heard.

There was a time when Europe had started on her search for the soul. In spite of all digressions she was certain that man must find his true wealth by becoming true. She knew that the value of his wealth was not merely subjective, but its eternal truth was in a love ever active in man's world. Then came a time when science revealed the greatness of the material universe and violently diverted Europe's attention to gaining things in place of inner perfection. Science has its own great meaning for man. It proves 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 selec-

tion 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.

This higher end of science is attained where its help has been requisitioned for the general alleviation of our wants and sufferings, where its gifts are for all men. But it fearfully fails where it supplies means for personal gains and attainment of selfish power. For its temptations are so stupendously great that our moral strength is not only overcome but fights against its own forces under the cover of such high-sounding names as patriotism and nationality. This has made the relationship of human races inhuman, burdening it with repression and restriction where it faces the weak and brandishing it with vengeance and competition of ferocity where it meets the strong. It has made war and preparation for war the normal condition of all nations, and has polluted diplomacy, the carrier of the political pestilence, with cruelty and dishonourable deception.

Yet those who have trust in human nature cannot but feel certain that the West will come out triumphant and the fruit of the centuries of her endeavour will not be trampled under foot in the mad scrimmage for things which are not of the spirit of man. Feeling the perplexity of the present-day entanglements she is groping for a better system and a wiser diplomatic arrangement. But she will have to recognise, perhaps at the end of her series of death-lessons, that it is an intellectual Pharisaism to have faith only in building pyramids of systems, that she must realise truth in order to be saved, that continually gathering fuel to feed her desire will only lead to world-wide incendiarism. One day she will wake up to set a limit to her greed and turbulent pride and find in compensation that she has an ever-lasting life.

Europe is great. She has been dowered by her destiny with a location and climate and race combination producing a history rich with strength, beauty and tradition of freedom. Nature in her soil challenged man to put forth all his forces never overwhelming his mind into a passivity of fatalism. It imparted in the character of her children the energy and daring which never acknowledge limits to their claims and also at the same time an intellectual sanity, a restraint in imagination, a sense of proportion in their creative works, and sense of reality in all their aspirations. They 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 storehouse of powers and there they had their fill of temptation.

Europe is fully conscious of her greatness and that itself is the reason why she does not know where her greatness may fail her. There have been periods of history when great races of men forgot their own souls in the pride and enjoyment of their power and possessions. They were not even aware of this lapse because things and institutions assumed such magnificence that all their attention was drawn outside their true selves. Just as nature in her aspect of bewildering vastness may have the effect of humiliating man, so also his own accumulation may produce the self-abasement which is spiritual. apathy



by stimulating all his energy towards his wealth and not his welfare. Through this present war has come the warning to Europe that her things have been getting better of her truth and in order to be saved she must find her soul and her God and fulfil

her purpose by carrying her ideals into all continents of the earth and not sacrifice them to her greed of money and dominion

—*Manchester Guardian.*

## INTERNATIONAL LAW IN ANCIENT INDIA

BY S. V. VISWANATHA, M.A., L.T.

### III. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS IN PEACE.

**T**HE rights and obligations by which the Indian states in ancient India were guided in times of peace form probably the most difficult chapter in the history of Indian International Law. This subject has received very little consideration in the mass of ancient literature, whereas there are elaborate regulations which were to guide the Indian states in their dealings with one another in the conduct of war. Indeed, it may be held, that very little of regulation is necessary for the conduct of states with one another in normal times; still there are certain features of international conduct which are too important to be left out of consideration, *viz.*, as regards diplomacy and alliances, relation of a particular state to the property and subjects of other states, etc. The information on these various heads has to be culled and, in most cases, inferred from the incidents recorded in works of literature. We have more full and detailed information on one phase than the rest, *viz.*, diplomacy and alliances in peace and for war. Even the treatment of diplomacy as a branch of international conduct is in evidence only from the age of the epics. Here as well as in other chapters of international law the work of Kautilya forms a landmark. It is only from the *historic period* that we meet with regulations laid down regarding the principles to which in normal times a nation had to conform in its dealings with the persons and property of the other independent states in India.

The rights and obligations in *normal* times of a state which came within the fold of Indian International Law may be considered as they have been by western

writers on modern International Law under :—

- (a) Rights and obligations connected with *Independence.*
- (b) Rights and obligations connected with *Jurisdiction and Property.*
- (c) Rights and obligations connected with *Jurisdiction and Equality.*
- (d) Rights and obligations connected with *Diplomacy and Alliance.*

#### (a) INDEPENDENCE AND THE RIGHTS CONNECTED WITH IT.

Independence has been defined as the right of a state to manage all affairs internal or external without control from other states.<sup>1</sup> In India, the subjects of each state must have been conscious of their being subordinate to a higher sovereign authority and "the multitude obey the words of the sovereign" and "the world cannot command him."<sup>2</sup> The King was throughout the period of ancient Indian history the executive head of the state, for it is he 'who sustains realms'<sup>3</sup> and no one should disregard this executive head.<sup>4</sup> He had the right of issuing laws suited to the needs of the particular state subject, of course, to the all-pervading *dharma*. Though in the early Vedic literature 'there is no reference to the exercise of the legislative activity of the King,' in later times, we find, 'it is an essential part of his duties'<sup>5</sup> Royal proclamations are common from the time

<sup>1</sup> *International Law* : Lawrence, Part II, ch 1

<sup>2</sup> *Mahabharata* : *Santi Parva* : *Rajadharma-nisāna Parva*. Sec. 59, sl. 135.

<sup>3</sup> *Satapatha Brahmana* : IX, 4, 1, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *M. Bh. Santi Rajadharma*. Sec. 68, sl. 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Vedic Index of names and subjects* : Macdonell & Keith, vol. II, p. 214.

# THE MODERN REVIEW

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WHOLE  
No. 139

## AT THE CROSS ROADS

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

**A**T the present moment the World Drama is at the change of its acts, and we do not know towards what denouement it is moving. This uncertainty has given rise to a universal perturbation of mind, from which India is not free. But having remained for long outside the arena of living and creative history, we are now, in this crisis, at a loss to know what to do, or how to think. Our mind is enveloped in the dust-storm of exaggerated hopes and fears, and this blinds us to the limitation of facts. When the promise of self-government suddenly showed signs of fulfilment, we failed to see clearly what it meant to us and how to claim it with justice. The hope of it was spread before us like a feast before the famine-stricken, and we did not know whether there was more danger in gorging ourselves or in desisting from it. The cruelty of the situation lies in the abnormal condition to which we have come through long years of deprivation.

I am fully aware that we have not had the training of taking up the tremendous responsibility of governing our country. The present upheaval in the West clearly shows what terrible power has gradually been concentrated in certain parts of the world, and what a menace it is to those who never had the opportunity or foresight to prepare to meet it. I have not the slightest doubt in my mind as to what would follow if India were completely left to herself. If the birth-throes of the new Japan were to happen at the present time, we know it would be throttled at its birth even as New Persia was.

But our problem is, how are we to receive our lessons in political wisdom discreetly gradual? When an Englishman in England discusses this, he bases his discussion on his full faith in his own countrymen. Personally, I myself

have a great admiration for the English people. But it is not the best ideals of a people that govern a foreign country. The unnaturalness of the situation stands in the way, and everything tending to encourage the baser passions of man,—the contemptuous pride of power, the greed of acquisition,—comes uppermost. The responsibility of the weak is tremendous. They keep themselves too obscure to be able to claim human consideration, and the conscience of the strong grows inactive for want of proper stimulus. It is sure to cause moral degeneracy in men to exercise habitually authority upon an alien people and therefore not to encounter the checks that arise from the relationship of natural sympathy. This is evident to us, not only in the callous arrogance of the bureaucracy, but also in the policy of most of the Anglo-Indian newspapers, whose consistent chorus of clamour against the least expression of Indian aspiration, or the possibility of our gaining the slightest privilege now held by the rulers, becomes virulently cruel. It creates a vicious circle,—the helplessness of the governed sapping the moral manhood of the governors, and that again reacting upon the governed, prolonging and deepening their helplessness.

This is the reason why most of our countrymen find small consolation when they are told that the rights and the power of the government of their country will come to them gradually, as they are being made fit, from the hands which hold that power now. The gift is to be cautiously doled out to us by somebody who is critic, judge and donor combined,—and, naturally, not an over-enthusiastic donor. If we could be certain of a genuinely sympathetic guidance we would be content with very little at the commencement.

But not having that full confidence in the bureaucratic agency of our donors, our people at the very outset claim those powers which, consciously or unconsciously, may be set against them in making it impossible for them to prove their fitness. No one can pretend to say that the British Government in India has been or ever can be disinterested. It is a dependency upon which depends the prosperity of England, though time may some day prove that such prosperity has not been for the good of the ruling country. But so long as the present cult of the self-worship of the Nation prevails, the subject races can only expect the fragmentary crumbs of benefit, and not the bread of life, from the hands of the powerful. It will ever be easy for the latter to find plausible arguments to keep the real power in their own hands and to prolong that state in which such arguments cannot effectively be refuted. For the ideal of the Nation is not a moral one,—all its obligations being based upon selfishness with a capital S. It principally recognises expediency in its own conduct and power in that of its neighbours. And as expediency, in God's world, cannot wholly be dissociated from a moral foundation, it finds its place in the Nation's government of the alien people: but it is there on sufferance, it is only secondary, and therefore the Nation's relationship with the non-Europeans easily breaks out into rampage, which is, to speak mildly, not Christian.\*

The question remains, what are we to do? Charity, on the one side, self-congratulatory and superior: humble acceptance of small favours on the other side, laudatory and grateful,—this is not the proper solution. We must have power in order to claim justice which is real. It is a blessing that we have the opposition of the powerful to overcome, that a boon cannot easily be given to us, even when there is some amount of willingness on the part of the giver. We must gain it through victory and never otherwise.

But whenever we speak of power and victory, the words at once conjure up pictures in our minds of Dreadnoughts, long-range guns and massacre of men by millions; because these belong to the great festival days of the religion of Nation-worship,

when human sacrifices must be without limit. 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.

I cannot imagine that we shall ever be able to enter into competition about their own methods and objects with these Nation-worshippers, and the boon of their power which they get from their gods is not for us. We must confess that, in spite of considerable exceptions, the Hindu population of India does not consist of martial races. We do not have any natural pleasure or pride in indulging in orgies of massacre for the sake of its glory. 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 for killing men with anything like a zest. No doubt, war was held to be a necessity, but only a particular body of men was 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. There is something very harshly unnatural and mock-heroic in the shrill pitch to which we have tuned our voice while vociferating that we are fighters and we must be fighters. I do not mean to say that by training and proper incentives a large number of us cannot be made into soldiers, but at the same time it will serve no good purpose if we delude ourselves into thinking that this is a vocation of life in which we can excel. 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.

I have been accused of going to the absurdity of the extreme for insisting upon an idealism which cannot be practical. But I assert that the absurdity is not in the idealism itself, but in our own moral shortsightedness. What they mean by saying that we must be practical is that we must live, and in this one cannot but agree, for suicide can never be an ultimate object for any creature. But fortunately for man his existence is not merely physical or even political. Man has attained all that is best in him by strongly believing

\* See passages quoted from M. Anatole France in "Gleanings" in this number.

that there are things for which he can afford to die. To ask him to lay down his life for some political good, and at the same time to be miserly where the moral good of humanity is in view, is to ask him to pay the highest price yet refuse to accept the thing of the highest value.

There are things in which men *do* go to extremity in the teeth of practical common sense. We have heard of instances where men, set adrift on the sea without provisions, have looked upon each other as possible food in case of emergency. But those exceptions among them who could not think of such an enormity in any conceivable circumstance, have done more permanent service to man by refusing to eat human flesh and dying, than those who survived by following the contrary course. And 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.

We must bear in mind that European civilisation, which is based on militant Nationalism, is on its trial in this war. We do not know what is going to be the end of it; for this may not be the last of such wars in Europe. But one thing has been made quite evident, that the attainment of political power has not the moral ideal behind it which can give it the true permanence of finality. Greece still lives where she was truly great, not in her possessions, but in her mind, and Rome survived the wreck of Empires where she attained the immortal. For centuries the Jews have had no political existence, but they live in the best ideals of Europe leavening its intellectual and spiritual life. The political ambitions of fighting races leave no other legacy to humanity but the legacy of ruins; and the power which grows tremendous, following its narrow channel of self-seeking, is sure to burst its bonds and end in a deluge of destruction.

And therefore, let us not seek the power which is in killing men and plundering them, but the moral power to stand against it, the moral power to suffer,—not merely in passive apathy, but in the enthusiasm of active purpose. This is an age of transition. The Dawn of a great To-morrow is 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. It will be the greatest sign of weak-

ness in us,—the most abject defeat,—if we still cling to the atheistic faith that those nations who thrive upon their victims are great because they are powerful, and that sacrifices have to be brought to the altar of their false gods.

I know that an instinctive faith in the adequacy of moral ideals and the inner strength of the spirit for building up the world anew from its wreckage will be held as the sign of ignorance of world-politics; for it does not wholly tally with the experience of the past. But all the fearful danger of the present day has come from that experience hardening into a crust obstructing the growth of spiritual humanity,—the humanity which aspires after an infinite inner perfection. The present-day Civilised Man, disillusioned and doubting, suffers from the moral senility of prudent worldliness, that knows too much but does not believe. Faith is of the future; it may lead us into danger or apparent futility; but Truth waits there for us to be courted at the risk of death or failure.

The immense power of faith which man possesses has lately been concentrated on his material possibilities. He ignored all checks from his past experiences when he believed that he could fly in the air; and even repeated failures and deaths have not deterred him from attaining this seeming impossibility. But he has grown cynically sceptic concerning the infinite reality of the moral laws.

The time for this prudent man has come near its end. The world is waiting for the birth of the Child, who believes more than he knows, who is to be the crowned King of the future, who will come amply supplied with provisions for his daring adventures in the moral world, for his explorations in the region of man's inner being.

We have heard that Modern Russia is floundering in its bottomless abyss of idealism because she has missed the sure foothold of the stern logic of Real Politik. We know very little of the history of the present revolution in Russia, and with the scanty materials in our hands we cannot be certain if she, in her tribulations, is giving expression to man's indomitable soul against prosperity built upon moral nihilism. All that we can say is that the time to judge has not yet come,—especially as Real Politik is in such a sorry plight itself. No doubt if Modern

Russia *did* try to adjust herself to the orthodox tradition of Nation-worship, she would be in a more comfortable situation to-day, but this tremendousness of her struggle and hopelessness of her tangles do not, in themselves, prove that she has gone astray. It is not unlikely that, as a nation, she will fail; but if she fails with the flag of true ideals in her

hands, then her failure will fade, like the morning star, only to usher in the sunrise of the New Age. 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.

## AT HOME AND OUTSIDE

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

### CHAPTER VII.

#### SANDIP'S STORY.

(6)

**W**E are men, we are kings, we must have our tribute. Ever since we have come upon the Earth we have been plundering her; and the more we claimed, the more she submitted. From primæval days have we men been plucking fruits, cutting down trees, digging up the soil, killing beast, bird and fish. From the bottom of the sea, from underneath the ground, from the very jaws of death, it has all been grabbing and grabbing and grabbing,—no strong box in Nature's store room has been respected or left unrifled.

The one delight of this Earth is to fulfil the claims of those who are men. She has been made fertile and beautiful and complete through her endless sacrifices to them. But for this, she would be lost in the wilderness, not knowing herself, the doors of her heart shut, her diamonds and pearls never seeing the light.

Likewise, by sheer force of our claims, we men have opened up all the latent possibilities of women. In the process of surrendering themselves to us, they have ever gained their true greatness. Because they had to bring all the diamonds of their happiness and the pearls of their sorrow into our royal treasury, they have found their true wealth. So for men to accept is truly to give: for women to give is truly to gain.

The demand I have just made from Bimala, however, is indeed a large one!

At first I felt scruples; for is it not the habit of man's mind to be in purposeless conflict with itself? I thought I had imposed too hard a task. My first impulse was to call her back, and tell her I would rather not make her life wretched by dragging her into all these troubles. I forgot, for the moment, that it was the mission of man to be aggressive, to make woman's existence fruitful by stirring up disquiet in the depth of her passivity, to make the whole world blessed by churning up the immeasurable abyss of suffering! This is why man's hands are so strong, his grip so firm.

Bimala had been longing with all her heart that I, Sandip, should demand of her some great sacrifice,—should call her to her death. How else could she be happy? Had she not waited all these weary years only for an opportunity to weep out her heart,—so satiated was she with the monotony of her placid happiness? And therefore, at the very first sight of me, her heart's horizon darkened with the rain clouds of her impending days of anguish. If I pity her and save her from her sorrows, what then was the purpose of my being born a man?

The real reason of my qualms is that my demand happens to be for money. That savours of beggary, for money is man's, not woman's. That is why I had to make it a big figure. A thousand or two would have the air of petty theft. Fifty thousand has all the expanse of romantic brigandage.

Ah, but riches should really have been

*Mahadev Haribhai Desai, and published by the All India Home Rule League, Hornby Road, Fort, Bombay. Cloth bound, pp. 82. Price—As. 10. (1918).*

This is a translation of the speeches made by the late Mr. Gokhale on Dadabhai Naoroji, Ranade, Mehta, W. C. Bonerji, S. K. Ghosh, Sister Nivedita, Hume, Sir W. Wedderburn, and Lord Northbrooke and Home Charges, in different parts of India and England. It is embellished by fine portraits of some of these celebrities. The best part of the book is the short but most valuable introduction written by Mr. Gandhi, replete with his unbounded admiration for and devotion to Gokhale. It traces the history of their acquaintance which ripened into friendship, though Mr. Gandhi always maintained that he looked upon Gokhale as his master and guide, and sat at his feet as his pupil. The translation is very well done, and will surely supply a want long felt in the language.

*KAVITA KALAP (कविता कलाप) by Champshi Vithaldas Udeshi, of 102-4 Lower Chitpur Road, Calcutta, printed at the Bombay Fine Arts Printing Works, Amratala Lane, Calcutta. Cloth bound, pp. 108. Price—As. 14. (1918).*

Champshi Vithaldas Udeshi is long since known in this part of the country, though he resides in Calcutta, by the verse contributions he seems to have made a point of sending to several magazines, notably to the Jnan Sudha, the organ of the Ahmedabad Prarthana Samaj. Hardly a single issue of it is published without some verses or other, good, bad, or indifferent, from Mr. Champshi. It must be said that his work is not of a high order, and in the volume under review, several liberties taken with the mechanical part of his work—i. e., rules of prosody—would be found. The dominating note in his verses is Devotion to God (प्रभुभक्ति), and in a subsidiary way, Patriotism. What we like most in the collection, rather most unremarkable, are the few lines on p. 8 of his preface, where he sets out the function of poetry.

*INDU KALA, (इन्दु कला) translated by the late Nalinkant Narsinhrao Divatia, printed at the Union Printing Press, Ahmedabad. Cloth bound, pp. 168. Price—As. 10. (1918).*

Professor Bain's Stories are two well known to need any mention. They deserve to be translated into each and every Indian vernacular. The present translator (now deceased) had already tried his hand at writing Gujarati prose before he launched into the scheme of translating this story, which by its English title, "A Digit of the Moon," has become such a favorite of all English-knowing readers. Nalinkant certainly did well in thinking of introducing Gujarati readers to this fine story, and he has

succeeded in his task, as we find that his work does not suffer in comparison with that of others who too had translated certain other of Prof. Bain's Stories, and who were equipped with far better educational qualifications than he was, who died young and without University education.

*RAMAKRISHNA KATHAMRIT (रामकृष्ण कथावृत) PART I, by Narmadashankar Balashankar Pandya, published by the Society for the Encouragement of Cheap Literature, and printed at the Diamond Jubilee Printing Press, Ahmedabad. Cloth bound, pp. 587. Price—Re. 1-2-0 (1918).*

Shrijut Mahendranath Gupta, one of the most devoted followers of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, has written so much about the saint and his life as almost to amount to a literature in itself. This *Kathamrit* narrates various episodes and incidents in the saint's life, together with the sentiments and opinions expressed by him. They remind one of the precision, assiduity and loyalty of Boswell. The translation is so happily done that it preserves all the spirit of the original, with its unflagging interest. The very simplicity and directness of the narrative are so well brought out, both by the author and the translator, that even one who is moderately educated can follow the trend of it.

*ADWAITA SIDDHI NUN GURJAR BHASHAMAN VIVARANA (अद्वैत सिद्धि नुन गुरजर भाषामां विवरण) SECTION I : CHAPTERS I AND II : by Ratilal Chhotalal Desai, printed at the Indian Printing Works, Bhavnagar. Paper cover. Pp. 18. Unpriced (1918).*

Pandit Madhusudan Saraswati has written in Sanskrit this great work on Vedant, and till now it is considered, inspite of various subsequent works, unsurpassed, in the way in which it has treated of this difficult branch of Indian metaphysics. The very laudable effort of the present writer is to take the Gujarati reader over the whole ground covered by the Sanskrit work in several instalments, the first of which he has published for private circulation. The whole subject is taboo to the mass in the street. Unless a good deal of spade work has been done, or as the writer puts it, one has placed oneself under a Guru, it is not possible to understand or follow such recondite subjects, so that it is only those who have made some progress in the path of Vedantic studies who can appreciate the विवरण; to others it would appear to be Sanskrit words transposed into Gujarati. Added to that drawback, we find that in some places, the specification could have been made more clear. However as we said, those who belong to the inner circle of Vedantins would find that they have got a work which they can profitably read.

K. M. J.

## GLEANINGS

### "Modern Civilisation."

The discovery of the West Indies, the exploration of Africa, the navigation of the Pacific Ocean, opened up vast territories to European avidity. The white kingdoms joined issue over the extermination of the

red, yellow and black races, and for the space of four centuries gave themselves up madly to the pillaging of three great divisions of the world. This is what is styled modern civilisation.—*The White Stone*, by M. Anatole France, p. 152.

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## THE OBJECT AND SUBJECT OF A STORY

[The following paper was written by the Author of "At Home and Outside" in answer to the letter of a lady criticising the publication of his novel.]

**M**Y writings do not please all my readers, but whenever they take the trouble to make me realise that fact, they usually employ a form of language in which I am no master. For this reason I never answer them.

But the letter, which has just reached me, contains to my surprise complaints, but no insults. It comes from a lady, who is a stranger to me, and it is evident that she has felt pain, though she has avoided giving it. Her letter which puts forward some questions for me to answer is un-addressed. From that I could infer that these questions come from her, as a representative of the public, and she wants the answer to be sent to the address of the same public.

First of all, she has asked me, with some dismay, what was my object in writing this story?

The answer to this is, that the true object of writing a story is story-writing. In a word, I write a story because it is my wish. But this cannot be interpreted as an object, because when you say 'wish', you ignore all other aims. All the same, when people are expecting some object, it sounds like insolence, if you tell them that you have no object to speak of.

Yet, very often, an object is revealed to an onlooker which escapes the principal actor. The antelope does not know why its skin is marked; but those who write notes on the subject tell us, that the marks are there to make it less conspicuous to its pursuers. This guess may or may not be true, but it is quite evident that the object is not in the mind of the antelope.

But you may contend that the object which was in the mind of the Creator is manifested through the antelope; and

that in like manner, the age in which he is born expresses its object through the author. 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.

Let us take the example of a great writing, such as Shakespeare's "Othello." If the poet were asked, what was his object in writing the play, it would drive him out of his wits to give a reply. If, after a great deal of cogitation, he came out with an answer, I am sure it would be a wrong one. If I happen to be a member of the "Brahmin Association," I should be certain that the poet's object was to offer sound advice to the world about respect for colour distinctions. If I am opposed to the emancipation of women, I should say that the poet wanted to prove the mistake of allowing women to mix freely with men. If I have a strong prejudice against the poet's moral ideals and intelligence, then I shall have no doubt that he was trying to prove, that devotion to one's husband leads to terrible consequences, or else that this play was a cruel irony against the simplicity of noble minds and a vindication of the villainy of Iago. But the real thing is this,—he has written a play. No doubt, the poet's likes and dislikes lie inherent in his work, and also the genius of his age and country,—not in the shape of moral lessons, but of artistic creation. That is to say, these belong to

the very life and beauty of the play. When I see a Bengali before me, I see him one with his race and ancestry. I see no line of cleavage between his individuality and his race. So, also, in a poet's works; the individuality and the environment are vitally blended.

This is why I was saying that, 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.

Rich men use the tails of yaks for making whisks; but the poor yak knows that the tail belongs to its own vital organisations and to cut it off and make it into an 'object' is absolutely alien to its nature.

My next point is that, when there is a conflict between my own ideals and those of my readers, the reader has the advantage of being able to inflict punishment. When a child has a fall, it kicks at the floor on which it fell; and it is a well-known fact that the generality of readers follow the same rule. But that the punishment is always just and inevitable, I do not admit.

Grown-up people may not be afraid of ghosts. They may even think it harmful to foster the fear of ghosts. Yet, when a grown-up person reads a ghost story, he need not remember all this. For, in a story, the question of opinion does not matter; it is the enjoyment which is important.

When a man of real culture, who is a Christian, judges some image of a Hindu god made by a Hindu artist, it will be a real help to him to forget, for the time, that he is a missionary. But, if unfortunately he cannot do so, then he must not blame the Hindu artist; for the latter naturally paints his picture according to his own faith and tradition; nevertheless, because it is a picture, there is something in it which is above his faith and tradition and that is the living spirit. If that spirit is unacceptable to one who is not a Hindu, then it is either due to the insensibility of the critic, in which case he is to blame, or it is due to the deficiency in the inspiration itself, in which case the blame must rest with the artist.

Englishmen have a special kind of

kerosene lamp. Hindus had lamps of their own before these English lamps were introduced. The difference here lies in the lamps; but light is light, both to the Hindu and to the Englishman. There is every likelihood of a difference of opinion between my countrymen and myself as to what is good for my country. But if my story is a story, then, in spite of my opinions, it will float.

When, however, the opinions are of such a nature, that they cannot but deeply concern my readers, it would be foolish to expect from them that perfect detachment of mind which is necessary for true appreciation, and in that case, the lamp which bears the light becomes more important than the light itself.

Let us agree to this.

Then what is the advice which the author must follow? Should he change his opinion altogether with regard to the good and bad of his country? If his readers are incapable of doing so, simply for the sake of the story, what obligation has the author to play such moral somersaults, simply for the sake of his readers? But if it is maintained that the cause of one's country is greater than the perfection of a story, then this holds good for the reader as well as for the writer.

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. But if this duty, for some reason or other, becomes impossible, then let him think what is good for his country, and not merely that his country should think him good.

The second question which the writer puts is whether the story of this novel is imaginary or whether it has its basis in actual fact; and if the latter, then does that fact belong to some orthodox Hindu family,—or to some sect enamoured of its western culture?

My answer is,—the story portion, like that contained in most of my writings, is imaginary. But that is not a complete answer to my correspondent. There is an implication hidden in the question, that such events as I have described are impossible in orthodox Hinduism.

An exact coincidence of an imaginary story with some real fact is nowhere possible, either in an orthodox family, or in a family that has drifted away from orthodoxy. You can merely gossip about



things that have actually happened in some family; you cannot write a story about them.

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.

The question reduces itself to this, whether human nature in orthodox Hindu families always follows the direction of the orthodox Hindu code. Does it never, on any provocation whatever, break away from its tether and run wild?

It is a matter of common observation, from the Vedic period up to the present, that the fight is endless between the outbreak of nature on the one hand and man's heroic remedies on the other. If there exists a Hindu society, where such a fight is altogether impossible, its address is concealed from us. Then further, one must know that where there is no possibility of evil, there can be no place for good. If it is absolutely impossible for a member of an orthodox Hindu family to go wrong, then the members of that family are neither good nor bad, but puppets worked by the texts of ancient scriptures.

We have seen the ugliest calumnies against women written in old Sanskrit verses, such as are rare in those authors who are proud of their western culture. This proves that our modern Bengali writers have a genuine regard for women. At the same time, one must fully admit that these ancient calumnies may be wrong, when applied to the whole of womankind. But if they were untrue even with regard to individual women, how did they come to be written at all?

So our discussion narrows itself down to this point, whether the impulse for evil, which is a fact of human nature, can be a proper subject for literature. The answer to this question has been given by literature itself, through all ages and all countries, and therefore it will not matter if I remain silent about it.

Unfortunately, in Bengali, the criticism

of literature has resolved itself into a judgment of the proprieties which are necessary for orthodoxy. Our critics go to the extreme tenuity of debate as to the excellence of Bankim's heroines in their strict conformity with the canons of Hinduism. Whether the indignation which Bhramar showed against her husband took away from the transcendental preciousness of her Hindu womanhood; whether the inability of Surjamukhi to accept, as her friend, her co-wife, Kunda, has cheapened the value of her Hindu character; how far Sakuntala is the perfect Hindu woman and Dushyanta the perfect Hindu king,—these are the questions seriously discussed in the name of literary criticism. Such criticism can only be found in our country, among all the countries of the world.

There are a crowd of heroines in Shakespeare's dramas, but their excellence is not judged according to their peculiar English qualities; and even the most fanatical Christian theologians desist from awarding them marks, in order of merit, according to their degree of Christianity. But possibly I am spoiling my own cause by admitting this, because our modern Bengali takes a special pride in thinking that India has nothing in common with the rest of the world.

But India is not a creation of the Bengalis, and it had already existed before we began our literary criticism. The classification of heroines which we find in the rhetoric of ancient India, was not in accordance with the models put forward in the Laws of Manu. I am not for such classification at all, because literature is not science; 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. If one must indulge in this absurd mania for classification, even in literature, then at least it should follow the line of human nature as much as possible, instead of being arranged on the wooden shelves of what is Hindu, and what is not.

My last request to my correspondent is this, that she should take me seriously when I say that I love my country. If I did not, then it would have been quite easy for me to become popular with my countrymen.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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## HOPE

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.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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## THE DOWNFALL OF BIJAPUR, 1686

### CITY OF BIJAPUR DESCRIBED.

**A**S the traveller enters the Bijapur district from its northern boundary near Sholapur, he passes through a vast desolate plain, absolutely treeless, uncultivated and untenanted by man as far as the eye can see. For forty miles this stretch of country is a monotonous succession of low wavy uplands which grow a crop of millet during the three months of rain but are covered with dry dust-coloured grass or expose large patches of black trap-rock for the rest of the year. Hidden deep among the uplands are the beds of some streams, with a few trees and hamlets and patches of cultivation, forming a pleasing oasis in the surrounding desert. The landscape is extremely depressing by reason of its barrenness and dreary by reason of its monotony; even the villages look deserted on account of their ruined battlements and houses with flat mud roofs and blind walls all around.

Half way across this plain the southern horizon is seen to be pierced by a gigantic

faint white bubble,—the largest dome in the world, standing 300 feet above the ground, which dominates the entire landscape. It is the *Gol Gumbaz* or tomb of Muhammad Adil Shah. Coming nearer, as the railway climbs up from a dip in the ground, Bijapur suddenly bursts into view like a dream city, with its strange mingling of beauty and melancholy, its sadly impressive grandeur derived from palace and tomb. "Far on every side the country is covered with buildings of varied shapes in different stages of decay. A number of tombs, mosques, palaces and towers lie scattered in every direction. To the right (i.e., north-west of the city), the white domes of Pir Amin's tomb gleam in the sunlight, a brilliant contrast to the dark gray ruins in the foreground. In front lie the city's massive walls and bastions, with here and there a stately building towering over the fortifications, while on the left the colossal proportions of the *Gol Gumbaz* dwarf its surroundings. Still further to the left (i.e., north-east of the city) the plain outside is dotted with

In Calcutta at 10-15 years of age the incidence was 6 times as great, at 15 to 20 years, it was 4 times as great, and at 20-30 years, 3 times as great as amongst males.

Another effect of the insanitary, ill-lighted dwelling has been that the incidence of blindness among males is lower, but among females is far higher, than in the province of which Calcutta is the capital; and that the loss of sight is less frequent among men than among women, whereas the reverse is the case in Bengal. The figures are given below:—

NUMBER PER 1,000.

	Male.	Female.
Calcutta	63	92
Bengal	78	63
England	100	107.3
United States	100	80.1
Calcutta	100	146.
Bengal	100	80.

One explanation is that males suffering from cataract have recourse to the surgeon

more freely than women. But the effects of the conditions of ill-lighted dwellings must also be emphasised. The occupation of women lies mainly indoors, and the main proportion have to spend the greater part of day and night in small dark rooms filled with the acrid smoke of cow-dung fires, at which they cook their food. The cumulative effect of life under such conditions is apparent from the returns of blindness by age, for two-thirds of the blind women are over 50 years of age. The homesteads in the village are ventilated as the bamboo walls and roofs allow of a more thorough passage of air; the Bengali woman in the village consequently suffers less than her sister who lives in the slums and the insanitary dwellings of the metropolis.

RADHAKAMAL MUKHERJEE  
*Lecturer in Economics,*  
*Calcutta University.*

## VERNACULARS FOR THE M. A. DEGREE

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

[ The following letter was written by Sir Rabindranath Tagore to a correspondent, and is published with the latter's permission. Ed., *M. R.* ]

Dear—,

It is needless to say that it has given me great delight to learn of Sir Ashutosh's proposal for introducing Indian vernaculars in the university for the M. A. But at the same time I must frankly admit the misgivings I feel owing to my natural distrust of the spirit of teaching that dominates our university education. Vernacular literature, at least in Bengal, has flourished in spite of its being ignored by the higher branches of our educational organisation. It carried no prospect of reward for its votaries from the Government, nor, in its first stages, any acknowledgment even from our own people. This neglect has been a blessing in disguise, for thus our language and literature have had the opportunity of natural growth, unhampered by worldly temptation, or imposition of outside authority. Our literary language is still in a fluid stage,

it is continually trying to adapt itself to new accessions of thought and emotion and to the constant progress in our national life. Necessarily the changes in our life and ideas are more rapid than they are in the countries whose influences are contributing to build the modern epoch of our renaissance. And, therefore, our language, the principal instrument for shaping and storing our ideals, should be allowed to remain much more plastic than it need be in the future when standards have already been formed which can afford a surer basis for our progress.

But I have found that the direct influence which the Calcutta University wields over our language is not strengthening and vitalising, but pedantic and narrow. It tries to perpetuate the anachronism of preserving the Pundit-made Bengali swathed in grammar-wrappings borrowed from a dead language. It is every day becoming a more formidable obstacle in the way of our boys' acquiring that mastery of their mother tongue which is of

life and literature. The artificial language of a learned mediocrity, inert and formal, ponderous and didactic, devoid of the least breath of creative vitality, is forced upon our boys at the most receptive period of their life. I know this, because I have to connive, myself, at a kind of intellectual infanticide when my own students try to drown the natural spontaneity of their expression under some stagnant formalism. It is the old man of the sea keeping his fatal hold upon the youth of our country. And this makes me apprehensive lest the stamping of death's seal upon our living language should be performed on a magnified scale by our university as its final act of tyranny at the last hour of its direct authority.

In the modern European universities the medium of instruction being the vernacular, the students in receiving, recording and communicating their lessons perpetually come into intimate touch with it, making its acquaintance where it is not slavishly domineered over by one particular sect of academicians. The personalities of various authors, the individualities of their styles, the revelation of the living power of their language are constantly and closely brought to their minds—and therefore all that they need for their final degrees is a knowledge of the history and morphology of their mother-tongues. But our students have not the same opportunity, excepting in their private studies and according to their private tastes. And therefore their minds are more liable to come under the influence of some inflexible standard of language manufactured by pedagogues and not given birth to by the genius of artists. I assert once again that those who, from their position of author-

ity, have the power and the wish to help our language in the unfolding of its possibilities, must know that in its present stage freedom of movement is of more vital necessity than fixedness of forms.

Being an outsider I feel reluctant to make any suggestions, knowing that they may prove unpractical. But as that will not cause an additional injury to my reputation, I make bold to offer you at least one suggestion. The candidates for the M. A. degree in the vernaculars should not be compelled to attend classes, because in the first place, that would be an insuperable obstacle to a great number of students, including ladies who have entered the married state; secondly, the facility of studying Bengali under the most favorable conditions cannot be limited to one particular institution, and the research work which should comprehend different dialects and folk literature can best be carried out outside the class; and lastly, if such freedom be given to the students, the danger of imposing upon their minds the dead uniformity of some artificial standard will be obviated. For the same reason, the university should not make any attempt, by prescribing definite text-books, to impose or even authoritatively suggest any particular line of thought to the students, leaving each to take up the study of any prescribed subject,—grammar, philology, or whatever it may be, along the line best suited to his individual temperament, judging of the result according to the quantity of conscientious work done and the quality of the thought-processes employed

Yours Sincerely

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

## THE RISE IN THE PRICES OF COTTON PIECE GOODS

**T**HE four years of war have witnessed a phenomenal rise in the prices of most commodities. In few cases however has the rise been more marked than in the case of cotton and its manufactures, and in no case has the rise of prices caused so much hardship to the poorer classes of the population as the rise in the prices of

cotton goods. It is true that all the Provinces have not suffered equally from the rise; those parts of the country which are near to the great centres of the Indian cotton industry, and those where the handloom industry still flourishes, have suffered less than those parts which in normal times depend upon imported piece

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## THE MESSAGE OF THE FOREST

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

**T**HE past not only contains, in its depths, the unrealised future, but in part the realised future itself. Everybody admits the truth, that, in the grandfather, lies dormant the potential grandson, who is to carry the growth of his ancestry to a further stage, or in a new direction. But it is also true that the grandson is practically born in the grandfather. New additions are made and modifications effected, but some keynote, that is to dominate the racial life, has already been achieved in the life of the grandfather.

This is the reason, why 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. It is not enough for us to know, that our future is growing out clearer from the nebulous adumbration of a primitive age, we must also be assured that it has already shown itself distinct in its achievements in the past. Every great people holds its history so valuable because of this, because it contains not mere memories, but hope, and therefore the image of the future. Man has his instinctive faith in heredity. He feels, that, in heredity, that which is to come has been proved in that which has been,—in great heredity, the great conclusion is perpetually present in the process. And all history is man's credential of his future, signed and sealed by his past.

The physical organisation of the race as certain vital memories, which are persistent, which fashion its nose and eyes in a particular shape, regulate its stature and deal with the pigment of its skin. In the ideal of a race, there also run memories that remain constant, or, in case of alien mixture, come back repeatedly, even after the lapse of long intervals.

These are the compelling forces, that secretly and inevitably fashion the future of a people and give characteristic shape to its civilization. In our Shastras, it is held that our desires are the creative factors which originate and guide our future births. Likewise every race has its innate desires, of its former days, leading it through the repeated new births of its history. 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. In a word, it does not renew its birth, but is merged in the amorphous vagueness of a ghostly existence.

Therefore, it is of great importance for us to know, whether, as a people, we carry in our subconscious mind some primal aspiration, which alone can guarantee us a definite future of our own. If we still have that, strong and living, it will save us from extinction, or from the perpetual shame,—worse than death,—of the life of imitation, or parasitism. When we are threatened with loss of self-respect; when our mind is overwhelmed with the idea, that there can be only one type of civilization worth the name, and that a foreign one; when our one conscious desire is to strive with all our might, by begging, borrowing or stealing, towards some ideal of perfection which can only be related to us, as a mask to a face, or a wig to a head,—then our only hope lies in discovering some profound creative desire persistent in the heart of our race, in the subconscious mind of our people. For, in the long run, it is our sub-conscious nature which wins, and it is the deeper unseen current of the mind which secretly cuts its own path and reaches its own goal,—not the conscious waves on the

face, which clamorously make themselves obvious and vigorously storm at the present time.

I have said elsewhere, that the environment, in which we see the past of India, the forest, the memory of which permeates our classical literature and still aunts our minds. The legends related in our great epics cluster under the sublime shade of those ancient forests; and, in the forest, the most intense pathos of human life found its background in the greatest of our romantic dramas. The memory of these sacred forests is the one great inheritance which India ever cherishes through all her political vicissitudes and economic disturbances.

But we must know, that these forests were not merely topographical in their significance. We have seen that the history of the Northmen of Europe is resonant with the association of the sea. That sea, also, is not a mere physical fact, but represents certain ideals of life which still guide their history and inspire all their creations. In the sea, Nature presented herself to these men in her aspect of a danger, of a barrier, which seemed to be at constant war with the land and its children. The sea was the challenge of untamed Nature to the indomitable human soul. And man did not flinch; he fought and won; and the spirit of fight continued in him. He looked upon his place in the world as extorted from a hostile scheme of things, retained in the teeth of opposition. His cry is the cry of triumph of defiant Man against the rest of the universe.

This is about the people who lived by the sea, and rode on it as on a wild champing horse, clutching it by its mane and making it render service from shore to shore. But in the level tracts of *Aryavarta* men found no barrier between their lives and the Grand Life that permeates the Universe. The forest gave them shelter and shade, fruit and flower, fodder and fuel; it entered into a close living relation with their work and leisure and necessity, and in this way made it easy for them to know their own lives as associated with the larger life. They could not think of their surroundings as lifeless, separate, or inimical. So the view of the Truth, which these men found, was distinctly different from that of those of whom we have spoken above: and their relation-

ship with this world also took a different turn, as they came to realise that the gifts of light and air, of food and drink, did not come from either sky or tree or soil, but had their fount in the all-pervading consciousness and joy of universal life. They uttered quite simply and naturally *यदिदम् किञ्च सर्वम् प्राण एजति निवृत्तम्*—“All that is, vibrates with life, having emerged from the Supreme Life.”

When we know this world as alien to us then we know it as a thing mechanical, built by a divine mechanic or by a chance combination of blind forces. Then our relation to it becomes the relation of utility, and we set up our own machines or mechanical methods to deal with it and make as much profit as our knowledge of its mechanism allows us to do. Then we are apt to say that Knowledge is power. This view of things does not altogether play us false, for the machine has its place in this world. And therefore, not only this material universe, but also human beings can be used as machines and made to yield results. But the view of the world which India has taken is summed up in one compound word—

*सच्चिदानन्द*. Its meaning is that Reality, which is essentially one, has three aspects. The first is *sat*, the principle of Being, whose first information comes to us through our senses; it relates us to all things through the relationship of common existence. The second is *chit*, the principle of Knowing; it relates us to all things through the relationship of mind. The third is *ananda*—the principle of Enjoying—which unites us with all things through the relationship of love. Our consciousness of the world as that of the sum total of things that exist or that are governed by universal laws is imperfect according to the true Indian view,—but it is perfect when our consciousness realises all things as spiritually one with it and therefore capable of giving us joy. Our text of daily meditation contains the truth of the one and the same creative force appearing in an undivided stream of manifestation in our consciousness and in the world of which we are conscious. They are one, as the East and the West are one, which only our self divides into contradictions. 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 it with us in blissful union. The Man whom you only use is a machine; the Man whom you only study is a material for your knowledge. But your friend is neither a machine to you nor a psychological curiosity, (though consciously or unconsciously he does take his part as a machine of work and as an object of study for you), his ultimate value lies in his giving you opportunity to lose your self in his love. This is his aspect of *ananda*—his truest aspect for you, which comprehends his other two aspects in harmony. 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.

When Vikramāditya became king, Ujjain a great capital, and Kālidāsa its poet, the age of India's forest retreats had passed. Then we had taken our stand in the midst of the great concourse of humanity, and the Chinese and the Hun, the Scythian and the Persian, the Greek and the Roman, had crowded round us. But even in this age of pride and prosperity, the longing love and awe of reverence with which its poet sang about the hermitage, shows what was the dominant ideal that occupied the mind of India, what was the one current of memory that continually flowed back through her life.

In Kālidāsa's drama *Shakuntala*, also, the hermitage, which dominates the play, overshadowing even the king's palace, has the same idea running through,—the recognition of the kinship of man with conscious and unconscious creation alike.

A poet of a later age, while describing a hermitage in his *Kadambari*, tells of the posture of devoutness in the flowering lianas as they bow to the wind; of the sacrifice offered by the trees scattering their blossoms; of the grove sounding with the lessons chanted by the neophytes, and the *mantras* which the parrots, constantly hearing, had learned to pronounce; of the wild fowl enjoying *Vaishva-deva-bali-pinda*—the food offered to the divinity which is in all creatures,—

and of the ducks coming up from the lake, near by, for their portion of the grass-seed, spread in the cottage yards to dry; of the deer caressing with their tongues the young hermit boys. It is again the same story. The hermitage shines out, in all our ancient literature, as the place where the chasm between man and the rest of creation has been bridged.

In the drama of other countries, where the human characters violently drown 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 *Mrichhakatika*, *Shakuntala*, *Uttara-Rama-Chārīta* 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.

The frenzied fury of passion, described in two of Shakespere's youthful poems, stands isolated upon its own pedestal of unashamed conspicuity. It is wrenched away naked from the cover of the All; it has not the green earth or the blue sky around it; the many-coloured veil of nature has been impatiently swept away from its face, bringing to our view the fever which is in man's desires, and not the healing balm which encircles it in the universe.

*Ritusamhara* is clearly a work of Kalidasa's immaturity. The song of youthful love sung in it sounds from the fundamental bass notes of human passion,—it does not reach the sublime height of reticence that there is in *Shakuntala* or *Kumara-Sambhava*. But the tune of these voluptuous outbreaks, being set to the varied harmony of Nature's symphony, loses its delirious shrillness in the expanse of the open sky. The moon-beams of the summer evening, resonant with the murmuring flow of fountains, add to it their own melody; in its rhythm sways the *Kadamba* grove, glistening in the first cool rain of the season; and the south breezes waft into its heart the wistfulness of the scent of the mango flowers.

In the third canto of *Kumara Sambhava*, while describing the boisterous emergence of youth at the sudden coming of *Madara*

(Eros), Kalidasa has been careful to avoid giving this outburst of passion an abnormal supremacy within the narrow field of view of exclusive humanity. His genius basked in the sunshine of the human spirit, where it pervades the spring flower and the harvest of the autumn; and that genius never played at focussing it into a point of ignition upon the naked fluttering heart. 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.

Not only its third canto, but the whole of the *Kumara Sambhava* poem is painted upon a limitless canvas. Its inner idea is deep and of all time. It answers the one question that humanity asks through all its endeavours:—How is the birth of the hero to be brought about,—the brave one who can defy and vanquish the evil demon, when he sweeps upon the scene, laying waste heaven's own kingdom? This is the greatest of all problems for each individual, and it forces itself in ever-new, ever-recurring forms upon each race and nation, and this is the one problem which persists in most of our poet's works,—in his *Shakuntala*, *Raghuvamsha* and *Kumara Sambhava*.

It becomes evident that such a problem had become acute in Kalidasa's time, when the old simplicity of Hindu life had broken up. The Hindu kings, forgetful of their kingly duties, had become self-seeking epicureans, and India was being repeatedly devastated by the Shakas.

But what answer does the poem give to the question it raises?—Not that more armaments were needed, or that a league of powers should be formed, or that some mechanical adjustment of political balance had to be effected. Its message is that the cause of weakness lies in the inner life of the soul. It is in some break of harmony with the Good, some dissociation from the True. 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 mankind from all defeat and disaster. When the ascetic Shiva—the Good—was lost in the passive immensity of his soli-

tude, heaven was in peril. And when beautiful Sati—the Real—was all by herself, in her unwedded self-seclusion, the demons were triumphant. Only from the union of the exuberant freedom of the Real with the tranquil restraint of the Good comes the fullest strength.

Viewed from the outside, India, in the time of Kalidasa, appeared to have reached the zenith of civilization, excelling as she did in luxury, literature and the arts. Kalidasa himself was not free from the prevailing tone, and the outer embellishment of his poetry is as daintily luxurious as must have been the decorative art of the period. This, however, is only one aspect in which his age influenced the poet.

But what sudden passion for sacrifice, for the austere discipline of the life of aspiration, troubled our Goddess of Poesy amidst the luxury of her golden bower? It was the eternal message of the forest, that can never be silenced, and like a refrain, simple in its purity, comes up again and again, through all noisy distractions of discord,—the message to free our consciousness from the accumulations of desire, to win our immortality, by breaking through the sheath of self, the self which belongs to death. From his seat beside all the glories of Vikramaditya's throne, the poet's heart yearned for the purity of India's past age of spiritual striving. And it was this yearning which took shape and impelled him to go back to the annals of the ancient kings of Raghu's line.

"I fain would sing," says Kalidasa, in his prologue, "of those whose purity went back to the day of their birth, whose striving went forward till attainment, whose empire knew no bounds but the seas, whose adventurous journeys reached up to the high heaven, who offered oblations to the sacred fire in accordance with injunctions, made gifts to the needy in accordance with their wants, awarded punishments in accordance with the crime, and regulated every wakeful activity in accordance with the hour,—who accumulated treasure for the sake of redistribution, tempered their utterance for the sake of truth, desired victories for the sake of glory, entered into wedlock for the sake of progeny,—who practised learning in their childhood, attended to wealth in their youth, took to the hermitage in their old age, cast away their bodies



when they had attained the supreme union. Of these would I sing, though I lack all wealth of language; for their great merits, entering my ears, have disturbed my heart."

But it was not in a pæan of praise that his poem ended. What had troubled his heart becomes clear, when we come to the end of his *Raghuvamsha*. What was the life story of the founder of this line of Kings? Where did it begin?

The heroic life of Raghū had its prologue in a hermitage, showing that its origin was in a life of purity and self-restraint, led there by Raghū's royal parents. The poem is not ushered in with the pomp and circumstance befitting the history of a great kingly line. King Dilip, with his consort, Queen Sudakshina, has entered upon the life of the forest. The great monarch is busy tending the cattle of the hermitage. Thus opens the *Raghuvamsha* amidst scenes of simplicity and self-denial. But it ends in the palace of magnificence, in the wealth and luxury which divert the current of energy from the truth of life to the heaps of things. There is brilliance in this ending, as there is in the conflagration which destroys and devastates. Peaceful as the dawn, radiant as the tawny-haired hermit boy, is the calm strength of the restrained language in which the poet tells us of the kingly glory crowned with the halo of purity,—beginning his poem, as the day begins, in the serene solemnity of its sunrise. And lavish are the colours in which he describes the end, as of the evening, eloquent for a time with its sumptuous splendour of sunset, but overtaken at last by the devouring darkness which sweeps away all its brilliance into the fathomless abyss of night.

In this beginning and this ending of his poem, lies hidden the message of the forest which found its voice in the poet's words. With a suppressed sigh he is saying: 'Look on that which was and that which is! In the days when the future glowed gloriously ahead, self-discipline was esteemed as the highest path, self-renunciation the greatest treasure, but when downfall had become imminent, the hungry fires of desire aflame at a hundred different points, dazzled the eyes of all beholders.'

When the lust of self-aggrandisement is unbridled, the harmony between enjoyment and renunciation is destroyed. By concentrating our pride or desire upon a

limited field, the field of the animal life, we seek to exaggerate a portion at the expense of the whole, the wholeness which is in man's life of the spirit. From this results evil. That is why renunciation becomes necessary,—not to lead to destitution, but to restoration, to win back the All.

Kalidasa in almost 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. And this is characteristically represented by the unbounded impetuosity of kingly splendour on one side and the serene strength of regulated desires on the other. I have already given above an illustration of this from the *Raghuvamsha*. Even in the minor drama of *Malavikagnimitra* we find the same thing in a different manner. It must never be thought that, in this play, the poet's deliberate object was to pander to his royal patron by inviting him to a literary orgy of lasciviousness. The very *Nandi* contradicts this and shows the object towards which this play is directed. The poet begins the drama with the prayer, "सन्मार्गाद्योक्तवन् व्यपनयतु स नक्षत्रसौहृदिक्रिमीषः": "Let God, to illumine for us the path of truth, sweep away our passions, bred of darkness." The God, to whom this prayer is uttered, says the poet, is one in whose nature Eternal Woman is ever commingled, in an ascetic purity of love,—who stands in the sacred simplicity of barrenness in the midst of his infinite wealth. The unified being of Hara and Parvati is the perfect symbolism of the eternal in the wedded love of man and woman. The poet opens his drama with the invocation of this spirit of the Divine Union. It is quite evident that this invocation carries the message in it with which he greeted his kingly audience. The whole drama is to show in vivid colour the utter ugliness of the treacherous falsehoods and cruelties inherent in all passions that are unchecked. In this play the conflict of ideals is between the king and the queen,—between Agnimitra and Dharini, between the insolent offence against all that is good and true, and the unlimited peace of forgiveness that dwells deep in the self-sacrifice of love. The great significance of this contrast lies hidden in the very names of the hero and

the heroine of the drama. Though the name '*Agnimitra*' is historical, yet it symbolises in the poet's mind the desolating destructiveness of uncontrolled desire,—just as did the name of *Agnivarna* in *Raghuvamsha*. *Agnimitra*,—'the friend of the fire',—the reckless person, who in his love-making is playing with fire, not knowing that, all the time, it is scorching him black, till the seed of immortality perishes at the core of his being. And what a great name is *Dharini*, signifying the fortitude and forbearance that comes of the majesty of soul! What association it carries of the infinite dignity of love purified by the sacrificial fire of self-abnegation rising far above all insult of base betrayal! Can anybody doubt what effect the performance of this drama produced upon the royal looker-on, what searching of heart, what humility, what reverence for the love that claims our best worship by the offer of its patient worship of service!

In *Shakuntala*, this conflict of ideals has been shown all through the drama, by the contrast of the pompous heartlessness of the king's court and the natural purity of the hermitage, the contrast of the arrogance displaying itself upon the hollow eminence of convention, and the simplicity standing upon the altitude of truth. The message of the poet is uttered by the two hermit boys, when they enter the king's palace, just before the impending catastrophe of *Shakuntala*'s life, the naked cruelty of which is skilfully hidden by the episode of the curse, though it was unbarred a moment before through the shameless self-confession of fickleness by the king, when he listened to the lamentation of *Hamsapadika*, one of his numerous victims. The message is:—

अभ्यक्तमिव ज्ञातः शुचिरशुचिमिव प्रवृत्त इव सुप्तम्  
वृद्धमिव खैरगतिर्जनमिह सुखसङ्गिनम् अवैमि ।

"We look upon these devotees of pleasure as he, who has bathed, looks upon the unclean, as the pure in heart upon the polluted, as the wide awake soul looks upon the slothful slumberer, and as the one, who is free to move, looks upon the shackled."

And what is the inner meaning of the curse that follows the hermit girl in this drama, till she is purified by her penance? I am sure, according to the poet, it is the

same curse from which his country at that time suffered. There were two guests who knocked at the gate of *Shakuntala* of whom one was accepted and the other refused. The king, as an embodiment of passion and worldliness, came to her and she readily yielded to his allurements. But when after that the duty of the higher life, the spirit of the forest ideal, stood before her in the guise of an ascetic, she in her absent-mindedness did not notice him. And what was the result? She lost her world of desire for which she had forsaken her truth. And in order to regain that world as her own by right she had to follow through suffering the path of self-conquest. The poet was aware of the two guests who sought entrance into the heart of his country,—the devotee of pleasure and power who comes secretly without giving his real name and insinuates himself into trustful acceptance, and the seeker of spiritual perfection who announces himself in a master's voice, in clear notes, अयमहं जीः—"I am here!" And to his dismay he found his country baring her heart to the former to be betrayed by him. It is evident that kings of that period were deeply drawn into the eddy of self-indulgence and were fighting each other for power, the love of which leads men into the insanity of suicide. The fatal curse of falsehood is always generated when power and success are pursued for their own sake, when our baser passions shamelessly refuse all claims of justice and self-control. The poet had one lingering ray of hope in his heart. He could not but believe that his country had not lost her reverence for her *tapaswi*, the guest who brings to her door the message of everlasting life: only her mind was distracted by some temporary outbreak of temptation. He was certain that she would wake up in sanctifying sorrow, and give birth to her *Bharata*, the hero who would bring to her life unity and strength of truth. There was a note of assurance in the poet's voice when through his great poems *Kumara-Sambhava* and *Shakuntala* he called her to come back once again to her purity of life and realisation of soul, the call which is true for other times and other countries also. For the curse still remains to be worked off by humanity for the inhospitable insult offered to the Eternal in Man.

The drama of Shakuntala opens with a hunting scene, where the king is in pursuit of an antelope. This indulgence in sport appears like a menace symbolising the spirit of the king's life clashing against the spirit of the forest-retreat, where all creatures find their protection of love. And the pleading of the forest-dwellers to the king, to spare the life of the deer, helplessly innocent and beautiful, is the pleading that rises from the heart of the whole drama.

न खलु, न खलु, वाचः सन्निपाद्योऽयमस्मिन् ।

सुदुर्नि सगणरौरे प्रव्य-रागाविवापिः ॥

'Never, oh never is the arrow meet for piercing the tender body of a deer, as the re is not for burning flowers.'

The living beauty, whose representative in this drama is Shakuntala, is not aggressively strong like the callous destructiveness of lust, but, through its frailness, it is ably great. And it is the poet's leading which still rings in our ears against the ugly greed of commercialism in the modern age, against its mailed fist of orth-hunger, against the lust of the strong, which is grossly intent upon killing the beautiful and piercing the heart of the good to the quick. Once again sounds the warning of the forest, at the conclusion of the first act, when the king is engaged in a cruel dalliance with the hermit girl:—"O *tapaswis*, hasten to rescue the living spirit of the sacred forest, for Dushyanta, the lord of earth, whose pleasure is in hunting, come." It is the warning of India's past, and that warning still continues against the reckless carnival of the present, celebrated by the lords of Earth, whose pleasure is in hunting to death with their ruthless machines all that is beautiful in the delicacy of life.

In *Kumara-Sambhava*, the friend and brother of Indra, the king of the Gods, is *dana*, the god of desire. And he, in his blindness, imagines that he can unite Shiva

Parvati by the delusion created by the madness of the senses. It is the same when we try to reach our perfection through wealth and power, through the vanity of boisterous self-seeking. That is not to be. At last Parvati's love was united with fulfilment through her renunciation of self-sacrifice. The moral of *Kumara-Sambhava* is the same as the teaching of the Upanishat : व्यक्ते न भुञ्जीथा,

"enjoy through renunciation". वा एवः कल्पसिद्धिर्नमः "Enjoyment must not be through greed."

One thing which we must remember is, that the life in ancient India was not all forest life,—nor is the heart the only organ we possess in our vital organism. But the heart lies in the centre of our body; it purifies our blood and sends our life-current through the ramifications of all the channels in our body to the extremities of our limbs. Our *tapovana* was just such a vital centre of our social body. In it throbbed the rhythm of our life's ebb and flow: it gave truth to our thoughts, right impulse to our feelings, and guiding force to our work. We distinctly see, from the works of our poet, that the teaching of the forest was not towards the inertia of passivity, but towards true heroism and victory. It was not towards suppression of action, but its purification, towards giving it freedom of life by removing obstructions.

We know of other great systems in which there is a special insistence upon sacrifice and resignation. Just as heat is an important factor in the process of creation, so is pain an essential reagent in the formation of man's life. It melts the intractable hardness of his spirit, and wears away the unyielding crust which confines his heart. But the Upanishat enjoins renunciation, not by way of acceptance of pain, but for the purpose of enjoyment of truth. Such renunciation means an expansion into the Universal, a union with the Supreme. It is the renunciation of the cocoon for the freedom of the living wings. So that the ideal hermitage of ancient India was not a theatre where the spirit should wrestle with the flesh, or where the monastic order should try conclusions with the social order,—it was to establish a harmony between all our energies and the eternal reality. That is why the relations of Indian humanity with beast and bird and tree had attained an intimacy which may seem strange to people of other lands. Our poets have told us that the *tapovana* is *shantarasaspadam*,—that the emotional quality peculiar to the forest-retreat is Peace, 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.

The two hermitages, which we have in the drama of Shakuntala, serve to give a magnitude to her joy and sorrow. One of these hermitages was on earth, the other on the border of the abode of immortals. In the first, we see the daughter of the hermitage watching in delight the union of the sweet flowering creeper with the mango tree round which it has twined; or busy rearing motherless young deer with handfuls of grass-seed, and picking the spear-grass out from their tender mouths, soothing the pricks with healing oil. This hermitage serves to make simple, natural and beautiful the love of the king for the hermit girl. The other hermitage was on the great cloud-like massive Hemakuta peak, standing like Shiva, with his locks of forest-growths and tangled creepers, lost in meditation, its gaze fixed on the sun. In this, Marichi, the revered preceptor of both Gods and Titans, together with his wife, was engaged in the pursuit of self-realisation. There, when the young hermit boys would playfully snatch from the lioness her suckling cub, its distress would greatly exercise the tãpasa-Mother. The second hermitage, in turn, serves to mellow with a great peace and purity the sorrow and insult which had driven Shakuntala there.

It has to be realised, that the former is of the earth, the region of the mortals, the latter of heaven, the region of the immortals. In other words, the one represents 'what is,' the other 'what should be.' The unceasing movement of 'what is' is towards 'what should be.' It finds its true freedom in that movement. The first is Sati—the Real—the last Shiva, the Good. In the life of Shakuntala, likewise, the 'what is' had to find its fulfilment in the 'what should be.' What was of the earth had to come, through the path of sorrow, to the border of heaven.

Those who have followed the evolution of the principal idea in this drama,—its seed-life in the soil of passion, its deliverance of harvest in the sunlight of the purity of self-abnegation,—will understand the great poet Goethe's criticism of

Shakuntala, so tersely expressed in a single verse:—

"Wouldst thou the flower of the spring and fruit of the mature year,  
Wouldst thou what charms and enrap-  
tures and what feeds and nourishes,  
Wouldst thou heaven and earth in one  
name entwined,  
I name thee, O Sakuntala, and all is said."

For in Shakuntala the reconciliation is given, through the penance of pain and sacrifice, to the pair of contraries, that which attracts and that which gives freedom, the limitation of self and the dedication of self to the Eternal. Goethe's own drama Faust, in its first and in its second part, tries to show the same separation and then reconciliation between the Real and the Good, between Sati and Shiva.

However, my point is this, that the scene of such reconciliation is depicted, both in Shakuntala and in Kumara-Sambhava, upon the background of the *tapovana*, showing whence the spring of the ideal harmony welled forth, the harmony between Nature and man, between the life in the individual and life in the All.

In the Ramayana, Rama and his companions, in their banishment, had to traverse forest after forest; they had to live in leaf-thatched huts, to sleep on the bare ground. But as their hearts felt their kinship with woodland, hill and stream, they were not in exile amidst these. Poets, brought up in an atmosphere of different ideals, would have taken this opportunity of depicting in dismal colours the hardship of the forest-life in order to bring out the martyrdom of Ramachandra in the strong emphasis of contrast. But, in the Ramayana, we are led to realise the greatness of the hero, not in an inimical struggle with nature, but in sympathy with it.

Sita, the daughter-in-law of a great kingly house, goes along the forest paths.

एकैकं पादपं गुह्यं बतं वा पुष्पशाबिनीम्

अदृष्टरूपां पश्यन्ती रामं पप्रच्छ सावला ।

रमणीयान् बहुविधान् पादपान् कुसुमोत्करान्

सीतावचनसंख्यं आनयायास बल्लभः ।

विचित्रवाद्युक्ताजलां संसारसनादितान्

रेमे जनकराजस्य सुतां प्रेक्ष्य तदा नदीम् ॥

She asks Rama about the flowering trees and shrubs and creepers which she has not seen before. At her request, Lakshmana gathers and brings her plants of all kinds exuberant with flowers, and it delights her heart to see the forest rivers, variegated with their streams and sandy bank, resounding with the calls of heron and duck.

सुरम्बमासाद्य तु चित्रकूटम्,  
नदीषु तां मालावतीं सुतोषीम्,  
ननन्द हृष्टो सगपच्चिजुष्टाम्,  
जहौ च दुःखं प्ररविप्रवासत् ॥

When Rama first took his abode in the Chitrakuta peak, that delightful *Chitrakuta*, by the *Malyavati* river, with its easy slopes for landing, he forgot all the pain of leaving his home in the capital at the sight of these woodlands, alive with beast and bird.

दोषैकाबोधितस्त्रक्षिन् गिरौ गिरिवनप्रियः—having lived on that hill for long, Rama, who was गिरिवनप्रिय, lover of the mountain and the forest, said one day to Sita :

न राजानंशनं भद्रे न रुद्धिर्विनाभवः  
मनो मे वायते दृष्ट्वा रमणीयविमं गिरिम् ।

“When I look upon the beauties of this hill, the loss of my kingdom troubles me no longer, nor does the separation from my friends cause me any pang.”

When they went over to the Dandaka forest, they saw there a hermitage with a halo round it caused by the sacrificial fires blazing like the sun itself. This ashram was अरण्यान् सर्वभूतानाम् the refuge of all creatures ; it was enfolded by *Brahmi Lakshmi*, the Spirit of the Infinite.

Thus passed Ramachandra's exile, now in woodland, now in hermitage scenes. The love which Rama and Sita bore each other united them, not only to each other, but to the Universe of life. That is why, when Sita was taken away, the loss seemed to be very great to the forest itself. The extinction of a star is doubtless a mighty event in the world of stars ; and we would know, if we had pure vision, that any infliction of injury in the heart of a true lover gives rise to suffering which belongs to all the world. 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.

Strangely enough, in Shakespeare's dramas, like those of Kalidasa, we find a secret vein of complaint against the artificial life of the king's court, the life of ungrateful treachery and falsehood. And almost everywhere, in his dramas, forest scenes have been introduced in connection with some working of the life of unscrupulous ambition. It is perfectly obvious in “Timon of Athens”—but there Nature offers no message or balm to the injured soul of man. In “Cymbeline” the mountainous forest and the cave appear in their aspect of obstruction to life's opportunities—which only seem tolerable in comparison with the vicissitudes of fortune in the artificial court life, as expressed by Belarius :

“Did you but know the city's usuries,  
And felt them knowingly : the art o'  
the court,  
As hard to leave as keep ; whose top to  
climb

Is certain falling, or so slippery that  
The fear's as bad as falling :”

In “As You Like It” the Forest of Arden is didactic in its lessons,—it does not bring peace, but it preaches when it says :

“Hath not old custom made this life  
more sweet  
Than that of painted pomp ? Are not  
these woods  
More free from peril than the envious  
court ?”

In the “Tempest” in Prospero's treatment of Ariel and Caliban we realise man's struggle with nature and his longing to sever connection with her. In “Macbeth,” as a prelude to a bloody crime of treachery and treason, we are introduced to a scene of barren heath where the three witches appear as the personification of Nature's malignant forces ; and in “King Lear,” it is the fury of a father's love turned into curses by the ingratitude born of the unnatural life of the court, that finds its symbol in the storm in the heath. The extreme tragic intensity of “Hamlet” and “Othello” is unrelieved by any touch of Nature's eternity. Excepting in a passing glimpse of a moonlight night in the love scene in the “Merchant of Venice” Nature has not been allowed in other dramas of this series, including “Romeo and Juliet”

and "Antony and Cleopatra," to contribute her own music to the music of man's love. In "The Winter's Tale" the suspicious cruelty of a king's love stands bare in its relentlessness, and Nature cowers before it offering no consolation. I hope it is needless for me to say that these observations of mine are not for criticising Shakespeare's great power as a dramatic poet, but to show in his works 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. When literature takes for its object the exhibition of the explosiveness of a human passion, then necessarily that passion is made detached from its great context of the universe and is shown in its extreme violence generated by the instability of equilibrium. And this is what we find in Elizabethan dramas,—the clash of passions in their fury of self-assertion. We observe a sudden and a completely different attitude of mind in the later English poets, like Wordsworth and Shelley, which can only be attributed to the great mental change in Europe, at that particular period, through the influence of the newly-discovered philosophy of India which stirred the soul of Germany and strongly roused the attention of other Western countries.

In Milton's "Paradise Lost," the very subject,—Man dwelling in the garden of Paradise,—seems to afford a special opportunity for bringing out the true greatness of man's relationship with Nature. But though the poet has described to us the beauties of the garden, though he has shown us the animals living there in amity and peace among themselves, there is no reality of kinship between them and man. They were created for man's enjoyment; man was their lord and master. We find no trace of the love of the first man and woman surpassing themselves and overflowing the rest of creation, such as we find in the love scenes in *Kumara-Sambhava* and *Shakuntala* and in our Vaishnava lyrics, where love finds its symbols in the beauty of all natural objects. But in the seclusion of the bower, where the first man and woman rested in the garden of paradise,

"Bird, beast, insect or worm

Durst enter none, such was their awe of man."

At the bottom of this gulf between man and Nature there is the lack of the message,—ईशावास्यमिदम् सर्वम् 'know all that is, as enveloped by God'. According to this epic of the West, God remains aloof to receive glorification from his creatures. The same idea persists in the case of man's relation to the rest of creation.

Not that India denied the superiority of man, but the test of that superiority lies, according to her, in the comprehensiveness of sympathy,—not in the aloofness of absolute distinction.

The love of Rama and Sita, in the *Uttara Rama Charita* has permeated the surrounding earth, water and sky with its exuberance. When Rama, for the second time, finds himself on the banks of the Godavari, he exclaims. यत्र द्रुमा अपि सृगा अपि वायवो मे "this is the place even whose deer and whose trees are my friends". When after Sita's exile he comes across some former haunt of theirs, he laments that his heart, even though turned to stone, melts when he sees the trees and the deer and the birds which Sita's own hands used to nourish with water, seed and grass.

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 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.

India holds sacred, and counts as place of pilgrimage, all spots which display a special beauty or splendour of nature. These had no original attraction, on account of any special fitness to be cultivated, or lived upon. Here, man is free, not to look upon nature as a source of supply of his necessities but to realise his soul beyond himself. The Himalayas of India are sacred and the Vindhya Hills. Her majestic rivers are sacred. Lake Manasa and the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna are sacred. India has saturated with her love and worship the great nature with which her children are sur



rounded, whose light fills their eyes with gladness, whose water cleanses them, whose food gives them life, and from whose majestic mystery come forth constant messages of the infinite in music, scent, and colour, bringing awakening to their souls. India has gained the world through worship,—through communion of soul. And this is her heritage from her forest sanctuary.

Learning does not depend on the school alone. Much more does it depend upon the receptive mind of the pupil. There are scholars who win diplomas, but fail to learn. So do many of us frequent places of pilgrimage, but come away from the door of the invisible shrine, where dwells the Eternal spirit of the place. They imagine that the mere journey to a place held sacred is sanctifying, that some peculiar virtues reside in particular soils and waters. Their minds do not shrink at the unspeakable pollution of the water and the air of those places, the pollution to which they themselves contribute, and the moral filth which they allow to accumulate there. The salutation of worship to the all-pervading divinity in the fire, water and plants, in all creation, has been bequeathed to us by our ancestors in the following immortal verse :

यो देवोऽग्नौ योऽपसु यो विश्वम् भुवनमाविवेश

य ऋषिषु यो वनस्पतिषु तस्मै देवाय नमो नमः ।

But we seem to have forgotten that all worship has also its duty of service, and in order truly to realise and approach the divine presence in the water and the air we have reverently to keep them clean and pure and healthful. The more our country has lost its powers of soul, the more elaborate have become its outward practices. The inner illumination of consciousness which is not only the object, but also the means of all true worship has, in our case, given place to the grossness of the senses and deadness of mere repetition of habits. But, even in these days of our spiritual sluggishness, I am unwilling to accept these mechanical practices as a permanent feature of India. It is absurd to believe as well-founded the idea, that a bath in a particular stream procures for the bather and millions of his ancestors a more favourable circumstance and desirable accommodation in the after life. Nor am I able to respect such a belief as something admirable.

But my reverence goes out to the man, who when taking an immersion, can receive the water upon his body, and into his mind as well, in a devout spirit ;—for him the grimy touch of habit has not been able to tarnish the ever-lasting mystery which is in fire and earth, water and food ; he has overcome, by the sensitiveness of his soul, the gross materialism, —the spirit of contempt, of the average man, which impels the latter to look upon water as mere liquid matter.

So long as man was unable to realise an all-pervading law in the material world, his knowledge remained petty and unfruitful. But the modern man feels himself united to the universe by physical laws governing all. This is Science's great achievement.

The quest which India set to herself was to realise the same unity in the realm of the spirit, that is to say, in its completeness. Such union enables us to see Him in all who is above all else. And 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.

Let no one think that I desire to extol this achievement, as the one and the only consummation. I would rather insist on the inexhaustible variety of the human race, which does not grow straight up, like a palmyra tree, on a single stem, but like a banian tree spreads itself in ever-new trunks and branches. Man's history is organic, and deep-seated life-forces work towards its growth. It is hopeless to cater to some clamorous demand of the moment, by endeavouring to fashion the history of one people on the model of another,—however flourishing the latter may be. A small foot may be the sign of aristocratic descent, but the Chinese woman's artificial attempt has only resulted in cramped feet. 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. This was recognised and followed in India's forests of old ; its truth was

declared in the Upanishat and expounded in the Gita ; the Lord Buddha renounced the world that he might make this truth a household word for all mankind ; Kabir, Nanak and other great spirits of India continued to proclaim its message. India's grand achievement, which is still stored deep within her heart, is waiting, to unite within itself Hindu, Moslem, Buddhist, and Christian, not by force, not by the apathy of resignation, but in the harmony of active co-operation.

An almost impossible task has been set to India by her Providence, a task given to no other great countries in the world. Among her children and her guests differences in race and language, religion and social ideals are as numerous as great, and she has to achieve the difficult unity which has to be true in spite of the separateness that is real. The best and the greatest of her sons have called us in immortal words to realise the unity of souls in all human beings and thus fulfil

the highest mission of our history ; but we have merely played with their words, and we have rigidly kept apart man from man, and class from class, setting up permanent barriers of indignity between them. We remained unconscious of the suicidal consequence of such divisions, so long as we lay stationary in the torpor of centuries, but when the alien world suddenly broke upon our sleep and dragged us on in its impetus of movement, our disjointed heterogeneity set up in its lumbering unwieldiness an internal clash and crush and unrhythmic stagger which is both ludicrous and tragic at the same moment. So long as we disregard or misread the message of our ancient forest, the message of all-pervading truth in humanity, the message of all-comprehensive union of souls which rises above all differences and goes deeper than mere expediency, we shall have to go on suffering sorrow after sorrow and endless humiliation, and in all things futility.

## LIFE HISTORY OF FROGS AND TOADS

**F**ROGS and Toads are in many respects intermediate between Reptiles and Fishes. From their mode of life they are very appropriately called Amphibians.

Frogs and Toads are distributed all over the world except the polar regions. They are most abundant in the tropical and sub-tropical regions ; and as they are not marine in their habits, even a narrow arm of the sea is generally sufficient to limit their habitat. When they occur on islands, it is probable either that their eggs have been carried by birds or that there has been a comparatively recent separation from the mainland. In absolutely desert districts also they are unknown ; while in countries where there is a long dry season, followed by a period of rains, they are in the habit of being torpid, during the former ; the length of the sleep in one Javan species being upwards of five months. In cold climates they become torpid during winter. They are abundant in India and

South America ; and it is not a little remarkable that some of the largest forms are inhabitants of islands. They are represented by about a thousand species.

When the autumn sets in Frogs seek out suitable places in which to pass the winter. Moss-lined crannies and hollows in the stumps of trees are the places most favored ; and there they remain till the spring recalls them to activity.

During this period of hibernation these creatures are in a state of torpor, the mouth and nostrils are closed and respiration is all but absent, being carried on then entirely by means of the skin. Only healthy Frogs can successfully withstand the rigours of the winter, the weaklings die during their hibernation.

With the advent of the spring these Frogs issue from their hiding places and congregate in considerable numbers in the ponds, and there they commence to spawn. Curiously enough, the same water is chosen year after year, and too the same part of the pond.



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## MOTHER'S PRAYER

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

TRANSLATED BY THE AUTHOR FROM HIS HENGALI ORIGINAL,  
COMPOSED 22 YEARS AGO.

King Dhritarashtra.—The blind Kaurava King.

Prince Duryodhana —His son, who has just won in a game of chance by which his  
Pandava cousins have lost their kingdom and accepted banishment.

Queen Gandhari.—The mother of Duryodhana.

**N.B.**—The italic *a*'s in the proper names is to be pronounced long as *a* in "fa."

Dhritarashtra.

You have attained what you sought.

Duryodhana.

I have attained success.

Dhritarashtra.

Are you happy ?

Duryodhana.

I am victorious.

Dhritarashtra.

I ask you again, what happiness had you in gain-  
ing an undivided kingdom.

Duryodhana.

Sire, a Kshatriya's thirst is not for happiness, but  
for victory,—the fiery wine victory brewed from seething  
jealousy. Wretchedly happy we were when we lived in  
peace under the friendly dominance of our cousins, like in-  
glorious stains lying idle on the breast of the moon, while  
these Pandavas would milk the world of its wealth and  
allow us to share it with them in brotherly tolerance. But  
now, when they own defeat and are ready for banishment,  
I am no longer happy,—but I am exultant.

Dhritarashtra.

Wretch, you forget that the Pandavas and  
Kauravas have the same forefathers.

Duryodhana.

It was difficult to forget that, and therefore our inequalities rankled all the more in my heart. The moon of the midnight is never jealous of the sun of the noon. But the struggle to share the horizon by both the orbs can not last forever. Thank heaven, that struggle is over and we have attained at last the solitude of glory.

Dhritarashtra.

The mean jealousy !

Duryodhana.

Jealousy is never mean,—it is in the nature of the great. Only grass can grow in crowded amity, not the giant trees. Stars live in clusters, but the sun and moon are lonely in their splendour. The pale moon of the Pandavas sets behind the forest shadows leaving the new-risen sun of the Kauravas to rejoice.

Dhritarashtra.

But what is right has been defeated.

Duryodhana.

What is right for the rulers of men is not what is right for the people. The people thrive in comradeship, but for a king those men are enemies who are his equals. They are obstacles when in front, they are a terror when behind. There is no place for brothers or friends in a king's polity ; its one solid foundation is conquest.

Dhritarashtra.

I refuse to call it conquest deceitfully to win in gambling.

Duryodhana.

It is no shame for a man not to challenge a tiger to fight on equal terms with teeth and nails. Our weapons are those which lead us to success and not to suicide. Father, I am proud of the end we have achieved and disdain feebly to regret the means.

Dhritarashtra.

But justice—

Duryodhana.

Only fools dream of justice before success is attained, but those who are born to be kings rely upon their power, merciless and unburdened by scruples.

Dhritarashtra.

Your success has brought down upon you a flood of calumny, loud and angry.

Duryodhana.

It will take amazingly little time before the people shall know that Duryodhana is their king and has the power to crush calumny under foot.

Dhritarashtra.

Calumny dies weary, dancing on the tongue-tips. Do not drive it into the secret shelter of the heart to grow in strength.

Duryodhana.

Unuttered defaming does not touch a king's dignity. I care not if love is refused us, but insolence shall not be borne. Giving of love depends upon the wish of the giver, and the poorest of the poor can indulge in such generosity. Let them squander it upon their pet cats and their tame dogs, and our good cousins the Pandavas, I shall never envy them. But fear is the tribute I claim for my royal throne. Father, only too leniently did you lend your ears to those who slander your sons,—but if you still allow these pious friends of yours to continue in their revels of shrill denunciation at the cost of your own children, then let us exchange our kingdom for the exile of our cousins, and go to the wilderness where happily friends are never cheap.

Dhritarashtra.

If my friends' pious warnings could lessen my love for my sons then we might be saved. But I have dipped my hands in the mire of your infamy and lost my sense of the good. I have heedlessly set fire for your sake to this ancient forest of our royal lineage,—so fearful is my love. With you clasped to my breast, we, like a double meteor, are plunging into a blind downfall. Therefore, doubt not in my father's love; relax not your embracing arms till we reach the brink of annihilation. Beat your drums of victory, lift your banner of triumph. In this mad riot of exultant evil, brothers and friends will disperse and there will remain only the doomed father and the doomed son and God's curse and nothing besides.

*Enters Attendant.*

Sire, Queen Gandhari asks for audience.

Dhritarashtra.

I shall wait for her.

Duryodhana.

Let me take my leave. (Exit.)

Dhritarashtra.

Fly away! For you cannot bear the fire of your mother's presence.

*Enters Queen Gandhari, the mother of Duryodhana.*

Gandhari.

I have a prayer at your feet.

Dhritarashtra.

The utterance of your wish carries fulfilment.

Gandhari.

The time has come to renounce him.

Dhritarashtra.

Whom, my queen ?

Gandhari.

Duryodhana.

Dhritarashtra.

Our own son, Duryodhana ?

Gandhari.

Yes !

Dhritarashtra.

Terrible is this prayer from you, Mother of kings.

Gandhari.

This prayer is not only mine, it comes from the fathers of the Kauravas, who are in paradise.

Dhritarashtra.

The Divine Judge will punish him who has broken his laws. But I am his father.

Gandhari.

And am I not his mother ? Have I not borne him under my throbbing heart ? Yet I ask of you, renounce Duryodhana the unrighteous.

Dhritarashtra.

And what will remain to us after that ?

Gandhari.

God's blessing.

Dhritarashtra.

And what will that bring to us ?

Gandhari.

New afflictions. How can we bear in our breast the double thorns of the pleasure of our son's presence and the pride of our freshly acquired kingdom bought at the price of wrong ? The Pandavas will never accept back from our hands the land which they have given up. Therefore, it is only meet for us to take upon our head some great sorrow which will rob the wrong of its reward.

Dhritarashtra.

Queen, you are inflicting fresh pain upon the heart already rent.

Gandhari.

Sire, the punishment imposed upon our son will be more ours than his. When the judge is callous of the pain that he inflicts he has not the right to judge. And if you withdraw judgment from your own son to save yourself pain, then all the culprits ever punished at your hands will cry for vengeance against you at God's throne—for had not they also their fathers?

Dhritarashtra.

No more of this, Queen, I pray you. Our son is renounced by God and that is why I cannot renounce him. To save him is no longer in my power, and therefore my consolation is to share his guilt and to go down the path of destruction with him,—his solitary companion. What has been done is done, and what must follow, let follow.

(Exit.)

Gandhari.

Be calm, my heart, and patiently wait for God's judgment. The oblivious night wears on, the morning 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 to the dust, and for your sacrifice fling on its way your heart to be trampled under its wheels. And then the darkness will 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.

## LESSONS FROM THE CAREER OF SHIVAJI

### § 1. SHIVAJI'S POLICY HOW FAR TRADITIONAL.

**S**HIVAJI'S state policy, like his administrative system, was not very new. From time immemorial it had been the aim of the typical Hindu king to set out early every autumn\* to "extend his king-

dom" at the expense of his neighbours. Indeed, the Sanskrit law-books lay down such a course as the necessary accomplishment of a true Kshatriya chief. In more recent times it had also been the practice of the Muhammadan sovereigns in North India and the Deccan alike. But these conquerors justified their territorial aggrandisement by religious motives. Ac-

\* Manu, vii. 99-100, 182.

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## LETTERS FROM AN ON-LOOKER

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

[*Translation revised by the Author.*]

I.

ONCE upon a time I had nothing whatever to do,—that is to say, my chief relations were then with the great world towards which we own no responsibility. Then came a period when I had to set to work to make up for the accumulated arrears of my earlier days—that is to say, now my relations were mainly with the work-a-day world which depends upon ourselves for its building up and maintenance. At last my health failed me, and I got a few days' respite from my work. And here I am, at length, stretched out on a long easy chair by the second-storey window, travelled so far, all in a day or two,—no railway ticket could have brought me this distance.

When I had thrust my universe behind the bars of my office habit, I gradually came to plume myself on having become an important personage of usefulness. From such a state of mind it is only a step to the belief that one is indispensable. Of the many means by which Nature exacts work from man, this pride is one of the most efficient. Those who work for money, work only to the extent of their wages, up to a definite point beyond which they would count it a loss to work. So they insist on an off-time. But those whose pride impels them to work, they have no rest; even over-time work is not felt as a loss by them.

So busy used I to be under the belief that I was indispensable, that I hardly dared to

wink. My doctor now and again would warn me saying: "Stop, take it easy." But I would reply: "How will things go on if I stop?" Just then the wheels of my car broke down and it came to a stop beneath this window. From here I looked out upon the limitless space. There I saw whirling the numberless flashing wheels of the triumphal chariot of time,—no dust raised, no din, not even a scratch left on the roadway. With its progress I could see bound up all progress that we come across in this world. On a sudden I came to myself. I clearly perceived that things could get along without me. There was no sign that those wheels would stop, or drag the least bit, for lack of any one in particular.

Thus, when I stepped from my desk to this window, I seemed to pass in a flash from the country of cannot-do-without-me to the country of can-do-without-me. . . . But is this to be admitted so easily as all that! Even if I admit it in words, my mind refuses assent. If it be really quite the same whether I go or stay, how then did my pride of self find a place in the universe, even for a moment? On what could it have taken its stand? Amidst all the plentifulness with which space and time are teeming, it was nevertheless not possible to leave out this self of mine. The fact that I am indispensable is proved by the fact that *I am*.

Egoism is the price paid for the fact of existence. So long as I realise this price within me, so long do I steadfastly bear all the pains and penalties of keeping myself

in existence. That is why the Buddhists have it, that to destroy egoism is to cut at the root of existence: for, without the pride of self it ceases to be worth while to exist.

However that may be, this price has been furnished from some fund or other,—in other words, it matters somewhere that I should be, and the price paid is the measure of how much it matters. The whole universe—every molecule and atom of it—is assisting this desire that I should be. And it is the glory of this desire which is manifest in my pride of self. By virtue of this glory this infinitesimal "I" is not lower than any other thing in this Universe, in measure or value.

Man has viewed this desire in two different ways. Some have held it to be a whim of Creative Power, some a joyous self-expression of Creative Love. The others I leave aside who call it *Maya*, predicating existence of that which is not. And man sets before himself different goals as the object of his life according as he views the fact of his *being* as the revelation of Force or of Love.

The value which our entity receives from Power is quite different in its aspect from that which it receives from Love. The direction in which we are impelled by our pride, in the field of power, is the opposite of that given by our pride, in the field of Love.

Power can be measured. Its volume, its weight, its momentum can all be brought within the purview of mathematics. So it is the endeavour of those who hold power to be supreme, to increase in bulk. They would repeatedly multiply numbers,—the number of men, the number of coins, the number of appliances. When they strive for success they sacrifice others' wealth, others' rights, others' lives; for sacrifice is of the essence of the cult of Power; and the earth is running red with the blood of that sacrifice.

The distinctive feature of Realism is the measurability of its outward expression, which is the same thing as the finiteness of its boundaries. And the disputes, civil and criminal, which have raged in the history of man, have mostly been over these same

boundaries. To increase one's own bounds one has necessarily to encroach upon those of others. So, because the pride of Power is the pride of quantity, the most powerful telescope, when pointed in the direction of Power, fails to reveal the shore of peace across the sea of blood.

But when engaged in adding up the quantities of this realistic world, this field of power, we do not find them to be an ever-increasing series. In our pursuit of the principle of accumulation we are all of a sudden held up by stumbling upon the principle of Beauty, based on proportionateness, which bars the way. We discover that there is not only onward motion, but there are also pauses. And we repeatedly find in history that whenever the blindness of Power has tried to override this rule of rhythm, it has committed suicide. That is why man treasures up such sayings as: "Pride was Lanka's undoing." And that is why man still remembers the story of the toppling over of the tower of Babylon.

So we see that the principle of Power, of which the outward expression is bulk, is neither the final nor the supreme Truth. It has to stop itself to keep time with the rhythm of the universe. Restraint is the gateway of the Good. The value of the Good is not measured in terms of dimension or multitude. He who has known it within himself feels no shame in rags and tatters. He rolls his crown in the dust and marches out on the open road.

When from the principle of Power we arrive at the principle of Beauty, we at once understand that, all this while, we had been offering incense at the wrong shrine; that Power grows bloated on the blood of its victims only to perish of surfeit; that try as we may by adding to armies and armaments, by increasing the number and variety of naval craft, by heaping up our share of the *loot* of war, arithmetic will never serve to make true that which is untrue; that at the end we shall die crushed under the weight of our multiplication of things.

When the *Rishi*, Yajnavalkya, on the eve of his departure, offered to leave his wife Maitreyi well-established upon an enumer-

ation of what he had gathered together during his life, she exclaimed :

**Yenam namrtasyam kimaham tena kuryam !**

*What am I to do with these, which are not of the immortal spirit ?*

Of what avail is it to add and add and add ? No amount of adding up of material things will take us to the perfectness of the immortal spirit. 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 the field of Perfectness the current of man's pride flows in the reverse direction, the direction of giving up. Man grows gigantic by the appropriation of everything for himself: he attains harmony by giving himself up. In this harmony is peace,—never the outcome of external organisation or of coalition between power and power,—the peace which rests on truth and consists in the curbing of greed, in the forgiveness of sympathy.

The question which I had raised was : "In which Truth is my entity to realise its fullest value,—in Power or in Love?" If we accept Power as that truth we must also recognise conflict as inevitable and eternal. Many modern European writers have taken a pride in proclaiming such recognition. According to them the Religion of Peace and Love is but a precarious coat of armour within which the weak seek shelter, but for which the laws of nature have but scant respect ; for it is Power which triumphs in the end. That which the timid preachers of religion anathematise as unrighteousness,—that alone is the sure road which leads man to success.

The opposite school do not wholly deny this. They admit the premises but they say:

**Adharmenaidhate tabat, tato bhadrani pashyati, tatah sapatnan jayati,—samoolastu vinashyati.**

*In unrighteousness they prosper, in it they find their good, through it they defeat their enemies,—but they perish at the root.*

The pride of prosperity throws man's mind outwards, and the misery and insult of destitution draws man's hungering desires likewise outwards. These two

conditions alike leave man unashamed to place above all other gods *Shakti*, the deity of Power, the cruel one whose right hand wields the weapon of wrong, and her left the weapon of guile. In the politics of Europe, drunk with power, we see the worship of this *Shakti*. Hence does its diplomacy slink from the path of publicity; yet it has nothing wherewith to hide the nakedness of its lolling tongue.—Behold, how it slides and slithers at the Peace table!

On the other hand, in the days of their political disruption, our cowed and down-trodden people, through the mouths of their poets, sang the praises of this same *Shakti*. The Chandi of Kavikankan, and of the Annadamangal, the ballad of Manasa, the goddess of the snakes, what are they but paeans of the triumph of evil? The burden of their song is the defeat of Shiva, the good, at the hands of the cruel, deceitful, criminal *Shakti*.

Today we see the same spirit abroad in our country. In the name of religion some of us are saying that it is cowardly to be afraid of wrong-doing ; others, that unrighteousness ceases to be wrong in the case of the powerful. And so we see that those who have attained worldly success, and those who have failed to attain it, are both singing the same tune. Both fret at righteousness as an obstacle, which both would overcome by physical force. But as it happens, physical force is not the supreme Power, even in this world.

In these terrible days of evil, it is my prayer that we may not be frightened by frightfulness nor bow down to it in worship—but ignore it, despise it. May ours be that pride of manhood which, standing in the midst of the appalling piles of the realistic world, can keep its head erect and say : *My wealth is not here ;* which can say : *Chains do not bind me, blows do not wound me, death does not kill me ;* which can say : "What have I to do with these which are not of the immortal spirit." Our forefathers have said : "Worship Him who is beyond death and beyond fear and thereby attain Peace." On our heads be their commandment, and in that Peace, which is beyond death and all fear, may we be established.



## II.

The point about the so-called "Mangal" poems of the old Bengali literature, is their dislodgement of one deity and the placing on his throne of another. To the simple mind it would seem that the question at issue, in a quarrel of this kind, would have been some difference in religious ideals. If a new divinity can furnish something more satisfying to man's sense of Right, that alone can be a valid reason for a change.

But here the fact was exactly the opposite. The male deity who was in possession was fairly harmless. All of a sudden a feminine divinity turned up and demanded to be worshipped in his stead. That is to say, she insisted on thrusting herself in where she had no right. Under what title? Force! By what method? Any that would serve. The methods that were eventually employed are not known as rightful to the ordinary understanding. But those were the methods that ultimately turned out to be victorious. Outrage, fraud and frightfulness were not only successful in capturing the Temple, but also in making the poets dance attendance and sing hosannas at its shrine. In their shame they faltered forth the excuse that they had received divine commandment in a dream! . . . This was the nightmare that once rode our land.

The history of that day is not clearly known, but the picture which we get is somewhat as follows: When Bengali literature raised its head, like a coral reef, out of the still lagoon of its origin, the religion of Buddha in its decay was crumbling into degenerate fragments. And, in the manner of one dream melting into another, Buddha had turned into Shiva. Shiva was a mendicant, an ascetic; he did not conform to the Vedas; he was for all men and sundry. In Kavikankan's poem and in the Annadamangal his quarrel with Daksha, of the Vedic cult, is treated of at the very outset. Anyhow, this deity of peace and renunciation did not survive.

In Europe also, the modern cult of *Shakti* has it that a god like the meek Jesus, the poor man's Jesus, the pale anaemic Jesus, will not do. What is wanted is a muscular, ravening god, who will acknow-

ledge no barriers, feel no compunctions, and own no shame in the process of proclaiming his worship. From what riotous assembly rises this European cult? From that of victors at their carousals, merry over the spoils of their success, who have cut up the earth into toothsome morsels as a zest for their liquor.

The self-same creed was formulated in the gathering of bards at which the Annadamangal was sung. But what were its authors? Those who were starving and in rags, shelterless and honourless,—it was the dream of their hungry, terror-stricken, wearied out condition.

History does not write itself in blank verse,—after every line there comes a rhyme. How perfectly rhymes the end of the line to-day with that of the line which was completed five hundred years ago! With high pomp and festivity does Europe celebrate her *Shakti* worship. Wine has reddened her eyes like unto a hibiscus flower, the sacrificial knife has been sharpened, the victims are bound to the sacrificial posts. Some of her priests are denying Jesus; others would temporise, saying that double-meaning psalms may propitiate both Christ and *Shakti*, who are but the male and female halves of one and the same deity. In short, some of them have got drunk on their thrones, others in their pulpits.

And we also,—we will not have Shiva, the good. We needs must sing the "mangal" of Chandi, the terrible, lauding her as the *summum bonum*. But our chant is dream-conceived, born of unsatisfied hunger, carking fear and unrequited toil. That is the difference between the victor's worship of Chandi, and her glorification by the defeated.

What is the proof that the original cult of Chandi, from beginning to end, was only a dream? Look at what happens to Kalaketu, the hunter, of the story. The whimsical goddess gives him a ring as a boon, and at once his house overflows with gold. This petty hunter then engages in battle with the king of Kalinga, whereupon Hanuman, the monkey who is strength personified, comes all of a sudden to the rescue and cuffs and kicks the Kalinga

## LETTERS FROM AN ON-LOOKER

forces into a rout. What is this if not the *Shakti* of dreamland, the offspring of hunger and terror? Everything there happens all of a sudden, out of connection with the order of the universe. And in the expectation of some such catastrophic good fortune our people began shouting *mother! mother!* in their chants of the praise of Chandi,—the Chandi who knows no distinction between right and wrong and for the furtherance of whose designs truth and untruth serve with equal facility. She cares not how or why she makes the small to be big, the poor to be rich, the weak to be powerful. No worthiness is required, no purging away of internal poverty. Everything may remain in slothful stagnation, just as it is,—only with folded hands one must shout: *mother! mother!*

When the Moghuls and Pathans came upon Bengal in a devastating flood, then from an outside view, *Shakti* alone seemed rampant in the eyes of all observers. No moral law, no sign of Shiva, the good, was visible. In such a pass, if man can stand up and say: *I will suffer all, but not bend the knee to this awful thing*,—then he can win through. In the case of Dhanapati and Chand, the merchants, we find, up to point, the man showing himself and making such stand. Blow upon blow was hurled at them; force and guile assailed them from every side; but they refused to allow the seat of their worship to be shifted. And then,—if fear could cow them, grief shatter them, losses weaken them, if their very backbone had to be broken for it, they must and shall bow to her in worship,—so vowed Chandi, the terrible. Otherwise?—otherwise her *prestige* was at stake. It was not of the prestige of any moral ideal that she was thinking, but the prestige of her Power. And so she punished and punished and punished.

And at last when the suffering was past bearing, the half-dead merchants moved Shiva from his pedestal and bowed their head to Chandi. What was the hurt of the previous sufferings compared with the hurt of this insult to manhood? The fearless, deathless soul thus owning allegiance to fear, and worshipping death as

its god, as greater than itself! That is where the victory of *Shakti* was most ghastly in its heinousness.

In our latter-day dreams we have set to the worship of Europe's divinity,—therein is our defeat at her hands seeking completeness. If she insists on hurting us, let us suffer,—but worship? No! Our worship must be reserved for the God of Right. If she insists on causing us sorrow, let her,—but defeat us? Never! No hurt can be greater than death. But if she can make us forget that even in death we can be immortal, then indeed shall we suffer Death Everlasting.

*Mahantam bibhum atmanam matwa dheera na sochati.*

*Knowing his soul as great and eternal, man attains peace and grieves not.*

### III.

In our country it is accounted the greatest calamity to have one's courtyard brought under the plough. Because, in the courtyard, man has made his very own the immense wealth called space. Space is not a rare commodity outside, but one does not get it till he can bring it inside and make it his own. The space of the courtyard, man has made part of his home. Here the light of the sun is revealed as his own light, and here his baby claps his little hands to call to the moon. So if the courtyard be not kept open, but be used for sowing crops, then is the nest destroyed in which the outside Universe can become man's own universe.

The difference between a really rich man and a poor man is, that the former can afford vast open spaces in his home. The furniture with which a rich man encumbers his house may be valuable, but the space with which he makes his courtyard big, his garden extensive, is of infinitely greater value. The business place of the merchant is crowded with his stock,—there he has not the means of keeping spaces vacant, there he is miserly, and millionaire though he be, there he is poor. But in his home that same merchant flouts mere utility by the length and breadth and height of his room—to say nothing of the expanse of his garden—and gives to space

the place of honour. It is here that the merchant is rich.

Not only unoccupied space, but unoccupied time, also, is of the highest value. The rich man, out of his abundance, can purchase leisure. It is in fact a test of his riches, this power to keep fallow wide stretches of time, which want cannot compel him to plough up.

There is yet another place where an open expanse is the most valuable of all,—and that is in the mind. Thoughts which must be thought, from which there is no escape, are but worries. The thoughts of the poor and the miserable cling to their minds as the ivy to a ruined temple.

Pain closes up all openings of the mind. Health may be defined as the state in which the physical consciousness lies fallow, like an open heath. Let there be but a touch of gout in the remotest point of the smallest toe and the whole of consciousness is filled with pain, leaving not a corner empty. So the expanse that the mind desires is not to be had when it is miserable.

Just as one cannot live grandly without unoccupied spaces, so the mind cannot think grandly without unoccupied leisure,—otherwise for it truth becomes petty. And like dim light, petty truth distorts vision, encourages fear, and keeps narrow the field of communion between man and man.

On coming to this window I have come to realise that, as Indians, the greatest misfortune for us has been the closing of all windows. And thorny weeds have sprung up and overrun all the little fallow spaces of leisure which had been left to us.

In old India one thing was plentiful—a thing we knew to be invaluable—the broad mental leisure which permitted of the pursuit and realisation of Truth. There was a day when India stood in the open, above pain and pleasure, loss and gain, and thence obtained a clear view of the truth "by gaining which no other gain seems greater."

But that large leisure for meditation is lost to us to-day. The Indian, now, has no day off. The stream of his holiday time has dwindled and dwindled till its very fount is dry; and the whole of his consciousness is now only full of pain.

So as I came to the window, there rose

from the courtyard the wailing of the weak, with which the length and breadth of our sky, from North to South and East to West, now resounds. Never in all history were the weak so terribly weak as they are to-day.

Thanks to science, physical force, in these times, is so utterly, so cruelly all-powerful. The yell of the athlete, flaunting his brawn, fills the earth. Even the sky, once impervious to man's evil passions, has now been invaded by man's cruelty. And, from the bottom of the ocean to the top of the atmosphere, blood is spurting from pierced hearts.

In this state of things, when the difference between the strong and the weak is so immeasurable, if we find that this terrible strength is also timorous, it becomes important to devote careful thought to the causes of this timidity. All the more so because, in order to come to a conclusion as to whether the Peace which is being made in Europe is likely to be permanent or not, it is necessary to understand the strong man's psychology.

When the war was at its height, when the fear of possible defeat was not less dominant than the hope of possible victory, then, in that divided state of mind, the aggrieved party charged the aggressor with what they called crimes against international law,—the crime of the breaking of treaties, the crime of the bombing of non-combatants from the skies, the crime of employing forbidden engines of destruction. When do men commit crimes? When the claims of some necessity become, in their view, greater than the claims of Right. Thus with the Germans the desirability of victory weighed more than the desirability of right-doing. When this hurt the opposite party they kept complaining that what Germany was doing was very very wrong indeed. What if it was war,—were there, then, no such things as Law and Right? When Germany pitilessly meted out, in her conquered provinces, unduly severe punishments for comparatively light offences, she had always some expediency to plead as justification. Nevertheless the opposite party waxed eloquently indignant: Was expediency the highest aim of Man: has

civilisation, then, no responsibilities : could those who ignore these responsibilities be allowed, any more, a place amongst civilised communities ?

From the standpoint of Right, of course, these questions admit of but one reply. And, as we heard that reply given, we thought to ourselves that the fiery ordeal of the war would at last burn away all the sin of this iron age ; that the condition of man could not fail of betterment since men's minds were undergoing a change ; for, was it not a truism that change of law or order without change of mentality is futile ?

But we made one miscalculation. In our country the longing for renunciation immediately following upon bereavement is looked upon with suspicion. The heart weakened by the wrench of parting is only too prone to self-abnegation. The renunciation of the strong, therefore, is the only true renunciation. So we should not have put full trust in the words of righteousness issuing from lips trembling at the prospect of possible defeat.

However, this party has won. They are sitting in conclave to decide how the foundations of a world Peace may be made secure. Debates are proceeding, proposals and counter-proposals, the partitioning and parcelling of territories. I am unable to imagine the kind of weapon that will be forged in this factory.

But one thing is becoming clear to me. All the fire of the war has *not* served to purge this *Kali Yuga* of its sin, nor has the psychology of Europe undergone a change. On what rests the throne of the *Kali Yuga* ? On Greed.—We would have, we would keep, we would on no account lose the tiniest part of our possessions. So is even the strongest pursued by incessant fear, lest now, or in some hereafter, however distant, any loss should haply befall. Where the very idea of loss is so intolerable, of what avail are counsels of law, of righteousness ? It takes no time to persuade oneself that wrong is right when it is judged, not on its merits, not in relation to law, but from the standpoint of one's own greed.

In these days of this terrible greed, in cases where the strong stand in fear of the strong, both loudly parley in the name of

the Right, and strive with might and main that no weak spot be left in their mutual regulations. But where, at the same point of time, this same greed makes the strong even the least bit afraid of the weak, then in the passion of punishment great rents are made in the text of the law, and considerations of right find no place.

There is a difference between the fear of the strong, and the fear of the weak. The weak are afraid of getting hurt, the strong of obstacles crossing their path. We all know the fear that took possession of the Western world under the name of the "Yellow Peril." At the bottom of this was the apprehension, felt by an all-devouring greed, lest its full satisfaction should somewhere meet with some check.

Where was the possibility of this check ? In the possibility of one of the weak rising to be as strong as the strong ones,—to become as strong as they,—that was the Peril ! And to prevent this, the weak had to be kept weak. That is the policy which guides Europe's treatment of the rest of mankind. How can Peace prevail in the midst of the chronic apprehension which this policy generates ?

Anatole France writes :

It does not, however, appear at first sight that the Yellow Peril at which European economists are terrified is to be compared to the White Peril suspended over Asia. The Chinese do not send to Paris, Berlin, and St. Petersburg missionaries to teach Christians the Fung-Chui, and sow disorder in European affairs. A Chinese expeditionary force did not land in Quiberon Bay to demand of the Government of the Republic extra-territoriality, i.e., the right of trying by a tribunal of mandarins cases pending between Chinese and Europeans. Admiral Togo did not come and bombard Brest Roads with a dozen battleships, for the purpose of improving Japanese trade in France. . . . He did not burn Versailles in the name of a higher civilisation. The army of the Great Asiatic Powers did not carry away to Tokio and Peking the Louvre paintings and the silver service of the Elysee.

No indeed ! Monsieur Edmond They himself admits that the yellow men are not sufficiently civilised to imitate the whites so faithfully. Nor does he foresee that they will ever rise to so high a moral culture. How could it be possible for them to possess our virtues ? They are not Christians. But men entitled to speak consider that the Yellow Peril is none the less to be dreaded for all that it is economic. Japan, and China organised by Japan, threaten us, in all the

markets of Europe, with a competition frightful, monstrous, enormous, and deformed, the mere idea of which causes the hair of the economists to stand on end.

That is to say, greed will not suffer itself to be checked. He who is down must be kept down, and he who shows signs of rising must be dealt with as a peril.

So long as this greed persists, no Peace Conference will have the power to give Peace to the world. Factories can make many things, but I refuse to believe in a factory-made peace. The differences between Capital and Labour, Governments and Peoples, are all due to this greed. So our conclusion must be in the words of our old saying :

*In greed is sin : in sin is death.*

When in these circumstances the strong sit down to adjust their mutual differences, they put up dykes on their own side and cut channels on the side of the weak, so that the current of their greed may flow away from their own interests. Amongst themselves they would divide those parts of the world which are soft, into which the teeth may be comfortably fastened, and which, if the rending claws come by any hurt, may afford those claws an easy revenge. But it may emphatically be asserted that this cannot last for ever. They will never remain agreed upon the division of the spoils ; contending greeds can never be equably satiated ; the leaks of sin can never be stopped ; and one day the leaky vessel will founder with all on board.

Providence has kept us safe from at least one source of anxiety. Every inch of the way to become physically strong has been barred to us. Even hope, which flies over barriers, has had its wings clipped. Only one royal road remains open to us,—the road which leads beyond all sorrow. Let evil assail us from without, but let us not allow it within. When we shall become greater than those who hurt us, then shall our sufferings be glorified. But this road is neither that of fighting, nor of petitioning.

*Atha dheera amrtatwam viditwa  
Dhruvam adhruesbviha na prarthayante.*

*Men of tranquil mind, being sure of*

*Immortal Truth, never seek the eternal in things of the moment.*

#### IV

Some part of the earth's water becomes rarefied and ascends to the skies. With the broad movement and the music it acquires in those pure heights it then showers down, back to the water of the earth. Similarly, part of the mind of man rises up out of the world and flies skywards ; but this sky-soaring mind attains completeness only when it has returned, time after time, to mingle with the earth-bound mind.

There are, however, desert tracts in which the greater part of the year is rainless. That which ascended as vapour does not, there, rain back on the earth : the higher mind cannot commune with the lower. Such regions may manage to get along with artificial canal water, but where for them is the joyous festival of downpour : where the music of the mingling of the waters of earth and sky ?

So far for mere drought. Then there are the rain of mud, the rain of blood, and such like dire phenomena of which we hear tell. These happen when the purity of the atmosphere is sullied and the air is burdened with dirt. Then it is not the song of the sky which descends in purifying showers, but just the earth's own sins which fall back on it.

That is the kind of stormy visitation which has overtaken us to-day. On the sin-laden dust of the earth pours tainted rain from the sky. Our long wait for the cleansing bath in pure water from on high has been repeatedly doomed to disappointment ; the mud is soiling our minds and marks of blood are also showing. How long can we keep on wiping this away ? Even the pure silence of the empyrean is powerless to clarify the discordant notes of the prayer for peace which is rising from a blood-stained world.

Peace ? who can truly pray for Peace ? Only they who are ready to renounce. Those whose clutching fingers are wriggling, like so many snakes, with the greed of absorption, they want peace,—but by trickery, not by paying its price. The peace they desire is the unchecked opportunity to lick up the cream of the earth.

As it unfortunately happens, the cream jars are mostly in the keep of the weak. Naturally the curbing of their greed becomes all the more difficult for the strong. Where the treasure is well guarded, self-restraint comes easy, as also the feeling of self-congratulation at having been good. There are hard places in this world where it distinctly pays to be good. But there is no dearth of examples of soft places where it becomes so terribly difficult for the strong to keep up their good character. Where the guard is feeble, both fear and shame depart. Let me give another extract from Anatole France. He is here talking about China :

In our own times, the Christian acquired the habit of sending jointly or separately into that vast Empire, whenever order was disturbed, soldiers who restored it by means of theft, rape, pillage, murder, and incendiarism, and of proceeding at short intervals with the pacific penetration of the country with rifles and guns. The poorly armed Chinese either defend themselves badly or not at all, and so they are massacred with delightful facility. . . . In 1901, order having been disturbed at Peking, the troops of the five Great Powers, under the command of a German Field Marshal, restored it by the customary means. Having in this fashion covered themselves with military glory, the five Powers signed one of the innumerable treaties by which they guarantee the integrity of the very China whose provinces they divide among themselves.

The destruction, pillage and rapine which then went on at Peking was far from being a small thing, viewed as a torment and insult to man; but we all know to what insignificant proportions that has now been reduced by the shame that was wrought and suffered in the great European war. This only shows how the strict ideal which alone serves to hold man up to his highest good is lowered by contact with the weak.

Man unconsciously enters into treaties with himself, and seeks to confine the struggle between good and evil, which continually goes on in his heart, within certain boundaries, allowing it to be relaxed outside them where compulsion is feeble. We have done this in India, where the Sudra was kept so weak by the Brahmin that no sense of fear or shame obtruded in the latter's dealings with the former. This becomes

abundantly clear on going through our ancient law books. And we have lost even the faculty of recognising the character of the evil fruit which the country is reaping—so low has been our fall.

The weak are as great a danger for the strong as quicksands for an elephant. They do not assist progress because they do not resist, they only drag down. The greater the bulk and strength on the one hand, the more terrible this downward pull on the other. The harder the strong kicks the weak, the worse for his foot.

Where the air is light there is the storm-centre, and so Asia and Africa are the real origins of all the stormy outbreaks in Europe. In these weak spots there is no resistance, and the inspiration which maintains the European ideal is correspondingly weak. So maddening is the intoxication of power that man fails to realise this lowering of his standard,—which again indicates the touching of bottom in his downfall.

This insensibility, this blindness, sometimes goes to such absurd lengths as to provoke a smile as well as a tear. There are a set of youths in our country who, drunk with the wine of Europe's political vintage, revel in committing murderous assaults upon one another. I have often had occasion to lament the intolerable burden of evil thus placed on our country,—which had enough sins of its own,—by this addition of sins imported from the West. And yet we find a former Governor of Bengal unblushingly proclaiming that these murders go to show how different is the sense of Right in Bengal and in Europe. According to him the Bengali looks upon murder as nothing more than the translation of the soul from one state of existence to another.\* To think of the mockery of being thus arraigned by our very teachers for having learnt their lessons so aptly. One can only suppose that habit has so dulled their vision that they are unable to see, as outsiders do, how cheaply human

\* In 1912 in the British Isles 17 per mille of the population were tried for murder. In 1911 in Bengal the proportion was only 08 per mille. I have not the book now before me and so cannot quote the rest of the statistics.

lives, are reckoned in their politics. But are these political libertines, I cannot help wondering, really oblivious of the special psychology which they have so sedulously cultivated and which propagating itself all over the world, is spreading bloodshed throughout the path of its progress?

Those who assert that the East and the West are radically different at bottom, pollute the very source of intercourse between the two. They keep their conscience pacified by laying down the principle that what is good for one cannot possibly do for the other, and with this they would stifle all qualms and prickings which injustice and cruelty elsewhere evoke. These shibboleths have come into use ever since the West first came into touch with the East. Where physical force makes it so easy to be unjust, the obstacle of moral force is thus, with equal ease, got rid of.

That is why I say that commerce with the weak destroys the moral sense of the strong, the process being the creation of different ideals, one for oneself, another for others. When one's own school-boys get out of hand, it is indulgently remarked that boys will be boys. When others' school-boys give vent to their excitement, they are glared at and dubbed scoundrels. Race feeling rouses a high indignation when it is found in a weaker race, but, even if ten times more intense in the stronger, so many good reasons for its existence are discerned, that it is hailed almost with affection. Once more I have to beg hospitality from Anatole France. His mind is clear, his imagination vivid and no absurdity can escape his keen sense of humour. He is still telling of the Chinese:

They are polite and ceremonious, but are reproached with cherishing feeble sentiments of affection for Europeans. The grievances we have against them are greatly of the order of those which Mr. Du Chaillu cherished towards his Gorilla. Mr. Du Chaillu, while in the forest, brought down with his rifle the mother of a Gorilla. In its death the brute was still pressing its young to its bosom. He tore it from its embrace, and dragged it with him in a cage across Africa, for the purpose of selling it in Europe. Now, the young animal gave him just cause for complaint. It was unsociable, and actually starved itself to death. "I was powerless," says Mr. Du Chaillu, "to correct its evil nature."

So, as I was saying, the greatest danger to the strong comes from the weak,—so insidiously is their moral sense stolen away that even its loss is not felt. This danger is much greater to-day, now that physical force has gained such tremendous resources of strength. There is no obstacle in the way of holding the weak in utter subjection, for they have absolutely no hope of ever finding any way out of the net of scientific method with which they are enmeshed. And yet, in spite of this enormous disparity of strength between the men in power and the men under them, the timorousness which is inseparable from greed keeps the strong in a state of chronic anxiety. And the strong have at length come to the conclusion that the thumb-screw must be so tightened that the weak may not dare to make their plaint at the bar of the world, nor to offer evidence of their sufferings,—not even to set up audible wailings in their own corners.

But those who are thus rendering their autoocracy absolutely easy and safe will have to draw upon the capital of their manhood in order to count out the cost. And in their own home shall they rue this continual dissipation of such capital. Even now they are beginning to feel the effects, but even yet they are not taking the trouble of casting up their accounts to find out the cause.

So much for what is to be said about the strong. I feel a world of shame in discussing this matter from our side, because though from an outer view it may sound like a homily, from the inner side it has too much resemblance to a wail of helplessness. To tremble and to whine are the two most shameful things for the weak to do. If we cannot prevail against the strong, we must prevail against ourselves. Whatever else we may do, let us not give way to fear; and if we are not allowed to speak out, let us at least refrain from sending forth our voice of lamentation from one shore to the other.

When the fire of misery is burning, the greatest loss of all would be to suffer its scorching, and not avail of its light. May that light destroy our illusions and enable us to make an effort truly to see. Let us

ask our conscience: Is this hideously overgrown Power really great? Poised on the pinnacle of office, men are priding themselves on their loftiness. The laws which they are making and breaking from their artificial eminence are not in conformity with the laws of the universal God. Are, then, these men really so great as they would appear? They can break from the outside, but can they add a particle to man's internal wealth? They can sign peace treaties, but can they give peace?

It was about 2,000 years ago that all-powerful Rome, in one of its Eastern provinces, executed on a cross, in company with certain miscreants, the simple, unpretending *guru* of a tribe of fishermen. On that day the Roman Governor felt no falling off in his appetite or sleep. From the outside, which of them then appeared the greater? And to-day? On that day there was on the one hand the agony, the humiliation, the death, by the cross; on the other, the pomp and festivity in the Governor's palace. And to-day? To whom, then, shall we bow the head?

**Kasmai devaya havisha vidhema :**

*To which god shall we offer oblation?*

### V.

The traffic of human progress has never met with so serious a block as it has to-day. The reason is that the long trains of modern history move by steam power, and their tracks, which spread all over the world, cross and recross in an intricate maze. So whenever the different trains fail to run clear of one another, a hideous smash-up is inevitable, and the whole world trembles at the shock.

Such an accident has now occurred; the loss of life and property has been stupendous; and on all sides questioning is heard: what has happened: how did it happen: how can it be prevented from happening again?

Do these questions, affecting the history of all humanity, cast no burden of thought on us? Are we to be content only with carping at others: are we not to search out our share of the responsibility?

For, as I have suggested before, and I repeat definitely here, a grave respon-

sibility lies on the weak. It is they who afford hospitality to all the disease germs floating about in the air, and nourish them and help them to multiply with their own life. Cowards are the cause of repeated attempts at frightfulness. Those who cringe keep on creating their own insults. Our sensibilities do not extend to where we cannot see. We lightly crush underfoot the insects on the way, but if it be a bird, fallen across our path, we hesitate to tread on it. Our standard of feeling is different for the bird and the ant.

It is thus an important duty for man so to bear himself that he may not fail to be recognised as man,—not only in his own interest, but because of his responsibilities to others. It is not good that man should trample man underfoot, neither for the downtrodden nor for him who treads. The man who belittles himself lowers not only his own value but that of all mankind. Man knows himself as great only where he sees great men,—and the truer is such vision of greatness, the easier it becomes to be great.

In countries where each individual has value, the whole nation grows to greatness, by itself. There men put forth their best efforts to live great lives, and they fight to the end if obstruction be placed in their way. Such men cannot fail to make themselves evident, and in dealing with them others needs must be careful how they behave. In judging such the judge's own sense of justice is not the sole factor, but they have within them something that calls forth right judgment.

The characteristic sign of a people progressing in the way of greatness is, that the negligibleness of any class or individual constantly tends to disappear. More and more do all get the right of demanding their full manhood. So do they busy themselves to assure good food, good clothing, good housing for all; good sanitation and true culture for all.

But what has happened in our country? By our preaching and practice and by our institutions it has been our one concern to keep the greatest number small. We have left no loophole for dispute or argument



as to whether they are really small or not, but have made it a matter of blind faith. And so it has come to pass that those we have charged with smallness are pleading guilty with folded hands, and if attempts are made to raise them in the social scale, it is they who protest most vehemently.

Thus have we made systematic provision for the unresisting acceptance of insult and contumely in every stratum of our society. Those who are kept under, are by far the most numerous,—yet the lowness of their ideas of life causes no pang in the hearts of the upper few. On the contrary, if they try to set up the standard of the upper set, the latter wax wroth.

When these men, habituated to perpetual insult, fail to assert their rights of manhood in sufficiently clear tones,—wherefore the foreigner finds nothing within or without which can make him keep back his contempt,—then, must we not recognise therein the true fruit of our own *Karma*? When the sin which we have codified in our social regulations returns on us, at the hands of foreigners, in the field of politics, whence are we to draw the strength for effective protest?

So we base our protests on the sense of justice of those very foreigners—oh the shame, the added insult of such protests! How low do we stoop when we say, in the same breath, that in our own society we shall continue to drag our ideal in the dust, but in your politics you must keep it raised aloft. We shall keep in full force the slavery sections of our social code in all their variety, but you, of your greatness, must place in our hands the reins of equal sovereignty. Where ours is the power we shall be utterly miserly in the name of Religion, but where the power is yours we shall importune you, in that same name of Religion, for unstinted largess. With what face are we to say these things? And what if our prayers be granted? If then we should still be as callous as ever about offering insult to our own countrymen, whilst foreigners out of the fulness of their generosity should be showing respect to the insulted ones,—would not that be for us the very acme of defeat?

Whatever may be the reason, the burden of wrong and insult lies heavy on us to-day. In this condition our sole hope is, that since our opponents are failing to maintain their own in the field of righteousness, we may there rise superior to them. In that event the wrong they do us will not hurt our honour, but rather add to it. Are we even now to persist in our cry: *May you excel us in moral power, so that we may expect more from you than we are prepared to render to ourselves*, in other words, *let us keep ourselves for ever low that you may go on lifting us up to your level*? All responsibility thrown on others, nothing borne by ourselves,—are we forever to hold ourselves in such contempt and others in such high esteem? What defeat can physical force wreak on us compared to such self-inflicted degradation?

Only a short while ago I have heard with my own ears an argument of which the conclusion was that Hindu and Moslem cannot dine under the same roof, even though no prohibited food should have been brought in. Those who have no hesitation in affirming such principle are the first to suspect foreign interference when Hindu and Moslem fall out; and along with such suspicion is an implied moral judgment against the foreigner concerned! The only explanation can be that they hold the foreigner to be more amenable to moral law than they are themselves. According to them, it is right when, in our own social system, we make the barriers between man and man intolerably rigid, but when the foreigner seeks to make use of such barriers for his own purposes, that is wrong. We may keep our own side weak in the name of religion, but the sin comes in when advantage is taken of that weakness by our opponents.

If it be asked why Hindu and Moslem should not dine under the same roof, it is not considered incumbent to make any reply,—so lost are we to all sense of the absurdity and shamefulness of this denial to our conscience of the right of question. We are not to render any explanation in regard to the greater part of our habits and customs, just as the beasts and birds and trees are not. We are not to render

any explanation in regard to our social relations with one another on which the welfare and misery, the joy and sorrow, of so many so absolutely depend. But in our commerce with the foreigner, in the world of politics, how glibly have we learnt to ask questions, how accustomed we are becoming to require reasonable explanations of all laws and regulations !

In a land where man has kept himself in slavery by thus ignoring the claim of human rights in social relations, how can there arise any true demand for self-determination ? All rights in such a land needs must be concessions made by the generosity of others.

So I repeat that where man keeps himself petty he fails to catch the eye, his plaint for rights fails to reach the ear. And when such men come into contact with the strong they bring about their downfall by lowering their ideal of the relation between man and man. Such relations with the weak gradually make pride, injustice and cruelty become natural for the strong. The very ease with which they can wreak their will on the weak makes them unconsciously relax their belief in the sanctity of human freedom. So is the weakness of those who have not the power to resist, such a potent poison for all humanity. And our social system is but a vast machine for perpetuating such weakness. Its countless forces of unreasoning injunctions have, on the one hand, completely hemmed us in, and, on the other, they have cut at the very root of that freedom of conscience which alone could have served to find us a way out. Then again, there are the punishments of disproportionate severity

for even the most trivial offences by way of nonconformity. And so under the burden of unthinking stupidity, and the pressure of distracting fear, all sensibility and initiative, even in the least of life's affairs, is utterly crushed out. And then ? Then only beg and beg, and if alms be denied, weep and wail !

If alms should have been forthcoming for the asking, and our travail should have ceased with the dole, then indeed would our abjectness have become hopeless. It is because God will not curse us with the curse of eternal abjectness, kept continually pampered by gifts of rights out of others' magnanimity, that He is showering upon us sorrow after sorrow.

When the ship's hold is full of water then only does the buffeting of the outside waters become a menace. The inside water is not so visibly threatening, its inrush not so stupendously apparent,—it destroys with its dead weight. So the temptation is strong to cast all blame on the waves outside. But if the good sense does not dawn in time, of all hands manning the pumps, then sinking is inevitable. However hopeless the task of getting rid of the internal water may now and then appear, it is surely more hopeful than trying to bale away the water of the outside seas !

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.

*Translated by*  
SURENDRANATH TAGORE.

WAS THERE A MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE ?

**I** was shown by the C. I. D. Inspector at Amritsar a telegram from the Punjab Government prohibiting the entrance of Mr. Eardly Norton into the martial law area for the purpose of defending the

accused under trial at Lahore. The Inspector asked me if I knew Mr. Eardly Norton by sight, and I told him I did not. He kept the mail train waiting while a thorough search was made from end to

tion and raising of the poor, depressed and oppressed, presided on the occasion. The Report is, indeed, highly interesting and our readers will do well to procure for themselves a copy each to be had for the price of 8 annas at the following offices of this Mission :—

D. C. Mission Office, Charni Rd., Girgaum, Bombay.  
 " " 670 Taboot St., Camp, Poona.  
 " " Near Post Office, Old Hubli.  
 " " Panchpaoli, Nagpur City.  
 " " 142 Narayen Pillai Street, Bangalore Cantonment.

(15) IS IT SELF-GOVERNMENT? by Prasanvadan M. Desai, printed at the Commercial Press, Bombay. This pamphlet discusses in detail the management of municipal affairs in India which

the author holds, and he rightly does so, are far from self-governing.

(16) REPORT ON PUBLIC INSTRUCTION IN BENGAL for 1917-18.

(17) SUPPLEMENT to the above.

(18) RESOLUTION REVIEWING THE REPORTS ON THE WORKING OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS IN BENGAL FOR 1917-18.

(19) THE BENGAL, BIHAR AND ORISSA CO-OPERATIVE JOURNAL for May 1919.

(20) THE BOMBAY CO-OPERATIVE QUARTERLY for June, 1919.

(21) BUREAU OF EDUCATION OCCASIONAL REPORTS NO. 8.—THE TRAINING OF TEACHER—issued by Superintendent, Government Printing India, 8, Hastings Street, Calcutta. Price 8 As. or 9 d.

## A LETTER FROM ROMAIN ROLLAND TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The following letter has been sent by the great French author, Romain Rolland, to the poet, Rabindranath Tagore.

“CERTAIN free spirits, who feel the need of standing out against the almost universal oppression and servitude of the intellect, have conceived the project of this Declaration of Independence of the Spirit,—a copy of which I enclose.

Would you give us the honour of uniting your own name with ours? It appears to me that our ideas are not out of harmony with yours. We have already received the consent of Henri Barbusse, of Paul Signac, the painter, of Dr. Frederik van Eeden, of Prof. Georg Fri Nicolai, of Henry Van der Velde, of Stefan Zweig; and we expect the consent of Bertrand Russell, Selma Lagerlof, Upton Sinclair, Benedetto Croce, and others. We think of collecting at first three or four signatories for each country,—if possible, one writer, one savant, one artist,—and then publish the Declaration, making the appeal chiefly to the intellectual elite of all nations. If you can recruit for us some names in India, Japan and China, I should be very much obliged. I could wish that henceforth the intellect of Asia might take a more and more definite part in the manifestation of the thought of Europe. My dream will be that one day

we may see the union of these two hemispheres of the Spirit, and I admire you for having contributed towards this more than anyone else. Allow me to tell you in conclusion, how dear to us are your wisdom and your art, and accept, I pray, the expression of my profound sympathy.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

P.S.—I have allowed myself to lay stress on certain passages of your lecture of 1916, at Tokyo, in one of my articles published during the War. I am sending it to you under separate cover with the request that you will pardon the imperfection of the French translation. I enclose with it a little pamphlet, dedicated to one of our old philosophers of Europe, who has exercised a great attraction over my thought and whom perhaps you will love also—Empedocles of Agrigentum.

### DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF THE SPIRIT

Fellow-workers of the Spirit, comrades, scattered throughout the world and separated from one another for five years by the armies, the censorship, and the nations engaged in war, we address our appeal to you at this hour,—when the barriers are falling down and the frontiers are opening again,—to re-establish our brotherhood

of union, but a new union, more firm and secure than that which was established before.

The war has thrown our ranks into disorder. The greater number of the intellectuals have placed their knowledge, their art, their reason, at the service of the governments. We do not wish to accuse any one, or to make any personal reproach. We know the weakness of individual souls, and the elemental force of the great collective currents. All of a sudden, the latter has swept away the former; because nothing had been foreseen in time to offer resistance. May this experience at least serve us in good stead for the future.

And, first of all, let us fully realise the disasters which have resulted from the almost complete abdication of the intellect of the world and its voluntary enslavement to the forces let loose. The thinkers and artists had added a scourge which has tormented Europe in body and soul, an incalculable volume of poisonous hatred. They have searched every arsenal of their knowledge, their imagination, their ancient and modern precedents, historical, scientific, logical, poetical, for hate. They have laboured to destroy understanding and love between man and man. In doing this, they have disfigured and debased Thought, whose ambassadors they were. They have made Her the instrument of the passions, and without knowing it, perhaps, the weapon of the selfish interests of a political or social party, a state, a country, or a class. They now emerge from this savage conflict,—in which all nations, both victors and vanquished, have been consumed, bruised, impoverished, and in their heart of hearts, however little they acknowledge it, ashamed and humiliated at their consummate folly; and Thought, entangled in their struggles, emerges with them ruined and fallen.

Up! Let us set the Spirit free from these entanglements, from these humiliating alliances, from these hidden 'slaveries! The Spirit is the servant of none. It is we who are servants of the Spirit. We have no other master. We are made to carry, to protect its life, to rally round it all men who have gone astray. Our part, our duty is to keep a fixed point, to show forth the

pole-star in the midst of the turbulence of the passions in the night. Among these passions of pride and mutual destruction we make no selection; we reject them all. We serve Truth alone, Truth that is free and frontierless, without confines, without prejudice of race or caste. Certainly we do not exempt ourselves from Humanity. It is for Humanity we labour, but for Humanity whole and entire. We do not know peoples, we know the People, unique, universal, the People which suffers and struggles, which falls to rise again, which advances always over the rough road, drenched with its own sweat and blood, the People of all mankind, and equally our brothers. And it is in order that they with us should gain the consciousness of this brotherhood, that we raise up over their blind conflict the Arch of Alliance, of the Free Spirit, one and manifold, eternal,

#### RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S REPLY TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

The following letter was sent, in reply, by the Poet, Rabindranath Tagore, to M. Romain Rolland:—

"When my mind was steeped in the gloom of the thought, that the lesson of the late war had been lost, and that people were trying to perpetuate their hatred and anger into the same organised menace for the world which threatened themselves with disaster, your letter came and cheered me with its message of hope. The truths, that save us, have always been uttered by the few and rejected by the many, and have triumphed through their failures. 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. Kindly accept my thanks for the noble words with which you have introduced the French Translation of the passages from my 'Message to Japan' in your pamphlet. I hope to be excused for publishing, in one of our Magazines, an English

rendering of the same, as well as your letter to me with the Declaration. I have asked my publisher to send you my book

on "Nationalism" which contains my Japanese addresses and some more lectures on the same subject."

## NOTES

### Wisdom from China.

The worth of the ancient civilisation of China is proved, among other things, by the writings of her sages, which are store-houses of wisdom. Lao-tsze, the reputed author of the *Tao Teh King*, was born about 604 B. C. *The World and the New Dispensation* has been giving some extracts from a translation of this work of his which are priceless for their insight and wisdom. Some of them are given below.

To harmonise great enemies  
We must possess that which far surpasses enmity.

We must be able to be at peace  
In order to be active in Love.

That is why the self-controlled man holds the left-hand portion of the contract, but does not insist upon the other man producing his portion.

He who is virtuous may rule by a contract,  
He whose virtue is within may rule by destroying it.

To govern a kingdom, use righteousness,  
To conduct a war, use strategy.  
To be a true world-ruler, be occupied with Inner Life.

How do I know that this is so ?

By this :—

The more restrictive the laws,  
the poorer the people.

The more machinery used,  
the more trouble in a kingdom.

The more clever and skilful the people,  
the more do they make artificial things.

The more the laws are in evidence,  
the more do thieves and robbers abound.

That is why the self-controlled man says :—

If I act from Inner Life  
the people will become transformed in themselves.

If I love stillness  
the people will become righteous in themselves.

If I am occupied with Inner Life  
the people will become enriched in themselves.

If I love the Inner Life  
the people will become pure in themselves.

If the government is from the heart  
the people will be richer and richer.

If the government is full of restrictions  
the people will be poorer and poorer.

Where troops dwell, there grow thorns and briars.  
After great wars, there follow bad years.

He who loves, bears fruit unceasingly,  
He does not dare to conquer by strength.  
He bears fruit, but not with assertiveness,  
He bears fruit, but not with boastfulness,  
He bears fruit, but not with meanness,  
He bears fruit, but not to obtain it for himself,  
He bears fruit, but not to shew his strength.

If a great kingdom only desires to unify and  
nourish men,

If a small kingdom only desires to enter in and  
serve men,

Then the Master, in each case, shall obtain his  
desire.

He who is great ought to be lowly.

### God "left out."

"A very serious omission in the platform of the League of Nations as cabled from Paris" is pointed out by two American "trade publications," namely, *The American Lumberman*, of Chicago, and *The Bean-Bag*, of St. Louis. *The Bean-Bag* says that "nowhere in the platform, nor, so far as reported, in the proceedings that led up to its promulgation, is to be found any hint of official or public recognition of the fact, generally accepted by civilized humanity, of the existence of a Supreme Being who rules the destinies of nations, nor any petition for divine guidance in the most momentous crisis in the history of the world," and *The Lumberman* questions whether it is a "trifling omission" or "mere bigotry to refer to it?" It affirms that Americans who are familiar with their country's history will not so regard it. *The Lumberman* says that "the founders of the American Republic recorded in the Declaration of Independence their 'firm reliance upon the protection of Divine Providence.' This sentiment was reiterated by Lincoln in his immortal address at

## THE TRIAL OF THE HORSE

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

**B**RAHMĀ, the creator, was very near the end of his task of creation when a new idea struck him.

He sent for the Store-keeper and said : "O keeper of the stores, bring to my factory a quantity of each of the five elements. For I am ready to create another creature." "Lord of the universe," the store-keeper replied, "when in the first flush of creative extravagance you began to turn out such exaggerations as elephants and whales and pythons and tigers, you took no count of the stock. Now, all the elements that have density and force are nearly used up. The supply of earth and water and fire has become inconveniently scanty, while of air and ether there is as much as is good for us and a good deal more."

The four-headed deity looked perplexed and pulled at his four pairs of moustaches. At last he said, "The limitedness of material gives all the more scope to originality. Send me whatever you have left."

This time Brahmā was excessively sparing with the earth, water and fire. The new creature was not given either horns or claws, and his teeth were only meant for chewing, not for biting. The prudent care with which fire was used in his formation made him necessary in war without making him warlike.

This animal was the Horse.

The reckless expenditure of air and ether, which went into his composition, was amazing. And in consequence he perpetually struggled to outreach the wind, to outrun space itself. The other animals run only when they have a reason, but the horse would run for nothing whatever, as if to run out of his own skin. He had no desire to chase, or to kill, but only to fly on and on till he dwindled into a dot, melted into a swoon, blurred into a shadow, and vanished into vacancy.

The Creator was glad. He had given for

his other creatures' habitations,—to some the forests, to others the caves. But in his enjoyment of the disinterested spirit of speed in the Horse, he gave him an open meadow under the very eye of heaven.

By the side of this meadow lived Man.

Man has his delight in pillaging and piling things up. And he is never happy till these grow into a burden. So, when he saw this new creature pursuing the wind and kicking at the sky, he said to himself : "If only I can bind and secure this Horse, I can use his broad back for carrying my loads."

So one day he caught the Horse.

Then man put a saddle on the Horse's back and a spiky bit in his mouth. He regularly had hard rubbing and scrubbing to keep him fit, and there were the whip and spurs to remind him that it was wrong to have his own will.

Man also put high walls round the Horse, lest if left at large in the open the creature might escape him. So it came to pass, that while the Tiger who had his forest remained in the forest, the Lion who had his cave remained in the cave, the Horse who once had his open meadow came to spend his days in a stable. Air and ether had roused in the horse longings for deliverance, but they swiftly delivered him into bondage.

When he felt that bondage did not suit him, the Horse kicked at the stable walls.

But this hurt his hoofs much more than it hurt the wall. Still some of the plaster came off and the wall lost its beauty.

Man felt aggrieved.

"What ingratitude !" he cried. "Do I not give him food and drink ? Do I not keep highly-paid men-servants to watch over him day and night ? Indeed he is hard to please."

In their desperate attempts to please the Horse, the men-servants fell upon him

and so vigorously applied all their winning methods that he lost his power to kick and a great deal more besides.

Then Man called his friends and neighbours together, and said to them exultingly,—“Friends, did you ever see so devoted a steed as mine?”

“Never!” they replied. “He seems as still as ditch water and as mild as the religion you profess.”

The Horse, as is well known, had no horns, no claws, nor adequate teeth, at his birth. And, when on the top of this, all kicking at the walls and even into emptiness had been stopped, the only way to give vent to his feelings was to neigh.

But that disturbed Man’s sleep.

Moreover, this neighing was not likely to impress the neighbours as a pæan of devotion and thankfulness. So Man invented devices to shut the Horse’s mouth.

But the voice cannot be altogether suppressed so long as the mistake is made of leaving any breath in the body. Therefore a spasmodic sound of moaning came from his throat now and then.

One day this noise reached Brahmā’s ears.

The Creator woke up from his meditation. It gave him a start when he glanced at the meadow and saw no sign of the Horse.

“This is all your doing,” cried Brahmā, in anger to Yama, the God of death. “You have taken away the Horse!”

“Lord of all creatures!” Death replied: “All your worst suspicions you keep only for me. But most of the calamities in your beautiful world will be explained if you turn your eyes in the direction of Man.”

Brahmā looked below. He saw a small enclosure, walled in, from which the

dolorous moaning of his Horse came fitfully.

Brahmā frowned in anger.

“Unless you set free my Horse”, said he, “I shall take care that he grows teeth and claws like the Tiger.”

“That would be ungodly”, cried man, “to encourage ferocity. All the same, if I may speak plain truth about a creature of your own make, this Horse is not fit to be set free. It was for his eternal good that I built him this stable—this marvel of architecture.”

Brahmā remained obdurate.

“I bow to your wisdom,” said Man, “but if, after seven days, you still think that your meadow is better for him than my stable, I will humbly own defeat.”

After this Man set to work.

He made the Horse go free, but hobbled his front legs. The result was so vastly diverting that it was enough to make even a frog burst his sides with laughter.

Brahmā, from the height of his heaven, could see the comic gait of his Horse, but not the tragic rope which hobbled him. He was mortified to find his own creature openly exposing its divine maker to ridicule.

“It was an absurd blunder of mine”, he cried, “closely touching the sublime.”

“Grandsire,” said Man with a pathetic show of sympathy, “what can I do for this unfortunate creature? If there is a meadow in your heaven, I am willing to take trouble to transport him thither.”

“Take him back to your stable!” cried Brahmā in dismay.

“Merciful God!” cried Man, “what a great burden it will be for mankind!”

“It is the burden of humanity,” muttered Brahmā.

## RESURRECTION OF MOTHERHOOD AND FATHERHOOD

**F**ROM time immemorial motherhood has been regarded in this country as the highest function of female life. So much so that God has been represented

as having taken birth as a human babe to taste a mother’s love.

“Nandah kimakarod brahman  
Sreya ebam mahodayam

# THE MODERN REVIEW

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## THE RUNAWAY

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

### 1.

**M**OTI Babu, *Zamindar* of Katalia, was on his way home by boat. There had been the usual forenoon halt, alongside a village mart on the river, and the cooking of the midday meal was in progress.

A Brahmin boy came up to the boat and asked: "Which way are you going, Sir?" He could not have been older than fifteen or sixteen.

"To Katalia," Moti Babu replied.

"Could you give me a lift to Nandigram, on your way?"

Moti Babu acceded and asked the young fellow his name.

"My name is Tara," said the boy.

With his fair complexion, his great big eyes and his delicate, finely-cut, smiling lips, the lad was strikingly handsome. All he had on was a *dhoti*, somewhat the worse for wear, and his bare upper body displayed no superfluity either of clothing or flesh,—its rounded proportions looked like some sculptor's masterpiece.

"My son," said Moti Babu affectionately, "have your bath and come on board. You will dine with me."

"Wait a minute, Sir," said Tara, with which he jumped on the servants' boat moored astern, and set to work to assist in the cooking. Moti Babu's servant was an up-country man\* and it was evident that his ideas of preparing fish for the pot were crude. Tara relieved him of his task and

neatly got through it with complete success. He then made up one or two vegetable dishes with a skill which showed a good deal of practice. His work finished, Tara after a plunge in the river took out a fresh *dhoti* from his bundle, clad himself in spotless white, and with a little wooden comb smoothed back his flowing locks from his forehead into a cluster behind his neck. Then, with his sacred thread glistening over his breast, he presented himself before his host.

Moti Babu took him into the cabin where his wife, Annapurna, and their nine-year old daughter were sitting. The good lady was immensely taken with the comely young fellow,—her whole heart went out to him. Where could he be coming from: whose child could he be: ah, poor thing, how could his mother bear to be separated from him?—thought she to herself.

Dinner was duly served and a seat placed for Tara by Moti Babu's side. The boy seemed to have but a poor appetite. Annapurna put it down to bashfulness and repeatedly pressed him to try this and that, but he would not allow himself to be persuaded. He had clearly a will of his own, but he showed it quite simply and naturally without any appearance of wilfulness or obstinacy.

When they had all finished, Annapurna made Tara sit by her side and questioned him about himself. She was not successful in gathering much of a connected story, but this at least was clear that he had run away from home at the early age of ten or eleven.

\* Servants belonging to other provinces do not as a rule understand the niceties of Bengali culinary art. *Tr.*



"Have you no mother?" asked Annapurna.

"Yes."

"Does she not love you?"

This last question seemed to strike the boy as highly absurd. He laughed as he replied: "Why should she not?"

"Why did you leave her, then?" pursued the mystified lady.

"She has four more boys and three girls."

Annapurna was shocked. "What a thing to say!" she cried. "Can one bear to cut off a finger because there are four more?"

## 2.

Tara's history was as brief as his years were few, but for all that the boy was quite out of the common. He was the fourth son of his parents and had lost his father in his infancy. In spite of this large family of children, Tara had always been the favourite. He was petted alike by his mother, his brothers and sisters, and the neighbours. Even the schoolmaster usually spared him the rod, and when he did not, the punishment was felt by all the class. So there was no reason for him to leave his home. But, curiously enough, though the scamp of the village—whose time was divided between tasting of the fruits stolen from the neighbours' trees and the more plentiful fruits of his stealing pressed on him by these same neighbours—remained within the village bounds clinging to his scolding mother, the pet of the village ran away to join a band of wandering players.

There was a hue and cry, and a rescue party hunted him out and brought him back. His distracted mother strained him to her breast and deluged him with her tears. A stern sense of duty forced his elders to make an heroic effort to administer a mild corrective, but overcome by the reaction they lavished their repentant fondness on him worse than ever. The neighbours' wives redoubled their attentions in the hope of reconciling him to his home-life. But all bonds, even those of affection, were irksome to the boy. The star under which he was born must have decreed him homeless.

When Tara saw boats from foreign parts being towed along the river; or a *Sannyasi*, in his wanderings through un-

known lands, resting under one of the village trees, or a gypsy camp sprung up on the fallow field by the river, the gypsies seated by their mat-walled huts, splitting bamboos and weaving baskets, his spirit longed for the freedom of the mysterious outside world, unhampered by ties of affection. After he had repeated his escapade two or three times, his relations and neighbours gave up all hope of him.

When the proprietor of the band of players, which he had joined, began to love Tara as a son and he became the favourite of the whole party, big and small alike,—when he found that even the people of the houses at which their performances were given, chiefly the women, would send for him to mark their special appreciation, he gave them all the slip, and his companions could find no trace of him.

Tara was as impatient of bondage as a young deer, and as susceptible to music. It was the songs in the theatrical performances which had drawn him away from his home ties. Their tunes would make corresponding waves course through his veins and his whole being swayed to their rhythm. Even when he was quite a child, the solemn way in which he would sit out a musical performance, gravely nodding to mark the time, used to make it difficult for the grown-ups to restrain their laughter. Not only music, but the patter of the heavy July rain on the trees in full foliage, the roll of the thunder, the moaning of the wind through the thickets, as of some infant giant strayed from its mother,—would make him beside himself. The distant cry of the kites flying high in the blazing midday sky, the croaking of the frogs on a rainy evening, the howling of the jackals at dead of night,—all these stirred him to his depths.

This passion for music next led him to take up with a company of ballad-singers. The master took great pains in teaching him to sing and recite ballads composed in alliterative verse and jingling metre, based on stories from the epics, and became as fond of him as if he were a pet singing bird. But after he had learnt several pieces, one fine morning it was found that the bird had flown.

In this part of the country, during June and July, a succession of fairs are held turn by turn in the different villages, and bands of players and singers and dancing girls, together with hordes of traders of every kind, journey in boats along the big and little rivers from fair to fair. Since the year before a novelty in the shape of a party of acrobats had joined the throng, Tara after leaving the ballad singers had been traveling with a trader, helping him to sell his *pan*. His curiosity being roused, he threw in his lot with the acrobats. He had taught himself to play on the flute, and it was his sole function to play jigs, in the Lucknow style, while the acrobats were doing their feats. It was from this troupe that he had last run away. Tara had heard that the *Zamindar* of Nandigram was getting up some amateur theatricals on a grand scale. He promptly tied up his belongings into a bundle with the intention of going there, when he came across Moti Babu.

Tara's imaginative nature had saved him from acquiring the manners of any of the different companies with whom he had hobnobbed. His mind had always remained aloof and free. He had seen and heard many ugly things, but there was no vacancy within him for these to be stored away. Like other bonds, habit also failed to hold him. Swan-like, he swam lightly over the muddy waters of the world, and no matter how often his curiosity impelled him to dive into the mire beneath, his feathers remained unruffled and white. That is why the face of the runaway shone with an unsullied youthfulness which made even the middle-aged, worldly Moti Babu accept and welcome him, unquestioning and undoubting.

After dinner was over, the boat was cast off and Annapurna, with an affectionate interest, went on asking all about Tara's relatives and his home life. The boy made the shortest possible replies and at last sought refuge in flight to the deck.

The vast river outside, swollen by the seasonal rains to the last limit of its brink, seemed to embarrass mother Nature herself by its boisterous recklessness. The sun, shining out of a break in the clouds, touched as though with a magic wand, the rows

of half-submerged reeds at the water's edge, the fresh juicy green of the sugar-cane patches higher up on the bank and the purple haze of the woodlands on the further shore against the distant horizon. Everything was gleaming and thrilling and quickening and speaking with life.

Tara mounted the upper deck, and stretched himself under the shade of the spreading sail. One after another, sloping grassy meadows, flooded jute fields, deep green waves of *Aman* rice, narrow paths winding up to the village from the riverside, villages nestling amidst their dense groves, came into sight and passed away. This great world, with its wide-gazing sky, with all the stir and whisper in its fields, the tumult in its water, the restless rustle in its trees, the vast remoteness of its space above and below, was on terms of the closest intimacy with the boy, and yet it never, for a moment, tried to bind his restless spirit within a jealously exacting embrace.

Calves were gambolling by the riverside. Hobbled village ponies jimped along, grazing on the meadow lands. Kingfishers, perched on the bamboo poles put up for spreading the nets, took a sudden plunge every now and then after fish. Boys were playing pranks in the river. Village maids up to their breasts in the water chattered and laughed as they scrubbed their clothes. Fishwives with their baskets and tucked-up skirts bargained with the fishermen over their catch,—these everyday scenes never seemed to exhaust their novelty for Tara, his eyes could never quench their thirst.

Then Tara started to talk with the boatmen. He jumped up and took turns with them at the poles whenever the boat hugged the shore too closely. And when the steersman felt he would like a smoke Tara relieved him at the helm, and seemed to know exactly how to work the sail with the changing direction of the breeze and the boat.

A little before evening Annapurna sent for Tara inside and asked him: "What do you usually have for supper?"

"Whatever I get," was the reply, "and some days I don't get anything at all!"

Annapurna was not a little disappointed

at this lack of response. She felt she would like to feed and clothe and care for this homeless waif till he was made thoroughly happy, but somehow she could not find out what would please him. When a little later, the boat was moored for the night, she hustled about and sent out servants into the village to get milk and sweetmeats and whatever other dainties were to be had. But Tara contented himself with a very sparing supper and refused the milk altogether. Even Moti Babu, a man of few words, tried to press the milk on him, but he simply said: "I don't care for it."

Thus passed two or three days of their life on the river. Tara of his own accord, and with great alacrity, helped in the marketing and the cooking and lent a hand with the boatmen in whatever had to be done. Anything worth seeing never missed his keen glance. 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.

From the various professionals with whom he had associated, he had picked up many entertaining accomplishments. Free from all troubling, his mind had a wonderful receptivity. He had by heart any number of ballads and songs and long passages out of the dramas. One day, as was his custom, Moti Babu was giving a reading from the Ramayana to his wife and daughter. He was about to come to the story of Kusha and Lava, the valiant sons of Rama, when Tara could contain his excitement no longer. Stepping down from the deck into the cabin he exclaimed: "Put away the book, Sir. Let me sing you the story." He then began to recite Dasarathi's version of the story in a faultless flute-like voice, showering and scattering its wonderful rhymes and alliterations all over. The atmosphere became charged with a wealth of laughter and tears. The boatmen hung round the cabin doors to listen, and even the occupants of passing boats

strained their ears to get snatches of the floating melody. When it came to an end, a sigh went forth from all the listeners,—alas, that it should have finished so soon!

Annapurna with her eyes brimming over, longed to take Tara into her lap and fold him to her bosom. Moti Babu thought that if only he could persuade the lad to stay on with them he would cease to feel the want of a son. Only the little Charu, their daughter, felt as if she would burst with jealousy and chagrin!

### 3.

Charu was the only child of her parents, the sole claimant to their love. There was no end to her whims and caprices. She had ideas of her own as to dress and toilet, but these were liable to constant fluctuations. So whenever she was invited out, her mother was on tenter-hooks till the last moment, lest she should get something impossible into her head. If once she did not fancy the way her hair had been done, no amount of taking it down and doing it up again would be any good—the matter was sure to end in a fit of sulks. It was the same with most other things. When, however, she was in a good humour, she was reasonableness itself. She would then kiss and embrace her mother with a gushing affection, and distract her with incessant prattle and laughter. In a word, this little mite of a girl was an impossible enigma.

With all the fierceness of her untamed heart Charu began to hate Tara. She took to tearfully pushing away her platter at dinner, the cooking was done so badly! She slapped her maid, finding fault with her for no rhyme or reason. In fine she succeeded in making her parents thoroughly uncomfortable. The more interesting she, with the others, found Tara's varied accomplishments to be, the angrier she became. Since her mind refused to admit Tara's merits, how should she not be wild when they became too obtrusive?

When Tara first sang the story of Kusha and Lava, Annapurna had hoped that the music, which could have charmed the beasts of the forest, might serve to soften the temper of her wayward daughter. She

asked her: "And how did you like it, Charu?" A vigorous shaking of the head was all the reply she got, which translated into words must have meant: "I did not like it, and I never will like it, so there!"

Divining that it was a pure case of jealousy the mother gave up showing any attention to Tara in her daughter's presence. But when after her early supper Charu had gone off to bed, and Moti Babu was sitting out on deck with Tara, Annapurna took her seat near the cabin door and asked Tara to give them a song. As the melody flooded the evening sky, seeming to enrapture into a hush the villages reposing under the dusk, and filling Annapurna's tender heart with an ecstasy of unutterable love and beauty, Charu left her bed and came up sobbing: "What a noise you are all making, mother! I can't get a wink of sleep!" How could she bear the idea of being sent off to bed alone, and all of them hanging round Tara, revelling in his singing?

Tara, for his part, found the tantrums of this little girl, with the bright black eyes, highly diverting. He tried his best to win her over by telling her stories, singing songs to her, playing on the flute for her,—but with no success. Only when he plunged into the river for his daily swim, with his *dhoti* lifted short above his knees and tightened round his waist, his fair supple limbs cleaving the water with skilful ease, like some water-sprite at play, her curious gaze could not help being attracted. She would be looking forward every morning to his bath-time, but without letting any one guess her fascination. And when the time came, this little untaught actress would fall to practice her knitting by the cabin window with a world of attention: only now and again her eyes would be raised to throw a casual, seemingly contemptuous glance at Tara's performance.

They had long passed by Nandigram, but of this Tara had taken no notice. The big boat swept onwards with a leisurely movement, sometimes under sail, sometimes towed along, through river, tributary and branch. The days of its inmates wore on like these streams, with a lazy flow of unexciting hours of mild variedness. No

one was in any kind of hurry. They all took plenty of time over their daily bath and food, and even before it grew quite dark the boats would be moored near the landing place of some village of sufficient size, against a woodland background, lively with the sparkle of fireflies and the chirping of cicadas. In this way it took them over ten days to get to Katalia.

## 4.

On the news of the *Zamindar* Babu's arrival, men, palanquins and ponies were sent out to meet his boat, and the retainers fired off a salvo startling the village crows into noisy misgivings. Impatient of the delay occasioned by this formal welcome Tara quietly slipped off the boat by himself, and made a rapid round of the village. Some he hailed as brother or sister, others as uncle or aunt, and in the short space of two or three hours he had made friends with all sorts and conditions of people.

It was perhaps because Tara acknowledged no bonds that he could win his way so easily into others' affections,—anyhow in a few days the whole village had capitulated unconditionally. One of the reasons for his easy victory was the quickness with which he could enter into the spirit of every class, as if he was one of themselves. He was not the slave of any habit, but he could easily and simply get used to things. With children, he was just a child, yet aloof and superior. With his elders, he was not childish, but neither was he a prig. With the peasant, he was a peasant without losing his brahminhood. He took part in the work or play of all of them with zest and skill. One day as he was seated at a sweetmeat-seller's, the latter begged him to mind the shop while he went on some errand, and the boy cheerfully sat there for hours, driving off the flies with a palmyra leaf. He had some knowledge of how to make sweetmeats; and could also take a hand at the loom, or at the potter's wheel with equal ease.

But though he had made a conquest of the village, he had been unable to overcome the jealousy of one little girl; and

it may be that just because he felt that this atom of femininity desired his banishment with all her might, he made such a prolonged stay in Katalia.

But little Charu was not long in furnishing fresh proof of the inscrutability of the feminine mind. Sonamani, the daughter of the cook\* (a Brahmin woman) had been widowed at the early age of five or six. She was now of Charu's age and her closest friend. She was confined to her quarters with some ailment when the family returned home and so could not come to see her companion for some days. When at last she did turn up, the two bosom friends nearly fell out for good. This is how it happened.

Charu had started on the story of her travels with great circumstance. With the thrilling episode of the abduction of the gem, known as Tara, she had fully expected to raise her friend's curiosity and wonderment to the topmost pitch. But when she learned that Tara was not unknown to Sonamani, that he called Sonamani's mother, aunt, and Sonamani called him *dada*†—when she further gathered that Tara had not only charmed both mother and daughter by playing songs of the loves of Radha and Krishna on the flute, but had actually made a bamboo flute for Sonamani with his own hand, and plucked fruit for her from tree tops and flowers for her from brambly thickets,—she felt as if a red-hot spear had been thrust into her.

That very day, Charu, on some different pretext, vowed eternal enmity to Sonamani. And going into Tara's room she pulled out his favourite flute, threw it on the floor and kicked and stamped and trampled it into shivers.

While she was thus furiously busy Tara came into the room. The picture of passion which the girl presented amazed him. "Charu!" he cried. "Why are you smashing up my flute?"

"Serve you right. I'd do it again!" she screamed, as with flushed face and

reddened eyes she gave the flute some more superfluous kicks and then ran away crying from the room.

Tara picked up his flute to find it utterly done for. He could not help laughing out loud to think of the sudden fate which had overtaken his unoffending instrument. Charu was becoming for him more and more an object of curiosity as days went by.

He found in this house other objects, also, which gave full scope to his curiosity. These were the English picture books in Moti Babu's library. Though his knowledge of the outside world was considerable, he found it difficult to enter fully into this world of pictures. He tried to make up for the deficiency by dint of his imagination. But that did not prove wholly satisfactory.

Finding the picture books so greatly attracting Tara, Moti Babu one day asked him: "Would you like to learn English? You could then understand all about these pictures."

"I would indeed!" exclaimed Tara.

Moti Babu, highly delighted, at once arranged with the head master of the village school to give him English lessons.

##### 5.

With his keen memory and undivided attention, Tara set to work at his English lessons. He seemed to have embarked on some adventurous quest and left all his old life behind. The neighbours saw no more of him, and when in the afternoon, just before it got dark, he would pace rapidly up and down the deserted riverside, getting up his lessons, his devoted band of boys looked on dejectedly from a distance, not daring to interrupt him.

Even Charu but rarely came across him. Tara had been used to come into the *zenana* for his meals, of which he partook leisurely, under the kindly eyes of Annapurna. He could no longer brook the loss of time which took place over all this, and begged Moti Babu's permission to be served in his room outside. Annapurna was grieved at the prospect of losing his company, and protested. But Moti Babu, glad to find the boy so mindful of his studies, fell in with the idea and so arranged it.

\* Cooks in Hindu households are usually Brahmins (invariably so in Brahmin households) and are on a much higher footing than menial servants.

† Elder brother.

All of a sudden Charu announced that she also must and would learn English. Her parents at first took it as a great joke and laughed heartily over their little one's latest caprice. But she effectually washed away the humorous part of the proposal with a flood of tears; and her helplessly doting guardians had to take the matter seriously. Charu was placed under the same tutor and had her lessons with Tara.

But studiousness did not come naturally to this flighty little creature. She not only did not learn herself, but made it difficult for Tara to do so either. She would lag behind by not preparing her lessons, but would fly into a rage, or burst into tears, if Tara went on to the next one without her. When Tara was through with one book and had to get another, the same had to be procured for her also. Her jealousy would not allow her to put up with Tara's way of sitting alone in his room to do his exercises. She took to stealing in, when he was not there, and daubing his exercise book with ink, or making away with his pen. Tara would bear these depredations as long as he could, and when he could not he would chastise her, but she could not be got to mend her ways.

At last, by accident, Tara hit upon an effective method. One day, as he had torn out an ink-bespattered page from his exercise book and was sitting there thoroughly vexed about it, Charu peeped in. "Now I am going to catch it," thought she. But as she came in, her hopes were disappointed. Tara sat quiet, without a word. She flitted in and out, sometimes edging near enough for him to give her a smack, if he had been so minded. But no, he remained as still and grave as ever. The little culprit was at her wit's end. She had never been used to begging pardon, and yet her penitent heart yearned to make it up. Finding no other way out, she took up the torn-out page and sitting near him wrote on it in a large round hand: "I will never do it again." She then went through a variety of manœuvres to draw Tara's attention to what she had written. Tara could keep his countenance no longer, and burst out laughing. The girl fled from the room be-

side herself with grief and anger.—She felt that nothing short of the complete obliteration of that sheet of paper, from eternal time and infinite space, would serve to wipe away her mortification!

Bashful, shrinking Sonamani would sometimes come round to the schoolroom door, hesitate at the threshold and then take herself off. She had made it up with Charu, and they were as great friends as ever in all else, but where Tara was concerned Sonamani was afraid and cautious. So she usually chose the time when Charu was inside the *Zenana*, to hover near the schoolroom door. One day Tara caught sight of the retreating figure and called out: "Hullo, Sona, is that you? What's the news: how is Aunt?"

"You haven't been to us for so long," said Sonamani. "Mother has a pain in the back, or she would have come to see you herself."

At this point Charu came up. Sonamani was all in a flutter. She felt as if she had been caught stealing her friend's property. Charu, with a toss of her head, and her voice pitched shrill, cried out: "For shame, Sonamani! To be coming and disturbing lessons! I'll tell mother." To bear Tara's self-constituted guardian, one would have thought that her sole care in life was to prevent the disturbance of his studies! What brought her here at this time the Lord might have known, but Tara had no idea.

Poor, flustered Sonamani sought refuge in making up all kinds of excuses, whereupon Charu called her a nasty little storyteller and she had to slink away, owning complete defeat.

But the sympathetic Tara shouted after her: "All right, Sona, tell your mother I'll go and see her this evening."

"Oh! Will you?" sneered Charu. "Haven't you got lessons to do? I'll tell *Master masai*,\* you see if I don't!"

Undeterred by the threat, Tara went over to Dame Cook's quarters one or two evenings. On the third, Charu went one better than mere threatening. She fastened

\* Respectful way of addressing or referring to a teacher of English. *Tr.*

the chain outside Tara's door and, taking a small padlock off her mother's spice-box, locked him in for the evening, only letting him out when it was supper time. Tara was excessively annoyed and swore he would not touch a morsel of food. The repentant girl, beside herself, begged and prayed for forgiveness. "I'll never, never do it again," she pleaded, "I beg of you at your feet, do please have something to eat." Tara was at first obdurate, but when she began to sob as if her heart would break, he had to turn back and sit down to his supper.

Charu had often and often said to herself that she would never again tease Tara and be very, very good to him, but Sonamani,—or something or other,—would get in the way and spoil her virtuous resolution.

And it came about that whenever Tara found her particularly quiet and good he began to look out for an explosion. How or why it happened he never could make out, but there it was sure enough,—a regular storm, followed by showers of tears,—and then the bright sun shone out and there was peace.

## 6.

Thus passed two whole years. Tara had never before permitted any one to cage him for so long a time. Perhaps it was his attraction for the novelty of his studies; perhaps it was a change of character, due to increasing age, which made his restless spirit welcome the change to a restful life; perhaps, again, his pretty little fellow-student, with her endless variety of teasing ways, had cast a secret spell over his heart.

Charu had reached her marriageable age. Moti Babu was anxiously casting about for a suitable bridegroom. But the mother said to her husband: "Why are you hunting for bridegrooms, high and low? Tara is quite a nice boy,—and our daughter is fond of him, too."

The proposal took Moti Babu by surprise. "How can that be?" he exclaimed. "We know nothing of his family or antecedents. Our only daughter must make a good match."

One day a party came over from the Raydanga *Zamindar's* to see the girl with a view to make a proposal. An attempt was made to get Charu dressed up and taken to the reception rooms outside. But she locked herself into her bedroom and refused to stir out. Moti Babu stood by the door and pleaded and scolded in vain; at last he had to return outside and make feeble excuses to the would-be bridegroom's party, saying his daughter was indisposed. They came to the conclusion that there was something wrong with the girl which was sought to be concealed, and the matter fell through.

Then Moti Babu's thoughts came back to Tara. He was handsome and well-behaved, and in every way desirable. He could continue to live with them, and so the wrench of sending away their only child to another's house could be done away with. It also struck him that the wilful ways of his little one, which seemed so readily excusable in her father's home, would not be so indulgently tolerated in that of her husband.

The husband and wife had a long talk about it and finally decided to send over to Tara's village in order to make inquiries. When the news was brought back that the family was respectable enough, but poor, a formal proposal was at once sent off to the mother and the elders. And they, overjoyed at the prospect, lost no time in signifying their consent.

Moti Babu discussed and settled the time and place of the wedding with his wife alone; with his habitual reticence and caution he kept the matter secret from everybody else.

Meanwhile Charu would now and then make stormy raids on the schoolroom outside,—sometimes angry, sometimes affectionate, sometimes contemptuous, but always disturbing. And gleams, as of lightning flashes, would create a hitherto unknown tumult in the once free and open sky of the boy's mind. His unburdened life now felt the obstruction of some network of dream-stuff into which it had drifted and become entangled. Some days Tara would leave aside his lessons and betake himself to the library, where he

would remain immersed in the pictures. And the world, which his imagination now conjured up out of these, was different from the former one and far more intensely coloured. The boy was struck with this change in himself, and conscious of a new experience.

Moti Babu had fixed upon a day in July for the auspicious ceremony, and sent out invitations accordingly to Tara's mother and relatives. He also instructed his agent in Calcutta to send down a brass band and the other innumerable paraphernalia necessary for a wedding. But to Tara, he had not as yet said a word about the matter.

In the meantime the monsoon had set in. The river had almost dried up, the only sign of water being the pools left in the hollows; elsewhere the river bed was deeply scored with the tracks of the carts which had latterly been crossing over. The village boats, stranded high and dry, were half imbedded in the caking mud. Then all of a sudden one day, like a married daughter returning to her father's house, a swift-flowing current, babbling and laughing with glee, danced straight into the empty heart and outstretched arms of the village. The boys and girls romped about with joy and never seemed to get done with their sporting and splashing in the water, embracing their long lost friend. The village women left their tasks and came out to greet their boon companion of old. And everywhere fresh life was stirred up in the dry, languishing village.

Boats from distant parts, small and big, and of all varieties of shape, bringing their freight, began to be seen on the river, and the bazars in the evening resounded with the songs of the foreign boatmen. During the dry season, the villages on either bank were left in their secluded corners, to while away the time with their domestic concerns, and then in the rains the great outside World would come a-wooing, mounted on his silt-red chariot, laden with presents of merchandise, and all pettiness would be swept away for a time in the glamour of the courting; all would be life and gaiety, and festive clamour would fill the skies.

This year the Nag Zamindars, close by,

were getting up a specially gorgeous ear-festival, and there was to be a grand fair. When, in the moon-lit evening, Tara went sauntering by the river, he saw boat upon boat hurrying by, some filled with merry-go-rounds, others bearing theatrical parties, singing and playing as they went, and any number carrying traders and their wares. There was one containing a party of strolling players, with a violin vigorously playing a well-known tune, and the usual *ha! ha!* of encouragement boisterously shouted out every time it came back to the refrain. The up-country boatmen of the cargo boats kept up an unmeaning but enthusiastic din with their cymbals, without any accompanying song or tune. All was the excitement and bustle.

And as Tara looked on, an immense mass of cloud rolled up from the horizon, spreading and bellying out like a great black sail; the moon was overcast; the east wind sprang up driving along cloud after cloud; the river swelled and heaved. In the swaying woods on the river banks the darkness grew tense, frogs croaked and shrill cicadas seemed to be sawing away at the night with their chirp.

All the world was holding a car-festival that evening, with flags flying, wheels whirling and the earth rumbling. Clouds pursued each other, the wind rushed after them, the boats sped on, and songs leapt to the skies. Then, the lightning flashed out, rending the sky from end to end; the thunder crackled forth; and out of the depths of the darkness a scent of moist earth, from some rainfall near by, filled the air. Only the sleepy little village of Katalia dozed away in its corner, with doors closed and lights out.

Next day, Tara's mother and brothers disembarked at Katalia and three big boats full of the various requirements of the wedding touched at the zamindar's landing ghat. Next day, Sonamani in great trepidation ventured to take some preserves and pickles to Tara's room and stood hesitating at his door. But next day there was no Tara to be seen. Before the conspiracy of love and affection had succeeded in completely hemming him in, the unattached, free-souled Brahmin boy had



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

Translated by  
SURENDRANATH TAGORE.

## SIVA OR MAHADEV

BY THE SISTER NIVEDITA.

**E**VERY well-born Hindu boy is taught that his ancestors have not always lived in India. The people's own name for themselves is Aryans and they believe that they came into the Peninsula from the North, across the mountain-passes of the Himalayas. Indeed, there are still a few tribes living in the Hindukush called the *Lall Kaffir*, or Fair Folk, because they are of pale complexion. The original stock of the Hindus probably have been left behind on the Southward march of their countrymen.

At any rate, the stories and present religion of the people have grown up since they crossed the mountains. In early days they had no images. Neither had they temples. They had open spaces or clearings and here they would gather in crowds to perform the Fire-Sacrifice. The fire was made of wood, borne to the spot on the back of a bull. And there were priests who recited chants and knew exactly how to pile up logs—for this was done in geometrical patterns, very carefully arranged—and how to make the offerings. This was the business of the priest, just as it is another man's work to grow corn or to understand weaving. He was paid for it and used his money to support his wife and children.

As far as we can go back however, Hindus have always believed that if a man wanted to be *religious*, he must give his whole life up to that. A *good* man may manage a home and family and business, they say. But if a man wants to be *musical* he gives all his care and thought to music; if *clever*, to study. And is it *easier* to know Truth than to do these

things? So you see they have a very high ideal of what being religious means. But where do you think they expect a man to go in order to become this? The musician takes his place before some instrument—does he not?—the piano, or the organ, or the violin. And the student goes to school or college. But to become religious, the Hindu would send a man into the forest! There he would be expected to live in a cave or under trees; to eat only the wild roots and fruits that he could find in the wood and to wear pieces of the bark of the white birch for clothing. This is a curious picture that you see now with your eyes shut, is it not? But it is not finished. You see the idea is that a great part of religion consists in quieting the mind. And being alone, without any need to think of food or clothes or home, in silence, amongst the trees and the birds, must be a great help to this. But it goes further. What would become of a man's *hair*, living far away from other men, without brushes and combs and scissors? It would grow thick and unkempt, would it not? And so great masses of hair coiled up hastily and fixed on the top of the head are amongst the best marks of religion in these forest-dwellers. They are expected to bathe constantly, even to wash the hair, but they can not spare time from meditation to make it beautiful. Now and then we see a man like this passing along the streets of some Indian city, with his long staff in one hand crowned by three points, —like the trident of Neptune,—and a begging-bowl with a handle in the other. But the place to find such people in great

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## AUTUMN-FESTIVAL

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

*Translated by the author from a Bengali play written for the boys of the Shanti-niketan.*

### CHARACTERS

SANYASI—EMPEROR VIJAYADITYA IN DISGUISE  
THAFURDADA  
LUCKESWAR  
UPANANDA  
RAJAH  
THE BOYS, COURTIER, &C

SCENE—The Forest near the River  
Vetasini

me to share his food, which was scanty enough. I have come to offer my service till his debt is fully paid.

LUCKESWAR AND UPANANDA.

*Luckeswar*

*Luckeswar.*

Have you brought me the money which is long overdue?

Indeed! Now that he is no more you have come to share my food, which is not overabundant. I am not such an ass as to be taken in by you. However let me first know what you can do.

*Upananda.*

*Upananda.*

My master died last night.

*Luckeswar.*

Died! Absurd! That trick won't do. What about the money?

I can copy manuscripts and illuminate them. Food I won't take in your house. I shall earn it and also pay off the debt.

*Upananda.*

*Luckeswar.*

He hasn't left anything except the *vina* which was his only means of paying off your debt.

*Luckeswar.*

Only the *vina*! That's a consoling piece of news to bring to me.

(Aside) The *vina* player was a big fool and he has moulded this boy in his own pattern. This vagabond is pining to take up some voluntary burden to be crushed to death. For some creatures this is the only natural death.—Good, I agree. But you must pay me the money on the third day of each month, otherwise—

*Upananda.*

*Upananda.*

I haven't come to give you news. There was a time when I was a beggar in the street; he sheltered me and allowed

Otherwise what! Your threats are of no use. In memory of my dear master I

take this up. But no threats for me, I warn you.

*Luckeswar.*

Don't take offence, my child. You are made of gold, every inch of you ; you are a jewel. You know I have my god in the temple, his worship depends upon my charity. If, owing to any irregularity in your payment, I have to curtail the temple expenses, the sin will be on your head. (Upananda moves away to another side of the forest.) Who's that ! It must be my own boy prowling about this place. I am sure the rogue is seeking for the place where I keep my treasure hidden. Simply out of fear of these prying noses I have to remove it from place to place.—Dhanapati, why on earth are you here ?

*Dhanapati.*

If you give me leave, I can have my game here this morning with the other boys.

*Luckeswar.*

(Aside) I know their game. They have got scent of that big pearl which I hid near this spot. (To Dhanapati) No, that won't do ! Come at once to your multiplication table.

*Dhanapati.*

But, Sir, it is a beautiful day—

*Luckeswar.*

What do you mean by the day being beautiful ! Come at once ! (Drags him away.)

ENTER BOYS WITH THAKURDADA.

*First Boy.*

You belong to our party, Thakurdada !

*Second Boy.*

No, to ours.

*Thakurdada.*

Children, I don't sell myself in shares. I must remain undivided. Now for the song.

(THEY SING.)

Over the green and yellow ricefields

sweeps the shadows of the autumn clouds followed by the swift-chasing sun.

The bees forget to sip their honey ; drunken with light they foolishly hover and hum.

The ducks in the islands of the river clamour in joy for nothing.

ENTER ANOTHER GROUP OF BOYS.

*Third Boy.*

Was it fair ? Why didn't you call us when you came out ?

*Thakurdada.*

It is your part to call me out. Don't quarrel, finish the song.

(THEY SING.)

Let none go back home, brothers, this morning, let none go to work.

Let us take the blue sky by storm and plunder space as we run.

Laughter floats in the air like foam on the flood.

Brothers, let us squander our morning in futile songs.

*First Boy.*

Look there Thakurdada, a sanyasi is coming.

*Second Boy.*

It's grand ! We shall have a game with the sanyasi. We shall be his followers.

*Third Boy.*

We shall follow him to the end of the earth and nobody will be able to find us out.

*Thakurdada.*

Hush, he has come.

*The Boys.*

(Shouting) Sanyasi Thakur ! Sanyasi Thakur !

*Thakurdada.*

Stop that noise ! The father will be angry.

*First Boy.*

Sanyasi Thakur, will you be angry with us ?

*Second Boy.*

We shall become your followers for this morning.

*Sanyasi.*

Excellent! When you have had your turn, I shall be your followers. That will be splendid fun!

*Thakurdada.*

My salutation. Who are you, father?

*Sanyasi.*

I am a student.

*Thakurdada.*

Student!

*Sanyasi.*

I have come out to fling to the four winds my books.

*Thakurdada.*

I understand. You want to be lightened of your learning, to follow the path of wisdom unburdened.

*First Boy.*

Thakurdada is wasting time with talk, and our holiday will come to its close.

*Sanyasi.*

You are right, my boys. My holidays are also near their end.

*The Boys.*

Have you long holidays?

*Sanyasi.*

Oh! no, extremely short. My school-master is already after me.

*First Boy.*

You frighten us! Even you have school-masters?

*Sanyasi.*

What boy is that under the shade of that tree, merged in his manuscripts?

*Boys.*

He is Upananda.

*First Boy.*

Upananda, we are Sanyasi Thakur's followers, come and become our chief.

*Upananda.*

Not to-day. I have my work.

*Second Boy.*

No work. You must come!

*Upananda.*

I must finish copying manuscripts.

*Third Boy.*

Father, you ask him to come. He won't listen to us.

*Sanyasi.*

(To Upananda) What work have you, my son? To-day is not meant for work.

*Upananda.*

I know it is our holiday. But I have my debt to pay and I must work.

*Thakurdada.*

Upananda, your debt! To whom?

*Upananda.*

My master has died, he is in debt to Luckeswar. I must pay it off.

*Thakurdada.*

Alas! that such a boy as you must pay your debts, and on such a day! The first breath of the autumn has sent a shiver through the white crest of flowering grass and the *shiuli* blossoms have offered their fragrance to the air, as if in the joy of reckless sacrifice, and it pains me to see that boy sitting in the midst of all this, toiling to pay his debts.

*Sanyasi.*

Why, this is as beautiful as all these flowers,—his paying his debts. He has made this morning glorious, sitting in its centre. Baba, you go on writing, let me watch you. Every line you finish brings you freedom, and thus you fill your holiday with truth. Give me one of your manuscripts and let me help you.

*Thakurdada.*

I have my spectacles with me, let me also sit down to this work.

*First Boy.*

We shall also write. This is great fun!

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*Second Boy.*

Yes, yes, let us try.

*Upananda.*

But it will be such a great trouble to you, father.

*Sanyasi.*

That is why I join you. We shall take trouble for fun. What do you say to that, boys ?

*The Boys.*

(Clapping hands) Yes, yes.

*First Boy.*

Give me one of the books.

*Second Boy.*

And me also.

*Upananda.*

But are you sure you can do it.

*The Boys.*

O! Yes!

*Upananda.*

You won't be tired ?

*Second Boy.*

Never.

*Upananda.*

You will have to be very careful.

*First Boy.*

Try us.

*Upananda.*

There must be no mistakes.

*Second Boy.*

Not a bit.

*Sanyasi.*

Baba Upananda, what was your master's name ?

*Upananda.*

Surasen.

*Sanyasi.*

Surasen, the *vina* player ?

*Upananda.*

Yes, father. Was he known to you ?

*Sanyasi.*

I came to this place with the one hope of hearing him.

*Upananda.*

Had he such fame ?

*Thakurdada.*

Was he such a master, that a sanyasi like yourself should have come all this way to hear him ? Then we must have missed knowing him truly.

*Sanyasi.*

But the Rajah of this place ?

*Thakurdada.*

The Rajah never even saw him. But where could you have heard him play ?

*Sanyasi.*

I suppose you know that there is a Rajah whose name is Vijayaditya.

*Thakurdada.*

We may be very provincial, but surely you don't expect us not even to know him.

*Sanyasi.*

Very likely. Surasen played the *vina* in his court, where I was present. The Rajah tried hard to keep him permanently in his capital, but he failed.

*Thakurdada.*

What a pity that we did not honour him.

*Sanyasi.*

But that neglect has only made him all the greater. God has called him to His own court. Upananda, how did you come to know him ?

*Upananda.*

At my father's death I came to this town seeking shelter. It was at the end of July and the rain was pouring down in torrents. I was trying to find a corner in Lokanath temple, when the priest came and drove me out, expecting me to be of a low caste. My master was playing the *vina* in the temple. At once he came up and putting his arms round my neck asked

me to come to his house. From that day he brought me up suffering calumny for my sake.

*Sanyasi.*

How did you learn illuminating manuscripts ?

*Upananda.*

At first I asked him to teach me to play the *vina*, so that I could earn something and be useful to him. He said, "Baba, this art is not for filling one's stomach." And so he taught me how to use paints for copying books.

*Sanyasi.*

Though Surasen's *vina* is silent, I hear the undying music of his life through you. My boy go on with your writing.

*The Boys.*

(Starting up). There he comes, Lucki's owl! We must run away. (They go.)

ENTERS LUCKESWAR.

*Luckeswar.*

Horror! Upananda is sitting exactly on the spot where the pearl is hidden. I was simple to think he was a fool seeking to pay off other people's debts. He is cleverer than he looked. He is after my pearl. I see he has captured a sanyasi to help him. Upananda!

*Upananda.*

What's the matter!

*Luckeswar.*

Get up from that spot at once! What business have you to be sitting there!

*Upananda.*

And what business have you to be shouting at me like that! Does this place belong to you?

*Luckeswar.*

It is no concern of yours, if it does or does not.—You are cunning! The other day this fellow came to me, looking innocent as a babe whose mother's milk had hardly dried on his lips. And I believed him when

he said that he came to pay his master's debts. Of course, it is in the King's statute also,—

*Upananda.*

I sat down to my work here for that very purpose.

*Luckeswar.*

That very purpose! How old am I do you think? Only born overnight?

*Sanyasi.*

But why do you suspect him and of what?

*Luckeswar.*

As if you know nothing! False Sanyasi!

*Upananda.*

(Getting excited) Won't I just smash his teeth with this pestle of mine!

(Luckeswar hides himself behind the sanyasi.)

*Sanyasi.*

Don't be excited. Luckeswar knows human nature better than any of you here. Directly he sets his eyes upon me, I am caught,—a sanyasi false from his matted hair to his bare foot. I have passed through many countries and everywhere they believed in me, but Luckeswar is hard to deceive.

*Luckeswar.*

(Aside) I am afraid I am mistaken. It was rash on my part. He may curse me. I still have three boats on the sea. (Taking the dust off Sanyasi's feet.) My salutation to you, father! I did make a blunder. Thakurdada, you had better take our Sanyasi to our house. I'll give him some alms. But you go first; don't delay, I shall be there in a minute.

*Thakurdada.*

You are excessively kind. Do you think that father has come crossing hills and seas to accept a handful of rice from you?

*Sanyasi.*

Why not Thakurdada! Where that

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handful of rice is so very dear, I must claim it. Come Luckeswar!

*Luckeswar.*

I shall follow you. Upananda, you get up first! Get up, I say, with your books and other nonsense.

*Upananda.*

Very well, I get up. Than I cut off all connection with you for good.

*Luckeswar.*

That will be a great relief to me. I was getting on splendidly before I had any connection with you.

*Upananda.*

My debt is paid with this insult that I suffer from your hands. (Goes.)

*Luckeswar.*

My God! Sepoys riding on horses are coming this way! I wonder if our Rajah also—I prefer Upananda to him. (To Sanyasi) Father, by your holy feet I entreat you, sit on this spot, just on this spot; no, slightly to the left, slightly more. Yes, now it is all right. Sit firmly on this plot of grass. Let the Rajah come or the Emperor, don't you budge an inch. If you keep my words, I'll satisfy you later on.

*Thakurdada.*

What is the matter with Luckeswar? Has he gone mad?

*Luckeswar.*

Father, the very sight of me suggests money to my Rajah. My enemies have falsely informed him that I keep my treasure hidden underground. Since this report, our Rajah has been digging an enormous number of wells in this kingdom. When asked for reasons, he said it was to remove the scarcity of water from this land. And now I can't sleep at nights because of the fear that a sudden fit of his generosity might lead him to remove the water scarcity from the floor of my own dwelling.

ENTERS THE KING'S MESSENGER.

*Messenger.*

Father, my salutation! You are Apurva-Ananda?

*Sanyasi.*

Some people know me by that name.

*Messenger.*

The rumour is abroad of your extraordinary powers. Our Rajah is desirous of seeing you.

*Sanyasi.*

He will see me whenever he sets his eyes on me.

*Messenger.*

If you would kindly—

*Sanyasi.*

I have given my word to somebody that I shall remain immoveable in this place.

*Messenger.*

The King's garden is close by.

*Sanyasi.*

All the less trouble for him to come.

*Messenger.*

I shall make known to him your wishes. (Goes.)

*Thakurdada.*

Since an irruption of Rajahs is apprehended, I take my leave.

*Sanyasi.*

Do you gather my scattered friends together and keep them ready for me.

*Thakurdada.*

Let disasters come in the shape of Kings or of anarchy, I firmly hold by you. (Goes.)

ENTERS LUCKESWAR.

*Luckeswar.*

I have overheard all. You are the famous Apurva-Ananda! I ask your pardon for the liberties I have taken.

*Sanyasi.*

I readily pardon you for your calling me a sham sanyasi.



*Luckeswar.*

But, father, mere pardon does not cost much. You cannot dismiss Luckeswar with that. I must have a boon,—quite a substantial one.

*Sanyasi.*

What boon do you ask ?

*Luckeswar.*

I must confess to you, father, that I have piled up a little money for myself, though not quite to the measure of what people imagine. But the amount does not satisfy me. Tell me the secret of some treasure, which may lead me to the end of my wanderings.

*Sanyasi.*

I am also seeking for this.

*Luckeswar.*

I can't believe it.

*Sanyasi.*

Yes, it is true.

*Luckeswar.*

Then you are wider awake than we are.

*Sanyasi.*

Certainly.

*Luckeswar.*

(Whispering) Have got on the track ?

*Sanyasi.*

Otherwise I shouldn't be roving about like this.

*Luckeswar.*

(Touching his feet) Do make it a little plain to me. I swear I shall keep it secret from everybody else.

*Sanyasi.*

Then listen. I am on the quest of the golden lotus on which Lakshmi keeps her feet.

*Luckeswar.*

How bold! This takes my breath away. But, do you think you can find it unaided? It means expense. Do one thing, let us go shares in it.

*Sanyasi.*

In that case you will have to be a sanyasi, never touching gold for a long time.

*Luckeswar.*

That is hard,

*Sanyasi.*

You can only prosper in this business if you give up all others.

*Luckeswar.*

That sounds very much like bankruptcy. But all the same I do believe in you—which astounds even myself. There comes our Rajah! Let me hide behind this tree.

(Hides himself.)

ENTERS THE RAJAH.

*Rajah.*

My salutation!

*Sanyasi.*

Victory to you! What is your desire?

*Rajah.*

Surely you can divine it already. My desire is to rule over a kingdom which is supreme.

*Sanyasi.*

Then begin by giving up what is small.

*Rajah.*

The overlordship of Vijayaditya has become intolerable to me

*Sanyasi.*

To tell you the truth he is growing too much even for me.

*Rajah.*

Is that so?

*Sanyasi.*

Yes. All my practices are to bring him under control.

*Rajah.*

Is that why you have become a sanyasi?

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*Sanyasi.*

Yes.

*Rajah.*

Do you think your charms will be potent enough to bring you success ?

*Sanyasi.*

It is not impossible.

*Rajah.*

In that case do not forget me.

*Sanyasi.*

I shall bring him to your court.

*Rajah.*

Yes, his pride must be brought low.

*Sanyasi.*

That will do him good.

*Rajah.*

With your leave I take my departure.

(Goes.)

(Returning) Father, I am sure you know Vijayaditya personally—is he as great as the people make him out to be ?

*Sanyasi.*

He is like an ordinary person,—it is his dress which gives him a false distinction.

*Rajah.*

Just what I thought. Quite an ordinary person !

*Sanyasi.*

I want to convince him that he is very much so. I must free his mind from the notion that he is a different creature from others.

*Rajah.*

Yes, yes, let him feel it. Fools puff him up and he believes them, being the greatest of their kind. Pull down his conceit to the dust.

*Sanyasi.*

I am engaged in that difficult task.

(The Rajah goes.)

ENTERS UPANANDA.

*Upananda.*

Father, the burden is not yet off my mind.

*Sanyasi.*

What is it that troubles you, my son ?

*Upananda.*

In my anger, at the insult offered to me, I thought I was right in disowning my debt to him. Therefore I went back home. But just as I was dusting my master's *vina* its strings struck up a chord and it sent a thrill through my heart. I felt that I must do something super-human for my master. If I can lay down my life to pay his debts for him, this beautiful day of October will then have its full due from me.

*Sanyasi.*

Baba, what you say is true.

*Upananda.*

Father, you have seen many countries, do you know of any great man who is likely to buy a boy like me for a thousand *kahan* ? That is all that I need for the debt.

*Sanyasi.*

What do you say to trying Vijayaditya, who used to be so fond of your master ?

*Upananda.*

Vijayaditya ? But he is our emperor.

*Sanyasi.*

Is that so ?

*Upananda.*

Don't you know that ?

*Sanyasi.*

But what if he is your emperor ?

*Upananda.*

Do you think he will care to pay any price for a boy like myself ?

*Sanyasi.*

I can assure you, that he will be ashamed.

ed of his full treasury, if he does not pay your debt.

*Upananda.*

Is that possible, father ?

*Sanyasi.*

Do you think in God's world Luckeswar is the only possibility ?

*Upananda.*

But I must not idly wait for chances. In the meanwhile, let me go on with my work and pay off in small parts what I owe.

*Sanyasi.*

Yes, my boy, take up your burden.

*Upananda.*

I feel ever so much stronger, for having known you. Now I take my leave.

(Goes.)

ENTERS LUCKESWAR.

*Luckeswar.*

I give it up. It is not in my power to be your follower. With an infinite struggle I have earned what I have done. To leave all that, at your bidding, and then to repent of my rashness till the end of my days, would be worse than madness ; it would be so awfully unlike myself. Now then, father, you must move from your seat.

*Sanyasi.*

(Rising) Then I have got my release from you ?

*Luckeswar.*

(Taking out a jewel case from under some turf and dry leaves) For this tiny little thing I have been haunting this place, like a ghost from the morning. You are the first human being to whom I have shown this. (Holding it up to him and then hastily withdrawing it) No, impossible ! I fully trust you, yet I have not the power to put it into your hands even for a moment. Merely holding it in the light makes my heart palpitate. Can you tell me, father, what kind of man is Vijayaditya ? If I try to sell it to him, are you sure he won't take it away by force ? Can you trust him ?

60½—2

*Sanyasi.*

Not always.

*Luckeswar.*

Well, that does not sound promising. I suspect, after all, this will lie underground, and after my death nobody will be able to find it.

*Sanyasi.*

Neither Kings nor Emperors, but the dust will claim it as its final tribute.

*Luckeswar.*

Let it ; that does not trouble me. But my anxiety is lest some one should discover it, when I am no more..... However, father, I shall never forget about that golden lotus. I feel sure you will get it some day ; but all the same I cannot be your follower.

(Goes.)

ENTERS THAKURDADA.

*Sanyasi.*

After long days I have learnt one thing at last, and that I must tell you.

*Thakurdada.*

Father, you are very kind to me.

*Sanyasi.*

I know why this world is so beautiful, —simply because it is ever paying back its debt. The ricefield 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 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 lacking in the gift, the harmony is broken in the eternal rhythm of the payment and repayment.

ENTERS LUCKESWAR.

*Luckeswar.*

What are you two people conspiring about ?

*Sanyasi.*

About that golden lotus.

*Luckeswar.*

Have you already given away your secret to Thakurdada ? You hope to be successful when you do your business in such a manner ? But is Thakurdada the proper man to help you ? How much capital has he, do you think ?

*Sanyasi.*

You don't know the secret. He has quite a big amount, though he does not show it.

*Luckeswar.*

(Slapping Thakurdada on the shoulder) You are deep. I never thought of that. And yet people only suspect *me* and not you, not even the Rajah himself. . . . Father, I can't bear Thakurdada to steal a march on me. Let all three of us join in this business. Look there, a crowd of people is coming this way. They must have got news that a Swami is here. Father, they will wear out your feet up to the knees taking the dust of them. But I warn you, father, you are too simple. Don't take anybody else into your confidence. . . . But, Thakurdada, you must know business is not mere child's play. The chances of loss are eleven to one—keep that in mind. I give it, up. But no, I must take time to decide.

(Goes.)

ENTER VILLAGERS.

*First Villager.*

Where is the Sanyasi they talked about ?

*Second Villager.*

Is this the man ?

*Third Villager.*

He looks like a fraud. Where is the real one.

*Sanyasi.*

A real one is difficult to find. I am playing at Sanyasi to amuse boys.

*First Villager.*

But we are not boys.

*Sanyasi.*

I know the distinction.

*Second Villager.*

Then why did someone say, that some swami is somewhere about ?

*First Villager.*

But your appearance is good. Have you learnt some charms ?

*Sanyasi.*

I am willing to learn. But who is to teach me ?

*Second Villager.*

There is a proper man. He lives in Bhairabpur. He has control over some spirits, and there is no doubt of that. Only the other day a boy was about to die. And what do you think this man did ? He simply let the boy's life-spark fly into the inside of a panther. You won't believe it, but I can assure you, that panther is still alive, though the boy died. You may laugh, but my own brother-in-law has seen the panther with his own eyes. If anybody tries to injure it, the father rushes at him with his big stick. The man is quite ruining himself by offering kids twice a day to this beast. If you must learn charms, this is the man for you.

*Third Villager.*

What is the use of wasting time ? Didn't I tell you in the beginning, that I didn't believe a word about this sanyasi. There are very few people in these days who have magic powers.

*Second Villager.*

That is true. But I was told by Kalu's mother that her nephew knew a Sanyasi who overturned his pipe of ganja and there came out a skull and a full pot of liquor

*Third Villager.*

But did he see it with his own eyes ?

*Second Villager.*

Yes, with his very own eyes.  
(They go.)

ENTERS LUCKESWAR.

*Luckeswar.*

I can't stand this. You must take away your charm from me. My accounts are all getting wrong. My head is in a muddle. Now I feel quite reckless about that golden lotus, and now it seems pure foolishness. Now I am afraid Thakurdada will win, and now I say to myself let Thakurdada go to the dogs. But this doesn't seem right. It is sorcery for the purpose of kidnapping. No, no, that will never do with me. What is there to smile about ? I am pretty tough, and you shall never have *me* for your disciple.

(Goes.)

ENTER BOYS.

*First Boy.*

We are ready for the autumn festival. What must we do ?

*Sanyasi.*

We must begin with a song. (Sings)  
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.

*Sanyasi.*

Now you have seen the face of the autumn.

*First Boy.*

But where is it, father ?

*Sanyasi.*

Don't you see those white clouds sailing on ?

*Second Boy.*

Yes, yes.

*Third Boy.*

Yes, I can see them.

*Sanyasi.*

The sky fills up.

*First Boy.*

With what ?

*Sanyasi.*

With light. And don't you feel the touch of the dew in the air ?

*Second Boy.*

Yes.

*Sanyasi.*

Only look at that Betasini River—what headlong rush to spend herself. And see the shiver in the young shoots of rice. Thakurdada, let the boys sing the welcome song of the autumn and go round the forests and hills yonder.

(*Thakurdada sings and the boys join him*).

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.  
There rings your welcome at the doors  
of the forest fairies ;  
your anklet bells sound  
in all my thoughts  
filling my work with music.  
(The boys go out singing.)

ENTERS LUCKESWAR.

*Thakurdada.*

Hallo ! Our Luckeswar in a sanyasi's garb

*Luckeswar.*

I have become your disciple at last father. Here is my pearl-case, and here are the jewel caskets. Take care of them.

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*Sanyasi.*

Why has this sudden change come over you ?

*Luckeswar.*

The Emperor Vijayaditya's army is marching towards this town. Nobody will dare touch you, so you are the safest man to whom I can entrust my treasure.— I am your devoted follower,—protect me !

ENTERS THE RAJAH.

*Rajah.*

Father !

*Sanyasi.*

Sit down. You seem to be out of breath. Rest awhile.

*Rajah.*

No time for rest. I am informed that Vijayaditya is almost upon us. His flag has been seen.

*Sanyasi.*

Very likely. He must be feeling eager to acquire new dominions.

*Rajah.*

What do you say ? New dominions ?

*Sanyasi.*

Why do you take offence at it, my son ? You also had a similar idea.

*Rajah.*

Oh ! no, that was quite different. But whatever that might be, I ask for your protection. Some mischief-makers must have carried tales to him. Please tell him, they are all lies. Am I mad, that I should want to be the Emperor ? Have I got the power ?

*Sanyasi.*

Thakurdada !

*Thakurdada.*

Yes, my master !

*Sanyasi.*

Simply with this rag upon my back and a few boys as my followers, I was fully successful in making this day glorious. But

look at this wretched man,—this emperor,—he has power only to ruin it.

*Rajah.*

Hush ! Somebody may overhear you !

*Sanyasi.*

I must fight it out with that—

*Rajah.*

I won't allow it. You are becoming dangerous. Can't you keep your sentiments to yourself ?

*Sanyasi.*

But I already had a discussion about this with you, haven't I ?

*Rajah.*

What an awful man you are ! Luckeswar, why are you here ? Leave this place at once.

*Luckeswar.*

Sire, I can tell you, it is not for the pure pleasure of your presence that I am here. I should be only too glad to get away, but I am fixed to this spot. I have not the power to move.

ENTER VIJAYADITYA'S COURTIER.

*The Minister.*

Victory to the Emperor Vijayaditya !  
(They all bow.)

*Rajah.*

Stop that stupid jest ! I am not Vijayaditya. I am his most unworthy servant—Somapal.

*Minister.*

(To the Sanyasi) Sire, the time has come for you to come back to your capital.

*Thakurdada.*

My master, is this a dream ?

*Sanyasi.*

Whether your dream or theirs is true who can tell ?

*Thakurdada.*

Then—

*Sanyasi.*

Yes, these people happen to know me as Vijayaditya.

*Thakurdada.*

But this new situation has made things critical for me.

*Luckeswar.*

And for me also. I surrendered myself to the Sanyasi in order to be saved from the Emperor. But I do not know in whose hands I am now.

*Rajah.*

Sire, did you come to try me ?

*Sanyasi.*

And also myself.

*Rajah.*

What is to be my punishment ?

*Sanyasi.*

To leave you to your memory.

ENTERS UPANANDA.

*Upananda.*

Who are these people ? Oh ! here is the Rajah. (About to leave.)

*Sanyasi.*

Upananda, do not go ! Tell me what you had come to say.

*Upananda.*

I came to tell you that I had earned this three *Kahaas* by my day's work.

*Sanyasi.*

Give them to me. They are too valuable to go for clearing Luckeswar's debt. I take these for myself.

*Upananda.*

Must you take these, father ?

*Sanyasi.*

Yes, I must. Do you think I have mastered my greed, because I have become a sanyasi ? These tempt me beyond anything else.

*Luckeswar.*

This sounds ominous ! I am undone !

*Sanyasi.*

Where is my treasurer ?

*Treasurer.*

Here I am.

*Sanyasi.*

Let this man have a thousand *Kahan* from my treasury.

*Upananda.*

Then does he buy me ?

*Sanyasi.*

You are mine. (To the minister) You were troubled, because no son had been born to my house. But I have earned my son, by my merit, and here he is.

*Luckeswar.*

How unlucky for me that I am too old for such adoption !

*Sanyasi.*

Luckeswar !

*Luckeswar.*

Command me !

*Sanyasi.*

I have protected your jewels from the grasp of Vijayaditya. Now they are given back to you.

*Luckeswar.*

If the Maharajah had given them back in secret, I could feel secure. Who is to save them now ?

*Sanyasi.*

That is my business. But Luckeswar, something is due to me from you.

*Luckeswar.*

(Aside) Curse me ! I knew it would come at last.

*Sanyasi.*

Thakurdada is witness to my claim.

*Luckeswar.*

(Aside) There will be no lack of false witnesses for him now.

*Sanyasi.*

You wanted to give me alms. You owe



me a handful of rice. Do you think you will be able to fill an Emperor's hand?

*Luckeswar.*

But, Sire, it was a sanyasi's hand which gave me courage to propose what I did.

*Sanyasi.*

Then I free you from your promise.

*Luckeswar.*

With the Maharajah's leave I take my departure. Everybody's eyes seem to be turned upon these caskets.

(He goes.)

ENTER THE BOYS.

*They shout.*

Sanyasi Thakur! (They suddenly stop and are about to run away.)

*Thakurdada.*

Boys, do not go.

*Sanyasi.*

Rajah, leave me.

(Rajah goes.)

(To his courtiers) And you also.

(They go.)

Now back to our festival.

#### COMMERCIAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

**A**MERICAN universities have within the past few years undertaken a new responsibility. Just as they have for many years been training students to become lawyers, physicians, clergymen, and technical men, they are now training them to become business men. Commerce has been made a subject of study in American universities ever since it became recognized as a science; ever since by systematic experiments and investigations its laws have been formulated; and the theories of advertising, marketing, and accounting have been established.

Twenty years ago the commercial schools and colleges, so-called, limited themselves to the teaching of shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping. Even now there are many of these schools, turning out sometimes efficient, more often, indifferent stenographers, clerks, and bookkeepers. But the more progressive schools are now giving courses which are wider in scope, though even these cannot be said to give a training which will qualify a student to become a business executive.

There are, however, about a dozen first class universities which do make this claim, and most of them with justice. Among these the most noteworthy are, (1) School of Commerce, Accounts, and Finance of the New York University; (2) School of

Business of Columbia University; (3) School of Commerce of the University of Chicago; (4) Wharton School of Finance, of the University of Pennsylvania; (5) School of Administration and Finance, of Dartmouth College; and the Schools of Commerce of the Northwestern University and the Universities of California and Illinois.

A business may be said to have five departments: production, distribution, transportation, financing and accounting. These universities offer courses which give a general knowledge of each of these, and a thorough training and education in any particular one of them, if the student so desires. Then there are further courses in the more important special lines of business, such as Foreign Trade, Insurance, Real Estate, Consular Service, etc.

Courses in accounting begin with simple book-keeping and then proceed to the accounting of complicated business ventures, to the theory of accounting, to fiduciary, investment and cost accounting, auditing, and research work, consisting of audit examinations, and investigations and system building in various fields of business.

An advertisement of a school of accounting, emphasizing the value of this study, says:—

## PRAYER

## 1.

Light thy signal, Father, for us, who have strayed far away from thee.  
 Our dwelling is among ruins haunted by lowering shadows of fear.  
 Our heart is bent under the load of despair and we insult thee  
 when we grovel to dust at every favour or threat that mocks our manhood.  
 For thus is desecrated the dignity of thee in us thy children,  
 for thus we put out our light and in our abject fear make it seem  
 that our orphaned world is blind and godless.

## 2.

Yet 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, as unto your own house, into the unprepared hall, on the unexpected day.  
 Dark ruins at your touch become like a bud  
 nourishing unseen in its bosom the fruition of fulfilment.  
 Therefore I still have hope—not that the wrecks will be mended,  
 but that a new world will arise.

## 3.

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.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF BOOKS

## ENGLISH.

*HISTORY OF AURANGZIB*, *Jadunath Sarkar*,  
 Vol. IV, pp. 412, M. C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta,  
 Rs. 3-8as.

Every student of Indian history will welcome the present Volume of Prof. Sarkar's *Aurangzib*. "The Deccan ulcer mined Aurangzib" and it was not the weak Sultanates of the south but the Marathas who were responsible for it. The fourth volume of *Aurangzib*, therefore, deals mainly with the rise of the Marathas, and the final conquest and annexation of Bijapur and Golkonda by the Mughals. The melancholy theme of the last two events has given us three charming chapters that will

interest even those who turn to History for a diversion only. In the first 238 pages of the present volume, Prof. Sarkar has given us an abridgment of his previously published "*Shivaji and His Times*." We have already reviewed that work in these columns, and we have not anything more to add except that it has lost nothing in interest by the merciless rejection of minor and unimportant details. In fact the abridged account may be more interesting to many lay readers.

Sambhaji's brief career however presents an unbroken array of dry details that may frighten many, but we cannot blame the author on that account. Sambhaji was a soldier, and nothing but a soldier. He spent his time either on horse-

officers. One of them, Mr. L. K. Roy (the youngest son of Mr. P. L. Roy of Calcutta) has been sent to Sandhurst to undergo training along with five Indians who recently arrived from India. The others, Bonarjee, Rudra, and Mr. V. N. Bhola Nauth, son of Colonel Bhola Nauth, until recently Assistant Director of Medical Service in Mesopotamia, were some time ago, sent to Indore for training.

From this survey it is clear that in spite of the most fervid Imperial patriotism and dogged determination shown by young

Indians in the United Kingdom, the powers that be have kept the door leading to military rank almost as tightly shut as when hostilities began. It matters little to Indians whether one department or another in Whitehall is to blame. What matters is that 19 months after His Majesty's Government announced, with a flourish of trumpets, that the colour-bar had been removed, less than a dozen Indians have been given the opportunity of obtaining training in Britain to qualify themselves to become military officers.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF BOOKS

### ENGLISH.

*THE HOME AND THE WORLD*, by Rabindranath Tagore. Translated into English. (Macmillan) Pp. 294+10. One dollar 75 cents.

This novel of modern Indian life in the days of the great Swadeshi movement in Bengal is Rabindranath's reply to Arabindo Ghosh. And thereby hangs a tale.

Our wrestlers salam each other before they come to grips, and so do our poets. At the dawn of the present Nationalist agitation Tagore published a long poetical salutation to Arabindo in his best style: *Arabinda / Rabindrer Laha Namaskar*. The inspired seer of Indian Nationalism was equally sweet on Rabindranath. And then they began to spar.

Tagore publicly denounced the cult of hatred, violence and political jugglery taught by some of our Nationalist leaders. This moral canker would, he argued, kill all our country's hopes; in God's world nothing immoral, nothing false, can triumph in the end. Arabindo (or more correctly his "pal") replied in the *Vande Mataram*, saying that such moral preaching was unpractical, that a great National regeneration can be effected only by rousing a whirlwind of passions, that in the great churning of the Indian mind which must precede the construction of our new heaven, poison and nectar alike must be expected to rise to the surface, that we must awaken the entire man in India in passionate insurrection against the existing order and then somehow in the end the good will triumph over the evil of the Revolution. Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal also preached Rousseau's dangerous doctrine that the minority (here the East Bengal Muhammadans) must be compelled to be free, that

those people who through ignorance or self-interest cannot accept the Swadeshi cult, must be coerced to join the Nationalist ranks; in short, that Rabindranath, a dreamy poet living in an ethereal atmosphere far away from our real world, was a "preacher of love and sweetness" (as Arabindo styled him) but a child in politics; and our war with the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy cannot be conducted in kid gloves.

Rabindranath did not reply immediately. The moral shock that he had received forced him to leave the Swadeshi camp and seek to heal his stricken heart in the rural quiet of Shanti Niketan. But he

"In meditation dwelt,

And shaped his weapon with an edge severe."

That reply is no polemical tract or platform oration, but a novel—the *Home and the World* (*Ghare Baire*), the moral of which he who runs may read.

Here in the corner of Bengal selected as the scene, the fiery orator (Sandip, 'blazing') openly preaches that all the baser passions of man must be roused if we are to save our country, that copybook morality, a sober decorous conduct on the part of our people, will not serve this high purpose, that the moral and intellectual elevation of our countrymen for ensuring true national union and love of independence is too slow a process and will be thwarted by the alien bureaucracy, and that we have only to set fire to our house and the mysterious force of Goodness will somehow or other present us with a newer and better home as the result! He openly justifies force and fraud in the great cause of the Motherland. He would shut his eyes to the enormous drag of so many millions of ignorant Muhammadans and depressed Namasudras, and instead of following the slow

but sure process of converting them, elevating them making friends with them,—he hoped to achieve a speedy success by hood-winking them, coercing them, riding roughshod over them, as negligible factors. The whole novel proves that these are not negligible factors and that a nationalist India when not based upon strength of character, hearty union and true obliteration of differences, is a house built on sand. The storm came, the rain descended, and the Nationalist "New Jerusalem" fell (in Barisal), and tragic was the fall of it. With this tragedy the novel ends.

But Ravindranath is too clever an artist to write a sermon and label it as a novel. *The Home and the World* is much more than a political parable. Indeed, readers ignorant of recent Bengal history will relish it none the less for altogether missing its political significance, for the abiding interest of the book lies in its unfolding a grave human problem with Jane Austen's delicacy of touch and subtle analysis of character. The problem is, how does the cloister virtue of the Hindu home fare in the wide world outside? Hitherto Hindu wives have led a sheltered life within the family circle; we have set up walls round them, not so much out of suspicion as from a desire to protect them. We have been giving our daughters in marriage before they could know what temptation is. And they have been models of virtue. But how would such virtue stand the strain of the world outside the harem walls where men and women move freely? Would not freedom under proper chaperoning in the early years have braced their characters and made them able to guard themselves like the free womanhood of the West or even of Maharashtra? The Irish girls carefully herded by Catholic priests in all their acts are models of virtue at home; but the same Irish girl breaks down hopelessly when thrown on her own guardianship as an emigrant in New York, because she has never been taught to take care of herself.

"Queen Bee" the heroine of our novel, at home is all that a wife should be. But as soon as she enters the world, her unformed character is imperceptibly driven by the irresistible force of environment and incident into a stage of development which ruins her home and appals her own self. Dr. Tagore's pitiless scalpel has dissected her heart at every step of this tragic change, and herein lies his literary craftsmanship. Oddly enough, some vernacular writers have denounced this novel as a plea for free love and the wrecking of wedded life!

Apart from its personal and deeper significances as described by me above, can we not detect in the novel, an ironical laughter of Tagore? Is not he here telling his opponents in the Swadeshi camp that he has renounced, "you justify force and fraud in imposing Swadeshi on the unwilling, ignorant minority. How would you like to see the same means

employed, for a personal purpose to win an ignorant woman living within the circle of the home? Can the rules of private morality be safely abjured in politics?"

JADUNATH SARKAR.

STUDIES IN MUGHAL INDIA, *Jadunath Sarkar, M. A. Pp. 313, M. C. Sircar & Sons, Calcutta. Rs. 2.*

Professor Sarkar needs no introduction to the public. The present volume is the second edition of his 'Historical Essays,' with no less than twelve new essays on various topics. Written in his usual simple and graceful style Professor Sarkar's essays are very charming indeed. He possesses that rare gift of making highly learned subjects easily intelligible, and productions of his mature scholarship as they are, these essays will be equally interesting to the serious student and lay readers. Here will they find, all that is known, about the daily life of two great Mughal Emperors, the revenue regulations of Aurangzebe, some account of Art and Education in Muhammadan India, the education of a Mughal prince and also learned treatises on various other historical topics. To these have also been added biographical sketches of two great Hindu Historians of Mediaeval India, Bhimsen and Ishwardas Nagar, William Guine, a European scholar, and Khuda Bakhsh, the Indian Bodley. Such a work would have gone through several editions in a single year in Europe, but here in India it will be considered a great thing that it has seen a second edition at all. Every student of Indian History should provide himself with a copy, as the price is within the means of almost all.

S. N. S.

#### GUJARATI.

SAKSHAR JIVAN ( *साक्षर जीवन* ), by the late Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi, B.A., LL.B., printed at the Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay and published by his son, Ramanujaram G. Tripathi, Bombay. Cloth bound, with a coloured photo of the writer. Pp. 309. Price Rs. 2, (1919).

A melancholy interest attaches to this publication, as the writer died before he could complete it. It first appeared about eighteen years ago as a magazine article in the quarterly Samalochak, and at the time attracted the attention of several thinkers, by the philosophical aspect which was lent to it, owing to the writer's predilection for the subject. However, as it was essentially a theme for those who were learned and cultured, it lay in that shape till young Ramanujaram conceived the idea of bringing it out as a separate book. In addition to the deep learning displayed by the late Mr. Tripathi in elucidating the literary life lived by the Indians of old, specially such notable scholars as Vyas and Vashishtha, the present publication, in the introduction contributed to it

picture of Mother India by Mr. Abanindranath Tagore, C. I. E. This calendar ought to adorn the wall of every nationalist's house.

3, 4. SRI KRISHNA AND ARJUN, AND SITA AND LAKSHMAN, pictures painted by Mr. Saraḍa Charan Ukil and reproduced in colours by Calcutta Phototype Co.; Publisher—Mitra and Ukil; can be had at Silpa-Mandir, 43-3 Amherst Street, Calcutta.

Mr. Ukil is an artist who is so well known that he requires no introduction at our hands. We have reproduced many of his pictures in reduced facsimile which have been spoken of very

eulogistically by art-critics both here and in England. Now the publishers have placed within reach of the public reproductions of his pictures of the same size as the originals. The pictures of Sri Krishna and Arjun, and Sita and Lakshman represent the scenes of Sri Krishna admonishing Arjun to fight on the eve of the great battle of Kurukshetra, and Sita admonishing Lakshman to go and help Ram when he has gone to slay the golden deer. Both the pictures are of great artistic merit and the reproductions are excellent and faithful, doing justice to the artist's originals.

C. B.

## COMMENT AND CRITICISM

### Rabindranath Tagore on Aurobindo Ghosh.

[A gentleman having written to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore from Ahmedabad to draw his attention to the review of his *The Home and the World* in the last November issue of the *Modern Review*, the poet gave the following reply to his correspondent.]

Santiniketan,  
Nov. 30, 1919.

DEAR SIR,

I have not yet read Jadu Babu's review of my book, but I feel sure that he could never mean to say that Aurobindo Ghosh belongs to the same type of humanity as Sandip of my story. My acquaintance with the literature of our contemporary politics being casual and desultory, I do not, even to this day, definitely know what is the political standpoint of Aurobindo Ghosh. But this I positively know that he is a great man, one of the greatest we have, and therefore liable to be misunderstood even by his friends. What I myself feel for him is not mere admiration but reverence for his depth of spirituality, his largeness of vision and his literary gifts, extraordinary in imaginative insight and expression. He is a true Rishi and a Poet combined, and I still repeat my *namaskar* which I offered to him when he was first assailed by the trouble which ultimately made him an exile from the soil of Bengal.

Yours Sincerely  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

### "The Story of the Lion and the Elephant."

Re Mr. Gangoly's note and Mr. Das's rejoinder.

With reference to Mr. O. C. Gangoly's note published in the *Modern Review* regarding the origin of the Lion and Elephant *motif* I find

Mr. P. C. Das has taken exception to the alleged inaccuracy in regard to the true sequence of Kesari and Gajapati Dynasties. Mr. Das's objection seems to be rather besides the mark, as Mr. Gangoly never said in his note that the Gajapatis preceded the Kesaries. Mr. Gangoly has refuted the view that the *motif* is not of the nature of a political cartoon and Mr. Das in his rejoinder has lent the weight of his support to this contention. Popular traditions seldom square with historical facts and a writer who refers to a tradition of this account merely to prove its erroneous character from his own particular standpoint, deserves no reproach on that account. Mr. Gangoly though an artist and art-connoisseur is well posted in historical and archæological literature and the fact that he could not have been oblivious of the correct sequence of the Kesaries and the later ruler of Orissa is I think well borne out by his reference to the date of Sabhakara Kesari and of the chronology of the Eastern Ganga Kings in his very interesting original article on "the Story of a Printed Cotton Fabric from Orissa." J. B. O. R. S., Sept. 1919, Vol. V, Pl. III, pp. 325, 330). These few words are written not with a view to prolong an unnecessary controversy but to clear up the misconception of a fair, minded critic whose interest is so keen and alert in matters of Orissan antiquity.

15-12-19.

G. D. SARKAR.

I have to disown the proposition which very curiously enough has been fathered upon me by Babu Purna Chandra Das in a note published in the last December number of this Review. I could never possibly suggest to anybody, that the Ganga Rajas were succeeded by the Kesari Rulers in Orissa. As to my views relating to the so-called Kesari Dynasty of Orissa, the following among other writings of mine may be referred to, viz.,—(1) J. B. O. S. 1916, and (2) Sonepur in the Sambalpur tract. B. C. MAZUMDAR.

JAN 15 1926

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## KARNA AND KUNTI

[Karna, the commander of the Kaurava host, and Kunti, the Pandava Queen Mother, who had borne Karna, when a maiden, and to hide her shame had deserted him after birth to be brought up by Adhiratha, the charioteer, as his son.]

KARNA.

I have sat to worship the setting sun by the bank of the holy Ganges. I am Karna, the son of the charioteer Adhiratha. Tell me who you are.

KUNTI.

I am the woman who first made you acquainted with the light to which you offer worship.

KARNA.

I do not understand your words, but the rays from your eyes seem to melt my heart within me like the kiss of the morning sun that melts the snow on the mountain top. Your voice strikes in me the sadness of a blind past that cannot see itself. Tell me, strange woman, with what mysterious bond my birth is bound to you.

KUNTI.

Patience, my son. I shall answer you when it grows dark, and the lids come down upon the prying eyes of the day. In the meanwhile know you, I am Kunti.

KARNA.

Kunti, the mother of Arjuna?

KUNTI.

Yes, indeed the mother of Arjuna, your rival. But do not take that into your heart and hate me. I still remember the

day of the trial of arms in Hastina when you a boy unknown to fame boldly stepped into the arena, like the first-born light of the dawn among the stars of the night. But, sitting behind the arras with the women of the royal house, who was that unhappy woman whose eyes kissed your bare slim body through their tears of blessing? It was the mother of Arjuna herself. Then the Brahmin teacher of arms came to you and said, 'He who is of lowly rank cannot challenge Arjuna to a trial of strength.' And you stood speechless, like a thunder-cloud of the sunset flashing with the agony of its suppressed light. But who was the woman whose heart caught the fire of your shame and anger, and burnt into a flaming silence? It was the mother of Arjuna. Praised be Duryodhana, who found out your worth and then and there crowned you the King of Anga, thus gaining you for ever as the champion on the side of the Kauravas. Overcome with this good news there broke in through the crowd Adhiratha, the charioteer, and at once you rushed to him and placed your crown at his feet amid the jeering laughter of the Pandavas and their friends. But there was one woman of the Pandava house whose heart glowed with joy at the sight of this heroic pride of meekness. It was the mother of Arjuna.

KARNA.

But why came you alone here, Mother of Kings?

KUNTI.

I have a prayer to you, my son.

KARNA.

Command me, and whatever my man-

hood and my honour as a Kshatriya permit shall be offered at your feet.

KUNTI.

I have come to take you.

KARNA.

Where ?

KUNTI.

To my mother's breast thirsting with love.

KARNA.

Fortunate mother of five brave sons, where can you find place for me, a small chieftain of lowly descent.

KUNTI.

Your place is before all my other sons.

KARNA.

But what right have I to step there ?

KUNTI.

Your own God-given right to the mother's love.

KARNA.

The evening darkness is spreading over the earth and silence is on the water and your voice seems to lead me into some primal world of infancy lit with the light of dim consciousness. However, be it a dream, or some fragment of forgotten reality, come near to me and place your right hand on my forehead. The rumour is that I was deserted by my mother. In many a night's dream she has come to me. When I asked her—'Open your veil and show me your face,' the figure has always vanished. Has the same dream come to me this evening? See there, the lamps are lighted in your sons' tents across the river and on the hitherside you can see the tent-domes of the Kauravas like suspended waves in a spellbound stormy sea. Between the din of tomorrow's battle and the awful hush of the battlefield this night, why does there come to me a message of forgotten motherhood through the voice of the mother of Arjuna and why does my name find such music on her tongue drawing my heart towards the Pandava brothers?

KUNTI.

Then delay not, my son, come with me.

KARNA.

Yes, I shall come and never ask questions and never doubt. My soul responds to your call, and the struggle for victory and fame and the rage of hatred have suddenly become untrue to me like the delirious night in the serene light of the morning. Tell me where to come with you.

KUNTI.

To the other bank of the river where those lamps burn across the ghastly pallor of the sands.

KARNA.

There, am I to find my lost mother for ever?

KUNTI.

Oh my son!

KARNA.

Then why did you banish me in a castaway world uprooted from its ancestral soil, adrift in a homeless current of indignity? Why set a bottomless chasm between Arjuna and myself turning a natural attachment of kinship into a fearful attraction of hate?...You remain speechless there. Your shame penetrates into the infinite darkness of night touching my limbs with its invisible shiver.—I take back my question. Never explain to me what made you rob your own son of his mother's love. Only tell me why you have come today to call me back to the ruins of that heaven which you wrecked with your own hands.

KUNTI.

A curse more deadly than your reproaches ever follows me, and though surrounded by five sons my heart still withers under the sorrow of the childless. The great rent left in my love by my deprived son draws all my life's pleasure into a void. Today I meet you face to face. On that accursed day of my treason against my motherhood you had not a word to utter. And today I implore you let your words bring forgiveness to your

recreant mother,—let that forgiveness ever burn like a fire in my heart, consuming my sin.

KARNA.

Mother, accept my tears.

KUNTI.

I never came with the hope of bringing you back to my arms, but to restore you to your own rights. Come to receive, as a king's son, your own dues among your brothers.

KARNA.

More truly am I the son of a charioteer and I do not covet a greater glory of parentage.

KUNTI.

Whatever that may be, come to win back the kingdom which by right is yours.

KARNA.

Must you tempt me with a kingdom who can refuse a mother's love? The living bond of kindred which you severed at its origin is dead,—it can never grow

again. And shame be on me if I hasten to call the mother of kings my mother and leave my mother of the charioteer's house!

KUNTI.

You are great, my son! How God's punishment invisibly grows from a tiny seed to a giant life—and the helpless babe disowned by his mother comes back a man through a dark maze of paths to smite his own brothers.

KARNA.

Mother, do not fear! I know for certain that victory waits for the Pandavas. In the peace of the still moment of night there sounds the music in my heart of a hopeless venture, of a baffled end. Never ask me to leave those who are under the doom of defeat. Let the Pandavas win their throne as they shall, but I will remain to the end with the desperate and the forlorn. On the night of my birth you left me to disgrace in the naked world of the nameless—leave me once again without pity to the calm expectation of defeat and death.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BY DR. SUDHINDRA BOSE, M.A., PH.D.,

LECTURER IN POLITICAL SCIENCE, STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, U. S. A.

**E**ARLY in the beginning of the European war, the editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, Professor L. P. Jacks of Manchester College, Oxford, wrote: "The nations at war are finding their souls." Both in America and England, this grandiloquent pronouncement of Mr. Jacks has been the text for innumerable glowing editorials and wildly optimistic pulpit sermons on the part of the master phraseocrats. Now as the war has come to an end, at least on paper, it is pertinent to ask a few straight forward questions: Have the nations which made the Paris peace found their souls? Have they abolished militarism and navyism? Are they establishing

"justice on equal terms for all nations great and small?" Have they insured freedom to all the world as they pledged? Have the victors of the war started to apply the principle of self-determination to their own protectorates and dependencies? Has anybody ever heard the conquering allies maintain that they had made the world safe for democracy? Is it true that the long black dreary night of the political tyrant and economic exploiter is over? Is the world really at the dawn of a better age, at the threshold of a new order? To these questions, what must be the answer?

The impassioned apologists and the ardent



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## TOWARDS THE FUTURE

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

IT is a great pleasure to me that you should have invited me here ; for I find it quite easy to take my place among students, not as a teacher from a distance, but near them, as one of themselves. The difficulty is, however, that from an outside point of view, I am mistaken for an old man, so that when young people invite me they do not call me near, but keep a separate seat for me, on a platform.

To save myself from this fate I selected a place, far away from the crowd, where I invited boys to come and be near me. This I did, not so much for their good, as for my own. Let me explain what benefit I gained.

Pride always occupies a large part of man's mind ; so when he grows old, he cannot help thinking that there is something to be specially proud of in the increase of his years—the more so, if he happens to be keeping company with other old men. The important fact altogether escapes him that what he takes for an increase is really a decrease. Of what avail is it to him, whose future is growing shorter and shorter, to boast of his lengthening past ?

If man had really cause to be proud of old men, the fates would not have been so busy getting rid of them. It is easy enough to see that the standing order for the old men is to get out of the way,—"Make room, Make room," the usher keeps on crying.

Why ? Why should we give up this sixty year old seat of ours ?

Because Prince Youth comes. God appoints Youth again and again to the throne of the world.

Is there no meaning in this ? Of course

there is. It means that God will not have his creation lagging behind, tied to the past. The manifestation of the Infinite will be obstructed, unless, time after time new forces take up the work afresh and build a new beginning upon the foundation of the finished. The Infinite does not grow old. That is why the aged burst and melt away like bubbles, while the young blossom out in the lap of the world like flower buds in the new morning light.

God keeps on calling the young with his flute-notes, and as they sally forth in crowds, the world throws open its gates to them in welcome. So I seat myself amidst youths and little ones, that I also may hear this call of God. The great good which I have derived from such an experience is, that I do not, as other old men often do, hold youth in contempt ; nor do I burden their hopes of the future with my fears from the past. I am able to say to them,—“Fear not. Inquire, experiment, reason. If you needs must break up truth, to find out all about it, then boldly and honestly fight against it, till you are conquered by it in the end. But whatever you do, go forward.”

The strain of God's flute, his call to the unbounded unexplored, to the adventures along the unknown, also finds a response in my heart. Then I understand that the reckless inexperience of youth is a truer guide than the hesitating cautiousness of old age ; for to the impetuosity of inexperience truth yields itself, over and over again, in ever new forms, with ever new powers. By its very keenness, inexperience can cut its way through obstructions mountain-high and achieve the impossible. The truth of life is not to

be sought in the stagnant shallows of safety, but in the depth of danger, in the turbulent waves of trouble. Truth is for the brave, who are ready to woo her with their life, with an unbounded faith in her which claims unmeasured sacrifices.

I am not here to lecture you from the privileged seat of garrulous age, but only to remind you of one great fact, which in India our training and circumstances help you to forget and make it almost penal to remember,—that you are young. You must not forget the task which is yours. You are sent to make a clean sweep of all worn-out refuse heaps of deadness, of all dilapidated anachronisms, from off the face of the earth. You have come to this world to find out truth for yourselves, making it your own, and to build this age, into which you are born, with your own life. Those who have become attached and keep clinging to the past are indeed over-age. They are already under orders of dismissal and must soon quit. But you are young. Boldly accept the responsibility of youth and its risks. The duty of serving the world has been newly placed on you. And that duty is to keep the world ever fresh and sweet and guide the movement of life towards the Infinite. Do not allow the current of time which carries the message of eternity, to be blocked with obstructing matter; keep the road clear.

With what provision have you been sent on your way? With boundless aspirations.

You are students; think well what it is you would learn. What do the little birds learn from their parents? To spread their wings and fly. Man must also learn to spread the wings of his mind, to soar high and take flight into the unlimited. It does not cost much effort to learn that one has to earn a living. But it takes all there is in man to keep alive and awake the dauntless determination which is necessary for him to realise that he must achieve fulfilment of life.

In the present age, Europe has secured the teacher's seat. She has humiliated the East and exploited the ancient lands of

the sunrise for her own benefit. We have known how, among alien races, she can exercise ruthless rapacity in her commerce and dishonest diplomacy in her politics; but in spite of this we have been constrained to admit that she has become the teacher of the present-day world, and those peoples who will not acknowledge this, through pride or intellectual incapacity, will be left behind in the onward march of humanity. Mere brute force may do many things, but it cannot gain this teacher's seat for man. Merit alone will serve; and merit can only be acquired by him whose aims are never timidly narrow or blindly immediate. Europe is an acknowledged teacher to-day, not merely because she has acquired a knowledge of history, geography, or science. No, it is because she is possessed of mighty aims which strongly urge her forward and know no limitations, not even of death.

To glorify the desire for petty interests of life, hedged in by rigid repetitions of daily habits, cannot make man great; to flutter about within rusty bars cannot justify the wings of a bird. But man's yearning for knowledge, his striving to find out truth in himself and in nature, to seek and discover the great gifts God has kept reserved for mankind in the earth and water and sky, and more than all else in his own soul, to wrest fruit from the desert, to conquer disease on behalf of health, to annihilate space in order to gain his freedom of movement, to control his feelings in order to achieve freedom of powers,—all these struggles forward speak of the manhood behind, and prove that the soul which is awake does not believe in defeat, and accounts it an insult to accept sufferings or privation as an unalterable decree of fate. It knows, rather, that its destiny is in its own hands, that it has the birth-right of mastery.

Because Europe thus spread wide the wings of her endeavour, she has achieved to-day the right to be the teacher of mankind. If we mistake the lessons she has to teach merely for book-lore, or belittle their importance by putting them down merely as information about things, we shall only be depriving ourselves.

Learning is to be a *man*. To gain the fullness of life is the important thing; all else is subordinate to this; and true manhood consists in the height and breadth of a man's aim, in its tireless energy in its indomitable will.

In the populous centres of Europe, the peoples, in their daring spirit of adventure, are giving expression to large aims, and carrying them to victorious realisation; and in the process of this struggle, Europe is achieving her education. This living education of ceaseless endeavour and continual questioning and readjustment goes on side by side with her academic education. Moreover, even the learning which is acquired in her colleges is a product of the life of her own peoples,—it is not merely printed matter; it represents national achievement through constant self-sacrifice. That is why the University student in Europe does not merely acquire book learning. He feels, on every side, the masterful presence of the human spirit, from which he receives, as its gift, the fruits of its own creations. By this indeed can man know himself, make this world his own, and learn how to become a man.

But, wherever we see students merely receiving doles of academic learning and gleaning information from the pages of prescribed text-books; wherever there is a complete dependence on what is begged from others, even in regard to the most necessary things of life; wherever man has nothing to offer to his motherland, neither health, nor food, nor knowledge, nor strength; where the fields of work are narrow and endeavours feeble, and man creates no new forms of beauty in the joy of life and soul; where the thoughts and actions of man are alike hampered by the bonds of habit and superstition; where there is not only a lack of independent questioning and reasoning, but these things are forbidden as wrong; where most of the forces are blind forces driving men's minds like dead leaves towards no purpose, there man cannot realise his soul in his society, because of the handcuffs and clogging chains, and because of the heaped-up decaying matter of a past age, which can only live in the

present, and be carried into the future, through repeated new incarnations, through changes of forms and additions of life forces. Men doomed to live a passive life in such a society can adapt themselves to the provisions made for them, but they can never meet the living Providence within themselves, or have faith in its existence.

If we try to go to the root of the matter, we shall see that our real poverty is poverty of spirit. The insults, which we have heaped on the soul of man, have reacted and lie scattered on every side as privations and indignities. When the water of a river dries up, it is no use lamenting the emptiness of its channel bed. The absence of the moving water is the thing to be deplored. When the soul-life ceases to flow, then comes the emptiness of dry formality, which is like the forms of the grammar of a language which has vanished.

The truth that sustains creation is a living, moving truth, which constantly reaches higher and higher stages up the ascent of revelation. This is so, because it is the object of truth to realise the limitless. So whenever it is sought to confine truth for all time within artificial limits of any kind, it kills itself, like a flame of light in the grip of a snuffer. Likewise the soul of man, which is on its way to the Infinite, flows on with new creations at every turn. Progressiveness is of the essence of its journey towards light and power. The soul misses the very reason of its being, if shackled; stagnation can only make for its imprisonment, not for its emancipation.

In our country we constantly hear the cry, that what is fixed for ever is truth, and therefore, truth only represents death and not life. We believe in the tombstone as the true symbol of truth. If we were right, if there were a spot in the universe where the manifestation of truth had come to a stop for all time, then they only would have won in this world who would not move, then all progress would be out of harmony with the inner principle of creation and all movements would knock themselves to death against the dead walls of immutability. But the fact is, that the

process of creation is never still for a moment, and if we find that in some part of the earth men's minds remain stationary against the current of time, we must know that this is an affront to the great procession of the all. This immobility must constantly be hurt and if even that does not stir it then it must be worn away into nothingness by the perpetual friction of the moving time.

What does true wisdom tell us? "Atmānam biddhih." "Know thyself." "Bhumaiva sukham, Bhumātveva vijijnāsitavyah." "There is no joy in the small; therefore seek the Great." In order to know and realise the soul and the Great, it will not do to sleep away the working day, keeping our store of hereditary wisdom safe under lock and key. We must move on, we must create afresh. God knows himself by ever new creations; so must man,—not by begging or borrowing from the store of his forefathers, or that of his more fortunate neighbours.

Where, then, is the harbour in the sea of knowledge to which true education should lead us? There, where the words of wisdom "Know thyself" and "Seek the Great" find their meaning. Where man knows his own soul, he finds the Great. Where man gains that power to give up, which enables him to create, he knows that by renunciation he grows. By the same power he transcends death. But what is the harbour to be seen from your academic ferry, which bears crowds across the seas of your University education? It is Government service,—clerkships, police inspectorships, deputy magistrateships. To have embarked on so great a sea, with such pettiness of aspirations, that is a shame, the sense of which our country has lost. We have lost even the faculty to desire great things. In other kinds of poverty there is nothing to be ashamed of; for those are of outside. But alas for the shame of the poverty of aspiration which comes from penury of soul.

So I have come here to exhort you to enlarge the scope of your endeavour to such an extent as to remind you and to prove that you are not merely creatures of

flesh, but that you are of spirit, that you have the power to turn your losses into gains and death into immortality. Some may have more power and capacity, and others less, but let us not insult our soul by ignoring its longing for the freedom of life, of light, of self-revelation. To have immensity of aspirations is to despise comfort and accept tribulation willingly. It is man's privilege to glorify his soul in his sufferings—the sufferings for the cause of truth and freedom. Our Shāstras tell us "Yādrshi Bhāvanā yasya siddhir bhavati tādrshi,"—"As the thought so the achievement."

What is the achievement? It is not only of outside things, but of the knowledge that we have our right to eternity,—the knowledge expressing itself in work which is for all time.

From our childhood, we deliberately set about curbing our innermost impulses of the soul, which are God's best gift to man,—the gift of his own essential truth. In the storm and stress of worldly life, it is too often seen, all the world over, that high aspirations have their wings stripped and then worldly prudence gains the ascendant. But our special misfortune is, that we are deliberately taught to lighten the burden by not taking sufficient provision for our journey along the higher road,—the provision of idealism, of faith in the soul. I have realised this keenly in the little boys of my school. For the first few years there is no trouble. But as soon as the third class is reached their worldly wisdom—the malady of agedness—begins to assert itself. Then they begin to insist,—"We must no longer learn, we have to pass examinations." That is as much as to say,—"We must take the road by which it is possible to gain the greatest number of marks with the least amount of knowledge."

So I say we have got habituated to cheat ourselves, from our childhood. From the very outset we play false to that intellectual rectitude which should have served to take us to the truth. Does not the curse of this fall on our country? Is it not for this reason, that we are beggars waiting for crumbs of knowledge thrown



to us from the feast of the rich? Can head-clerkships make up for this degradation?

Now you will understand why a certain class of our youths are content with saying that what our Rishis of old have said and done leaves no room for further thought over that. We snap the very spring of a clock and then say, with a great gusto of satisfaction, that for us time has come to its perfection and therefore refuses to move. This is cheating ourselves of truth.

Is there any other country in the world where men, who have gone through their full course of education, are capable of saying, that only *that* society is perfect where the dead rules and life is defeated, where thoughts have no place of authority, and originality is an offence to be persecuted with persistency of punishment? It is the ever-active energy of mind, which, accompanied by the aspiring hope of the future, has built all great civilisation; and we are not only ready to sacrifice it, but we blow our trumpets and beat our drums at its ceremony of demolition and congratulate ourselves on being the only people in the world, who have such amazing uniqueness of mentality. But let us not delude ourselves with the hope that by boasting of our misfortunes they will prove any the less unfortunate. It is the same cheating of ourselves—when we think we are clever, because we prefer passing examinations to learning,—as when we keep our aims small, our striving narrow, and only swell our vanity out of all proportion. When we look for results, we are met with university degrees and remunerative posts; but our debt to truth remains unpaid and our heads are bowed in shame before the world.

When we are envious of other peoples who enjoy political freedom we overlook the fact that this freedom springs from a mind that constantly strives for intellectual freedom, whose best energies are not diverted to the endless conformity to customs which have lost their meaning, to the foolishness which tries to drag boats through the dry river-beds, because these were navigated ages ago, when they were

alive with water. We would cut the very roots of our true life and then cast envious glances at the fruits of freedom borne by living branches; we would keep our boat clinging to the moveless bottom of the stream by means of hundreds of small and big anchors and then try to tug it against the current with a tow-rope of charitable concessions into the difficult haven of political freedom.

We must know that freedom and truth are twins, they are closely associated. When there are obstacles for our mind against receiving truth, then those obstacles take shape in our outward world forming barriers against freedom of action. From our infancy we are brought up in unthinking conformity to customs in the smallest details of life. This acts as an accumulating poison deadening our freedom of power to receive truth. Let me give an instance from our own school in Santiniketan. Some time ago I noticed a fresh scar on the foreheads of at least a score of boys who attended my class. Knowing that such a number of coincidences could not be accidental, I made enquiries and found out that one of the students of my school had said to the others, that by scratching a particular spot of the forehead sin could be bled out from us. It took no time for these boys to believe this and act accordingly. We may talk ourselves hoarse in explaining to them scientific laws of sanitation or other matters without producing any result, but because of the training of generations they are ready to accept everything that does not offer any reason for its proof of truth. Ready submission to unreason is the poisonous breeding ground for submissiveness to all authorities however arbitrary they may be.

One of the greatest mischiefs that such a habit of mind produces is the pessimistic belief that all evils are permanent or incorrigible, that they are decreed by fate. The West has never accepted malaria or plague or famine or any tyranny of man or nature as permanent, as inexorable. Its own mind moves and therefore it constantly pushes things away that are obstacles. This movement of mind, this faith in

reason, this perpetual exercise of will power, this ceaseless pushing off of all barriers of life is the only education for gaining freedom,—not writing petitions or organising beggary on a big scale.

I have not come here to lecture you from a distance. I want to show you in its true colours our accumulated shame, the shame which we have gilded with our vanity and are trying to pass off as something to be proud of. You are young, you are fresh; it is for you to remove this stain from our country. You must not try to delude others, nor suffer yourselves to be deluded. You must keep your aspirations high, your strivings true. If you keep your vision pure and your steps straight ahead, we may be yet able to fulfil the vow of humanity which has led other great peoples to their greatness. What is the vow? The vow of giving out of our abundance.

When we are unable to give, we may get beggars' doles; but when we are able to give out of our abundance, we are sure to gain our own selves. When we learn how to give, all the world will come out to meet and welcome us. Then we need not be kept pleading with folded hands—"Oh spare us, save us, hurt us not." For then mankind in its own interest will see that we are safe from hurt. Then we shall receive in our own right and not by others' favours.

Now we are saying, in timid deprecation that we do not aspire to the seats of the great, but will be quite content, if we can get a corner for ourselves to cower in. For God's sake do not entertain so mean

a desire nor utter so mean a prayer. "There is no joy in the small; therefore seek thou the Great." If we are oblivious of the Great within and only seek for it without, then whatsoever of comfort or pleasure we may succeed in getting by beggary will spell the doom of our country.

Sovereign Truth is out in his chariot of victory. His trumpet call is resounding from sky to sky. Those who are timid of spirit, who are indolent in mind, who are enamoured of their self-deluding false logic, who try to bar the path of truth with dead words of a decaying age, and thus hope to keep him captive at their own gate, will only succeed in forging fetters for their own feet. Sweep away this rubbish heap of ages,—for the King of the travellers is abroad. Every day the question comes from him, "How far have you made progress?" Should we every day repeat the same answer with a foolish swagger year after year and age after age, "Not a single step?" Should we keep our post at the same fixed spot, at the cross-road of the world's pilgrimage,—like a beggar with a castaway coat of the past age worn to tatters,—and raise our impotent arms to the fortunate pilgrims who have their place in the chariot of the King of travellers, and beg from them for our food and help and knowledge and freedom? And when they ask, "Why should you also not come with us for the search of wealth?" should we give them the same answer year after year, age after age, that all movement is forbidden us because we belong to the holy past, and are tied to the dead for all time to come?

## INDIAN SETTLERS IN AFRICA

I  
**I**N these articles my desire is to write down as simply and lucidly as I can some of the main thoughts that have been impressed upon my mind, during a long absence from India, while travelling up and down the

continent of Africa and meeting there settlers from Asia and from Europe.

The journey which I undertook was an extensive one. It stretched as far north as the sources of the Nile in Uganda and as far south as Capetown and the Cape Penin-

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## THE TRIAL

### ACT I

KHIRI THE MAID SERVANT

*Khiri*

**S**OME people have the means to be good in gorgeous comfort, and others like us groan under the burden of their goodness. Their charity grows fat in their easy chairs, while we carry out their mission with the sweat of our brows. They reap undying fame and we early death.

*A voice from without*

Khiri! Khiri!

*Khiri*

There she calls! No time for poor me even to nurse my grievance!

ENTERS RANI KALYANI

*Kalyani*

Sulky as usual!

*Khiri*

That proves I am made of flesh and blood.

*Kalyani*

What is your latest grievance?

*Khiri*

That I made a wrong choice when I chose you for my mistress. Why should I come to a Rani's house, if I must serve a whole world of ragged riffraffs, cook for a needy neighbourhood bred in dirt, and wear out my fingers washing their dishes? and all this with nobody to help me!

*Kalyani*

Help you could have enough if your tongue did not sting out all the servants I brought to my house.

*Khiri*

You are right. I have a sensitive mind,

and cannot bear the least wrong around me. This fastidious delicacy of mine dooms me to solitude. The servants you had were pure-blooded robbers, blessed with a dangerously innocent look.

*Kalyani*

And what about yourself?

*Khiri*

Holy Mother! I never claim to be an exception. I freely take all that I can lay my hands on. Yet I have but a single pair of them. The Creator made these to grab and to hold; therefore if you multiply hands about you, you divide your possessions.

*Kalyani*

But your solitude seems to be bursting with a crowd of nephews and nieces and a miscellaneous brood of cousins. Hasn't each of them a pair of hands for their share? You anger me and yet make me laugh.

*Khiri*

If only you laughed less and got angered more, possibly you could have changed my nature.

*Kalyani*

Your nature change! Not even when you are dead.

*Khiri*

This is encouragingly true. It makes me hope that death will be cautious about claiming me. There! look at that lazy crowd waiting at your gate. Some of them have the story of a sick husband, who obligingly never dies, and some of an uncle, whose death remains for ever fresh with its endless claim to funeral rites. They bring their bags full of lies, to ex-

change them for solid silver. I never cease to wonder how certain people can have a special relish for being cheated.

*Kalyani*

The poor cheat because wealth is often meaner than poverty. However, tell me why, last evening, when I fed the poor, sweets were scarce and also milk.

*Khiri*

Very likely the pastryman and the milk-vendor like to give you a fair chance to be cheated.

ENTER NEIGHBOURING WOMEN

*They shout*

Long live Rani Kalyani!

*Khiri*

Listen to that! If their stomachs had missed their fill of good fare yesterday, their lungs would show it this morning.

*Kalyani*

Who is that girl with you, Piari? I never saw her before.

*Second woman*

It is the ~~bride~~ bride come to our house. I have brought her for your blessing.

*Khiri*

It is easy to guess what you mean by blessing.

*Kalyani*

She has a sweet face.

*Second woman*

But not a particle of jewelry has she brought from her father's house.

*Khiri*

"They are all safely stored in your own chest," whisper those who are in the secret.

*Kalyani*

Come with me into my room.

(Kalyani goes with the woman and the bride)

*First woman*

The uncommon cheek of that woman.

*Khiri*

It is tiresomely common.

*Third woman*

But this surpasses anything that we know.

*Khiri*

Because it benefits somebody else but you.

*Third woman*

Your wit makes our sides burst with laughter.

*First woman*

Whatever we may say, our Rani has the biggest heart in the world.

*Khiri*

In other words, she is the biggest fool under the Sun.

*Fourth woman*

That is true. You remember how blind Andi was loaded with money, merely for fun, it seemed to me.

*Third woman*

And that old witch of a potter woman took away from her a real woolen rug as a reward for her facility in weeping.

*Fourth woman*

There is no harm in charity, but must it be foolish?

*First woman*

But she has such a sweet nature.

*Khiri*

A great deal of one's sweetness belongs to one's pocket.

*Fourth woman*

What I object to in her is her familiarity with vulgar people.

*Third woman*

She could easily have a better companion, to say the least, than Kedar's mother.

*Fourth woman*

It is simply courting the applause of the vulgar.

*Khiri*

Such is the way of the world. It is all give and take. She supplies food to our mouths, to gather back praise from them.



She gets the best of the bargain. For food is vulgar, but praise is for the great.

*Fourth woman*

There they come back from the Rani's room, that woman with the bride.

*First woman*

Show us what you have got.

*Second woman*

Nothing but a pair of bracelets.

*Third woman*

It sounds like a practical joke.

*Fourth woman*

You remember Piari got for her newly married daughter a gold chain besides a pair of earrings.

*Second woman*

Pity is not for the poor, but fortunate are they who have the reputation for it.

*Fourth woman*

The generosity of the rich is a mere hobby, it is only to please themselves.

*Khiri*

If only Lakshmi, the Goddess of Luck, were kind to me, I would show how to be kind in proper style.

*Second woman*

We pray that your wish may be fulfilled.

*First woman*

Stop your chatter! I hear the Rani's footsteps!

*Fourth woman*

(Loudly) Our Rani is an angel of mercy.

*Third woman*

Wealth has been blessed by the touch of her hands.

ENTERS KALYANI

*Kalyani*

What are you all so busy talking about?

*Khiri*

They have been furiously ploughing the ground of your good fame, harrowing,

hoing and raking, weeding out every green thing that bore flowers.

*Kalyani*

Before you go home remember that if gifts had to flow parallel with expectations they would have run dry and disappeared from the world within a few days of creation. (She leaves the room).

*Fourth woman*

Isn't that spiteful? She must have been eavesdropping.

*Khiri*

No need for that. She is old enough to know by this time that the praise that grows to excess before her face is generally pruned thin behind her back.

*Fourth woman*

Really, you people ought to control your tongues.

*Third woman*

If only you can do it, it won't matter much if the rest of us fail.

*Khiri*

Enough for the day's work of detraction. Now you can go home with eased hearts and try to forget the smart of receiving favours. (The women go.—She calls—) Kini, Bini, Kashi!

(THE GIRLS COME)

*Kashi*

Yes, Granny.

*Kini and Bini*

Yes, aunt.

*Khiri*

Come and take your meal.

*Girls*

We are not hungry.

*Khiri*

For eating hunger is not essential, but opportunity is. You will find some milk in the cupboard and some sweets.

*Kashi*

You are doing nothing but eat all day. Appetite has its limits.

*Khiri*

But good things are immensely more limited. Bini, why don't I see the silver comb you had in your hair ?

*Bini*

Poor Khetu's girl—

*Khiri*

I understand. Benevolence! The plague is in the air in this house! It is fatal for a girl of your circumstances. Our Rani indulges in wasting her means only to prove that they can never be exhausted. But for you to give is to lose for ever, do you not see the difference? Now then, off to bed.

(They go).

ENTERS KALYANI

*Khiri*

Life has become a burden to me, Rani.

*Kalyani*

You seem to bear it with wonderful ease.

*Khiri*

I swear by your feet, I am serious. I have news from home, that my aunt, my father's youngest sister, is on her death-bed.

*Kalyani*

A year is hardly past since I paid you the funeral expenses of this very same aunt, the youngest one.

*Khiri*

What a pity! But you seem to have a keen memory only about my poor aunts.

*Kalyani*

Does it choke you to ask from me? Must you lie?

*Khiri*

Lies are necessary to give dignity to begging. Truth would be monotonous and mean.

*Kalyani*

But, have I ever denied you, when you asked?

*Khiri*

To neglect our weapons, when not needed, is the sure way to miss them in the time of need. But I must tell you that you encourage lies by believing them.

*Kalyani*

They will fail this time.

*Khiri*

I shall not despair about my next chance. Till then, my father's youngest sister shall never be mentioned again.

(Kalyani goes out laughing)

Mother Goddess of Luck, your favourite bird, the owl, must have daily carried you to this house. Could it by mistake alight on my shoulder, I would feed it with choice morsels of mice flesh till it became languid and lay at my door.

(ENTERS GODDESS LAKSHMI)

*Khiri*

Visitors again!

*Lakshmi*

I am willing to leave, if I am not wanted.

*Khiri*

I must not be rash. That seems to be a regular crown on your head. And yet you don't look ridiculous with it as a real queen would do. Tell me who you are.

*Lakshmi*

I am Lakshmi.

*Khiri*

Not from the stage?

*Lakshmi*

No, from my heaven.

*Khiri*

You must be tired. Do take your seat, and do not be in a hurry to leave. I know full well you have no mercy for those who have brains. It is, I suppose, because the clever ones need never die of starvation and only fools need your special favour.

*Lakshmi*

Are you not ashamed to make your living by cheating your mistress?

*Khiri*

It is because you are perverse in your choice that those who have minds live upon those who have money.

*Lakshmi*

Intellect I never despise, only the crooked minds I avoid.

*Khiri*

The intellect, which is too straight, is only another name for stupidity! But if you promise me your favour, I give you my solemn word that henceforth my dullness will delight your heart. I shall be content to remain a perfect bore shunned by all intelligent people.

*Lakshmi*

Do you think you will ever be able to spend a farthing in charity?

*Khiri*

With pleasure. For when charity grazes only at the fringe of one's surplus, it adds to the beauty of the view—and it can also be made paying by good management. Only change our mutual position, and you will find the Rani developing a marvellous talent for devising means to get what is not her own. On the other hand, I shall become perfectly silly in swallowing lies and parting with my possessions, and my temper will grow as insipid as that of an egregious saint.

*Lakshmi*

Your prayer is granted. I make you a Rani. The world will forget that you ever were a servant unless you yourself help it to remember.

—  
ACT II

KHIRI THE QUEEN

*Khiri*

Where is Kashi?

*Kashi*

Here I am.

*Khiri*

Where are your four attendants?

*Kashi*

It is a perfect misery to be dogged by servants day and night.

*Khiri*

Should the elephant ever complain of the weight of its tusks? Malati!

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness!

*Khiri*

Teach this girl why she must be followed by attendants.

*Malati*

Remember that you are a Rani's granddaughter. In the Nawab's house, where I used to serve, the Begum had a litter of pet mongooses; each of them had four maids for their attendants, and sepoy's besides.

*Khiri*

Kashi, do you hear?

*Attendant*

Moti of our neighbourhood craves audience.

*Khiri*

Malati!

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness!

*Khiri*

What is the form of salutation expected from visitors in your Begum's house?

*Malati*

They have to walk forward, salaaming by touching the earth at each step, and then retire walking backward, salaaming again.

*Khiri*

Let Moti come before me in proper style.

MALATI BRINGS IN MOTI

*Malati*

Bend your head low. Touch the floor, and then touch the tip of your nose. Once again—not so fast—step properly.

*Moti*

Ah my poor back! How it aches!

*Malati*

Take dust on the tip of your nose three times.

*Moti*

I am rheumatic.

*Malati*

Once again.

*Moti*

Long live Rani Mother. Today, being the eleventh day of the moon, is for fasting and for almsgiving.

*Khiri*

Your Rani Mother can ascertain the phases of the moon even without your help, if she finds it profitable.

*Moti*

Let me receive alms from our Rani and take leave singing her praises.

*Khiri*

The first part of your prayer I prefer to ignore; the rest I graciously grant. You may leave immediately singing my praises. Malati!

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness!

*Khiri*

Let this woman take her leave in proper style.

*Moti*

Then I go.

*Malati*

Not so easily. Bend your head down. Take up the dust of the floor on the tip of your nose. Once again. Once more.

(Moti goes.)

*Khiri*

Bini, what happened to the ring you had on your forefinger? Has it been stolen?

*Bini*

Not stolen.

*Khiri*

Then lost?

*Bini*

Not lost.

*Khiri*

Then someone has cheated you of it?

*Bini*

No.

*Khiri*

You must admit that a thing either remains, or is stolen, or lost, or . . . . .

*Bini*

I have given it away.

*Khiri*

Which plainly means that someone has cheated you of it. Tell me, who has it?

*Bini*

Mallika. She is the poorest of all your servants, with her children starving. I have such a heap of rings, I thought . . .

*Khiri*

Listen to her! Only those of moderate means earn fame by spending in charity, while the rich in doing it earn ingratitude. Charity has no merit for those who possess too much. Malati!

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness.

*Khiri*

Mallika must be dismissed at once.

*Malati*

She shall be driven away.

*Khiri*

But not with the ring on her. What music is that outside my palace?

*An attendant*

A marriage procession.

*Khiri*

A marriage procession in front of the Rani's house! Suppose I happen to object, what is there to prevent me? Malati!

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness!

*Khiri*

What do they do in a Nawab's house in such a case?

*Malati*

The bridegroom is taken to the prison, and, for three days and nights two amateur flute players practice their scales at each of his ears, and then he is hanged if he survives.

*Khiri*

Ask my guards to give everyone of the party ten strokes with a shoe.

*First attendant*

Only ten strokes ! It almost sounds like a caress.

*Second attendant*

They ought to rejoice at this happy ending.

*Third attendant*

Our Rani has the gift of humour, for which God be praised.

ENTERS A MAID SERVANT

*Maid*

My pay has been in arrears for the last nine months. To slave and yet to borrow money to feed oneself is not to my taste. Either pay up my wages or allow me leave and go home.

*Khiri*

To pay up your wages is tolerably good, but it saves a lot of trouble to allow you to leave. Malati !

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness.

*Khiri*

What is your advice ?

*Malati*

Let her be fined at least a hundred rupees.

*Khiri*

As she is poor I remit fifty rupees out of her fine.

*First attendant*

Rani, you are kind.

*Second attendant*

How lucky for her to get fifty rupees for nothing.

*Third attendant*

You can as well count it nine hundred and fifty rupees out of a thousand.

*Fourth attendant*

How few are there whose charity can bear such a drain.

*Khiri*

You do make me blush. (To the maid servant) Now you may go away with proper ceremony and finish the rest of your weeping at leisure outside my palace. (Malati takes away the maid making her walk backwards with salaams)

RE-ENTERS MALATI

*Malati*

Rani Kalyani is at your door.

*Khiri*

Has she come riding on her elephant ?

*Malati*

No, walking. She is dusty all over.

*Khiri*

Must I admit her in ?

*First attendant*

She should sit at a proper distance.

*Second attendant*

Let her stand behind your back.

*Third attendant*

She can be dismissed by saying that Your Highness is tired.

*Khiri*

Malati !

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness !

*Khiri*

Advise me what to do.

*Malati*

Let all other seats be removed but your own.

*Khiri*

You are clever. Let my hundred and twenty slave girls stand in a row outside that door. Sashi, hold the state umbrella over my head. Malati !

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness !

*Khiri*

Is it all right ?

*Malati*

Perfect ! like a picture !

*Khiri*

Bring her into my presence.

(Malati goes out and returns with  
*Kalyani*)

*Kalyani*

Are you well?

*Khiri*

My desire is to keep well, but the rest of the world tries its best to wreck me.

*Kalyani*

I must have a talk with you in private.

*Khiri*

Nothing can be more private than this. Only yourself and I. These are mere servants. Malati!

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness!

*Khiri*

Is it possible to send them away?

*Malati*

I shudder to think of it.

*Kalyani*

Then let me tell you briefly. Our Pathan King was forcibly robbed me of my lands.

*Khiri*

You are not joking? Then those villages Gopalnagar, Kanaiganj and . . . .

*Kalyani*

They no longer belong to me.

*Khiri*

That's interesting. Haven't you some cash left?

*Kalyani*

Nothing whatever.

*Khiri*

How funny! That sapphire necklace and those wonderful diamonds and that chain of rubies, seven rows deep . . . . .

*Kalyani*

They are all taken away.

*Khiri*

Doesn't our scripture say that wealth is unstable like a water drop on a lotus

leaf? And your jewelled umbrella, and that throne with its canopy—I suppose they also have followed the rest.

*Kalyani*

Yes.

*Khiri*

This is instructive. Our sages truly say that prosperity is like a beautiful dream that makes the awakening all the more dismal. But have they left you your palace?

*Kalyani*

The soldiers are in possession.

*Khiri*

It does sound like a story—a Rani yesterday and today a beggar in the street. Malati!

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness!

*Khiri*

What do you say?

*Malati*

Those who grow too high must have their fall.

*Kalyani*

If I may have shelter here for a short time I can try to recover my lost fortune.

*Khiri*

How unfortunate! My palace is crowded with my servants—no space left where a needle can be dropped. Of course, I could leave you my room and try to rough it in my country-house.

*First attendant*

Absurd!

*Second*

It will simply break our hearts.

*Kalyani*

I cannot dream of putting you to such inconvenience. I take my leave.

*Khiri*

Must you go so soon? By the by, if you still have some jewelry left, you may leave it with me for permanent safe keeping.



*Kalyani*

Nothing has been saved.

*Khiri*

How late it is. It gives me a headache if I am made to talk too much. I feel it already coming on. (Kalyani goes) See that my State chair and footstool are carefully put back in the store-room. Malati!

*Malati*

Yes, Your Highness!

*Khiri*

What do you think of this?

*Malati*

It makes one laugh to see the frog turning into a tadpole again.

*An attendant*

A woman craves your audience. Shall I send her away?

*Khiri*

No, no, call her in. I am in a delightful mood today.

ENTERS THE WOMAN.

*The woman*

I am in trouble.

*Khiri*

You want to pass it on to others?

*The woman*

Robbers came to my room last night.

*Khiri*

And you must take your revenge on me!

*The woman*

I ask for your pity.

*Khiri*

Pity for what you have lost yourself and nothing for what you ask me to lose?

*The woman*

If you must reject my prayer, tell me where I may get it granted.

*Khiri*

Kalyani is the proper person to suit you. My men will go and show you her place.

*The woman*

Her place is well known to me,—I go back to her! (Revealing herself) I am the Goddess Lakshmi!

*Khiri*

If you must leave me, do it in proper style.—Malati, Malati, Tarini! Where are my maids?

(ENTERS KALYANI)

*Kalyani*

Have you gone mad? It is still dark, and your shouts bid fair to wake the whole neighbourhood.

*Khiri*

What ugly dreams I have had all night! It is a new life to wake up from them. Stay a while, let me take the dust of your feet. You are my Rani, and I am your servant for ever.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## INDIAN SETTLERS IN AFRICA

### II

I HAVE in my possession a pencil-written manuscript, which was given to me by an Indian friend, who travelled many long journeys with me in East Africa. We had talks together which sometimes continued far

into the night; and I always found his nature the same,—simple, religious, free from the least touch of racial bias, perfectly frank and open, and essentially truthful. He had a great wish to accompany me on all my journeys, and it would have been a delight to me

forward to relieve their sufferings and sorrows, and lift them to the level of healthy human existence ?

The working classes of civilized countries, being comparatively comfortable and educated, have risen against their masters. They are attempting to prevent the continuance of profiteering and exploitation by their employers, both by means of passive and active resistance. But the workers in India being uneducated, unorganized and steeped in poverty and dense ignorance of the liberating-

forces—economic and political, of the world, need the active and constant sympathy and assistance of the workers of other countries. The State, too, ought to give up its stoic indifference, should sweep away all criminal opposition to the just demands of labour, fix a minimum wage for every branch of industry, save more than eighty million men, women, and children from under-feeding, ill-breeding and social injustice and thus restore them to freedom, comfort and culture.

BAL KRISHNA.

RHYMED VERSIONS FROM 'THE CRESCENT MOON'

[The following rhymed versions from 'The Crescent Moon' were sent to the Poet from Liverpool by a poor, working girl, who was deeply moved by the beauty of the Poet's own translation. I have received her permission to publish these in the "Modern Review". C. F. A.]

BABY'S WORLD.

Little baby, baby mine,  
What does thy tiny soul define  
In this new world ?

Do the stars hold speech with thee,  
And the baby clouds, so swift and free ?

A wonder world is my baby's mind,  
It has visions that I can never find,—  
To which my world-worn eyes are blind.

But he can see !

'Tis a realm of kings unfound,  
Where all dear baby things abound,  
And from the magic ground  
Springs new delight ;

There Reason has elastic laws,  
And Fact has never any flaws,  
And Truth wins wild applause,  
In baby's world.

WHEN AND WHY.

That love's sweet summer flowers  
May perfume all your infant hours,  
I bring these colours in your toys,—  
Little childish, painted joys,—  
That every tint may win your sight,  
As colours in a rainbow bright,  
Making your day one perfect light,  
That all life's colours may control  
The freshness of your soul.

And when I sing, my gathered tone  
Shall make your spirit dimly own  
The music in the swaying trees  
And the faint whisper in the breeze.  
The wistful waves along the shore  
Will make you listen and understand,  
When my voice is heard no more.

The wild waved heart of the waters,  
Caressing the listening earth,  
Shall supplement your childish mirth.

To your baby lips I hold  
The cup of life's pure gold,  
Filled to the brim and o'er the rim,  
Till Death's angel dim  
Shall call me after a while.

I kiss your tiny brow,—  
Ah 'tis the dawn of morning now  
I gaze and bow  
To your sweet tender smile.

THE BEGINNING.

"Where did I come from, Mother dear,  
Along the worlds, till I got here ?"

The mother clasped her darling boy  
"Desire of my heart, my love, my joy !"  
She said.

"You were hidden deep in my heart's desire,  
You were the flame of my own life's fire ;  
With little dolls I used to play  
And with tiny play-things made of clay ;  
The little Baby Christ, enshrined,  
So purified my heart and mind,  
That as I knelt before heaven's shrine,  
My trembling soul could scarce define,  
God's ultimate, divine  
Sweet will,  
Until  
You came to me, my child !



The Virgin Mother's salutation  
 Thrilled through my life's probation  
 Through all the years,  
 Bringing sweet hopes, sweet fears.  
 Welcome as the dawn,  
 Your little life in me was born,  
 And you floated down the stream  
 Of all my virgin dream,  
 Until reaching  
 My beseeching  
 Soul,  
 You gained the portal fair of birth  
 On this all-welcoming earth.

"As I gaze upon your face,  
 Little hero of the race,  
 I scarcely know what I should do,—  
 Is there fear of losing you?  
 Ah! I press you closely to my breast,  
 God knows all things best,  
 Little baby mine,  
 In this great world!"

#### THE RECALL.

On a dark dark night,  
 When all were sleeping,  
 And I was alone, awake and weeping,  
 My baby's soul took its angel flight  
 Far away to the land of light,

The fixed stars were shining then,  
 Tonight they shine again.  
 She died when the buds were nearly rife,  
 With busy palpitating life,  
 And she is dead.

Now all the beautiful flowers  
 Bedeck the summer hours.  
 And children scatter in their play  
 So many petals along the way  
 To that bright land,  
 Where you alone can understand  
 My hearts grief.

All the scented petals' dust  
 It must, it must,  
 Your baby soul recall.

Ah, could I but see beneath the pall  
 Of sullen Death!  
 So much of life around is wasted,—  
 Your little soul had hardly tasted  
 Earth's sweet inter-play  
 When you were taken far away  
 Out of the light of our common day,  
 Leaving me desolate.

My longing soul can ask but this,  
 Give me one baby kiss,

Tonight.  
 Liverpool.

M. M. EVANS.

## WRONG DIET AND WRONG HYGIENE AS SECONDARY CAUSES OF OUR PHYSICAL DEGENERATION

BY PRAMATHA NATH BOSE, B. SC. (LONDON)

**I**MPOVERISHMENT leading to dearth of proper aliment is one of the primary causes of the increasing ill health of the multitude. But it cannot be operative in the case of the small class of fairly prosperous Neo-Indians consisting of well-to-do officials, lawyers, doctors, &c. The noxious effects of the other primary causes—obstruction of drainage offered by railways, raised roads, embankments of canals, &c., and mental strain—no doubt have their influence on them as on others. But it might not unreasonably be expected to be counteracted to some extent by proper diet and hygiene. There appears to be but little indication of that, however.

Until lately, the diet of the upper class Hindus consisted of cereals, pulses, fresh

vegetables, fruits, and milk and its products. Since the Vedic period, at least, they have mostly abstained from fish and flesh except in Bengal, where also meat was but occasionally partaken of. The diet was the result of untold centuries of experiment, and that it was well suited to their constitution is attested by the splendid physique and the mental vigour of those who still adhere to it, especially among the Brahmans of southern and western India. The properties of all its ingredients had been thoroughly studied, their physiological effects were well known, and they were skilfully combined into dishes highly palatable, easily digestible and serving all the purposes of nutrition in a tropical or subtropical climate. In Bengal, for in-



Mahatma Gandhi, Moulana Mahamad Ali and a kisan delegate coming out of the Subjects Committee at Nagpur.

The result of the deliberations of the Congress and the statesmanship of the leaders of the movement is too apparent to be discussed here so far as the Non-Co-operation resolution is concerned. The resolution has a positively constructive side which has laid a programme before the nation with a view to work for the attainment of Swaraja. The next Congress according to the new constitution will be and ought to be the National Parliament of India.

The Congress enters into a new phase now. It will have time and facilities to deliberate, discuss and legislate for the Indian Nation.

We will want whole time Secretaries and a regular staff of clerks and Under-Secretaries. The Congress work will go on throughout the year.

The next step will be to construct a permanent building for holding the sessions of the Congress and a home for the staff. It means the National Parliament of India and will have to be fixed once for all. The place should be easily accessible to all provinces. No other place is more central than Allahabad. It is a happy idea that the office of the All-India Congress Committee, which hereafter becomes the executive body of the Congress, is located at Allahabad.

## RABINDRANATH TAGORE ON CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

**T**HE following letter has been received from the Poet in America :—

"It has given me great consolation to read in your letters what Mahatmaji is doing in the way of constructive work. Such a positive programme of duties requires no special stress of necessity to justify itself. The stars light up their flames, not because of their despair at the sun's absence, but because it is their nature to shine. One need not wait to find some cause for anger from other people's country, in order to be able to serve one's own. Let us do what we can for our

brothers, but never as a movement of retaliation against our cousins. Self-help loses a great deal of its merit when it is resorted to, as a desperate measure, by the importunate beggar thwarted in his expectation of outside help.

"'You are wicked : I shan't have anything to do with you,' sounds quarrelsome. 'I shall manage my own affairs, whatever you may think or do,' sounds all right. Non-co-operation appeared to me to be the progeny of the union of rejection from one party and dejection from the other party ; and therefore

though I tried to shed upon it my best smile, I long hesitated to welcome it to my heart.

"Why do we not feel the miserable shame of uttering in a tear-choked voice, or, for the matter of that, in a sullen growl, to our Governors—'We are sorely disappointed in you, and therefore we have no other alternative than to come down to our own people.' It is like the exclamation of a malcontent dog to its neglectful master, 'I was willing to guard your door and beautifully wag my tail at you, if you had provided me with the remnant of your dinner : but as you never cared to do so, I go to join my own species.'

"Not very long ago, we said to our rulers,— "We are willing to sacrifice our principles and to persuade our men to join in a battle about whose merit they have not the least notion ; only, in exchange, we shall claim your favour.' It was pitifully weak : it was sinful. And now we must acknowledge our responsibility,—to the extent of our late effort at recruiting,—for turning our men into a mercenary horde, drenching the soil of Asia with brothers' blood for the sake of the self-aggrandisement of a people wallowing in the mire of imperialism.

"I am mighty glad that any reward was refused, or, at least, what was flung to us was deemed inadequate. It was ordained that we should go through our penance at Jallianwala Bagh and at the debates of both the Houses of Parliament. Let India also accept and carry out the Esher Commission recommendations, for her sackcloth and ashes !

"The word 'Non-co-operation' still chokes me. I cannot get over the shame that it carries. It will always proclaim the fact, that our co-operation came to us by a road of ignominy,—that it missed its true route and did not enter into the heart of our country through the great triumphal arch of love.

"I have ever cried myself hoarse in trying to convince our people that self-government for us is simple,—like the eye-sight to the eyes,—it is already there, only the lids have to be opened.

"The most vitally valuable part of Self-government is the 'Self.' When it comes to us as a *gift* packed in a tin from the outside,

then that very 'self' is smothered to death, and its tortured ghost becomes for us an eternal incubus.

"For a man to be kept fettered in a prison-house, is inconvenient, but not incongruous—but for him to be left fettered in an open road is tragic and ludicrous at the same moment,—for it is inappropriate. Borrowed self-government is that fettered self-government,—it has the open road, but not the free legs.

"And yet, what was it that hindered us from taking upon ourselves the full responsibility of our own education, sanitation, prevention of crimes, and such other duties that God Himself, and not Montagu or British Parliaments, had given us to perform entirely according to our own way ? The sacred responsibility had been lying before our own door wearily waiting, not for any passing of a Bill, but for real sacrifice from ourselves.

"The *power* is there where there is right, and where there is the dedication of love. It is a *maya* to imagine that the gift of self-government is somewhere outside us. It is like a fruit that the tree must produce itself through its own normal function, by the help of its inner resources. It is not a Chinese lantern, flimsily gaudy, that can be bought from a foreign second-hand shop to be hung on the tree to illuminate its fruitlessness.

"All this I tried to explain in my 'Swadeshi Samaj'—and when I found that nobody took me at all seriously, and when pedants discovered to their utter disgust discrepancies between my proposal and some doctrine of John Stuart Mill, then I took up, unaided, my village organisation work, which at the present moment is throbbing out its last heart throbs in a remote corner of Bengal. Certainly, I was more successful in writing the song on that occasion,—

'If nobody cares to come in answer to thy call, walk alone.

"Of course, turning out songs is my proper work. But those, who are unfortunate, cannot afford to limit their choice to the works they *can* do ; they must also bear the burden of tasks they can *not* do !"



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OUR SWADESHI SAMAJ

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

(Specially translated for the Modern Review).

[ This paper was read by the author some 16 years ago on the occasion of a Government resolution bearing on Water Scarcity in Bengal. It is extraordinary how closely it touches the present feeling in the Country.—Ed., *The Modern Review* ].

**I**N our country the king has made wars, defended his territory and administered his laws, but the social organisation has attended to everything else, from the supply of water to the supply of knowledge, so simply and naturally that the repeated floods of new sovereignty, which swept over the land with the advent of each new era, did not reduce us to brutes by destroying our *dharma*, nor scatter us into vagabondage by breaking up our social structure. The kings incessantly battled against one another, but in our murmuring bamboo groves, amidst the shade of our mango orchards, temples were being raised, rest-houses for wayfarers established, and water-reservoirs excavated; the village schoolmaster taught his simple lore, higher philosophy was not lacking in the *tols*, and the village meeting-places were resonant with the chanting of the Ramayana and the singing of *Kirtans*. The social life did not depend upon outside aid, nor did outside aggression perceptibly mar its serene beauty.

It is a trivial matter that we should be deploring the scarcity of water to-day. The root of it is the thing, above all things, which should cause us the deepest misgiving,—the fact that our mind is no longer in our own social system, that our whole attention is directed outwards.

If a river, which has always flowed by the side of some village, deserts it and betakes its current elsewhere, then the village loses its water, its fruits, its health

and its commerce. Its gardens become wildernesses, and the tangled growths which lodge in the cracks of its decayed prosperity become the haunt of bat and owl.

The current of man's mind is of no less importance than a river. This current of old had kept pure and joyful the cloistered shade of Bengal's villages,—but now the mind of Bengal has been distracted and turned away from its village homesteads. That is why its temples are in ruins, for there are none to repair them; its pools are insanitary, for there are none to clear out the slime; the dwellings of its wealthy ones are deserted and no joyful festivity resounds therein. So now it is the government which must give us water, government which must give us health, and for our very education we must cringe at the door of government. The tree which used to bear its own blossoms now stretches its withered branches upwards, petitioning for a rain of flowers from on high. What if its prayer be granted,—of what avail to it would be such make-believe bloom?

The state is the sovereign power in England. The old-time *Raj-shakti* in our country was different. In England the state is mainly responsible for the well-being of the people, but in India this was so only to a limited extent. Not that the king had not to maintain and reward the sages who gave free education to the people in religion and science,—but that was only in part. The real responsibility lay on the householder. If the king stopped his

grants, or even if the land was kingless, these primary activities of the community would not suffer any serious check. Not that the king did not provide water-reservoirs for the people, but no more than what all wealthy men considered it their duty to do. The neglect of the king could not dry up the water resources of the country.

In England every one is at liberty to pursue his self-interest, his personal comforts and amusements. They are not burdened with communal duties. All the greater cares rest on the state. In our country it was the king who was comparatively free, and on the people was cast the burden of their civic obligations. The king warred and hunted; whether he spent his time attending to matters of state or to his personal pleasures was a matter for which he might be accountable to *dharma*, but on which the people did not leave their communal welfare to depend. The responsibility for this was divided in a wonderfully adaptive way among the members of the community themselves.

For this reason what we understand as *dharma* permeated the whole social fabric; each one had to practise the discipline of self-restraint, each one had to conform to *dharma*.

This shows that the seat of life of different civilisations is differently placed in the body politic. Where the responsibility for the welfare of the people lies, there beats the heart of the nation; and if a blow should fall thereon, the whole nation is wounded unto death. In England the overthrow of the state would mean destruction for the nation. But disaster can only overtake our country when its social body, its *Samaj*, is crippled. That is why we have never staked our all to resist a change of sovereignty, but have clung with might and main to the freedom of our *Samaj*. It is, I say, because all good works depend in England upon the state, and in India upon the social organisation, that in England to save the state is to save the country, and for India to live is to preserve her social institutions.

Naturally England is busy keeping the state ever alert, eternally vigilant. And we

having read in her school, have come to the conclusion that the continual poking of Government out of its indifference is the whole duty of the Indian man. We somehow seem to have become incapable of understanding that putting a blister on someone else's body is not a way to cure one's own malady.

We love to argue, and here it may be argued whether or not it is better to centralise the business of public welfare in the hands of a specialised Government rather than leave it loosely spread over every member of the community. What I say is, that this may be a good subject for a debating club, but its discussion cannot lead us anywhere, for in England the state depends on the continued goodwill of the people, which has been evolved by a natural process. We cannot get to this state by discussion and, though it be perfection itself, we must perforce do without it!

The Government in our country—the *Sarkar*—has no relations with our social organisation—the *Samaj*; so that whatever we may seek from the former must be paid for out of our freedom. From whichever of its duties our *Samaj* seeks relief by getting it done by the *Sarkar*, to that extent will it be disabled with an incapability which was not of its essence in the past. To-day we are striving, of our own accord, to place in the hands of the *Sarkar* the whole duty of our *Samaj*. So long many a new sect has arisen in our *Samaj*, each with its own special manners and customs, without protest or penalty from the larger body. Now we are crystallised into rigidity by the Englishman's law, and every departure is compelled to declare itself non-Hindu. The innermost core of our *Samaj*, which we have been carefully guarding within our bosoms, through the ages, is at last exposed to outside aggression. That is the calamity,—not water-scarcity.

In the old days those who were decorated by the Imperial power of the Moghuls, and called to share its counsels, did not find their fullest satisfaction in these honours. They gave a higher place to the approval of their own *Samaj*. And for the highest reward, which even Delhi had



not in its gift, they had to come and stand at the cottage door of the village of their birth. Acknowledgment as a high-souled member of the community by the meanest there, meant more than the highest Maharajaship conferred by the *Sarkar*. In those days they had learnt to value appreciation by the motherland in the very depths of their being; and the pomp of the metropolis, or the glories of the imperial audience chamber never succeeded in drawing their hearts away therefrom. Therefore, there was no water-scarcity then, and all the adjuncts of true human culture were to be found in the life of the village.

To-day it adds not to our happiness that our countrymen should hail us as blessed, and so does our endeavour fail to be directed towards our country. It has now become necessary for requests and reminders to come to us from the *Sarkar*. There is nothing within us to impel us to take the natural course ourselves, for have we not signed away our birthright to the white man,—are not our very tastes put up for sale in his shops?

I feel I may be misunderstood. I do not mean that each one of us should cling to the soil of his native village and that there is no need to stir outside it to gain knowledge or recognition. The Bengali cannot but be grateful to the forces of attraction which have drawn him out, roused his faculties, and broadened his mind by widening his sphere of activity. But the time has come to remind the sons of Bengal that they must not turn topsyturvy the natural relations of within and without. Men go abroad to earn, and come home to spend. To make the best use of our powers in the outside world, we must keep our heart true within. But, as the last Provincial Conference showed only too clearly, we have now changed all that. We went to confer with our provincial brethren, but our language was foreign. We have learnt to look upon the English-educated man as our next-of-kin, and cannot realise that all our politics are futile if we cannot make one with us the whole community, from the highest to the lowest. We have become used to keeping

the great mass of our countrymen outside our deliberations and so have set up an impassable barrier between them and ourselves. We have from the very first spared no effort or artifice to win the heart of England, but have clean forgotten that the heart of our own country is of greater value and requires at least as much of striving for its conquest.

The ultimate object of political work is to mould the mind of the people into one. It is only in our unfortunate country that the idea finds place of calling a series of operations designed to capture the mind of the foreigner by the name of political education. If we acknowledge the conquest of the country's heart to be the supreme gain, we must cast aside the foreign methods which we have learnt to consider so necessary in business matters, and bring full into our view the avenues which have always been open, and still are available, as thoroughfares to the heart of the motherland.

Let us try and imagine what we should have done if we really had some message which we wanted to deliver to the country. Instead of getting up a meeting in the English style we should have organised a grand *mela*. There arrangements for play and song and festivity galore would bring crowds hurrying from the most distant places. There we could hold our markets and our exhibitions of home-made goods and agricultural produce. There we could award prizes to our bards and reciters and those who came to sing or play. There we could arrange lantern lectures on sanitation. There we could have heart to heart talks with each other, and bethink ourselves of ways and means, in regard to all matters of national interest,— and with gentle and rustic alike we could hold communion in our own language.

Our countrymen are mainly villagers. When the village desires to feel in its veins the throb of the greater life of the outside world, the *mela* has always been its way of achieving that object. The *mela* is the invitation of the village to the world into its cottage home. On such festive occasion the village forgets its narrowness in a

hospitable expansion of heart. Just as in the rains the water-courses are filled with water from the sky, so in *mela* time the village heart is filled with the spirit of the Universal.

These melas are altogether a natural growth in our country. If you call people to a formal meeting they come burdened with doubt and suspicion and it takes time for their hearts to open. But those who come to a mela are already in the open, holiday mood, for they have left plough and hoe and all cares behind. So that is the place and time to come and sit by the people and hold converse with them. There is not a district in Bengal where, at different times in the year and at suitable places, melas are not held. We should make a list of these times and places to begin with, and then take pains to make acquaintance with our own people through this open door.

If the leaders of the country will abjure empty politics and make it their business to give new life and objective to these melas, putting their own heart into the work and bringing together the hearts of Hindu and Muslim, and then confer about the real wants of the people,—schools, roads, water reservoirs, grazing commons and the like, then will the country soon awaken into life.

It is my belief that if a band of workers go about from district to district, organising these melas of Bengal, furnishing them with new compositions by way of *Jatras*, *Kirtans* and recitations; with bioscope and lantern shows, gymnastics and legerdemain; then the money question will give no trouble. In fact if they undertake to pay the zamindars their usual dues on being allowed to make the collections, they will stand to make considerable profit. And if this profit be used for national work, it would result in uniting the organisers of the mela to the people with a stronger tie, and would enable them to get acquainted with every detail of the life of the country. The valuable functions they could then perform in connexion with the national awakening would be too numerous to recount.

Religious and literary education has

always been imparted in our country in the midst of the joy of festivity. Now-a-days, for one reason or another, the zamindars have been drawn away to the metropolis, and the festivities on the occasion of the weddings of their sons and daughters are limited to the dinners and nauches given for their rich town friends, the poor tenants being often called upon to pay extra impositions for the purpose. So the villages are losing all their joy, and the religious and literary culture, which was a feature of all festivity, and used to be the solace of man, woman and child alike, is getting to be more and more beyond the means of ordinary people. If our suggested band of organisers can take back this current of festivity to the villages, they will reclaim the desert into which the heart of the nation is fast lagging.

We should also remember that the drying up or pollution of our reservoirs is not only a cause of water-scarcity, but of disease and death as well. So also many of our melas, originating in the name of some religious festival, have degenerated, and far from being a source of education are becoming centres of corruption. Fields which are neglected not only do not yield crops, but breed noxious weeds. If we do not rescue these institutions from such foul decay we shall be guilty before our country and our *dharma*.

I have said this much to give an example of how we can approach our countrymen in a natural way, and also to give an idea how, by organising and regulating our existing institutions, it may be possible to make them fruitful of untold blessings to the country at large.

Those who are unable to pin their faith on petitioning the Government as the highest form of political activity are dubbed pessimists by the opposite school. That is to say, they think that we refuse to beg because we are pessimistic as to the quantity or quality of the alms. But let me say as clearly as I can that I have never been one of those who seek the consolation of the grape-forswearing fox, and that I have never preached the superiority of self-determination because of the big



stick with which Government goes for over-impertunate beggars. On the contrary, I say that a dependence on the favours of others is the sign of the truly pessimistic wretch. I refuse to be a party to the attitude that unless we bend our knees and fold our hands there is no hope for the country. I believe in our country and I have a great respect for the powers of our people. And, above all, I know for certain that if our present unity be not a realisation of India's essential oneness from within, if it be something depending on the changing of his mood by the foreigner, then it is doomed to repeated futility.

Therefore it is always incumbent on us to inquire and find out what is the true way of India. To establish a personal relationship between man and man was always India's main endeavour. Our relationships extended to the most distant connections, continued unrelaxed with children even when grown up, and included neighbours and villagers irrespective of race or caste. The householder was bound by family ties to preceptor and teacher, guest and wayfarer, landlord and tenant,—not ties prescribed by religion or law, but of the heart. Some were as fathers, others as sons, some as brothers, others as intimates. Whomsoever we came into contact with we drew into the circle of relationship. So we never got into the habit of looking on man as a machine, or a tool for the furtherance of some interest.

There may be a bad as well as a good side to this, but it was the way of our country,—nay more, it is the way of the East.

We saw this in the Japanese war. War is doubtless a mechanical thing now-a-days and those who engage in it have to act and become as parts of a machine. And yet every Japanese soldier was something more than a machine. He was not reduced to a blind piece of war material, nor to a blood-thirsty brute. They all remained related to their Mikado and their country in a reverential self-dedication. So, in our old days, our warriors did not go to their death like pawns moved by an unknown player, but, through their chiefs, each of them dedicated himself to the *Ksha-*

*tra-dharma*. No doubt this made the ancient battle-field resemble a vast sacrifice of self-immolation: and the westerner may exclaim that it was magnificent, but not war: but the Japanese by not neglecting their pristine magnificence, while making efficient modern war, won the admiration of East and West alike.

Anyhow, that is our nature. We are unable to turn necessity to account unless we first purify it with the touch of personal relation. And so we have often to take on ourselves extra burdens. The ties of necessity are narrow and confined to the place of business. If master and servant are merely so related, their commerce is confined to the giving and taking of work and wages; but if personal relations are brought in, then is the burden of each cast on the other through the whole gamut of their respective joys and sorrows.

Let me give a modern illustration of what I mean. I was present at the Provincial Conferences of Rajshahi and Dacca. Of course we all looked on the work of the Conference as a serious piece of business, but what took me by surprise was, that the demands of hospitality, and not of the business of the day, were the more conspicuous — as if we had accompanied a bridegroom to his wedding — and the requirements of our comfort and our amusement were so insistent that they must have strained our hosts to the limit. If they had reminded us that we had come to do patriotic work and that there was no reason to suppose that we had laid them under some eternal obligation, they would have been justified. But it is not our characteristic to admit business as an excuse for keeping to one's own concerns. However business-like our modern training may be making us, the host must still be above mere business considerations. We cannot allow even business to remain untouched by the heart. And so at the Conferences we were less impressed by the business done than by the hospitality received. Those meetings of our countrymen, with all their western paraphernalia, were unable to get rid of their eastern heart. So, also, with the Congress, that much of it which is truly national — its hospitality



— has played an abiding part in the national regeneration, while its work ends with its three-day's session and is heard of no more during the rest of the year.

This eastern hospitality, which is of India's very nature, is a source of great joy to her when it can be offered on a grand scale. The individual hospitality of the householder used to be expanded in the old days into a vast *Yajna* in order to find its completest realisation. That, however, was in the distant past. So when India got this recent opportunity of throwing open her guest-house once more, she was overjoyed, and India's Goddess stepped in and took her long unused seat. And thus it happened that, even in the midst of the outrageously outlandish speechifying and clapping of hands in our Congress and Conferences, our Mother smiled on us once more, happy that she could serve out of her humble store to each one of her guests, albeit understanding but little else of what it was all about! She would have been happier still if, instead of this book-learned, this watch-and-chain-bedecked assembly, she had found rich and poor, cultured and rustic, invited and uninvited, gathered together as in the *Yajnas* of old, to join this festivity. May be, in such case, there would have been less of material to go round, but the Mother's blessing would have fallen in richer abundance.

However that may be, what I was saying is, that India is unwilling to forego the sweetness of human relationship even in her work and business, and is ready to take on herself the extra burdens so arising. That is why, in the past, no outsider has had to be concerned with the succour of the helpless, the teaching of the young, the sheltering of wayfarers, or any other public good work. If to-day the old samajic bonds have ceased to hold, and if the giving of water and health and learning be no longer possible from within the broken-up Samaj, even that need not cause us to despair.

Hindu Dharma has always shown the way for each householder to transcend the narrowness of home or parish and relate himself to the universal. Each house-

holder is still in the habit of making his daily offerings of *Pancha-yajna* to the Gods, the rishis, ancestors, humanity and all creatures. Why should it not be possible for him to maintain the same high relations with his country? Could we not set apart every day some offering, be it the smallest coin, be it half-a-handful of rice, in the name of our country? Would it be too much to ask of our Hinduism that it should unite us in concrete relations with this India of ours, the resort of our gods, the retreat of our rishis, the motherland of our ancestors? The relation of good works with our own land,—are we not to gain that for each one of ourselves, rather than leave it to others, and take our hearts off elsewhere?

We are ceaselessly bewailing the draining out of our money, but is it a thing of less moment that our heart should be enticed away? Does our patriotism, then, consist simply in urging others to do all good work, and is that what all our Congresses and Conferences are content to be busy with? No, that can never be! This state of things cannot last long in our country, for it is not of India's nature. We who have uncomplainingly shared our hard-earned little with our destitute relations and connections without considering that to be any extraordinary sacrifice,—shall we say that we are unable to bear the burden of supporting our Mother? Is the foreigner to be for ever doling out alms and we crying ourselves hoarse because the doles are not generous to our liking? Never, never! Each one of us shall for every day of our lives, take up the burdens of our country. This shall be our glory, this is our *Dharma*. The time has come when each of us must know that he is not alone, that, insignificant though he be, he cannot be neglected, nor must he neglect the meanest.

If to-day we should say to one, "Go and work for your Swadeshi Samaj," he would be utterly puzzled to make out how, where, on what and for whom he is to work. It is perhaps just as well that each individual should not be capable of deciding for himself his own programme of work. Therefore there must be a centre.

Our bands of workers are often successful in making their enthusiasm blossom forth, but they fail to carry on till fruition. There may be many a reason for this, but one reason is, that they are unable to realise the oneness of their party, and so to maintain it. So each one's slackening responsibility gradually slips off his shoulders and cannot find a place. Our *Samaj* cannot afford to go on any longer in this way, because the opposing force which is seeking to devour it is well-knit and organised in its unity and moreover has introduced its tentacles through and through our social fabric, from our educational institutions to the shops dealing with our daily necessities. In order to save ourselves from its fatal embrace, our *Samaj* must make the firmest stand in its united strength. And the only way is, to anoint some *Samaj-pati* to be our chief, and then for each one to rally round him as the symbol and representative of our union, not deeming it derogatory to render him the fullest obedience, for he shall represent the spirit of Freedom itself.

Such *Samaj-pati* may sometimes be the best of men, and sometimes not, but if the *Samaj* be alive and alert, that will not matter, for the worst of them can do it no permanent injury. On the other hand, the anointment of such a Chief is the best way to keep the *Samaj* in full vigour,—by dint of continually realising its strength in that of its representative it will become unquerable. Under the *Samaj-pati* there will, of course, be subordinate leaders for each convenient division of the country, who will see to the doing of all needful good works and be responsible to the *Samaj-pati* for their due performance. I have suggested that each one should set apart a small voluntary contribution for his country as a matter of daily habit. This could be amplified by larger contributions out of expenditure on all festive occasions. In our country, where voluntary contributions have founded rich monasteries and built monumental temples, it should be easily possible for the *Samaj* to be adequately maintained, especially when by its good works it would be entitled to the gifts of the grateful as well.

A little consideration will convince anyone how necessary it is to have a centre to which the *Shakti* of the country may flow, where it will accumulate, and from which it can be appropriately distributed. No doubt we should contrive, as best we may, that disease should not gain entrance from without. but what if, in spite of us, it does come? Are we not to have our internal vital force ready to combat it? If such force be there, no outside aggression can reduce us to lifelessness, for its very *dharma* is to cure wounds, to co-ordinate efforts, and to rouse the fullest consciousness. Even the Government is in the habit of bestowing titles for good work, but we can only be truly rewarded when we receive the benediction of our own country. Such power of reward, therefore, must also be placed in the hands of our *Samaj*, else shall we deprive ourselves of a potent source of self-satisfaction. Lastly, there is the Hindu-Moslem friction, which it must be the duty of our Swadeshi *Samaj* to eradicate by equity of treatment and regulation of conflicting interests—failing this, repeated disruptions will only weaken it more and more.

Let us not mistrust our own *Shakti*, for it is clear that the time has come. Know for certain that India has always been endowed with the power of binding together. Through adverse circumstances of every kind she has invariably succeeded in evolving an orderly system, so does she still survive. On this India I pin my faith. Even to-day, at this very moment, she is wonderfully adapting herself to recent conditions. May it be vouchsafed to each of us to co-operate with her consciously,—not to succumb to material considerations and go against her.

This is not the first time that India has come into contact with the outer world. When the Aryans first came in, violent antagonisms were set up between them and the first inhabitants. The Aryans won, but the non-Aryans were not exterminated, as were the American and Australian aborigines. In spite of their different manners and modes of thought, they found a place in the Aryan polity.



And, in their turn, they contributed variety to the Aryan *Samaj*.

Later there came another and more prolonged period of disruption. So long as Buddhism prevailed, there was intimate commerce between India and every kind of foreigner. Such intimacy was far more serious for her than any conflict, for, in the absence of the latter the instinct of self-preservation is not awake, and indiscriminate mingling threatens to turn into disorganisation. That is what happened in the Buddhist age. During that Asia-wide religious inundation, widely differing ideals and institutions found entry unchecked.

But even when weltering in that vast chaos, India's genius for synthesis did not desert her. With all that she had before, and all that had come upon her, she set to work to reconstruct her *Samaj* afresh, and in the midst of all this multifarious diversity she preserved and consolidated her unity of Ideal. Even now many ask, where in all these self-contradicting mutually-conflicting differences is the unity of the Hindu religion, of the Hindu *Samaj*? It is difficult to give a clear answer. The larger the circumference, the harder it is to locate the centre; but nevertheless the centre exists. We may not be able to lay our finger on the spot, but each one of us knows that the unity is there.

Then came the Mohamedans. It cannot be said that they had no effect on our *Samaj*. Synthetical re-actions began almost immediately, and a common ground was in course of preparation where the boundary lines between Hindu and Muslim were growing fainter and fainter. The followers of Nanak, of Kabir, and the lower orders of Vaishnavas are cases in point. But our educated classes do not keep in touch with the makings and breakings which are going on beneath the surface of the *Samaj*, among the common people. Had they done so they would have known that these re-actions have even now not ceased to work.

There has lastly come yet another religion with its different manners, customs and educational methods. And so now all the four great religions of the

world are here together—Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohamedanism and Christianity. It is evident that India is God's chemical factory for the making of a supreme religious synthesis.

Here, however, we must take note of one thing. The long and thorough disorganisation which characterised the Buddhist age, left behind it a shrinking timidity in the succeeding Hindu *Samaj*—an utter dread of novelty or change—which still persists. This constant fearfulness is hampering its further progress, and makes it difficult for it to rise superior to obstacles. Any *Samaj*, which concentrates all its attention on sheer self-preservation, cannot freely move or act and comes to a state of death in life.

The barriers within which the Hindu *Samaj* then entrenched itself with all it could gather together, caused India to lose her place in the world. Once India was the world's *guru*, for her free thought ranged fearlessly over religion, philosophy and science, far and wide. But from that high seat she is now deposed,—and that because fear has entered into her soul.

Our timidity has caused us to stop all voyaging on the high seas,—whether of water or of wisdom. We belonged to the universe but have relegated ourselves to the parish. Our *shakti* has become the womanish *shakti* of thrift and conservation, and our masculine adventurous curiosity has owned defeat. Our treasure, which used to multiply by commerce, is now hoarded in the zenana store-room; it increases no longer, and whatever we may lose out of it is lost for good.

We must realise that every nation is a member of humanity and each must render an account of what it has created for the weal of mankind. By the measure of such contribution does each nation gain its place. When any nation loses its creative power, it hangs limp like a paralysed limb, for there is no virtue in mere continued existence.

India never fought for domination, nor scrambled for spoils. China, Japan and Tibet, who are so careful to bar their windows against the advances of Europe, welcomed India with open arms as their

*guru*, for she had never sent out her armies for plunder and pillage, but only her messages of peace and goodwill. This glory, which India had earned as the fruit of her self-discipline, was greater than that of the widest of Empires.

When with the loss of our glory we, with our bundled-up belongings, were huddled together in our corner, it was high time for the Britisher to come. At his onslaught the defensive barriers of our crouching, run-away *Samaj* began to give way in places, and through the gaps the Outside, in dread of which we had shrunk into ourselves, came hurtling in upon us. Now who shall thrust it back? With this breaking down of our enclosure we discovered two things—how wonderfully strong we had been, how miserably weak we have become.

And to-day we have likewise understood that this policy of funk will not do. The true way of self-defence is to rouse our inherent powers. The policy of protection by imitation of the conqueror is a self-delusion which will not serve, either,—the imitation cannot prevail against the reality. I repeat, therefore, that the only way to stem the tide of waste of heart and taste and intellect is, to become our true selves, consciously, actively and with our full strength. Our dormant *shakti* must awake at the impact of the outside, for to-day the world stands sorely in need of the priceless fruits of the discipline of our ancient Rishis. God will not allow these to go to waste. That is why, in the fulness of time, He has roused us by this agony of suffering.

The realisation of unity in diversity, the establishment of a synthesis amidst variety,—that is the inherent, the *Sanatan* Dharma of India. India does not admit difference to be conflict, nor does she espy an enemy in every stranger. So she repels none, destroys none; she abjures no methods, recognises the greatness of all ideals; and she seeks to bring them all into one grand harmony.

By reason of this genius of India, Hindu, Moslem and Christian need not fight here for supremacy, but will find

common ground under the shelter of her hospitality. That common ground will not be un-Hindu, it will be more especially Hindu. And however foreign the several limbs may be, the heart will still be the heart of India.

If we but realise this God-given function of India, our aim will become true, our shame will depart from us, and we shall revive the undying *shakti* of India. Before that great day comes, call once on the Mother! The One Mother who, through the ages, has been nourishing her children from her eternal store of wisdom and truth, preserving them from destruction, drawing them nearer one another, and to Herself.

We had once learnt to despise riches, to make poverty beautiful and glorious. Shall we to-day insult our *Sanatan* Dharma by falling prostrate before money? Shall we not once more be fit to serve our Mother, to build anew her fallen house, by taking up a clean, disciplined, simple life? It was never reckoned a shame in our country to eat off plantain leaves—the shame was in eating by oneself alone. Shall we not get back this sense of shame? Shall we not be able to forego some of our comforts, some of our luxuries, so that we may have enough to serve to all our brethren? Will that which was once so easy for us become impossible to-day? Never!

Even in her uttermost extremity India's tremendous power has secretly and calmly regained victory for herself. I know for certain that this school-taught obsession of ours will never be able to prevail over that imperishable power. I know for certain that the deep note of India's call has already found a response in our hearts, and that, unknown to ourselves, we are slowly but surely going back to her. Here, standing at the crossing of the ways, with face turned towards Home, and eyes fixed on the pure light of its sacred lamp, call once on the Mother!

Free translation by  
SURENDRANATH TAGORE.



ed on the ground of their ceasing to be rate-payers. The force of this argument has however been greatly exaggerated. Married and unmarried women would not under the proposed measure be sharply or permanently divided. Great numbers of female voters would be constantly passing into the married state. Great numbers of married women would be constantly acquiring by widowhood the right of voting; and married women with independent property would retain their votes in the married state.

The entrance of women into the field of politics would no doubt make the elimination of priestly influence from the political arena difficult; but this applies much more in the case of Catholic countries where women are absolutely under ecclesiastical influence than in the English speaking world. In India, educated professional women with independent property qualifications are more likely to be free from religious prejudices than even many educated male voters.

As for the results of the enfranchisement of women, Lecky is of opinion that it would raise the standard of private morality required in public men, and increase the importance of character in public life. It would probably be a conservative influence, very hostile to revolutionary and predatory change. It would also probably tend somewhat, though not in any overwhelming degree, to strengthen ecclesiastical influence, especially in questions relating to religious education. Questions connected with the social condition of the masses of the people will receive an increased prominence in legislation, and women would make it the interest of the people's representatives to give them an increased share of their attention. At the same time it should be remembered that women, and especially

unmarried women, are on the whole more impulsive than men; more easily induced to gratify an undisciplined or misplaced compassion, to the neglect of the larger and more permanent interests of society [e.g., their vehement opposition to vivisection]; more apt to dwell upon the proximate than the more distant results; more subject to fanatisms, which often acquire almost the intensity of monomania. A due sense of the proportion of things; an adequate subordination of impulse to reason; an habitual regard to the ultimate and distant consequences of political measures; a sound, sober and unexaggerated judgment, are elements which already are lamentably wanting in political life, and female influence would certainly not tend to increase them. Nor is it likely that it would be in the direction of liberty. With women, even more than men, there is a strong disposition to overrate the curative powers of legislation, to attempt to mould the lives of men in all their details by meddling or restraining laws; and an increase of female influence could hardly fail to increase that habit of excessive legislation which is one of the great evils of the time.

On the whole, however, Lecky's conclusion is as follows:

"Women form a great section of the community, and as we have seen, they have many special interests. The opening to them of employments, professions and endowments; the regulation of their labour; questions of women's property and succession; the punishment of crimes against women; female education; laws relating to marriage, guardianship and divorce, may all be cited; and in the great drink question they are the more sober sex, they are also, it is to be feared, the sex which suffers most from the consequences of intemperance. With such a catalogue of special interests it is impossible to say that they have not a claim to representation if they desire it."

Z.

## A CRY FOR PEACE

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

**T**HE world is crying for peace. The West is desiring the restoration of peace through a League of Powers. But can Powers find their equilibrium

in themselves? Power cannot be made secure only against power, it must also be made secure against the weak; for there lies the peril of its losing balance. The

weak are as great a danger for the strong, as quicksands for an elephant. They do not assist progress, because they do not resist, they only drag down. The people who grow accustomed to wield absolute power over others are apt to forget, that by doing it they generate an unseen disruptive force, which some day rends that power into pieces. The dumb fury of the down-trodden finds its awful support from the universal law of moral balance. The air which is thin and weak gives birth to storms that nothing can resist. This has been proved in history over and over again; and stormy forces arising from the heart of insulted humanity are openly gathering in the air even in the present day. Yet the psychology of athletic might stubbornly refuses its lessons and despises to take count of the terribleness of the weak. This is the gross stupidity, that, like an unsuspected worm, burrows at the bottom of the muscular bulk of the prosperous and the proud. Have we never read of the gorgeousness of a power, supinely secure in its arrogance, in a moment dissolving in the air at the explosion of the outraged weak? Politicians calculate upon the number of mailed hands that are on the sword-hilts; they do not possess the third eye to see the great invisible hand, that clasps in silence the hand of the helpless and waits its time. The strong form their League by combination of Powers, driving the weak to form their league alone with their God. I know I am crying in the wilderness, when I raise my voice of warning; and while the West is busy in its organisation for building its machine-made peace, it will still continue to nourish, with its iniquities, underground forces of earthquake in the vast bosom of the Eastern Continent. The West seems unconscious that Science, by providing it with more and more power, is tempting it to suicide, encouraging it to accept the challenge of the disarmed, not knowing that this challenge comes from a higher source.

Two prophecies about the world's salvation are cherished in the hearts of the two great religions of the world. They represent the highest expectation of man, thereby indicating his faith in a truth, which he instinctively considers as ultimate,—the truth of love. These prophecies have not for their vision the fettering of the world into tameness with a closely linked power forged in the factory of a political steel trust. One of these religions has, for its meditation, the image of Buddha who is to come, Maitreya, the Buddha of love. And he is to bring peace. The other religion waits for the coming of Christ. For Christ preached peace when he preached love, when he preached Oneness of the Father among brothers who are many. And this was the truth of peace. Christ never held that peace was the best policy. For policy is not truth. The calculation of self-interest can never successfully fight the irrational force of passion—the passion which is perversion of love, and which can only be set aright by the truth of love. So long as the Powers build a League on the foundation of their desire for safety, and for securest enjoyment of gains,—for consolidation of past injustice, for putting off reparation of wrongs, while their fingers still wriggle for grabbing and still reek of blood,—rifts will appear in their union, and conflicts in future will take greater force and magnitude. It is the national and commercial egoism, which is the evil harbinger of war; by different combinations it changes its shape and dimensions, but not its nature. This egoism is still held almost as sacred as religion; and such religion, by its mere change of temple and of committee of priests, will never save men. We must know that, as, through science and commerce, the realisation of the unity of the material world gives us power, so the realisation of the great spiritual unity of man only can give us peace.



ing him, frankly acknowledged that he reckoned to make two rupees a week by this method, so for curiosity's sake I said, 'Very well, *bawarchi*, I will add an extra two rupees a week to your pay on condition that there be no bargaining, and that you charge me air prices only.' He was delighted at earning the additional money so easily, but at the end of the month begged me to 'cut' the two rupees, and let him go back to the old system; 'bargaining' was such a real pleasure to him that in consequence of there being none he was losing health. So back he went, quite joyful at the prospect of a daily battle of words and, presumably, recovered health. It is the immemorial *ustoor* (custom) of the country, and, because the East and the East, changeth not.

On one occasion another *bawarchi* charged me five annas for a small purchase, a fair price being four and a half annas. On my pointing this out to him with some asperity, he salaamed very profoundly, and said it was his misfortune that he could not pronounce four and a half correctly, as he had lost some teeth, so always had to say 'five annas', which caused him no difficulty at all. This preposterous apology almost took my breath away; but, controlling my face, I said very sympathetically that I was exceedingly sorry for his misfortune, but that I, too, suffered from a peculiar deafness, and, therefore, whenever I heard him say 'five annas', I should write down 'four'. This style of argument appealed to him much more than any form of vituperation, and I had no further trouble.

In the writer's opinion, it is no use asking a servant the reason for any dereliction of duty.

Plausibility is a fine art. 'Why has this place not been cleaned to-day?' 'Oh *sahib*, if I clean it to-day, it will be dirty again to-morrow, so what is the good of cleaning it to-day?' The only safe method is the direct 'Clean it.' Then in the eyes of the servant it becomes an order, *hukum hai*, something sacred, and

so must be obeyed. The somewhat apologetic and polite form of request will probably have no effect at all; the man thinks you are not in earnest.

Hindu and European notions of cleanliness are thus illustrated.

A very intelligent *khansama* was explaining to me how very clean the Hindus are in comparison with Europeans, in spite of the two baths daily the white man finds necessary. 'If I want to brush my teeth, *sahib*, I take a piece of fresh wood from God's own tree, fill my mouth with heaven-sent water, and use the frayed stick as a brush; but the *sahib* takes the hairs of an unclean dead animal, fixes them in the bone of another unclean animal, and then puts all this uncleanness into his mouth.' So does the humble and necessary tooth-brush appear to the mind of the Oriental, and therefore we are unclean in the using thereof. Needless to say, this view had not occurred to me before.

The Hindu idea is safer, cheaper, and more hygienic.

The *dhobie* comes in for his share of praise and blame.

The *dhobie* was an unfailing joy. He washed clothes beautifully, but tore them indiscriminately. Isn't it Mark Twain who says that the *dhobie* is a native of India who earns his living by breaking stones with a shirt? At any rate, this fairly indicates the methods employed by the *dhobie* who conscientiously tries to live up to his reputation. He never wrote down a list of the things he took away, but very rarely made a mistake. In some Oriental way he had *Pelmanised* his memory, and as he took to his *dhobie-khana* about a hundred pieces weekly from my house, and presumably similar quantities from one or two other *sahibs*, one may gain some idea of his mnemonic powers. His excuses for damage were always original, though not convincing. 'The bull ate it, *sahib*,' 'The wind blew a hole in it,' are specimens of these.

## DR. TAGORE ON BRITISH MENTALITY IN RELATION TO INDIA

[ The following letter has been received from the Poet, Rabindranath Tagore. ]

RECENTLY I chanced to find a copy of Professor Lowes Dickenson's report of his travels in the East. It made me realise clearly the mentality of the British people in their relation to India. When the author indicates, in it, the utter difference of their temperament from ours, it fills me with despair at the unnaturalness of our relationship, which is so humiliating on our side and so demoralising on theirs.

In the pamphlet, he quotes, with

approval, a remark made to him by an Englishman, an officer, in India, whom he describes as "intelligent and enlightened". It is about the maintaining by Englishmen of an impassable social gulf between themselves and the people of India, and it says:—

"An Englishman cannot be expected to lose his own soul for the sake of other people's politics."

Here the author parenthetically explains



the word 'soul' by saying that it denotes the habits and traditions of one's race.

All this means that Englishmen feel a sense of irreconcilable contradiction between their nature and ours; and therefore we are like twins, who, by some monstrous freak of destiny, have been tied together back to back. He concludes the summary of his Report by saying:—

"But my own opinion is that India has more to gain and less to lose than any other Eastern country by contact with the West."

He contemptuously ignores the fact that where no communication of sympathy is possible, gifts can be hurled, but not given; that while counting the number of gains by the receiver, we also have to consider the fracture of his skull; and while thanking the doctor for the rest cure, we must hasten to negotiate with the undertaker for the funeral.

It is the very irony of fate for us to be blamed by these people about the iniquity of our caste distinctions. And yet, never, in the blindness of our pride of birth, have we suggested that by coming into contact with any race of men we can lose our souls, although we may lose our caste which is a merely conventional classification. The analogy would be perfect, if the division of the railway compartments, with its inequality of privileges, was defended by the railway directors as being necessary for the salvation of the passengers' souls.

Only think in this connexion of the ideal which the life of Akbar represented. This Emperor's soul was not afraid, for its own safety, of the touch of a neighbouring humanity but of the want of touch. Aurangzeb, on the other hand, who was certainly "intelligent and enlightened" and meticulously careful about keeping intact what he considered to be his soul, represented a force, insolent and destructive. Such an enormous difference in the ideals of these two most powerful monarchs of Moghal India sprang from fundamentally different interpretations of the word 'soul'.

Lowes Dickenson has mentioned about

the possibility of India being benefited by her contact with the West. Very likely he meant the contact to be like that of the root of a tree with the water in the soil. I admit the light of Europe's culture has reached us. But Europe, with its corona of culture, is a radiant idea. Its light permeates the present age, it is not shut up in a single bull's eye lantern, which is some particular people from Europe who have come to us in India, yet we are repeatedly asked to be grateful to this bull's eye lantern and prostrate ourselves before it with loyalty and reverence. But this is not possible; for it is a mere lantern, it has no soul. Not only that, but it circumscribes the light to a narrow circle of barest necessity. The full radiation of European Culture has pervaded Japan only because it has not come to her through an unnatural glare of a miserly lense, exaggerating the division between the small shining patch and the vast obscure.

It is our pride which seeks difference, and gloats upon it. But sympathy is a higher faculty, being our spiritual organ of sight: it has the natural vision of the *Advaitam*. The world is an ever moving multitude with an eternal unity of movements, which must not be retarded in any of its parts by a break of cadence. The world of man is suffering because all movements in its individual parts are not in harmony with one another and therefore with the whole: because the relationship of races has not been established in a balance of truth and goodness. This balance cannot be maintained by an external regulation, as in a puppet show. It is a dance which must have music in its heart to regulate it. This great music of love is lacking in the meeting of men which has taken place in the present age; and all its movements in their incongruity are creating complexities of suffering.

I wish I could write to you simple letters giving our detailed news. But the world-wide agony of pain fills my mind with thoughts that obstruct natural communications of personal life.

Sandeman, Baluchistan, a supposed copper lode occurring in the neighbourhood was examined, but the deposit appears to be a poor one. Attempts to work commercially the indigenous deposits of this mineral have met with very limited success so far. A certain amount of argentiferous copper ore occurs in association with the lead-zinc ore bodies of the Bawdwin mines in the Northern Shan states of Burma, and the existence of considerable quantities of copper in Sikkim has been established, but it remains to be seen whether its extraction is commercially possible. The output of copper in 1918 amounted to 3619 tons.

Iron :—The recent discoveries of iron ore in the southern parts of Singhbhum having resulted in a large number of applications for prospecting licences and mining leases, it was decided to examine the ferruginous belt. The results show that the iron ore usually occurs at or near the top of hills, the most important being in the range running from about three miles south-west of Gua to the Kolhan Keonjhar boundary east of Naogaon. The Kolhan hæmalites usually contain :—iron 64 per cent. ; phosphorus, 0·03 to 0·08 per cent., and in some cases, 0·15 per cent. The sulphur content is usually below 0·03 per cent. Traces of titanium are also found occasionally in the ore. Samples from the better parts of the ore-deposits contain as much as 68—69 per cent. iron. Little prospecting work has been done hitherto on the deposits, but enough is known to justify the belief that the quantities available will run into hundreds of millions of tons. In most cases, the chief obstacle to development lies in the difficult and inaccessible nature of the country.

Kaolin :—Extensive examination of the China clay deposits of Upper Burma proved the existence of very large quantities of clay eminently suitable for the manufacture of porcelain. The raw sand is said to contain about 60 per cent. of free silica, 25—30 per cent. of Kaolin, and to be very free from iron and alkalis. Laboratory test indicated that the plasticity, refractoriness, and colour of the levigated material were good.

Soda :—An enquiry has recently been made into the soda deposits and industry in Sind. Prior to this little was known regarding the nature and extent of these deposits. The salt obtained is a crude trona known locally as 'Chaniho', and is used for washing and dyeing clothes, for hardening treacle, for the preparation of molasses from sugarcane, but principally as a yeast in the manufacture of 'papars' or pulse biscuits. The total output in Sind averages approximately 1000 tons per annum.

Sulphur :—Early in 1919 the old sulphur mines near Sayni in Baluchistan were examined but the results showed there was likely to be only a small amount of sulphur available.

Tin :—A good show of tin was found in the streams adjoining the Tenasserim river (Tavoy) from the west. Tin mining is now a well established industry in Burma, the output of 1918 amounting to 15,607 cwt.

Mining :—A school of mines and geology is to be established by the Indian Government at Dhanbaid in the coal-mining district of Behar and Orissa, and a Principal and senior professor of mining are soon to be appointed. A mining and metallurgical society has been formed at the Kolar gold field.

KALIPADA GHOSH, M. B. A. C. (Lond)

## THE WAY TO GET IT DONE

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

(Specially translated for the Modern Review)

This paper was read by the author in 1905-6 and, like the "Swadeshi Samaj" translated for our last number, it is remarkably apposite to the present situation. Ed., M. R.

**T**HE river may think that it divides a country, but it really brings one part nearer another by carrying commerce and keeping open a permanent way. In a disunited country foreign domination is just such a unifying agency; and it is as the instrument of divine providence for this purpose that British Rule in India has been touched with glory.

This process of unification will go on even if England does not like it.

History has shown that no permanent good can be gained by one set of men at the expense of another. Only in a harmonious development is to be found that permanent force of coherence which we call *Dharma*. If the harmony be destroyed, so is the *dharma* and — *Dharma éva hato hanti*

— if the dharma be destroyed, it destroys in turn. Britain has been made great by her Empire. If now she tries to keep India weak, her greatness cannot last, but will topple over of itself, — the weakness of a disarmed, effete and starving India will be the ruin of the British Empire.

Few have the gift of taking a broad comprehensive view of politics, especially when greed stands in the way. If any system of political exploitation should fix its ambition on the permanence of India's connexion, then such a system is bound to overlook the very factors essential for such connexion. A permanent connexion is against the law of Nature. Even the tree has to yield up its fruit, and any artificial attempt to prolong its hold can only result in a shortening of its natural term.

To make a subjugated country weak, to keep it distracted in disunity, to prevent the natural growth of its powers by refusing to allow their exercise, and thus to reduce it to lifelessness,—this is England's policy of the day when world-entrancing flowers have ceased to bloom in her literature and only thorny politics flourish in overwhelming luxuriance; when pity has ceased to well up for the weak, the unfortunate, the downtrodden; when only the expansion of dominion is accounted greatness; when deeds of daring have given way to aggressive exploitation, and the selfish cult of patriotism has usurped the place of religion.

Whether this state of things in England is unfortunate for us in India, or otherwise, will depend upon ourselves. A clearer vision of Truth is to be obtained in the day of tribulation, and without the vision of Truth there is no hope for any people. God has been visiting us with suffering in order to bring it home to us that we cannot gain by petitioning what it is our own duty to earn, and that expenditure of words is mere waste where service alone will do. So long as these simple truths are not realised by us, sorrow on sorrow, contumely on contumely, will be our lot.

We must first of all understand one thing clearly. If moved by some secret,

underlying apprehension, the Government should choose to put obstacles in the way of our growing unity, to protest is worse than useless. Can we contrive any form of words clever enough to give them the assurance that we desire for ever to be under the British Empire as our *summum bonum*? And are they of such infantile innocence as to believe it? All we can say — and it will be clear enough even if we do not say it — is, that we have use for the British connexion only so long as we are unable to evolve a secure and lasting union among the differing elements which exist within India,— and no further.

Such being the case, if the Englishman looking to his own selfish interests — selfish albeit glorified with the name of Empire — should say that it is high time for him to set about consolidating his position by refusing to allow us to be united, then what reply have we to give him except in the shape of the purest of platitudes? If when the woodman is about to ply his axe, the tree should cry: "Stay, else I lose my branch," and the woodcutter should reply: "I know, I am here because I want it!" — is there any room for further argument?

But we have learnt that in Parliament they debate: one party replies to the other party: and the winning party rejoices in its victory. So we cannot get rid of the idea that success in debate is final. We forget the difference. There the two parties are the right and left hands of the same body, and are both nourished by the same power. Is it the same here? Are our powers and those of the Government derived from the same source? Do we get the same shower of fruit when we shake the same tree? Please do not look into your text books in answering this question. It will be of no avail to know what Mill has said, and Herbert Spencer has said, and Seeley has said. The book of the country lies open before us, and the true answer is there.

To put it briefly, it is for the master to call the tune, and we are not the master. But the lover of argument will not be silenced. Do we not pay so many crores of



taxes, and is not the power of Government based on our money? Why not ask for an account to be rendered? But why, oh why does not the cow brandish her horns and ask for an account of the milk that has gone to fatten the plump young hopefuls of her lord and owner?

The simple truth is that methods must vary with circumstances. If the British Prime Minister wants to get some concession out of the French Government, he does not try to get the better of the French President in argument, nor does he preach to him high moral doctrine,— he makes some diplomatic move, and for that reason expert diplomats are permanently employed. There is a story that once upon a time when England was friendly with Germany, an English Duke left his seat at dinner to hand a table napkin to the Kaiser — this, it appears, largely advanced his cause. There was also a day when the Englishman had to bow and scrape at the durbar of the great Moghul, smilingly and with infinite patience to put up with repulses, spend any amount of money and toil in gratifying his satellites, in order to gain his object. This sort of thing is inevitable if concessions have to be won from adverse hands.

And yet in this impotent country of ours, what possesses us to think that constitutional agitation will serve with our all-powerful Government? Agitation may raise butter from milk, but not if the milk be in the dairy and the agitation at home. Granted that we are only asking for rights and not favours,— yet when the rights are barred by limitation, that means the same old begging from the man in possession. Our Government is not a machine,— it is run by creatures of flesh and blood, with a good dash of passion in their composition, who have by no means come here purged of all earthly weaknesses. So, to put them in the wrong is not the way to make them mend their ways.

We never pause to consider the nature of our circumstances, of the object of our desires, and the means and methods best fitted thereto. Just as victory is the sole

end of war, so is success in gaining the object the end of politics. But even if we admit this in words, we fail to realise it in action. That is why our political meetings are conducted like a debating club, as if the Government is a rival school-boy whom to silence is to defeat! But as men may die under the most scientific treatment, so have we failed of our object in spite of the most splendid oratory.

May I make a personal confession? For my part, I do not worry myself over-much about what the Government does, or does not, do for us. I count it silly to be a-tremble every time there is a rumbling in the clouds. First of all, a thunderbolt may or may not fall; secondly, we are not asked to assist in the counsels of the thunderbolt factory, nor will our supplications determine its course; and lastly, if the thunderbolt is at all to be diverted that cannot be done by making a counter-demonstration of feebler thundering, but only by using the proper scientific appliances. The lightning conductor does not fall from the skies, like the lightning itself; it has to be manufactured patiently, laboriously and skilfully down below, by our own efforts.

It is no use fretting against the laws of nature. The winged ant may complain about the inequity of its getting burnt, but if it flies into the flame, the inevitable will nevertheless happen. So, instead of wasting time over a discussion of the equities, it is better to keep the fire at a respectful distance. The Englishman is determined to maintain his hold upon India at any cost, so that whenever he finds anything working loose he is bound to hammer in a nail or two, promptly and vigorously, in order to fix it firmly again. Merely because we can speak good English or chop subtle logic, he is not likely to give up this very business-like habit of his. And whatever else we may or may not do about it, it is futile to lose our temper.

One thing we should always remember,— how very small we figure in the Englishman's eyes. He rules us from a remote corner of his vast political arena. All his

attention and skill are absorbed in steering through the rocks of the European waters and in keeping together his colonies. We who inhabit a fringe of his unwieldy empire,—our likes and dislikes, our effusions and tantrums, alike leave him cold. Hence the soporific power of Indian debates in Parliament.

The Englishman passes through this country like flowing water; he carries no memory of value away with him; his heart strikes no root in its soil. He works with the prospect of furlough in his mind, and even for his amusements he looks to his compatriots alone. His acquaintance with our language is confined to the depositions of witnesses and with our literature to translations in the Government Gazette. How little of his view we subtend we are apt to forget and so are every now and then taken by surprise at his callousness towards us. When we blurt out our feelings, he in turn, naturally considers such expression an exaggeration, which sometimes provokes irritation and sometimes only a smile.

I am not saying all this by way of formulating a charge against the Englishman, but merely to point to the facts as they are, and naturally must be. How can the high and mighty have a vision seen enough to discern in detail the agonies, however heart-rending, the losses however vital, of what is so very small? So what seems to us of immense moment is negligible to his perceptions. When we rage and fume over the partition of this little province of ours, or of some problem concerning this petty municipality of ours, or this education or literature of ours, we are astounded at not getting results proportionate to our outcry. We forget that the Englishman is not of us, but over us; and if ever we should reach the olympian heights where he dwells, only then could we know at what a distance we are and how ridiculously diminutive we look.

It is because we appeared so small to him that Lord Curzon asked with naive surprise why we were so absurdly unable to appreciate the glory of being

merged in the British Empire. Just think of it! To be compared with Australia, Canada, and the rest, for whose imperial embrace the Britisher is pining, at whose window he sings such moving serenades, for whose sake he is even willing to allow the price of his daily bread to mount up! Could his lordship have been serious? But whatever Lord Curzon may have felt when making this extravagant suggestion, our feelings were much the same as those of the lamb ceremonially invited, along with the guests, to join the feast! So are we called to glory within the British Empire. There, if tropical areas are to be brought under cultivation, it shall be our function to furnish cheap indentured labour; it shall be our right to supply funds for expeditions against poor, inoffensive Tibet; and if there be a rising of the oppressed in Somaliland, it shall be our privilege to die in its suppression. Only thus can both big and small participate in a common glory.

But, as I say, that is a natural law over which it is no use making our eyes either red or moist. In all that we do, it is enough to bear in mind what the natural law is. If we appeal to the Englishman on the ground of lofty morality and say: "Rise superior to the level of ordinary humanity and subordinate the interests of your country to those of India!" suppose he retorts: "Look here, we'll listen to your preaching later on, but will you first have the goodness to come down to our very ordinary level, and place the interests of your country before your own selfish ones; if you cannot give up your life, at least give up your money, your comforts, anything at all, for your country. Are we to do everything for you and you nothing for yourselves?" What are we to say to that? What after all are we doing, what are we giving? If we had only kept ourselves acquainted with our country, that would have been something,—but so lazy are we, we know next to nothing about her. The foreigner writes our history, we translate it; the foreigner discovers our grammar, we cram it! If we want to

know what there is next door, we have to look into Hunter. We gather no facts first hand,— neither about men, nor commerce, nor even agriculture. And yet, with such crass indifference on our own part, we are not ashamed to prate about the duties of others towards our country. Is it any wonder that our empty preaching should be so utterly futile? The Government is at least doing something and has some responsibility. We are doing nothing and have none. Can there be any real interchange of counsels between two such parties? And so it happens that on the one hand we get up agitations and hold indignation meetings and vociferate to our heart's content and then, the very next day, swallow the most unpalatable humiliations so completely that no doctor, even, has to be called in!

I do hope that my readers will tell me that I am uttering the stalest truisms. The truths — that we must look after our own interests, carry on our own work, wipe away our own shame, earn our own welfare, do everything ourselves — are certainly not new. And I shall glory in any censure that may be passed on me because of their triteness. What I dread is lest any one should accuse me of advocating something new-fangled, for then must I confess ignorance of the art of proving self-evident things. It is the sign of a critical condition indeed, if the simple should appear difficult and old truths come as a surprise, or rouse honest indignation!

However, I have wandered of nights on the vast sandbanks of the Padma, and I know how, in the darkness, land and water appear as one, how the straightest of paths seem so confused and difficult to find; and when in the morning light dawns, one feels astonished how such mistakes could have been made. I am living in the hope that when our morning comes, we shall discover the true path and retrace our steps.

Moreover, I am sure that all of us are not wandering in the same darkness. There are many enthusiastic young fellows whom I know, who are willing to spend more than words in the service of

their country. Their difficulty is, they do not know what to do about it, where to go for advice, what service is to be rendered and to whom; to spend oneself without method and without organisation would be mere waste. If there had been some centre of our *shakti*, where all could unite; where thinkers could contribute their ideas, and workers their efforts: then there the generous would find a repository for their gifts. Our education, our literature, our arts and crafts, and all our good works would range themselves round such centre and help to create in all its richness the commonwealth which our patriotism is in search of.

I have not the least doubt in my mind that the rebuffs which we are meeting from the outside are intended by Providence to help this centre of our *shakti* to become manifest within the nation; our petitions are being thrown back to us in order that we may turn our faces towards such centre; and the pessimism which is spreading amongst the feckless, workless critics of the government is due not to the smart of any particular insult, or the hopelessness of any particular concession, but to the growing insistence of an inward quest for this centre.

If we can establish such centre in our midst, our persuasions and arguments may be addressed to it and will then acquire meaning and become real work. To this centre we can pay our tribute, to it we can devote our time and energy. It will be the means of evoking and giving full play to our intellect, our capacity for sacrifice and all that is great and deep in us. To it shall we give and from it shall we receive our truest wealth.

If our education, our sanitation, our industries and commerce radiate from such a centre, then we shall not, off and on, be kept running after orators to get up public meetings to protest against some wrong, to ventilate some grievance. These sudden awakenings and outcries, by fits and starts, followed by a relapse into the silence of somnolence, is getting to be ludicrous. We can hardly talk about it seriously any more, not even to ourselves.



The only way to put a stop to this farce is to take upon ourselves the whole duty of our national progress.

Let no one think that I am advocating a policy of sullen aloofness. That would only be another form of sulking, which may have its place in a lover's quarrel, but not here. What I say is the reverse. I am for courteous, diplomatic relations with the Government. In courtesy there is freedom. A relationship which is forced on us is but a form of slavery and cannot last. Free relations may mature into friendship later on.

Some of us seem to think that if only we could get all we are asking for from the government, a state of effusive friendliness would be sure to arise. But that is contrary to experience. Where can one find the end to begging on the one hand and granting of favours on the other? As our *shastras* put it, you cannot quench a flame by pouring oil thereon. The more the beggar gets, the more does he want and the less is he satisfied. Where getting depends, not on the earning of the recipient, but on the generosity of the giver, it is twice accursed,—it spoils both him that takes and him that gives.

But where the relationship is one of give and take on both sides, of an exchange of benefits, there amicable arrangements are always possible, and the gain to both is real. This can only be brought about if we establish our power on a foundation of good works. Mutual concessions between two powers are graceful as well as permanent, pleasing and honorable to both parties. That is why I say that, in order to get from the Government what is due from it to the country, up to the last farthing, the only way is to render in our turn the services which our country may expect from us ourselves, likewise to the last farthing. We may demand only by the measure of what we do give.

Here it may be asked, what if the Government should use its forces to hinder our rendering true service to the country? That, of course, is possible. Where interests are adverse such attempts

are only to be expected. But that is no reason for our giving it up as a bad job. We should remember that it is not an easy matter to obstruct a person who is honestly engaged in doing his duty. Moreover we must not confuse such obstruction with the arbitrary withdrawal of favours. Take for instance the matter of self-government. We are crying ourselves hoarse because what Lord Ripon wanted to give, some other Lord took away. Shame on us for attaching such value to what others can give and others can take away. It was only our folly which led us to call such a thing by the name of self-government.

And yet self-government lies at our very door, waiting for us. No one has tried, nor is it possible for any one even if he does try, to deprive us of it. We can do everything we like for our villages— for their education, their sanitation, the improvement of their communications,— if only we make up our minds to set to work, if only we can act in unison. For this work we do not need the sanction of a government badge. . . . But what if we cannot make up our minds? What if we will not be united? Then are there not ropes and stones enough for us to go and drown ourselves?

I repeat that our education is the thing which we should first of all take into our own hands. The doubter will ask, what if we do— who will then provide us with lucrative posts? That, also, we shall do ourselves. If the work of the country be in our own hands, where is the difficulty in remunerating those who do it? He who provides the employment is bound to be the master,— it cannot be otherwise. And in assessing our wages the foreign master will naturally not be neglectful of his own pocket. All the more reason, therefore, why the whole field of work, including education as an essential part, should be under our own control. We complain of the want of opportunity for acquiring technical knowledge. But we know to our cost that, if the master be an outsider, he will take particular care not to allow us any real opportunity.



I know my critics will say that the matter now begins to sound difficult. I do not hesitate to admit it. If it had not been difficult, it would not have been worth doing. If someone wants to go a-voyaging on a petition-paper boat in quest of the golden fleece, a certain class of patriots may be attracted by this fairy-tale proposition, but I would not recommend anyone to risk real national Capital in the venture. It is difficult to build a dike, and easy to get up a constitutional agitation asking the waters to recede,— but the latter is not a way out of the difficulty. To get something ultra cheap makes one feel extra clever, and when the cheap thing collapses under the strain of work, it is comforting to put the blame on some one else ; but in spite of all these consolations the fact remains that the work fails to get done.

To consider all responsibilities as being light in one's own case and heavy in the case of others, is not a good moral code. When sitting in judgment on the behaviour of the British towards ourselves, it is well to take note of the difficulties in their way and their human weaknesses. But when searching out our own lapses, there must be no invention of excuses or palliations, no lowering of the standard on grounds of expediency. And so I say, the rousing of indignation against the British Government may be an easy political method, but it will not serve to lead us to our goal. Rather, the cheap pleasure of giving tit for tat, of dealing shrewd blows, will detract from the efficient pursuit of our own path

of duty. When a litigant is worked up into a state of frenzy, he thinks nothing of staking and losing his all. If anger be the basis of our political activities, the excitement itself tends to become the end in view, rather than the object to be achieved. Side issues assume an exaggerated importance, and all gravity of thought and action is lost. Such excitement is not an exercise of strength, but a display of weakness.

We must give up all such pettiness and found our political work on the broad basis of love of country,— not on dislike of, or dependence upon others. This dislike and this dependence may seem to be opposite states of mind, but they are really twin branches of the same tree of impotence. Because we decided that our salvation lay in making demands, dislike was born of our disappointment. We then jumped to the conclusion that this feeling of ours was Patriotism,— gaining at one stroke profound consolation and an elevating pride !

Just think for a moment of the mother from whom the care of her child is taken away and entrusted to another. Why is she inconsolable ? Because of her exceeding love. The same anxiety to do our best for our country by our own efforts may alone be called Patriotism,— not the cleverness of shifting that duty on to the foreigner, which is not true cleverness either, for the duty does not get done.

*Free Translation by*

SURENDRANATH TAGORE.

### A GLIMPSE OF SCHOOL LIFE IN CHINA

**I**T is opening day at Liu Mei School, the school which prepares Chinese boys for study in Europe and America. In the entrance hall of the Teachers' Court, the doors at the north have been closed to form a background, and on a table placed against them, a red tablet to Confucius

has been set up, with a bronze incense jar filled with incense sticks before it, and two red candles on either side.

At about eight o'clock in the morning, the bell ringer, whose duty it is to usher in and bring to a close the classes by pacing up and down the various courts

words (Nos. lxxxiii and cvii)—like "enemy," "savage," "barbarian," "heathen," "foreigner," "nigger,"—his advocacy of "each man's right," held as sacred as each woman's right (No. cii); his recognition of the "peasant-folk as Nature's noblemen and noblewomen" (out-rivalling Burns) in No. cix dedicated to "Norway, land of strong men and free women"—"of women equal in rights to men, land whose sons behold the vision of Universal Peace" (p. 232); and lastly, his equally strong denunciation, with an Old Testament Prophet's directness and vigour, in No. ci, of "a harrying, ruthless civilisation" and his soul-entrancing dream of the royal proclamation (in No. ix)—"Let all the races of the earth be one, all tongues be one, and all religions one" followed by the voice of the youthful prophet—he with "gentle, dreamy eyes"—offering to carry out the monarch's will by going to "each man's door and bid him search his heart and find the one"—all these puissant utterances wince an essentially broad and modern outlook on life and its problems thoroughly imbued with whatever is highest and best in the democratic spirit of the West.

The great hope is his that—"Even the dust will come to be as glorious as a God" (No. ci.) which, by the way, reminds us of Shelley's "It (love) makes the reptile equal to the God" (Prometheus Unbound, Act II., Sc. V., Asiatic Panthea). His faith in the glorious future of humanity makes him fling his imagination forward to the day when after "the downfall of an earth-hungering, ego-minded nation," Norway's "sons may follow the path of wisdom through the green avenue of greedlessness, sublime forbearance, and science nobly utilised, to a new age of equal honour for all nations" (No. cix).

This is Shelley over again. How inspiring in these days of a new "storm and stress"!

"The Bengali Captain's" (No. xxvii) dying wish on the field of Mons and his prayer to Mother Humanity are in the same strain. In (xcii) "O Friends", which is his appeal for a "righteous commonwealth of nations," he solemnly hopes on behalf of "thought-burdened Humanity" for the day when "the budding sense of nationhood" will "flower into the full-blown rose of Divine Humanity" if only "nations rival, as the saints do, each other in goodness and soulfulness." Then can the league of all nations—each honouring "the divinity within the humanity of other nations"—"serve posterity for the foundation stones of the future edifice of Love." This piece is a modern application (if not extension) of the ancient teaching of Gautama Buddha. Conceived in the same spirit is his "A New Star" (No. lxxxix) embodying the ideal of "Love-born Harmony".

We have an unpleasant duty to do as honest critics and propose to dismiss with a bare statement certain

elements that seem to take away from the merit of this excellent book.

(1) The Parable-like pieces such as, xli to xliii, lxxv, lxxviii, have little poetry in them. Such is the case too with the "problem" poems (eg. lxxxiv, lxxxv) full of deep searchings of the spirit rather *intellectually* presented. No. lxxviii is redeemed by its last few lines. In No. lxxx too the atmosphere of the Norseland is re-created.

(2) "Local colouring" in the higher sense of the expression is absent from several pieces rich in local place names and even associations (cf. Nos. ii to viii and No. xvii). This is, however, not the case with others, such as, Nos. i, x to xii, xiv and xviii. No. xiv—"With the Muses"—reproduces the very spirit of Salmund's Edda as translated by Thorpe.

(3) Sometimes *doctrine* is allowed to tyrannically dominate a piece till the poetic quality is killed outright (e.g. xxxiv).

(4) "Bower and Swain (No. xxx), "heavy quilt of snow" (No. v.) "tremulous stage of heaven"—suggest artificial convention.

Then there are conceits like "thy mountain lakes are tears shed by angels," (cix), "Thou wert created boneless" (said of the tongue) "that thou might'st utter naught but gentle, kindly words" (cvii). We do not want to multiply such instances for even if limited in number they are sure to jar upon the ear.

(5) We must allow a poet his mannerism within certain limits. Frequent repetition of a "trick", however, sickens. We have too often in this volume such negative compounds as "un-alive," "un-sleeping," "un-waving," "un-speaking," "un-winking," "un-breathing," "un-stirring," "un-fleeing," "un-asking," "un-existing," "un-laughing." Their name is legion.

(6) The writer is too fond also of such compound epithets as "self-making" "true-gold", etc.

(7) A sparing use of dainty things like "pansy-tinted," "pearl-crowned," "Aurora-hearted," "silver-sprinkled," "heaven-tinted" may be recommended though in themselves these poetic expressions are exquisite in flavour.

(8) What shall we say of "time, the flammivomous dragon" (p. 191) or "the smithy of hyltheistic culture" (p. 233), not to speak of that proverbial last straw in "the arche-type of eudæmonic eunomocracy?" (p. 233).

Lastly we hope to be pardoned for not being able to relish in the "Snow-Birds" a strange bird of black feathers like the fling, however just and well-deserved, at Germany and German culture in No. cix. The tribute to the reigning English sovereign (p. 231), so loyal and just, seems also to have been smuggled in. Let us not be hastily condemned as captious.

JAYGOPAL BANERJI.

## LETTERS FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE

I

March 2nd, 1921.

**Y**OUR last letter gives wonderful news about our students in Calcutta. I hope that this spirit of sacrifice and willingness to suffer will grow in strength; for to

achieve this is an end in itself. This is the true freedom! Nothing is of higher value,—be it national wealth, or independence,—than disinterested faith in ideals, in the moral greatness of man. The West has its unshakable faith in material strength and

prosperity ; and therefore however loud grows the cry for peace and disarmament, its ferocity grows louder, gnashing its teeth and lashing its tail in impatience. It is like a fish, hurt by the pressure of the flood, planning to fly in the air. Certainly the idea is brilliant, but it is not possible for a fish to realize. We, in India, shall have to show to the world, what is that truth, which not only makes disarmament possible but turns it into strength. That moral force is a higher power than brute force, will be proved by the people who are unarmed. Life, in its higher development, has thrown off its tremendous burden of armour and a prodigious quantity of flesh ; till man has become the conqueror of the brute world. The day is sure to come, when the frail man of spirit, completely unhampered by arms and air fleets, and dreadnoughts, will prove that the meek is to inherit the earth. It is in the fitness of things, that Mahatma Gandhi, frail in body and devoid of all material resources, should call up the immense power of the meek, that has been lying waiting in the heart of the destitute and insulted humanity of India. The destiny of India has chosen for its ally, *Narayan*, and not the *Narāyansena*,—the power of soul and not that of muscle. And she is to raise the history of man, from the muddy level of physical conflict to the higher moral altitude. What is *Swaraj* ! It is *maya*, it is like a mist, that will vanish, leaving no stain on the radiance of the Eternal. However we may delude ourselves with the phrases learnt from the West, *Swaraj* is not our objective. Our fight is a spiritual fight, —it is for Man. We are to emancipate Man from the meshes that he himself has woven round him,—these organisations of National Egoism. The butterfly will have to be persuaded that the freedom of the sky is of higher value than the shelter of the cocoon. If we can defy the strong, the armed, the wealthy,—revealing to the world the power of the immortal spirit,—the whole castle of the Giant Flesh will vanish in the void. And then Man will find his *Swaraj*. We, the famished, ragged ragamuffins of the East, are to win freedom for all Humanity. We have no word for 'Nation' in our language. When we borrow this word from other people, it never fits us. For we are to make our league with *Narayan*, and our victory will not give us anything but victory itself ; victory for

God's world. I have seen the West ; I covet not the unholy feast, in which she revels every moment, growing more and more bloated and red and dangerously delirious. Not for us, is this mad orgy of midnight, with lighted torches, but awakenment in the serene light of morning.

## II

March 5th, 1921

Lately I have been receiving more and more news and newspaper cuttings from India, giving rise in my mind to a painful struggle that presages a period of suffering which is waiting for me. I am striving with all my power to tune my mood of mind to be in accord with the great feeling of excitement sweeping across my country. But deep in my being why is there this spirit of resistance maintaining its place in spite of my strong desire to remove it? I fail to find a clear answer and through my gloom of dejection breaks out a smile and a voice saying, "Your place is on 'the seashore of worlds', with children ; there is your peace, and I am with you there." And this is why lately I have been playing with inventing new metres. These are merest nothings that are content to be borne away by the current of time, dancing in the sun and laughing as they disappear. But while I play, the whole creation is amused, for are not flowers and leaves never-ending experiments in metre, is not my God an eternal waster of time? He flings stars and planets in the whirlwind of changes, he floats paper-boats of ages, filled with his fancies, on the rushing stream of appearance. When I tease him and beg him to allow me to remain his little follower and accept a few trifles of mine as the cargo of his play-boat, he smiles and I trot behind him catching the hem of his robe. But where am I among the crowd, pushed from behind, pressed from all sides? And what is this noise about me? If it is a song, then my own *sitar* can catch the tune and I join in the chorus, for I am a singer. But if it is a shout, then my voice is wrecked and I am lost in bewilderment. I have been trying all these days to find in it a melody, straining my ear, but the idea of non-co-operation with its mighty volume of sound does not sing to me, its congregated menace of negation.



shouts. And I say to myself, "If you cannot keep step with your countrymen at this great crisis of their history, never say that you are right and the rest of them wrong; only give up your role as a soldier, go back to your corner as a poet, be ready to accept popular derision and disgrace."

R, in support of the present movement, has often said to me that passion for rejection is a stronger power in the beginning than the acceptance of an ideal. Though I know it to be a fact, I cannot take it as a truth. We must choose our allies once for all, for they stick to us even when we would be glad to be rid of them. If we once claim strength from intoxication, then in the time of reaction our normal strength is bankrupt, and we go back again and again to the demon who lends us resources in a vessel whose bottom it takes away.

*Brahma-vidya* (the cult of Brahma, the Infinite Being) in India has for its object *mukti*, emancipation, while Buddhism has *nirvana*, extinction. It may be argued that both have the same idea in different names. But names represent attitudes of mind, emphasise particular aspects of truth. *Mukti* draws our attention to the positive, and *nirvana* to the negative side of truth. Buddha kept silence all through his teachings about the truth of the *Om*, the *everlasting yes*, his implication being that by the negative path of destroying the self we naturally reach that truth. Therefore he emphasised the fact of *duhkha* (misery) which had to be avoided and the *Brahma-vidya* emphasised the fact of *Ananda*, Joy, which had to be attained. The latter cult also needs for its fulfilment the discipline of self-abnegation, but it holds before its view the idea of Brahma, not only at the end but all through the process of realisation. Therefore the idea of life's training was different in the Vedic period from that of the Buddhistic. In the former it was the purification of life's joy, in the latter it was the eradication of it. The abnormal type of asceticism to which Buddhism gave rise in India revelled in celibacy and mutilation of life in all different forms. But the forest life of the *Brahmana* was not antagonistic to the social life of man, but harmonious with it. It was like our musical instrument *tambura* whose duty is to supply the fundamental notes to the music to save it from straying into discordance. It believed in *anandam*,

the music of the soul, and its own simplicity was not to kill it but to guide it.

The idea of non-co-operation is political asceticism. Our students are bringing their offering of sacrifices to what? Not to a fuller education but to non-education. It has at its back a fierce joy of annihilation which at its best is asceticism, and at its worst is that orgy of frightfulness in which the human nature, losing faith in the basic reality of normal life, finds a disinterested delight in an unmeaning devastation, as has been shown in the late war and on other occasions which came nearer to us. *No* in its passive moral form is asceticism and in its active moral form is violence. The desert is as much a form of *himsa* (malignance) as is the raging sea in storm; they both are against life.

I remember the day, during the *swadeshi* movement in Bengal, when a crowd of young students came to see me in the first floor hall of our Vichitra house. They said to me that if I would order them to leave their schools and colleges they would instantly obey. I was emphatic in my refusal to do so, and they went away angry, doubting the sincerity of my love for my motherland. And yet long before this popular ebullition of excitement I myself had given a thousand rupees, when I had not five rupees to call my own, to open a *swadeshi* store and courted banter and bankruptcy. The reason of my refusing to advise those students to leave their schools was because the anarchy of a mere emptiness never tempts me, even when it is resorted to as a temporary measure. I am frightened of an abstraction which is ready to ignore living reality. These students were no mere phantoms to me, their life was a great fact to them and to the All. I could not lightly take upon myself the tremendous responsibility of a mere negative programme for them which would uproot their life from its soil, however thin and poor that soil might be. The great injury and injustice which had been done to those boys who were tempted away from their career before any real provision was made, could never be made good to them. Of course that is nothing from the point of view of an abstraction which can ignore the infinite value even of the smallest fraction of reality. I wish I were the little creature Jack whose one mission is to kill the giant abstraction which is claiming the sacrifice of individuals all over

the world under highly painted masks of delusion.

I say again and again that I am a poet, that I am not a fighter by nature. I would give everything to be one with my surroundings. I love my fellow-beings and I prize their love. Yet I have been chosen by destiny to ply my boat there where the current is against me. What irony of fate is this that I should be preaching co-operation of cultures between East and West on this side of the sea just at the moment when the doctrine of non-co-operation is preached on the other side? You know that I do not believe in the material civilisation of the West just as I do not believe in the physical body to be the highest truth in man. But I still less believe in the destruction of the physical body, and the ignoring of the material necessities of life. What is needed is establishment of harmony between the physical and spiritual nature of man, maintaining of balance between the foundation and superstructure. I believe in the true meeting of the East and the West. Love is the ultimate truth of soul. We should do all we can, not to outrage that truth, to carry its banner against all opposition. The idea of non-co-operation unnecessarily hurts that truth. It is not our hearth fire, but the fire that burns out our hearth and home.

### III

March 13th, 1921.

Things that are stationary have no responsibility and need no law. For death, even the tombstone is a useless luxury. But for a world, which is an ever-moving multitude advancing toward an idea, all its laws must have one principle of harmony. This is the law of creation.

Man became great when he found out this law for himself, the law of co-operation. It helped him to move together, to utilise the rhythm and impetus of the world march. He at once felt that this moving together was not mechanical, not an external regulation for the sake of some convenience. It was what the metre is in poetry, which is not a mere system of enclosure for keeping ideas from running away in disorder, but for vitalising them, making them indivisible in a unity of creation.

So far this idea of co-operation has developed itself into individual communities

within the boundaries of which peace has been maintained and varied wealth of life produced. But outside these boundaries the law of co-operation has not been realised. Consequently the great world of man is suffering from ceaseless discordance. We are beginning to discover that our problem is world-wide, and no one people of the Earth can work out its salvation by detaching itself from the others. Either we shall be saved together, or drawn together into destruction.

This truth has ever been recognised by all the great personalities of the world. They had in themselves the perfect consciousness of the undivided spirit of man. Their teachings were against tribal exclusiveness, and thus we find that Buddha's India transcended geographical India, and Christ's religion broke through the bonds of Judaism.

Today, at this critical moment of the world's history, cannot India rise above her limitations and offer the great ideal to the world that will work towards harmony and co-operation between the different peoples of the earth? Men of feeble faith will say that India requires to be strong and rich before she can raise her voice for the sake of the whole world. But I refuse to believe it. That the measure of man's greatness is in his material resources is a gigantic illusion casting its shadow over the present-day world,—it is an insult to man. It lies in the power of the materially weak to save the world from this illusion, and India, in spite of her penury and humiliation, can afford to come to the rescue of humanity.

The freedom of unrestrained egoism in the individual is license and not true freedom. For his truth is in that which is universal in him. Individual human races also attain true freedom when they have the freedom of perfect revelation of Man and not that of their aggressive racial egoism. The idea of freedom which prevails in modern civilisation is superficial and materialistic. Our revolution in India will be a true one when its forces will be directed against this crude idea of liberty.

The sunlight of love has the freedom that ripens the wisdom of immortal life, but passion's fire can only forge fetters for ourselves. The Spiritual Man has been struggling for its emergence into perfection,

and all true cry of freedom is for this emancipation. Erecting barricades of fierce separateness in the name of national necessity is offering hindrance to it, therefore in the long run building a prison for the nation itself. For the only path of deliverance for nations is in the ideal humanity.

Creation is an endless activity of God's freedom; it is an end in itself. Freedom is true when it is a revelation of truth. Man's freedom is for the revelation of the truth of Man which is struggling to express itself. We have not yet fully realised it. But those people who have faith in its greatness, who acknowledge its sovereignty, and have the instinctive urging in their heart to break down obstructions, are paving the way for its coming. India ever has nourished faith in the truth of Spiritual Man, for whose realisation she has made innumerable experiments, sacrifices and penance, some verging on the grotesque and the abnormal. But the fact is, she has never ceased in her attempt to find it even though at the tremendous cost of material success. Therefore I feel that the true India is an idea, and not a mere geographical fact. I have come into touch with this idea in far away places of Europe and my loyalty was drawn to it in persons who belonged to different countries from mine. India will be victorious when this idea wins victory,—the idea of "*Purusham mahāntam āditya-varnam tamasah parāstāt,*" the Infinite Personality whose light reveals itself through the obstruction of darkness. Our fight is against this darkness, our object is the revelation of the light of this Infinite Personality in ourselves. This Infinite Personality of Man is not to be achieved in single individuals, but in one grand harmony of all human races. The darkness of egoism which will have to be destroyed is the egoism of the People. The idea of India is against the intense consciousness of the separateness of one's own people from others, and which inevitably leads to ceaseless conflicts. Therefore my one prayer is, let India stand for the *co-operation* of all peoples of the world. The spirit of rejection finds its support in the consciousness of separateness, the spirit of acceptance in the consciousness of unity. India has ever declared that Unity is Truth, and separateness is *māyā*. This unity is not a zero, it is that which comprehends all and

therefore can never be reached through the path of negation. Our present struggle to alienate our heart and mind from those of the West is an attempt at spiritual suicide. If in the spirit of national vaingloriousness we shout from our house-tops that the West has produced nothing that has an infinite value for man, then we but create a serious cause of doubt about the worth of any product of the Eastern mind. For it is the mind of Man in the East and West which is ever approaching Truth in her different aspects from different angles of vision; and if it can be true that the standpoint of the West has betrayed it into an utter misdirection, then we can never be sure of the standpoint of the East. Let us be rid of all false pride and rejoice at any lamp being lit at any corner of the world, knowing that it is a part of the common illumination of our house.

The other day I was invited to the house of a distinguished art-critic of America who is a great admirer of old Italian art. I questioned him if he knew anything of our Indian pictures and he brusquely said that most probably he would "*hate them*". I suspected he had seen some of them and hated them. In retaliation I could have said something in the same language about the Western art. But I am proud to say it was not possible for me. For I always try to understand the Western art and never to hate it. Whatever we understand and enjoy in human products instantly become ours wherever they might have their origin. I should feel proud of my humanity when I can acknowledge the poets and artists of other countries as mine own. Let me feel with unalloyed gladness that all the great glories of man are mine. Therefore it hurts me deeply when the cry of rejection rings loud against the West in my country with the clamour that the Western education can only injure us. It cannot be true. What has caused the mischief is the fact that for a long time we have been out of touch with our own culture and therefore the Western culture has not found its perspective in our life, very often found a wrong perspective giving our mental eye a squint. When we have the intellectual capital of our own, the commerce of thought with the outer world becomes natural and fully profitable. But to say that such commerce is inherently wrong



is to encourage the worst form of provincialism, productive of nothing but intellectual indigence. The West has misunderstood the East which is at the root of the disharmony that prevails between them, but will it mend the matter if the East in her turn tries to misunderstand the West? The present age has powerfully been possessed by the West; it has only become possible because to her is given some great mission

for man. We from the East have to come to her to learn whatever she has to teach us; for by doing so we hasten the fulfilment of this age. We know that the East also has her lessons to give, and she has her own responsibility of not allowing her light to be extinguished, and the time will come when the West will find leisure to realise that she has a home of hers in the East where her food is and her rest.

## INDIAN PERIODICALS

### India and the World in Ancient Times.

In the *Hindustan Review*, Mr. Shibamath Basu shows, by referring to and quoting from numerous authors, that

India in ancient times was in active intercourse with the whole of the then known world and occupied the position of the Queen of the Ancient World. Her adventurers, colonisers and navigators, not afraid of the dangers of the Mighty Deep built up a greater India beyond the seas, her merchants carried the torch of Indo-Aryan civilisation to the distant quarters of the world, her missionaries carried the Law of Gautama to countries beyond the frontiers of India, her Universities attracted students from countries beyond the deserts of Taklakaman and Gobi; while at home her children laid the foundation stone of a culture system which became the boast and inspiration of the civilised world.

### "Journal of Indian Industries and Labour."

In the foreword to the newly started *Journal of Indian Industries and Labour*, Sir Thomas Holland says that the chief Government activities in respect of the development of industries "must necessarily be provincial—the grant of concessions and other forms of assistance necessary to facilitate private enterprise, the development of technical and industrial education, and the research work necessary to establish the value of raw materials.

Decentralisation of authority and responsibility must necessarily tend to give rise to

local variations in policy, apart altogether from those variations that necessarily follow local diversity in natural resources. Thus, there arises at once the necessity for designing some machinery to facilitate voluntary co-operation and mutual understanding; for no province can be entirely self-contained in those matters that affect the development of industries on modern lines. For the essential communications, for accessory raw materials, for markets, for financial aid, and even for unskilled labour, one province must rely on the resources of another. Industries do not flourish singly but in family groups; provinces do not develop singly but in federal associations.

As one step towards provincial co-operation, this *Journal* has been established at the special and unanimous request of the Provincial Directors of Industries who have met in conference on two occasions during the past year.

The reference to the provincial Directors of industries in the last sentence quoted above may make the reader curious to know who these Directors are. We find from the "summary of industrial intelligence for the quarter ending December 31st, 1920," that Assam is fortunate enough to possess Mr. K. L. Barua as its Director of Industries. The name appears to show that he is an Indian. Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Bombay, Central Provinces and Punjab have European Directors; the Madras summary is signed by its European Assistant Director, leaving one in doubt as to the race and domicile of its Director; and there are no summaries for the United Provinces, and the N. W. Frontier Province. Who are the Directors and

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## EAST AND WEST IN GREATER INDIA

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

( *Specially translated for the Modern Review* )

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**T**HE History of India,— of whom is it the history ?

This history began with the day when the white-skinned Aryans, overcoming all obstacles, natural as well as human, made their entry into India. Sweeping aside the vast enveloping curtain of forest, which stretched across her from East to West, they brought on the scene sunny fields adorned with corn and fruit, and their toil and skill thus laid the foundation. And yet they could not say that this India was exclusively their India.

The non-Aryans became fused with the Aryans. Even in the first blush of the latter's victorious supremacy, they used to take to themselves non-Aryan girls in marriage. And in the Buddhist age such intermingling became freer. When, thereafter, the Brahminic Samaj set to work to repair its barriers and make its encircling walls impregnable, they found some parts of the country come to such a pass that brahmins of sufficiently pure stock could not be found to conduct the vedic ceremonies, and these either had to be imported, or new creations made by investiture with the sacred thread. The white skin, on the colour of which the difference between Brahmin and Sudra had originally been founded, had meanwhile tarnished into brown. The sudras, with their different manners and ideals, gods and rituals, had been taken into the social polity. And a larger Indian, or Hindu,

Samaj had been evolved which not only was not one with the Aryan Samaj of the vedic times, but in many respects even antagonistic.

But was India able to draw the line of her history there ? Did Providence allow her to make the assertion that the History of India was the history of the Hindus ? No. For, while in Hindu India the Rajputs were busy fighting each other in the vanity of a suicidal competition of bravery, the Mussalmans swept in through the breaches created by their dissensions, and scattering themselves all over the country they also made it their own by living and dying on its soil.

If now we try to draw the line here crying : "Stop ! Enough ! Let us make the History of India a history of Hindu and Muslim !" will the Great Architect, who is broadening out the history of humanity in ever-increasing circles, modify his plans simply to gratify our pride ?

Whether India is to be yours or mine, whether it is to belong more to the Hindu, or to the Moslem, or whether some other race is to assert a greater supremacy than either,— that is not the problem with which Providence is exercised. It is not as if, at the bar of the judgment seat of the Almighty, different advocates are engaged in pleading the rival causes of Hindu, Moslem or Westerner, and that the party which wins the decree shall finally plant the standard of permanent posses-

sion. It is our vanity which makes us think that it is a battle between contending rights,—the only battle is the eternal one between Truth and untruth.

The Ultimate, the Perfect, is concerned with the All, and is evolving itself through every kind of obstacle and opposing force. Only to the extent that our efforts assist in the progress of this evolution can they be successful. Attempts to push on oneself alone, whether made by individuals or nations, have no importance in the processes of Providence. That Alexander did not succeed in bringing the whole earth under the flag of Greece was merely a case of unsatisfied ambition which has long ceased to be of concern to the world. The preparation of Rome for a world-empire was shattered to pieces by the Barbarians, but this fall of Rome's pride is not bewailed by the world to-day. Greece and Rome shipped their golden harvests on the bark of time,—their failure to get a passage on it, for themselves as well, proved no loss, but rather lightened its burden.

So, in the evolving History of India, the principle at work is not the ultimate glorification of the Hindu, or any other race. In India, the history of humanity is seeking to elaborate a specific ideal, to give to general perfection a special form which shall be for the gain of all humanity;—nothing less than this is its end and aim. And in the creation of this ideal type, if Hindu, Moslem or Christian should have to submerge the aggressive part of their individuality, that may hurt their sectarian pride, but will not be accounted a loss by the standard of Truth and Right.

We are all here as factors in the making of the History of Greater India. If any one factor should become rebellious and arrogate to itself an undue predominance, that will only interfere with the general progress. The section which is unable or unwilling to adapt itself to the entire scheme, but struggles to keep up a separate existence, will have to drop out and be lost, sooner or later. And the component which, realising its dedication to the ulti-

mate ideal, acknowledges its own individual unimportance, will lose only its pettiness and find permanence for its greatness in that of the whole.

So, for ourselves, we must bear in mind that India is not engaged in recording solely our story, but that it is we who are called upon to take our place in the great Drama, which has India for its stage. If we do not fit ourselves to play our part, it is we who shall have to go. If we stand aloof from the rest, in the pride of past achievement, content with heaping up obstacles around ourselves, God will punish us, either by afflicting us with sorrow unceasing till He has brought us to a level with the rest, or by casting us aside as mere impediments. If we insist on segregating ourselves in our pride of exclusiveness, fondly clinging to the belief that Providence is specially concerned in our own particular development; if we persist in regarding our *dharma* as ours alone, our institutions as specially fit only for ourselves, our places of worship as requiring to be carefully guarded against all incomers, our wisdom as dependent for its safety on being locked up in our strong rooms; then we shall simply await, in the prison of our own contriving, for the execution of the death sentence which in that case the world of humanity will surely pronounce against us.

Of late the British have come in and occupied an important place in India's history. This was not an uncalled for, accidental intrusion. If India had been deprived of touch with the West, she would have lacked an element essential for her attainment of perfection. Europe now has her lamp ablaze. We must light our torches at its wick and make a fresh start on the highway of time. That our forefathers, three thousand years ago, had finished extracting all that was of value from the universe, is not a worthy thought. We are not so unfortunate, nor the universe so poor. Had it been true that all that is to be done has been done in the past, once for all, then our continued existence could only be a burden to the earth, and so would not be possible.



With what present duty, in what future hope, can they live who imagine that they have attained completeness in their great grand-fathers and whose sole idea is to shield themselves against the influx of the Modern behind the barriers of antiquated belief and custom ?

The Englishman has come through the breach in our crumbling walls, as the messenger of the Lord of the world-festival, to tell us that the world has need of us ; not where we are petty, but where we can help with the force of our Life, to rouse the World in wisdom, love and work, in the expansion of insight, knowledge and mutuality. Unless we can justify the mission on which the Englishman has been sent, until we can set out with him to honour the invitation of which he is the bearer, he cannot but remain with us as our tormentor, the disturber of our quietism. So long as we fail to make good the arrival of the Englishman, it shall not be within our power to get rid of him.

The India to which the Englishman has come with his message, is the India which is shooting up towards the future from within the bursting seed of the past. This new India belongs to humanity. What right have we to say who shall and who shall not find a place therein. Who is this "We" ? Bengali, Marathi or Panjabi, Hindu or Mussalman ? Only the larger "We" in whom all these,— Hindu, Moslem and Englishman, and whosoever else there be,— may eventually unite shall have the right to dictate who is to remain and who is to leave.

On us to-day is thrown the responsibility of building up this greater India, and for that purpose our immediate duty is to justify our meeting with the Englishman. It shall not be permitted to us to say that we would rather remain aloof, inactive, unresponsive, unwilling to give and to take, and thus to make poorer the India that is to be.

So the greatest men of modern India have all made it their life's work to bring about an approachment with the West. The chief example is Rammohan Roy. He stood alone in his day for the union of

India with the world on the broad base of humanity. No blind belief, no ancestral habit was allowed to obscure his vision. With a wonderful breadth of heart and intellect he accepted the West without betraying the East. He, alone, laid the foundation of new Bengal.

Rammohan Roy cheerfully put up with persecution in order to extend the field of our knowledge and work, right across from East to West, to gain for us the eternal rights of man in the pursuit of Truth, to enable us to realise that we, also, had inherited the earth. It was he who first felt and declared that for us Buddha, Christ and Mohammed have spent their lives ; that for each one of us has been stored up the fruits of the discipline of our Rishis ; that in whatsoever part of the world whosoever has removed obstacles in the path of wisdom or, breaking the bondage of dead matter, has given freedom to man's true *shakti*, he is our very own, and through him is each one of us glorified.

Rammohan Roy did not assist India to repair her barriers, or to keep cowering behind them,— he led her out into the freedom of Space and Time, and built for her a bridge between the East and West. That is why his spirit still lives with us, his power of stimulating India's creative energies is not yet exhausted. No blind habit of mind, no pettiness of racial pride, were able to make him commit the folly of rebellion against the manifest purpose of Time. That grand purpose which could not have found its fulfilment in the past, but is ever marching onwards to the future, found in him a gallant, unflinching standard bearer.

In the Deccan, Ranade spent his life in the making of this same bridge between East and West. In his very nature there was that creative faculty of synthesis which brings men together, builds up the *Samaj*, does away with discord and inequity and circumvents all obstacles in the way of knowledge, love and will-power. And so he rose superior to all the petty or unworthy considerations prevalent in his time, in spite of all the various conflicts of ideas and interests between the

Indian and the Englishman. His largeness of heart and breadth of mind impelled him to make a life-long endeavour to clear the way for an acceptance of whatever elements in the British are of value for the true History of India, and to strive for the removal of whatever obstructions stand in the way of India's attainment of perfection.

And the *mahatma* who passed away from us only the other day — Swami Vivekananda — he too took his stand in middle, with the East on his right, the West on his left. His message was not to keep India bound in her latter-day narrowness by ignoring in her history the advent of the West. His genius was for assimilation, for harmony, for creation. He dedicated his life to opening up the royal road by which the thought-treasure of the East may pass to the West, and of the West to the East.

Then there was the day when Bankim-chandra invited both East and West to a veritable festival of union in the pages of his *Bangadarshan*. From that day the literature of Bengal felt the call of time, responded to it, and having thus justified herself, took her place on the road to immortality. Bengali literature has made such wonderful progress because she cut through all the artificial bonds which would have hampered her communion with the World literature, and regulated her growth in such wise as to be enabled to make her own, naturally and with ease, the science and ideals of the West. Bankim is great, not merely by what he wrote, but because his genius helped to pave the way for such growth.

Thus, from whatever view-point we take a survey, we see that the epoch-makers of modern India, in whom the greatness of man becomes manifest, are gifted, as the very essence of their nature, with that breadth of understanding in which the differences of East and West do not hurt, or conflict with, one another, but where both find their ultimate harmony.

Many of us who belong to the educated class, think that these attempts at union

of the different races belonging to India are for the purpose of gaining political strength. Thus, as in so many other cases, do we view the Great as subservient to the Small. That we in India should attain Unity, is a much greater thing than any particular purpose which our union may serve,— for it is a function of our humanity itself. That we are not succeeding in becoming united is due to some basic defect in our manhood, which also is the reason why on every side we perceive our lack of *shakti*. It is our own sin that destroys our *dharma*, which again makes for the destruction of everything else.

Our attempts at Union can only become successful when they are made from the standpoint of Righteousness, which cannot be brought within the confines of any petty pride or narrow expediency. And if Righteousness be our guiding principle these efforts will not remain restricted to the different classes of Indians alone, but the Englishman also needs must join hands in the good work.

What then are we to make of the antagonism which has arisen of late between the Englishman and the Indian, educated as well as uneducated? Is there nothing true in this? Is it only the machination of a few conspirators? Is this antagonism essentially different in purpose from the constant action and reaction of making and breaking which are at work in the making of Indian History? It is very necessary for us to come to a true understanding of its meaning.

In our religious literature, opposition is reckoned as one of the means of union. Ravana, for instance, is said to have gained his salvation because of the valiant fight that he fought. The meaning is simply this, that to have to own defeat after a manful contest with the truth is to gain it all the more completely. To accept with a too ready acquiescence is not a full acceptance at all. This is why all science is based on a severe scepticism.

We began with a blind, foolish, insensate begging at the door of Europe, with our critical sense entirely benumbed.

That was not the way to make any real gain. Whether it be wisdom, or political rights, they have to be earned, that is to say to be attained by one's own *shakti*, after a successful struggle against obstructing forces. If they be put into our hands by others, by way of alms, they do not become ours at all. To take in a form which is derogatory can only lead to loss. Hence our reaction against the culture of Europe and its ideals. A feeling of wounded self-respect is prompting us to return upon ourselves.

This revulsion was necessary for the purposes of the History which, as I say, Time is evolving in this land of India. Of what we were receiving weakly, unquestioningly, in sheer poverty of spirit, it was not possible for us to appraise the value; therefore we were unable to appropriate it at its worth, and so to put it to use. It remained with us merely as an ornamental appendage. And when we realised this, our desire to get away from it was only natural.

Rammohan Roy was able to assimilate the ideals of Europe so completely because he was not overwhelmed by them: there was no poverty or weakness on his side. He had ground of his own on which he could take his stand and where he could secure his acquisitions. The true wealth of India was not hidden from him, and and this he had already made his own. Consequently he had with him the touchstone by which he could test the wealth of others. He did not sell himself by holding out a beggar's palms, but assessed the true value of whatever he took.

This *shakti* which was natural to our first great leader, is steadily developing itself amongst us through constantly conflicting stresses and strains, actions and reactions. Pendulum-wise do our movements touch now this extreme, now the other. An undue eagerness of acceptance and an undue timidity of rejection assail us by turns. Nevertheless are we being carried forward to our goal.

Our soul which was overburdened with uncritically accumulated foreign ideas has

now swung to the opposite extreme of wholesale rejection. But the cause of the present tension of feelings is not this alone.

The West has come as India's guest; we cannot send away the visitor while the object of his visit remains unfulfilled; he must be properly accommodated. But, whatever be the reason,— whether it be some defect in our power of appreciation, or the miserliness of the West in revealing itself in its truth,— if the flow of this great purpose of Time should receive a check, there is bound to be a disastrous irruption.

If we do not come into touch with what is true, what is best in the Englishman; if we find in him merely a merchant, or a military man, or a bureaucrat; if he will not come down to the plane in which man may commune with man and take him into confidence;— if, in fine, the Indian and the Englishman needs must remain apart, then will they be to each other a perennial source of unhappiness. In such case the party which is in power will try to make powerless the dissatisfaction of the weaker by repressive legislation, but will not be able to allay it. Nor will the former find any satisfaction in the situation; and feeling the Indian only to be a source of trouble the Englishman will more and more try to ignore his very existence.

There was a time when high-souled Englishmen like David Hare came very near to us and held up before our hearts the greatness of the English character. The students of that day truly and freely surrendered their hearts to the British connexion. The English professor of today not only does not succeed in exhibiting the best that is in his race to his pupils, but he lowers the English ideal in their eyes. As the result, the students cannot enter into the spirit of English literature as they used to do. They gulp it down but do not relish it, and we see no longer the same enthusiastic revelling in the delights of Shakspeare or Byron. The approachment which might have resulted from a genuine appreciation of the same literature has thus received a set-back.



This is not only the case in the sphere of education. In no capacity, be it as magistrate, merchant, or policeman, does the Englishman present to us the highest that his racial culture has attained, and so is India deprived of the greatest gain that might have been hers by reason of his arrival; on the contrary, herself-respect is wounded and her powers deprived on every side of their natural development.

All the trouble that we see now-a-days is caused by this failure of East and West to come together. Bound to be near each other, and yet unable to be friends, is an intolerable situation between man and man, and hurtful withal. Therefore the desire to put an end to it must become overwhelming sooner or later. Such a rebellion, being a rebellion of the heart, will not take account of material gains or losses; it will even risk death.

And yet it is also true that such rebelliousness can only be a temporary phase. In spite of all retarding factors our impact with the West must be made good,—there can be no escape for India until she has made her own whatever there may be worth the taking from the West. Until the fruit is ripe it does not get released from stem, nor can it ripen at all if it insists on untimely release.

Before concluding I must say one word more. It is we who are responsible for the failure of the Englishman to give us of his best. If we remove our own poverty we can make him overcome his miserliness. We must rouse our powers in every direction before the Englishman shall be able to give what he has been sent here to give. If we are content to stand at his door empty-handed we shall only be turned away, again and again.

The best that is in the Englishman is not a thing that may be acquired by us in slothful ease; it must be strenuously won. If the Englishman should be moved to pity that would be the worst thing for us. It is our manhood which must awaken his. We should remember that the Englishman himself has had to realise his best through supreme toil and suffering. We must cultivate the like power within ourselves.

There is no easier way of gaining the Best.

Those of us who go to the Englishman's durbar with bowed heads and folded hands, seeking emoluments of office or badges of honour,—we only attract his pettiness and help to distort his true manifestation in India. Those, again, who in a blind fury of passion would violently assail him, succeed in evoking only the sinful side of the Englishman's nature. If, then, it be true that it is our frailty which excites his insolence, his greed, his cowardice or his cruelty, why blame him? Rather should we take the blame on ourselves.

In his own country the Englishman's lower nature is kept under control and his higher nature roused to its fullest capacity by the social forces around him. The social conscience there, being awake, compels each individual, with all its force, to take his stand on a high level and maintain his place there with unceasing effort. In this country his society is unable to perform the same function. Anglo-Indian society is not concerned with the whole Englishman. It is either a society of civilians, or of merchants, or of soldiers. Each of these are limited by their own business, and become encased in a hard crust of prejudice and superstition. So they develop into thorough-going civilians, or mere merchants, or blatant soldiers. We cannot find the man in them. When the civilian occupies the High-Court bench we are in despair, for whenever there is a conflict between the Right and the civilian's gods, the latter are sure to prevail,—but these gods are inimical to India, nor are they worshipped by the Englishman at his best.

On the other hand, the decay and weakness of the Indian *Samaj* itself is also a bar to the rousing of the true British spirit, wherefore both are losers. It is our own fault, I repeat, that we meet only *Burra Sahebs* and not great Englishmen. And to this we owe all the sufferings and insults with which we have to put up. We have no remedy but to acknowledge our sin and get rid of it.

*Nāyamatma balahinena labhyah,*

*Self-realisation is not for the weak,—nor the highest truth.*

Neither tall talk nor violence, but only sacrifice and service are true tests of strength. Until the Indian can give up his fear, his self-interest, his luxury, in his quest for the best and the highest, in his service of the Motherland, our demanding from the government will but be empty begging and will aggravate both our incapacity and our humiliation. When we shall have made our country our own by sacrifice and established our claim to it by applying our own powers for its reclamation, then we shall not need to stand abjectly at the Englishman's door. And if we are not abject, the Englishman need not lower himself. Then may we become colleagues and enter into mutual arrangements.

Until we can cast off our individual or *samajic* folly ; as long as we remain unable to grant to our own countrymen the full rights of man ; as long as our zamindars continue to look on their tenantry as part of their property, our men in power glory in keeping their

subordinates under their heels, our higher castes think nothing of looking down on the lowest castes as worse than beasts ; so long shall we not have the right or power to demand from the Englishman proper behaviour towards ourselves.

At every turn,—in her religion, in her *Samaj*, in her daily practice—does the India of to-day fail to do justice to herself. She does not purify her soul by sacrifice, and so on every side she suffers futility. She cannot meet the outsider on equal terms and so receives nothing of value from him. No cleverness or violence can deliver her from the sufferings and insults of which the Englishman is but the instrument. Only when she can meet him as his equal, will all reason for antagonism, and with it all conflict, disappear. Then will East and West unite in India,—country with country, race with race, knowledge with knowledge, endeavour with endeavour. Then will the History of India come to an end, merged in the History of the World which will begin.

*Free translation*

BY SURENDRANATH TAGORE.

## PLAN OF ORGANISATION

**A**FTER the aims and objects of an organization have been defined, comes the problem of planning practical steps to attain the goal. Plans involve investigations of conditions and methods, provision of materials and tools with which the workers can perform the task, planning and controlling the progress of work and supervision. The basic facts have to be established first before any other steps can be taken. Then campaigns for membership, for financing, for the enactment of measures, for the establishment of branches and every method of strengthening a movement are taken up.

Plans involve strategy. War maxims

such as : "activity, activity, life", "order, counter-order, disorder", "march divided, fight united", apply just as well to social organizations as the army. Eternal vigilance and activity is necessary by each of the departments, boards and committees of the organization to successfully conduct it. Life is one struggle after another with nature and our fellow-beings. The greatest competition, the greatest hindrance in our plan of work usually comes from the latter. The life of an organization is not free from oppositions. Organizations of reform have to fight continually with forces of conservatism, of labour with capitalism, of religion with the sinful tendencies of the day. Very like the army,

perties. It cannot be said that anarchy or internal disorder existed in any form or shape in these newly raised independent states. But this cannot be said of the British rulers of that age and the territories under their administration. It seems that they never cared for the welfare or prosperity of their subjects whose persons and properties they never took any step to protect.

It is also a singular fact that distractions and disorders commenced to appear in the different states of India not very

long after the British established themselves as a political power in Bengal. It may hence be presumed that the Europeans sent emissaries to the states and principalities of Indian India to create distraction and confusion and disorder in them in order that they might be able to extend their power. It was the Europeans who helped the Nawab Vizir of Oude to murder in cold blood the brave inhabitants of Rohilkhand.

( *To be continued.* )

HISTORICUS.

### LETTERS FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE

#### I.

**W**HEN life began her first experiments, she was mightily proud of the hugeness of her animal specimens. The bigger the bodies were, the more extravagantly large the armour had to be made for their protection. The ludicrous creatures, in order to maintain their balance, had to carry a tail which was absurdly disproportionate to the rest of the body. It went on like this till life became a burden to itself and to the exchequer of creation. It was uneconomical, and therefore not only harmful but ungainly. True economy is the principle of beauty in practical arithmetic. Driven to bewilderment life began to seek for a pause in her insanity of endless multiplication. All forms of ambitious power are obsessed by this delirium of multiplication. All its steps are steps towards augmentation and not completeness. But ambitions, that rely solely upon the suggestions of their tails and armour, are condemned to carry out their own obstruction till they have to stop.

In its early history, life, after its orgies of megalomania, had at last to think of disarmament. But how did she effect it? By boldly relinquishing the ambition to produce bigness,—and man was born helplessly naked and small. All of a sudden, he was disinherited of the enormity of flesh, when apparently he was most in need of it. But this prodigious loss gained for him his freedom and victory.

There began the reign of Mind. It brought its predecessor of gigantic bulk under subjection. But, as it often happens, the master became the parasite of its slave, and mind also tried to achieve greatness by the bigness of materials. The dynasty of mind followed the dynasty of flesh, but employed this flesh as its Prime Minister.

Our history is waiting for the dynasty of Spirit. The human succeeded the brutal, and now comes the turn of the Divine. In our mythology, we have often heard of man taking the side of Gods, and saving Paradise from the dominion of Giants. But in our history, we often notice man holding alliance with Giants and trying to defeat the Gods. His guns and ships of huge power and proportion are turned out from the arsenal of the Giant. In the fight of bigness against goodness man has joined the former, counting coins of his reward in number and not in quality - in lead and not in gold.

Those who are in possession of material resources have become slaves of their own instruments. Fortunately for us, in India, these resources are beyond all immediate possibility of realisation. We are disarmed, and therefore we have no option but to seek for other and higher sources of power. The men who believe in the reality of brute force have made enormous sacrifices in order to attain and to maintain it. Let us, in India, have faith in moral power in man and be ready to sacrifice for it, all that we have. Let



us do our best to prove that Man has not been the greatest mistake in Creation. Let it not be said, that, for the sake of happiness and peace of the world, the physical brutes were far preferable to intellectual brutes who boast of their factory-made teeth and nails and poison fangs.

## II.

In every age and in every country facts are given to us in order that we may provide with them some special expression of Truth. Facts are like atoms in gases. They fight with, or else fly away from one another. But when they are united into a drop of dew they attain beauty and reality. Man must have that creative magic to bring the facts of his time into some unity of creation. In Christ and in Buddha, this creative ideal tried to unite men who were divided because of their formalism in religious faith.

Formalism in religion is like Nationalism in politics. It breeds sectarian arrogance, mutual misunderstanding and a spirit of persecution. Our mediæval saints, through their light of love and inner perception of truth could realise the spiritual unity of man. For them, the innumerable barriers of formalism had no existence, and therefore the mutually antagonistic creeds of Hindus and Muhammadans, irreconcilable as they seemed, did not baffle them. Our faith in truth has its

trial in the apparent difficulty of its realisation.

The most important of all facts in the present age is that the East and West have met. So long as it remains a mere fact, it will give rise to interminable conflicts; it will even hurt man's soul. It is the mission of all men of faith, in the present age, to raise this fact into truth. The worldly-wise will shake their heads and say it is not possible—that there is a radical difference between the East and the West and therefore only physical power will have its sway in their relationship.

But physical power is not creative. Whatever laws and organisations it may produce it will never satisfy spiritual humanity. Ram Mohan Ray was the first great man in our age who had the profound faith and large vision to feel in his heart the unity of soul between East and West. I follow him, though he is practically rejected by my countrymen. I only wish you had been with me in Europe! You would know at once what is the purpose of the modern age; what is the cry of man, which the politicians never hear. There were politicians in the courts of the Moghul Emperors. They have left nothing behind them, but ruins. But Kabir and Nanak! They have bequeathed to us their imperishable faith in the unity of Man through God's love.

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## THE BURIAL OF A BIRD

(By an American boy of 10 or 11 years of age.)

One day, when I was walking near the bridge,  
I heard a noise and I turned to look,  
And I saw a man with a gun in his hand.  
I ran up when he fired the shot,  
I looked around for half an hour,  
Until I found something hopping on the ground,  
Then I saw a blackbird.  
He hopped slower and slower, until he dropped dead,  
And then I picked him up.

I brought him to Miss Wylie,  
And she gave me a box to bury him in.  
Then I buried him in Shelter garden,  
And then I built a cross,  
And made a wreath of flowers,  
And I put some flowers on the grave.  
Then some other boys said the Lord's Prayer,  
And then we went away sad.

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## EAST AND WEST

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

(I)

**I**T is not always a profound interest in man that carries travellers nowadays to distant lands. More often it is the facility for rapid movement. For lack of time and for the sake of convenience, we generalise and crush human facts flat in the packages inside our steel trunks that hold our traveller's reports.

Our knowledge of our own countrymen, and our feelings about them have slowly and unconsciously grown out of innumerable facts which are full of contradictions and subject to incessant change. They have the elusive mystery and fluidity of life. We cannot define to ourselves what we are as a whole, because we know too much; because our knowledge is more than knowledge. It is an immediate consciousness of personality, any evaluation of which carries some emotion, joy or sorrow, shame or exaltation. But in a foreign land, we try to find our compensation for the meagreness of our data by the compactness of the generalisation which our imperfect sympathy itself helps us to form. When a stranger from the West travels in the Eastern world, he takes the facts that displease him and readily makes use of them for his rigid conclusions, fixed upon the unchallengeable authority of his personal experience. It is like a man, who has his own boat for crossing his village stream, but, on being compelled to wade across some strange watercourse, draws angry comparisons, as he goes, from every patch of mud and every pebble which his feet encounter.

Our mind has faculties which are universal, but its habits are insular. There are men who become impatient and angry at the least discomfort, when these habits are incommoded. In their idea of the next world, they probably conjure up the ghosts of their slippers and dressing gowns, and expect the latch-key that opens their lodging-house door on earth to fit their door-lock in the other world. As travellers they are a failure; for they have grown too accustomed to their mental easy-chairs and in their intellectual nature, love home comforts, which are of local make, more than the realities of life, which like earth itself, are full of ups and downs, yet are one in their rounded completeness.

The modern age has brought the geography of the earth near to us, but made it difficult for us to come into touch with man. We go to strange lands and observe; we do not live there. We hardly meet men, but only specimens of knowledge. We are in haste to seek for general types and overlook individuals.

When we fall into the habit of neglecting to use the understanding, that comes of sympathy, in our travels, our knowledge of foreign people grows insensitive, and therefore easily becomes both unjust and cruel in its character, and also selfish and contemptuous in its application. Such has, too often, been the case with regard to the meeting of Western people in our days with others for whom they do not recognise any obligation of kinship.

It has been admitted that the dealings

between different races of men are not merely between individuals; that our mutual understanding is either aided, or else obstructed, by the general emanations forming the social atmosphere. These emanations are our collective ideas and collective feelings, generated according to special historical circumstances.

For instance, the caste-idea is a collective idea in India. When we approach an Indian, who is under the influence of this collective idea, he is no longer a pure individual with his conscience fully awake to the judging of the value of a human being. He is more or less a passive medium for giving expression to the sentiment of a whole community.

It is evident that the caste-idea is not creative; it is merely institutional. It adjusts human beings according to some mechanical arrangement. It emphasizes the negative side of the individual,—his separateness. It hurts the complete truth in man.

In the West, also, the people have a certain collective idea that obscures their humanity. Let me try to explain what I feel about it.

## (II)

Lately I went to visit some battlefields of France, which had been devastated by war. The awful calm of desolation, which still bore wrinkles of pain, death-struggles stiffened into ugly ridges,—brought before my mind the vision of a huge demon, which had no shape, no meaning, yet had two arms that could strike, and break and tear, a gaping mouth that could devour, and bulging brains that could conspire and plan. It was a purpose, which had a living body, but no complete humanity to temper it. Because it was passion,—belonging to life, and yet not having the wholeness of life,—it was the most terrible of life's enemies.

Something of the same sense of oppression in a different degree, and the same desolation in a different aspect, is produced in my mind when I realise the touch of the West upon Eastern life,—the West which, in its relation to us, is all plan and purpose incarnate, without any superfluous humanity.

I feel the contrast very strongly in Japan. In that country, the old world presents itself with some ideal of perfection, in which man has his varied opportunities of self-revelation in art, in ceremonial, in religious faith, and in customs expressing the poetry of social relationship. There one feels that deep delight of hospitality, which life offers to life. And side by side, in the same soil, stands the modern world, which is stupendously big and powerful, but inhospitable. It has no simple-hearted welcome for man. It is living; yet the incompleteness of life's ideal within it cannot but hurt humanity.

The wriggling tentacles of a cold-blooded utilitarianism, with which the West has grasped all the easily yielding succulent portions of the East, are causing pain and indignation throughout the Eastern countries. The West comes to us, not with the imagination and sympathy that create and unite; but with a shock of passion,—passion for power and wealth. This passion is a mere force, which has in it the principle of separation, of conflict.

I have been fortunate in coming into close touch with individual men and women of the Western countries, and have felt with them their sorrows and shared their aspirations. I have known that they seek the same God, who is my God,—even those who deny Him. I feel certain, that, if the great light of culture be extinct in Europe, our horizon in the East will mourn in darkness. It does not hurt my pride to acknowledge, that in the present age, Western humanity has received its mission to be the teacher of the world; that her science, through the mastery of laws of matter, is to liberate human souls from the dark dungeon of matter. For this very reason, I have realised all the more strongly, that the dominant collective idea in the Western countries is not creative. It is ready to enslave or kill individuals, to drug a great people with soul-killing poison, smudging their whole future with the black mist of stupefaction and emasculating entire races of men to the utmost degree of helplessness. It is wholly wanting in spiritual power to blend and harmonise;



it lacks the sense of the great personality of man.

The most significant fact of modern days is the fact, that the West has met the East. Such a momentous meeting of humanity, in order to be fruitful, must have in its heart some great emotional idea, generous and creative. There can be no doubt that God's choice has fallen upon the knights-errant of the West for the service of the present age; arms and armour have been given to them; but have they yet realised, in their hearts the single-minded loyalty to their cause which can resist all temptations of bribery from the devil? The world today is offered to the West. She will destroy it, if she does not use it for a great creation of man. The materials for such a creation are in the hands of science; but the creative genius is in Man's spiritual ideal.

### (III)

When I was young, a stranger from Europe came to Bengal. He chose his lodging among the people of the country, shared with them their frugal diet, and freely offered them his service. He found employment in the houses of the rich, teaching them French and German, and the money thus earned he spent to help poor students in buying books. This meant for him hours of walking in the midday heat of a tropical summer; for, intent upon exercising utmost economy, he refused to hire conveyances. He was pitiless in his exaction from himself of his resources, in money, time and strength, to the point of privation; and all this for the sake of a people who were obscure, to whom he was not born, but whom he dearly loved. He did not come to us with a professional mission of teaching sectarian creeds; he had not in his nature the least trace of that self-sufficiency of goodness, which humiliates by gifts the victims of its insolent benevolence. Though he did not know our language, he took every occasion to frequent our meetings and ceremonies; yet he was always afraid of intrusion and tenderly anxious lest he might offend us by his ignorance of our customs. At last, under the continual strain of

work in an alien climate and surroundings, his health broke down. He died, and was cremated at our burning ground according to his express desire.

The attitude of his mind, the manner of his living, the object of his life, his modesty, his unstinted self-sacrifice for a people who had not even the power to give publicity to any benefaction bestowed upon them, were so utterly unlike anything we were accustomed to associate with the Europeans in India, that it gave rise in our mind to a feeling of love bordering upon awe.

We all have a realm of a private paradise in our mind, where dwell deathless memories of persons who brought some divine light to our life's experience, who may not be known to others and whose names have no place in the pages of history. Let me confess to you that this man lives as one of those immortals in the paradise of my individual life.

He came from Sweden, his name was Hammargren. What was most remarkable in the event of his coming to us in Bengal was the fact that in his own country he had chanced to read some works of my great countryman, Ram Mohan Roy, and felt an immense veneration for his genius and his character. Ram Mohan Roy lived in the beginning of the last century, and it is no exaggeration when I describe him as one of the immortal personalities of modern time. This young Swede had the unusual gift of a far-sighted intellect and sympathy, which enabled him even from his distance of space and time, and in spite of racial differences, to realise the greatness of Ram Mohan Roy. It moved him so deeply that he resolved to go to the country which produced this great man, and offer her his service. He was poor and he had to wait some time in England before he could earn his passage money to India. There he came at last and in reckless generosity of love utterly spent himself to the last breath of his life, away from home and kindred and all the inheritances of his motherland. His stay among us was too short to produce any outward result. He failed even to achieve during his life what he had in his mind,

which was to found by the help of his scanty earnings, a library as a memorial to Ram Mohan Roy, and thus to leave behind him a visible symbol of his devotion. But what I prize most in this European youth, who left no record of his life behind him, is not the memory of any service of good will, but the precious gift of respect which he offered to the people who are fallen upon evil times, and whom it is so easy to ignore or to humiliate. For the first time in the modern days, this obscure individual from Sweden brought to our country the chivalrous courtesy of the West, a greeting of human fellowship.

The coincidence came to me with a great and delightful surprise when the Nobel prize was offered to me from Sweden. As a recognition of individual merit, it was of great value to me, no doubt; but it is the acknowledgment of the East as a collaborator with the Western continents, in contributing its riches to the common stock of civilisation, which has an immense significance for the present age. It is the joining hands in comradeship of the two great hemispheres of the human world across the sea.

#### (IV)

Today the real East remains unexplored. The blindness of contempt is more hopeless than the blindness of ignorance, for contempt kills the light which ignorance merely leaves unignited. The East is waiting to be understood by the Western races, in order not only to be able to give what is true in her, but also to be confident of her own mission.

In Indian history, the meeting of the Mussalman and the Hindu produced Akbar, the object of whose dream was the unification of hearts and ideals. It had all the glowing enthusiasm of a religion, and it produced an immediate and a vast result even in his own lifetime.

But the fact still remains that the Western mind, after centuries of contact with the East, has not evolved the enthusiasm of a chivalrous ideal which can bring this age to its fulfilment. It is everywhere raising thorny hedges of exclusion, offering human sacrifices to national self-seeking.

It has intensified the mutual feeling of envy among Western races themselves, as they fight over their spoils and display a carnivorous pride in their snarling rows of teeth.

We must again guard our minds from any encroaching distrust of the individuals of a nation. The active love of humanity and the spirit of martyrdom for the cause of justice and truth, which I have met with in the Western countries have been an immense lesson and inspiration to me. I have no doubt in my mind that the West owes its true greatness, not so much to its marvellous training of intellect, as to its spirit of service devoted to the welfare of man. Therefore I speak with a personal feeling of pain and sadness about the collective power which is guiding the helm of Western civilisation. It is a passion; not an ideal. The more success it has brought to Europe, the more costly it will prove to her at last, when the accounts have to be rendered. And the signs are unmistakable, that the accounts have been called for. The time has come, when Europe must know that the forcible parasitism, which she has been practising upon the two large Continents of the world, the two most unwieldy whales of humanity,—must be causing to her moral nature a gradual atrophy and degeneration.

As an example, let me quote the following extract from the concluding chapter of "From the Cape to Cairo", by Messrs. Grogan and Sharp, who have the power to inculcate their doctrines both by precept and by example. In their reference to the African they are candid, as when they say, "We have stolen his land. Now we must steal his limbs." These two sentences, carefully articulated, with a smack of enjoyment, have been more clearly explained in the following statement, where some sense of that decency, which is the attenuated ghost of a buried conscience, prompts the writers to use the phrase, "compulsory labour", in place of the honest word "slavery"; just as the modern politician adroitly avoids the word "possession" and uses the word "mandate". "Compulsory labour in some form," they say, "is the

corollary or our occupation of the country." And they add: "It is pathetic, but it is history,"—implying thereby, that moral sentiments have no serious effect in the history of human beings.

Elsewhere they write: "Either we must give up the country commercially, or we must make the African work. And mere abuse of those who point out the impasse cannot change the facts. We must decide and soon. Or rather the white man of South Africa will decide." The authors also confess, that they have seen too much of the world "to have any lingering belief that Western Civilisation benefits native races."

The logic is simple,—the logic of egoism. But the argument is simplified by lopping off the greater part of the premise. For these writers seem to hold, that the only important question for the white men of South Africa is, how indefinitely to grow fat on ostrich feathers and diamond mines, and dance jazz dances over the misery and degradation of a whole race of fellow beings of a different colour from their own. Possibly they believe, that moral laws have a special domesticated breed of comfortable concessions for the service of the people in power. Possibly they ignore the fact, that commercial and political cannibalism, profitably practised upon foreign races, creeps back nearer home; that the cultivation of unwholesome appetites has its final reckoning with the stomach that has been made to serve it. For, after all, man is a spiritual being, and not a mere living money-bag jumping from profit to profit, and breaking the backbone of human races in its leapfrog of bulging prosperity.

Such, however, has been the condition of things for more than a century; and today, trying to read the future by the light of the European conflagration, we are asking ourselves everywhere in the East: "Is this frightfully overgrown power really great? It can bruise us from without; but can it add to our wealth of spirit? It can sign peace treaties; but can it give peace?"

It was about two thousand years ago that all-powerful Rome in one of its east-

ern provinces executed on a cross a simple teacher of an obscure tribe of fishermen. On that day, the Roman governor felt no falling off of his appetite or sleep. On that day, there was, on the one hand, the agony, the humiliation, the death; on the other, the pomp of pride and festivity in the Governor's palace.

And today? To whom, then, shall we bow the head?

Kasmā devaya havisha vidhema?

"To which God shall we offer oblation?"

We know of an instance in our own history of India, when a great personality both in his life and voice, struck the keynote of the solemn music of the soul, love for all creatures. And that music crossed seas, mountains and deserts. Races belonging to different climates, habits and languages were drawn together, not in the clash of arms, not in the conflict of exploitation, but in harmony of life, in amity and peace. That was creation.

When we think of it, we see at once what the confusion of thought was, to which the Western poet, dwelling upon the difference between East and West, referred, when he said, "Never the twain shall meet." It is true, that they are not yet showing any real sign of meeting. But the reason is, because the West has not sent out its humanity to meet the man in the East, but only its machine. Therefore the poet's line has to be changed into something like this,

Man is man, machine is machine,

And never the twain shall wed.

You must know that red tape can never be a common human bond, that official sealing wax can never provide means of mutual attachment; that it is a painful ordeal for human beings to have to receive favours from animated pigeon-holes, and condescensions from printed circulars that give notice, but never speak. The presence of the Western people in the East is a human fact. If we are to gain anything from them, it must not be a mere sum-total of legal codes and systems of civil and military services. Man is a great deal more to man than that. We have our human birthright to claim direct help from the man of the West, if he has anything

great to give us. It must come to us, not through mere facts in a juxtaposition, but through the spontaneous sacrifice made by those who have the gift and therefore the responsibility.

Earnestly I ask the poet of the Western world to realize and sing to you with all the great power of music which he has, that the East and the West are ever in search of each other, and that they must meet not merely in the fullness of physical strength, but in fullness of truth; that the right hand, which wields the sword, has the need of the left, which holds the shield of safety.

The East has its seat in the vast plains watched over by the snow-peaked mountains and fertilized by rivers carrying mighty volumes of water to the sea. There, under the blaze of a tropical sun, the physical life has bedimmed the light of its vigor, and lessened its claims. There man has had the repose of mind, which has ever tried to set itself in harmony with the inner notes of existence. In the silence of sunrise and sunset, and on star-crowded nights, he has sat face to face with the infinite, waiting for the revelation that opens up the heart of all that there is. He has said, in a rapture of realisation,

"Hearken to me, ye children of the Immortal, who dwell in the kingdom of heaven. I have known, from beyond darkness, the Supreme Person, shining with the radiance of the sun."

The man from the East, with his faith in the eternal, who in his soul has met the

touch of the Supreme Person,—has he never come to you in the West and spoken to you of the Kingdom of Heaven? Did he not unite the East and the West in truth, in the unity of one spiritual bond between all children of the Immortal, in the realization of one great Personality in all human persons?

Yes, the East did meet the West profoundly in the growth of her life. Such union became possible, because the East came to the West with the ideal that is creative, and not with the passion that destroys moral bonds. The mystic consciousness of the infinite, which she brought with her, was greatly needed by the man of the West to give him his balance.

On the other hand, the East must find her own balance in Science,—the magnificent gift that the West can bring to her. Truth has its nest as well as its sky. That nest is definite in structure, accurate in law of construction; and though it has to be changed and rebuilt over and over again, the need of it is never-ending and its laws are eternal. For some centuries the East has neglected the nest building of truth. She has not been attentive to learn its secret. Trying to cross the trackless infinite, the East has relied solely upon her wings. She has spurned the earth, till, buffeted by storms, her wings are hurt and she is tired, sorely needing help. But need she then be told, that the messenger of the sky and the builder of the nest shall never meet?

## THE FIRST LORD MINTO'S INDIAN ADMINISTRATION

(Continued from page 210 of the August Number.)

SO then, though it may not have been a matter of political expediency during the administration of Lord Minto not to give peace or afford security to the persons and properties of the inhabitants of the territories then under the rule of the East India Company, such peace and security were not enjoyed by them.

But the rising in arms of Indians of their own territories against their tyrannical rule was not the only danger which the British had to apprehend. The Marathas had been defeated, but not altogether crushed. It was quite possible for them to combine again and take revenge on their British persecutors and



prohibition. As the State Treasurer of Montana recently wrote to Mr. Johnson :—

"The counties of the States have lost the income from licenses formerly collected, but have saved materially by not having their prisons or poorhouses filled with criminals and dependents, caused by the use of liquor. The State has also lost the percentage of the revenue formerly derived from these licenses, but has saved in the same manner. Therefore, we do not consider that the prohibition policy has raised our taxes."

As taxation in the United States is based upon the value of property, the authorities, in many places, have benefited from the general rise in the value of property which has resulted from the removal of the saloons.

The effect of prohibition upon domestic civic and social life is equally marked, whereas in the old days the worker used to take in his cheque to be cashed at the saloon, which would deduct the best part of it for drink, supplied on account and also for "treating" on pay day ; now it is taken to the wife, who is able to provide better food, clothes and amusement, and withal to save a part of it and put it by for the rainy day. *Between June 30, 1919, and November 17, 1919, there were 880,000 new accounts opened in the National Banks of the United States, the increase in deposits aggregating*

*\$1,422,883,000, while the increase in the number and amount of deposits in the State and private banks was far greater than that in the National Banks.*

Why should a country so poor as India, and a people so constitutionally opposed to drink as Indians, continue to waste money and stamina upon the liquor traffic and reap all the ills which follow in its train ? With her traditions, India should have really led the way in prohibition, but though that opportunity has been lost to us, there is nothing to prevent us from following the example set by the United States of America.

Any administrator who tells us that the drink traffic cannot be extinguished because the money derived from it is needed for education and sanitation, is really not worth keeping. Not so very long ago physicians in England used to tell their patients that alcohol was indispensable. When people began to test the fitness of the doctor by his ability to do without liquor, physicians soon found that they could prescribe without having recourse to alcohol. Administrators are the servants of the people, and if the people are determined to extinguish the liquor traffic, their agents must find a way to get along without excise revenue.

## LETTERS FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE

### I

THERE are a large number of ideas, about which we do not even know that they are inaccessible to us, only because we have grown too familiar with their names.

Such is our idea of God. We do not have to realise it, in order to be aware that we know it. This is why it requires a great deal of spiritual sensitiveness to be able to feel the life-throb of God's reality behind the vulgar callosity of words. Things that are small naturally come to their limits for us, when they are familiar. But the truth which is great should reveal its infinity all the more vastly, when it is near to us. Unfortu-

nately, words that represent truth, and the minds that use those words, have not the same immensity of life as truth itself. Therefore, the words (and with them our attention and interest) become inert, by constant handling, obscuring our faith underneath them without our being conscious of that tragic fact.

This is the reason, why men who are obviously religious are frequently more irreligious, in reality, than those who openly ignore religion. Preachers and ministers of religion have made it their business to deal with God at every moment. They cannot afford to wait, until they come in touch with them. They dare not acknowledge the fact, that

they have not done so. Therefore, they have to strain their minds into a constant attitude of God-knowingness. They have to delude themselves, in order to fulfil the expectation of others, or what they consider to be their duty.

And yet, the consciousness of God, like that of all other great ideas, comes to us only with intense moments of illumination, of inspiration. If we do not have the patience to wait for it, we only choke the path of that inspiration with the debris of our conscious efforts. Those, who make it their business to preach God, preach creeds. They lose their sense of distinction between these two. Therefore, their religion does not bring peace in this world but conflict. They do not hesitate to make use even of their religion for the propaganda of national self-seeking and boastfulness.

You may wonder, in your mind, as to the reason of my bringing up this topic in my present letter. It is in connexion with the same endless conflict within me between the poet and the preacher,—one of whom depends for his mission upon inspiration and the other upon conscious endeavour. Straining of consciousness leads to insensitiveness, of which I am more afraid than anything else. The preacher is the professional dealer in particular ideas. His customers come at all hours of the day and put questions to him. The answers, which he gets into the habit of producing, gradually lose their living quality, and his faith in his ideas runs the risk of being smothered under the deadness of his words. I believe that such a tragedy is more common than people suspect, especially with those who are good, and therefore are ever ready to sign their cheques of benefit for others, without waiting to see if the cash had time to accumulate in the bank.

This makes me think, that it is safe to be nothing better than a mere poet. For poets have to be true to their best moments and not to other peoples' requirements.

## II.

Even when I was very young, my mind saw things with a large atmosphere and

an environment of reality. That is to say, fact indicated some truth to me, even though I did not clearly understand it. That is why my mind was constantly struck with things that, in themselves, were commonplace. When I watched, from over the wall of the terrace of the inner apartments of our Jorashanko house, the cocoanut trees and the tank surrounded by the huts of the milk vendors, they came before me with a more-than-themness that could not be exhausted. That faculty,—though subsequently mingled with reasoning and self-analysis,—has still continued in my life. It is the sense and craving for wholeness. Constantly it has been the cause of my separation from others and also to their misunderstanding of my motives. Swadeshism, swarajism, ordinarily produce intense excitement in the minds of my countrymen, because they carry in them some fervour of passion generated by the exclusiveness of their range. It cannot be said that I am untouched by this heat and movement. But somehow, by my temperament as a poet, I am incapable of accepting these objects as final. They claim from us great deal more than is their due. And after a certain point is reached, I find myself obliged to separate myself from my own people, with whom I have been working, and my soul cries out,—“The complete man must never be sacrificed to the patriotic man, or even to the merely moral man.”

To me, humanity is rich and large and many sided. Therefore, I feel deeply hurt when I find that, for some material gain, Man's personality is mutilated in the Western world and he is reduced to a machine. The same process of repression and curtailment of humanity is often advocated in our country under the name of patriotism. Such deliberate impoverishment of our nature seems to me a crime. It is a cultivation of callousness, which is a form of sacrilege. For God's purpose is to lead man into that perfection of growth, which is the attainment of a unity comprehending an immense manifoldness. But when I find man, for some purpose of his own, imposing upon his



society, a mutilation of mind, a niggardliness of culture, a puritanism which is spiritual penury, it makes me inexpressibly sad.

I have been reading a book by a Frenchman on Japan,—it almost makes me feel almost envious! The sensitiveness to the ideal of beauty which has been made universal in Japan, is not only the source of her strength, but of her heroic spirit of renunciation. For true renunciation blossoms on the vigorous soil of beauty and joy,—the soil which supplies positive food to our souls.

But the negative process of making the soil poor produces a ghastly form of renunciation, which belongs to the nihilism

of life. Emaciation of human nature has already been going on for a long time in India, let us not add to it by creating a mania for self-immolation. Our life today needs more colour, more expansion, more nourishment, for all the variety of its famished functions. Whatever may be the case in other countries, we need in India more fullness of life, and not asceticism.

Deadness of life, in all forms, gives rise to impurities, by enfeebling our reason, narrowing our vision, creating fanaticism, owing to our forcing our will power into abnormal channels. Life carries its own purification, when its sap finds its passage unbarred through all its ramifications.

## REFORM OF FIGHTING IN COURTS OF LAW

**F**IGHTING in Courts of Law between individuals or between the State and one or more individuals is a civil contest carried on with weapons of law, and not with weapons of violence. The combatants here are highly trained men of keen intellects, a very large part of the highest talent in every civilized country being drawn to this body of combatants. But the combatants are mercenaries after all, for they sell their services indiscriminately for pay. This gives the litigant with the long purse an immense advantage over the litigant with the small purse. The higher the fee paid the abler is the advocacy secured. Generally speaking, a man of small means has hardly any chance of success in a legal contest with a man of large means. "The law's delay" has become a proverbial expression, and delay means additional expenditure. With the system of the distribution of justice now prevailing in civilized countries great dissatisfaction has been widely felt. In France, in 1793, popular courts were introduced in place of the then existing courts, but they did not answer. Soviet Russia has followed

the course taken by France in 1793 and has abolished the Bar. But this too will not answer. In our own country Mahatma Gandhi sometime back declared himself against law courts and legal practitioners. This propaganda of his has had but trifling success, and is bound to fail, completely.

The reform of the existing system of judicial administration should follow the line of retaining all that is good in the existing system and of casting off all that is evil. For the performance of judicial work, civil or criminal, specialization is necessary, if it is necessary in any department of human life. The present practice of specialization for judicial officers and advocates requires to be retained, and judicial officers require to be highly paid, and also advocates, if they are to be made servants of the State, as is proposed in this paper. How advocates as servants of the State are to work, will be indicated later on. Soviet Russia has made all medical practitioners servants of the State and employed them to look after the health of the entire body of the people. A similar idea has been

- (e) *Manufacture of Coke.*
- (f) *Fuel.*
- (g) *Labour.*
- (h) *Cost Accounting.*
- (i) *Electricity.*
- (j) *Mechanical Drawing.*

#### SECOND YEAR COURSES.

- (k) *Manufacture of Pig Iron.*
- (l) *Manufacture of Steel.*
- (m) *Rolling Mill Practice.*
- (n) *Heat Treatment of Steel.*
- (o) *Metallography.*
- (p) *Metallurgy of other metals.*
- (q) *Economic Considerations.*
- (r) *Theses.*

The curriculum which is given above [with particulars omitted] is all that a student can be expected to carry during the two years he is in training and some of the courses may have to be reduced. If it were given in 10 months continuously the students would not be able to carry such a variety of subjects or cover so much ground. It is believed, however, that with the alternate weeks in the mill which allow time for the student to digest the technical work which he has covered the previous week and which will give him an opportunity for extra study, the course can be carried.

#### XIII. TEXT BOOKS.

The text books required for the entire course will cost some Rs. 300 to 400. For 25 men annually, this would represent a total cost of Rs. 7500 to Rs. 10,000. This cost is too high to be borne by the students themselves without some assistance.

The text books will be loaned to the men by the Technical Institution and each student will be debited with their cost. If the course be successfully completed, the students will be expected to repay the cost of the text books during the first two years of their contract, the cost being deducted from their salary monthly. If the men fail, the text books will

be taken back by the Technical Institute and reissued to incoming students at a reasonable valuation.

In addition to the 3 scholarships awarded at the end of one year of experience, 3 additional prizes will be given. These prizes will be the cancellation of the charge for the text-books and the award of one extra text-book to each prize winner.

#### XIV. LIBRARY.

The Technical Institute must have a thoroughly good library relating to the metallurgy of steel. This must include the proceedings and transactions of the principal steel metallurgical societies in England, America, and if possible France and Germany. It should have a file of the best steel works journals, and the principal steel works journals should be taken regularly. All the courses will require some collateral reading, particularly in the trade journals where descriptions are given of modern mills erected in various countries. This library will be increased from year to year.

#### XV. LABORATORIES.

There will be two laboratories, one for chemical work, and the other for physical testing. The chemical laboratory, which must be well equipped, will include various types of combustion furnaces in addition to the usual chemical apparatus. There will be one small research laboratory separate from the main room in which special research may be carried on if required.

The physical laboratory will be equipped with machines of various kinds for testing steel. This will include a tensile testing machine, a torsion machine, an impact machine, an abrasion machine and such others as might be found necessary for special research work in the future.

Separate from the main physical laboratory will be the laboratory for metallography, which will contain grinding and polishing machines and the micro-photographic camera. Attached to this will be a Dark Room.

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## THE SONG

When the evening steals on western waters,  
 Thrills the air with wings of homeless shadows;  
 When the sky is crowned with star-gemmed silence,  
 And the dreams dance on the deep of slumber;  
 When the lilies lose their faith in morning,  
 And in panic close their hopeless petals,  
 There's a bird which leaves its nest in secret,  
 Seeks its song in trackless path of heaven.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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INDIA? It is not necessary that we should pronounce the word fellowship with wry faces. It is only requisite that we should kneel down and adore the common mother. So loving, so praising, we shall accomplish all else by implication.

And once more it will stand demonstrated that "All that we are is the result of what we have thought. It is founded on our thought. It is made up of our thought."

## THE HIDDEN TREASURE

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

### 1

**I**T was a moonless night, and Mritunjaya was seated before the ancestral image of the goddess Kali. As he finished his devotions the cawing of an early morning crow was heard from a neighbouring mango grove.

First seeing that the door of the temple was shut, he bowed once more before the image and, shifting its pedestal, took from under it a strong wooden box. This he opened with a key which hung on his sacred thread, but the moment he had looked inside he started in dismay. He took up the box and shook it several times. It had not been broken open, for the lock was uninjured. He groped all round the image a dozen times, but could find nothing.

Mritunjaya's little temple stood on one side of his inner garden which was surrounded by a wall. It was sheltered by the shade of some tall trees. Inside there was nothing but the image of Kali, and it had only one entrance. Like a mad man Mritunjaya threw open the door, and began to roam round on all sides in search of a clue, but in vain. By this time daylight had come. In despair he sat on some steps and with his head buried in his hands began to think. He was just beginning to feel sleepy after his long sleepless night when suddenly he heard some-one say: "Greeting, my son!" Looking up he saw in the courtyard before him a long-haired sannyasi. Mritunjaya made a deep obeisance to him and the ascetic placed

his hand on his head, saying: "My son, your sorrow is vain."

Mritunjaya, in astonishment, replied: "Can you read people's thoughts? How do you know about my sorrow? I have spoken of it to no-one."

The sannyasi answered: "My son, instead of sorrowing over what you have lost, you ought to rejoice."

Clasping his feet Mritunjaya exclaimed: "Then you know everything? Tell me how it got lost and where I can recover it."

The sannyasi replied: "If I wanted you to suffer misfortune then I would tell you. But you must not grieve over that which the goddess has taken from you out of pity."

But Mritunjaya was not satisfied and in the hope of pleasing his visitor he spent the whole of that day serving him in different ways. But when early next morning he was bringing him a bowl of fresh milk from his own cow he found that the sannyasi had disappeared.

### 2

When Mritunjaya had been a child his grandfather, Harihar, was sitting one day on those same steps of the temple, smoking his hookah, when a sannyasi came into the courtyard and greeted him. Harihar invited him into his home and for several days treated him as an honoured guest.

When about to go the sannyasi said to him: "My son, you are poor, are you not?", to which Harihar replied: "Father,

I am indeed. Only hear what my condition is. Once our family was the most prosperous in the village, but now our condition is so miserable that we can hardly hold up our heads. I beg you to tell me how we can restore ourselves to prosperity again."

The sannyasi laughing slightly said: "My son, why not be satisfied with your present position? What's the use of trying to become wealthy?"

But Harihar persisted and declared that he was ready to undertake anything that would restore his family to their proper rank in society.

Thereupon the sannyasi took out a roll of cloth in which an old and stained piece of paper was wrapped. It looked like a horoscope. The sannyasi unrolled it and Harihar saw that it had some signs in cypher written within circles, and below these was a lot of doggerel verse which commenced thus:—

"For attainment of your goal  
Find a word that rhymes with soul.  
From the "Radha" take its "ra",  
After that at last put "dha."  
From the tamarind-banyan's mouth  
Turn your face towards the south.  
When the light is in the East  
There shall be of wealth a feast."

There was much more of the same kind of rigmorale.

Harihar said: "Father, I can't understand a single word of it."

To this the sannyasi replied: "Keep it by you. Make your puja to the goddess Kali, and by her grace you, or some descendant of yours, will gain the untold wealth of which this writing tells the secret hiding place."

Harihar entreated him to explain the writing, but the sannyasi said that only by the practice of austerity could its meaning be discovered.

Just at this moment Harihar's youngest brother, Shankar, arrived on the scene and Harihar tried to snatch the paper away before it could be observed. But the sannyasi, laughing, said: "Already, I see, you have started on the painful road to greatness. But you need not be afraid. The secret can only be discovered by one

person. If anyone else tries a thousand times he will never be able to solve it. It will be a member of your family, so you can show this paper to anyone without fear."

The sannyasi having left them, Harihar could not rest until he had hidden the paper. Fearful lest anyone else should profit by it, and above all lest his young brother Shankar should enjoy this hidden wealth, he locked the paper in a strong wooden box and hid it under the seat of the household goddess Kali. Every month, at the time of the new moon, he would go in the dead of night to the temple and there he would offer prayers to the goddess in the hope that she would give him the power to decipher the secret writing.

Some time after this Shankar came to his brother and begged him to show him the paper.

"Go away, you idiot!" shouted Harihar, "that paper was nothing. That rascal of a sannyasi wrote a lot of nonsense on it simply to deceive me. I burnt it long ago."

Shankar remained silent, but some weeks afterwards he disappeared from the house and was never seen again.

From that time Harihar gave up all other occupations, and spent all his waking moments in thinking about the hidden treasure.

When he died he left this mysterious paper to his eldest son, Shyampada, who as soon as he got possession of it gave up his business and spent his whole time in studying the secret cypher and in worshipping the goddess in the hope of goodluck coming to him.

Mritunjaya was Shyampada's eldest child, so he became the owner of this precious heirloom on his father's death. The worse his condition became the greater eagerness he showed in trying to solve the secret. It was about this time that the loss of the paper occurred. The visit of the long-haired sannyasi coinciding with its disappearance Mritunjaya determined that he would try to find him, feeling sure he could discover everything from him. So he left his home on the quest.



3

After spending a year in going from place to place Mritunjaya one day arrived at a village named Dharagole. There he stayed at a grocer's shop, and as he was sitting absent-mindedly smoking and thinking, a sannyasi passed along the edge of a neighbouring field. At first Mritunjaya did not pay much attention, but after a few minutes he came to himself and it flashed across his mind that that was the very sannyasi for whom he had been searching. Hurriedly laying aside his hookah he rushed past the startled storekeeper and dashed from the shop into the street. But the sannyasi was nowhere to be seen.

As it was dark and the place was strange to him he gave up the idea of searching further and returned to the shop. There he asked the storekeeper what lay beyond the village in the great forest near by. The man replied :

"Once a great city was there, but owing to the curse of the sage, Agastya, its king and all his subjects died of some dreadful pestilence. People say that enormous wealth and piles of jewels are still hidden there, but no-one dares to enter that forest even at midday. Those who have done so have never returned."

Mritunjaya's mind became restless, and all night long he lay on his mat tormented by mosquitoes and by thoughts of the forest, the sannyasi, and his lost secret. He had read the verses so often that he could almost repeat them by heart, and hour after hour the opening lines kept ringing through his mind, until his brain reeled.

"For attainment of your goal  
Find a word that rhymes with soul.  
From the "Radha" take its "dha",  
After that at last put "ra"."

He could not get the words out of his head. At last when dawn came he fell asleep and in a dream the meaning of the verse became as clear as daylight. Taking the "ra" from "Radha" you get "Dha", and at the end of that putting "ra" you get "Dhara", and "gole" rhymes with soul! The name of the village in which

he was staying was "Dharagole"! He jumped up from his mat sure that he was at last near the end of his search.

4

The whole of that day Mritunjaya spent roaming about the forest in the hope of finding a path. He returned to the village at night half dead with hunger and fatigue, but next day he took a bundle of parched rice and started off again. At midday he arrived at the side of a lake round which there were traces of a path. The water was clear in the middle but near the banks it was a tangle of weeds and water lilies. Having soaked his rice in the water by some broken stone steps on the bank he finished eating it and began to walk slowly round the lake looking carefully everywhere for signs of buildings. Suddenly when he had reached the west side of the lake he stood stock still, for there before him was a tamarind tree growing right in the centre of a gigantic banyan. He immediately recalled the lines :

"From the tamarind-banyan's mouth  
Turn your face towards the south."

After walking some distance towards the south he found himself in the middle of a thick jungle through which it was impossible to force a way. He however determined not to lose sight of the tamarind tree.

Turning back he noticed in the distance through the branches of the tree the pinnacles of a building. Making his way in that direction he came upon a ruined temple, by the side of which were the ashes of a recent fire. With great caution Mritunjaya made his way to a broken door and peeped in. There was no-one there, not even an image, only a blanket, and a water pot with a sannyasi's scarf lying beside it.

Evening was approaching, the village was far off, and it would be difficult to find a path back by night, so Mritunjaya was pleased at seeing signs of a human being. By the door lay a large piece of stone which had fallen from the ruin. On this he seated himself and was deep in thought when he suddenly noticed what appeared to be written characters on the

surface of the stone. Looking closely he saw a circular symbol which was familiar to him. It was partly obliterated, it is true, but it was sufficiently distinct for him to recognise the design as that which had appeared at the top of his lost piece of paper. He had studied it so often that it was clearly printed on his brain. How many times had he begged the goddess to reveal to him the meaning of that mystic sign as he sat at midnight in the dimly lit temple of his home with the fragrance of incense filling the night air. To-night the fulfilment of his long cherished desire seemed so near that his whole body trembled. Fearing that by some slight blunder he might frustrate all his hopes, and above all dreading lest the sannyasi had been beforehand in discovering his treasure he shook with terror. He could not decide what to do. The thought came to him that he might even at that very moment be sitting above untold wealth without knowing it.

As he sat repeating the name of Kali evening fell and the sombre darkness of the forest resounded with the continual chirping of crickets.

## 5

Just as he was wondering what to do he saw through the thick foliage the distant gleam of a fire. Getting up from the stone on which he was seated he carefully marked the spot he was leaving and went off in the direction of the light.

Having progressed with great difficulty a short way he saw from behind the trunk of a tree the very sannyasi he had been seeking with the well known paper in his hand. He had opened it and, by the light of the flames, he was working out its meaning in the ashes with a stick.

There was the very paper which belonged to Mritunjaya, and which had belonged to his father and his grandfather before him, in the hands of a thief and a cheat! It was for this then that this rogue of a sannyasi had bidden Mritunjaya not to sorrow over his loss!

The sannyasi was calculating the meaning of the signs, and every now and then would measure certain distances on

the ground with a stick. Sometimes he would stop and shake his head with a disappointed air, and then he would go back and make fresh calculations.

In this way the night was nearly spent and it was not until the cool breeze of daybreak began to rustle in the leafy branches of the trees that the sannyasi folded up the paper and went away.

Mritunjaya was perplexed. He was quite sure that without the sannyasi's help it would be impossible for him to decipher the mystery of the paper. But he was equally certain that the covetous rascal would not knowingly assist him. Therefore to watch the sannyasi secretly was his only hope; but as he could not get any food without going back to the village, Mritunjaya decided he would return to his lodgings that morning.

When it became light enough he left the tree behind which he had been hiding and made his way to the place where the sannyasi had been making his calculations in the ashes. But he could make nothing of the marks. Nor, after wandering all round, could he see that the forest there differed in any way from other parts of the jungle.

As the sunlight began to penetrate the thick shade of the trees Mritunjaya made his way towards the village looking carefully on every side as he went. His chief fear was lest the sannyasi should catch sight of him.

That morning a feast was given to Brahmins at the shop where Mritunjaya had taken shelter, so he came in for a sumptuous meal. Having fasted so long he could not resist eating heavily, and after the feast he soon rolled over on his mat and fell sound asleep.

Although he had not slept all night, Mritunjaya had made up his mind that he would that day take his meals in good time and start off early in the afternoon. What happened was exactly the opposite, for when he woke the sun had already set. But although it was getting dark, he could not refrain from entering the forest.

Night fell suddenly and so dense was the darkness that it was impossible for him to see his way through the deep



shadows of the thick jungle. He could not make out which way he was going and when day broke he found that he had been going round and round in one part of the forest quite near the village.

The raucous cawing of some crows from near by sounded to Mritunjaya like mockery.

## 6

After many miscalculations and corrections the sannyasi had at length discovered the path to the entrance of a subterranean tunnel. Lighting a torch he entered. The brick walls were mouldy with moss and slime, and water oozed out from the many cracks. In some places sleeping toads could be seen piled up in heaps. After proceeding over slippery stones for some distance the sannyasi came to a wall. The passage was blocked! He struck the wall in several places with a heavy iron bar but there was not the least suspicion of a hollow sound—there was not a crack anywhere—without a doubt the tunnel ended there.

He spent the whole of that night studying the paper again, and next morning having finished his calculations, he entered the underground passage once more. This time, carefully following the secret directions, he loosened a stone from a certain place and covered a branch turning. This he followed but once more he came to a stop where another wall blocked all further progress.

But finally, on the fifth night, the sannyasi as he entered exclaimed, "To-night I shall find the way without the shadow of a doubt!"

The passage was like a labyrinth. There seemed no end to its branches and turnings. In some places it was so low and narrow that he had to crawl on hands and knees. Carefully holding the torch he arrived at length at a large circular room, in the middle of which was a wide well of solid masonry. By the light of his torch the sannyasi was unable to see how deep it was, but he saw that from the roof there descended into it a thick heavy iron chain. He pulled with all his strength at this chain and it shook very slightly. But

there rose from the depth of the well a metallic clang which reverberated through that dark dismal chamber. The sannyasi called out in excitement: "At last I have found it!"

Next moment a huge stone rolled through the hole in the broken wall through which he had entered and someone fell on the floor with a loud cry. Startled by this sudden sound the sannyasi let his torch fall to the ground and the room was plunged in darkness.

## 7

He called out, "Who is there?" but there was no answer. Putting out his hand he touched a man's body. Shaking it he asked, "Who are you?" Still he got no reply. The man was unconscious.

Striking a flint he at last found his torch and lighted it. In the meantime the man had regained consciousness and was trying to sit up though he was groaning with pain.

On seeing him the sannyasi exclaimed: "Why, it is Mritunjaya! What are you doing here?"

Mritunjaya replied: "Father, pardon me. God has punished me enough. I was trying to roll that stone on you when my foot slipped and I fell. My leg must be broken."

To this the sannyasi answered: "But what good would it have done you to kill me?"

Mritunjaya exclaimed: "What good indeed! Why did you steal into my temple and rob me of that secret paper? And what are you doing in this underground place yourself? You are a thief, and a cheat! The sannyasi who gave that paper to my grandfather told him that one of his family was to discover the secret of the writing. The secret is mine by rights, and it is for this reason that I have been following you day and night like your shadow, going without food and sleep all these days. Then to-day when you exclaimed: 'At last I have found it!' I could restrain myself no longer. I had followed you and was hiding behind the wall where you had made the hole, and I tried to kill you. I failed because I am weak and the ground

was slippery and I fell. Kill me if you wish, then I can become a guardian spirit to watch over this treasure of mine. But if I live, you will never be able to take it. Never! Never! Never! If you try, I will bring the curse of a Brahmin on you by jumping into this well and committing suicide. Never will you be able to enjoy this treasure. My father, and his father before him, thought of nothing but this treasure and they died thinking of it. We have become poor for its sake. In search of it I have left wife and children, and without food or sleep have wandered from place to place like a maniac. Never shall you take this treasure from me while I have eyes to see!"

## 8

The sannyasi said quietly: "Mritunjaya, listen to me. I will tell you everything. You remember that your grandfather's youngest brother was called Shankar?"

"Yes," replied Mritunjaya, "he left home and was never heard of again."

"Well," said the sannyasi, "I am that Shankar!"

Mritunjaya gave a gasp of despair. He had so long regarded himself as the sole owner of this hidden wealth that, now that this relative had turned up and proved his equal right, he felt as if his claim were destroyed.

Shankar continued: "From the moment that my brother got that paper from the sannyasi he tried every means in his power to keep it hidden from me. But the harder he tried the greater became my curiosity, and I soon found that he had hidden it in a wooden box under the seat of the goddess. I got hold of a duplicate key, and by degrees, whenever the opportunity occurred, I copied out the whole of the writing and the signs. The very day I had finished copying it I left home in quest of the treasure. I even left my wife and only child neither of whom is now living. There is no need to describe all the places I visited in my wanderings. I felt sure that as the paper had been given to my brother by a sannyasi I would be able to find out its meaning from one, so I began to serve

sannyasis whenever I had the chance. Many of them were impostors and tried to steal the writing from me. In this way many years passed, but not for a single moment did I have any peace or happiness.

"At last in my search, by virtue of some right action in a previous birth, I had the good fortune to meet in the mountains Swami Rupananda. He said to me: 'My child, give up desire, and the imperishable wealth of the whole universe will be yours.'

"He cooled the fever of my mind. By his grace the light of the sky and the green verdure of the earth seemed to me equal to the wealth of kings. One winter day at the foot of the mountain I lit a fire in the brazier of my revered guru and offered up the paper in its flames. The Swami laughed slightly as I did it. At the time I did not understand that laugh. But now I do. Doubtless he thought it is easy enough to burn a piece of paper, but to burn to ashes our desires is not so simple!

"When not a vestige of the paper remained it seemed as if my heart had suddenly filled with the rare joy of freedom. My mind at last realised the meaning of detachment. I said to myself; 'Now I have no more fear, I desire nothing in the world.'

"Shortly after this I parted from the Swami and although I have often sought for him since I have never seen him again.

"I then wandered as a sannyasi with my mind detached from worldly things. Many years passed and I had almost forgotten the existence of the paper, when one day I came to the forest near Dharagole and took shelter in a ruined temple. After a day or two I noticed that there were inscriptions on the walls, some of which I recognised. There could be no doubt that here was a clue to what I had spent so many years of my life in trying to discover. I said to myself: 'I must not stay here. I must leave this forest.'

"But I did not go. I thought there was no harm in staying to see what I could find out, just to satisfy my curiosity. I examined the signs carefully, but without

result. I kept thinking of the paper I had burnt. Why had I destroyed it? What harm would there have been in keeping it?

"At last I went back to the village of my birth. On seeing the miserable condition of my ancestral home I thought to myself: 'I am a sannyasi, I have no need of wealth for myself, but these poor people have a home to keep up. There can be no sin in recovering the hidden treasure for their benefit.'

"I knew where the paper was, so it was not difficult for me to steal it.

"For a whole year since then I have been living in this lonely forest searching for the clue. I could think of nothing else. The oftener I was thwarted the greater did my eagerness become. I had the unflagging energy of a mad man as I sat night after night concentrating on the attempt to solve my problem.

"When it was that you discovered me I do not know. If I had been in an ordinary frame of mind you would never have remained concealed, but I was so absorbed in my task that I never noticed what was going on around me.

"It was not until to-day that I discovered at last what I had been so long searching for. The treasure hidden here is greater than that of the richest rajah in the world, and to find it the meaning of only one more sign had to be deciphered.

"This secret is the most difficult of all, but in my mind I had come even to its solution. That was why I cried out in my delight, 'At last I have found it!' If I wish I can in a moment enter that hidden store house of gold and jewels."

Mritunjaya fell at Shankar's feet and exclaimed: "You are a sannyasi, you have no use for wealth—but take me to that treasure. Do not cheat me again!"

Shankar replied: "To-day the last link of my fetters is broken! That stone which you intended should kill me did not indeed strike my body but it has shattered forever the folly of my infatuation. To-day I have seen how monstrous is the image of desire. That calm and incomprehensible smile of my saintly Guru has at

last kindled the inextinguishable lamp of my soul."

Mritunjaya again begged pitifully: "You are free, but I am not. I do not even want freedom. You must not cheat me of this wealth."

The sannyasi answered: "Very well my son, take this paper of yours, and if you can find this treasure keep it."

Saying this the sannyasi handed the paper and his staff to Mritunjaya and left him alone. Mritunjaya called out in despair: "Have pity on me. Do not leave me. Show me the treasure!" But there was no answer.

Mritunjaya dragged himself up and with the help of the stick tried to find his way out of the tunnels, but they were such a maze that he was again and again completely puzzled. At last worn out he lay down and fell asleep.

When he awoke there was no means of telling whether it was night or day. As he felt hungry he ate some parched rice, and again began to grope for the way out. At length in despair he stopped and called out: "Oh! Sannyasi, where are you?" His cry echoed and re-echoed through the tangled labyrinth of those underground tunnels, and when the sound of his own voice had died away, he heard from close by a reply, "I am near you—what is it you want?"

Mritunjaya answered: "Have pity on me and show me where the treasure is."

There was no answer, and although he called again and again all was silent.

After a time Mritunjaya fell asleep again in this underground realm of perpetual darkness where there was neither night nor day. When he woke up and found it still dark he called out beseechingly: "Oh! Sannyasi, tell me where you are?"

The answer came from near at hand: "I am here. What do you want?"

Mritunjaya answered: "I want nothing now but that you should rescue me from this dungeon."

The sannyasi asked: "Don't you want the treasure?"

Mritunjaya replied: "No."



There was the sound of a flint being struck and the next moment there was a light. The sannyasi said: "Well Mritunjaya, let us go."

Mritunjaya: "Then, father, is all my trouble to be in vain? Shall I never obtain that wealth?"

Immediately the torch went out. Mritunjaya exclaimed—"How cruel!", and sat down in the silence to think. There was no means of measuring time and the darkness was without end. How he wished that he could with all the strength of his mind and body shatter that gloom to atoms. His heart began to feel restless for the light, for the open sky, and for all the varied beauty of the world, and he called out: "Oh! Sannyasi, cruel sannyasi, I do not want the treasure. I want you to rescue me."

The answer came: "You no longer want the treasure? Then take my hand, and come with me."

This time no torch was lighted. Mritunjaya holding his stick in one hand and clinging to the sannyasi with the other slowly began to move. After twisting and turning many times through the maze of tunnels they came to a place where the sannyasi said, "Now stand still."

Standing still Mritunjaya heard the sound of an iron door opening. The next moment the sannyasi seized his hand, and said: "Come!"

Mritunjaya advanced into what appeared to be a vast hall. He heard the sound of a flint being struck and then the blaze of the torch revealed to his astonished eyes the most amazing sight that he had ever dreamed of. On every side thick plates of gold were arranged in piles. They stood against the walls glittering like heaped rays of solid sunlight stored in the bowels of the earth. Mritunjaya's eyes began to gleam. Like a mad man he cried: "All this gold is mine—I will never part with it!"

"Very well," replied the sannyasi, "here is my torch, some barley and parched rice, and this large pitcher of water for you. Farewell."

And as he spoke the sannyasi went out, clanging the heavy iron door behind him.

Mritunjaya began to go round and round the hall touching the piles of gold again and again. Seizing some small pieces he threw them down on the floor, he lifted them into his lap, striking them one against another he made them ring, he even stroked his body all over with the precious metal. At length, tired out, he spread a large flat plate of gold on the floor, lay down on it, and fell asleep.

When he woke he saw the gold glittering on every side. There was nothing but gold. He began to wonder whether day had dawned and whether the birds were awake and revelling in the morning sunlight. It seemed as though in imagination he could smell the fragrant breeze of daybreak coming from the garden by the little lake near his home. It was as if he could actually see the ducks floating on the water, and hear their contented cackle as the maidservant came from the house to the steps of the ghat, with the brass vessels in her hand to be cleaned.

Striking the door Mritunjaya called out: "Oh, Sannyasi, listen to me!"

The door opened and the sannyasi entered. "What do you want?" he asked.

"I want to go out," replied Mritunjaya, "but can't I take away a little of this gold?"

Without giving any answer the sannyasi lighted a fresh torch, and placing a full water pot, and a few handfuls of rice on the floor went out closing the door behind him.

Mritunjaya took up a thin plate of gold, bent it and broke it into small fragments. These he scattered about the room like lumps of dirt. On some of them he made marks with his teeth. Then he threw a plate of gold on the floor and trampled on it. He asked himself, "How many men in the world are rich enough to be able to throw gold about as I am doing!" Then he became oppressed with a fever for destruction. He was seized with a longing to crush all these heaps of gold into dust and sweep them away with a broom. In this way he could show his contempt for the covetous greed of all the kings and maharajahs in the world.

At last he became tired of throwing the gold about in this way and fell asleep.

Again he saw on awakening those heaps of gold, and rushing to the door he struck at it with all his strength and called out : "Oh sannyasi, I do not want this gold. I do not want it !"

But the door remained closed. Mritunjaya shouted till his throat was hoarse and still the door did not open. He threw lump after lump of gold against it, but with no effect. He was in despair. Would the sannyasi leave him there to shrivel up and die, inch by inch, in that golden prison ?

As Mritunjaya watched the gold fear gripped him. Those piles of glittering metal surrounded him on all sides with a terrifying smile, hard, silent, without tremor or change, until his body began to tremble, his mind to quake. What connection had he with these heaps of gold ? They could not share his feelings—they had no sympathy with him in his sorrows. They had no need of the light, or the sky. They did not long for the cool breezes, they did not even want life. They had no desire for freedom. In this eternal darkness they remained hard and bright for ever.

On earth perhaps sunset had come with its golden gift of limpid light,—that golden light which cools the eyes as it bids farewell to the fading day, falling like tears on the face of darkness. Now the evening star would be gazing serenely down on the courtyard of his home where his young wife had tended the cows in the meadow and lit the lamp in the corner of the house, while the tinkling of the temple bell spoke of the closing ceremony of the day.

To-day the most trifling events of his home and his villageshone in Mritunjaya's imagination with overpowering lustre. Even the thought of his old dog lying curled up asleep in front of the stove caused him pain. He thought of the grocer in whose shop he had stayed while he was at Dharagole and imagined him putting out his lamp, shutting up his shop and walking leisurely to some house in the village to take his evening meal, and as he thought of him he envied him his happiness. He did not know what day it was, but if it were Sunday he could picture to

himself the villagers returning to their homes after market, calling their friends from over the fields and crossing the river together in the ferry boat. He could see a peasant, with a couple of fish dangling in his hand and a basket on his head, walking through the meadow paths, or making his way along the dikes of the paddy fields, past the bamboo fences of the little hamlets, returning to his village after the day's work in the dim light of the star-strewn sky.

The call came to him from the world of men. But layers of earth separated him from the most insignificant occurrences of life's varied and unceasing pilgrimage. That life, that sky, and that light appealed to him now as more priceless than all the treasures of the universe. He felt that if only he could for one moment again lie in the dusty lap of mother earth in her green clad beauty, beneath the free open spaces of the sky, filling his lungs with the fragrant breeze laden with the scents of mown grass and of blossoms, he could die feeling that his life was complete.

As these thoughts came to him the door opened, and the sannyasi entering asked : "Mritunjaya, what do you want now ?"

He answered, "I want nothing further. I want only to go out from this maze of darkness. I want to leave this delusive gold. I want light, and the sky ; I want freedom !"

The sannyasi said : "There is another storehouse full of rarest gems of incalculable value, tenfold more precious than all this gold. Do you not wish to go there ?"

Mritunjaya answered: "No."

"Haven't you the curiosity just to see it once ?"

"No, I don't want even to see it. If I have to beg in rags for the rest of my life I would not spend another moment here."

"Then come," said the sannyasi, and taking Mritunjaya's hand he led him in front of the deep well. Stopping here he took out the paper and asked : "And what will you do with this ?"

Taking it Mritunjaya tore it into fragments and threw them down the well.

( Translation by W. W. PEARSON. )

at the corner of Dinu's tea party. But I must not grumble, for our corporeal existence has its own joy because of its obstacles and pain and the devious process of the fulfilment of its hope.

P.S. I have just written this about Dr. Patrick Geddes.

What so strongly attracted me in Dr. Patrick Geddes when I came to know him in India, was not his scientific achievements, but, on the contrary, the rare fact of the fulness of his personality rising far

above his science. Whatever he has studied and mastered has become vitally one with his humanity. He has the precision of the scientist and at the same time, the vision of the prophet. He has also the power of an artist to make his ideas visible through the language of symbol. His love of man has given him the insight to see the truth of man, and imagination to realise in the world the infinite mystery of life, not merely its mechanical aspect.

## THE CALL OF TRUTH

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

**P**ARASITES have to pay for their ready-made victuals by losing the power of assimilating food in its natural form. In the history of man this same sin of laziness has always entailed degeneracy. Man becomes parasitical, not only when he fattens on others' toil, but also when he becomes rooted to a particular set of outside conditions and allows himself helplessly to drift along the stream of things as they are; for the outside is alien to the inner self, and if the former be made indispensable by sheer habit, man acquires parasitical characteristics, and becomes unable to perform his true function of converting the impossible into the possible.

In this sense all the lower animals are parasites. They are carried along by their environment; they live or die by natural selection; they progress or retrogress as nature may dictate. Their mind has lost the power of growth. The bees, for millions of years, have been unable to get beyond the pattern of their hive. For that reason, the form of their cell has attained a certain perfection, but their mentality is confined to the age-long habits of their hive-life and cannot soar out of its limitations. Nature has developed a cautious timidity in the case of her lower types of life; she keeps them tied to her apron strings and has stunted their minds, lest they should stray into dangerous experiments.

But Providence displayed a sudden accession of creative courage when it came to man; for his inner nature has not been tied down, though outwardly the poor human creature has been left naked, weak and defenceless. In spite of these disabilities, man in the joy of his inward freedom has stood up and declared; "I shall achieve the impossible." That is to say, he has consistently refused to submit to the rule of things as they always have been, but is determined to bring about happenings that have never been before. So when, in the beginning of his history, man's lot was thrown in with monstrous creatures, tusked and taloned, he did not, like the deer, simply take refuge in flight, nor, like the tortoise, take refuge in hiding, but set to work with flints to make even more efficient weapons. These, moreover, being the creation of his own inner faculties, were not dependent on natural selection, as were those of the other animals, for their development. And so man's instruments progressed from flint to steel. This shows that man's mind has never been helplessly attached to his environment. What came to his hand was brought under his thumb. Not content with the flint on the surface, he delved for the iron beneath. Not satisfied with the easier process of chipping flints, he proceeded to melt iron ore and hammer it into shape. That which resisted more stubbornly was converted into a better ally.



Man's inner nature not only finds success in its activity, but there it also has its joy. He insists on penetrating further and further into the depths, from the obvious to the hidden, from the easy to the difficult, from parasitism to self-determination, from the slavery of his passions to the mastery of himself. That is how he has won.

But if any section of mankind should say, "The flint was the weapon of our revered forefathers; by departing from it we destroy the spirit of the race," then they may succeed in preserving what they call their race, but they strike at the root of the glorious tradition of humanity which was theirs also. And we find that those, who have steadfastly stuck to their flints, may indeed have kept safe their pristine purity to their own satisfaction, but they have been outcasted by the rest of mankind, and so have to pass their lives slinking away in jungle and cave. They are, as I say, reduced to a parasitic dependence on outside nature, driven along blindfold by the force of things as they are. They have not achieved Swaraj in their inner nature, and so are deprived of Swaraj in the outside world as well. They have ceased to be even aware, that it is man's true function to make the impossible into the possible by dint of his own powers; that it is not for him to be confined merely to what has happened before; that he must progress towards what ought to be by rousing all his inner powers by means of the force of his soul.

Thirty years ago I used to edit the *Sādhanā* magazine, and there I tried to say this same thing. Then English-educated India was frightfully busy begging for its rights. And I repeatedly endeavoured to impress on my countrymen, that man is not under any necessity to beg for rights from others, but must create them for himself; because man lives mainly by his inner nature, and there he is the master. By dependence on acquisition from the outside, man's inner nature suffers loss. And it was my contention, that man is not so hard oppressed by being deprived of his outward rights as he is by the constant bearing of the burden of prayers and petitions.

Then when the *Bangadarshan* magazine came into my hands, Bengal was beside herself at the sound of the sharpening of the knife for her partition. The boycott of Manchester, which was the outcome of her distress, had raised the profits of the Bombay mill-owners to a super-foreign degree. And I had then to say: "This

will not do, either; for it is also of the outside. Your main motive is hatred of the foreigner, not love of country." It was then really necessary for our countrymen to be made conscious of the distinction, that the Englishman's presence is an external accident,—mere *māyā*—but that the presence of our country is an internal fact which is also an eternal truth. *Māyā* looms with an exaggerated importance, only when we fix our attention exclusively upon it, by reason of some infatuation—be it of love, or of hate. Whether in our passion we rush to embrace it, or attack it; whether we yearn for it, or spurn it; it equally fills the whole field of our blood-shot vision.

*Māyā* is like the darkness. No steed, however swift, can carry us beyond it; no amount of water can wash it away. Truth is like a lamp; even as it is lit *māyā* vanishes. Our shastras tell us that Truth, even when it is small, can rescue us from the terror which is great. Fear is the atheism of the heart. It cannot be overcome from the side of negation. If one of its heads be struck off, it breeds, like the monster of the fable, a hundred others. Truth is positive: it is the affirmation of the soul. If even a little of it be roused, it attacks negation at the very heart and overpowers it wholly.

Alien government in India is a veritable chameleon. Today it comes in the guise of the Englishman; to-morrow perhaps as some other foreigner; the next day, without abating a jot of its virulence, it may take the shape of our own countrymen. However determinedly we may try to hunt this monster of foreign dependence with outside lethal weapons, it will always elude our pursuit by changing its skin, or its colour. But if we can gain within us the truth called our country, all outward *māyā* will vanish of itself. The declaration of faith that my country is there, to be realised, has to be attained by each one of us. The idea that our country is ours, merely because we have been born in it, can only be held by those who are fastened, in a parasitic existence, upon the outside world. But the true nature of man is his inner nature, with its inherent powers. Therefore that only can be a man's true country, which he can help to create by his wisdom and will, his love and his actions. So, in 1905, I called upon my countrymen to create their country by putting forth their

own powers from within. For the act of creation itself is the realisation of truth.

The Creator gains Himself in His universe. To gain one's own country means to realise one's own soul more fully expanded within it. This can only be done when we are engaged in building it up with our service, our ideas and our activities. Man's country being the creation of his own inner nature, when his soul thus expands within it, it is more truly expressed, more fully realised. In my paper called 'Swadeshi Samaj', written in 1905, I discussed at length the ways and means by which we could make the country of our birth more fully our own. Whatever may have been the shortcomings of my words then uttered, I did not fail to lay emphasis on the truth, that we must win our country, not from some foreigner, but from our own inertia, our own indifference. Whatever be the nature of the boons we may be seeking for our country at the door of the foreign Government, the result is always the same,—it only makes our inertia more densely inert. Any public benefit done by the alien Government goes to their credit, not to ours. So whatever outside advantage such public benefit might mean for us, our country will only get more and more completely lost to us thereby. That is to say, we shall have to pay out in soul value for what we purchase as material advantage. The Rishi has said: 'The son is dear, not because we desire a son, but because we desire to realise our own soul in him.' It is the same with our country. It is dear to us, because it is the expression of our own soul. When we realise this, it will become impossible for us to allow our service of our country to wait on the pleasure of others.

These truths, which I then tried to press on my countrymen, were not particularly new, nor was there anything therein which need have grated on their ears; but, whether anyone else remembers it or not, I at least am not likely to forget the storm of indignation which I roused. I am not merely referring to the hooligans of journalism whom it pays to be scurrilous. But even men of credit and courtesy were unable to speak of me in restrained language.

There were two root causes of this. One was anger, the second was greed.

Giving free vent to angry feelings is a species of self-indulgence. In those days there was practically nothing to stand in the

way of the spirit of destructive revel, which spread all over the country. We went about picketing, burning, placing thorns in the path of those whose way was not ours, acknowledging no restraints in language or behaviour,—all in the frenzy of our wrath. Shortly after it was all over, a Japanese friend asked me: "How is it you people cannot carry on your work with calm and deep determination? This wasting of energy can hardly be of assistance to your object." I had no help but to reply: "When we have the gaining of the object clearly before our minds, we can be restrained, and concentrate our energies to serve it; but when it is a case of venting our anger, our excitement rises and rises till it drowns the object, and then we are spend-thrift to the point of bankruptcy." However that may be, there were my countrymen encountering, for the time being, no check to the overflow of their outraged feelings. It was like a strange dream. Everything seemed possible. Then all of a sudden it was my misfortune to appear on the scene with my doubts and my attempts to divert the current into the path of self-determination. My only success was in diverting their wrath on to my own devoted head.

Then there was our greed. In history, all people have won valuable things by pursuing difficult paths. We had hit upon the device of getting them cheap, not even through the painful indignity of supplication with folded hands, but by proudly conducting our beggary in threatening tones. The country was in ecstasy at the ingenuity of the trick. It felt like being at a reduced price sale. Everything worth having in the political market was ticketed at half-price. Shabby-genteel mentality is so taken up with low prices that it has no attention to spare for quality, and feels inclined to attack anybody who has the hardihood to express doubts in that regard. It is like the man of worldly piety who believes that the judicious expenditure of coin can secure, by favour of the priest, a direct passage to heaven. The dare-devil who ventures to suggest that not heaven but dreamland is likely to be his destination must beware of a violent end.

Anyhow, it was the outside *māyī* which was our dream and our ideal in those days. It was a favorite phrase of one of the leaders of the time that we must keep one hand at the feet and the other at the throat of the

Englishman,—that is to say, with no hand left free for the country! We have since perhaps got rid of this ambiguous attitude. Now we have one party that has both hands raised to the foreigner's throat, and another party which has both hands down at his feet; but whichever attitude it may be, these methods still appertain to the outside *māyā*. Our unfortunate minds keep revolving round and round the British Government, now to the left, now to the right; our affirmations and denials alike are concerned with the foreigner.

In those days, the stimulus from every side was directed towards the heart of Bengal. But emotion by itself, like fire, only consumes its fuel and reduces it to ashes; it has no creative power. The intellect of man must busy itself, with patience, with skill, with foresight, in using this fire to melt that which is hard and difficult into the object of its desire. We neglected to rouse our intellectual forces, and so were unable to make use of this surging emotion of ours to create any organisation of permanent value. The reason of our failure, therefore, was not in anything outside, but rather within us. For a long time past we have been in the habit, in our life and endeavour, of setting apart one place for our emotions and another for our practices. Our intellect has all the time remained dormant, because we have not dared to allow it scope. That is why, when we have to rouse ourselves to action, it is our emotion which has to be requisitioned, and our intellect has to be kept from interfering by the hypnotism of some magical formula,—that is to say we hasten to create a situation absolutely inimical to the free play of our intellect.

The loss which is incurred by this continual deadening of our mind cannot be made good by any other contrivance. In our desperate attempts to do so we have to invoke the magic of *māyā* and our impotence jumps for joy at the prospect of getting hold of Aladin's lamp. Of course everyone has to admit that there is nothing to beat Aladin's lamp, its only inconvenience being that it beats one to get hold of. The unfortunate part of it is that the person, whose greed is great, but whose powers are feeble, and who has lost all confidence in his own intellect, simply will not allow himself to dwell on the difficulties of bespeaking the services of some genie of the lamp. He can only be brought

to exert himself at all by holding out the speedy prospect of getting at the wonderful lamp. If any one attempts to point out the futility of his hopes, he fills the air with wailing and imprecation, as at a robber making away with his all.

In the heat of the enthusiasm of the partition days, a band of youths attempted to bring about the millennium through political revolution. Their offer of themselves as the first sacrifice to the fire which they had lighted makes not only their own country, but other countries as well, bare the head to them in reverence. Their physical failure shines forth as the effulgence of spiritual glory. In the midst of their supreme travail, they realised at length that the way of bloody revolution is not the true way; that where there is no politics, a political revolution is like taking a short cut to nothing; that the wrong way may appear shorter, but it does not reach the goal, and only grievously hurts the feet. The refusal to pay the full price for a thing leads to the loss of the price without the gain of the thing. These impetuous youths offered their lives as the price of their country's deliverance; to them it meant the loss of their all, but alas! the price offered on behalf of the country was insufficient. I feel sure that those of them who still survive must have realised by now, that the country must be the creation of all its people, not of one section alone. It must be the expression of all their forces of heart, mind and will.

This creation can only be the fruit of that *yoga*, which gives outward form to the inner faculties. Mere political or economical *yoga* is not enough; for that all the human powers must unite.

When we turn our gaze upon the history of other countries, the political steed comes prominently into view; on it seems to depend wholly the progress of the carriage. We forget that the carriage also must be in a fit condition to move; its wheels must be in agreement with one another and its parts well fitted together; with which not only have fire and hammer and chisel been busy but much thought and skill and energy have also been spent in the process. We have seen some countries which are externally free and independent; when, however, the political carriage is in motion, the noise which it makes arouses the whole neighbourhood from slumber and the jolting produces aches and pains in the limbs of the helpless passengers. It comes to pieces



in the middle of the road, and it takes the whole day to put it together again with the help of ropes and strings. Yet however loose the screws and however crooked the wheels, still it is a vehicle of some sort after all. But for such a thing as is our country,—a mere collection of jointed logs, that not only have no wholeness amongst themselves, but are contrary to one another,—for this, to be dragged along a few paces by the temporary pull of some common greed or anger, can never be called by the name of political progress. Therefore, is it not, in our case, wiser to keep for the moment our horse in the stable and begin to manufacture a real carriage?

From the writings of the young men, who have come back out of the valley of the shadow of death, I feel sure some such thoughts must have occurred to them. And so they must be realising the necessity of the practice of *yoga* as of primary importance;—that form which is the union in a common endeavour of all the human faculties. This cannot be attained by any outside blind obedience, but only by the realisation of self in the light of intellect. That which fails to illumine the intellect, and only keeps it in the obsession of some delusion, is its greatest obstacle.

The call to make the country our own by dint of our own creative power, is a great call. It is not merely inducing the people to take up some external mechanical exercise; for man's life is not in making cells of uniform pattern like the bee, nor in incessant weaving of webs like the spider; his greatest powers are within, and on these are his chief reliance. If by offering some allurements we can induce man to cease from thinking, so that he may go on and on with some mechanical piece of work, this will only result in prolonging the sway of *Māyā*, under which our country has all along been languishing. So far, we have been content with surrendering our greatest right—the right to reason and to judge for ourselves—to the blind forces of shastric injunctions and social conventions. We have refused to cross the seas, because Manu has told us not to do so. We refuse to eat with the Mussulman, because prescribed usage is against it. In other words, we have systematically pursued a course of blind routine and habit, in which the mind of man has no place. We have thus been reduced to the helpless condition of the master who is altogether dependent on his servant. The

real master, as I have said, is the internal man; and he gets into endless trouble, when he becomes his own servant's slave—a mere automaton, manufactured in the factory of servitude. He can then only rescue himself from one master by surrendering himself to another. Similarly, he who glorifies inertia by attributing to it a fanciful purity, becomes, like it, dependent on outside impulses, both for rest and motion. The inertness of mind, which is the basis of all slavery, cannot be got rid of by a docile submission to being hoodwinked, nor by going through the motions of a wound-up mechanical doll.

The movement, which has now succeeded the Swadeshi agitation, is ever so much greater and has moreover extended its influence all over India. Previously, the vision of our political leaders had never reached beyond the English-knowing classes, because the country meant for them only that bookish aspect of it which is to be found in the pages of the Englishman's history. Such a country was merely a mirage born of vapourings in the English language, in which flitted about thin shades of Burke and Gladstone, Mazzini and Garibaldi. Nothing resembling self-sacrifice or true feeling for their countrymen was visible. At this juncture, Mahatma Gandhi came and stood at the cottage door of the destitute millions, clad as one of themselves, and talking to them in their own language. Here was the truth at last, not a mere quotation out of a book. So the name of Mahatma, which was given to him, is his true name. Who else has felt so many men of India to be of his own flesh and blood? At the touch of Truth the pent-up forces of the soul are set free. As soon as true love stood at India's door, it flew open: all hesitation and holding back vanished. Truth awakened truth.

Stratagem in politics is a barren policy,—this was a lesson of which we were sorely in need. All honour to the Mahatma, who made visible to us the power of Truth. But reliance on tactics is so ingrained in the cowardly and the weak, that, in order to eradicate it, the very skin must be sloughed off. Even today, our worldly-wise men cannot get rid of the idea of utilising the Mahatma as a secret and more ingenious move in their political gamble. With their minds corroded by untruth, they cannot understand what an important thing it is that the Mahatma's supreme love should have drawn forth the country's love. The thing that has happened is nothing less than

the birth of freedom. It is the gain by the country of itself. In it there is no room for any thought, as to where the Englishman is, or is not. This love is self-expression. It is pure affirmation. It does not argue with negation : it has no need for argument.

Some notes of the music of this wonderful awakening of India by love, floated over to me across the seas. It was a great joy to me to think that the call of this festivity of awakening would come to each one of us ; and that the true *shakti* of India's spirit, in all its multifarious variety, would at last find expression. This thought came to me because I have always believed that in such a way India would find its freedom. When Lord Buddha voiced forth the truth of compassion for all living creatures, which he had obtained as the fruit of his own self-discipline, the manhood of India was roused and poured itself forth in science and art and wealth of every kind. True, in the matter of political unification the repeated attempts that were then made as often failed ; nevertheless India's mind had awakened into freedom from its submergence in sleep, and its overwhelming force would brook no confinement within the petty limits of country. It overflowed across ocean and desert, scattering its wealth of the spirit over every land that it touched. No commercial or military exploiter, to-day, has ever been able to do anything like it. Whatever land these exploiters have touched has been agonised with sorrow and insult, and the fair face of the world has been scarred and disfigured. Why ? Because not greed but love is true. When love gives freedom it does so at the very centre of our life. When greed seeks unfettered power, it is forcefully impatient. We saw this during the partition agitation. We then compelled the poor to make sacrifices, not always out of the inwardness of love, but often by outward pressure. That was because greed is always seeking for a particular result within a definite time. But the fruit which love seeks is not of to-day or tomorrow, nor for a time only : it is sufficient unto itself.

So, in the expectation of breathing the buoyant breezes of this new found freedom, I came home rejoicing. But what I found in Calcutta when I arrived depressed me. An oppressive atmosphere seemed to burden the land. Some outside compulsion seemed to be urging one and all to talk in the same strain, to work at the same mill. When

I wanted to inquire, to discuss, my well-wishers clapped their hands over my lips, saying : "Not now, not now. To day, in the atmosphere of the country, there is a spirit of persecution, which is not that of armed force, but something still more alarming, because it is invisible." I found, further, that those who had their doubts as to the present activities, if they happened to whisper them out, however cautiously, however guardedly, felt some admonishing hand clutching them within. There was a newspaper which one day had the temerity to disapprove, in a feeble way, of the burning of cloth. The very next day the editor was shaken out of his balance by the agitation of his readers. How long would it take for the fire which was burning cloth to reduce his paper to ashes ? The sight that met my eye was, on the one hand, people immensely busy ; on the other, intensely afraid. What I heard on every side was, that reason, and culture as well, must be closed. It was only necessary to cling to an unquestioning obedience. Obedience to whom ? To some *mantra*, some unreasoned creed !

And why this obedience ? Here again comes that same greed, our spiritual enemy. There dangles before the country the bait of getting a thing of inestimable value, dirt cheap and in double-quick time. It is like the faqir with his goldmaking trick. With such a lure men cast so readily to the winds their independent judgment and wax so mightily wroth with those who will not do likewise. So easy is it to overpower, in the name of outside freedom, the inner freedom of man. The most deplorable part of it is that so many do not even honestly believe in the hope that they swear by. "It will serve to make our countrymen do what is necessary"—say they. Evidently, according to them, the India which once declared : "In truth is Victory, not in untruth"—that India would not have been fit for *Swaraj*.

Another mischief is that the gain, with the promise of which obedience is claimed, is indicated by name, but is not defined. Just as when fear is vague it becomes all the more strong, so the vagueness of the lure makes it all the more tempting ; inasmuch as ample room is left for each one's imagination to shape it to his taste. Moreover there is no driving it into a corner because it can always shift from one shelter to another. In short, the object of the temptation has been

magnified through its indefiniteness, while the time and method of its attainment have been made too narrowly definite. When the reason of man has been overcome in this way, he easily consents to give up all legitimate questions and blindly follows the path of obedience. But can we really afford to forget so easily that delusion is at the root of all slavery—that all freedom means freedom from *māyā*? What if the bulk of our people have unquestioningly accepted the creed, that by means of sundry practices *swaraj* will come to them on a particular date in the near future, and are also ready to use their clubs to put down all further argument,—that is to say, they have surrendered the freedom of their own minds and are prepared to deprive other minds of their freedom likewise,—is not this by itself a reason for profound misgiving? We were seeking the exorciser to drive out this very ghost; but if the ghost itself comes in the guise of exorciser then the danger is only heightened.

The Mahatma has won the heart of India with his love; for that we have all acknowledged his sovereignty. He has given us a vision of the *shakti* of truth; for that our gratitude to him is unbounded. We read about truth in books: we talk about it: but it is indeed a red-letter day, when we see it face to face. Rare is the moment, in many a long year, when such good fortune happens. We can make and break Congresses every other day. It is at any time possible for us to stump the country preaching politics in English. But the golden rod which can awaken our country in Truth and Love is not a thing which can be manufactured by the nearest goldsmith. To the wielder of that rod our profound salutation! But if, having seen truth, our belief in it is not confirmed, what is the good of it all? Our mind must acknowledge the truth of the intellect, just as our heart does the truth of love. No Congress or other outside institution succeeded in touching the heart of India. It was roused only by the touch of love. Having had such a clear vision of this wonderful power of Truth, are we to cease to believe in it, just where the attainment of *Swaraj* is concerned? Has the truth, which was needed in the process of awakening, to be got rid of in the process of achievement?

Let me give an illustration. I am in search of a Vina player. I have tried East

and I have tried West, but have not found the man of my quest. They are all experts, they can make the strings resound to a degree, they command high prices, but for all their wonderful execution they can strike no chord in my heart. At last I come across one whose very first notes melt away the sense of oppression within. In him is the fire of the shakti of joy which can light up all other hearts by its touch. His appeal to me is instant, and I hail him as Master. I then want a Vina made. For this, of course, are required all kinds of material and a different kind of science. If, finding me to be lacking in the means, my master should be moved to pity and say: "Never mind, my son, do not go to the expense in workmanship and time which a Vina will require. Take rather this simple string tightened across a piece of wood and practise on it. In a short time you will find it to be as good as a Vina." Would that do? I am afraid not. It would, in fact, be a mistaken kindness for the master thus to take pity on my circumstances. Far better if he were to tell me plainly that such things cannot be had cheaply. It is he who should teach me that merely one string will not serve for a true Vina; that the materials required are many and various; that the lines of its moulding must be shapely and precise; that if there be anything faulty, it will fail to make good music, so that all laws of science and technique of art must be rigorously and intelligently followed. In short, the true function of the master player should be to evoke a response from the depths of our heart, so that we may gain the strength to wait and work till the true end is achieved.

From our master, the Mahatma,—may our devotion to him never grow less!—we must learn the truth of love in all its purity, but the science and art of building up *Swaraj* is a vast subject. Its pathways are difficult to traverse and take time. For this task, aspiration and emotion must be there, but no less must study and thought be there likewise. For it, the economist must think, the mechanic must labour, the educationist and statesman must teach and contrive. In a word, the mind of the country must exert itself in all directions. Above all, the spirit of Inquiry throughout the whole country must be kept intact and untrammelled, its mind not made timid or inactive by compulsion, open or secret.

We know from past experience that it is



not any and every call to which the Country responds. It is because no one has yet been able to unite in *Yoga* all the forces of the country in the work of its creation, that so much time has been lost over and over again. And we have been kept waiting and waiting for him who has the right and the power to make the call upon us. In the old forests of India, our *Gurus*, in the fulness of their vision of the Truth had sent forth such a call saying: "As the rivers flow on their downward course, as the months flow on to the year, so let all seekers after truth come from all sides." The initiation into Truth of that day has borne fruit, undying to this day, and the voice of its message still rings in the ears of the world.

Why should not our Guru of to-day, who would lead us on the paths of Karma, send forth such a call? Why should he not say: "Come ye from all sides and be welcome. Let all the forces of the land be brought into action, for then alone shall the country awake. Freedom is in complete awakening, in full self-expression." God has given the Mahatma the voice that can call, for in him there is the Truth. Why should this not be our long-awaited opportunity?

But his call came to one narrow field alone. To one and all he simply says: Spin and weave, spin and weave. Is this the call: "Let all seekers after truth come from all sides"? Is this the call of the New Age to new creation? When nature called to the Bee to take refuge in the narrow life of the hive, millions of bees responded to it for the sake of efficiency, and accepted the loss of sex in consequence. But this sacrifice by way of self-atrophy led to the opposite of freedom. Any country, the people of which can agree to become neuters for the sake of some temptation, or command, carries within itself its own prison-house. To spin is easy, therefore for all men it is an imposition hard to bear. The call to the ease of mere efficiency is well enough for the Bee. The wealth of power, that is Man's, can only become manifest when his utmost is claimed.

Sparta tried to gain strength by narrowing herself down to a particular purpose, but she did not win. Athens sought to attain perfection by opening herself out in all her fulness,—and she did win. Her flag of victory still flies at the masthead of man's civilisation. It is admitted that European military

camps and factories are stunting man, that their greed is cutting man down to the measure of their own narrow purpose, that for these reasons joylessness darkly lowers over the West. But if man be stunted by big machines, the danger of his being stunted by small machines must not be lost sight of. The *charka* in its proper place can do no harm, but will rather do much good. But where, by reason of failure to acknowledge the differences in man's temperament, it is in the wrong place, there thread can only be spun at the cost of a great deal of the mind itself. Mind is no less valuable than cotton thread.

Some are objecting: "We do not propose to curb our minds for ever, but only for a time." But why should it be even for a time? Is it because within a short time spinning will give us Swaraj? But where is the argument for this? Swaraj is not concerned with our apparel only—it cannot be established on cheap clothing; its foundation is in the mind, which, with its diverse powers and its confidence in those powers, goes on all the time creating Swaraj for itself. In no country in the world is the building up of Swaraj completed. In some part or other of every nation, some lurking greed or illusion still perpetuates bondage. And the root of such bondage is always within the mind. Where then, I ask again, is the argument, that in our country Swaraj can be brought about by everyone engaging for a time in spinning? A mere statement, in lieu of argument, will surely never do. If once we consent to receive fate's oracle from human lips, that will add one more to the torments of our slavery, and not the least one either. If nothing but oracles will serve to move us, oracles will have to be manufactured, morning, noon and night, for the sake of urgent needs, and all other voices would be defeated. Those for whom authority is needed in place of reason, will invariably accept despotism in place of freedom. It is like cutting at the root of a tree while pouring water on the top. This is not a new thing, I know. We have enough of magic in the country,—magical revelation, magical healing, and all kinds of divine intervention in mundane affairs. That is exactly why I am so anxious to re-instate reason on its throne. As I have said before, God himself has given the mind sovereignty in the material world. And I say to-day, that only those will be able to get and

keep Swaraj in the material world who have realised the dignity of self-reliance and self-mastery in the spiritual world, those whom no temptation, no delusion, can induce to surrender the dignity of intellect into the keeping of others.

Consider the burnnig of cloth, heaped up before the very eyes of our motherland shivering and ashamed in her nakedness. What is the nature of the call to do this? Is it not another instance of a magical formula? The question of using or refusing cloth of a particular manufacture belongs mainly to economic science. The discussion of the matter by our coutrymen should have been in the language of economics. If the country has really come to such a habit of mind that precise thinking has become impossible for it, then our very first fight should be against such a fatal habit, to the temporary exclusion of all else if need be. Such a habit would clearly be the original sin from which all our ills are flowing. But far from this, we take the course of confirming ourselves in it by relying on the magical formula that foreign cloth is 'impure'. Thus economics is bundled out and a fictitious moral dictum dragged into its place.

Untruth is impure in any circumstances, not merely because it may cause us material loss, but even when it does not; for it makes our inner nature unclean. This is a moral law and belongs to a higher plane. But if there be anything wrong in wearing a particular kind of cloth, that would be an offence against economics, or hygiene, or æsthetics, but certainly not against morality. Some urge that any mistake which brings sorrow to body or mind is a moral wrong. To which I reply that sorrow follows in the train of every mistake. A mistake in geometry may make a road too long, or a foundation weak, or a bridge dangerous. But mathematical mistakes cannot be cured by moral maxims. If a student makes a mistake in his geometry problem and his exercise book is torn up in consequence, the problem will nevertheless remain unsolved until attacked by geometrical methods. But what if the schoolmaster comes to the conclusion that unless the exercise books are condemned and destroyed, his boys will never realise the folly of their mistakes? If such conclusion be well-founded, then I can only repeat that the reformation of such moral weakness of these particular boys

should take precedence over all other lessons, otherwise there is no hope of their becoming men in the future.

The command to burn our foreign clothes has been laid on us. I, for one, am unable to obey it. Firstly, because I conceive it to be my very first duty to put up a valiant fight against this terrible habit of blindly obeying orders, and this fight can never be carried on by our people being driven from one injunction to another. Secondly, I feel that the clothes to be burnt are not mine, but belong to those who most sorely need them. If those who are going naked should have given us the mandate to burn, it would, at least, have been a case of self-immolation and the crime of incendiarism would not lie at our door. But how can we expiate the sin of the forcible destruction of clothes which might have gone to women whose nakedness is actually keeping them prisoners, unable to stir out of the privacy of their homes?

I have said repeatedly and must repeat once more that we cannot afford to lose our mind for the sake of any external gain. Where Mahatma Gandhi has declared war against the tyranny of the machine which is oppressing the whole world, we are all enrolled under his banner. But we must refuse to accept as our ally the illusion-haunted magic-ridden slave-mentality that is at the root of all the poverty and insult under which our country groans. Here is the enemy itself, on whose defeat alone Swaraj within and without can come to us.

The time, moreover, has arrived when we must think of one thing more, and that is this. The awakening of India is a part of the awakening of the world. The door of the New Age has been flung open at the trumpet blast of a great war. We have read in the Mahabharata how the day of self-revelation had to be preceded by a year of retirement. The same has happened in the world today. Nations had attained nearness to each other without being aware of it, that is to say, the outside fact was there; but it had not penetrated into the mind. At the shock of the war, the truth of it stood revealed to mankind. The foundation of modern, that is Western, civilisation was shaken; and it has become evident that the convulsion is neither local nor temporary, but has traversed the whole earth and will last until the shocks between man and man, which have extended from continent to continent, can be

brought to rest, and a harmony be established.

From now onward, any nation which takes an isolated view of its own country will run counter to the spirit of the New Age, and know no peace. From now onward, the anxiety that each country has for its own safety must embrace the welfare of the world. For some time the working of the new spirit has occasionally shown itself even in the Government of India, which has had to make attempts to deal with its own problems in the light of the world problem. The war has torn away a veil from before our minds. What is harmful to the world, is harmful to each one of us. This was a maxim which we used to read in books. Now mankind has seen it at work and has understood that wherever there is injustice, even if the external right of possession is there, the true right is wanting. So that it is worth while even to sacrifice some outward right in order to gain the reality. This immense change, which is coming over the spirit of man raising it from the petty to the great, is already at work even in Indian politics. There will doubtless be imperfections and obstacles without number. Self-interest is sure to attack enlightened interest at every step. Nevertheless it would be wrong to come to the decision that the working of self-interest alone is honest, and the larger-hearted striving is hypocritical.

After sixty years of self-experience, I have found that out and out hypocrisy is an almost impossible achievement, so that the pure hypocrite is a rarity indeed. The fact is, that the character of man has always more or less of duality in it. But our logical faculty, the trap-door of our mind, is unable to admit opposites together. So when we find the good with the bad, the former is promptly rejected as spurious. In the universal movement, as it becomes manifest in different parts of the world, this duality of man's character cannot but show itself. And whenever it does, if we pass judgment from past experience, we are sure to pronounce the selfish part of it to be the real thing; for the spirit of division and exclusion did in fact belong to the past age. But if we come to our judgment in the light of future promise, then shall we understand the enlightened large-heartedness to be the reality, and the counsel which will unite each to each to be the true wisdom.

I have condemned, in unsparing terms, the present form and scope of the League of Nations and the Indian Reform Councils. I therefore fell certain that there will be no misunderstanding when I state that, even in these, I find signs of the Time Spirit, which is moving the heart of the West. Although the present form is unacceptable, yet there is revealed an aspiration, which is towards the truth, and this aspiration must not be condemned. In this morning of the world's awakening, if in only our own national striving there is no response to its universal aspiration, that will betoken the poverty of our spirit. I do not say for a moment that we should belittle the work immediately to hand. But when the bird is roused by the dawn, all its awakening is not absorbed in its search for food. Its wings respond unweariedly to the call of the sky, its throat pours forth songs for joy of the new light. Universal humanity has sent us its call to-day. Let our mind respond in its own language; for response is the only true sign of life. When of old we were immersed in the politics of dependence on others, our chief business was the compilation of others' shortcomings. Now that we have decided to dissociate our politics from dependence, are we still to establish and maintain it on the same recital of others' sins? The state of mind so engendered will only raise the dust of angry passion, obscuring the greater world from our vision, and urge us more and more to take futile short cuts for the satisfaction of our passions. It is a sorry picture of India, which we shall display if we fail to realise for ourselves the greater India. This picture will have no light. It will have in the foreground only the business side of our aspiration. Mere business talent, however, has never created anything.

In the West, a real anxiety and effort of their higher mind to rise superior to business considerations, is beginning to be seen. I have come across many there whom this desire has imbued with the true spirit of the *Sannyasin*, making them renounce their home-world in order to achieve the unity of man, by destroying the bondage of nationalism; men who have within their own soul realised the *Advaita* of humanity. Many such have I seen in England who have accepted persecution and contumely from their fellow-countrymen in their struggles to free other peoples from the



oppression of their own country's pride of power. Some of them are amongst us here in India. I have seen *sannyasins* too in France—Romain Rolland for one, who is an outcast from his own people. I have also seen them in the minor countries of Europe. I have watched the faces of European students all a glow with the hope of a united mankind, prepared manfully to bear all the blows, cheerfully to submit to all the insults, of the present age for the glory of the age to come. And are we alone to be content with telling the beads of negation, harping on others'

faults and proceeding with the erection of *swaraj* on a foundation of quarrelsomeness? Shall it not be our first duty in the dawn to remember Him, who is One, who is without distinction of class or colour, and who with his varied *shakti* makes true provision for the inherent need of each and every class; and to pray to the Giver of Wisdom to unite us all in right understanding—

Yo ekōvarno vahudhā shakti yōgāt  
Varnānanekān nihitārthodadhātī  
Vichaiti chānte vishwamādau  
Sa no buddhyā subhayā samyunaktu !

## SIAM TO-DAY

BY DR. SUDHINDRA BOSE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, U. S. A.

THE kingdom of Siam affords a striking illustration of the political principle that a country possessing its own government, even though it is imperfect, may be happy and contended. His Majesty king Rama VI rules over the Siamese nation as an absolute autocrat. He is "the absolute sovereign lord of all of us" is the way a Siamese put it. Nevertheless, there is little or no complaint by the Siamese people as a whole against the present form of government. They prefer their own Siamese monarch with unlimited power of veto and initiative to, say, a foreign viceroy who may give them a few sham legislative and executive councils to play with.

Formerly Siam was a large kingdom; but in comparatively recent years France on the east and England on the west, under one pretext or another, swallowed up huge portions of her territory. Siam is now a small buffer state between her two formidable neighbours. "We are like a

little house," said a Siamese, "with two vicious dogs on either side of us. These beasts not only bark, but they frequently break into our house with savage ferocity."

Even in its reduced condition, Siam has a physical area of over 200,000 square miles. In other words, it is as large as the State of Hyderabad, or a trifle larger than



Cambodian Man.

Annamite Woman.

the Republic of France. The population of Siam is relatively small, being estimated at 10,000,000. Siam is called *Muang Thai*,

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## THE UNION OF CULTURES

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

**I**T cannot but be admitted that this is a day of victory for the people of the West. The world is theirs to draw upon as they please and their stores are overflowing. We are left standing at a distance, agape, watching our share growing less and less; and with the fire of our hunger blazes the fire of our wrath. We wish we could have the opportunity of getting hold of the man who has been eating our share of the food. But so far he has got hold of us, and the opportunity still remains in his hands, and has not reached us at all.

But why does the chance not come to us? Why is the enjoyment of the earth's plenty for them alone? Surely because of some underlying truth. It is not a case of banding ourselves together in a particular way so as to be able to deprive them and provide for ourselves. The matter is not quite so simple as that. It is mere folly to expect to get the locomotive under control by hitting the driver on the head: for it is not the man but his science which makes the engine go. So the fire of our wrath will not serve the purpose; we must acquire the requisite science, if we covet the boon which Fruth has in her gift.

It is like a father with two sons. The father drives his own motor car and has promised it to the son who learns first how to drive. One of the sons is alert and full of curiosity. His eye is always on the driving to see how it is done. The other one is excessively good natured. His

reverent gaze is always on his father's face. He pays no regard to what the hands are doing with lever and wheel. The clever one soon picks up the science of motor driving, and one fine day he drives off all by himself, with exultant toots of the horn. So absorbed does he become in the joy of his new acquisition that he forgets even the existence of his father. But the father does not punish him for the liberty he is taking, nor take the car away from him; for he is pleased that his son should succeed. The other son, when he sees his brother careering madly over his fields, playing havoc with his corn, dare not stand in the way to protest, even in the name of their father; for that would mean certain death. So he keeps his gaze fixed on his father's face, saying that this is all in all to him.

But whoever contemns the useful, saying he has no use for it, simply courts suffering. Every utility has its rightful claim, the ignoring of which entails a permanent slavery in the way of payment of interest until its dues are fully met. The only way to get rid of the school master's importunity is to do one's lessons properly.

There is an outside aspect of the world where it is simply an immense machine. In this aspect, its laws are fixed and do not yield by a hair's breadth either this way or that. This mechanical world gets in our way at every step; and he who, through laziness or folly, tries to evade its laws, does not succeed in cheating the machine, but only himself. On the oth-



hand, he who has taught himself its working is able not only to avoid its obstruction, but to gain it for an ally, and so is enabled to ride swiftly over the paths of the material world. He reaches the place of his quest first, and has his fill of the good things there. But those who have lagged behind, jogging along unaided, arrive late to find very little left over for themselves.

Since these are the facts, merely to re-ville the science by which Westerners have gained their victory in the modern world, will not tend to relieve our sufferings, but will rather add to the burden of our sins. For this science which the West has mastered is true. If you say, it is not their science, but their satanic abuse of it to which you object, that point need not disturb us; for we may be certain that the satanic part of it will be the death of them, because Satan's way is not true.

The beasts live if they get food, and die if they get hurt. They accept what comes, without question. But one of the greatest traits of man is his habit of protesting. Unlike the beast, he is a rebel by nature. Man has achieved his glorious position in the history of the world because he has never been able to accept as final what has been imposed upon him without his concurrence or co-operation. In short, man is by no means a mild creature only; he is ever in revolt. From the beginning of his career, man has sworn to sway the world of events. How? By conquering it, or else coming to an understanding with the forces of which it is the resultant. He will never be content to be merely a fact; he needs must be a factor. He began with magical practices, because at first it seemed to him that whatever was happening was due to some wonderful magic at work behind the scenes. He felt that he also could take a hand in it, if he could but master the art. The activities which began as magic ended in science, but the motive in both cases has been the refusal to be subservient to the blind forces of nature. Those, whose efforts were successful, attained the mastery over the material world, and were no longer its slaves.

The belief in universal, immutable laws, is the basis of science, and loyalty to this belief has led to victory. Secure in this loyalty, the people of the West are winning their way through the obstructions and difficulties of the material world. But those who have held on to a lingering faith in magic have failed to acquire control over the world's mechanism, and are being defeated at every turn. At a time when we were still busy invoking the exorciser against ill and the fortune-teller against poverty and misfortune, while we were content to seek protection against small-pox from Sitala Devi, and relied on charms and spells for the destruction of our enemies, in Europe a woman asked Voltaire, whether it was true that incantations could kill a flock of sheep. She got the reply that doubtless they could, provided there was enough arsenic. I do not mean that there is no belief in magic in any corner of Europe today; but certainly belief in the efficacy of arsenic is universal. That is why they can kill when they want to, and we have to die even when we do not.

It is a platitude to be saying today that the phenomenal world is only a manifestation of universal law, and that, through the law of reason, we realise the laws of the material world. It is because we know such power to be inherent in us, that we can take our ultimate stand on our own selves. But he who, in his commerce with the universe, cannot get rid of the habit of looking to accidental interventions, tends to rely on anything and everything except himself. One who doubts that his intelligence will avail, ceases to question, or to experiment. He casts about for some external master, and as a result is exploited, right and left, beginning from police officers and ending with malaria-breeding mosquitos. Cowardliness of intellect is a fertile source of feebleness of power.

From what period did political liberty begin to evolve in the West? In other words, when did the people of the West begin to realise, that political power was not the privilege of special individuals or classes, but depended on their own

consent? It was from the time that their pursuit of Science freed them from nameless fears, and they discovered that only those laws were true which could not be distorted or diverted by anyone's whim or fancy.

Giant Russia was so long the slave of her Czars, because her people relied in every matter on Providence and not in their own powers. Even now, when her Czar is gone that power which has taken his place is but dragging her through a sea of blood to the barren shore of starvation. The reason is that self-rule cannot be established through outside agency, but must be based on that self-reliance which is born of trust in one's own intellect.

I was once engaged in trying to improve one of our Bengal villages. There had been a fire and I asked the villagers how it was they had not been able to save a single homestead? "It was our fate!" they exclaimed. "Not fate," said I, "but the lack of wells. Why not make wells?" "That will be as the master pleases," was the reply. So it comes to pass that the people, whose homesteads are gutted by fate and whose wells await the master's pleasure, may lack all else but never a master.

From the very beginning God has given us Swarajya in His universe. That is to say He has given us for ourselves universal laws independent of Himself. We can not be prevented from bringing these under our control by anyone or anything except our own folly. So the Upanishat has it, that God has given us laws for our own material provisions, immutable for all time. That is to say those laws hold good for all people, and all periods, and all occasions. Had this not been so, man would have remained weakly dependent on God at every step, all his energies exhausted in propitiating, now this intermediary, now the other, in a chronic state of abject fear. But our God-given Magna Charta of Swaraj sets us for ever free from the wiles of all pretending intermediaries,—with our freedom firmly based on well-ordered and enduring laws. In the glowing letters of sun, moon and stars, God gives us his message: "You have no

need of my help at every turn in the material world. I stand aside. On the one hand, you have the laws of matter; on the other, the laws of your mind. Use them together, and grow in greatness. The empire of the universe is yours; yours its wealth, yours its armoury of forces. May yours be the victory!"

He who accepts this charter of material Swaraj has the opportunity to achieve all other kinds of Swaraj and also to keep them when achieved. But those, who surrender their intellect to the slave-driver, have no help but to be slaves in politics as well. Those who insist on invoking masters, where God Himself has refrained from asserting His own mastery, those who court insult where God has granted them dignity,—their self-rule will certainly mean rule after rule, the only doubt being as to that little prefix "self".

The science of material existence is in the keeping of the professors of the West. This is the science which gives us food and clothing, health and longevity and preserves us from the attacks of matter, brute and barbarian. This is the science of the unchangeable laws of matter, and self-rule can only be achieved when these are brought into harmony with the laws of our mind. There is no other way.

Let us consider the case of a departure from this truth. Take the idea that, if a Mussalman draws water from the well of a Hindu, the water becomes impure. This is a confusion indeed! For, water belongs to the world of matter, and impurity to the realm of the spirit. Had it been said, that if the Hindu contemns the Mussalman, this shows the impurity of his mind, the proposition would have been intelligible, it would be wholly a spiritual question. But when impurity is imputed to the Mussalman's vessel, then that which belongs to the category of the material is taken entirely outside the scope of material laws. The intellect is defrauded of its legitimate scope. The Hindu disciple of the West will urge that this imputation of impurity is only a religious way of promulgating a sanitary doctrine. Sanitation, however, takes no account of moral purity. The answer is given us: "But it is only

put thus in order to induce people, who have no faith in Science, to obey its laws." This is not a right reply. For if external compulsion be once brought in, it comes to stay. Those for whom it is made necessary, lose all initiative of their own and get into the habit of depending on injunctions. Furthermore, if truth has to be bolstered up by untruth, it ends by getting smothered. By using the phrase 'morally impure' where 'physically unclean' is meant, truth is made difficult of apprehension. Whether a thing is unclean or not can be proved. And if uncleanliness be the charge, a comparative inquiry into the vessels and wells of Hindu and Moslem should be made, and we should find out if there is anything less sanitary in the Moslem water arrangements than in those of the Hindu. Uncleanliness itself being an external fault, it can be remedied by external means. But an allegation of impurity takes the question out of the jurisdiction of the ordinary mind, and makes it a matter of religion. Is that a sound method of achieving the desired object? To keep the intellect in a state of delusion cannot be the way to attain high moral excellence. Untruth from the teacher, together with blindness in the pupil, will never create a spiritually healthy society.

So if we call Western Science 'impure', merely because it was discovered in the West, we shall not only be unable to master it, but shall also be placing in a bad light that Eastern Science which teaches of moral purity.

Here I am apprehensive of another argument. Many will ask, Whether, when the West was still savage, clothed in skins and living by hunting, we in the East had not been able to feed and clothe ourselves? When they fared forth merely for plunder, had we not evolved a political commonwealth? Certainly, we were then far more advanced than the West. But the reason was that, in those days, we in the East had a superior knowledge of Science and its laws. We had then the knowledge of cultivation and weaving. That scientific knowledge went far further than mere skill in hunting which the West then possessed. It requires more science to con-

duct a stable government than to hunt wild beasts. How then did the parts become reversed? It was not by any trick of fate. It was by no luck or magic. Rather it was due to the West learning the same Science which the East had learnt before, and to a still more useful purpose. Therefore, it is not by looking to some external force that we can now compete with the West. We can resist their onslaught only if we make their Science our own. To say this implies that the greatest of our problems in India is the problem of Education.

But at this point in the argument, I have to answer the further question, whether I have found satisfaction in that aspect of power, which the West is now presenting to mankind. My answer would be, 'No'. What I saw did not satisfy me. The picture was that of self-aggrandisement, not that of happiness. For seven months at a stretch I have lived in the giant's Castle of Wealth, in America. Through my hotel window, sky-scrapers frowned on me. They only made me think of the difference between Lakshmi, the Goddess of grace, who transmutes wealth into well-being, and the ugly god Mammon, who represents the spirit of insensate accumulation. The process of piling up has no ultimate end in view. Twice two are four, twice four are eight, twice eight are sixteen, the figures leap frog-like over increasing spans. He, who is obsessed by their stride, becomes intoxicated by it and revels in the glory of mere multiplication. But, what oppressiveness it produces in the mind of an onlooker, I can best explain by an analogy.

Once I was in a house-boat on the brimming autumn river, seated at the window on the eve of the full moon. Not far off, moored along-side the bank, there was an up country cargo boat, whose crew were enthusiastically engaged in entertaining themselves. Some of them had tom-toms, others had cymbals; none of them had a voice; but all of them had muscles beyond any possibility of question! And the beats of their clanging sped on from double-quick to quadruple-quick time, with the stimulus of its own frenzy. Ten o'clock passed,



eleven o'clock passed; it was well on towards midnight, yet they would not stop. Why should they? Had there been a song, there would have been some natural pause. Anarchic rhythm, on the other hand, has movement, but no rest: excitement, but no satisfaction. Those rhythm-maniacs on the cargo boat had no doubt that they were scaling the topmost heights of enjoyment. But what of poor me?

I was much in the same plight over there on the other side of the Atlantic. The *crescendo* of their rhythmic advance like a wilderness of bricks and mortar was obvious. But where was the song? That was the burdening question. And standing before the forbidding might of their towering opulence, the son of indigent down-trodden India was left cold, murmuring—"What then?"

I am not for emptiness, in the garb of renunciation. External restraint is true, only when it is the expression of internal fulness,—just as time and tune are kept properly regulated because the artist is full of his song. Unmitigated noise has no occasion for disciplined restraint. If there be the truth called Love, at the heart, enjoyment must be restrained, service must be true, that is to say, such a process of realisation needs the spirit of charity to help it. The renunciation, which is in the chastity of love, is the true renunciation. The union of the Goddess of Plenitude with the God who needs no wealth is the true union.

When I was in Japan, the spirit of old Japan gave me a profound pleasure. Old Japan had found Beauty reigning on the lotus throne of her heart. In her dress and ornament, in her dwellings and furniture, in her work and play, in her rites and ceremonials, she expressed in various forms the One who is beauty. Utter penury is as unmeaning as lavish profusion. The spirit of old Japan represented neither, but rather the fulness of perfection. Such fulness makes man's heart hospitable,—its passion is for welcome and not for rejection. Side by side with the old, I have also seen the modern Japan. Here the spirit of the rhythm-maniac has assumed control, and its din rocks the moonlight.

By all this, I do not mean that railways and telegraphs are not needed. They have their use, but not their message. Where man has needs, he must furnish himself with materials; but where he has fulness, there is manifest his immortality; Man's envy and hatred are in the region of his material needs, the region where he is in want. Here he erects his barricades and maintains his guards. Here he is for self-aggrandisement and for the exclusion of others. But where he is immortal he displays, not things, but his soul. He invites all to enter. His distribution does not mean diminution; and so peace reigns.

When Europe was opening out the mystery chambers of the Universe with the keys of Science, she found at every step fixed laws. And their constant presence in her field of vision ever since has caused her to forget that there is something more behind these laws, which has its harmony of delight in accord with our complete humanity. By the help of natural laws we achieve success, but man aspires to gain something greater than success. The laws which the tea-garden manager imposes on his coolies, if well devised, tend to increase his output. But where the manager's friends are concerned, he does not dream of efficient laws. In dealing with his friends he does not increase his output; he spends his tea in entertainment. It is well to believe in the laws which make for efficiency. But if ever it is believed, that the truth of friendship is not a part of an infinite truth, then that belief tends to destroy our humanity itself. We cannot make friends with a machine. Therefore, if we cease to be aware of anything beyond mechanism, then our personality which is ever seeking its own affinity in other persons, finds no permanent refuge. The West, in its one-sided pursuit of Science, has been steadily thrusting personality further and further into the back-ground till hardly any room has been left for it. If our own one-sided spiritual tendency of mind has made us lose our way and left us stranded in the quagmire of weakness and poverty, the limping gait of the West has taken it no nearer, from its own side, to humanity's goal.

True, it is difficult to cope with those

who consistently keep to the tea-garden-manager outlook on the universe ; for they have enlisted the services of the genie of efficiency. The good natured man invariably gets caught by their recruiters, and once in their net, there is no escape. He has no conception of the value of fixed laws of the world. He insists on pinning his faith just where he should not, whether it be on the unluckiness of Thursday, the virtue of talismans, the trustworthiness of touts, or the honesty of tea-garden recruiters. But even the most helplessly good natured man has a place, beyond the reach of laws, where he can take his stand and say : "God grant I may never be born, despite my trials and troubles, to be a tea-garden manager !"

And yet the tea-garden manager also has his own methods of benevolence. He makes sanitary dwellings for his coolies, soundly and symmetrically built, and his arrangements for their supplies are admirable. But this non-human benevolence is but an appendage of efficiency. It helps to increase the profits ; it bestows a kind of benefit upon the human tools. But from that springs not even a fraction of true happiness.

Let no one imagine that I am referring to the relations between the Western masters and their Eastern servants only. The undue stress laid on the mechanical side of the world, both in external and internal relations, has similarly created a split in the polity of the West. If the mechanical bonds of association be made into a fetish, the living bonds of voluntary fellowship slacken. And this, in spite of the fact that these mechanical bonds make for extraordinary mechanical efficiency. Commodities multiply, markets spread, tall buildings pierce the sky. Not only so, but in education, healing and the amenities of life, man also gains real success. That is because the machine has its own truth. But this very success makes the man, who is obsessed by its mechanism, hanker for more and more mechanism. And as his greed continually increases, he has less and less compunction in lowering man's true value to the level of his own machine.

Greed is not an ideal,—it is a passion.

Passion cannot create. So when any civilisation gives the first place to greed, the soul relation between man and man is severed ; and the more luxurious such a civilisation grows in pomp and power, the poorer it becomes in truth of soul. A picture is a creation, because it is the harmony of many lines, related to one another. An engineer's plan is not a picture, because the lines there are bound to each other by some external necessity. When greed of success is the main nexus between man and man, Society becomes a huge plan and ceases to be a picture of the ideal. Man's spiritual relations are lost sight of ; money becomes the prime mover ; the capitalist the driver ; and the rest of mankind merely the fuel for the running of the machine. It is possible to measure the value of such civilisation in terms of the speed of its progress. But man, at the bottom of his heart, does not worship Mammon, and so has no real happiness in the triumphal progress of his car. Because his faith in Mammon is wanting, the cords, by which man is bound to Mammon's service, are not bonds of loyalty, but shackles. And man ever revolts when he feels himself shackled. The dark clouds of this social revolt lower only too dismally over the West. There the union, devised for exploitation, has ended in disruption. In India the union, imposed by customary rule, has resulted in emasculation. Because traditional customs and professional dealings are not ideals, therefore they make their arrangements by keeping man's soul out of the account.

What is the ideal ? Jesus Christ said : "I and my father are one." Here is one ideal. "My unity with my father," is a true unity. But the unity of the coolie with the manager is not true. Again a great ideal has been given utterance to in the Isha Upanishat. "All that moves in this moving world is enveloped by God. Therefore enjoy by renunciation ; never covet others' possessions." I have already referred in terms of condemnation to the greed which has become the dominant motive in the West. Why do we condemn it ? The Rishi tells us the reason,— "Do not covet." Why should we not covet ? Be



cause truth cannot be obtained through greed. But if I say, "I want my enjoyment rather than truth." Well, the Rishi also says, "Enjoy." But there can be no enjoyment outside truth. What then is the truth? It is this: "All that moves in this moving world is enveloped by God." Had "all that moves in the world" been itself the ultimate truth, then to keep piling up would have been the best thing to do; and greed would have been the most efficient of man's virtues. But the truth being this, that God is there, enveloping all things, we have to enjoy this truth with our soul, and for such enjoyment renunciation is needed, not greed. During my seven months' stay in America, the land of mountain-high piles of lucre, I have watched this striving in the reverse direction. There, "all that moves in this moving world" has become prominent. God, who "envelops all things" has become obscured in the thick dust of dollars. Therefore, in America, the injunction to enjoy is not observed with the help of truth, but with the help of money. Truth gives us Unity. Money sets up separation. Furthermore, it keeps our soul empty. Therefore, it causes in us a hankering to fill that emptiness from outside, and we pursue the path of multiplying numbers in hot haste. While our desire runs at a break-neck pace, jumping from one figure to another in the multiplication table, we grow dizzy and forget that whatever else we may have been acquiring, it is not happiness.

Our Rishis have told us that satisfaction is only to be found in the One. Apples fall one after another. The truth about their falling cannot be arrived at by counting them: arithmetical progression marches on indefinitely and the mind turns away unsatisfied from each fresh enumeration, saying: "What does it all mean?" But when innumerable falls find their unity in the principle of gravitation, the intellect at last finds satisfaction and can say: "Enough, I have found the truth."

And what of the truth of Man. It is not in the Census Report, not in an interminable series of figures. Man is expressed, says the Upanishat, when he realises all

creation in himself and himself in all creation. Otherwise his truth is obscured. There is a telling example of this in our history. When the Lord Buddha realised humanity in a grand synthesis of unity, his message went forth to China as a draught from the fountain of immortality. But when the modern empire-seeking merchant, moved by his greed, refused allegiance to this truth of unity, he had no qualms in sending to China the deadly opium poison, nay, in thrusting it down her throat at the cannon's mouth. What could be a better illustration of how the soul of man is revealed, and how it is obscured?

Many at the present moment will exclaim: "That is just what we were saying. How can we possibly maintain relations with those, who only know how to divide, whose rapacious maw continually opens wider and wider? They know nothing of the spirit of the Infinite which is all in all to us. They follow the cult of the finite. Must we not keep at arm's length their pernicious teaching and culture?"

But this attitude is also one of division, while it has not even the merit of worldly prudence behind it. India's ancient teaching was not this. Manu says: "Restraint cannot be practised so well by leaving the world, as by remaining in it purified by wisdom." That is because the responsibility of the material world is also on us and cannot be shirked, if we would do justice to the responsibilities of the world of the spirit. So the Upanishat says: "Rescue yourself from death by the cult of the finite, and then by the cult of the infinite you shall attain immortality." Shukra, the preceptor of the Titans, was master of the art of material existence; and in his school Kacha, the emissary of the Gods, had to gain admission in order to learn the secret of immortality.

One of the first steps in the culture of the Soul is to free it from the tyranny of matter. This is the basic effort which must be made to start with; and unless the foundation be thus well and truly laid, the powers of the majority of men will be exhausted in their struggles to stave off sheer physical starvation. It is quite true,



that the West has kept its head bent to the ground and become so absorbed in the spade work that no time has been left to lift its head upwards. Nevertheless, it will not do for those, who aspire to live in the light and air of the upper storey, to despise the spade work itself. In the region of the spirit, our seers have told us, ignorance is bondage, knowledge is freedom. The same is true in the material world. Those who do not know its laws are its slaves, those who do are emancipated. The bondage of external forces is an illusion which science alone can dispel.

Anyhow, the Western continents have been striving for liberation from the *maya* of matter, striking hard whenever they encounter any of the roots of that ignorance which breeds hunger and thirst, disease and want, or other ills of mundane life. In a word, they have been engaged in securing for man protection against physical death. On the other hand, the striving of the Eastern peoples has been to win for man his spiritual kingdom, to lead him to immortality. By their present separateness, East and West alike are now in danger of losing the fruits of their age-long labours. That is why the Upanishat, from the beginning, has enunciated the principle, which yet may serve to unite them. "Gain protection," it says, "from death by the cult of the finite, and then by the cult of the infinite you shall attain immortality." "All that moves in the moving world" is the province of Science. "God envelops all this" is the province of the philosophy of the Infinite. When the Rishi enjoins us to combine them both, then that implies the union of the East and the West. For want of that union, the East is suffering from poverty and inertia and the West from lack of peace and happiness.

There is a danger of my being misunderstood as to what I mean by Union. I should like to make that point quite plain to my readers. Uniformity is not unity. Those who destroy the independence of other races, destroy the unity of all races of humanity. Modern Imperialism is that idea of Unity, which the python has in

swallowing other live creatures. I have said before, that, if the spiritual altogether swallows up the material interest of man that cannot be called harmony. But when the spiritual and the material keep separate, in their own respective provinces, then they can find their unity. In like manner, when we respect the true individuality of men, then we can discover their true unity.

While Europe, after the great war, has been yearning for peace, the smaller nations have been more and more insistent in claiming self-determination. If a new era is really to be ushered in, it must be signalised by the overthrow of the monster, Wealth, and the monster, Empire, and also of the enormity of organisations. The true unity must be established upon true units. Those who co-operate with the New Age must cultivate their own individuality in order to attain successfully the spirit that shall unite. They must remember that Freedom (which is the great quest) is not of this or that nation, but of universal man.

The truth that "the man who knows others as himself is truly revealed" is not only to be found in the pages of man's scriptures. Its working can be seen throughout human history. In the beginning, we see man gathered into separate groups within barriers of mountain and ocean. As soon as man came into touch with man, the problem of his truth as a member of the human race demanded attention. Whenever men came together, but were unable to unite, they lost their truth. Those of them, who, having come into contact, hit out wildly against one another, none trusting the other, each trying to gain the advantage, have all disappeared from the face of the earth. And those, who have tried to realise the one Soul in the souls of all, have developed into great peoples.

Thanks to Science, so many vehicles of communication are speeding over land and water and even through the air, that today there are no longer any geographical barriers. Now, not only individual men, but whole nations have come into contact, and the problem has become



acute. Those whom Science has brought together how shall man put asunder? If the conjunction of man is a real union, then all goes well, otherwise nearness produces conflict. Such an age of universal conflict has come. The outward forces which are bringing men together are running at a great speed; the inner forces which make men united are lagging behind. It is as if a locomotive were to rush on with its train, the driver left behind wringing his hands in despair, while a cheering crowd of onlookers are lost in admiration at its headlong speed, crying "This is progress indeed!" And we, the mild men of the East, who are in the habit of trudging along on foot, how can we possibly bear the brunt of the collision? Things which are near us and yet keep aloof, if they have their movement, always give us shocks. Such a conjunction of shocks may not be comfortable, but, in certain circumstances, it may be wholesome.

However that may be, nothing is more obvious than the fact, that nations have come together, but yet are not united. The agony of this presses on the whole world. Why is it, that, in spite of its torture, the world can find no solution? Because even those, who had mastered the art of uniting within their own boundaries, have not yet learnt the secret of uniting outside them. The barrier, by limiting truth, makes truth itself at first easier of comprehension; so man is apt to give the credit to the barrier and not to the truth; he worships the priest to the exclusion of the divinity, and fears the policemen more than the king.

Nations have risen on the strength of truth, but it was not their Nationalism which was true. And yet human sacrifices are being offered to this barrier-god. So long as the victims were of alien race no question arose; but all of a sudden, in 1914, the votaries developed a mania for sacrificing one another. Then the doubt arose: "Is this after all the right kind of household god, who fails to distinguish between kindred and stranger?" While he was fastening his fangs on the limbs of the offerings from the East, sucking out their substance, the festivity of the sacrificial rites waxed fast and furious, for

stimulants were not lacking either. Today some of them are to be seen with bowed heads, oppressed with the misgiving, that perhaps this kind of riotous worship might not be altogether healthy. While the war was at its height, there was some hope that the orgy of Nationalism might soon be brought to an end. But the war, which disappeared in one aspect came back wearing the mask of peace. The thinkers of the West are bemoaning the tragic fact, that, the infatuation from which this disaster has been caused, is still as vigorous as ever. This infatuation is Nationalism, the collective Egotism of the whole nation. It is a passion whose tendency is against the ideal of Unity. Its pull is towards itself.

The peoples have come together. This great truth cannot be crushed beneath the triumphal car of any imperialistic ambition. Then we must establish relations with this truth. Otherwise there will be no end to these wars of annihilation. Since it is essential that education should fit in with the spirit of the time, the high priests of Nationalism will avail themselves of every pretext and opportunity to inculcate by means of education the doctrine of national pride in the growing generation. When Germany frankly made her Universities the servitors of her political ambitions, other European nations condemned her. But which of the greater European nations has not followed suit? The only difference has been that Germany being the greater master of scientific method, carried on the nationalistic propaganda more thoroughly. She made her education into a scientific incubator for hatching the eggs of Nationalism, and the chickens produced have been more vigorous than those of the neighbouring nations. The same has become the function of the press,—the unremitting circulation of plausible national untruths.

An Education which can free the nations from this ungodly fetish of Nationalism is what is chiefly needed today. Tomorrow is to begin the chapter of the federation of races. Any evil tendencies of thought and sinful habits, which militate against the spirit of federation will unfit us to take our part in the history of tomorrow

I hope I can claim to be duly conscious of the glories of my own country, but my fervent prayer is that such consciousness may never make me forgetful of the earliest message of our seers, the message of unity, in which the forces of disruption have no place.

I can hear, from over the seas the wailing of men questioning themselves: "Wherein was our sin,—in what part of our thoughts, of our education,—that this terrible suffering is ours today?" May the reply of our Rishis reach them: "There can be no blindness and sorrow, where all beings are known as oneself and the Unity is realised." I can hear, from over the seas, the cry for Peace. We must give them the message of our great forefathers: "Peace is where the Good is; the Good is where there is Unity."

SHANTAM, SHIVAM, ADVAITAM.

Unity is peace; for Unity is the Good.

I am fully conscious of the glories of my motherland, so it shames me even to think, that now, on the eve of the new age, when the command of Rudra, the Terrible, has gone forth to sweep away the rubbish of decayed ages, this same rubbish should be piled up into an altar for her worship. He who is Peace, who is Good, is the One Universal Refuge of all the different Nations of men. Cannot the chanting of the *mantra*,—Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam,—with the first fresh glow of the dawning era, rouse in us once more our ancient love of truth?

It is the dream of my heart, that the culture-centre of our country should also be the meeting ground of the East and West. In the field of business, antagonism still prevails; it struggles hard against reconciliation. In the field of culture, there is no such obstacle. The householder, who is exclusively occupied with his domestic concerns and is chary of his hospitality, is poor in spirit. No great country can afford to be confined to its kitchen, it must have its reception room where it can do honour to itself by inviting the world.

India has only government institutions, prototypes, for her education.

By far the greater part of it consists in begging for the crumbs of other people's attaining. When begging becomes a habit, the lack of hospitality ceases to cause shame. So the Indian Universities have no compunction in proclaiming themselves mendicants with nothing to offer in return for what they receive. It is not true, that nothing is expected from them. I have often been confronted in Europe with the question: "Where is India's voice?" But when the enquirer from the West comes to India, and listens at her door, he says: "The words which we hear are only the feeble echoes of our own words,—the mere parodies of things preached by us." To me, it has always seemed that, when the Indian disciple of Max Muller boasts in strident tones of his Aryan descent, there is heard all the blatant noise of the Western brass band; and also when in a frenzy of condemnation he rejects the West, there is heard only the most discordant sounds of the Western tunes.

It is my prayer that India should, in the name of all the East, establish a centre for the culture of Truth to which all may be invited. I know she lacks material wealth, but she has no lack of spiritual wisdom. On the strength of the latter she may invite the world, and be invited into every part of the world, not to hang round the threshold, but to take the seat prepared for her in the inmost chamber. But even that honour may be left out of sight. The real object of our endeavour should be to realise truth in our inner nature and then to manifest it in the outer world,—not for the sake of expediency: not for gaining honour, but for emancipating man's spirit from its obscurity. The ideal revelation of soul must be expressed, through all our education and through all our work, and then by honouring all men we shall ourselves be honoured, and by welcoming the new age we shall ourselves be freed from the burden of senility. The *mantra* of that education is this:

"He, who realises all creatures in himself and himself in all creatures, is never obscured."

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## THE MODERN AGE

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

( 1 )

**W**HEREVER man meets man in a living relationship, the meeting finds its natural expression in works of art, the signatures of beauty in which the mingling of the personal touch leaves its memorial.

On the other hand the relationship of pure utility humiliates man, it ignores the rights and needs of his deeper nature; it feels no compunction in maltreating and killing things of beauty that can never be restored.

Some years ago, when I set out from Calcutta on my voyage to Japan, the first thing that shocked me, with a sense of personal injury, was the ruthless intrusion of the factories for making gunny bags on both banks of the Ganges. The blow it gave to me was owing to the precious memory of the days of my boyhood when the scenery of this river was the only great thing near my birthplace reminding me of the existence of a world which had its direct communication with our innermost spirit. You all know that Calcutta is an upstart town with no depth of sentiment in her face and in her manners. It may truly be said about her genesis, in the beginning there was the spirit of the Shop which uttered through its megaphone, "Let there be the Office!" and there was Calcutta. She brought with her no dower of distinction, no majesty of noble or ro-

mantic origin; she never gathered around her any great historical association, annals of brave sufferings, or memory of mighty deeds. The only thing which gave her the sacred baptism of beauty was the river. I was fortunate enough to be born before the smoke-belching iron dragon had devoured the greater part of the life of its banks; when the landing stairs descending into its waters, caressed by its tides, appeared to me like the loving arms of the villages clinging to it; when Calcutta, with her tilted-up nose and stony stare, had not completely disowned her foster-mother, rural Bengal, and had not surrendered body and soul to her wealthy paramour, the spirit of the ledger, bound in dead leather.

But as an instance of the contrast of the different ideal of a different age, incarnated in the form of a town, the memory of my last visit to Benares comes to my mind. What impressed me most deeply, while I was there, was the mother-call of the river Ganges, which ever filled the atmosphere with an "unheard melody", attracting the whole population to its bosom every hour of the day. I am proud of the fact, that India has felt a most profound love for this river, which nourishes her civilisation on its banks, guiding its course from the silence of the hills to the sea with its myriad voices of solitude. The love of this river, which has become



one with the love of the best in man, has given rise to this town as an expression of reverence. This is to show, that there are sentiments in us which are creative, which do not clamour for gain, but overflow in gifts, in spontaneous generosity of self-sacrifice.

But our minds will nevermore cease to be haunted by the perturbed spirit of the question,—“What about gunny bags?” I admit they are indispensable, and am willing to allow them a place in society, if my opponent will only admit that even gunny bags should have their limits, and will acknowledge the importance of leisure to man, with space for joy and worship, and a home of wholesale privacy, with associations of chaste love and mutual service. But if this concession to humanity be denied or curtailed, and if profit and production are allowed to run amuck then they play havoc with our love of beauty, of truth, of justice, and also with our love for our fellow-beings. So it comes about that the cultivators of jute, who live on the brink of everlasting famine, are combined against, and driven to lower the price of their labours to the point of blank despair, by those who earn more than cent per cent profit and wallow in the infamy of their wealth. The facts that man is brave and kind, that he is social and generous and self-sacrificing, have some aspect of the complete in them; but the fact that he is a manufacturer of gunny bags is too ridiculously small to claim the right of reducing his higher nature to insignificance. The fragmentariness of utility should never forget its subordinate position in human affairs. It must not be permitted to occupy more than its legitimate place and power in society, nor to have the liberty to desecrate the poetry of life, to deaden our sensitiveness to ideals, bragging of its own coarseness as a sign of virility. The pity is that when in the centre of our activities we acknowledge, by some proud name, the supremacy of wanton destructiveness, or productiveness, not less wanton, we shut out all the lights of our souls, and in that darkness our conscience, and consciousness of shame, are hidden and our love of freedom is killed.

I do not for a moment mean to imply that in any particular period of history men were free from the disturbance of their lower passions. Selfishness ever had its share in their government and trade. Yet there was a struggle to maintain a balance of forces in society; and our passions cherished no delusions about their own rank and value. They contrived no clever devices to hoodwink our moral nature. For, in these days our intellect was not tempted to put its weight into the balance on the side of over-greed.

But in recent centuries a devastating change has come in our mentality with regard to the acquisition of money. Whereas in former ages men treated it with condescension, even with disrespect, now they bend their knees to it. That it should be allowed a sufficiently large place in society, there can be no question; but it becomes an outrage when it occupies those seats which are specially reserved for the immortals, by bribing us, by tampering with our moral pride, by recruiting the best strength of society on its side in a traitor's campaign against human ideals, disguising, with the help of pageantry and pomp, its true insignificance. Such a state of things has come to pass, because, with the help of science, the possibilities of profit have suddenly become immoderate. The whole of the human world, throughout its length and breadth, has felt the gravitational pull of a giant planet of greed, with its concentric rings of innumerable satellites, causing to our society a marked deviation from its moral orbit. In former times, the intellectual and spiritual powers of this earth upheld their dignity of independence and were not giddily rocked on the tides of the money market. But, as in the last fatal stages of disease, so this fatal influence of money has got into our brain and affected our heart. It has like a usurper, occupied the throne of higher social ideals, using every means, by menace and threat, to take away our right and by offer of temptation even the desire to judge it. It has not only science for its ally, but other forces also that have some semblance of religion, such as nation-worship and the idealizing

of organised selfishness. Its methods are far-reaching and sure. Like the claws of a tiger's paw they are softly sheathed. Its massacres are invisible, because they are fundamental, attacking the very roots of life. Its plunder is ruthless behind a scientific system of screens, which have the formal appearance of openness and responsibility to enquiries. By whitewashing its own stains it keeps respectability unblemished. It makes a liberal use of falsehood in diplomacy, only feeling embarrassed when its evidence is disclosed by others of the trade. An unscrupulous system of propaganda paves the way for widespread misrepresentation. It works up the crowd psychology through regulated hypnotic doses at repeated intervals; administered in bottles with moral labels upon them of soothing colours. In fact, man has been able to make his pursuit of power easier today by his art of mitigating the obstructive forces that come from the higher region of his humanity. With his cult of power and his idolatry of money, he has, in a great measure, reverted to his primitive barbarism,—a barbarism whose path is lit up by the lurid light of intellect. For, barbarism is the simplicity of a superficial life. It may be bewildering in its surface adornments and complexities, but it lacks the ideal to impart to it the depth of moral responsibility.

( 2 )

Society suffers from a profound feeling of unhappiness, not so much when it is in material poverty, as when its members are deprived of a large part of their humanity. This unhappiness goes on smouldering in the subconscious mind of the community till its life is reduced to ashes, or a sudden combustion is produced. The repressed personality of man generates an inflammable moral gas deadly in its explosive force.

We have seen in the late war, and also in some of the still more modern events of history, how human individuals, freed from moral and spiritual bonds, find a boisterous joy in a debauchery of destruction. There is generated a disinterested passion of ravage. Through such catastrophe we

can realize what formidable forces of annihilation are kept in check in our communities by bonds of social ideas, nay, made into multitudinous manifestations of beauty and fruitfulness. Thus we know that evils are, like meteors, stray fragments of life, which need the attraction of some great ideal in order to be assimilated with the wholesomeness of creation. The evil forces are literally outlaws; they only need the control and cadence of spiritual laws to change them into good. The true goodness is not in the negation of badness; it is in the mastery of it. Goodness is the miracle which turns the tumult of chaos into a dance of beauty.

In modern society, the ideal of wholeness has lost its force. Therefore its different sections have become detached and resolved into their elemental character of forces. Labour is a force; so also is Capital; so are the Government and the People; so are Man and Woman. It is said that when the forces lying latent in even a handful of dust are liberated from their bond of unity, they can lift the buildings of a whole neighbourhood to the height of a mountain. Such disfranchised forces, irresponsible freebooters, may be useful to us for certain purposes; but human habitations, standing secure on their foundations, are better for us. To own the secret of utilizing these forces is a proud fact for us, but the power of self-control and self-dedication of love is a truer subject for the exultation of mankind. The genii of the Arabian Nights may have in their magic their lure and fascination for us. But the consciousness of God is of another order, and infinitely more precious in imparting to our minds ideas of the spiritual power of creation. Yet these genii are abroad everywhere; and even now, after the late war, their devotees are getting ready to play further tricks upon humanity, by suddenly spiriting it away to some hill-top of desolation.

( 3 )

We know that when at first any large body of people in their history became aware of their unity, they expressed it in some popular symbol of divinity. For they

felt that their combination was not an arithmetical one ; its truth was deeper than the truth of number. They felt that their community was not a mere agglutination, but a creation, having upon it the living touch of the infinite Person. The realisation of this truth having been an end in itself,—a fulfilment,—gave meaning to self-sacrifice, to acceptance even of death.

But our modern education is producing a habit of mind which is ever weakening in us the spiritual apprehension of truth, the truth of a person as the ultimate reality of existence. Science has its true sphere in analysing this world as a construction ; just as grammar has its legitimate office in analysing the syntax of a poem. But the world as a creation is not a construction ; it is also more than a syntax. It is a poem, which we are apt to forget, when grammar takes exclusive hold of our minds.

Upon the loss of this sense of a universal personality, which is religion, the reign of the machine and of method has been firmly established, and man, humanly speaking, has been made a homeless tramp. And, as nomads, ravenous and restless, the men from the West have come to us. They have exploited Eastern humanity for sheer gain of power. This meeting of men has not yet received the blessing of God. For it has kept us apart, though railway lines are laid far and wide, and ships are plying from shore to shore to bring us together.

It has been said in the Upanishads :—

Yastu sarvāni bhūtāni ātmanyevānupa-  
shyati  
Sarva bhuteshu chātmanam na tato  
vijugupsate.

‘He who sees all things in Atmā, in the infinite spirit, and the infinite spirit, in all beings, remains no longer unrevealed.’

In the modern civilization, for which an enormous number of men are used as materials, and human relationships have in a large measure become utilitarian, man is imperfectly revealed. His revelation does not lie in the fact that he is a power but that he is a spirit. The prevalence of the theory which realises the power of the

machine in the universe, and organizes men into a machine, is like the eruption of Etna, tremendous in its force, in the outburst of fire and fume ; but its creeping lava covers up human shelters made by the ages and its ashes smother life.

( 4 )

The terribly efficient method of repressing personality in the individuals and the races who have failed to resist it, has in the present scientific age spread all over the world ; and in consequence there have appeared signs of a universal disruption which seems not far off. Faced with the possibility of such a disaster, one which is sure to affect the successful peoples of the world in their intemperate prosperity,—the great Powers of the West are seeking peace, not by curbing their greed, or by giving up the exclusive advantages which they have unjustly acquired, but by concentrating their forces for mutual security.

But can powers find their equilibrium in themselves ? Power has to be made secure not only against power, but also against weakness ; for there lies the peril of its losing balance. The weak are as great a danger for the strong, as quicksands for an elephant. They do not assist progress, because they do not resist ; they only drag down. The people who grow accustomed to wield absolute power over others are apt to forget that by doing so they generate an unseen force which some day rends that power into pieces. The dumb fury of the down-trodden finds its awful support from the universal law of moral balance. The air, which is so thin and unsubstantial, gives birth to storms that nothing can resist. This has been proved in history over and over again, and stormy forces arising from the revolt of insulted humanity are openly gathering in the air at the present time. Yet the psychology of the strong stubbornly refuses the lesson and despises to take count of the terribleness of the weak. This is the latent ignorance, that, like an unsuspected worm, burrows under the bulk of the prosperous. Have we never read of the castle of power, securely buttressed on all sides, in a moment dissolving in air, at the explosion

caused by the weak and outraged besiegers? Politicians calculate upon the number of mailed hands that are kept on the sword-hilts; they do not possess the third eye to see the great invisible hand that clasps in silence the hand of the helpless, and waits its time. The strong form their league by a combination of powers, driving the weak to form their own league alone with their God. I know I am crying in the wilderness, when I raise the voice of warning and while the West is busy with its organisation of a machine-made peace, it will still continue to nourish with its iniquities the underground forces of earthquake in the Eastern Continent. The West seems unconscious that science, by providing it with more and more power, is tempting it to suicide, encouraging it to accept the challenge of the disarmed, not knowing that the challenge comes from a higher source.

Two prophecies about the world's salvation are cherished in the hearts of the two great religions of the world. They represent the highest expectation of man thereby indicating his faith in a truth which he instinctively considers as ultimate, the truth of love. These prophecies have not for their vision the fettering of the world, and reducing it to tameness, with the closelinked power forged in the factory of a political steel trust. One of these religions has for its meditation the image of Buddha who is to come,

Maitreya, the Buddha of love. And he is to bring peace. The other religion waits for the coming of Christ. For Christ preached peace when he preached love, when he preached the oneness of the Father with the brothers who are many. And this was the truth of peace. He never held that peace was the best policy. For policy is not truth. The calculation of self-interest can never successfully fight the irrational force of passion, the passion which is perversion of love, and which can only be set right by the truth of love. So long as the powers build a league on the foundation of their desire for safety and the securest enjoyment of gains, for the consolidation of past injustice, for putting off the reparation of wrongs, while their fingers still wriggle for greed, and still reek of blood, rifts will appear in their union, and conflicts in future will take greater force and magnitude. It is the political and commercial egoism which is the evil harbinger of war. By different combinations, it changes its shape and dimensions but not its nature. This egoism is still held almost as sacred as religion; and such a religion, by a mere change of temple, and by new committees of priests, will never save men. We must know that, as, through science and commerce, the realisation of the unity of the material world gives us power, so the realisation of the great spiritual Unity of Man alone can give us peace.

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## LETTERS FROM ABROAD

Antwerp,  
October 3rd, 1920.

You must have heard by this time, from different sources, that our American tour has been cancelled. The atmosphere of our mind has been cleared, at a sweep, of the dense fog of the contemplation of securing money. This is deliverance. In the meanwhile I have spent about a fortnight in Holland. This fortnight has been most

generous of its gifts to me. It has condensed the love and fellowship of fifteen years into fifteen days and has made it mine. It is so wonderful to think that I had so completely occupied the heart of this people before I had ever known them. Yet, by nature, they are not quick in their mind and not easily moved. They are phlegmatic, but they have their idealism protected and kept pure by this external

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## LETTERS FROM THE ATLANTIC

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

I

S. S. RHYNDAM.

THE very fact that we have turned our face towards the East fills my heart with joy. For me my East is the poet's East, not that of a politician or a scholar. It is the East of the magnanimous sky and exuberant sun-light, where once upon a time a boy found himself straying in the dim twilight of child-consciousness peopled with dreams. That child has grown, but never grown out of his childishness. I realise it all the more strongly when some problem, political or otherwise, becomes clamorous and insistent, trying to exact its answer from me. I rouse myself up, I strain my mind, I raise my voice for prophetic utterances and in every way try to be worthy of the occasion, but in my heart of hearts I feel exceedingly small and to my utter dismay discover I am not a leader, not a speaker, not a teacher, and farthest of all away from being a prophet. The fact becomes fully evident to me, that I had forgotten to grow. It comes of an incorrigible absent-mindedness. My mind has ever wandered away from those things that mature one into wisdom and old age,—I have neglected my lessons. And this utter want of training makes me such a wretchedly bad reader of journals dealing with the practical questions of the day! But I am

afraid the present time is a tremendously difficult one in India for the child, for the poet. It is no use protesting that he is lacking in understanding,—that he is congenitally incapable of paying attention to anything urgent and serious. No, he must attend meetings, or write editorials; cultivate cotton-fields, or accept some responsibility of grave and national import, in order to make a fool of himself. And yet my heart is aching in longing to meet with proper ceremony the first day of the rainy season or fill every pore of my mind with the smell of mango blossoms. Is that allowable at the present moment? Does our south breeze still enjoy all the frivolities of spring days? Have our sunset hours taken the vow of discarding all traces of colours from their cloud turbans? But what is the use of complaining? The poets are too primitive for this age. If they had not ignominiously been discarded by the law of evolution, they would long ago have grown into their career as politicians, but the mischief is,—they have been left behind in a world which has stopped growing, where things are still important which have no use or market value. The more the call for action grows loud from across the sea, the more I feel conscious of the poet in me, who cries, "I am of no use,—leave me alone to my utter inutility." But I know, when I reach India, the poet



in me will be defeated and I shall piously study the newspapers—every paragraph of them. But, for the present, even the poet in me is at a disadvantage,—for the sea is rough, my head is swimming and the English language is extremely difficult to manage in a rolling ship.

## II

S. S. RHYNDAM.

Sometimes it amuses me to observe the struggle for supremacy that is going on between the different persons within me. In the present condition of India, when the call is sure to come to me to take some part, in some manner or other, in some political affairs, the Poet in me at once feels nervous, thinking that his claims are likely to be ignored, simply because he is the most useless member in the confederacy of my personality. He fully anticipates that argument against him, and takes special pains to glorify his deficiency even before any complaint has been submitted by anybody on this point. He has proudly begun to assert: "I belong to the great brotherhood of the supremely Useless. I am the cup-bearer of the Gods. I share the common privilege with all divinities to be misunderstood. My purpose is to reveal Purposelessness to the children of the Immortal. I have nothing to do with committee meetings or laying of foundation stones for structures that stand against the passage of time and are sure to be trampled to dust. I am to ply the ferry boat that keeps open the traffic between this shore and the shore of Paradise,—this is our King's mail-boat for the communication of messages, and not for carrying cargo to the markets." I say to him: "I fully agree with you; but, at the same time, take my warning, that your mail-boat may have to be commandeered for other urgent purposes, wholly unconnected with the Celestial Postal Department." His cheeks pale; his eyes become bemisted, his frail body shivers like a cypress at the first breath of winter, and he says to me: "Do I deserve to be treated like this? Have you lost all your love for me, that you can talk of putting me

under martial law? Did you not drink your first cup of *Amrita* from my hand, and has not the Citizenship of the Sphere of Music been conferred upon you through my persuasion?" I sit dumb, and muse and sigh, when sheaves of newspaper-cuttings are poured upon my table, and a leer is spread upon the face of the Practical man; he winks at the Patriotic man sitting solemnly by his side; and the man who is Good, thinks it his painful duty to oppose the Poet, whom he is ready to treat with some indulgence within proper limits. As for me, who am the President of this *Panchayet*, I have my deepest sentiment of tenderness for this poet, possibly because he is so utterly good-for-nothing and always the first to be ignored in the time of emergency. The timid Poet, avoiding the observation of the Practical and the Good comes to my side and whispers: "Sir, you are not a man made for the time of emergency,—but for the time that transcends it on all sides." The rascal knows how to flatter and generally wins his case with me,—especially when others are too cocksure of the result of their appeal; and I jump up from my judgment seat, and, holding the Poet by the hand, dance a jig dance and sing: "I shall join you, Comrade, and be drunk, and be gloriously useless." Ah, my evil luck! I know why the Presidents of meetings hate me, newspaper editors revile me, the virile call me effeminate; and I try to take my shelter among children, who have the gift of being glad with things and men that have no value.

## III

S. S. RHYNDAM.

My difficulty is that when, in my environment, some intense feeling of pride or resentment concentrates its red light within a certain limited area, I lose my true perspective of life and the world and it deeply hurts my nature. It is not true that I do not have any special love for my own country, but when it is in its normal state it does not obstruct outside reality; on the contrary, it offers a standpoint and helps me in my natural relationship with others. But when that stand-

point itself becomes a barricade, then something in me asserts that my place is somewhere else. I have not yet attained that spiritual altitude from which I can say, with perfect assurance, that such barricading is wrong, or even unnecessary; but some instinct in me says, that there is a great deal of unreality in it, as there is in all passions that are generated through contraction of consciousness, through rejection of a great part of truth. I remember your wondering why Christ gave no expression to his patriotism, which was so intense in the Jewish people. It was because the great truth of man, which he realised, through his love of God, would only be cramped and crushed within that enclosure. I have a great deal of the patriot and the politician in me, and therefore I am frightened of them, and I have an inner struggle against submitting myself to their sway. But I must not be misunderstood,—there is such a thing as moral standard of judgment. When India suffers from injustice, it is right that we should stand against it; and the responsibility is ours to right the wrong not as Indians, but as human beings. There your position is higher than most of our countrymen's. You have accepted the cause of India for the sake of humanity. But I know that most of our people will accept your help as a matter of course, and yet reject your lesson. You are fighting against that patriotism with which the West has humiliated the East—the patriotism which is racial egoism, national egoism, which is a comparatively later growth in European history and a far greater cause of misery and injustice in the human world than the blood-thirsty ferocity, the nomadic savagery in the primitive history of man. The Pathans came to India and the Moghals, and they perpetrated misdeeds in their heedlessness, but simply because they had no taint of patriotism, they did not attack India at the very root of her life, keeping themselves superciliously aloof. Gradually they were growing one with us; and just as the Normans and Saxons combined into a nation, our Muhammadan invaders would ultimately have lost their line of

separateness and contributed to the richness and strength of Indian civilization. We must remember that Hinduism is not the original Aryanism, in fact a greater portion of it is non-Aryan. Another great mixture had been awaiting us, the mixture with the Muhammadans. I know there were difficulties in its way,—but the greatest of all difficulties was lacking, the patriotism, the sacrilegious idolatry of Geography. Just see what hideous crimes are being committed by British patriotism in Ireland;—it is a python which refuses to disgorge this live creature which struggles to live its separate life. For patriotism is proud of its bulk, and in order to hold in a bond of unity the units that have their own distinct individualities, it is ever ready to use means that are inhuman. Our own patriots would do just the same thing, if the occasion arose. When a minority of our population claimed its right of inter-caste marriage, the majority cruelly refused to allow it that freedom; it would not acknowledge a difference which was fundamental, and was willing to perpetrate a moral torture far more reprehensible than a physical one. Why? Because power lies in number and in extension. Power, whether in the patriotic or in any other form, is no lover of freedom. It talks of unity—but forgets that unity is unity of freedom, uniformity is unity of bondage. Suppose, in our Swaraj, the anti-Brahmin community refuses to join hands with us; suppose for the sake of its self-respect and self-expression, it tries to keep an absolute independence,—patriotism will try to coerce it into an unholy union. Because patriotism has its passion of power; and power builds its castle upon arithmetic. I love India, but my India is an idea and not a geographical expression, and therefore I am *not* a patriot,—I shall ever seek my compatriots all over the world. You are one of them, and I am sure there are many others.

## IV

S. S. RHYNDAM.

Plato threatened to banish all poets from his republic. Was it in pity or in

anger, I wonder? Will our Indian *Swaraj*, when it comes to exist, pass a deportation order against all those feckless creatures, who are pursuers of phantoms and fashioners of dreams, who neither dig nor sow, bake nor boil, spin nor darn, neither move nor second nor support resolutions? I have often tried to imagining the banished hordes of poets establishing their own Republic in the near neighbourhood of that of Plato. Naturally, as an act of reprisal, His Excellency the Poet President is sure to banish from the Rhymers' Republic all philosophers and politicians. Just think of the endless possibilities arising from feuds and truces of these rival Republics,—peace conferences, deputations of representatives, institutions with busy secretaries and permanent funds having for their object the bridging of the gulf between the two adversaries. Then think of a trivial accident through which a hapless young man and a melancholy maiden coming from the opposite territories meet at the frontier and owing to the influence of the conjunction of their respective planets fall in love with each other. There is no harm in supposing that the young man is the son of the President of the Philosophers' Republic while the maiden is the daughter of that of the Poets. The immediate consequence is the secret smuggling of forbidden love-lyrics by the desperate youth into the very heart of the commentaries and controversies of the two contradictory schools of Philosophy,—the one professed by the yellow turbanned sages proclaiming that *one* is true and *two* is nought, and the other, which is the doctrine of the green-turbanned sages, asserting that *two* is truth and *one* is an illusion. Then came the day of the great meeting, presided over by the Philosopher President, when the Pandits of opposite factions met to fight their dialectic duels finally to decide the truth. The din of debates grew into a tumultuous hubbub, the supporters of both parties threatened violence and the throne of truth was usurped by shouts. When these shouts were about to be transmuted into blows, there appeared in the arena the pair of lovers,

who, on the full moon light of April were secretly wedded, though such inter-marriage was against the law. When they stood in the open partition between the two parties, a sudden hush fell upon the assembly. How this unexpected and yet ever to be expected event, mixed with texts liberally quoted from the proscribed love-lyrics, ultimately helped to reconcile the hopeless contradiction in logic, is a long story. It is well-known to those who have had the privilege to pursue the subsequent verdict of the judges, that both doctrines are held to be undoubtedly true, that, *one* is in *two* and therefore *two* must find itself in *one*. The acknowledgment of this principle helped to make the intermarriage valid, and since then the two Republics have successfully carried out their disarmament, having discovered for the first time, that the gulf between them was imaginary. Such a simple and happy ending of this drama has caused widespread unemployment and consequent feeling of disgust among the vast number of secretaries and missionaries belonging to the institutions maintained, with the help of permanent funds, for the preaching of Union—those organisations which were so enormously perfect in their machinery, that they could well afford to ignore the insignificant fact of their barrenness of result. A large number of these individuals gifted with an ineradicable passion for doing good are joining the opposite organisations, which have their permanent funds in order to help them to prove and to preach that two is two and never the twain shall meet.

That the above story is a true one will, I am sure, be borne out by the testimony of even the august shade of Plato himself. This episode of the game of hide and seek of one in two should be sung by some poet, and therefore I request you to give it, with my blessings, to Satyendranath Datta that he may set it in those inimitable verse forms of which he is a master—and make it ring with the music of happy laughter.

V

S. S. RHYNDAM.

The sea has been exceedingly rough—

the wild East wind, playing its snake-charmer's bagpipe, has made a myriad of hissing waves raise their hoods to the sky. The rude handling by the sea does not affect me much, but the gloom and unrest and the tremendous rise and fall of the waves, like a giant's beating of the breast in despair, depress my mind. The sad thought very often comes to me, with an imaginary supposition, that I may never reach the Indian shore and my heart aches with a longing to see the arms of my motherland extended into the sea with the palm leaves rustling in the air. It is the land where I gazed into the eyes of my first great sweetheart—my muse—who made me love the sunlight, touching the top of the cocoanut row through a pale mist of the serene autumn morning, and the storm-laden rain-clouds rolling up from some abyss behind the horizon, carrying in their dark folds a thrilling expectation of a mad outburst of showers. But where is this sweetheart of mine, who was almost the only companion of my boyhood, and with whom I spent my idle days of youth exploring the mysteries of dream-land? She, my Queen, has died; and my world has shut against me the door of that inner apartment of beauty, which gives the real taste of freedom. I feel like Shah-Jehan when his beloved Mumtaz was dead—and now I have left to me my own progeny a magnificent plan of an International University,—but it will be like Aurangzeb, who will keep me imprisoned and become my lord and master to the end of my days. Every day my fear and distrust against it are growing in strength. For it has been acquiring power from outside my own resources, and it is material power. Shantiniketan has been the playground of my own spirit. What I created on its soil was made of my own dream-stuff. Its materials are few; its regulations are elastic; its freedom has the inner restraint of beauty. But the International University will be stupendous in weight and rigid in construction, and if we try to move it, it will crack.—It will grow up into a bully of a brother, and browbeat its sweet elder sister into a cowering state of subjection. Beware

of organisation, my friend! They say organisation is necessary in order to give a thing its permanence, but it may be the permanence of a tombstone. This letter of mine will seem to you pessimistic. The reason is I am unwell and utterly homesick; and the vision of home, which haunts my mind, night and day, is আমাদের শান্তিনিকেতন [ Amader Shantiniketan =Our Shantiniketan ], and the big towers of International University obstruct its view. I am tired to the marrow of my bones trying all these months for a purpose and working in a direction which is against the natural current of my inner being.

## VI

S. S. RHYNDAM.

You, who are given a stable and solid surface to work out your problems of daily life, cannot fully realise what a trial it has been for us, these two days, to be tossed upon a wild sea every moment of our existence. I do not feel sea-sick,—but the great fact for us is, that we are the children of the land,—this is an immovable fact,—and yet, when this fact begins to move, it is not only misery but an affront to us. The whole sea seems to laugh loud at the conceited creatures who only have a pair of tottering legs and not even a fraction of a fin. Every moment the dignity of man is outraged in making him helplessly tumble about in an infinite variety of awkwardness. He is compelled to take part in a very broad farce: and nothing can be more humiliating for him than to exhibit a comic appearance in his very sufferings,—it is like making the audience roar with laughter by having the clown kicked into all manner of helpless absurdities. While sitting, walking, taking meals we are constantly being hurled about into unexpected postures, which are shamefully inconvenient. When Gods try to become funny in their sublime manner of perpetrating jokes, we, mortal creatures, find ourselves at a terrible disadvantage; for their huge laughter, carried by the millions of roaring waves, in flashing foam, keeps its divine dignity

unimpaired, while we, on our side, find our self-respect knocked into pieces. I am the only individual in this steamer, who is vying with the Gods by fashioning my misery into laughing words and refusing to be a mere passive instrument of an elemental foolery. A laughter, which is tyranny, has to be answered by another laughter which is rebellion. And this letter of mine carries the laughter of defiance. I had no other object in sitting down to write this morning; I had nothing particular to say to you,—and to try to think when the ship is rolling in such an insane manner, is like trying to carry a full vessel of water while one is drunk,—the greater part of the content is spilt. And yet I must write this letter, merely to show, that, though at the present moment I cannot stand erect on my legs, I can write. This is to assert, in the face of the ironical clapping of hands of the mighty Atlantic, that my mind, not only can stand up straight in its world

of language, but can run, and even dance. This is my triumph.

To-day is Tuesday,—on the morning of Thursday we are expected to reach Plymouth. I had been nourishing in my heart the expectation of finding your letters waiting for me in London; for I had hoped that R — had cabled to Thos. Cook's about our movements. But I find that he has not, and a number of your letters will take nearly a month to find me. I cannot tell you what a disappointment it is for me. Your letters have helped me more than anything else during these extremely trying months of my exile,—they have been like food and water to a soldier who is dragging his wounded and weary limbs, counting every step, across a difficult and doubtful road back to his camp-fire. However, I am coming to my journey's end and intensely hoping to see you, when I reach home. What I have suffered God only knows.— I am longing for rest.

## ON THE TEACHING OF APPLIED CHEMISTRY

( *A paper read before the Students' Society, Lucknow.* )

BY DR. E. R. WATSON, M.A., D.SC.,

PRINCIPAL, TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, CAWNPORE.

I HAVE now been in this province nearly two years. I came to start a Research Institute whose primary function was to be chemical research for the assistance and development of the industries of this province. But at the request of the Legislative Council the function of the Institute was reconsidered, it has been re-named the Technological Institute and in addition to the work originally intended we shall now teach students applied chemical research and we shall also train works chemists for the oil, leather and textile industries. We have already made a start in the teaching world by admitting a few students for the research course and a few to train as oil chemists. The

Institute has now a definite connection with the Universities because the B. Sc., degree is our entrance qualification.

I have chosen for the object of my address one which is not only of great interest to the Technological Institute but is also at the present time receiving the attention of nearly all Universities.

At the present time it is generally admitted that a knowledge of chemistry is of considerable practical value. In the past the recognition of this fact has been by no means so general as at present. Germany has always been the foremost country in recognising the practical value of Chemistry and in the Great War she utilised her chemical resources and her



and September last. This also explains their demand to be taken into the South African Union as an integral part of that Union. For they were ready to sacrifice

everything else, if only the white race supremacy itself remained unbroken.

C. F. ANDREWS.

*Calicut.*

## A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

### I

#### THE UNCLE.

**W**HEN I first met Satish he appeared to me like a constellation of stars, his eyes shining, his tapering fingers like flames of fire, his face glowing with a youthful radiance. I was surprised to find that most of his fellow students hated him for no other fault than that he resembled himself more than he resembled others. With men, as with insects, taking the colour of the surroundings is often the best means of self-protection.

The students in the hostel, where I lived, could easily guess my reverence for Satish. This caused them discomfort and they never missed an opportunity of reviling him in my hearing. If you have a speck of dust in your eye, it is best not to rub it. And when words smart, it is best to leave them unanswered.

But, one day, the calumny against Satish was so gross that I could not remain silent.

Yet the trouble was, that I hardly knew anything about Satish; we seldom even had a word between us; while some of the other students were his close neighbours, and some his distant relatives. These affirmed, with assurance, that what they said was true; and I asserted, with even greater assurance, that it was incredible. Whereupon all my fellow inmates of the hostel bared their arms, and cried: "What impertinence!"

That night I was vexed to tears. Next day, in an interval between lectures, when Satish was reading a book, lying at full length on the grass in College Square, I went up to him and, without a word of introduction, blurted out my agitation in a confused manner, scarcely knowing what I said.

Satish shut his book and looked in my face. Those who have not seen his eyes will not know what that look was like. He said to me: "Those who libel me do so,

not because they love to know the truth, but because they love to believe evil of me. Therefore it is useless to try to prove to them that the calumny is untrue."

"But," I protested, "must not the liars be —"

"They are not liars," interrupted Satish.

"I had a poor young neighbour," he went on, "who had epileptic fits. Last winter I gave him a blanket. My servant came to me, in a furious temper, and told me that the boy only feigned the disease. These students, who malign me, are like that servant of mine. They believe what they say. Possibly my fate has awarded me an extra blanket which they think would have suited them better."

I ventured on the question: "Is it true what they say, that you are an atheist?"

He said: "Yes."

I had to hang my head. What about my vehement assertion that Satish could not possibly be an atheist?

I had received two severe blows at the outset of my short acquaintance with Satish. I had imagined that he was a Brahman, but came to know that Satish belonged to a Bania family, and I in whose veins flowed a bluer blood was bound duly to despise all Banias. Secondly, I had a rooted belief that atheists were worse than murderers, nay, worse even than beef-eaters.

Nobody could have imagined, even in a dream, that I would ever sit down and take my meals with a Bania student, or that my fanatical zeal in the creed of atheism would surpass even that of my instructor. Yet both these things came to pass.

Wilkins was our Professor in the College.

His learning was as high as his opinion of his pupils was low. He felt that it was a menial occupation to teach literature to Bengali students. That is why, even in our Shakespeare class, he would give us the synonym for 'cat' as "a quadruped of the feline species." But Satish was excused from taking down these notes. The Professor told him: "I will make good to you the hours wasted in this class, when you come to my room."

The other less favoured students used to ascribe this partiality for Satish to his fair complexion and to his profession of atheism. Some of the more worldly-wise among them went to Wilkins' study, with a great show of enthusiasm, to borrow from him some book on Positivism. But he refused, saying that it would be beyond their understanding. That they should be held unfit even to cultivate atheism, made their minds all the more bitter against Satish.

( 2 )

Jagamohan was Satish's uncle. He was a notorious atheist of that time. It would be inadequate to say that he did not believe in God,—rather he vehemently believed in 'No God.' As the business of a Captain in the Navy is more to sink ships than to steer clear, so it was Jagamohan's business to sink the creed of theism, wherever it put its head above water.

The order of his arguments ran like this :

If there be a God, then we must owe our intelligence to him.

But our intelligence clearly tells us that there is no God.

Therefore God himself tells us that there is no God.

"Yet you Hindus," he would conclude, "have the effrontery to contradict God by asserting that he exists. For this sin, three and thirty million gods and goddesses rightly serve you people, by twisting your ears for your presumption."

Jagamohan was married when he was a mere boy. Before his wife died he had read Malthus. He never married again.

His younger brother, Harimohan, was the father of Satish. Harimohan's nature was so exactly the opposite of his elder brother's, that people might suspect me of fabricating it for the purpose of writing this story. But only stories have to be always on their guard to sustain their reader's confidence. Facts have no such responsibility

and laugh at incredulity. So, in this world, instances of two brothers, as exactly the opposite of one another as morning and evening, are by no means lacking.

Harimohan, in his infancy, had been a weakly child. His parents had tried to keep him safe from the attacks of all maladies by barricading him behind amulets and charms, dust taken from holy shrines, and blessings bought from innumerable Brahmans at enormous expense. When Harimohan grew up, he was physically robust enough, yet the tradition of his poor health lingered on in the family. So nobody claimed from him anything more arduous than that he should continue to live; and right dutifully did he fulfil all expectations by holding on to his life. At the same time, he never ceased to display the label that life in his case was more fragile than in most other mortals, and thus managed to divert towards himself the undivided attention of all his aunts and his mother. He had specially prepared meals served to him, and had less work, and more rest, than other members of the family. He was not allowed to forget for a moment that he was under the special protection, not only of his aforesaid mother and aunts, but also of the countless gods and goddesses presiding in the three regions of earth, sky and heaven. He thus acquired an attitude of prayerful dependence towards all the powers of the world, both seen and unseen: from police sub-inspectors, wealthy neighbours, and highly placed officials, to sacred cows and Brahmans.

Jagamohan's anxieties went altogether in the opposite direction. He would give a wide berth to men of power, lest the slightest suspicion of snobbishness should come near him. It was this same sentiment which had greatly to do with his defiance of the gods. His knees were too stiff to bend before those from whom favour could be expected.

Harimohan got himself married at the proper time,—that is to say, long before the time. After three sisters and three brothers, Satish was born. Everybody was struck by his resemblance to his uncle, and Jagamohan took possession of him as if he were his own son.

At first, Harimohan was glad of this, having regard to the educational advantage of the arrangement; for Jagamohan had the reputation of being the most eminent scholar of that period. He seemed to live within the

shell of his English books. It was easy to find the rooms he occupied in the house, by the rows of books about the walls; just as it is easy to know the bed of a stream by its lines of pebbles.

Harimohan petted and spoiled his eldest son, Purandar, to his heart's content. He had an impression that Purandar was too delicate to survive the shock of being denied anything he wanted. His education was neglected. No time was lost in getting him married; but that did not help to keep him within the connubial limits. Harimohan's daughter-in-law did not fail to express her emphatic disapprobation of her husband's excursions out of bounds, but Harimohan would only get angry with her and ascribe his son's conduct to her want of tact and charm.

Jagamohan took entire charge of Satish to save him from similar paternal solicitude. Satish acquired a mastery of the English language while he was still a child, and the inflammatory doctrines of Mill and Bentham set his brain on fire, till he began to burn like a living torch of atheism.

Jagamohan treated Satish, not as a ward, but as his boon companion. He held the opinion that veneration in human nature was a superstition, specially designed to make men into slaves. Some son-in-law of the family happened to write him a letter, with the usual formal beginning:

To the gracious feet of—

Jagamohan, in answer, proceeded to instruct him in this wise:

My dear Noren,

Neither you, nor I, know what special significance it gives to the feet to call them 'gracious'. Therefore the epithet is worse than useless and had better be dropped. And then it is apt to give your correspondent a nervous shock when you address your letter only to his feet, completely ignoring their owner. Please to understand that, so long as my feet are attached to my body, you should never dissociate them from their context. Next, you should bear in mind that human feet have not the advantage of prehensibility, and it is sheer madness to offer anything to them, confounding their natural function. Lastly, your use of the word 'feet' in the honorific plural instead of the dual inflection, may denote special reverence on your part (because there are animals with four feet which have your particular veneration) but I consider it my duty to disabuse your mind of all errors concerning my own zoological identity.

Yours,

Jagamohan.

Jagamohan used to discuss with Satish subjects which are usually kept out of sight in polite conversation. If people objected to this plainness of speech with one so young, he would say that, just as you can only drive away hornets by breaking up their nest, so you can only get rid of the shamefulness of certain subjects by breaking through the shame itself.

When Satish had completed his college course, Harimohan tried his best to extricate him from his uncle's influence. But when once the noose is round the neck, it only grows tighter by pulling at it. Harimohan became more and more annoyed with his brother, the more Satish proved recalcitrant. If this atheism of his son and elder brother had been merely a matter of private opinion, Harimohan could have tolerated it. He was quite ready to pass off dishes of fowl as 'kid curry'.\* But matters had now become so desperate, that even lies were powerless to whitewash the culprits. What brought things to a head was this.

The positive side of Jagamohan's atheistic creed consisted in doing good to others. He felt a special pride in it, because doing good, for an atheist, was a matter of unmitigated loss. It had no allurements of merit, and no deterrents of punishment, in the hereafter. If he was asked, what concern he had in bringing about 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number,' he used to answer that his best incentive was, that he could expect nothing in return. He would say to Satish: "Baba,† we are atheists, so the very pride of it should keep us stainless. Because we have no respect for any being higher than ourselves, we must all the more respect ourselves."

There were some leather shops in the neighbourhood kept by Mussalman dealers. The uncle and nephew bestirred themselves with great zeal and at considerable expense in doing good to these untouchable leather dealers. This made Harimohan beside himself with indignation. Since he knew that any appeal to scriptures, or to tradition, would have no effect upon these two

\* In Bengal, kid curry may be eaten by Hindus without blame, but the flesh of the domestic fowl is one of the prohibited meats.

† A term of endearment, literally "father".

renegades, he complained to his brother concerning such wasting of their patrimony.

"When my expenditure," his brother answered, "comes up to the amount you have spent upon your full-fed Brahman priests, we shall be quits."

One day, Harimohan's people were surprised to find preparations going on in Jagamohan's quarters for a grand feast. The cooks and waiters were all Mussalmans. Harimohan called for his son and taxed him angrily: "I hear that you are going to give a feast to your respected friends, the leather-dealers."

Satish replied that he was far too poor to think of such a thing. It was his uncle who had invited them.

Satish's elder brother, Purandar, was equally indignant. He threatened to drive all these unclean guests away.

When Harimohan expressed his protest to his brother the latter answered: "I never make any objection to your offering food to your idols. You should make none to my offering food to my gods."

"Your gods!" exclaimed Harimohan.

"Yes, my gods," his brother repeated.

"Have you turned Theist\* all of a sudden?" sneered Harimohan.

"No!" retorted his brother. "Theists worship a God who is invisible. You idolators worship gods who are visible, but dumb and deaf. The gods I worship are both visible and audible, and it is impossible not to believe in them."

"Do you mean to say," cried Harimohan, "that these mussulman leather-dealers are really your gods?"

"Yes, indeed," said Jagamohan. "You shall see their miraculous power when I put food before them. They will actually swallow it, which I defy your gods to do. It delights my heart to see my gods perform such divine wonders. If you have not become morally blind, it will delight your heart also."

Purandar came to his uncle and swore in a high-pitched voice that he was prepared to take desperate measures to put a stop to the proceedings.

Jagamohan laughed at him: "You monkey! Just you try to lay hands on my gods, and you will instantly discover how powerful they

are. I shall not have to trouble to defend them."

Purandar was even a greater coward than his father. He played the tyrant only where he felt sure of receiving submission. In this case he could not screw up courage enough to risk a quarrel with his Mussalman neighbours. So he went over to Satish, instead, and reviled him. Satish gazed at him with those wonderful eyes of his, and remained silent.

The feast was a great success.

( 3 )

Harimohan could not take this insult passively. He declared war. The property on whose income the whole family subsisted was a temple endowment. Harimohan brought a suit in the law court against his brother, accusing him of grave breaches of orthodox propriety which made him unworthy of continuing as a beneficiary of a Hindu religious endowment. Harimohan had as many witnesses as ever he wished. The whole Hindu neighbourhood was ready to support him.

Jagamohan professed in open court, that he had no faith in gods or idols of any description whatever: that all eatable food was for him food to be eaten: that he never bothered his head to find out the particular limb of Brahma from which the Mussalmans had issued, and so had not the smallest hesitation in taking food in their company.

The judge decreed Jagamohan to be unfit to take any benefit from this temple property. Jagamohan's lawyers assured him that this decision could be upset by an appeal to the higher court. But Jagamohan refused to appeal. He said he would rather not cheat even the gods whom he did not believe in. Only those, who had the intelligence to believe such things, could have the conscience to betray them.

His friends asked him: "How are you going to maintain yourself?"

He answered: "If I have nothing else left to swallow, I shall be content to gulp down my last breaths."

After this, a partition was made of the family house. A wall was raised from the ground floor to the uppermost story, dividing the house into two parts.

Harimohan had great faith in the selfish sanity of prudence in human nature. He was certain that the savour of good living would tempt Satish into his golden trap, away

\* Meaning monotheist, i.e., one who does not believe in caste or ritualistic observances and thus is looked upon as a non-Hindu by the orthodox.

from the empty nest of Jagamohan. But Satish gave another proof that he had inherited neither his father's conscience, nor his sanity. He remained with his uncle.

Jagamohan had become so accustomed to look upon Satish as his own, that he took it as a matter of course when he found him remaining on his side after the partition.

But Harimohan knew his brother's temperament very well. He went about explaining to people that the reason why Jagamohan did not let go his hold on Satish was in order to make a good thing out of his brother by keeping his son as a kind of hostage. Harimohan almost shed tears as he complained to his neighbours: "Could my brother ever imagine that I was going to let him starve, that he should go to the length of concocting this diabolical plot against me? However, I shall now wait and see whether he is cleverer than I am."

Harimohan's insinuations, helped on by mutual friends, duly reached his brother's ears. Jagamohan was surprised at his own stupidity in not anticipating such a move on his brother's part.

He said: "Good bye, Satish."

Satish was absolutely certain that nothing could make Jagamohan change his mind, so he had to take his leave, after having spent his eighteen years of life in his uncle's company.

When Satish had put his books and things on the top of the carriage and driven away, Jagamohan shut the door of his room and flung himself on the floor. When evening came, and the old servant knocked at the door with the lighted lamp, he got no answer.

Alas for the greatest happiness of the greatest number! The estimate in number is not all that counts in human affairs. The man who gains 'one' may go beyond all arithmetic, when the heart does the sum. When Satish took his departure, he at once became infinite to Jagamohan.

Satish went into a students' lodging to share a room with one of his friends. Harimohan shed tears while meditating on the neglect of filial duties in this god-forsaken age. Harimohan had a very tender heart.

After the partition, Purandar dedicated a room in their portion of the house to the family god. It gave him a peculiar pleasure to know that his uncle must be execrating him for the noise raised every morning and evening by the sacred conches and prayer gongs.

In order to maintain himself, Satish secured a post as a private tutor. Jagamohan obtained an appointment as headmaster of a high school. And it became a religious duty with Harimohan and Purandar to persuade parents and guardians to take away their boys from the malign influence of the atheist, Jagamohan.

( 4 )

One day, after a long interval of absence, Satish came to Jagamohan. These two had given up the usual form of greeting\* which passes between younger and elder. Jagamohan embraced Satish and led him to a chair and asked him for the news.

There was news indeed!

A girl named Nonibala had taken shelter with her widowed mother in the house of the mother's brother. So long as her mother lived, there was no trouble. But a short time ago her mother had died. Her cousins were rascals. One of their friends had taken away this girl. Then after a while, suspecting her of infidelity, he made her life a constant torture. This had happened in the house next to the one where Satish had his tutorship. Satish wanted to save her from this misery, but he had no money or shelter of his own. Therefore he had come to his uncle. The girl was about to give birth to a child.

Jagamohan, when he heard the story, was filled with indignation. He was not the man to calculate coldly the consequence of his deeds, and he at once said to his nephew: "I have the room in which I keep my books. I can put the girl there."

"But what about your books?" Satish asked in surprise.

Very few books, however, were now remaining. During the time while he had been unable to secure an appointment, he had been obliged to eke out a living by selling his books.

Jagamohan said: "Bring the girl here at once."

"She is waiting downstairs, I have brought her here."

Jagamohan ran downstairs, and found the girl crouching in a corner, wrapped in her *sari*, looking like a bundle of clothes.

\* This greeting in Penglal is for the younger to touch the feet of the elder and for the latter to give his blessing in return.



Jagamohan, greeted her at once in his deep bass voice : "Come, little mother,\* why do you sit in the dust ?"

The girl covered her face and burst into tears. Jagamohan was not a man to give way to emotion, but his eyes were wet as he turned to Satish, and said : "The burden that this girl is bearing is ours."

Then he continued to the girl : "Mother, don't be shy with me. My schoolfellows used to call me 'Mad Jagai', and I am the same madcap even now."

Without the least hesitation, he took the girl by both her hands and raised her. The veil dropped from off her head. Her face was fresh and infantile in its youthfulness,—there was no line of hardness or vice in it. The inner purity of her heart had not been stained, just as a speck of dust does not soil a flower.

Jagamohan took Nonibala to his upper room, and addressed her thus : "Mother, look what a state my room is in ! The floor is all unswept. Everything is upside down ; and as for myself, I have no fixed hour for my bath or my meals. Now that you have come to my house, everything will be put right ; and even this mad Jagai will be made respectable."

Nonibala had never felt before, even when her mother lived, how much one person could be to another ; because her mother had looked upon her, not so much as a daughter, but as a young girl who had to be watched.

Jagamohan employed an elderly woman servant to help Nonibala. At first Noni was afraid, lest Jagamohan should refuse to take food from her hand, because of her impurity. But as it turned out, he refused to take his meals unless they were cooked and served by his little mother.

Jagamohan was aware that a great wave of calumny was about to break over his head. Noni also felt that it was inevitable, and she had no peace of mind. Within a day or two it began.

The servant who waited on her had at first supposed that Noni was Jagamohan's daughter. But she came one day and said hard things to Noni, and resigned her service in contempt. Nani became pale with fear, thinking of Jagamohan.

Jagamohan said to her : "My little mother,

\* Way of addressing a daughter, or one situated as a daughter.

the full moon is up in the horizon of my life, so the time is ripe for the flood tide of revilement. But, however muddy the water may become, it will never stain my moonlight."

An aunt of Jagamohan's came from Hari-mohan's quarters muttering : "Jagai, what a disgrace, what a disgrace ! Wipe off this stain of sin from your house."

Jagamohan answered : "You are pious people, and this feeling is worthy of you. But, if I drive away all relics of sin, what will become of this sinner ?"

Some old woman of a grandmother came to him with the advice : "Send the wench away to the hospital. Harimohan is ready to bear all the cost."

"But she is my mother," replied Jagamohan. "Because someone else is ready to pay the expenses, should I send my mother to the hospital ?"

The grandmother opened her eyes wide. "Who is this you call your mother ?" she asked, in surprise.

Jagamohan replied : "One who nourishes life within her womb and is risking her own life to give birth to a child. I cannot call the other scoundrel-parent of the child 'Father'. He can only cause trouble, keeping himself safely out of it."

Harimohan's whole body shrank at the utter infamy of the thing. That a fallen woman should be sheltered only on the other side of the wall, and in the midst of a household sacred to the memory of generations of mothers and grandmothers ! The disgrace was intolerable.

Harimohan at once surmised that Satish was mixed up in this affair, and that his uncle was encouraging him in his shameful conduct. He was so sure of his facts that he went about spreading the news. Jagamohan did not say a single word to contradict him.

"For us, atheists," he said, "the only heaven waiting for good deeds is calumny."

The more the rumour of Jagamohan's doings became distorted, the more he seemed to enjoy it, and his laughter rang loud in the sky. It was hardly possible for Harimohan, and respectable people of his class, to imagine that the uncle could go so far as to jest openly on such a subject and indulge in loud unseemly buffoonery about it with his own nephew.

Though Purandar so long had been carefully avoiding his uncle's part of the house, he

vowed that he would never rest now till he had driven the girl away from her shelter.

At the time when Jagamohan had to go to his school, he would shut up all access to his quarters, and he would come back the moment he had any leisure, to see how Noni was faring.

One day, at noon, Purandar, with the help of a bamboo ladder crossed the boundary parapet over the terrace roof and jumped down on Jagamohan's side of the house. Nonibala was resting after the mid-day meal. The door of her room was open. When Purandar, coming down from the terrace, caught sight of her sleeping figure he gave a great start and shouted: "Ah, I see, so you are here, are you?"

Noni woke up and saw Purandar before her. She went pale as death and her limbs stiffened, leaving her powerless to rise, or to utter a single word.

Purandar, trembling with rage, shouted again: "Noni!"

Just then Jagamohan entered the room from behind. "Get out of this house," he commanded.

Purandar's whole body began to swell up like an angry cat. Jagamohan insisted: "If you don't get out at once, I will call in the police."

Purandar darted a terrible glance at Noni as he went away. Noni fainted.

Jagamohan now understood the whole situation. He found out by his questions that Satish had been aware that Purandar had seduced Noni: but fearing an angry outbreak he had not informed Jagamohan of the fact.

For days after this incident Noni trembled like a bamboo leaf. Then she gave birth to a dead child.

One midnight Purandar had driven Noni from the room kicking her in a fit of temper. Since then he had sought her in vain. When he suddenly found her in his uncle's house, he was seized with an uncontrollable passion of jealousy. He was sure that Satish had enticed her away from him, to keep her for his own pleasure, and had then put her in that very house in order to insult him. This was more than any mortal man could bear.

Harimohan heard all about it. Indeed, Purandar never took any pains to hide these doings from him: for the father looked upon the son's moral aberrations with a kindly indulgence. But Harimohan thought

it contrary to all notions of decency for Satish to snatch away this girl whom his elder brother, Purandar, had looked upon with favour. He devoutly hoped that Purandar would be successful in recovering his spoil.

It was the time of the Christmas holidays. Jagamohan attended Noni night and day. One evening he was translating a novel of Sir Walter Scott's to her, when Purandar burst into the room with another young man.

On Jagamohan threatening to call for the police, the young man said: "I am Noni's cousin. I have come to take her with me."

Jagamohan caught hold of Purandar by the neck and shoved him out of the room and down the stairs. He then turned to the other young man, shouting: "You are a villain and a scoundrel! You assert this cousin's right of yours in order to wreck her life, not to protect her."

The young man hurried away. But when he had got to a safe distance, he swore that he would take legal proceedings in order to rescue his ward.

"Open, O earth, and hide me away!" was Noni's prayer.\*

Jagamohan called Satish and said to him: "Let me leave this place and go to some up-country town with Noni. It will kill her if this is repeated."

Satish pointed out that his brother was certain to follow her, once he got the clue.

"Then what do you propose?" asked Jagamohan.

"Let me marry Noni."

"Marry Noni!"

"Yes, according to the civil marriage rites."

Jagamohan stood up, went to Satish and pressed him to his heart.

Since the partition of the house, Harimohan had not once been over to see his elder brother. But that day he came in, dishevelled, and said: "Dada,† what disaster is this you are planning?"

"I am saving everybody from disaster," replied Jagamohan.

"Satish is just like a son to you," Harimohan pleaded. "Yet you can have the heart to let him be married to that woman of the street!"

\* Sita, in the Ramayan, uttered this cry in the extremity of her insult.

† Elder brother.

"Yes," rejoined Jagamohan, "I have brought him up as my own son, and I consider that my pains have borne fruit at last."

"Dada," said Harimohan, "I humbly acknowledge defeat at your hands. I am willing to write away half my property to you, if only you will not take revenge on me like this."

Jagamohan started up from his chair as he bellowed out: "You want to throw me your dirty leavings, as you throw a dog a bone! I am an atheist,—remember that! I am not a pious man like you! I neither take revenge, nor beg for favours."

Harimohan hastened round to his son's lodgings. He cried out to him: "Satish! What in the world are you about to do? Can you think of no other way of ruining yourself? Are you determined to plunge the whole family into this hideous shame?"

Satish calmly answered: "I have no particular desire to marry. I am doing it in order to save the family from hideous shame."

Harimohan was shocked: "Have you not the least spark of conscience left in you? That girl, who is almost like a wife to your brother—"

Satish caught him up sharply: "Wife!" he exclaimed. "Pollute not that word, sir, I pray you."

After that Harimohan became wildly abusive, and Satish remained silent.

What troubled Harimohan most was that Purandar openly advertised his intention to commit suicide, if Satish married Noni. Purandar's wife merely told her husband with her compliments that this would be the best solution of a difficult problem, if only he could muster up the courage to do it!

Satish had sedulously maintained a distance from Noni all these days, but when the proposed marriage was settled, Jagamohan suggested that Satish and Noni should try to know each other better, before they were united in wedlock. Satish consented.

Jagamohan fixed a day for their first talk together. He said to Noni: "My little

mother, you must dress yourself up for the occasion."

Noni bent her eyes to the ground, hesitating.

"No, no," he insisted, "don't be shy, Noni. I have a great longing to see you nicely dressed, and you really must satisfy my desire." He had specially selected a Benares silk *sari* with a suitable bodice and veil for Noni. These he now handed her.

Noni prostrated herself at his feet. This made Jagamohan get up hurriedly.

He snatched away his feet from her embrace, protesting: "I am afraid, Noni, I have miserably failed in clearing your mind of all this superstitious reverence. I may be your elder in age, but don't you know you are greater than I am, for you are my mother?"

He then kissed her on the forehead, telling her: "I have an invitation to dine out, and I shall be late coming back this evening."

Noni clasped his hand. "Baba, I want your blessing to-night," was all she said.

"Mother," replied Jagamohan, "I see that you are determined to turn me into a believer in my old age. I wouldn't give a brass farthing for a blessing, myself. Yet I cannot help blessing you, every time I look on you."

Jagamohan put his hand under her chin, and raised her face, and gazed into it silently, while the tears ran down her cheeks.

( 5 )

In the evening a man ran up to the place where Jagamohan was having his dinner, and brought him back to his house.

He found the dead body of Noni, stretched on the bed, dressed in the things he had given her. In her hand was a letter. Satish was standing by her head. Jagamohan opened the letter and read:

Baba, forgive me. I cannot do what you wanted. I have tried my best, for your sake, but I could never forget him. My thousand salutations to your gracious feet.

Nonibala, the sinner.

(To be continued)

## CHANCE AND PLAN

**C**HANCE brings fortune to some men and we have got into the habit of overvaluing it. The difference between depending on luck, and relying upon an intelligent plan, is just the difference between waiting in a boat for a

fish to jump in, and going to a good place to fish with all the proper tackle and bait. Sometimes fish jump into boats, but a heap more are caught in the regular way on hooks.

—The American Boy.

class, which, constitutes 95 percent of the people, have nothing whatever to say about the imperial policy of the country. As he says,

"Where the subject peoples or smaller states attempt to assert their rights of self-determination or of independence, the Empire will act as Great Britain has acted in Ireland and in India; as Italy and France have acted in Africa; as Japan has acted in Korea; as the United States has acted in the Philippines, in Hayti, in Nicaragua and in Mexico."

A few significant passages are given here to show the opinions held by Nearing upon the last war-opinions such as led to his trial for "sedition".

"The *Chicago Tribune*, in one of its charmingly frank editorials, thus describes the gains to the British Empire as a result of the war. 'The British mopped up. They opened up their highway from Cairo to the Cape. They reached out from India and took the rich lands of the Euphrates. They won Mesopotamia and Syria in the war. They won Persia in diplomacy. They won the east coast of the Red Sea. They put protecting territory about Egypt and gave India bulwarks. They make the eastern dream of the Germans a British reality....'

"Egypt and India helped to win the late war, and by that very process they fastened the shackles of servitude more firmly upon their own hands and feet. The imperialists of the world never had less intention than they have today of quitting the game of empire-building."

The American Empire, says the author, will travel the same path as other Empires have trodden before. Preparations are being made now for another contest with the great world powers in the game of "grab". The same old story will be told, from the "preparedness" campaigns, the brutal oppressions and repressions, down to the time when "the killing is over and a few old men, sitting around a table will carve the world—stripping the vanquished while they reward the victors."

Against this world imperialism, this strangl-

ing capitalism, there is one protest—the revolutionary protest. The author traces this protest from the Russian revolution of 1905 down to the present Russian revolution, and of the revolutionary movements of Europe. Speaking of it, he says—

"This is the real struggle for the possession of the earth. Shall the few own and the many labor for the few, or the many own and labor upon jobs they themselves possess? The struggle between the capitalist nations is incidental. The struggle between the owners of the world and the workers of the world is fundamental."

For the American workers to travel any other road than the road of revolution means that they must pay the price of Empire. And what is this price, queries Nearing. He gives the answer, here summarized briefly:

1. It will cost them their liberties.
2. It will cost them not only their own liberties, but they will be compelled to take liberties away from the peoples that are brought under the domination of the Empire.
3. They will be compelled to produce surplus wealth for the imperial ruling class.
4. They must be prepared to create and maintain an imperial class.
5. They must be prepared, in peace time as well as in war time, to provide the "sinews of war".
6. In return for these sacrifices, they must be prepared to accept the poverty of a subsistence wage; to give the best of their energies in war and in peace, and to stand aside while the imperial class enjoys the fat of the land.

The new system, he says, "may establish a new economic order—a system belonging to the workers, and managed by them for their benefit. The workers of Europe have learned the way. It was no longer a question of wages or a job in Europe. It was a question of life or death."

Such are the opinions of a professor of economy and sociology, an avowed Pacifist, and at the same time, a Pacifist-revolutionary.

ALICE BIRD.

## A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

II.

SATISH

**T**HE last words of Jagamohan, the atheist, to his nephew, Satish, were: "If you have a fancy for funeral ceremony, don't waste it on your uncle,—reserve it for your father."

This is how he came by his death.

When the plague first broke out in Calcutta, the poor citizens were less afraid of the epidemic than of the preventive staff who wore its badge. Satish's father, Hari-mohan, was sure that their Mussulman neigh-

bours, the untouchable leather dealers, would be the first to catch it, and then defile him and his kith and kin by dragging them along into a common end. Before he fled from his house, Harimohan went over to offer refuge to his elder brother, saying: "I have taken a house on the river at Kalna, if you—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted Jagamohan. "How can I desert these people?"

"Which people?"

"These leather dealers of ours."

Harimohan made a grimace and left his brother without further parley. He next proceeded to his son's lodgings, and to him simply said: "Come along."

Satish's refusal was equally laconic. "I have work to do here," he replied.

"As pall bearer to the leather dealers, I suppose?"

"Yes sir, that is, if my services be needed."

"Yes sir, indeed! You scamp, you scoundrel, you atheist! If need be you're quite ready to consign fourteen generations of your ancestors to perdition, I have no doubt!"

Convinced that the Kali Yuga\* had touched its lowest depth, Harimohan returned home, despairing of the salvation of his next of kin. To protect himself against contamination he covered sheets of foolscap with the name of Kālī, the protecting goddess, in his neatest handwriting.

Harimohan left Calcutta. The plague and the preventive officials duly made their appearance in the locality; and for dread of being dragged off to the plague hospital, the wretched victims dared not call in medical aid. After a visit to one of these hospitals, Jagamohan shook his head and remarked: "What if these people are falling ill,—that does not make them criminals."

Jagamohan schemed and contrived till he obtained permission to use his own house as a private plague hospital. Some of us students offered to assist Satish in nursing: there was also a qualified doctor amongst us.

The first patient in our hospital was a Mussulman. He died. The next was Jagamohan himself. He did not survive either. He said to Satish: "The religion I have all

along followed has given me its last reward. There is nothing to complain of."

Satish had never taken the dust † of his uncle's feet while living. After Jagamohan's death he made that obeisance for the first and last time.

"Fit death for an atheist!" scoffed Harimohan when he first came across Satish after the cremation.

"That is so, sir!" agreed Satish, proudly.

2

Just as, when the flame is blown out, the light suddenly and completely disappears, so did Satish after his uncle's death. He went out of our ken altogether.

We had never been able to fathom how deeply Satish loved his uncle. Jagamohan was alike father and friend to him and, it may be said, son as well; for the old man had been so regardless of himself, so unmindful of worldly concerns, that it used to be one of the chief cares of Satish to look after him and keep him safe from disaster. Thus had Satish received from and given to his uncle, his all.

What the bleakness of his bereavement meant for Satish, it was impossible for us to conceive. He struggled against the agony of negation, refusing to believe that such absolute blankness could be true: that there could be emptiness so desolate as to be void even of Truth. If that which seemed one vast 'No' had not also its aspect of 'Yes', would not the whole universe leak away, through its yawning gap, into nothingness?

For two years Satish wandered from place to place,—we had no touch with him. We threw ourselves with all the greater zeal into our self-appointed tasks. We made it a special point to shock those who professed belief in any kind of religion, and the fields of good work we selected were such that not a good soul had a good word left for us. Satish had been our flower; when he dropped off, we, the thorns, cast off our sheaths and gloried in our sharpness.

3

Two years had passed since we lost sight of Satish. My mind revolted against harbouring the least thing evil against him, nevertheless I could not help suspecting that

\* According to the Hindu *Shastras* the present age, the Kali Yuga, is the Dark Age when Dharma (civilisation) will be at its lowest ebb.

† Touching the feet of a revered elder, and then one's own head, is called taking the dust of the feet. It is the formal way of doing reverence.



the high pitch, at which he used to be kept strung, must have been flattened down by this shock.

Uncle Jagamohan had once said of a *sannyasin*: "As the money changer tests the ring of each coin, so does the world test each man by the response he gives to shocks of loss and pain, the resistance he offers to the craze for cheap salvation. Those who fail to ring true are cast aside as worthless. These wandering ascetics have been so rejected, as being unfit to take part in the world's commerce,—yet the vagabonds swagger about, boasting that it is they who have renounced the world! The worthy are permitted no loophole of escape from duty—only withered leaves are allowed to fall off the tree."

Had it come to this, that Satish, of all people, had joined the ranks of the withered and the worthless? Was he, then, fated to leave on the black touchstone of bereavement his mark of spuriousness?

While assailed with these misgivings, news suddenly reached us that Satish (our Satish, if you please!) was making the welkin resound with his cymbals in some out of the way village, singing frenzied *kirtans*\* as follower of Lilananda Swami, the Vaishnava revivalist!

It had passed my comprehension, when I first began to know Satish, how he could ever have come to be an atheist. I was now equally at a loss to understand how Lilananda Swami could have managed to lead him such a dance with his *kirtans*.

And how on earth were we to show our faces? What laughter there would be in the camp of the enemy—whose number, thanks to our folly, was legion! Our band waxed mightily wroth with Satish. Many of them said they had known from the very first, that there was no rational substance in him,—he was all frothy idealism. And I now discovered how much I really loved Satish. He had dealt his ardent sect of atheists their death blow,—yet I could not be angry with him.

4

Off I started to hunt up Lilananda Swami. River after river I crossed, and trudged

\* The *kirtan* is a kind of devotional oratorio sung to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, the libretto ranging over the whole gamut of human emotions, which are made the vehicle for communion with the Divine Lover. As their feelings get worked up, the singers begin to sway their bodies with, and finally dance to the rhythm.

over endless fields. The nights I spent in grocers' shops. At last in one of the villages I came up against Satish's party.

It was then two o'clock in the afternoon. I had been hoping to catch Satish alone. Impossible! The cottage which was honoured with the Swami's presence was packed round with crowds of his disciples. There had been *kirtans* all the morning; those who had come from a distance were now waiting to have their meal served.

As soon as Satish caught sight of me, he bounded up and embraced me fervidly. I was staggered. Satish had always been extremely reserved. His outward calm had ever been the only measure of his depth of feeling. He now appeared as though intoxicated.

The Swami was resting in the front room, with the door ajar. He could see us. At once came the call, in a deep voice: "Satish!"

Satish was back inside, all in a flurry.

"Who is that?" inquired the Swami.

"Srivilas, a great friend of mine," Satish reported.

During these years I had managed to make a name for myself in our little world. A learned Englishman had remarked on hearing one of my English speeches: "The man has a wonderful —" but let that be, why add to the number of my enemies? Suffice it to say that, from the students up to the students' forbears, the reputation had travelled round that I was a rampaging atheist who could bestride the English language and race her over the hurdles at break-neck speed in the most marvellous manner.

I somehow felt that the Swami was pleased to have me here. He sent for me. I merely hinted at the usual salutation as I entered his room,—that is to say, my joined hands were uplifted, but my head was not lowered. Staunch pupils of Uncle Jagamohan as we were, our reverence was not directed to any outward object, as from a bent bow, but remained defiantly erect, like a bayonet on guard.

This did not escape the Swami. "Here, Satish!" he ordered. "Fill me that pipe of mine."

Satish set to work. But as he lit the tinder, it was I who was set ablaze within. Moreover, I was getting fidgety, not knowing where to sit. The only seat in the room was a wooden bedstead on which was spread the Swami's carpet. Not that I confessed to any

qualms about occupying a corner of the same carpet on which the great man was installed, but somehow my sitting down did not come off. I remained standing near the door.

It appeared that the Swami was aware of my having won the Premchand-Roychand\* scholarship. "My son," he said to me, "it is good for the pearl diver if he succeeds in reaching the bottom, but he would die if he had to stay there. He must come up for the free breath of life. If you would live, you must now come up to the light, out of the depths of your learning. You have enjoyed the fruits of your scholarship, now try a taste of the joys of its renunciation."

Satish handed his master the lighted pipe and sat down on the bare floor near his feet. The Swami leant back and stretched his legs out towards Satish, who began gently to massage them. This was more than I could stand. I left the room. I could of course see that this ordering about of Satish and making him fag, was deliberately directed at me.

The Swami went on resting. All the guests were duly served by the householder with a meal of kedgerree. From five o'clock the *kirtans* started again and went on till ten in the night.

When I got Satish alone at last, I said to him: "Look here, old fellow! You have been brought up in the atmosphere of freedom, from infancy. How have you managed to get yourself entangled in this kind of bondage to-day? Is Uncle Jagamohan, then, so utterly dead?"

Partly because the playfulness of affection prompted it, partly, perhaps, because precision of description required it, Satish used to reverse the first two syllables of my name and call me Visrit.

"Visri," he replied, "while Uncle was alive he gave me freedom in life's field of work,—the freedom which the child gets in the playground. After his death it is he, again, who has given me freedom on the high seas of emotion,—the freedom which the child gains when it comes back to its mother's arms. I have enjoyed to the full the freedom of life's day-time; why should I now deprive myself of the freedom of its evening? Be sure that both these are the gift of that same uncle of ours."

"Whatever you may say," I persisted, "Uncle could have nothing to do with this kind of pipe filling, leg-stroking business. Surely this is no picture of freedom."

"That," argued Satish, "was the freedom on shore. There Uncle gave full liberty of action to our limbs. This is freedom on the ocean. Here the confinement of the ship is necessary for our progress. That is why my Master keeps me bound to his service. This massaging is helping me to cross over."

"It does not sound so bad," I admitted, "the way you put it. But, all the same, I have no patience with a man who can thrust out his legs at you like that."

"He can do it," explained Satish, "because he has no need of such service. Had it been for himself, he might have felt ashamed to ask it. The need is mine."

I realised that the world into which Satish had been transported had no place for me, his particular friend. The person, whom Satish had so effusively embraced, was not I, Srivilas, but a representative of all humanity, just an idea. Such ideas are like wine. When they get into the head, anyone can be embraced and wept over,—I, only as much as anybody else. But whatever joys may be the portion of the ecstatic one, what can such embrace signify to me, the other party? What satisfaction am I to get, merely to be accounted one of the ripples on a grand, difference-obliterating flood,—I, the individual I?

However, further argument was clearly useless. Nor could I make up my mind to desert Satish. So, as his satellite, I also danced from village to village, carried along the current of *kirtan* singing.

The intoxication of it gradually took hold of me. I also embraced all and sundry, wept without provocation, and tended the feet of the Master. And one day in a moment of curious exaltation, Satish was revealed to me in a light, for which there can be no other name than divine.

## 5

With the capture of two such egregious, college-educated atheists, as we were, the fame of Lilananda Swami spread far and wide. His Calcutta disciples now pressed him to take up his head-quarters at the metropolis.

So Swami Lilananda came on to Calcutta. Shivatosh had been a devoted follower

\* The highest prize at the Calcutta University.

† Ungainly, ugly.

of Lilananda. Whenever the Swami visited Calcutta, he had stayed with Shivatosh. And it was the one delight of Shivatosh's life to serve the Master together with all his disciples, when they thus honoured his house. When he died he bequeathed all his property to the Swami, leaving only a life-interest in the income to his young childless widow. It was his hope that this house of his would become a pilgrim-centre for the Sect.

This was the house where we now went into residence.

During our ecstatic progress through the villages I had been in an elated mood, which I now found it difficult to keep up in Calcutta. In the wonderland of emotion where we had been revelling, the mystic drama of the courting of the Bride within us and the Bridegroom who is everywhere, was being played. And a fitting accompaniment to it had been the symphony of the broad grazing greens, the shaded ferry landing-places, the enraptured expanse of the noon-day leisure, the deep evening silences vibrant with the tremolo of cicadas. Ours had been a dream progress to which the open skies of the country side offered no obstacle. But with our arrival at Calcutta, we knocked our heads against its hardness, we got jostled by its crowds, and our dream was at an end.

Yet, was not this the Calcutta where, within the confines of our students' lodgings, we had once put our whole soul into our studies, by day and by night; where we had pondered over and discussed the problems of our country with our fellow students in the College Square; where we had served as volunteers at the holding of our National Assemblies; where we had responded to the call of Uncle Jagamohan, and taken the vow to free our minds from all slavery imposed by Society or State? Yes, it was in this self-same Calcutta that, in the flood tide of our youth, we had pursued our course, regardless of the revilement of stranger and kindred alike, proudly breasting all contrary currents like a boat in full sail. Why, then, should we now fail, in this whirlpool of pleasure-and-pain ridden, hunger-and-thirst driven, much-suffering humanity, to keep up the exaltation proper to our tear-saturated cult of Emotional Communion?

As I manfully made the attempt, I was beset with doubts at every step. Was I then a mere weakling: unfaithful to my ideal: unworthy of strenuous endeavour? When I

turned to Satish, to see how he fared, I found on his countenance no sign to show that Calcutta, for him, represented any geographical reality whatsoever,—in the mystic world where he dwelt, all this city life meant no more than a mirage.

## 6

We two friends took up our quarters, with the Master, in Shivatosh's house. We had come to be his chief disciples, and he would have us constantly near his person.

With our Master and our fellow disciples, we were absorbed day and night in discussing emotions in general and the philosophy of Spiritual Emotion in particular. Into the very thick of the abstruse complexities which thus engaged our attention, the ripple of a woman's laughter would now and again find its way from the inner apartments.\* Sometimes there would be heard, in a clear, high-toned voice, the call: "Bami!"—evidently a maid-servant of that name.

These were doubtless but trivial interruptions for minds soaring, almost to vanishing point, into the empyrean of idea. But to me they came as a grateful shower of rain upon a parched and thirsty soil. When little touches of life, like shed flower petals, were blown across from the unknown world behind the wall, then all in a moment I could understand that the wonderland of our quest was just there: there, where the keys jingled, tied to the corner of Bami's *sari*; where from the floors rose the sound of the broom, and from the kitchen the savour of the cooking,—all trifles, but all true. That world, with its commingling of fine and coarse, bitter and sweet,—that itself was the heaven where Emotion truly held sway.

The name of the widow was Damini. We could catch momentary glimpses of her through opening doors and flapping curtains. But the two of us grew to be so much part and parcel of the Master, that very soon these doors and curtains were no longer barriers in our case.

Damini† was the lightning which gleams within the massed clouds of July. Without, the curves of youth enveloped her in their fulness: within, flashed fitful fires. Thus runs an entry in Satish's diary:

\* The women's part of the house.

† Damini means Lightning.

In Nonibala I have seen the Universal Woman in one of her aspects,—the woman who takes on herself the whole burden of sin, who gives up life itself for the sinner's sake, who in dying leaves for the world the balm of immortality. In Damini I see another aspect of Universal Woman. This one has nothing to do with death,—she is the Artist of the art of Life. She blossoms out, in limitless profusion, in form and scent and movement. She is not for rejection; refuses to entertain the ascetic; and is vowed to resist the least farthing of payment to the tax-gathering Winter Wind.

It is necessary to relate Damini's previous history.

At the time when the coffers of her father Annada, were overflowing with the proceeds of his jute business, Damini was married to Shivatosh. So long, Shivatosh's fortune had consisted only in his pedigree: it could now count a more substantial addition. Annada bestowed on his son-in-law a house in Calcutta and sufficient money to keep him for life. There were also lavish gifts of furniture and ornaments made to his daughter.

Annada, further, made a futile attempt to take Shivatosh into his own business—but the latter had no interest in worldly concerns. An astrologer had once predicted to Shivatosh that, on the happening of a special conjunction of the stars, his soul would gain its emancipation whilst still in the flesh. From that day he lived in this hope alone, and ceased to find charm in riches, or even in objects still more charming. It was while in this frame of mind that he had become a disciple of Lilananda Swami.

In the meantime, with the subsidence of the Jute boom, the full force of the adverse wind caught the heavy-laden bark of Annada's fortune and toppled it over. All his property was sold up and he had hardly enough left to make a bare living.

One evening, Shivatosh came into the inner apartments and said to his wife: "The Master is here. He has some words of advice for you, and bids you attend."

"I cannot go to him now," answered Damini. "I haven't the time."

What? No time! Shivatosh went up nearer and found his wife seated in the gathering dusk, in front of the open safe, with her ornaments spread out before her. "What in the world is keeping you?" inquired he.

"I am arranging my jewels," was the reply.

So that was the reason for her lack of time. Indeed!

The next day, when Damini opened the

safe, she found her jewel box missing. "My jewels?" She exclaimed, turning inquiringly to her husband.

"But you offered them to the Master. Did not his call reach you at the very moment?—for he sees into the minds of men. He has deigned, in his mercy, to save you from the lure of pelf."

Damini's indignation rose to white heat. "Give me back my ornaments!" she commanded.

"Why, what will you do with them?"

"They were my father's gift to me. I would return them to him."

"They have gone to a better place," said Shivatosh. "Instead of pandering to worldly needs they are dedicated to the service of devotees."

That is how the tyrannical imposition of faith began. And the pious ritual of exorcism, in all its cruelty, continued to be practised in order to rid Damini's mind of its mundane affections and desires.

So, while her father and her little brothers were starving by inches, Damini had to prepare daily, with her own hands, meals for the sixty or seventy disciples who thronged the house with the Master. She would some times rebelliously leave out the salt, or contrive to get the viands scorched, but that did not avail to gain her any respite from her penance.

At this juncture, Shivatosh died: and in departing he awarded his wife the supreme penalty for her want of faith: he committed his widow, with all her belongings, to the guardianship of the Master.

## 7

The house was in a constant tumult with rising waves of fervour. Devotees kept streaming in from all quarters to sit at the feet of the Master. And yet Damini, who had gained the Presence without effort of her own, thrust aside her good fortune with contumely.

Did the Master call her for some special mark of his favour?—she would keep aloof pleading a headache. If he had occasion to complain of some special omission of personal attention on her part, she would confess to have been away at the theatre. The excuse was lacking in truth, but not in rudeness.

The other women disciples were aghast at Damini's ways. Firstly, her attire was not

such as widows \* should affect. Secondly, she showed no eagerness to drink in the Master's words of wisdom. Lastly, her demeanour had none of the reverential restraint which the Master's presence demanded. "What a woman!" exclaimed they. "Many a hoyden have we seen, but not one so outrageous."

The Swami used to smile. "The Lord," said he, "takes a special delight in wrestling with a valiant opponent. When Damini will have to own defeat, her surrender will be absolute."

He began to display an exaggerated tolerance for her contumacy. That vexed Damini still worse, for she looked on it as a more cunning form of punishment. And one day the Master caught her in a fit of laughter, mimicking to one of her companions the ultra-suaivty of his manner towards herself. Still he had not a word of rebuke, and repeated simply that the final denouement would be all the more extraordinary, to which end the poor thing was but the instrument of providence and so herself not to blame.

This was how we found her when we first came. The denouement was indeed extraordinary. I can hardly bring myself to write on further,—what happened, moreover, is so difficult to tell. The net-work of suffering, which is woven behind the scenes, is not of any pattern set by the scriptures, nor of our own devising either. Hence the frequent discords between the inner and the outer life—discords that hurt, and wail forth in tears.

There came, at length, the dawn when the harsh crust of rebelliousness cracked and fell to pieces, and the flower of self-surrender came through and held up its dew-washed face. Damini's service became so beautiful in its truth, that it descended on the devotees like the blessing of the very Divinity of their devotions.

And when Damini's lightning flashes had matured into a steady radiance, Satish looked on her and saw that she was beautiful; but I say this, that Satish gazed only on her beauty, failing to see Damini herself.

In Satish's room there hung a portrait of the Swami sitting in meditation, done on a porcelain medallion. One day he found it on the floor—in fragments. He put it down to his pet cat. But other little mischiefs began to follow, which were clearly beyond the

\* Hindu widows in Bengal are supposed to dress in simple white, (sometimes plain brown silk, without border, or ornamentation.

powers of the cat. There was some kind of disturbance in the air which now and again broke out in unseen electric shocks.

How others felt, I know not, but a growing pain gnawed at my heart. Sometimes I thought that this constant ecstasy of emotion was proving too much for me. I wanted to give it all up and run away. The old work of teaching the leather dealers' children seemed, in its unalloyed prose, to be now calling me back.

One wintry afternoon, when the Master was taking his siesta, and the weary disciples were at rest, Satish for some reason went off into his own room at this unusual hour. His progress was suddenly arrested at the threshold. There was Damini, her thick tresses dishevelled, lying prone on the floor, beating her head on it as she moaned: "Oh you stone, you stone, have mercy on me, have mercy and kill me outright!"

Satish, all a-tremble with a nameless fear, fled from the door.

## 8

It was a rule with Swami Lilananda to go off once a year to some remote, out of the way place, away from the crowd. With the month of Magh\* came round the time for his journey. Satish was to attend on him.

I asked to go too. I was worn to the very marrow with the incessant emotional excitement of our cult; and felt greatly in need of physical movement as well as of mental quiet.

The master sent for Damini. "My little mother," he told her, "I am about to leave you for the duration of my travels. Let me arrange for your stay meanwhile, with your aunt as usual."

"I would accompany you," said Damini. "You could hardly bear it, I am afraid. Our journeying will be troublesome."

"Of course I can bear it," she answered. "Pray have no concern about any trouble of mine."

Lilananda was pleased at this proof of Damini's devotion. In former years this opportunity had been Damini's holiday time,—the one thing to which she had looked forward through the preceding months. "Miraculous!" thought the Swami. "How wondrously does even stone become as wax in the Lord's melting-pot of emotion."

\* January-February.



So Damini had her way, and came along with us.

9

The spot at which we arrived, after hours of tramping in the sun, was a little, cocoanut-palm-shaded promontory on the sea-coast. Profound was the solitude and the tranquillity which reigned there, as the gentle rustle of its palm tassels merged into the idle plash of the girdling sea. It looked like a tired hand of the sleepy shore, limply fallen upon the surface of the waters. On the palm of this hand, stood a bluish-green hill; and inside the hill was a sculptured cave-temple of yore, — being, for all its serene beauty, the cause of much disquiet amongst antiquarians as to the origin, style and subject matter of its sculptures.

Our intention had been to return to the village where we had made our halt, after paying a visit to this temple. That was now seen to be impossible. The day was fast declining and the moon was long past its full. Lilananda Swami at length decided that we should pass the night in the cave.

All four of us sat down to rest on the sandy soil beneath the cocoanut groves fringing the sea. The sunset glow bent lower and lower over the western horizon, as though Day was making its parting obeisance to approaching Night.

The Master's voice broke forth in song— one of his own composition—

The day has waned, when at last we meet

And as I try to see your face, the last ray of evening  
at the turning,  
fades into the night.

We had heard the song before, but never with such complete rapport between singer, audience and surroundings. Damini was affected to tears. The Swami went on to the second verse—

I shall not grieve that the darkness comes  
between thee and my sight,—  
 Only, for a moment, stand before me that I may kiss  
thy feet and wipe them with my hair.

When he had come to the end, the placid eventide, enveloping sky and waters, was filled, like some ripe, golden fruit, with the bursting-sweetness of melody.

Damini rose and went up to the Master. As she prostrated herself at his feet, her loose hair slipped off her shoulders and was scattered over the ground on either side. She remained long thus, before she raised her head.

10

[From Satish's Diary:]

There were several chambers within the temple. In one of these I spread my blanket and laid myself down. The darkness pent up inside the cave seemed alive, like some great black monster, its damp breath bedewing my body. I began to be haunted by the idea that this was the first of created animals, born in the beginning of time, with no eyes or ears, but just one enormous appetite. Confined within this cavern for endless ages, it knew nothing, having no mind: but having sensibility, it felt; and wept and wept, in silence.

Fatigue overpowered my limbs like a dead-weight, but sleep came not. Some bird, or perhaps bat, flitted in from the outside, or out from the inside,—its wings beating the air as it flew from darkness to darkness; when the draught reached my body it sent a shiver through me, making my flesh creep.

I thought I would go and get some sleep outside. But I could not recollect the direction in which the entrance was. As I crawled on my hands and knees along the way which appeared the right one, I knocked against the cave wall. When I tried a different side I nearly tumbled into a hollow in which the water dribbling through the cracks had collected.

I crawled back to my blanket and stretched myself on it again. Again was I possessed with the fancy that I had been taken right into the creature's maw, and could not extricate myself; that I was the victim of a blind hunger which was licking me with its slimy saliva, through which I would be sucked and digested noiselessly, little by little.

I felt that only sleep could save me. My living, waking consciousness was evidently unable to bear such close embrace of this horrible, suffocating, obscurity—fit only for the dead to suffer. I cannot say how long after it came,—or whether it was really sleep at all,—but a thin veil of oblivion fell at last over my senses. And while in such half-conscious state I actually felt a deep breathing somewhere near my bare feet.—Surely not that primeval creature of my imagining!

Then something seemed to cling about my feet. Some real wild animal this time!—was my first thought. But there was nothing furry in its touch. What if it was some species of serpent or reptile, of features and

body unknown to me, of whose method of absorbing its prey I could form no idea? All the more loathsome seemed the softness of it, —of this terrible, unknown, mass of hunger.

What between dread and disgust, I could not even utter a cry. I tried to push it away with ineffectual leg thrusts. Its face seemed to be touching my feet, on which its panting breath fell thickly. What kind of a face had

it, I wondered. I launched a more vigorous kick, as the stupor left me. I had at first supposed there was no fur, but what felt like a mane now brushed across my legs. I struggled up into a sitting posture.

Something went away in the darkness. There was also a curious kind of a sound. Could it have been sobbing?

*(To be continued)*

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## HYDRO-ELECTRICITY IN MYSORE

BY ST. NIHAL SINGH.

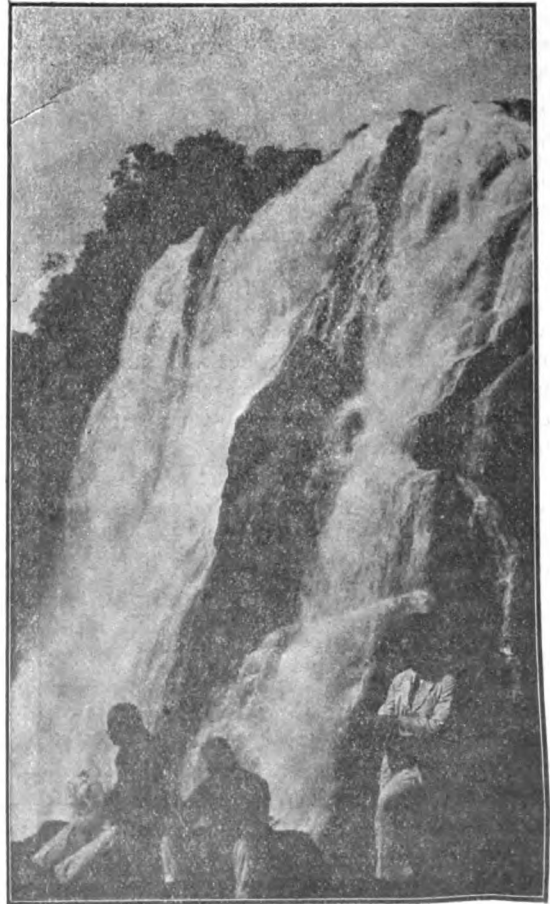
**F**ROM an unpretentious wooden frame hanging against an unpapered wall in the power station at Siva-samudram, Mysore, the figure of a simply-garbed, venerable Brahman statesman, Sir Seshadri Iyer, looks down upon the electric switches controlling the current which, at a distance of some 60 miles, sets machinery at work digging gold from the bowels of the earth, and lights up the cities of Bangalore and Mysore, each less distant than the Kolar Gold Fields.

Only a little more than two decades have passed since that statesman, then Dewan of Mysore, first dreamed a dream of generating power from "Siva's Sea". He had never left the shores of India, except for a trip to Ceylon, if that be leaving India's shore. Nor had he come into intimate contact with electric engineers. All that he knew of hydro-electricity was gleaned from books and journals he had chanced to read.

It is said that when the subject was first broached to the Government of India, the Earl (now Marquis) Curzon, then Viceroy and Governor-General, did not appear to be keen upon incurring heavy expenditure upon works whose utility had not been tested in India. As His Highness the Maharaja was then a minor, and the State was being administered under British supervision, his hesitation to embark upon this project is not difficult to understand.

Sir Seshadri, however, supported by the far-seeing Maharani-Regent, the mother of the Maharaja, stuck to his scheme, and finally succeeded in convin-

cing the Governor-General that it was practical. The tug of war on that and other questions between the two seems to have inspired great respect in Lord



Siva-samudram Falls, from which Mysore Gets Water Power.

## A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## III

## DAMINI

WE are back in our quarters in the village, near a temple, in a two-storeyed house belonging to one of the Swami's disciples, which had been placed at our disposal. Since our return we see but little of Damini, though she is still in charge of our household affairs. She has made friends with the neighbouring women and spends most of her off time going about with them from the house of this one to that of the other.

The Swami is not particularly pleased. Damini's heart, thinks he, does not yet respond to the call of the etherial heights, all its fondness is still for earthen walls. In her daily work of looking after the devotees — latterly like an act of worship with her — a trace of weariness has become noticeable. She makes mistakes. Her service has lost its radiance.

The Master begins to be afraid of her again, at heart. Between her brows there darkens a gathering frown; her temper is ruffled with fitful breezes; the loosening knot of her hair lowers over her neck; the pressure of her lips, the gleams from the corner of her eye, her sudden wayward gestures, presage a rebellious storm.

The Swami turned to his *kirtans* with renewed attention. The wandering bee, he hoped, would be brought to drink deep of the honey, once enticed in by its fragrance. And so the short winter days were filled to the brim with the foaming wine of ecstatic song.

But no, Damini refused to be caught. The exasperated Swami laughed out one day: "The Lord is out hunting: the resolute flight of the deer adds zest to

the chase: but succumb she must, in the end."

When we had first come to know Damini, she was not to be found amongst the band of devotees clustering round the Master. That, however, did not attract our notice then. Her empty place had now become conspicuous. Her frequent absences smote us tempestuously.

The Swami put this down to her pride, and that hurt his own pride. As for me,— but what does it matter what I thought?

One day the Master mustered up the courage to say in his most dulcet tones: "Damini, my little mother, do you think you will have a little time to spare this afternoon? If so —"

"No," said Damini.

"Would you mind telling me why?"

"I have to assist in making sweetmeats at the Nandi's."

"Sweetmeats! What for?"

"They have a wedding on."

"Is your assistance so indispensable—?"

"I promised to be there."

Damini whisked out of the room without waiting for further questioning.

Satish, who was there with us, was dumbfounded. So many men of learning, wealth and fame had surrendered at the feet of the Master, and this slip of a girl,— what gave her such hardihood of assurance?

Another evening Damini happened to be at home. The Master had addressed himself to some specially important topic. After his discourse had progressed awhile, something in our faces gave him pause. He found our attention wandering. On looking round

he discovered that Damini, who had been seated in the room, sewing in hand, was not to be seen. He understood the reason of our distraction. She was not there, not there, not there,—the refrain now kept worrying him too. He began to lose the thread of his discourse and at last gave it up altogether.

The Swami left the room and went off to Damini's door. "Damini!" he called. "Why are you all alone here? Will you not come and join us?"

"I am engaged," said Damini.

The baffled Swami could see, as he passed by the half-open door, a captive kite in a cage. It had somehow struck against the telegraph wires, and had been lying wounded, when Damini rescued it from the peering crows; and she had been tending it since.

The kite was not the only object which engaged Damini's solicitude. There was a mongrel pup, whose looks were on a par with its breeding. It was discord personified. Whenever it heard our cymbals it would look up to heaven and voice forth a prolonged complaint. The gods, being fortunate, did not feel bound to give it a hearing. The poor mortals whose ears happened to be within reach were wofully agonised.

One afternoon, when Damini was engaged in practising horticulture in sundry cracked pots on the roof-terrace, Satish came up and asked her point blank: "Why is it you have given up coming over there altogether?"

"Over where?"

"To the Master."

"Why, what need have you people of me?"

"We have no need,—but surely the need is yours."

"No, no!" flung out Damini. "Not at all, not at all!"

Taken aback by her heat, Satish gazed at her in silence. Then he mused aloud: "Your mind lacks peace. If you would gain peace—"

"Peace from you? You who are consumed day and night with your excitement,—where have you the peace to give? Leave me alone, I beg and

pray you. I was at peace. I would be at peace."

"You see but the waves on the surface. If you have the patience to dive deep, you will find all calm there."

Damini wrung her hands as she cried: "I beseech you, for the Lord's sake, don't insist on my diving downwards. If only you will give up all hope of my conversion, I may yet live!"

## 2

My experience has never been large enough to enable me to penetrate the mysteries of woman's mind. Judging from what little I have seen of the surface from the outside, I have come to the belief that women are ever ready to bestow their heart where sorrow cannot but be their lot. They will either string their garland of acceptance\* for some beast who will trample it under foot and defile it in the mire of his passions, or dedicate it to some idealist, on whose neck it will get no hold, attenuated as he is, like the dream-stuff of his imaginings.

When left to do their own choosing, women invariably reject ordinary men like me, made up of gross and fine, who know woman to be just woman,—that is to say, neither a clay doll made to serve for our pastime, nor a transcendental melody to be evoked at our master touch. They reject us because we have neither the forceful delusions of the flesh, nor the roseate illusions of fancy: we can neither break them on the wheel of our desire, nor melt them in the glow of our fervour to be cast in the mould of our ideal.

Because we know them only for what they are, they may be friendly, but cannot love us. We are their true refuge, for they can rely on our devotion, but our self-dedication comes so easy, they forget that it has a price. So the only reward we get is, to be used for their purposes; perchance to win their respect; . . . but I am afraid my psychological propositions are more likely nothing but personal grievances. The fact probably

\* In the old days, when a girl had to choose between several suitors, she signified her choice by putting a garland round the neck of the accepted one.

is, what we thus lose is really our gain,—any way, that is how we may console ourselves.

Damini avoids the Master because she cannot bear him. She fights shy of Satish because for him her feelings are of the opposite description. I am the only person, near at hand, with whom there is no question of love or hate. So whenever I am with her, Damini talks away to me of unimportant matters concerning the old days, the present times, or the daily happenings at the neighbours' houses. These talks would usually take place on the shaded part of the roof-terrace, which served as a passage between our several rooms on the second storey, where Damini sat slicing betelnuts.

What I could not understand is, how these trifling talks should have attracted the notice of Satish's emotion-clouded vision. Granted that the circumstance was not so trifling, but do I not know that, in the world where Satish dwelt, they had no such disturbing things as circumstances, at all? The Mystic Union, in which personified cosmic forces were assisting, was an eternal drama, not an historical episode. Those who are rapt with the undying flute strains borne along the ceaseless zephyrs which play on the banks of the ever-flowing Jamuna of that mystic paradise,—one would not suppose that they have eyes or ears left for the ephemeral doings immediately around them. This much at least is certain, that before our return from the cave, Satish used to be much denser in his mundane perceptions.

For this difference I may have been partly responsible. I also had begun to absent myself from our *kirtans* and discourses, perhaps with a frequency which could not elude even Satish. One day he came round on inquiry, and found me running after Damini's mongoose — a recent acquisition — trying to lure it into bondage with a pot of milk which I had procured from the local milkman. This occupation, viewed as an excuse, was simply hopeless. It could easily have waited till the end of our sitting. For the matter of that, the best thing

clearly would have been to leave the mongoose to its own devices, thus at one stroke demonstrating my adherence to the two principal tenets of our cult,—compassion for all creatures, and Passion for the Lord.

That is why, when Satish came up, I had to feel ashamed. I put down the pot then and there, and tried to edge away along the path which led back to self-respect.

But Damini's behaviour took me by surprise. She was not in the least abashed as she asked: "Where are you off to, Srivilas Babu?"

I scratched my head as I mumbled: "I was thinking of joining the —"

"They must have finished by this time. Do sit down."

This coming from Damini, in the presence of Satish, made my ears redden.

Damini turned to Satish. "I am in awful trouble with the mongoose," she said. "Last night it stole a chicken from the mussulman quarters over there. I dare not leave it loose any longer. Srivilas Babu has promised to look out for a nice big hamper to keep it in."

It seemed to me that it was my devotion to her which Damini was using the mongoose to show off. I was reminded how the Swami had ordered about Satish to impress me. The two were the same thing.

Satish made no reply and his departure was somewhat abrupt. I gazed on Damini and could see her eyes flash out as they followed his disappearing figure; while on her lips there set a hard, enigmatic smile.

What conclusion Damini had come to, she knew best; the only result apparent to me was, that she began to send for me on all kinds of flimsy pretexts. Sometimes she would make sweetmeats, which she pressed on me.

One day I could not help suggesting: "Let's offer some to Satish as well."

"That would only annoy him," said Damini.

And it happened that Satish, passing that way, caught me in the act of being thus regaled.



In the drama which was being played, the hero and the heroine spoke their parts 'aside'. I was the one character who, being of no consequence, had to speak out. This sometimes made me curse my lot; none the less, I could not withstand the temptation of the petty cash with which I was paid off, from day to day, for taking up the role of middleman. What a situation to be in!

## 3

For some days Satish clanged his cymbals and danced his *kirtans* with added vigour. Then, one day, he came to me and said: "We cannot keep Damini with us any longer."

"Why?" I asked.

"We must free ourselves altogether from the influence of Woman."

"If that be a necessity," said I, "there must be something radically wrong with our system."

Satish stared at me in amazement.

"Woman is a natural phenomenon,"

I continued undaunted, "who will have her place in the world, however much we may try to get rid of her. If your spiritual welfare depends on ignoring her existence, then its pursuit will be like the chasing of a phantom, and will shame you so, when the illusion is dissipated, that you will not know where to hide yourself."

"Oh stop your philosophising!" exclaimed Satish. "I was talking practical politics. It is only too evident that women are emissaries of *Maya*, and at her behest ply on us their blandishments—for they cannot fulfil the design of their Mistress unless they overpower our reason. So we must steer clear of them if we would keep our intellect free."

I was about to make my reply, when Satish stopped me with a gesture, and went on: "Visri, old fellow! Let me tell you plainly: if the hand of *Maya* is not visible to you, that is because you have allowed yourself to be caught in her net. The vision of Beauty with which she has ensnared you to-day will vanish as soon as its purpose is accomplished, and with the beauty will disappear the spectacles of desire through which you

now see it as greater than all the world. Where the noose of *Maya* is so glaringly obvious, why be foolhardy enough to take risks?"

"I admit all that," I rejoined. "But, my dear fellow the all-pervading net of *Maya* was not cast by my hands, nor do I know the way to escape round it. Since we have not the power to evade *Maya*, our spiritual striving should help us, while acknowledging her, to rise above her. Because it does not take such course, we have to flounder about in vain attempts to cut away the half of Truth."

"Well, well, let's have your idea of spiritual striving a little more clearly," said Satish.

"We must sail the boat of our life," I proceeded, "along the current of Nature, in order to reach beyond it. Our problem is, not how to get rid of this current, but how to keep the boat afloat in its channel, until it is through. For that a rudder is necessary."

"You people who have ceased to be loyal to the Master,—how can I make you understand that in him we have just this rudder? You would regulate your spiritual life according to your own whims. That way death lies!" With this Satish betook himself to the Master's chamber and fell to tending his feet with fervour.

The same evening, when Satish lit the Master's pipe, he also preferred his plaint against *Maya* and her emissaries. The smoking of one pipe, however, did not suffice for its adjudication. Evening after evening, pipe after pipe was exhausted, yet the Master was unable to make up his mind.

From the very beginning, Damini had given the Swami no end of trouble. Now the girl had managed to set up this eddy in the midst of the smooth current of the devotees' progress. But Shivatosh had thrown her and her belongings so absolutely on the Master's hands that he knew not how or where to cast her off. What made it more difficult still was, that he harboured a secret fear of his ward.

And Satish — for all the doubled and quadrupled enthusiasm which he put into his *kirtans*, for all the pipe-filling and massaging in which he tried to rest his heart — the poor fellow was not allowed to forget for a moment that *Maya* had taken up her position right across the line of his spiritual advance.

One day some *kirtanists* of repute had arrived, and were to sing in the evening at the temple next door. The *kirtan* would last far into the night. I managed to slip away after the preliminary overture, having no doubt that, in so thick a crowd, no one would notice my absence.

Damini, that evening, had completely thrown off her reserve. Things which are difficult to speak of, which refuse to leave one's choking throat, flowed from her lips so simply, so sweetly. It was as if she had suddenly come upon some secret recess in her heart, so long hidden away in darkness,— as if, by some strange chance, she had gained the opportunity to stand before her own self, face to face.

Just at this time, Satish came up from behind and stood there hesitating, without our being aware of it at the moment. Not that Damini was saying anything very particular, but there were tears in her eyes,— all her words, in fact, were then welling up from some tear-flooded depth. When Satish arrived, the *kirtan* could not have been anywhere near its end. I divined that he must have been goaded with repeated inward urgings, to have left the temple then.

As Satish came round into our view, Damini rose with a start, wiped her eyes and made off towards her room. Satish with a tremor in his voice said: "Damini, will you listen to me? I would have a word with you."

Damini slowly retraced her steps and came and sat down again. I made as though to take myself off, but an imploring glance from her restrained me from stirring. Satish, who seemed to have made some kind of effort meanwhile, came straight to the point.

"The need," said he to Damini, "which brought the rest of us to the Master, was not yours when you came to him."

"No," avowed Damini, expectantly.

"Why, then, do you stay amongst his devotees?"

Damini's eyes flamed up as she cried: "Why do I stay? Did I come of my own accord? Was not this helpless creature, for all her lack of faith, bound hand and foot by your devotees into this dungeon of devotion? What avenue of escape have you left me?"

"We have now decided," stated Satish, "that if you would go to stay with some relative, all your expenses will be found."

"You have decided, have you?"

"Yes."

"Well then,— I have not!"

"Why, how will that inconvenience you?"

"Am I a piece in your game, that you devotees shall play me now this way, now the other?"

Satish was struck dumb.

"I did not come," continued Damini, "wanting to please your devotees. And I am not going away, at the bidding of the lot of you, merely because I don't happen to please you!"

Damini covered her face with her hands and burst out sobbing as she ran into her room and slammed the door.

Satish did not return to the *kirtan* singing. He sank down in a corner of the adjoining roof-terrace and brooded there in silence.

The sound of the breakers on the distant sea-shore came, wafted along the south breeze, like despairing sighs, rising up to the watching star clusters, from the very heart of the Earth.

I spent the night wandering round and round through the dark, deserted village lanes.

4

The World of Reality has made a determined onslaught on the Mystic Paradise, within the confines of which the Master sought to keep Satish and myself content, by repeatedly filling for us the cup of symbolism with the nectar of idea. Now the clash of the actual with the symbolic bids fair to overturn the latter and spill its emotional contents in the

dust. The Master is not blind to this danger.

Satish is no longer himself. Like a paper kite, with its regulating knot gone, he is still high in the skies, but may at any moment begin to gyrate groundwards. There is no falling off, as yet, in the outward rigour of his devotional and disciplinary exercises, but a closer scrutiny reveals the tottering gait of incipient weakening.

As for my condition, Damini has left nothing so vague in it as to require any guess-work. The more she notices the fear in the Master's face, and the pain in Satish's, the oftener she makes me dance attendance on her.

It came to be so, that when we would be engaged in talk with the Master, Damini would sometimes appear in the doorway and interrupt us with: "Srivilas Babu, would you mind coming over this way?" without even condescending to add what I was wanted for.

The Swami would glance up at me; Satish would glance up at me; I would hesitate for a moment between them and her; then I would glance up at the door; — and in a trice I was off the fence, and out of the room! An effort would be made, after my exit, to go on with the talk, but the effort would soon get the better of the talk, whereupon the latter would stop.

Everything seemed to be falling to pieces around us. The old compactness was gone.

We two had come to be the pillars of the sect. The Master could not give either of us up without a struggle. So he ventured once more to make an overture to Damini. "My little mother," said he, "the time is coming for us to proceed to the more arduous part of our journey. You had better return from here."

"Return where?"

"Home, to your aunt."

"That cannot be."

"Why?" asked the Swami.

"First of all," said Damini, "she is not my own aunt at all. Why should she bear my burden?"

"All your expenses shall be borne by us."

"Expenses are not the only burden. It is no part of her duty to be saddled with looking after me."

"But Damini," urged the Swami in his desperation, "can I keep you with me for ever?"

"Is that a question for me to answer?"

"But where will you go when I am dead?"

"I was never allowed," returned Damini icily, "to have the responsibility of thinking that out. I have been made to realise too well that in this world I have neither father nor brother; neither home nor property; nothing at all to call my own. That is what makes my burden so heavy to bear. It pleased you to take it up. You shall not now cast it on another!"

Damini went off.

"Lord, have mercy!" sighed the Swami.

Damini had laid on me the command to procure for her some good Bengali books. I need hardly say, that by 'good' Damini did not mean spiritual, of the quality affected by our sect. Nor need I pause to make it clear, that Damini had no compunction in asking anything from me. It had not taken her long to find out that making demands on me was the easiest way of making me amends. Some kind of tree is all the better for being pruned: that was the kind of person I seemed to be where Damini was concerned.

Well, the books I ordered were unmitigatedly modern. The author was distinctly less influenced by *Manu*,\* than by man himself. The packet was delivered by the postman to the Swami. He raised his eyebrows as he opened it, and asked: "Hullo, Srivilas, what are these for?"

I remained silent.

The Master gingerly turned over some of the pages, as he remarked for my benefit that he had never thought much of the author, having failed to find in his writings the correct spiritual flavour.

"If you read them carefully, Sir," I suddenly blurted out, "you will find his writings not to be lacking in the flavour

\* The Hindu law-giver.

of Truth!" The fact is, rebellion had been long brewing within me. I was feeling done to death with mystic emotion. I was nauseated with slobbering over abstract human feelings, to the neglect of living human creatures.

The Master blinked at me curiously before he replied: "Very well, my son, carefully read them I will!" with which he tucked the books away under the bolster on which he reclined. I could perceive that his idea was, not to surrender them to me.

Damini, from behind the door, must have got wind of this, for at once she stepped in and asked: "Haven't the books you ordered for me arrived yet?"

I remained silent.

"My little mother!" said the Swami. "These books are not fit for your reading."

"How should you know that, pray?"

The master frowned. "How, at least, could you know better?"

"I have read the author: you, perhaps, have not."

"Why, then, need you read him over again?"

"When you have any need," Damini flared up, "nothing is allowed to stand in the way. It is only I who am to have no needs, I suppose?"

"You forget yourself, Damini. I am a *sannyasin*, I have no worldly desires."

"You forget that I am not a *sannyasin*. I have a desire to read these books. Will you let me have them, please?"

The Swami drew out the books from under his bolster and tossed them across to me. I handed them over to Damini.

In the result, the books that Damini would have read alone by herself, she now began to send for me to read out to her. It was in that same shaded verandah along our rooms, that these readings took place. Satish passed and re-passed, longing to join in, but could not, unasked.

One day we had come upon some humorous passage, and Damini was rocking with laughter. There was a festival on at the temple and we had supposed that Satish would be there. But

we heard a door open behind us, through which Satish unexpectedly appeared and came and sat down beside us.

Damini's laughter was at once cut short. I also felt awkward. I wanted badly to say something to Satish, but no words would come, and I went on silently turning over page after page of my book. He rose, and left as abruptly as he had come. Our reading made no further progress that day.

Satish may, very likely, have understood that while he envied the absence of reserve between Damini and me, its presence was just what I envied in his case! That same day he petitioned the Master to be allowed to go off on a solitary excursion along the sea coast, promising to be back within a week. "The very thing, my son!" acquiesced the Swami, with enthusiasm.

Satish departed. Damini did not send for me to read to her any more, nor had she anything else to ask of me. Neither did I see her going to her friends, the women of the neighbourhood. She kept her room, with closed doors.

Some days passed thus. One afternoon, when the Master was deep in his siesta, and I was writing a letter seated out on our verandah, Satish suddenly turned up. Without so much as a glance at me, he walked straight up to Damini's door, knocking as he called: "Damini, Damini."

Damini came out at once. But what a Satish met her inquiring gaze! Like a storm-battered ship, with torn rigging and tattered sails, was his condition,—eyes wild, hair dishevelled, features drawn, garments dusty.

"Damini," said Satish, "I asked you to leave us. That was wrong of me. I beg your forgiveness."

"Oh don't say that!" cried the distressed Damini, clasping her hands.

"You must forgive me," he repeated. "I will never again allow the pride to overcome me, which led me to think I could take you or leave you, according to my own spiritual requirements. Such sin will never cross my mind again, I promise you. Do you also promise me one thing."

"Command me!" said Damini, making humble obeisance.

"You must join us, and not keep aloof like this."

"I will join you," said Damini. "I will sin no more." Then, as she bowed low again to take the dust of his feet, she repeated: "I will sin no more."

## 5

The stone was melted again. Damini's bewildering radiance remained undimmed, but it lost its heat. In worship and ritual and service her beauty blossomed out anew. She was never absent from the *kirtan* singing, nor when the Master gave his readings and discourses. There was a change in her raiment also. She reverted to the golden brown of plain tussore,\* and whenever we saw her she seemed fresh from her toilet.

The severest test came in her intercourse with the Master. When she made her salutation to him, I could catch the glint of severely repressed temper through her half-closed eyelids. I knew very well that she could not bear to take orders from the Master; nevertheless, so complete was her self-suppression, that the Swami was able to screw up the courage to repeat his condemnation of the obnoxious tone of that outrageously modern Bengali writer. The next day there was a heap of flowers near his seat; and under them were the torn pages of the books of the objectionable author!

I had always noticed that the fagging of Satish was specially intolerable to Damini. Even now, when the Master asked him for some personal service, Damini would try to hustle past Satish and forestall him. This, however, was not possible in every case; and while Satish kept blowing on the tinder to get it into a blaze for the Master's pipe, Damini would have much ado to keep herself in hand by grimly repeating under

\* The tussore silk-worm is a wild variety, and its cocoon has to be used after the moth has cut its way out and flown away, thus not being killed in the process of unwinding the silk. Hence tussore silk is deemed specially suitable for wear on occasions of divine worship.

her breath: "I will sin no more. I will sin no more."

But what Satish had tried for did not come off. On the last occasion of Damini's self-surrender, he had seen the beauty of the surrender only, not of the self behind it. This time, Damini herself had become so true for him that she eclipsed all strains of music and all thoughts of philosophy. Her reality had become so dominant, that Satish could no longer lose himself in his visions, nor think of her merely as an aspect of Universal Woman. It was not she who, as before, set off for him the melodies which filled his mind; rather these melodies had now become part of the halo which encircled her person.

I should not, perhaps, leave out the minor detail that Damini had no longer any use for me. Her demands on me had suddenly ceased altogether. Of my colleagues who used to assist in beguiling her leisure, the kite was dead, the mongoose fled, and as for the mongrel puppy, its manners having offended the Master's susceptibilities, it had been given away. Thus, bereft both of occupation and companionship, I returned to my old place in the assembly surrounding the Master, though the talking and singing and doing, that went on there, had all alike become horribly distasteful to me.

## 6

The laboratory of Satish's mind was not amenable to any outside laws. One day, as he was concocting therein, for my special delectation, a weird mixture of ancient philosophy and modern science, with reason as well as emotion promiscuously thrown in, Damini burst in upon us panting:

"Oh, do come both of you, come quick!"

"Whatever is the matter?" I cried, as I bounded to my feet.

"Nabin's wife has taken poison, I think," she said.

Nabin was a neighbour: one of our regular *kirtan* singers: and an ardent disciple. We hurried after Damini, but when we arrived, his wife was dead.

We pieced together her story. Nabin's



wife had brought her motherless younger sister to live with them. She was a very pretty girl and, when Nabin's brother had last been home, he was so taken with her that their marriage was speedily arranged. This greatly relieved her elder sister; for, high caste as they were, a suitable bridegroom was not easy to find. The wedding day had been fixed some months later, when Nabin's brother would have completed his college course. Meanwhile Nabin's wife lit upon the discovery that her husband had seduced her sister. She forthwith insisted on his marrying the unfortunate girl — for which, as it happened, he did not require much persuasion. The wedding ceremony had just been put through, whereupon the elder sister had made away with herself by taking poison.

There was nothing to be done. The three of us slowly wended our way back, to find the usual throng round the Master. They sang a *kirtan* to him and, as was his wont, he waxed ecstatic and began to dance with them. . . .

That evening the moon was near its full. One corner of our terrace was overhung by the branch of a *chalta* tree. At the edge of the shadow under its thick foliage, sat Damini lost in silent thought. Satish was softly pacing up and down our verandah, behind her. I had a mania for diary-writing, in which I was indulging, alone in my room, with the door wide open.

That evening the *koil* could not sleep; stirred by the south breeze, the leaves too were speaking out; and the moonlight, shimmering on them, smiled in response. Something must have also stirred within Satish, for he suddenly turned his steps towards the terrace, and went and stood near Damini.

Damini looked round with a start, adjusted her *sari*\* over the back of her head, and rose as if to leave. Satish called: "Damini!"

She stopped at once, and turning to

\* A formal recognition of the presence of an elder.

him appealingly, with folded hands she said: "My Master, may I ask you a question?"

Satish looked at her inquiringly, but made no reply.

Damini went on: "Tell me truly, of what use to the world is this thing with which your sect is occupied day and night. Whom have you been able to save?"

I came out from my room and stood on the verandah.

Damini continued: "This passion, passion, passion, on which you harp,— did you not see it in its true colours to-day? It has neither religion, nor duty; it regards neither wife, nor brother, nor the sanctuary of home; it knows neither pity, nor trust, nor modesty, nor shame. What way have you discovered to save men from the hell of this cruel, shameless, soul-killing passion?"

I could not contain myself, but cried out: "Oh yes, we have hit upon the wonderful device of banishing Woman right away from our territory, so as to make our pursuit of passion quite safe!"

Without paying any heed to my words, Damini spoke on to Satish: "I have learnt nothing at all from your Master. He has never shed a moment's peace over my distracted mind. Fire cannot quench fire. The road, along which he is taking his devotees, leads neither to courage, nor restraint, nor peace. The woman who is dead,— her heart's blood was sucked dry by that ogress, Passion, who killed her. Did you not see the hideous countenance of the murderess? For god's sake, my Master, I implore you, do not sacrifice me to that ogress. Oh save me, for if anybody can save me, it is you!"

For a space, all three of us kept silent. So poignant became the silence all around, it seemed to me that the droning vibration of the cicadas was but a swoon-thrill of the pallid sky.

Satish was the first to speak. "Tell me," said he to Damini. "What is it you would have me do for you?"

"Be my *guru*! I would follow none else. Give me some creed — higher than all this — which can save me. Do not let

me be destroyed, together with the Divinity which is in me."

Satish drew himself up straight, as he responded: "So be it."

Damini prostrated herself at his feet, her forehead touching the ground, and remained long thus, in reverential adoration, murmuring: "Oh my Master, my Master, save me, save me, save me from all sin."

## 7

Once more there was a mighty sensation in our world, and a storm of vituperation in the newspapers — for Satish had again turned renegade!

At first he had loudly proclaimed active disbelief in all religion and social convention. Next, with equal vehemence, he had displayed active belief

in gods and goddesses, rites and ceremonies, not excluding the least of them. Now, lastly, he had thrown to the winds all the rubbish heaps both of religious and irreligious cults, and had retired into such simple peacefulness that no one could even guess what he believed, or what he did not. True, he took up good works as of old; but there was nothing aggressive about it, this time.

There was another event over which the newspapers exhausted all their resources of sarcasm and virulence. That was the announcement of Damini's marriage with me. The mystery of this marriage none will perhaps fathom,— but why need they?

( *To be continued* )

## EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AGRICULTURE

BY PRINCIPAL G. C. BOSE.

**A**N instructive and interesting article on Agricultural education in Denmark has been published in 81st volume of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England to which the writer wishes to invite the attention of the Government, the University, and the people of Bengal, whose minds are now greatly exercised on the subject of Vocational studies. As the Journal may not be available to all of them, a brief summary is given here of contents of the article and of the points which are of special interest to us in Bengal where the question of Education in Agriculture, which has been trifled with much too long, will soon have to be faced.

As compared with England, Denmark is a country of small farmers. A sixth of the whole of the land is in holdings of less than 35 acres (100 bighas nearly). They are worked in many cases solely by the farmer and his family. The parallel between Denmark and Bengal is very close in these respects; hence Denmark has been chosen

as the country which may afford Bengal some guidance in the matter of education with special reference to agriculture. Although 90 per cent of the land of Denmark is under arable cultivation, the agriculture of the country is founded on cows, as there are 46 cows for every 100 heads of population; whereas in England and Wales the ratio is 10 to 100. The milk is sent to local creameries to be made into butter, or cheese, for export.

In tracing out the scheme of Agricultural Education in Denmark and thereby formulating, if possible, a scheme for Bengal, it is desirable to start with the boy at the Elementary Schools, popularly called Village Schools, and gradually trace his career through various kinds of Secondary Schools, to the highly technical Royal Agricultural College at Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark.

### THE VILLAGE SCHOOLS.

Denmark is essentially an agricultural country and the want of a strong agricultural bias in the curriculum of the Village Schools

## A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

## IV

## I, SRIVILAS

**T**HERE was once an Indigo factory on this spot. All that now remains of it are some tumble-down rooms belonging to the old house, the rest having crumbled into dust. When returning homewards, after performing Damini's last rites, the place as we passed by it, somehow appealed to me, and I stayed on alone.

The road, leading from the river-side to the factory gate, is flanked by an avenue of *sissoo* trees. Two broken pillars still mark the site of the gateway, and portions of the garden wall are standing here and there. The only other memento of the past is the brick-built mound over the grave of some Musalman servant of the factory. Through its cracks, wild flowering shrubs have sprung up. Covered with blossoms, they sway to the breeze and mock at death, like merry maidens shaking with laughter while they chaff the bridegroom on his wedding day. The banks of the garden pool have caved in and let the water trickle away, leaving the bottom to serve as a bed for a coriander patch. As I sit out on the roadside, under the shade of the avenue, the scent of the coriander, in flower, goes through and through my brain.

I sit and muse. The factory, of which these remnants are left, like the skeleton of some dead animal by the wayside, was once alive. From it flowed waves of pleasure and pain in a stormy succession, which then seemed to be endless. Its terribly efficient English proprietor, who made the very blood of his sweating cultivators run blue,—how tremendous was he compared to puny me!

Nevertheless, Mother Earth girded up her green mantle, undismayed, and set to work so thoroughly to plaster over the disfigurement wrought by him and his activities that the few remaining traces require but a touch or two more to vanish for ever.

This scarcely novel reflection, however, was not what my mind ruminated over. "No, no!" it protested. "One dawn does not succeed another merely to smear fresh plaster\* over the floor. True, the Englishman of the factory, together with the rest of its abominations, are all swept away into oblivion like a handful of dust,—but my Damini!"

Many will not agree with me, I know. Shankaracharya's philosophy spares no one. All the world is *maya*, a trembling dew drop on the lotus leaf. But Shankaracharya was a *sannyasin*. "Who is your wife, who your son?" were questions he asked, without understanding their meaning. Not being a *sannyasin* myself, I know full well that Damini is not a vanishing dew drop on the lotus leaf.

But, I am told, there are householders also, who say the same thing. That may be. They are mere householders, who have lost only the mistress of their house. Their home is doubtless *maya*, and so likewise its mistress. These are their own handiwork, and when done with, any broom is good enough for sweeping their fragments clean away.

\* The wattle-and daub cottages of a Bengal village are cleaned and renovated every morning by a moist clay mixture being smeared by the housewife over the plinth and floors.

I did not keep house long enough to settle down as a householder, nor is mine the temperament of a sannyasin,—that saved me. So the Damini whom I gained became neither housewife nor *maya*. She remained true to herself and, to the end, my Damini. Who dares call her a shadow?

Had I known Damini only as mistress of my house, much of this would never have been written. It is because I knew her in a greater, truer relation, that I have no hesitation in putting down the whole truth, recking nothing of what others may say.

Had it been my lot to live with Damini as others do in the every-day world, the household routine of toilet and food and repose would have sufficed for me as for them. And after Damini's death, I could have heaved a sigh and exclaimed with Shankaracharya: "Variegated is the world of *maya*!" before hastening to honour the suggestion of some aunt or other well-meaning elder, by another essay at sampling its variety. But I had not adjusted myself to the domestic world, like a foot in a comfortable old shoe. From the very outset I had given up hope of happiness,—no, no, that is saying too much; I was not so non-human as that. Happiness I certainly hoped for, but I did not arrogate to myself the right to claim it.

Why? Because it was I who persuaded Damini to give her consent to our marriage. Not for us was the first auspicious vision\* in the rosy glow of festive lamps, to the rapturous strains of wedding pipes. We married in the broad light of day, with eyes wide open. . . .

## 2

When we went away from Lilananda Swami, the time came to think of ways and means, as well as of a sheltering roof. We had all along been more in danger of surfeit than of starvation, with the hospitality which the devotees of the Master pressed on us, wherever we

\* At one stage of the wedding ceremony a red screen is placed round the Bride and Bridegroom and they are asked to look at each other. This is the Auspicious Vision.

went with him. We had almost come to forget that to be a householder involves the acquiring, or building, or at least the renting of a house; so accustomed had we become to cast the burden of its supply upon another, and to look on a house as demanding from us only the duty of making ourselves thoroughly comfortable in it.

At length we recollected that Uncle Jagamohan had bequeathed his share of the house to Satish. Had the Will been left in Satish's custody, it would by this time have been wrecked, like a paper boat, on the waves of his emotion. It happened, however, to be with me; for I was the executor. There were three conditions attached to the bequest which I was responsible for carrying out. No religious worship was to be performed in the house. The ground floor was to be used as a school for the leather-dealers' children. And after Satish's death, the whole property was to be applied for the benefit of that community. Piety was the one thing Uncle Jagamohan could not tolerate. He looked on it as more defiling even than worldliness; and probably these provisions, which he facetiously referred to in English as 'sanitary precautions', were intended as a safeguard against the excessive piety which prevailed in the adjoining half of the house.

"Come along," I said to Satish. "Let's go to your Calcutta house."

"I am not quite ready for that yet," Satish replied.

I did not understand him.

"There was a day," he explained, "when I relied wholly on reason only to find at last that reason could not support the whole of life's burden. There was another day, when I placed my reliance on emotion, only to discover it to be a bottomless abyss. The reason and the emotion, you see, were alike mine. Man cannot rely on himself alone. I dare not return to town until I have found my support."

"What then do you suggest?" I asked.

"You two go on to the Calcutta house. I would wander alone for a

time. I seem to see glimpses of the shore. If I allow it out of my sight now, I may lose it for ever."

As soon as we were by ourselves, Damini said to me: "That will never do! If he wanders about alone, who is to look after him? Don't you remember in what plight he came back, when he last went wandering? The very idea of it fills me with fear."

Shall I tell the truth? This anxiety of Damini's stung me like a hornet, leaving behind the smart of anger. Had not Satish wandered about for two whole years after Uncle's death,—had that killed him? This question of mine did not remain unuttered. Rather, some of the smart of the sting got expressed with it.

"I know, Srivilas Babu," Damini replied. "It takes a great deal to kill a man. But why should he be allowed to suffer at all, so long as the two of us are here to prevent it?"

The two of us! Half of that meant this wretched creature, Srivilas! It is, of course, a law of the world, that in order to save some people from suffering others shall suffer. All the inhabitants of the earth may be divided into two such classes. Damini had found out to which I belonged. It was a compensation, indeed, that she included herself in the same class.

I went and said to Satish: "All right, then, let us postpone our departure to town. We can stay for a time in that dilapidated house on the river side. They say it is subject to ghostly visitations. This will serve to keep off human visitors."

"And you two?" inquired Satish.

"Like the ghosts, we shall keep in hiding as far as possible."

Satish threw a nervous glance at Damini,—there may have been a suggestion of dread in it.

Damini clasped her hands as she said imploringly: "I have accepted you as my *guru*. Whatever my sins may have been, let them not deprive me of the right to serve you."

3

I must confess that this frenzied pertinacity of Satish's quest is beyond my understanding. There was a time when I would have laughed to scorn the very idea. Now I had ceased to laugh. What Satish was pursuing was fire indeed, no will-o-the-wisp. When I realised how its heat was consuming him, the old arguments of Uncle Jagamohan's school refused to pass my lips. Of what avail would it be to find, with Herbert Spencer, that the mystic sense might have originated in some ghostly superstition, or that its message could be reduced to some logical absurdity? Did we not see how Satish was burning,—his whole being aglow?

Satish was perhaps better off when his days were passing in one round of excitement,—singing, dancing, serving the Master,—the whole of his spiritual effort exhausting itself in the output of the moment. Now that he has lapsed into outward quiet, his spirit refuses to be controlled any longer. There is now no question of seeking emotional satisfaction. The inward struggle for realisation is so tremendous within him, that we are afraid to look on his face.

I could remain silent no longer. "Satish," I suggested, "don't you think it would be better to go to some *guru* who could show you the way and make your spiritual progress easier?"

This only served to annoy him. "Oh do be quiet, Visri," he broke out irritably. "For goodness' sake, keep quiet! What does one want to make it easier for? Delusion alone is easy. Truth is always difficult."

"But would it not be better," I tried again, "if some *guru* were to guide you along the path of truth?"

Satish was almost beside himself. "Will you never understand," he groaned, "that I am not running after any geographical truth? The Dweller within can only come to me along my own true path. The path of the *guru* can only lead to the *guru's* door."

What a number of opposite principles have I heard enunciated by this same mouth of Satish. I, Srivilas, once the



favorite disciple of Uncle Jagamohan,— who would have threatened me with a big stick if I had called him Master,— I had actually been made by Satish to massage the legs of Lilananda Swami. And now not even a week has passed, but he needs must preach to me in this strain! However, as I dared not smile, I maintained a solemn silence.

"I have now understood", Satish went on, "why our scriptures say that it is better to die in one's own *dharma* rather than court the terrible fate of taking the *dharma* of another. All else may be accepted as gifts, but if one's *dharma* is not one's own, it does not save, but kills. I cannot gain my God as alms from anybody else. If I get Him at all, it shall be I who win Him. If I do not, even death is better."

I am argumentative by nature and could not give in so easily. "A poet," said I, "may get a poem from within himself. But he who is not a poet needs must take it from another."

"I am a poet," said Satish, without blenching.

That finished the matter. I came away.

Satish had no regular hours for meals or sleep. There was no knowing where he was to be found next. His body began to take on the unsubstantial keenness of an over-sharpened knife. One felt this could not go on much longer. Yet I could not muster up courage to interfere. Damini, however, was utterly unable to bear it. She was grievously incensed at God's ways. "With those who ignored Him, God was powerless,—was it fair thus to take it out of one who was helplessly prostrate at His feet? When Damini used to wax wroth with Lilananda Swami, she knew how to bring it home to him. Alas, she knew not how to bring her feelings home to God!

Anyhow, she spared no pains in trying to get Satish to be regular in satisfying his physical needs. Numberless and ingenious were her contrivances to get this misfit creature to conform to domestic regulations. For a considerable space, Satish made no overt objection to her endeavours. But one morning he waded

across the shallow river to the broad sand-bed along the opposite bank, and there disappeared from sight.

The sun rose to the meridian: it gradually bent over to the West; but there was no sign of Satish. Damini waited for him, fasting, till she could contain herself no longer. She put some food on a tray, and with it toiled through the knee-deep water till she found herself on the sand bank.

It was a vast expanse on which not a living creature of any kind was to be seen. The sun was cruel. Still more so were the glowing billows of sand, one succeeding the other, like ranks of crouching sentinels guarding the emptiness. As she stood on the edge of this spreading pallor, where all limits seemed to have been lost, where no call could meet with any response, no question with any answer, Damini's heart sank within her. It was as if her world had been wiped away and reduced to the dull blank of original colorlessness. One vast "No" seemed to be stretched at her feet. No sound, no movement, no red of blood, no green of vegetation, no blue of sky,—but only the drab of sand. It looked like the lipless grin of some giant skull, the tongueless cavern of its jaws gaping with an eternal petition of thirst to the unrelenting fiery skies above.

While she was wondering in what direction to proceed, the faint track of foot-steps caught Damini's eye. These she pursued and went on and on, over the undulating surface, till they stopped at a pool on the further side of a sand-drift. Along the moist edge of the water could be seen the delicate tracery of the claw marks of innumerable water-fowl. Under the shade of the sand-drift sat Satish.

The water was the deepest of deep blue. The fussy snipets were poking about on its margin, bobbing their tails and fluttering their black and white wings. At some distance were a flock of wild duck quacking vigorously and seeming never to get the preening of their feathers done to their own satisfaction. When Damini reached the top of the mound which

formed one bank of the pool, the ducks took themselves off in a body, with a great clamour and beating of wings.

Satish looked round and saw Damini. "Why are you here?" he cried.

"I have brought you something to eat," said Damini.

"I want nothing," said Satish.

"It is very late—" ventured Damini.

"Nothing at all," repeated Satish.

"Let me then wait a little," suggested Damini. "Perhaps later on—?"

"Oh, why will you—" burst out Satish, but as his glance fell on Damini's face, he stopped short.

Damini said nothing further. Tray in hand she retraced her steps through the sand, which glared round her like the eye of a tiger in the dark.

Tears had always been rarer in Damini's eyes than lightning flashes. But when I saw her that evening,—seated on the floor, her feet stretched out before her,—she was weeping. When she saw me, her tears seemed to burst through some obstruction and showered forth in torrents. I cannot tell what it felt like within my breast. I came near and sat down on one side.

When she had calmed herself a little I inquired: "Why does Satish's health make you so anxious?"

"What else have I to be anxious about?" She asked simply. "All the rest he has to think out for himself. There I can neither understand nor help."

"But consider, Damini," I said. "When man's mind puts forth all its energy into one particular channel, his bodily needs become reduced correspondingly. That is why, in the presence of great joy or great sorrow, man does not hunger or thirst. Satish's state of mind is now such, that it will do him no harm even if you do not look after his body."

"I am a woman," replied Damini. "The building up of the body with our own body, with our life itself, is our *dharma*. It is woman's own creation. So when we women see the body suffer, our spirit refuses to be comforted."

"That is why," I retorted, "those who are busy with things of the spirit

seem to have no eyes for you, the guardians of mere bodies!"

"Haven't they!" Damini flared up. "So wonderful, rather, is the vision of their eyes, it turns everything topsy-turvy."

"Ah, woman," said I to myself. "That is what fascinates you. Srivilas, my boy, next time you take birth, take good care to be born in the world of topsy-turvy-dom."

## 4

Th. wound which Satish inflicted on Damini, that day on the sands, had this result that he could not remove from his mind the agony he had seen in her eyes. During the succeeding days he had to go through the purgatory of showing her special consideration. It was long since he had freely conversed with us. Now he would send for Damini and talk to her. The experiences and struggles through which he was passing were the subject of these talks.

Damini had never been so exercised by his indifference as she now was by his solicitude. She felt sure this could not last, because the cost was too much to pay. Some day or other Satish's attention would be drawn to the state of the account, and he would discover how high the price was; then would come the crash. The more regular Satish became in his meals and rest, as a good householder should, the more anxious became Damini, the more she felt ashamed of herself. It was almost as if she would be relieved to find Satish becoming rebellious. She seemed to be saying: "You were quite right to hold aloof. Your concern for me is only punishing yourself. That I cannot bear!—I must," she appeared to conclude, "make friends with the neighbours again, and see if I cannot contrive to keep away from the house."

One night we were roused by a sudden shout: "Srivilas! Damini!" It must have been past midnight, but Satish could not have taken count of the hour. How he passed his nights we knew not, but the way he went on seemed to have cowed the very ghosts into flight.

We shook off our slumbers, and came

out of our respective rooms to find Satish on the flagged pavement in front of the house, standing alone in the darkness. "I have understood!" he exclaimed as he saw us. "I have no more doubts."

Damini softly went up and sat down on the pavement. Satish absently followed her example and sat down too. I also followed suit.

"If I keep going," said Satish, "in the same direction along which He comes to me, then I shall only be going further and further away from Him. If I proceed in the opposite direction, then only can we meet."

I silently gazed at his flaming eyes. As a geometrical truth what he said was right enough. But what in the world was it all about?

"He loves form," Satish went on, "so He is continually descending towards form. We cannot live by form alone, so we must move on towards His formlessness. He is free, so His play is within bonds. We are bound, so we find our joy in freedom. All our sorrow is, because we cannot understand this"

We kept as silent as the stars.

"Do you not understand, Damini?" pursued Satish. "He who sings proceeds from his joy to the tune; he who hears, from the tune to joy. One comes from freedom into bondage, the other goes from bondage into freedom; only thus can they have their communion. He sings and we hear. He ties the bonds as He sings to us, we untie them as we hear Him."

I cannot say whether Damini understood Satish's words, but she understood Satish. With her hands folded on her lap she kept quite still.

"I was hearing His song through the night," Satish went on, "till in a flash the whole thing became clear to me. Then I could not keep it to myself, and called out to you. All this time I had been trying to fashion Him to suit myself, and so was deprived.—O Desolator! Breaker of ties! Let me be shattered to pieces within you, again and again, for ever and ever. Bonds are not for me, that is why I can hold on to no bond for long. Bonds are yours, and so are you kept eternally bound to

creation. Play on, then, with our forms and let me take my plunge into your formlessness.—O Eternal, you are mine, mine, mine.—" With this cry Satish departed into the night towards the river.

After that night, Satish lapsed back into his old ways, forgetful of all claims of rest or nourishment. As to when his mind would rise into the light of ecstasy, or lapse into the depths of gloom, we could make no guess. May God help her, who has taken on herself the burden of keeping such a creature within the wholesomeness of worldly habit. . . .

## 5

It had been stiflingly oppressive the whole day. In the night a great storm burst on us. We had our several rooms along a verandah, in which a light used to be kept burning all night. That was now blown out. The river was lashed into foaming waves, and a flood of rain burst forth from the clouds. The splashing of the waves down below and the dashing of the torrents from above played the cymbals in this chaotic revel of the gods. Nothing could be seen of the deafening movements which resounded within the depths of the darkness, and made the sky, like a blind child, break into shivers of fright. Out of the bamboo thickets pierced a scream as of some bereaved giantess. From the mango groves burst the cracking and crashing of breaking timber. The river-side echoed with the deep thuds of the falling masses of the crumbling banks. Through the bare ribs of our dilapidated house the keen blasts howled and howled like infuriated beasts.

On such a night the fastenings of the human mind are shaken loose. The storm gains entry and plays havoc within, scattering into disorder its well-arranged furniture of convention, tossing about its curtains of decorous restraint in disturbing revelation. I could not sleep. But what can I write of the thoughts which assailed my sleepless brain? They do not concern this story.

"Who is that?" I heard Satish cry out all of a sudden in the darkness.

"It is I,—Damini," came the reply. "Your windows are open and the rain is streaming in. I have come to close them."

As she was doing this she found Satish had got out of his bed. He seemed to stand and hesitate, just for a moment, and then he went out of the room.

Damini went back to her own room and sat long on the threshold. No one returned. The fury of the wind went on increasing in violence.

Damini could sit quiet no longer. She also left the house. It was hardly possible to keep on one's feet in the storm. The sentinels of the revelling gods seemed to be scolding Damini and repeatedly thrusting her back. The rain made desperate attempts to pervade every nook and cranny of the sky.—If only Damini could give outlet to her agony in just such a world-drowning flood!

A flash rent the sky from end to end with terrific tearing thunder. It revealed Satish standing on the river brink. With a supreme effort Damini reached him in one tempestuous rush outvying the wind. She fell prone at his feet. The shriek of the storm was overcome by her cry: "At your feet I swear I had no thought of sin against your God! Why punish me thus?"

Satish stood silent.

"Thrust me into the river with your feet, if you would be rid of me. But return you must!"

Satish came back. As he re-entered the house he said: "My need for Him whom I seek is immense,—so absolutely, that I have no need for anything else at all. Damini, have pity on me and leave me to Him."

After a space of silence Damini said: "I will."

## 6

I knew nothing of this at the time, but heard it all from Damini, afterwards. So when I saw through my open door, the two returning figures pass along the verandah to their rooms, the desolation of my lot fell heavy on my heart and took me by the throat. I struggled up from

my bed. Further sleep was impossible that night.

The next morning, what a Damini was this who met my gaze? The demon dance of last night's storm seemed to have left all its ravages on this one forlorn girl. Though I knew nothing of what had happened, I felt bitterly angry with Satish.

"Srivilas Babu," said Damini. "Will you take me on to Calcutta?"

I could guess all that these words meant for her, so I asked no questions. But, in the midst of the torture within me, I felt the balm of consolation. It was well that Damini should take herself away from here. Repeated buffeting against the rock could only end in the vessel being broken up.

At parting, Damini made her obeisance to Satish, saying: "I have grievously sinned at your feet. May I hope for pardon?"

Satish with his eyes fixed on the ground replied: "I also have sinned. Let me first purge my sin away and then will I claim forgiveness."

It became clear to me, on our way to Calcutta, what a devastating fire had all along been raging within Damini. I was so scorched by its heat that I could not restrain myself from breaking out in revilement of Satish.

Damini stopped me frenziedly. "Don't you dare talk so in my presence!" she exclaimed. "Little do you know of what he saved me from! You can only see my sorrow. Had you no eyes for the sorrow he has been through in order to save me? The hideous thing tried to destroy the Beautiful and got well kicked for its pains—Serve it right!—Serve it right!—" Damini began to beat her breast violently with her clenched hands. I had to hold them back by main force.

When we arrived in the evening, I left Damini at her aunt's and went over to a lodging house, where I used to be well-known. My old acquaintances started at sight of me. "Have you been ill?" they cried.

By next morning's post I got a letter from Damini. "Take me away," she wrote. "There is no room for me here."

It appeared that her aunt would not have her. Scandal about us was all over the town. The Poojah numbers of the weekly newspapers had come out shortly after we had given up Lilananda Swami. The instruments for our execution had been kept sharpened. The carnage turned out to be worthy of the occasion. In our *shastras* the sacrifice of she-animals is prohibited. But, in the case of modern human sacrifice, a woman victim seems to add to the zest of the performers. The mention of Damini's name was skilfully avoided. But no less was the skill which did away with all doubt as to the intention. Anyhow, it had resulted in this shrinkage of room in the house of Damini's distant aunt.

Damini had lost her parents. But I had an idea, that one of her brothers was living. I asked Damini for his address, but she shook her head saying they were too poor. The fact was, Damini did not care to place her brother in an awkward position. What if he also came to say there was no room?

"Where will you stay, then?" I had to inquire.

"I will go back to Lilananda Swami."

I could not trust myself to speak for a time,—I was so overcome. Was this, then, the last cruel trick which Fate had held in reserve?

"Will the Swami take you back?" I asked at length.

"Gladly!"

Damini understood men. Sect-mongers rejoice more in catching adherents, than in gaining truths. Damini was quite right. There would be no dearth of room for her at Lilananda's, but—

"Damini," I said, just at this juncture. "There is another way. If you promise not to be angry, I will mention it."

"Tell me," said Damini.

"If it is at all possible for you to think of marrying a creature, such as I am —"

"What are you saying, Srivilas Babu?" interrupted Damini. "Are you mad?"

"Suppose I am," said I. "One can sometimes solve insoluble problems by becoming mad. Madness is like the wishing carpet of the Arabian Nights. It can

waft one over the thousand petty considerations which obstruct the every-day world."

"What do you call petty considerations?"

"Such as: What will people think?—What will happen in the future?—and so on, and so forth."

"And what about the vital considerations?"

"What do you call vital?" I asked in my turn.

"Such as, for instance: What will be your fate, if you marry a creature like me?" said Damini.

"If that be a vital consideration, I am reassured. For I cannot possibly be in a worse plight than now. Any movement of my prostrate destiny, even though it be a turning over to the other side, cannot but be a sign of improvement."

Of course I could not believe that some telepathic news of my state of mind had never reached Damini. Such news, however, had not, so far, come under the head of 'Important'—at least it had not called for any notice to be taken. Now action was definitely demanded of her.

Damini was lost in silent thought.

"Damini," I said. "I am only one of the very ordinary sort of men,—even less, for I am of no account in the world. To marry me, or not to marry me, cannot make enough difference to be worth all this thought."

Tears glistened in Damini's eyes. "Had you been an ordinary man, it would not have cost me a moment's hesitation," she said.

After another long silence, Damini murmured: "You know what I am." "You also know what I am," I rejoined.

Thus was the proposal mooted, relying more on things unspoken than on what was said.

Those who, in the old days, had been under the spell of my English speeches had mostly shaken off their fascination during my absence; except only Naren, who still looked on me as one of the rarest



products of the age. A house belonging to him was temporarily vacant. In this we took shelter.

It seemed at first that my proposal would never be rescued from the ditch of silence, into which it had lumbered at the very start; or at all events that it would require any amount of discussion and repair work, before it could be hauled back on the high road of 'yes' or 'no'.

But man's mind was evidently created to raise a laugh against mental science, with its sudden practical jokes. In the spring, which now came upon us, the Creator's joyous laughter rang through and through this hired dwelling of ours.

All this while, Damini never had the time to notice that I was anybody at all; or it may be that the dazzling light from a different quarter had kept her blinded. Now that her world had shrunk around her, it was reduced to me alone. So she had no help but to look on me with seeing eyes. Perhaps it was the kindness of my fate, which contrived that this should be her first sight of me.

By river and hill and sea shore have I wandered along with Damini, as one of Lilananda's *kirtan* party, setting the atmosphere on fire with passionate song, to the beat of drum and cymbal. Great sparks of emotion were set free as we rang the changes on the text of the Vaishnava poet: *The noose of love hath bound my heart to thy feet*. Yet the curtain which hid me from Damini was not burnt away.

But what was it that happened in this Calcutta lane? The dingy houses, crowding upon one another, blossomed out like flowers of paradise. Verily God vouchsafed to us a miracle. Out of this brick and mortar, he fashioned a harp-string to voice forth His melody. And with His wand He touched me, the least of men, and made me, all in a moment, wonderful.

When the curtain is there, the separation is infinite; when it is lifted, the distance can be crossed in the twinkling of an eye. So it took no time at all. "I was in a dream," said Damini. "I wanted this shock to wake me. Between

that 'you' of mine and this 'you' of mine, there was a veil of stupor. I salute my master again and again, for it is he who dispelled it."

"Damini," I said. "Do not keep your gaze on me like that. Before, when you made the discovery that this creation of God is not beautiful, I was able to bear it; but it will be difficult to do so now."

"I am making the discovery," she replied, "that this creation of God has its beauty."

"Your name will go down in history!" I exclaimed. "The planting of the explorer's flag on the South Pole heights was child's play to this discovery of yours. 'Difficult' is not the word for it. You will have achieved the impossible!"

I had never realised before how short our spring month of Phalgun is. It has only thirty days, and each of the days is not a minute more than twenty-four hours. With the infinite time, which God has at his disposal, such parsimony I failed to understand!

"This mad freak that you are bent on,—" said Damini, "what will your people have to say to it?"

"My people are my best friends. So they are sure to turn me out of their house."

"What next?"

"Next it will be for you and me to build up a home, fresh from the very foundations. That will be our own special creation."

"You must also fashion afresh the mistress of your house, from the very beginning. May she also be your creation, with no trace left of her old battered condition!"

We fixed a day in the following month for the wedding. Damini insisted that Satish should be brought over.

"What for?" I asked.

"He must give me away."

Where the madcap was wandering I was not sure. I had written several letters, but with no reply. He could hardly have given up that old haunted house, otherwise my letters would have been returned as undelivered. The chances

were, that he had not the time to be opening and reading letters.

"Damini," said I, "you must come with me and invite him personally. This is not a case for sending a formal invitation letter. I could have gone by myself, but my courage is not equal to it. For all we know, he may be on the other side of the river, superintending the preening of the ducks' feathers. To follow him there is a desperate venture of which you alone are capable!"

Damini smiled. "Did I not swear I would never pursue him there again?"

"You swore you would not go to him with food any more. That does not cover your going over to invite him to a repast!"

## 8

This time everything passed off smoothly. We each took Satish by one hand, and brought him along with us, back to Calcutta. He was as pleased as a child receiving a pair of new dolls!

Our idea had been to have a quiet wedding. But Satish would have none of that. Moreover, there were the Musalman friends of uncle Jagamohan. When they heard the news, they were so extravagantly jubilant,—the neighbours must have thought it was for the Amir of Kabul, or the Nizam of Hyderabad, at the very least. But the height of revelry was reached by the newspapers in a very orgy of calumny. Our hearts, however, were too full to harbour any resentment. We were quite willing to allow the blood-thirstiness of the readers to be satisfied, and the pockets of the proprietors to be filled—along with our blessings to boot.

"Come and occupy my house, Visri, old fellow," said Satish.

"Come with us, too," I added. "Let us set to work together, over again."

"No, thank you," said Satish: "My work is elsewhere."

"You won't be allowed to go, till you have assisted at our house-warming," insisted Damini.

This function was not going to be a crowded affair, Satish being the only

guest. But it was all very well for him to say: "Come and occupy my house." That had already been done by his father, Harimohan,—not directly, but through a tenant. Harimohan would have entered into possession himself; but his worldly and other-worldly advisers warned him, that it was best not to risk it,—a Musalman having died there of the plague. Of course the tenant, to whom it was offered, ran the same spiritual and physical risks, but then why need he be told?

How we got the house out of Harimohan's clutches is a long story. The Musalman leather-dealers were our chief allies. When they got to know of the contents of the Will, we found further legal steps to be superfluous!

The allowance, which I had all along been getting from home, was now stopped. It was all the more of a joy to us to undertake together the toil of setting up house without outside assistance. With the seal of Premchand—oychand, it was not difficult for me to secure a professorship. I was able to supplement my income by publishing notes on the prescribed text-books, which were eagerly availed of as patent nostrums for passing examinations. I need not have done so much, for our own wants were few. But Damini insisted that Satish should not have to worry about his own living while we were here to prevent it.

There was another thing, about which Damini did not say a word, and which, therefore, I had to attend to secretly. That was the education of her brother's son and the marriage of his daughter,—both matters beyond the means of her brother himself. His house was barred to us; but pecuniary assistance has no caste to stand in the way of its acceptance. Moreover, acceptance did not necessarily involve acknowledgment. So I had to add the sub-editorship of a newspaper to my other occupations.

Without consulting Damini, I engaged a cook and two servants. Without consulting me, Damini sent them packing the very next day. When I objected, she made me conscious how ill-judged was my attempted consideration for her. "If I

am not allowed," she said, "to do my share of work, while you are slaving away, where am I to hide my shame?"

My work outside and Damini's work at home flowed on together like the confluent Ganges and Jumna. Damini also began to teach sewing to the leather-dealers' little girls. She was determined not to take defeat at my hands. I am not enough of a poet to sing how this Calcutta house of ours became Brindaban itself, our labours the flute strains which kept it enraptured. All I can say is, that our days did not drag, neither did they merely pass by,—they positively danced along.

One more springtime came and went ; but never another.

Ever since her return from the cave temple, Damini had suffered from a pain in her breast, of which, however, she then told no one. This suddenly took a turn for the worse, and when I asked her about it she said : "This is my secret wealth, my touchstone. With it, as

dower, I was able to come to you. Else, I would not have been worthy."

The doctors, each of them, had a different name for the malady. Neither did they agree in their prescriptions. When my little hoard of gold was blown away between the cross fire of the doctors' fees and the chemists' bills, the chapter of medicament came to an end, and change of air was advised. As a matter of fact, nothing else of changeable value was left to us except air.

"Take me to the place from which I brought the pain," said Damini. "It has no dearth of air."

When the month of Magh ended with its full moon, and Phalgun began ; while the sea heaved and sobbed with the wail of its lonely eternity ; Damini, taking the dust of my feet, bade farewell to me with the words :

"I have not had enough of you. May you be mine again in our next birth."

THE END.

## RAM-LEELA\*

BY MISS SEETA CHATTERJEE.

THE hot and sultry evening was drawing to a close. It was still insufferably warm, and the leaves of the guava tree which stood by the house, were unstirred by a single whiff of air and looked like the creation of a painter's brush, so motionless they were.

The house stood at the extreme end of a small town of the United Provinces, but one look sufficed to tell that the inhabitants came from Bengal. On the small verandah in front two children sat playing. One was about five years of age, another about three. The elder was clad in a dirty and ragged cloth, which ill became his beautiful and fair

\* The annual festival in Upper India to celebrate the deified hero Ram's victory over the Rakshas king Ravan of Lanka or Ceylon.

appearance. The younger was not good looking at all. But he was dressed in a frock of gaudy pink silk, profusely decorated with black lace, whose pristine glory had become somewhat tarnished through constant contact with the oily body of the child.

A voice cried out shrilly from the inner apartments : "Sheolal, why don't you bring in baby here ? I have been shrieking for about half an hour ; are you deaf, that you cannot hear ?"

Being thus addressed, in atrocious Hindustani, the boy servant, Sheolal, had reluctantly to come down from the guava tree where he had been hunting for edible fruits. The voice acted like a storm signal, and with two half-ripe guavas in his hand, he picked up the rebellious child and proceeded to enter the

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WHOLE  
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## PILGRIM

Pilgrim, the night of the weary old year is ended.  
The blazing sun brings on your path the call of the Destroyer,  
the fiery scourge for pollutions of the past.  
A thin line of distance stretches along the road  
like a fine-drawn note from the one-stringed lute of a beggar  
seeking the way he has lost.

Let the grey dust of the road be like your nurse !  
May she take you up in her arms,  
lead you away from the clasp of clinging reluctance !  
Not for you is the music of the home,  
the light of the evening lamp,  
the wistful gaze of the lover keeping watch.  
You have ever claimed the boon of Life  
which is not in pleasure nor in peace or comfort,  
therefore the time has come for you for rejection at every door.

The Cruel One has come,—  
the bolts and bars of your gate are broken,  
your wine vessel shattered ;  
take his hand whom you do not know and dare not understand.  
Never fear, pilgrim !  
Turn not away from the terror of Truth,  
or the dark phantom of the unreal,  
accept your final gift from him who takes away everything.  
Has the old night ended ?  
then let it end !

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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# THE MODERN REVIEW

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WHOLE  
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## THE WATERFALL

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

[ *Scene.* A mountainous country, with a road leading to the Temple of Bhairava.\* (The Scene remains the same throughout the play.)

In the background is represented the upper framework of a big iron machine ; opposite to this is the spire of the Bhairava Temple, with its trident.

Ranjit, the king of Uttarakut, has his royal tent in the mango grove by the side of the road. He is resting there on his way to celebrate the evening festival, on the dark night of the moon. After twenty-five years of strenuous effort, his Royal Engineer, Bibhuti, has succeeded in building up an embankment across the waterfall called Muktheadhārā. †

The inhabitants of Uttarakut are seen visiting the temple with their offerings and preparing to hold in the temple court-yard the festival, which is to celebrate the achievement of the Royal Engineer, Bibhuti.

\* One of the names of the God Shiva, meaning 'The Terrible.'

† The Free Current.

The temple DEVOTEES of Bhairava are in the foreground. They are seen making a long circuit in religious procession round the Temple. As they sing the praises of the God Bhairava, some are swinging their censers, some are beating the gongs, some are blowing the conch shells.]

THE DEVOTEES *sing, in procession,—*  
Victory to Him, the Terrible,  
The Lord of Destruction,  
The uttermost Peace,  
The Dissolver of doubts,  
The Breaker of fetters,  
Who carries us beyond all conflicts,  
The Terrible, the Terrible !

[ *They go in.*

*A stranger comes with his offerings of worship and meets a citizen of Uttarakut.*

STRANGER. What's that there put up against the sky ? It is frightful !

CITIZEN. Don't you know ? You're a stranger, I see.—It's the Machine.

STRANGER. Machine ! What Machine ?

CITIZEN. The Royal Engineer, Bibhuti, has been working at it for the last twenty-five years. It's just been finished. A

festival is now being held in honour of the occasion.

STRANGER. What's the object of the Machine ?

CITIZEN. It has bound up the waterfall of Muktheadhārā.

STRANGER. What a monster ! It looks like a dragon's skull with its fleshless jaws hanging down ! The constant sight of it would make the life within you withered and dead.

CITIZEN. The life within *us* has got a thick hide to protect it ! You needn't have any fear for *us* !

STRANGER. All the same, this is n't a thing to put up nakedly before the sun and stars. Can't you see how it seems to irritate the whole sky by its obtrusion ?

CITIZEN. But are n't you going to attend the evening worship of Bhairava ?

STRANGER. Yes, I've come out for that object. Every year I bring my offering at this time. But I've never seen such a monstrous obstruction in the sky before. Don't you think it's a sacrilege to allow it to overtop the spire of the Temple ?

[ *He goes.*

*Enters a woman named Amba, with a white veil which covers her head and body and trails in the dust.*

AMBA. My Suman ! My Suman ! Won't my son Suman come back to me ? You've all returned, but where is he ?

CITIZEN. Who are you ?

AMBA. I'm Amba of Janai village. Suman, my son, 's the light of my eyes, the breath of my life,—my Suman !

CITIZEN. What's happened to him ?

AMBA. I don't know where they've taken him. I'd gone to worship Bhairava, in the Temple ; and when I came back, I found that he had been taken away.

CITIZEN. Then he must have been recruited for the work of building up the embankment.

AMBA. I've heard that they've taken him along this road to the west of the Hill of Gauri ; and my eyesight does n't reach so far. I can't see the way across it.

CITIZEN. What's the use of grieving ? We're going to the Temple. It's a great day for us. You also must come.

AMBA. No, no ! From that day, when I lost my son, I've dreaded going to the Temple. Let me tell you, our worship never reaches Him. Someone filches it away, as it's carried to the shrine.

CITIZEN. Who's that ?

AMBA. The one who's taken my Suman away from me ! I don't know who it is. Suman ! My Suman ! My darling !

[*They go.*

*The messenger from Abhijit, the Crown Prince of Uttarakut, meets Bibhuti, while he is on his way to the Temple.*

MESSENGER. Bibhuti ! The Crown Prince has sent me to you.

BIBHUTI. What is his wish ?

MESSENGER. You have been for a long time building up an embankment across the waterfall of Muktheadhārā. Over and over again it gave way, and men perished, smothered with sand and earth ; and others got washed away by the flood. At last, to-day—

BIBHUTI. My object is accomplished ; and the sacrifice of their lives has met with its fulfilment.

MESSENGER. The inhabitants of Shiutarai are still ignorant of this fact. They cannot believe, that any man can deprive them of the water, which has been to them the gift of God.



BIBHUTI. God has given them the water ; but He has given me the power to bind that water.

MESSENGER. They don't know that, within a week, their fields—

BIBHUTI. Why talk about their fields ? What have I to do with their fields ?

MESSENGER. Was n't it your object to devastate their fields with drought ?

BIBHUTI. My object was to make Man triumphant over the sands and water and stones, which conspired against him. I had not the time to trouble my mind about what would happen to some wretched maize field of some wretched cultivator in some place or other.

MESSENGER. The Crown Prince asks you, if the time has not come at last for you to trouble your mind about it.

BIBHUTI. No ! My mind is occupied with the contemplation of the majesty of the Machine.

MESSENGER. Cannot the cry of hunger interrupt that contemplation ?

BIBHUTI. No ! the pressure of water cannot break my embankment ; the cry of hunger cannot sway my Machine.

MESSENGER. Are n't you afraid of curses ?

BIBHUTI. Curses ?—When labourers became scarce in Uttarakut, I had all the young men of over eighteen years of age from every house of Pattana village brought out by the King's command, and a great number of them never returned to their homes. My Machine has triumphed against the storm of mothers' curses. He who fights God's own power, is not afraid of man's malediction.

MESSENGER. The Crown Prince says that you have already attained the glory of a creation ; and now it is time for you

to attain a greater glory by demolishing that creation.

BIBHUTI. So long as my work remained unfinished, it was mine. But now that it is finished, it belongs to all Uttarakut. I have no longer the right to demolish it.

MESSENGER. The Crown Prince declares, that he will take this right into his own hands.

BIBHUTI. Are these words from our own Crown Prince himself ? Does he not belong to us ?

MESSENGER. He says, that it has yet to be proved, whether God's Will has found its entrance into the Government of Uttarakut ; the Machine must not stand between.

BIBHUTI. It is my mission to prove, by the force of the Machine, that God's throne is ours. Tell the Crown Prince, that no road is left open to make the Machine slacken its grip.

MESSENGER. The God, who breaks, does not need the broad road for his passage. The smallest holes, which escape our notice, are enough for him.

BIBHUTI. Holes ! What do you know about them ?

MESSENGER. Nothing. But He knows, who makes use of them.

[*Messenger goes.*]

*Citizens of Uttarakut, on their way to the Temple, meet Bibhuti.*

1ST CITIZEN. Engineer, you're a wonderful fellow ! We never noticed when you got ahead of us !

2ND CITIZEN. That 's ever been his habit. Nobody knows how he wins in the race. That shaven-headed Bibhuti of our Chabua village got his ears pulled along with ourselves at the village school.

And yet he 's done such wonders, surpassing us all !

3RD CITIZEN. Hallo, Gobru ! why d' you stand there, basket in hand, with your mouth wide open ? Is this the first time you 've seen Bibhuti ? Bring out the garlands. Let's garland him.

BIBHUTI. No, no ! What's the use of doing that ?

3RD CITIZEN. Why do you say 'no' ? If the length of your neck could keep pace with your greatness, it 'd grow like a camel's and we'd load it up to the tip of your nose with garlands.

2ND CITIZEN. Harish, our drummer, has n't yet arrived.

1ST CITIZEN. That man 's the very prince of the sluggards ! He needs a good beating on the drum of his back.

3RD CITIZEN. Nonsense, he can beat the drum far better than we can.

4TH CITIZEN. The idea came to me, that we might borrow the chariot from Samanta, to drive Bibhuti on it to the Temple. But we hear that the king himself 'll go walking to the temple. Let's carry him on our shoulders.

BIBHUTI. No, no ! This is too much !

5TH CITIZEN. Not at all ! You were born in the lap of Uttarakut, and now you 've got to be raised on its shoulders.

*(They all take him up and sing.)*

*The Song of the Machine.*

We salute the Machine, the Machine !

Loud with its rumbling of wheels,

Quick with its thunder flame,

Fastening its fangs

into the breast of the world.

Hurling against obstructions

its fiery defiance

That melts iron, crushes rocks,

And drives the inert from its rest.

We salute the Machine, the Machine !

Now stolidly stable, with timber

and stones,

Now light and free, like a storm cloud

Sailing across earth, water and sky.

The Machine, whose claws wrench

bare

The entrails of the earth.

Whose magic net captures in its meshes

The elements elusive and subtle.

We salute the Machine, the Machine !

*[ They all go out.*

*Enter the King Ranajit and his Minister from the Camp.*

RANAJIT. You ever failed thoroughly to subdue our subjects in Shiu-tarai. And now, Bibhuti has made it possible at last by controlling the waterfall, Mukta-dhārā. But how is it, that you do not show any sign of elation ? Is it jealousy ?

MINISTER. Pardon me, Your Majesty. It is not our business to wrestle with the clay and stones by the help of spades and pickaxes. Our weapon is diplomacy. We deal with men's minds. It was I who advised you to send the Crown Prince to Shiu-tarai ; and the embankment, which could have been built up by this policy, would have controlled a turbulent force with greater security and permanence than this one before us

RANAJIT. Yet what was the result ? They have not paid taxes for two years. Famines are not unusual among them, yet in former days they had never left their dues unpaid.

MINISTER. Something more valuable than taxes was being realised at the very moment when you ordered the Crown Prince back. It is not a sound policy to despise the small. When things are intol-

erable, then the small becomes great with the power of their suffering.

RANAJIT. You change the tune of your advice, time after time. I distinctly remember how you have often said to me that it is easiest to put pressure upon those, who are down below you, from the vantage ground of the higher position; and that foreign subjects must always be under that pressure.

MINISTER. Yes, I did say that; but the circumstances then were different; therefore my advice was timely. But now,—

RANAJIT. It was against my wish to send the Crown Prince to Shiu-tarai.

MINISTER. Why, Sire?

RANAJIT. Distance has its dignity. Familiarity diminishes it. You can win the hearts of your own people through love; but aliens must be won over by fear.

MINISTER. You forget, Sire, what was the real reason for sending the Crown Prince to Shiu-tarai. For some days, we had noticed in him a spirit of restlessness, and we suspected that, by some chance, he had come to know that he was not born to the royal house, but picked up near the source of this waterfall. Therefore in order to keep his mind engaged,—

RANAJIT. Yes, I know. He began to visit the source of the waterfall alone, in the night. Once I surprised him, and asked him what was the matter, and why he was there. He said, "I find my mother's tongue in the murmurs of this water."

MINISTER. Once I asked him what had come over him, and why he was so often absent from the palace. He answered, that he had come into the world to open out roads: this was the inner meaning of his life which he must fulfil;

RANAJIT. The prophecy, that he would be the ruler of a great empire, is no longer credible.

MINISTER. But, Sire, it was the *guru* of your *guru* who came here specially for the purpose of telling you this. *He* made that prediction.

RANAJIT. He must have been mistaken. The Crown Prince, in all his moods, has always made me suffer loss. By his last fit of folly, wantonly destroying the wall across the Nandi Pass, he has undone the work in a few days which our forefathers took years to complete. And now there will be nothing to prevent the wool and other products of Shiu-tarai from finding their outlet in markets beyond our own kingdom. This will raise the price of food and clothing in Uttarakut.

MINISTER. You must remember that he is young and takes an one-sided view of his duty, having only the good of Shiu-tarai in view.

RANAJIT. But that is what I call rebellion against his own people. I am sure that Vairagi\* Dhananjai, of Shiu-tarai, whose business it is to incite our subjects against us, must have had a hand in this business. We must throttle this man with his own rosary. We must capture him.

MINISTER. I dare not contradict. But I am sure you know, that there are dangers which are better left free, than captured.

RANAJIT. You need not trouble yourself about it.

MINISTER. No Sire! I want *you* to trouble about it.

*Enter Warder.*

WARDER. Sire, your uncle, Viswajit, of Mohangarh, has come.

\* A mendicant ascetic singer.

RANAJIT. There is another of them ! He is the worst of all those, who have acted their part in spoiling the Crown Prince. The man, who is a relation and yet an alien, is like a hump on the back of a hunch-back. It always follows you. You cannot cut it off, and yet it is a trouble to bear it. What is that ?

MINISTER. The devotees have come out, and are going round the temple in procession.

*The DEVOTEES come and sing the rest of their song.*

Victory to the fearful flame,

That tears the heart of darkness,  
That burns to ashes things that are dead,  
Victory to him, whose voice thunders

forth Truth,

Whose right arm smites the unrighteous,  
Whose guidance leads mortals across death.

The Terrible !

*[They go away.]*

*Viswajit, the uncle of Ranajit, enters.*

RANAJIT. My greeting to you ! I never expected the good fortune of your coming and joining with us to-night in our worship.

VISWAJIT. I have come to warn you that the God Bhairava will reject the worship you bring to him to-night.

RANAJIT. Such words from you are an insult to our great Festival.

VISWAJIT. Festival ? For what ? For shutting up the water, that has ever poured forth from the cup of the God of Gods, so that all who thirst may drink ? Why did you do it ?

RANAJIT. To defeat our enemies !

VISWAJIT. Are you not afraid of making an enemy of your God himself ?

RANAJIT. Our victory is His. He is

the Patron God of Uttarakut. Therefore He has allowed His own boon to be withdrawn for our sake. He will bring Shiu-tarai to the feet of Uttarakut, piercing its heart with the spear of thirst.

VISWAJIT. If that is true, then the worship you offer to Him is no worship at all, but merely wages.

RANAJIT. Uncle, you are partial to the outsiders, and against your own kith and kin. It is through *your* lessons that Abhijit has failed fully to accept the duties of the kingdom of Uttarakut which are to be his hereafter.

VISWAJIT. Through *my* lessons !—Was there not a time when I belonged to your party ? After your actions had caused a rebellion in Pattana, was it not I who crushed it, desolating the whole place ? Then came that boy Abhijit into my heart. He came like a flash of light ; and those whom I had struck, blinded by the darkness of my heart—I could see them, for the first time, in their full humanity. You accepted him into your home, because you found in him the signs of a World Emperor ; and now you try to keep him tied to the limits of the throne of Uttarakut.

RANAJIT. I am sure that it was you, who divulged to him the secret ; it was you, who told him that he was a foundling picked up at the source of the waterfall, Muktadhārā.

VISWAJIT. Yes, I did. It was on the night of the Lamp Festival in my palace. I found him standing alone in the balcony, gazing at the summit of Gauri. I asked him, what he was looking at. He said that he saw the vision of the roads of the future,—the roads which

had not yet been built across the difficult passes of the mountains; the roads that would bring the distant near. When I heard him, I said to myself, that nothing could keep such a child captive, whom some homeless mother had given birth to near the waterfall, which seeks its home in the Unknown. I could not contain myself and I said to him,—‘My child, that bare mountain accepted you in its arms when you were born by the roadside. The welcome music of the home was not for you at your birth.’

RANAJIT. Now, I understand.

VISWAJIT. What do you understand?

RANAJIT. Abhijit has lost his feeling of attachment for our royal house ever since the time he heard this news from you. In order to show this disaffection the first thing he did was to break the wall of the fort of Nandi and open out the road of Nandi Pass.

VISWAJIT. What harm was there in that? The open road belongs to all,—as much to Uttarakut as to Shiu-tarai.

RANAJIT. Uncle, I have borne with you for long, but no more of this! You must leave my kingdom!

VISWAJIT. I have not the power to leave you. But if you leave me, I shall merely suffer it.

[ Goes.

*Enters Amba.*

AMBA. Who are you there? The sun is about to set, but my Suman has n't yet come back.

RANAJIT. Who are you?

AMBA. I'm nobody. He, who was my all in all, has been taken away from me along this path. And has this path no end? Does my Suman walk and ever walk on, into the West, across the

peak of Gauri, where the sun is sinking, the light is sinking, and everything is sinking?

RANAJIT ( *to his minister* ). It seems that—

MINISTER. Yes, Sire, it must be connected with the building up of the embankment.

RANAJIT ( *to Amba* ). Set your mind free from all grief. I assure you, your son has received the last great gift of life.

AMBA. If that were true, he would have brought it to my hands in the evening. For I'm his mother.

RANAJIT. He will bring it. That evening time has not yet come.

AMBA. May your words turn out to be true! I shall wait for him on this road leading to the temple.

[ *She goes.*

*A Schoolmaster enters, with a group of boys.*

SCHOOLMASTER. These wretched boys are in for a good caning, I can see. Shout, with your loudest voices boys: “Salve Imperātor.”

BOYS. ‘Salve Im—’

SCHOOLMASTER. ‘—perātor!’

BOYS. ‘—perātor!’

SCHOOLMASTER. ‘Salve Imperātor Imperātorum!’

BOYS. ‘Salve Imperātor—’

SCHOOLMASTER. —‘Imperātorum!’

BOYS. ‘Imperātorum!’

RANAJIT. Where are you going?

SCHOOLMASTER. Your Majesty is about to confer special honour on the Royal Engineer, Bibhuti; and I am taking my boys to the festival, in order to share in the rejoicing. I do not want my boys to miss any opportunity of participating in the glory of Uttarakut.

RANAJIT. Do these boys know what Bibhuti has done ?

THE BOYS. ( *clapping their hands and jumping* ). Yes ! Yes ! We know. He has shut up the drinking water of the Shiu-tarai people !

RANAJIT. Why has he shut it up ?

BOYS. To give them a good lesson.

RANAJIT. What for ?

BOYS. To make them smart !

RANAJIT. Why ?

BOYS. Because they are bad !

RANAJIT. Why bad ?

BOYS. Oh they are terribly bad. Everybody knows it !

RANAJIT. Then, *you* do not know why they are bad ?

SCHOOLMASTER. Certainly, they know it, Your Majesty. ( *To the boys* ) What's happened to you, you blockheads ? Have n't you—Have n't you,—in your books ?—Have n't you—in your books ?—( *in a low voice, whispering* ) Their religion is rotten !

BOYS. Yes ! Yes ! Their religion is rotten !

SCHOOLMASTER. And they are not like us,—come, answer, boys,—don't you remember ( *pointing to his nose* ).

BOYS. Yes, they haven't got high-bridged noses.

SCHOOLMASTER. Good ! Of course you know what has been proved by our Professor. What does a high-bridged nose denote ?

BOYS. The greatness of the race !

SCHOOLMASTER. Good ! Good ! And what is the mission of the greater races ?—Speak out ! They conquer—speak out !—They conquer,—the world,—for themselves. Is not that so ?

BOYS. Yes ! They conquer the world for themselves.

SCHOOLMASTER. Is there a single case, in which Uttarakut has been defeated in a war ?

BOYS. No, never !

SCHOOLMASTER. You all know how the grandfather of our king, with only 293 soldiers, put to flight 31,700 barbarians from the South. Isn't that true, boys ?

BOYS. Yes !

SCHOOLMASTER. Your Majesty may rest assured that these very boys will one day be a terror to all those who have the misfortune to be born outside our boundaries. I shall be false to my vocation as a schoolmaster if this does not happen. I never allow myself to forget for one moment the great responsibility which we teachers have. We build up *men* ! Your statesmen merely use them.—And yet Your Majesty should take the trouble to compare the pay, which *they* draw, with what we get.

MINISTER. But those very students are your best reward.

SCHOOLMASTER. Wonderfully uttered ! Indeed, they are our best reward ! Beautiful ! But, Sir, food is becoming so dear nowadays. For instance, the butter from cow's milk was once—

MINISTER. You needn't go on. I shall ponder over this question of the butter from cow's milk. Now you may take your leave.

[ *The Schoolmaster, with his boys, departs.* ]

RANAJIT. Inside the skull of this schoolmaster of yours, there is nothing but the butter made of cow's milk.

MINISTER. Nevertheless, Sire, such people are useful. He loyally repeats the lesson, day after day, according to the instruction that he has received. If he had



more brains, such a thing as this would not be possible.

RANAJIT. What is that in the sky ?

MINISTER. Have you forgotten about it ? That is the top of Bibhuti's Machine.

RANAJIT. I have never seen it so clear as it is to day.

MINISTER. The storm this morning has cleared the sky. That is why it is so distinct.

RANAJIT. Don't you see how the sun from behind it looks red with anger, and the Machine appears like the menacing fist of a giant. It has not been at all proper to raise it so high.

MINISTER. The thing appears like a spasm of agony in the heart of the sky.

RANAJIT. It is time for us to go to the temple.

[ *They go.*

*A second group of CITIZENS of Uttarakut enters.*

1ST CITIZEN. Don't you notice, how Bibhuti seeks to evade us now-a-days ? He tries to rub off from his skin the fact that he was bred up along with ourselves. One day he 'll realise, that it's not good for the sword to grow longer than the sheath.

2ND CITIZEN. Whatever you may say, Bibhuti has upheld the reputation of Uttarakut.

1ST CITIZEN. Stop that nonsense ! You 're making too much of him ! This embankment, which has cost him all his resources, has given way ten times at least.

3RD CITIZEN. Who knows that it won't give way once again ?

1ST CITIZEN. Have you noticed the mound on the northern side.

2ND CITIZEN. What about it ?

1ST CITIZEN. Don't you know ? Everybody, who has seen it, says—

2ND CITIZEN. What ? Tell me.

1ST CITIZEN. You *are* a simpleton ! Don't you know, that from one end to the other, it's—Oh, rubbish !

2ND CITIZEN. *Do* explain it to me a little more clearly.

1ST CITIZEN. Wait a while. It 'll explain itself, when all of a sudden— (*ends with a gesture* ).

2ND CITIZEN. Terrible ! All of a sudden ?

1ST CITIZEN. Yes ! Jagru will be able to tell you all about it. He has measured every inch of it.

2ND CITIZEN. That's the best thing about Jagru. He has a wonderfully cool head. When everybody's delirious with admiration, he quietly brings out his measuring tape.

3RD CITIZEN. Some people say that all the science of Bibhuti—

1ST CITIZEN. Yes, yes ! It's stolen from Benkot Varma. *He* was a great man, indeed ! Yes indeed, *he* was great ! There was nobody like *him*. What brains ! What prodigious brain power !—And yet Bibhuti gets all the rewards, and that poor man,—he actually died of starvation.

3RD CITIZEN. Only of starvation ?

1ST CITIZEN. Whether from starvation or from some food from some hand,—who knows ? But what's the use of discussing it ? Someone may overhear what we 're saying. There are all kinds of scandal-mongers in this land. Our people can't bear to hear good of others.

2ND CITIZEN. Whatever you may say, he's a—

1ST CITIZEN. What wonder is there in that. Just consider in what soil he flourished. That Chabua village of ours,—don't

you realise, it has given birth to my great grandfather?—Of course you know his name.

2ND CITIZEN. Of course! Everybody in Uttarakut knows him. He's that—what do you call it?

1ST CITIZEN. Bhāskar. There was none in the whole kingdom of Uttarakut, who could come near to him in making snuff. The great Rajah Satrujit could n't pass a day without buying snuff from him.

3RD CITIZEN. Let's hurry to the temple now. We belong to the same village as Bibhuti. Our place will be on his right side.

BATU *from behind the screen cries out* :—

Don't go, friends! Don't go! Turn away from this path!

2ND CITIZEN. There he is,—old Batu!

*Batu enters with a torn blanket on his back and a crooked stick in his hand.*

1ST CITIZEN. Where are you going, Batu?

BATU. I warn you, friends! Don't take that path! Go back, while there's time!

2ND CITIZEN. Why?

BATU. They'll sacrifice,—sacrifice human beings! They've taken away by force two of my grandsons, who never returned.

3RD CITIZEN. Sacrifice? Before whom?

BATU. Before the Demon Thirst!

2ND CITIZEN. Who's that?

BATU. The Demon whose dry tongue grows and grows, like a flame of fire fed by the oil.

1ST CITIZEN. Madman! We're going to Bhairava's temple. Where's your Demon Thirst there?

BATU. Haven't you heard the news? They're going to dethrone Bhairava to-

day, and the Demon Thirst will occupy his altar.

2ND CITIZEN. Hold your tongue, madman! The people of Uttarakut will cut you to pieces, if they hear you talk like this.

BATU. They're throwing mud at me, and the children are pelting me with stones. Everybody's saying, that my grandsons were fortunate in being able to give up their lives.

1ST CITIZEN. That's true!

BATU. True? If the offer of life does not bring life in return,—if with death you gain death itself,—then Bhairava will never allow such an utter loss! I warn you, friends, never take that path!

[ *He goes.*

2ND CITIZEN. I must confess his words seem to send a shiver of cold through my blood.

1ST CITIZEN. Ranju, you're a great coward. Let's go!

[ *They all go.*

*Enter the Crown Prince Abhijit and the Prince Sanjay.*

SANJAY. I cannot understand why you are leaving our palace.

ABHIJIT. You will not fully understand it. For how are you to know that my life is a stream which must have its free course over the stones of the king's house.

SANJAY. We all have noticed, that you have been feeling restless for some time past. It seemed as if the bond that kept you tied to us was slackening every day. Has it snapped at last?

ABHIJIT. Sanjay! Look at that image of the sunset over the peak of Gauri! Some bird of fire has spread its wings and is flying towards the night. The

setting sun has drawn in the sky the picture of my own life's adventure.

SANJAY. To me the picture is different. Look how the top of that Machine has pierced the heart of this evening. It seems like a stricken bird falling head foremost into the valley of night! I do not like this omen! Now is the time for rest. Come into the palace.

ABHIJIT. Where there is an obstruction, there can be no rest.

SANJAY. How have you discovered, after all these days, this obstruction of which you are speaking?

ABHIJIT. I discovered it when I heard that they had bound the waters of Mukta-dhārā.

SANJAY. I do not understand the meaning of these words.

ABHIJIT. Every man has the mystery of his inner life somewhere written in the outer world. The secret of my own life has its symbol in that waterfall of Mukta-dhārā. When I saw its movements shackled, I received a shock at the very root of my being; I discovered that this throne of Uttarakut is an embankment built up across my own life's current. And I have come out into the road to set free its course.

SANJAY. Take me with you as your companion!

ABHIJIT. No! You have to find out your own course. If you follow me, then I shall only obscure it—your own true path.

SANJAY. Do not be so hard! You hurt me!

ABHIJIT. You know my heart; and you will understand me even when I pain you.

SANJAY. I do not wish to question you as to the source from which your call has come. But, Prince, now it is evening,

and the music of the nightfall comes floating from the palace tower. Has not this also its call? All that is stern and strenuous may have its glory. But all that is sweet has also its value.

ABHIJIT. The pursuit of the hard is for paying the price of the sweet.

SANJAY. Do you remember, the other day, you were surprised to find a white lotus before your seat, where you have your prayer? Some one had gathered that lotus early in the morning before you were awake, and you were not told who it was. Can you ignore, at a moment like this, the divine gift which lies hidden in the heart of that little incident? Does not the face of that timid creature haunt your memory, who hid herself, but not her worship?

ABHIJIT. Yes, it does! And for the sake of that very love, which is in this world, I cannot tolerate this hideousness. It kills the music of the earth, and laughs its sinister laughter, displaying its rows of steel teeth in the sky. Because I love the paradise of the Gods, I am ready to fight the Titans who menace it.

SANJAY. Cannot you see the picture of an infinite sorrow in the twilight glow, clinging to that purple hill?

ABHIJIT. Yes, my heart fills with tears. I never boast of harshness as heroic. Look at that tiny bird, sitting on the topmost branch of the pine tree, all alone. I do not know whether it will go to its nest, or take its journey across the night to a distant forest; but the sight of that lonely bird gazing at the last ray of the setting sun fills my heart with a sadness which is sweet. How beautiful is this world! Here is my salutation to all that has made my life sweet.

*Enters Batu.*

BATU. They would n't let me go on, but turned me back with blows.

ABHIJIT. What has happened to you, Batu? There is a wound on your forehead, from which blood flows.

BATU. I came out to warn them; I cried out to them to leave that path and go back.

ABHIJIT. Why?

BATU. Don't you know, Prince? They're going to instal, upon the altar of the Machine, the Demon Thirst. They will sacrifice human beings to this Demon.

SANJAY. What is this wild talk?

BATU. They've already poured out the blood of my own two grandsons at the foundation of this altar. I'd hoped that this shrine of sin would break into pieces with its own load of evil. But that has not yet come to pass; and the God Bhairava has not yet awakened out of sleep.

ABHIJIT. Yes, the shrine will break into pieces. The time has come!

BATU (*coming close to him, whispers*). Then you must have heard,—heard the call of Bhairava?

ABHIJIT. Yes, I have heard.

BATU. Then there is no escape for you?

ABHIJIT. No escape for me!

BATU. Don't you see how the blood flows from my wound? Will you be able to bear it, Prince, when your heart bleeds?

ABHIJIT. By the grace of Bhairava, I shall bear it.

BATU. When everybody becomes your enemy? When your own people renounce you?

ABHIJIT. I must bear it!

BATU. Then there's no fear!

ABHIJIT. No fear for me.

BATU. Good! Keep me in your mind. I'm also bound for that path. You'll be able to recognise me, even in the dark, by this mark of blood, which Bhairava Himself has painted on my forehead.

[*Batu goes.*]

*Enters the King's Guard, Uddhab*

UDDHAB (*to the Crown Prince*). Sire, what made you open out the road along the Nandi Pass?

ABHIJIT. To save the people of Shiu-tarai from perpetual famine.

UDDHAB. Our King is kind! Is he not always ready to help them?

ABHIJIT. When the right hand in its miserliness shuts out the path of plenitude, the generosity of the left hand is no help at all. For this I have freed the passage of provisions in Shiu-tarai. I have no respect for that mercy, which keeps poverty dependent on it.

UDDHAB. The King says, that you have taken the bottom out of *Uttarakut's* food vessel by breaking down the fort of the Nandi Pass.

ABHIJIT. I have set *Uttarakut* free from remaining for all time a parasite of *Shiutarai*.

UDDHAB. It was extremely rash of you. The King has heard the news. I dare not say any more. Leave this place at once, if you can do so. It's not safe for me to be seen talking with you on the road.

[*Uddhab goes.*]

*Enters Amba.*

AMBA. Suman, my darling! Have none of you followed that path, along which they took my Suman?

ABHIJIT. Have they taken your son away?

AMBA. Yes, towards the West, where

the sun sinks, where the days come to their end.

ABHIJIT. My journey is also along that path.

AMBA. Then remember an unfortunate woman like me. When you meet him, tell him that mother is waiting.

ABHIJIT. Yes, I shall tell him.

[ *Amba goes out.*

*The Devotees of Bhairava enter singing*

Victory to Him, who is Terrible!

The Lord of Destruction!

The uttermost Peace!

The Dissolver of doubts,

The Breaker of fetters!

Who carries us beyond all conflicts.

The Terrible! The Terrible!

[ *They go.*

*Enters a General, Bijaypal.*

BIJAYPAL. Princes, accept my humble salutation. I come from the King.

ABHIJIT. What is his command?

BIJAYPAL. I must tell it to you in secret.

SANJAY (*holding Abhijit by his hand*). Why in secret?—Secret even from me?

BIJAYPAL. Such is my instruction. I beg you, Crown Prince, to enter the tent.

SANJAY. I must accompany him.  
( *Attempts to do so* )

BIJAYPAL. No! That will be against the wishes of the King.

SANJAY. Then I shall wait for him at this road side.

[ *Abhijit, followed by Bijaypal, goes towards the tent.*

*Enters a Flower-seller.*

FLOWER-SELLER (*to Sanjay*). Sir, who is this man, Bibhuti, of Uttarakut?

SANJAY. Why do you seek him?

FLOWER-SELLER. I'm a stranger coming from Deotali, and I've heard that they

are throwing flowers on his path in Uttarakut. He must be some saint. So I've brought these flowers from my own garden to offer to him.

SANJAY. He is not a saint, but a clever man.

FLOWER-SELLER. What has he done?

SANJAY. He has bound up our waterfall.

FLOWER-SELLER. Is all this worship for *that*? Will the binding of the waterfall serve *God's* purpose?

SANJAY. No. It will fetter God's own designs.

FLOWER-SELLER. I don't understand.

SANJAY. It is good for you not to understand it. Go back again! (*She starts to go.*) Stay, hear me! Will you sell that white lotus to me?

FLOWER-SELLER. I can't sell this flower, which I had already offered in my mind to some saint.

SANJAY. The saint, whom I venerate more than any one else, shall have this.

FLOWER-SELLER. Then take it. (*He offers money.*) No! No price for this! Give the Father my salutation, and tell him that I'm the poor woman of Deotali, who sells flowers.

[ *She goes.*

*Enters Bijaypal.*

SANJAY. Where is the Crown Prince?

BIJAYPAL. He is a captive in the tent.

SANJAY. The Crown Prince a captive! What arrogance!

BIJAYPAL. Here is the warrant from the King.

SANJAY. Whose conspiracy is this? Let me go to him for a moment.

BIJAYPAL. Pardon me, I cannot.

SANJAY. Then arrest me, also! I am a rebel!

BIJAYPAL. I have not the instructions.

SANJAY. I go myself to force from him the instructions. (*He goes some way, and then returns.*) Give this white lotus to the Crown Prince, in my name.

[*They go out.*]

*Enters the Bairagi, Dhananjay of Shiu-tarai with citizens who are his followers from Shiutarai.*

DHANANJAY (*to one of his followers*). You look as pale as a ghost! Why? What's the matter?

1ST SHIU-TARAI CITIZEN. Master, the blows from Chandapal, the King's brother-in-law, have become intolerable!

*The Shin-tarai Leader, Ganesh, enters.*

GANESH. Father, give me your orders! Let me snatch away the baton from that scoundrel, Chandapal, and prove to him what a blow can really mean.

DHANANJAY. \* You had better try to prove what a 'no blow' can really mean! The helm's not for beating the waves, but for conquering them by keeping itself steady.

2ND SHIU-TARAI CITIZEN. Then, what's your wish?

DHANANJAY. Raise your head! Say that nothing hurts you, and then the hurt will receive its death blow.

3RD SHIU-TARAI CITIZEN. It's difficult to say that nothing hurts *me*!

DHANANJAY. The true man within us is a flame of fire. He consumes all hurts in light. Only the brute beast is hurt. The brute beast is flesh, and it goes whining when it is struck.—Why do you stand

with your mouths gaping wide open? Cannot you follow my words!

2ND S. CITIZEN. Father, we understand *you*! It doesn't matter if we fail to understand your words.

DHANANJAY. Then it's past cure.

GANESH. It takes a most tedious time to understand words. But when we understand *you*, we are saved at once.

DHANANJAY. Saved at once? But what about later on?

GANESH. We know that we must come to you for our shelter, and that shows that we understand.

DHANANJOY. No, not in the least. That's why your eyes are still red with passion, and your voice lacks music. Shall I give you the proper tune?

*He sings.*

Let your hurts come upon me, Master!  
More, if you wish, and yet more!

You cowards! In order to avoid being hurt, you either hurt others, or else run away. Both are the same. Both are for the brute beasts.

*He sings again.*

I hide myself, I run away.

I try to avoid you in fear.

Capture me, and take all that I have!

Look here, children! I am going to make my final reckoning with the great God, Mrityunjay,\* the Conqueror of death. I want to say to him, "Try me, and see if blows hurt me, or not." I must not in this voyage burden my boat with those who fear and those who frighten others.

*He sings again.*

May this be my last stake at the game!

Let me see whether I win, or thou!

\* A name of the God Shiva meaning the Death-Conqueror.

\* The character of Dhananjay and a great part of the language he utters are taken from an earlier play of the Poet, called 'Prayaschitta,' which was written more than fifteen years ago.



In the markets, in the highways, among  
the crowds,

I had my mirth and I laughed.

Let me see if at last you can make me  
weep!

ALL (*Crying out together*). Bravo,  
Father.—“Let me see if at last you can  
make me weep.”

2ND S. CITIZEN. Tell us where are you  
going?

DHANANJAY. To the King's Festival.

3RD S. CITIZEN. But the King's Festi-  
val is not for you. Why do you go there  
at all?

DHANANJAY. I must make my name  
known in the King's Court.

4TH S. CITIZEN. When once he catches  
you, then he'll—. But, no! that must  
never be!

DHANANJAY. Let it be, man! Let it  
be to the full!

1ST S. CITIZEN. You 're not afraid  
of the King, Master. But we dread him!

DHANANJAY. That's only because, in  
your secret hearts, you want to hurt.  
But I don't want to hurt, and therefore  
I never fear.

2ND S. CITIZEN. Very well then. We  
also shall accompany you!

3RD S. CITIZEN. Yes! We shall go to  
the King's Court.

DHANANJAY. What will you ask the  
King?

3RD S. CITIZEN. There are so many  
things to ask. But the question is, which  
of them will be granted.

DHANANJAY. Why not ask for the  
kingdom?

3RD S. CITIZEN. Father, you're joking!

DHANANJAY. Not at all! If the king-  
dom belonged to the king alone and not  
also to the subjects, then the hopping

about of that one-legged kingdom  
might make you jump with fright; but  
it would bring tears to the eyes of  
God!—You must claim the kingdom for  
the sake of the king himself.

2ND S. CITIZEN. But when they come  
to push us out?

DHANANJAY. The push from the king  
will come back upon the king himself,  
if your claim has truth.

*He sings.*

I forget, and forget again, my Lord,  
That Thou callest us to Thine own seat.  
—Shall I tell you the truth, children? So  
long as you don't recognise the seat to be  
His, your claim to the throne will be futile.

*He sings again.*

Thy door-keepers do not know us,

They shut the gate against our face.

We stand outside Thy house.

How are the door-keepers to recognise  
us? The dust has settled upon the mark  
of royalty on our foreheads. We can  
show nothing to prove our claim.

*He sings once more.*

Thou hast given us life with Thine

own hand,

And with it Thy crown of honour,

But greed, fear and shame smudge it

with grimy touch,

And Thy gift is obscured day by day.

1ST S. CITIZEN. Whatever you may  
say, we don't understand why you're  
going to the King's Court.

DHANANJAY. Shall I tell you why?  
It's because I have misgivings in my mind  
about you.

1ST S. CITIZEN. Why, Father?

DHANANJAY. The more you cling to  
me, while trying to swim, the more you  
forget your lessons in swimming, and also  
keep dragging me down. I must take my

leave of you and go where nobody follows me.

1ST S. CITIZEN. But the king won't easily let you go !

DHANANJAY. Why should he let me go ?

2ND S. CITIZEN. We can never remain quiet, if they molest you !

DHANANJAY. If He, to whom I have dedicated this body of mine, chooses to suffer through me, you also will have to be patient.

1ST S. CITIZEN. Very well, then, Father ! Let us also go, and then let happen what may !

DHANANJAY. You must wait here for me. This is a strange place and I must get to know something about the neighbourhood.

[ *He goes.*

1st S. CITIZEN. Have you noticed the features of these men of Uttarakut ? They look as if the Creator, when He made them, had begun with a big lump of flesh and had had no time to finish His work.

2ND S. CITIZEN. And do you see how they dress themselves in tight clothes.

3RD S. CITIZEN. They pack themselves up tightly in bundles as though to prevent the least leakage.

1ST S. CITIZEN. They're born to drudgery. They spend their lives in going from market to market, and from one landing place to another.

2ND S. CITIZEN. They 've no culture worth speaking of. The books that they have are worth nothing.

1ST S. CITIZEN. Nothing at all. Haven't you noticed the letters in them like lines of white ants creeping across the page.

2ND S. CITIZEN. Well said ! White ants indeed ! Their culture gnaws everything to pieces.

3RD S. CITIZEN. And heaps up earth mounds. They kill life with their arms and destroy mind with their books.

2ND S. CITIZEN. Sin ! Sin ! Our *guru* says that even to cross their shadow is a sin. Do you know why ?

3RD S. CITIZEN. Tell me, why.

2ND S. CITIZEN. After the nectar had been churned up by the Gods and Titans from the sea, some drops of it were spilt from the Gods' cups. From the clay thus formed the ancestor of the Shiu-tarai was made. And when the Titans licked the nearly empty cups of the Gods and threw them into the ditch, the broken pieces of the cups were fashioned into the ancestor of the Uttarakut people. That's why they are so hard, and faugh !—so unclean !

3RD S. CITIZEN. Where did you learn all this ?

2ND S. CITIZEN. From our own *guru* !

3RD S. CITIZEN ( *reverently bowing his head* ). *Guru*, you're-truth itself !

*A group of Uttarakut citizens enters.*

1ST UTTARAKUT CITIZEN. Everything has passed off so happily, excepting the admission of that blacksmith, Bibhuti, into the Kshatriya order by our king.

2ND UTTARAKUT CITIZEN. That's all a domestic question. We shall deal with that, later on. Meanwhile let's cry "Long live the Royal Engineer, Bibhuti."

3RD UTTARAKUT CITIZEN. He who has united the Kshatriya's weapons with the tools of the Vaishya ! "Long live Bibhuti."

1ST U. CITIZEN. Hallo ! There are some men from Shiu-tarai.

2ND U. CITIZEN. How d' you know ?

1ST U. CITIZEN. Don't you see their ear-caps. How queer they look ! They

seem like people suddenly thumped on the head and thus stopped in their growth.

2ND U. CITIZEN. Of all head dresses, why have they chosen this? Do they think that ears are a mistake of the Creator?

1ST U. CITIZEN. They have put an embankment over their ears, lest the precious little intelligence which they have should ooze out.

3RD U. CITIZEN. No, it's rather to prevent any common sense entering in to trouble them.

1ST U. CITIZEN. Some ear-pulling ghost of Uttarakut might haunt them!

( *They all laugh.* )

1ST U. CITIZEN. Hallo! You clodhoppers from Shiu-tarai! What's the matter with you?

3RD U. CITIZEN. Don't you know that to-day's our festival? Come and join us in our cry—"Long live the Royal Engineer, Bibhuti!"

1ST U. CITIZEN. Are your throats dry? Shout "Long live Bibhuti."

GANESH. Why should we cry "Long live Bibhuti"! What has he done?

1ST U. CITIZEN. Just bark at him! "What has he done?" The tremendous news has not reached them yet! That's all the result of their ear-caps!

( *The U. Citizens laugh* )

3RD U. CITIZEN. Do you ask what he has done? Why! The water to quench your thirst is in his hands! If he withholds it, then you will dry up, like toads in a time of drought!

2ND S. CITIZEN. Our water in Bibhuti's hands! Has he suddenly become a God?

2ND U. CITIZEN. He has dismissed God from service. He'll take up God's work himself.

1ST S. CITIZEN. Is there any specimen of his work?

1ST U. CITIZEN. Yes! That embankment across Mukta-dhārā.

( *Shiu-tarai people laugh loudly.* )

2ND U. CITIZEN. D' you take this to be a joke?

GANESH. Why! What else can it be? That son of a blacksmith to snatch away from us the gift that comes from Bhairava Himself!

1ST U. CITIZEN. See with your own eyes there in the sky!

2ND S. CITIZEN. Great heavens! What on earth is that?

3RD S. CITIZEN. Good God! It looks like a gigantic grasshopper just going to jump towards the stars!

1ST U. CITIZEN. That grasshopper is going to stop, with his legs, your water supply!

GANESH. Leave off that foolery, won't you? Some day you will be saying that the son of this blacksmith is riding the grasshopper in order to catch the moon!

1ST U. CITIZEN. That's the beauty of their ear-caps. They refuse to listen and thus they perish!

1ST S. CITIZEN. We refuse to perish!

3RD U. CITIZEN. That sounds well! But who is to save you?

GANESH. Haven't you seen our God, our Vairagi Dhananjay? One of his bodies is in the temple, and one outside.

3RD U. CITIZEN. Listen to these men with their ear-caps on! Nobody can save them from utter destruction.

[ *The Citizens of Uttarakut go out.  
Enters Dhananjay.* ]

DHANANJAY. Fools! What have you been saying? Is it in my hand to sa

you from death?—Then you're dead thrice over!

GANESH. The Uttarakut people said to us that Bibhuti has stopped the water of Mukta-dhārā.

DHANANJAY. Did they say that an embankment had been raised?

GANESH. Yes, Father!

DHANANJAY. You haven't listened to them carefully!

GANESH. It is not worth listening to!

DHANANJAY. Have you kept all your ears with me alone? Must I hear for all of you?

3RD S. CITIZEN. What is there to hear at all, Father?

DHANANJAY. Is it a small thing, to control the turbulent power, whether it is outside us or within us?

GANESH. That may be; but what about this stoppage of—

DHANANJAY. That's a different matter; and Bhairava will never suffer it to be done. I must go and find out all about it. This world is full of voices. To stop listening to them is to perish.

[*Dhananjay goes out.*]

*Another Citizen from Shiu-tarai enters.*

4TH S. CITIZEN. Bishan, what's the news?

BISHAN. The Crown Prince has been recalled from Shiu-tarai.

ALL. Impossible!

BISHAN. What are you to do?

ALL. We shall take him back.

BISHAN. How?

ALL. By force.

BISHAN. What about our King?

ALL. We defy him.

*Enter King Ranajit and Minister.*

RANAJIT. Whom do you defy?

ALL (*to the king*). Long live Your Majesty!

GANESH. We have come to you with our prayer.

RANAJIT. What is it?

ALL. We want the Crown Prince for ourselves.

RANAJIT. You are modest in your demand.

1ST S. CITIZEN. Yes, we must take him back to Shiu-tarai.

RANAJIT. And then triumphantly forget to pay the taxes?

ALL. But we're starving.

RANAJIT. Where is your leader?

2ND S. CITIZEN (*pointing to Ganesh*). Here's our leader, Ganesh.

RANAJIT. No. Where is the Vairagi?

GANESH. There he comes.

*Enters Dhananjay.*

RANAJIT. It is you who make these people forget themselves.

DHANANJAY. Yes, Sir. And I forget myself also.

RANAJIT. Don't parry words with me! Tell me, are you for paying taxes?

DHANANJAY. No, Sir! Decidedly no!

RANAJIT. You are insolent.

DHANANJAY. I must not give you what is not yours.

RANAJIT. Not mine?

DHANANJAY. A part of our excess food belongs to you, but not the food which belongs to our hunger.

RANAJIT. Do you prevent my people from paying me my dues?

DHANANJAY. Yes, they are timid and ready to submit. But I tell them, "Give your life only to Him, whose gift it is."

RANAJIT. Their timidity you merely repress with your own assurance; but when that bloated assurance is pricked

somewhere, the fear will burst out with double force, and then they will be lost. You have trouble written on the tablet of your fate.

DHANANJAY. I have taken that tablet to my heart. There dwells He, who is above all trouble.

RANAJIT (*to S. Citizens*). All of you go back to your place, and the Vairagi will remain here.

ALL. No, that cannot be !

DHANANJAY. (*Sings*)

"Remain !" You cry.

But, strain hard as you may,

Only that will remain which must.

King ! You can keep nothing by straining. He who gives all, keeps all. That which your greed tries to keep, is a stolen thing. It will have to be given up.

(*Sings*)

"You are wilful, you are strong, in the injuries you inflict,  
There is one who suffers,

And only what he chooses to bear,  
Shall be borne.

You make a mistake, King, when you think that the world, which you take by force, is your world. What you keep free, you gain. But seize it, and it eludes you ! (*Sings*),

You dream that you make the world dance,  
To the tune of your own desire ;  
Suddenly your eyes open ; you see,  
That things happen which you never wish.

RANAJIT. Minister, keep this Vairagi under custody.

MINISTER. Sire,—(*pauses*)

RANAJIT. This command of mine is not agreeable to you ?

MINISTER. A terrible engine of punishment is made ready. You merely weaken it, by trying to add to its fierceness.

S. CITIZENS. We shall never allow this.

DHANANJAY. Leave me, I tell you !  
Leave me and go !

1ST S. CITIZEN. Have n't you heard, Father, that we have also lost our Crown Prince ?

2ND S. CITIZEN. Who is there to sustain our strength if we lose both of you ?

DHANANJAY. I am defeated ! Let me retire.

ALL. Why, Father ?

DHANANJAY. You rejoice to think, that you gain me, and take no heed that you lose yourself ! I cannot make good that loss ! You put me to shame !

1ST S. CITIZEN. Don't say that ! We shall do whatever you wish.

DHANANJAY. Then leave me and go.

2ND S. CITIZEN. But have you the heart to keep away from us ? Do you not love us ?

DHANANJAY. It is better to love you and keep you free, than to love you and smother you by my love. Go ! No more of this ! Go, and leave me !

2ND S. CITIZEN. Very well, Father, we go. But—

DHANANJAY. No 'but' ! Hold your heads high and go !

ALL. Very well, father, we go !

(*They move slowly away.*)

DHANANJOY. Is *that* what you call going ? Quick ! Begone !

GANESH. As you wish. But you must know, that all our hopes and thoughts remain with you.

[*They go.*]

RANAJIT. What are you thinking of, Vairagi ? Why are you so silent ?

DHANANJAY. They have made me anxious, King !

RANAJIT. For what ?

DHANANJAY. I am afraid that I have succeeded in doing what your own Chandapāl has failed to accomplish with his baton.

RANAJIT. What makes you think so ?

DHANANJAY. Once I chuckled to myself and said,—“I am strengthening their hopes and thoughts.” But today they brutally threw it in my face, that it was I who had robbed them of their hopes and thoughts.

RANAJIT. How has that been made possible ?

DHANANJAY. The more I excited them, the less I matured their minds. By making people run and rush, you do not lighten their load of debts.—They believe me to be greater even than their Providence, and to have the power to write off the debt, which they owe to their God. And therefore they shut their eyes and cling to me with all their might.

RANAJIT. They have taken *you* to be their God.

DHANANJAY. And thus they stop at *me*, and never reach their true God. He, who could have guided them from within, has been obscured by me, who forced them from outside.

RANAJIT. You prevent them, when they come to pay their dues to their king. But do not *you* suffer in *your* mind, when they come to pay *you* the offering which is for their God ?

DHANANJAY. I do indeed ! I feel as if I could sink through the ground. They become bankrupt in their minds by spending on me all their worship. The responsibility for their debt will be mine ; and I shall not be able to escape from it.

RANAJIT. What is your duty now ?

DHANANJAY. To remain away from

them. If it is true that I have raised an embankment across the freedom of their minds, then I am afraid the God Bhairava will take both your Bibhuti and me to account at the same time.

RANAJIT. Then why delay ? Why not move away ?—( *To Uddhab* ) Take this Vairagi to my tent and keep him there.

[ *Uddhab takes Dhananjay to the tent.*

RANAJIT. Minister ! Go and see Abhijit in the guard house. If you find him in a repentant mood, then—

MINISTER. Sire, is it not right, that you yourself should personally—

RANAJIT. No, no ! He is a traitor against his own people. I shall not see his face, until he confesses his guilt. I go back to my palace. Send me the news there ! [ *The King goes.*

*Enter the Devotees, who sing,*  
 Victory to the fearful Flame,  
 That tears the heart of Darkness,  
 That burns to ashes things which  
 are dead,  
 Victory to Him, whose voice thunders  
 forth Truth,  
 Whose right arm smites the  
 unrighteous.  
 Whose guidance leads mortals  
 across Death.  
 [ *They go.*

*Uddhab re-enters.*

UDDHAB. What is this ? The King goes away without seeing the Crown Prince !

MINISTER. He was afraid, lest his resolution should fail him. He was prolonging his talk with the Vairagi, because the conflict was going on in his mind. He could not decide to go into the tent, or to leave the tent. I must go and see the Crown Prince. [ *They go out.*



*Some Citizens from Uttarakut enter.*

1ST CITIZEN. We must be firm. Let's go to the King.

2ND CITIZEN. What's the good of it? The Crown Prince is the jewel of his heart. We will never be able to judge him; he will only be angry with us.

1ST CITIZEN. That does n't matter. We must give him a piece of our mind, whatever may happen after. The Crown Prince made such a fine display of his love for us, and is this the end? Shiu-tarai has become greater in importance to him than Uttarakut.

2ND CITIZEN. If this can come to pass, then there's no justice in the world!

3RD CITIZEN. It's impossible to trust anybody merely by his appearance.

1ST CITIZEN. If our king does n't punish him, we must do it ourselves.

2ND CITIZEN. What will you do?

1ST CITIZEN. He'll not find his place here. He must be sent off along the very path he has opened out at Nandi Pass.

3RD CITIZEN. But that man at Chabua village says, that he's not at Shiu-tarai at this moment. And he cannot be found in the palace here.

1ST CITIZEN. I am sure that our King has been hiding him from us.

3RD CITIZEN. Hiding him? We'll break down the palace walls and drag him out!

1ST CITIZEN. We'll set fire to the palace.

*Enter the Minister and Uddhab.*

1ST CITIZEN (to the Minister). Don't you try to play the game of hide and seek with us! Bring out the Crown Prince!

MINISTER. Who am I, to bring him out?

2ND CITIZEN. It must have been by your advice.—But, I tell you—it won't do! We'll drag him out from his hiding place.

MINISTER. Then take the reins of this government in your own hands, and release him from the King's prison.

3RD CITIZEN. From the King's prison!

MINISTER. The King has imprisoned him.

ALL. Long live the King! Victory to Uttarakut!

2ND CITIZEN. Come, let's go to the prison, and there—

MINISTER. What?

2ND CITIZEN. We'll take the flowers from the garland that Bibhuti has cast off, and put the string of it on the Crown Prince's neck.

MINISTER. The Crown Prince is guilty, you say, because he has broken the Fort. But is there no guilt in it, when you break the laws of the realm?

2ND CITIZEN. That's altogether a different affair.

3RD CITIZEN. But if we *do* break the laws?

MINISTER. You may jump into the void because you are not in love with the ground underneath your feet. But I can assure you, that you won't find yourself in love with that void.

3RD CITIZEN. Then let's go and stand before the Palace and shout, 'Long live the King.'

1ST CITIZEN. Look there! The sun has set, and the sky's growing dark. But that framework of Bibhuti's machine is still glowing. It looks as if it had got red with drunkenness.

2ND CITIZEN. And on that trident, the last sinking light of the day is held aloft. It looks a kind of,—I don't know how to describe it.

[ *The Citizens of Uttarakut go out.*

MINISTER. Now I understand, why

the King has kept the Crown Prince captive in his own camp.

UDDHAB. Why ?

MINISTER. To save him from the hands of his people. But things look ugly. The excitement is growing wilder every moment.

*Enters Sanjay.*

SANJAY. I dare not show my eagerness to the King, because that only helps to make his determination stronger.

MINISTER. Prince, try to keep quiet. Do not add to the complications which are already too great.

SANJAY. I went to talk to the people. I knew that they loved the Crown Prince more than life itself; that they would not tolerate his imprisonment. But I found them flaming with anger at the news of the opening out of Nandi Pass.

MINISTER. Then you ought to understand, that the Crown Prince's safety lies in his imprisonment itself.

SANJAY. I have ever followed him, from my childhood. Let me follow him into the prison.

MINISTER. What good will that do ?

SANJAY. Every man is but half a man by himself. He finds his unity only when he is truly united with someone else. My unity I find in my union with the Crown Prince.

MINISTER. But where the union is true, a mere outward meeting is superfluous. The cloud in the sky, and the water in the sea, are truly one, in spite of their distance from each other. Our Crown Prince must manifest himself through you, where he is absent.

SANJAY. These words do not seem like your own. They sound like his.

MINISTER. His words are everywhere

in the air of this place. We make use of them; and yet forget that they are his.

SANJAY. You have done well to remind me of this. I shall serve him by living away from him. I must now go to the King.

MINISTER. Why ?

SANJAY. I shall ask the King to give me the Governorship of Shiu-tarai.

MINISTER. But the times are very critical.

SANJAY. And therefore, this is the best time.

[ *They go.* ]

*Enters Vishwajit, the King's Uncle.*

VISHWAJIT. Who is there? Is that Uddhab ?

UDDHAB. Yes, Sire !

VISHWAJIT. I was waiting for it to grow dark. Have you received my letter ?

UDDHAB. I have.

VISHWAJIT. Have you followed my advice ?

UDDHAB. You will know within a short time. But—

VISHWAJIT. Have no misgivings in your mind. The King is not ready to give him freedom: but if, by some chance, someone without his knowledge effects it, it will be a great relief to the King.

UDDHAB. But he will never forgive the man who does it.

VISHWAJIT. My soldiers will take you and your guards captive. The responsibility is mine.

*A voice from outside.* "Fire ! Fire !"

UDDHAB. There it is ! They have set on fire the kitchen tent, which is near the guard-room. This is the opportunity

for me to release Dhananjay and the Crown Prince.

( *He goes out, and Abhijit comes in later.* )

ABHIJIT ( *to Vishwajit* ). Why are you here ?

VISHWAJIT. I have come to capture you. You must come to Mohangarh.

ABHIJIT. Nothing will be able to keep me captive today,—neither anger, nor affection. You think that you are the agents who set this tent on fire ? No ! This fire has been waiting for me ! The leisure has not been granted to me to remain in captivity.

VISHWAJIT. Why, child ? What work have you to do ?

ABHIJIT. I must pay off the debt of my birthright. The current of the waterfall has been my first nurse and I must set her free.

VISHWAJIT. There is time enough for that, but not today !

ABHIJIT. All that I know is this, that the time has come ! And no one knows when that time will ever come again.

VISHWAJIT. We also shall join you.

ABHIJIT. No, the quest is mine ; it has never reached you.

VISHWAJIT. The people of Shiutarai, who love you and are eagerly waiting to join hands in your work,—will you not call them to your side ?

ABHIJIT. If my call had come to them also, they would never sit waiting for me. My call will only lead them astray.

VISHWAJIT. It is growing dark, my child.

ABHIJIT. The light comes from that direction, from whence comes the call.

VISHWAJIT. I have not the power to turn you from your own path. Though you are taking a plunge into the dark-

ness, I will trust in God to guide you. I must leave you in His hands. Only let me hear one word of hope. Tell me, that we shall meet again.

ABHIJIT. Keep it ever in your mind, that we can never be separated.

[ *They go in opposite directions.*

*Enter Batu and Dhananjay.*

BATU. Father, the day is ended and it grows dark.

DHANANJAY. My son, we have formed the habit of depending upon the light which is outside us, and therefore we are blinded when it is dark.

BATU. I had thought that the dance of the God, Bhairava, would commence from to-day. But has the Engineer, Bibhuti, bound up even His hands and feet with the machine ?

DHANANJAY. When Bhairava begins His dance, it is not visible. Only when it comes to its end, is it revealed.

BATU. Give us confidence, Master. We are afraid ! Awake Bhairava ! Awake ! The light has gone out ! The path is dark ! We find no response ! Lord of all conquering Life ! Kill our fear with something still more dread ! Bhairava, awake ! Awake !

[ *He goes.*

*Enter Citizens of Uttarakut.*

1ST CITIZEN. It was a lie ! He's not in the prison house ! They have hidden him somewhere.

2ND CITIZEN. We shall see how they can hide him.

DHANANJAY. No ! They will never be able to hide him. The walls will break down ; the gate will be shattered. The light will rush into the dark corner, and everything will be revealed.

1ST CITIZEN. Who's this ?—He gave me such a sta t

3RD CITIZEN. All's right! We must have some victim! This Vairagi will serve us quite well. Bind him!

DHANANJAY. What is the use of catching one, who has always surrendered himself?

1ST CITIZEN. Leave your saintliness behind you! We are not your followers.

DHANANJAY. You are fortunate! I know some miserable wretches, who have lost their teacher by following him,

1ST CITIZEN. Who is their teacher?

DHANANJAY. Their true teacher is he, from whom they get their blows.

*Enter the Devotees, who sing,*  
Victory to the fearful Flame,  
That tears the heart of Darkness,  
That burns to ashes things which are dead,  
Victory to Him, whose voice thunders  
forth Truth,  
Whose right arm smites the unrighteous,  
Whose guidance leads mortals across death,  
Victory to Him!

3RD CITIZEN. Look there! Look at that! The evening is darkening and that machine is looking blacker and blacker.

1ST CITIZEN. In the day time, it tried to outmatch the sunlight, and now it's rivalling the night itself in blackness. It looks like a ghost!

2ND CITIZEN. I can't understand why Bibhuti built it in that fashion. Wherever we are in the town, we cannot help looking at it. It's like a shriek rending the sky.

*Enters 4th Citizen.*

4TH CITIZEN. Our King's uncle has carried away by force the Crown Prince along with the guards who guarded his prison.

1ST CITIZEN. What's the meaning of that?

3RD CITIZEN. It shows he has the blood of Uttarakut in his veins. He must have done it, for fear lest the Crown Prince should fail to get his proper punishment from our King.

1ST CITIZEN. Outrageous! Think of it! To encroach upon our right to punish our own Prince ourselves!

2ND CITIZEN. The best thing to do, friend, is to—you understand?

1ST CITIZEN. Yes, Yes. The gold mine which he has in his territory,—

3RD CITIZEN. And I've heard from a most reliable source that he has at least fifty thousand head of cattle in his stall. We must take possession of them, counting every head. This is insufferable!

4TH CITIZEN. And then again, the yearly yield of his saffron field must amount at least to—

2ND CITIZEN. Yes! yes! His State must be made to disgorge it. What an affront!

1ST CITIZEN. Come! Let us inform the King about it.

*[ They all go.*

*Enters a Traveller, who shouts out.*

1ST TRAVELLER. Budhan! Sambhu! Budha-an! Sambhu-u-u! What a nuisance! They sent me in advance, saying they'd overtake me, following the short cut. But there's no sign of them.—(Looking up) That black iron monster over there! It's making grimaces at me! It makes me shiver with fear.—

*Enters another Traveller.*

Who's there? Why don't you answer? Are You Budhan?

2ND TRAVELLER. I'm Nimku, the lamp-seller. They've got an all night festival in the Capital, and lamps will be needed.— Who are you?

1ST TRAVELLER. I'm Hubba. I belong to a band of strolling players. Did you meet with our party on the way, and their leader Andu ?

NIMKU. There are crowds of men coming up. How could I recognise them ?

HUBBA. But our Andu is an entire man by himself. You don't have to put on glasses to pick him out of the crowd. He's not a mere fraction.—I say ! What a quantity of lamps you have in your basket ! Can't you spare one for me ? Those who are out in the street have greater need of lamps than those who are in their houses.

NIMKU. How much will you pay for it ?

HUBBA. If I could afford to *pay*, I should order you in a loud voice, and not waste my sweet tones on you !

NIMKU. You seem to be a humorist !

[ *He goes.*

HUBBA. I failed to get my lamp ; but I got my recognition as a humorist ! That's something ! Humorists have the knack of making themselves felt, even in the dark. Confound this chirping of the crickets ! It is like pins and needles in the limbs of the sky, made audible.—I wish I had used my muscle with that lamp-seller, instead of displaying my humour.

*Enters a Recruiter.*

RECRUITER. Up ! up !

HUBBA. Oh, goodness ! Why on earth d'you go and frighten me in that way ?

RECRUITER. Get ready to start !

HUBBA. That was exactly my intention, my friend. And now I am trying to digest the lesson how to get stuck, when one tries to go ahead.

RECRUITER. Your party is ready. Only you are wanting.

HUBBA. What do you say ? We, inhabitants of Tin Mohāna are remarkably inept at understanding words, when their meaning is not clear. What do you mean by *my party* ?

RECRUITER. We inhabitants of Chabua village have become wonderful adepts in making our meaning clear by other means than words. (*Gives him a push*) Now you understand !

HUBBA. H'm ! Yes ! The simple meaning is, I must start, whether I wish it or not. But for what place ? Please make your answer a little more gentle this time. That first push of your talk has cleared my mind greatly.

RECRUITER. You have to go to Shiutarai.

HUBBA. To Shiutarai ? On this dark night ? What is the subject of the play there ?

RECRUITER. The subject is 'The rebuilding of the fort of Nandi Pass'.

HUBBA. You mean to rebuild the Fort with *my* help ? My dear friend, it's only because you can't get a good sight of me, in this darkness, that you could ever utter such an absurdity as that ! I'm—

RECRUITER. I don't care who you are ! You've got your two hands.

HUBBA. That's only because I could not help it. But can you call these—

RECRUITER. The proof of the use of of your hands doesn't come from your mouth. We shall discover it at the right time. Come now ! Get up !

*Enters 2nd Recruiter.*

2ND RECRUITER. Here's another man, Kankar.

KANKAR. Who is he ?

WAYFARER. I'm nobody, Sir ! I am

LACHMAN. I sound the gong in the Temple of Bhairava.

KANKAR. That means your hands are strong. Come to Shiu tarai!

LACHMAN. But the gong?

KANKAR. Bhairava will sound His own gong himself.

LACHMAN. Pray, have pity on me! My wife's ailing!

KANKAR. She'll either be cured or dead, when you're absent. And the same thing 'll happen if you're present.

HUBBA. Lachman, my good fellow! Don't make a fuss. The work has its risk, I know. But your objection also has its own risk, and I've had some taste of it already.

KANKAR. Listen! I can hear the voice of Narsingh.

*Narsingh enters with a gang of men.*

KANKAR. Is the news good, Narsingh?

NARSINGH. I've gathered these men for our purpose. And some have already been despatched.

ONE OF THE PARTY. I refuse to go.

KANKAR. Why? What's the matter with you?

ONE OF THE PARTY. Nothing. But I'm not going.

KANKAR. What's his name, Narsingh?

NARSINGH. His name's Banwari. He makes rosaries out of lotus seeds.

KANKAR. Let me settle with him. (To Banwari) Why do you refuse to go?

BANWARI. I've no quarrel with the Shiu-tarai people. They're not our enemies.

KANKAR. But let's suppose that we are *their* enemies! Hasn't *that* also its responsibility?

BANWARI. I'd hate to take part in wrong-doing.

KANKAR. Wrong's only wrong where you've the right to judge. Uttarakut is a great body, you're only a part. Whatever you do as a part of it—you can have no responsibility for that!

BANWARI. There's a greater body, whose part's Uttarakut as well as Shiu-tarai.

KANKAR. I say, Narsingh! This man argues! Nobody's a greater nuisance for the country than the man who argues!

NARSINGH. Hard work is the best cure for that! This is why I'm taking him along with us.

BANWARI. I'll be only a burden to you, and of no use for your work.

KANKAR. You're a burden to Uttarakut, and we're trying to get rid of you.

HUBBA. My dear friend Banwari, you seem to belong to that class of men who are rational and you won't accept the fact that there's another class of men who are powerful. And you two always clash! Either learn their method, or else give up your own and keep quiet.

BANWARI. What's *your* method?

HUBBA. I usually sing. But that would only be useless now, and therefore I keep silence.

KANKAR (to Banwari). Now tell me what you're going to do.

BANWARI. I shan't move a step further.

KANKAR. Oh! Then we'll have to make you move. I say there! Bind him with this rope.

HUBBA (intervening). My dear sir, please let me say one word. Don't be angry with me! The force you spend in carrying this man can be better used, if you save it.

KANKAR. Those who are unwilling to serve Uttarakut—we've got our un-



pleasant duty towards them, and we can't neglect it. D' you understand ?

HUBBA. H'm, yes ! Very clearly indeed !

[ *They all go out except Narsingh and Kankar.*

NARSINGH. Here comes Bibhuti. Long live Bibhuti !

*Enters Bibhuti.*

KANKAR. We 've made great progress. Our party's grown strong. Why are you here ? They 're waiting for you at their Festival.

BIBHUTI. I have no heart for this Festival.

NARSINGH. Why ?

BIBHUTI. The news about the Nandi Pass has deliberately been sent to us to-day, in order to take away from the glory of my reception. There is a rivalry against me.

KANKAR. Who's the rival ?

BIBHUTI. I do not want to utter his name. You all know it. The problem has become acute with him,—whether he shall have more honour in this country than I. I have not told you one fact. A messenger came to me from the other party, to lure me away, and he also gave me a hint that they are ready to break the embankment.

NARSINGH. What impudence !

KANKAR. How could you bear it, Bibhuti ?

BIBHUTI. It is useless to contradict the ravings of madness.

KANKAR. But is it right to feel too secure ? I remember how you said once that there are one or two weak spots, which can easily be—

BIBHUTI. Those who have any information about these weak spots also

know, that they themselves will be carried away by the flood, if they meddle with them.

NARSINGH. Wouldn't it be wise to keep guards at those places ?

BIBHUTI. Death itself is keeping guard there. There is not the least fear for my embankment. If only I can shut up once again the Nandi Pass, I shall die happy.

KANKAR. It's not at all difficult for you to do that.

BIBHUTI. My appliances are ready. Only the Pass is so narrow, that it can be defended by a very few men.

KANKAR. That means we shall require men who must die.

*From behind the scene, the cry comes,  
Awake, Bhairava ! Awake !*

*Enters Dhananjay.*

KANKAR. This is an evil sight for us at the moment of starting for our adventure.

BIBHUTI. Vairagi, saints like you have never succeeded in awakening Bhairava. But men like myself, whom you call infidels, are on our way to give Him a good rousing up.

DHANANJAY. I have no doubt in my mind, that it's for you to awaken Him.

BIBHUTI. Our process of awakening Him is not through sounding temple gongs and lighting temple lamps.

DHANANJAY. No ! When you bind Him with your fetters, he will wake up to break them.

BIBHUTI. *Our* fetters are not easy to break. The evils are innumerable, and there are an infinite number of knots.

DHANANJAY. *His* time comes when the obstacle becomes insurmountable.

*The devotees come, singing,*  
 Victory to Him, the Terrible,  
 The Lord of Destruction,  
 The Uttermost Peace,  
 The Dissolver of doubts,  
 The Breaker of fetters,  
 Who carries us beyond all conflicts,  
 The Terrible! The Terrible!  
*Enter Ranajit and Minister.*

MINISTER. Sire, the camp is deserted and a great part of it is burnt away. The few guards, who were there—

RANAJIT. Never mind about them. Where is Abhijit? I *must* know!

KANKAR. King! We claim punishment for the Crown Prince.

RANAJIT. Do I ever wait for your claim, in order to punish the one who deserves it?

KANKAR. The people harbour suspicions in their minds, when they cannot find him.

RANAJIT. Suspicions? Against whom?

KANKAR. Pardon me, Sire! You must understand the state of mind of your subjects. Owing to the delay in finding the Crown Prince, their impatience has grown to such a degree, that they will never wait for your judgment, when he is discovered.

BIBHUTI. Of our own accord we have taken in hand the duty of building up again the Fort of Nandi Pass.

RANAJIT. Why could you not leave it in my hands?

BIBHUTI. We have the right to suspect your secret sanction to this outrage done by the Crown Prince.

MINISTER. Sire, the mind of the public is excited by their self-glorification on the one hand and by their anger on the other. Do not add to *their* impatience, and make

it still more turbulent by *your* impatience.

RANAJIT. Who is there? Is it Dhananjay?

DHANANJAY. I am happy to find that you have not forgotten me!

RANAJIT. You certainly know where Abhijit is.

DHANANJAY. I can never keep secret, what I know for certain.

RANAJIT. Then what are you doing here?

DHANANJAY. I am waiting for the appearance of the Crown Prince.

*From outside, the voice is heard of Amba:*

Suman! Suman, my darling! It's dark. It's so dark!

RANAJIT. Who is that calling?

MINISTER. It is that mad woman, Amba.

*Enters Amba.*

AMBA. He has not yet come back.

RANAJIT. Why do you seek him? The time came, and Bhairava called him away.

AMBA. Does Bhairava only call away and never restore,—secretly? In the depth of the night?—My Suman!

*[ Amba goes out.*

*Enters a Messenger.*

MESSENGER. A multitude of men from Shiu-tarai is marching up.

BIBHUTI. How is that? We had planned to disarm them, by falling on them suddenly. There must be some traitor among us! Kankar! Very few people knew, except your party. Then how was it,—?

KANKAR. Bibhuti! You suspect even us!

BIBHUTI. Suspicion knows no limits.

KANKAR. Then we also suspect you.

BIBHUTI. You have the right! But

when the time comes, there will be a reckoning.

RANAJIT (*to the Messenger*). Do you know, why they are coming ?

MESSENGER. They have heard that the Crown Prince is in prison, and they have come to seek him out and rescue him.

BIBHUTI. We are also seeking him, as well as they. Let us see who can find him !

DHANANJAY. Both of you will find him. He has no favourites.

MESSENGER. There comes Ganesh, the leader of Shiu-tarai.

*Enters Ganesh.*

GANESH (*to Dhananjay*). Father, shall we find him ?

DHANANJAY. Yes.

GANESH. Promise us !

DHANANJAY. Yes, you shall find him.

RANAJIT. Whom are you seeking ?

GANESH. King ! You must release him.

RANAJIT. Whom ?

GANESH. Our Crown Prince ! You do not want him, but we do ! Would you shut up everything that we need for our life,—even him ?

DHANANJAY. Fool ! Who has the power to shut *him* up ?

GANESH. We shall make him our King.

DHANANJAY. Yes, you shall ! He is coming with his King's crown.

*Enter the devotees, singing.*

Victory to the fearful Flame,  
That tears the heart of Darkness,  
That burns to ashes things  
which are dead.  
Victory to Him whose voice  
thunders forth Truth,

Whose right arm smites  
the unrighteous,  
Whose guidance leads mortals  
across Death.

*From outside there is heard the cry of  
Amba.*

AMBA. Mother calls, Suman ! Mother calls ! Come back, Suman ! come back !

( *A sound is heard in the distance.* )

BIBHUTI. Hark ! What is that ? What is that sound ?

DHANANJAY. It is laughter, bubbling up from the heart of the darkness.

BIBHUTI. Hush ! Let me find out from what direction the sound comes.

*In the distance, the cry is faintly heard,  
"Victory to Bhairava !"*

BIBHUTI (*listening with his head bent towards the ground*). It is the sound of water.

DHANANJAY. The first beat of the drum in the dance—

BIBHUTI. The sound grows in strength !

KANKAR. It seems—

NARSINGH. Yes ! It certainly seems—

BIBHUTI. My God ! There is no doubt of it ! The water of Muktadhāra is freed ! —Who has done it ?—Who has broken the embankment ? He shall pay the price ! There is no escape for him !

*[He rushes out.*

*Kankar and Narsingh rush out, following him.*

RANAJIT. Minister ! What is this !

DHANANJAY. It is the call to the Feast of the Breaking of Bondage—(*Sings*)

The drum beats ;  
It beats into the beatings of my heart.  
MINISTER. Sire, it is—

RANAJIT. Yes, it must be his !

MINISTER. It can be no other man than—

RANAJIT. Who is so brave as he ?

DHANANJAY. (*Sings*)

His feet dance,

They dance in the depth of my life.

RANAJIT. I shall punish him, if punished he must be. But these people, maddened with rage,—O my Abhijit ! He is favoured of the Gods ! May the Gods save him !

GANESH. I do not understand what has happened, Master !

DHANANJAY. (*Sings*)

The night watches,

And watches also the Watchman.

The silent stars throb with dread.

RANAJIT. I hear some steps !—Abhijit ! Abhijit !

MINISTER. It must be he, who comes.

DHANANJAY. (*Sings*)

My heart aches and aches,

While the fetters fall to pieces.

*Enters Sanjay.*

RANAJIT. Here comes Sanjay !—Where is Abhijit ?

SANJAY. The waterfall of Mukta-dhārā has borne him away, and we have lost him.

RANAJIT. What say you, Prince ?

SANJAY. He has broken the embankment.

RANAJIT. I understand ! And with this he has found his freedom ! Sanjay ! Did he take you with him ?

SANJAY. No ! But I was certain he would go there. And so I preceded him, and waited in the dark.—But there it ends. He kept me back. He would not let me go.

RANAJIT. Tell me more !

SANJAY. Somehow he had come to know about a weakness in the structure, and at that point he gave his blow to the monster Machine. The monster returned

that blow against him. Then Mukta-dhārā, like a mother, took up his stricken body into her arms and carried him away.

GANESH. We came to seek our Prince ! Shall we never find him again !

DHANANJAY. You have found him for ever !

*Enter the Devotees of Bhairava, singing.*

Victory to Him, who is Terrible,

The Lord of Destruction,

The Uttermost Peace !

The Dissolver of doubts,

The Breaker of fetters,

Who carries us beyond all conflicts,

The Terrible ! the Terrible !

Victory to the fearful Flame,

That tears the heart of Darkness !

That Turns to ashes things that are dead !

Victory to Him, whose voice thunders

forth Truth,

Whose right arm smites the unrighteous,

Whose guidance leads mortals across

death !

The Terrible ! the Terrible !

( *The End.* )

### Note by the Author.

[ The waterfall round which the action of this play revolves is named Mukta-dhārā—the Free Current. Such a descriptive name may sound strange in English, but those who are familiar with geographical names prevalent in India, will at once be reminded of the *Pagla-jhora*—the waterfall of Darjeeling, whose meaning is the Mad Stream.

The name Free Current is sure to give rise in the readers' minds to the suspicion that it has a symbolic meaning ; that it represents all that the word 'freedom' signifies in human life. This interpretation

will appear to be still more obvious when it is seen that the Machine referred to in the play has stopped the flow of its water.

While acknowledging that there is no great harm in holding the view that this play has some symbolical element in its construction, I must ask my readers to treat it as a representation of a concrete fact of psychology. The Crown Prince Abhijit, who is one of the principal characters in this drama, suddenly comes to learn that he is a foundling, picked up near the source of Muktheadhārā. This unexpected revelation profoundly affects his mind, making him believe that his life has a spiritual relationship with this waterfall; that its voice was the first voice which greeted him with a message when he came to the world. From that moment the fulfilment of that message becomes the sole aim of his life, which is to open out paths for

the adventurous spirit of Man. Just at this time the news reaches him that the Royal Engineer Bibhuti with his machine has stopped the flow of Muktheadhārā. It comes as a challenge to himself personally; for to him the current of this waterfall has become an objective counterpart of his inner life. The fact that it was the King's policy which for its political purposes utilised this machine, makes him realise that the palace and its responsibilities are the real hindrances to his spiritual freedom,—they are the machine obstructing the flow of his soul for a purpose which is alien to his inner being. He rejects the palace; he comes out with the object of emancipating the prisoned water and his life at the same time. He achieves this through a supreme act of renunciation. ]

VAISHNAVA LYRICS DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE

1  
The night is dark ; the sky is overcast.  
Only the lightnings flash in the sky's ten  
corners,  
And down the rain pours, thick and cold and  
fast ;  
Yet Radha, the darling, now with maidens few,  
Hasteneth to the grove to meet her Lover ;  
And she is muffled in clinging scarf of blue.  
Since Love, new-wakened, maketh strong  
the weak,  
Radha hath kept the tryst, but not her  
Lover.  
Him, therefore, Jñānadāsa goeth to seek.

2  
So the Maid speaketh, looking at the trees :  
"How the twigs do quiver in the gentle  
breeze !"

Startled anon, she looketh wistfully ;  
Then "Krishna is coming ! Madhava !"  
says she.  
"At your tricks again ! Hiding there behind  
The tall tamāla tree—but is it really kind  
To keep a Maid waiting whom you swore to  
please?"  
So the Maid speaketh ; for it was not he ;  
"What can the meaning be ? Is it done to  
tease ?  
Nay, I will walk about ; indeed I cannot stay.  
I wonder if Krishna can have lost his way.  
If the jingling music of the nupur I could hear,  
Then I should know that he was really near."  
Govindadāsa, the poet, singeth so  
Of Krishna and a Maiden long long ago.

3  
The night is dark ; clouds thunder overhead.  
How will he come to me,

## PICTURE

[*Translated from Rabindranath Tagore's "Balākā"*]

BY K. C. SEN, I. C. S.

Art thou a picture mere, on canvas limn'd ?  
 —That starry cluster, distance-dimm'd  
 That throngs its nest  
 Of heaven's breast ;  
 That tireless travellers' band  
 A-journeying through the darkness, lamps in hand,—  
 The sun and moon and stars that speed  
 Through wheeling year by year :  
 Art thou not real like those, indeed ?  
 Art thou, alas, a picture mere ?

'Mid restless change why art thou fix'd in rest ?  
 Be thou the traveller's comrade blest,  
 O thou who hast lost thy' way !  
 Why night and day  
 Dost thou, in midst of all, remain so far from all,  
 Immured in quietude's inmost hall ?  
 This dust doth raise  
 Its grey-hued skirt, and plays  
 With winds in wanton mirth.  
 In summer months it drapes the Earth,  
 Of splendour shorn in widow's weeds austere.  
 In spring-time of the year  
 It paints and decks her youth :  
 Thus dust, too, lives in truth.  
 These leaves of grass  
 That lie at the Universe's feet, alas,  
 Are real, too,—they change from green to sere.  
 Thou changest not,—thou art a picture mere,  
 A picture mere !

Once didst thou walk beside us on our way.  
 Thy breast did heave and sway,  
 Thy life in every limb of thine  
 In melody and grace  
 Did trace  
 Its own new rhythm and rhyméd line,  
 Attuned to the music of the spheres.  
 Since then have passed by many months and years.  
 And in my life, my world,  
 That round about thee whirled,



How real wert thou, in sooth,  
 O goddess of my youth !  
 For thou didst paint, with beauty's brush,  
 All earth and sky, in joy's deep flush.  
 Yea, in that dawn on Earth,  
 In thee all Nature's voice had birth.

We walked together hand in hand ;  
 But thou didst step aside, and stand  
 Behind the shadow of the night.  
 Since then, with all my might,  
 Onward I 've walked, and on,  
 Through grief and joy, alone.  
 Daylight and night, the heaven's ebb and flow,  
 Pass on and go ;  
 The flowers I greet  
 Beside the road, move on with silent feet,  
 In splendour's hues array'd.  
 In a thousand streams Life's river sweeps unstay'd  
 With Death as anklets sweet  
 On its dancing feet.  
 Afar and farther still  
 I rove  
 Stirred by a nameless thrill :  
 For I have given the roadside all my love.  
 Where thou didst step aside,  
 Thou standest still.  
 And thou dost hide  
 Behind the dust, behind the leaves of grass,  
 Behind the sun and moon and stars, alas,  
 Thou, who wert so dear,  
 To-day a picture mere !

What senseless fancies cloud the poet's brow ?  
 A picture thou ?  
 Ah no, thou art no picture mere.  
 The painter's lines have not confined thee, dear,  
 Nor silence stopt thy breath.  
 Ah no, for if the joy that's thou had met its death,  
 This river  
 Would lose its liquid quiver,  
 This cloud that gleams  
 Would fold for e'er its golden beams.  
 If from this world the dark enchantment of thy hair  
 Did pass and fade,  
 The wind-fann'd murmurous shade  
 Of the blossom'd woodlands there  
 Would dreamlands' be.  
 Have I, indeed, forgotten thee ?  
 Ah, no, thou hast thy seat  
 In Life's own source, and heart's red beat ;  
 So art remember'd not.

So we remember not the flowers that dot  
 The paths we walk with listless hearts distraught.  
 So we remember not the stars.  
 Yet they,  
 Across the viewless bars,  
 Add fragrance to the breath of night and day,—  
 Unseen, unsought,  
 They fill oblivion's void with tunes unheard.  
 Forgetting's not the same as remembering not ;  
 So thou hast stirr'd  
 And sway'd my blood, unknown,  
 From oblivion's throne.  
 Thou livest not before mine eye,  
 For in its pupil dost thou lie.

And that is why  
 Thou livest in the woodlands green, and in the azure sky.  
 In thee  
 My world hath found its inmost melody.  
 None know they hear thy accents ring  
 In all the songs I sing.  
 Thou art the poet that sits within the poet's heart ;  
 No picture, no, no picture mere thou art !  
 Thou camest, long ago, array'd in morning's light,  
 And I have lost thee in the night.  
 Since then,  
 In midnight gloom, unknown of men,  
 Thou hast been coming back to me, my dear :  
 No picture thou, thou art no picture mere.

## BHARATAVARSHA

A PLAY IN ONE ACT.

BY MRS. NORAH RICHARDS.

*Persons of the Play*

DR. PURANA  
 DR. STEAM  
 DR. WHISTLE  
 DR. WHITEHALL  
 DR. DELHI  
 DR. SHORTIS  
 DR. MONTAGU FORD  
 A SICK MAN  
 His WIFE  
 BHARATA, *their son.*  
 A BOY.  
 A SERVANT.

} *Physicians.*SCENE—*The courtyard of any house in India.*

*The SICK MAN, his WIFE, BHARATA and Dr. PURANA are discovered, Dr. PURANA is seated in the centre facing the SICK MAN who is lying on a charpai to the right,\* reclining against a big pillow. The WIFE of the SICK MAN is seated on a pirhi below the charpai, she occasionally fans the patient. BHARATA is sitting below and a little to the left of PURANA.*

\* *Right and left are to be understood as from the point of view of the audience.*







# THE MODERN REVIEW

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## THE PROBLEM

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

(*Authorised translation for the Modern Review*)

**S**TUDENTS flock to our examination halls in their thousands, for all of them, the questions are identical, presented to each on precisely similar printed paper, and the same answers likewise serve to gain them their diplomas, it being even possible to pass by copying from one's neighbour. But the examination system of God's providence is not so simple. The peoples of the Earth have been given their own particular problems, the solution of which each of them must find for itself in its own way, in order to gain place and honour in the world.

India has thus had her own problem set to her, and until she truly solves it, her sorrows cannot be ended. All this time we have been trying to pass our examination by copying our answers from Europe,—at first stupidly, word for word, then more cunningly, with change of phrasing,—but to no purpose. The round marks, given by the Examiner's blue pencil in either case, do not even gain by addition, the empty total still remaining zero.

An atmospheric storm is called "nasty weather" because of the angry buffetings to which it subjects us. What is there behind all its discomforting turmoil? Only some break in the harmony which should subsist between the neighbouring strata of air, one having developed undue weight, the other too much lightness. Until their harmony

can be restored, the fury of the elements knows no bounds, upsetting the gravity even of the forests and driving the very ocean into madness. No mere incantations, however fervid, can help to appease this agony of discord, due to break in normal relation.

As with the elements, so with men. All our trouble is due to some break in the harmony of true relations. No agitation on our part, constitutional or otherwise, can serve to counteract the thundering of our wrathful Frysians or the wrangling of our hundred and one distracted elements. When, therefore, we clamour for freedom, we should try to be clear in our own minds, what it is we desire to be free from.

Man has absolute liberty only where he is absolutely alone, having no relations with, no responsibilities to, no dependence upon anyone else, but this is a kind of freedom which man not only does not want, but is beside himself if he gets.

Robinson Crusoe lost this absolute liberty when he found his man Friday—for even in the relation of master and servant there is mutual dependence—but he did not feel it as a loss of freedom, such as he would have done if Friday had been a treacherous, self-seeking savage. This shows that we do not, as a matter of fact, feel freer when our relations with our fellow men are lax or lacking, but rather the reverse. The joy of

Freedom is gained only when these relations are full and unobstructed. We are freest with our greatest friend to whom we are bound by the strongest of ties.

The empty, negative freedom of absence of relations hurts, because man is not fulfilled in his solitary state, but can only realise the truth of his humanity in his relations with others, with the All. And upon his failure to realise this truth, owing to some break, or imperfection, or distortion in such relations, man's freedom is obstructed. So that, the true freedom is the positive freedom of fulness of relation.

Whether in the domestic or in the political world, storms occur when any of the natural relations are broken or disturbed by envy or greed, leading to mutual encroachment. So, when we want freedom for our country, it cannot be the emptiness of negative freedom, but the removal of all obstructions in the way of our countrymen maintaining the fullest relations with their fellows,—obstructions which may be internal as well as external.

We have read in history how the people of the West have stormed and raged for liberty. We imitate their outcry, but we forget that whenever this happened in Europe, there were some particular sorrows of some break in their own internal relations from which they sought to be freed, and when such rupture was healed, they felt their end gained. When we feel the lack of freedom we should, rather, first of all try to form a clear idea of what breaks in mutual relations are obstructing our common welfare and thus causing us sorrow. To pay no attention to such obstructions, and yet to talk of striving for freedom, is unmeaning.

In Europe, again, we have seen new political conditions brought about by revolutions. At the bottom of these were differences between rulers and ruled, who, however, belonged only to different classes, not to different races. Whenever the divergence between the rights and privileges of these became so excessive as to lead to an outbreak, the sole function of the resulting revolution has been to repair this rent in the social fabric.

Now a days another revolution is in progress in the West, which on investigation proves to be due to equally excessive differences between the rights and privileges

of capitalists and wage earners. The capitalists scenting danger, have begun to take thought for the amelioration of the lot of their workers,—better housing, more education, and increase of amenities generally,—but the reason why the progress of this revolution has not yet been checked is, that patchwork by means of such doles does not serve to establish true relations.

When England first colonised the New World and tried to keep her American children in leading strings, the chafing of the strings proved too much of a strain for even the ties of blood, and the remedy had to be found in a permanent separation, in spite of the closeness of their brotherhood. In Italy, likewise, when the Austrian was at the head and the Italian at the tail end, there was no living connection between head and tail, and their enforced propinquity, in the absence of true relations, became so intolerable that Italy, also, had to seek her freedom in a definite rupture.

So we see, in any case, that the way to true freedom is by getting rid of the torments of the absence of true relations. In the religion of our country this truth is expressed in its most general form by saying that the sense of break in relation is an Untruth due to ignorance, only by overcoming which by the realisation of the Truth of our relation with the All, can we gain our salvation.

As I began by saying, the same questions are not set to all the examinees in the examination hall of Providence. Their problems are various. A sandal on one foot and a boot on the other, is one kind of trouble, one leg short and the other long, is another kind, a broken leg is a third. They all impede progress, but if the broken leg is content with copying the prescription for the sandalled foot, it will only make matters worse for itself.

In the case of Europe, a revolution of the constitutional wheels might have served, on occasion, to repair some rent in the social fabric. But where, as in our country, the fabric itself is yet to be woven,—the very warp lying disarranged, threads broken here, there tangled up into knots,—any such mechanical remedy is unthinkable. So with us we must go further back, getting the warp straightened up, put on to the sociological loom, and made up first into woven stuff that may take time. But, to import a sewing



## THE PROBLEM

machine in place of the loom, does not help to save time in the making of the fabric

Our nursery rhyme tells us of the three wives of Shibu, the Brahmin. The first one cooked, the second ate, the last, getting nothing, went off to her father's, in a pet. The third wife, apparently, not being in the favoured position of the second, sought, under the old paternal roof, a round about solution of her food problem. The record is vague as to how the first wife fared in regard to the satisfaction of her hunger, I suspect she was an example, not rare in history, of one having to sweat that the other may enjoy.

This motherland of ours is not in the happy situation of the old Brahmin's favourite,—that much has been made clearer and clearer during the centuries. Either she neglected to cook, and on being reprimanded took, in a huff, the long, long road back to her father's, or, in spite of having contrived and cooked, she found, every time, the dish being served up to the other one. Her problem is, therefore, to discover and remove the cause of the old man's annoyance with herself, it will do her no good to be constantly grumbling about his partiality for her more fortunate sister.

We are fond of repeating that foreign domination is our one curse and that with its disappearance will disappear, likewise, all our sorrows. I have no love for foreign domination, no more than I have for the usurpation of our interior by an enlarged spleen. But I have been noticing for long that this encroachment of the spleen upon our vitals has not awaited our pleasure. And now it has become as dangerous, quietly to allow it to remain in possession, as to dislodge it forcibly at the risk of rupture.

Wise men tell us that unless and until we fill up the ~~innumerable~~ <sup>breasting</sup> holes round about us, the spleen will remain to fill our insides. At which we are aghast, much rather, would we, that their depths be filled with our tears, than have these sacred foot prints of Father Time obliterated! So all our irritation continues to be vented, not on the holes, but on the spleen. Meanwhile the different sections of our community are kept effectively segregated by these innumerable pitfalls.

My readers, by this time, must have got fairly impatient. "Out with your problem!" cry they. I have been hesitating and beating about the bush, only because it is so absurdly simple. "Don't we all know that?" will be

the reply as soon as I say it. So I have been like the doctor who dares not demand his fee unless he calls a case of want of sleep by the name of Insomnia.

Well, the real trouble with us is, we are not one. Our differences are innumerable. I have already indicated that break in true relation is the one fault, the original sin,—breaks which may occur between our own people as well as with the foreigner. It is because of these that we cannot use our polity as a properly co-ordinated body. It goes without saying that if, when the blood tries to feed the brain, a counter current promptly drives it back or when the foot requires massaging the hand goes in for a *hartal*, then such lumbering entity cannot expect to enjoy the efficiency of the Body politic from over the seas.

To see the jaunty Stranger, with stylish shoes and elegant umbrella pursuing his prosperous career, makes us feel that by emulating his outfit we shall attain to his sleekness as well. But it is futile to try and rectify the omissions of Providence by adding to it one of our own. We may procure shoes and umbrella of the same pattern, but they will slip off our feet or be blown out of our hand or being snatched away, be used as weapons of offence against ourselves converting comedy into tragedy. The problem is not that of providing an outfit but of building up a body which can carry it.

This caricature of a body of ours seems to have left aside the duty of co-ordinating its limbs for the present in the belief that by dressing up fashionably facility of movement will come of itself. But this blind trust in things happening of themselves is only a deluding of oneself and self delusion is a thing which man begins to have an affection for, and then refuses to put to the test.

I remember how, when yet I was young, there used to rage, off and on, a great controversy as to whether we were, or were not, a Nation. I cannot claim to have followed all the arguments of the rival disputants, but of this I was sure that, if a king I would have put the no Nation party into gaol, or if a popular leader cut off their social amenities. Non violence towards them would have been, for me, out of the question!

The stock argument of the pro Nation party was that, if in Switzerland three different races could live side by side as one

nation, then where was the difficulty? And, as I heard it, I said to myself that now, at last, all was safe. But, it is one thing to cry "no fear!" and another to feel really reassured.

The man in the story, condemned to the gallows, was advised by his advocate "Don't be afraid—swing off in the name of Durga—we shall see about it in appeal!" The poor fellow did not mind calling on Durga, but, for the life of him, he could not overcome his objection to being swung off! It is not much of a consolation to establish by argument that, if Switzerland is a nation, so are we for, when it comes to practical effect, they are on firm ground, and we are left swinging.

It is well worth considering what it is at the root which leads to this disparity in the fruit. Whatever may be the other differences between the sections of the people of Switzerland, the *feeling of difference* is not there. There is no obstacle, whether of law or of tradition, in the way of their forming blood connections. But such obstacles, with us, are so tremendous, that the very idea of legislation permitting inter-caste marriages, throws our social leaders into a cold sweat. And yet relationship runs more deeply in the current of blood, than in a torrent of words.

If those who plume themselves on being one great community leave no channel open for the blood current to flow through and through, their unity can never be a living one, it will always remain difficult for them jointly to dedicate their lives to any cause, for their joint lives will not form one Being.

A friend of mine used to live in the N.W. Frontier Province. There were frequent abductions of Hindu women by Pathan roughs from across the border. On one such occasion my friend asked a local Hindu why they did not band together to resist such outrage on the Hindu community. "Oh, that was only a Bania wench," was the sneering reply. The Bania girl was a Hindu, so was the contemptuous speaker, but, for all their common acceptance of *shastric* bonds, there was clearly no living tie between them. That was why the blow suffered by one found no response in the other. Oneness of Nations means at bottom oneness through birth,—the very derivation of the word shows it, its underlying ideal demands it.

Nothing great can be based on unreality. When man gets into an awkward position, he often tries to escape from his own conscience by cheating himself. When at his wit's end he can bring himself to believe that it is possible to gain with the right hand what he has deprived himself of by the left.

At the bottom of our hearts we all know how unreal is the unity of relationship at the base of the political unity of our agitations, that is why we are so anxious to keep this fundamental defect out of sight and are wont to display so vehemently the materials we have gathered for the political superstructure. But, to smother a shaky foundation by a superabundance of the best of building material, does not tend to make it stronger, but rather, brings out its weakness all the sooner.

The recrudescence of Hindu Moslem outbreaks, after the collapse of the propped-up truce of the Khil'fat, is an instructive example of this, proving that a defect at the root cannot be cured at the branch. To point this out, however, puts some of us out of patience. "There's a third party," say they,—'our enemy, the foreigner, who foists the quarrel on us. It's his fault, not ours. Didn't we, Hindus and Moslems, formerly live side by side in amity? etc., etc."

But our Astrology tells us that Saturn has to wait some fault before he can fasten his baleful influence on man. He can contrive our downfall only if he finds open some gateway of sin. The ensuing disaster may be an outside thing, but the sin is our own, and the greatest of calamities always is the fondness we acquire for the sin, reserving all our ire for the disaster.

This leaky vessel of ours doubtless used to make its passage in fair weather, giving little trouble except for the occasional baling out. But, now, with the storm, the leak has increased and it threatens to founder. If the Captain throws all the blame on the storm, content with calling for a chorus of imprecations, and leaving the leak to take care of itself, then his leadership will help the vessel to the bottom, not to port. If the storm be on us, as an unfriendly third party, we should remember that it is not there to assist us to do repair work, rather will it wax eloquent in showing up our utter lack of seaworthiness. Nay more, it will snute us now on the right



cheek, then on the left, to make it quite clear that if our right and left hands cannot work together at the real remedy, the only course we shall eventually steer is straight for perdition.

If we but apply the time and energy we waste in futile fretting and fuming, to the repair of the cracks at the bottom, there is yet hope of saving ourselves. If Providence is inclined to make game of us, there may be a lull in the storm for a while, but I am afraid a deaf ear will be turned to any prayer, even of the holy Hindu, for the annihilation of the atmosphere which breeds storms, or for a reduction of the sea to a puddle. So I earnestly implore our captains not to seek to emulate the storm with their stentorian roarings, in order to drown the question of setting about the repair of those cracks.

Our leaders assure us that this subject has their attention, for, orthodox as they are, have they not nevertheless pronounced against untouchability? But, say I, that again is mere tinkering. This untouchability is but one of the outward symptoms of our fundamental feeling of disunion. To break off one twig of the spreading tree of differences which stands across our path, will not serve to clear the way for us. I have said elsewhere that where religion divides, the door to union is barred from within. Let me here try to make my meaning clearer.

Religion is that which binds. Our word Dharma means that which holds together. That is to say all things that afford us a sure refuge appertain to Dharma,—things about which there is no room for argument, which are not subject to change. If in regard to these, our attitude is not stable, our opinions and course of action liable to fluctuation, then shall our very life become insecure.

But there is another department of life where changes are ever going on, where accidental happenings are incessant, where the maintaining of life is not possible without constant adaptations to varying circumstances. If into this department we import, and there try to establish, that which properly belongs to the realm of the unchangeable, then catastrophe is inevitable.

The firm soil is good for the rooted tree, but it is not healthy for it to have its free-swaying branches likewise imbedded. The

earth upholds me and its immovability is essential for my security, its quaking is a calamity. The carriage also holds me, if, however, it stands fast instead of advancing, it becomes for me not as the earth, but like a cage, with it my proper relations are those of constant adjustment, selling the old one, buying a new one, getting in or coming out,—may be, jumping off in a jiffy at any sign of overturning.

When religion tells me that I should be friendly with the Musalmans, I accept that reverently without a word of argument, for the truth underlying this dictum is for me as permanent as the great ocean itself. But when religion tells me that I should not eat food touched by a Musalman, then argue I must, and ask "why so?" For the validity of this kind of proposition is to me as impermanent as the water in a pot, which I can keep or throw away as my reason may dictate.

To those who insist that even such injunctions if given by religion, must be deemed beyond question, my reply is, that if need be I am prepared to take my stand against all the scriptures of the world and assert that on such commandment lies the curse of Him who hath vouchsafed unto us the supreme gift of Reason (Dhīyo yo nah prachodayāt). Those who voice such commandment are really placing priest before deity and but insult Religion in whose name they dare thus to speak.

In the region of the mind, man can truly unite with man only through reason. If unreason gains entry its impish pranks upset the mental equilibrium altogether. A spectre owns no home of its own and, as it pays no rent for its haunts, it cannot be given notice to quit. So, once we admit the unreal as real we cannot make it answerable to control. That is why it makes our legs give way, our hearts go pit a pat and shivers run down our back, the only thing left firm being our belief in it. If one questions "Why this belief?" all we can do is to point a trembling thumb over our shoulder and whisper "There it is!" If the questioner persists and asks "Where?" we go for him as an unbeliever, threatening, moreover, to deprive him of sanctified cremation when he is dead!

If we enthrone Reason in our mind, there we have *Sicary*; for there we acknow-

ledge our own sovereignty,—as well as the sway of the best minds of all places and times. Unreason tyrannises because it belongs neither to the individual nor to humanity. It reduces our mentality to a prison house in which we can associate only with other equally fettered, prematurely-decrepit fellow unfortunates, deprived of all communion with the free millions outside. This separation from the Great is indeed bondage; the primal trouble, the ultimate disaster.

It has become the fashion with us to decry big factories, for that they reduce men to machines. We find in this thought all the more of a consolation because it amounts to an indictment of western civilisation. But why do factories mutilate manhood? Because the workers are forced into narrow grooves, without scope for their fullest development. Now, unreasoning injunctions are not a whit less hard and rigid than machinery of steel.

The India wide cast iron social system, which with its cruel penalties has for ages compelled countless men and women to submit unquestioningly to a continual repetition of the same unmeaning, unreasonable practices, is as much of a mechanical monstrosity as the worst of factories. In fact I know of nothing more heartless and unyielding devised by the mind of man, in any country or age, on so vast, so complete a scale.

Once upon a time, when India out of the fullness of her heart offered up a prayer, she prayed. *Ya eko'varnah sa no budhyā subhaya samyunaktu*—*may He, who is beyond distinctions of colour or caste, unite us by means of good understanding.* Then India did pray for Unity, but not mechanical unity, whether social or political. She wanted to become one, led by *budhyā subhaya*—*good understanding*, not by being tied round with the same fetters, whether of acquiescence in political subordination, or of unreasoning obedience to scriptural injunctions.

In the sphere of the impermanent, as I have said, man has to adjust himself continually to the variations of his environment. It is one of the most important functions of our intellect to help us in regard to such adjustments. These variations, our experience tells us, accidentally occur in Nature. They come as isolated facts which have to be

assimilated and brought into line with the universal rhythm, to which in turn they contribute their variety. The same happens in the societies of man, as well as in his individual life. He has to learn to deal properly with unlooked for accidents, that is to say instead of allowing them to come as an outrage on intellect, feeling, or taste, to bring them into harmony with life by the exercise of his wisdom.

Suppose that a *faqir*, having by chance planted a stake in the middle of the road to tie up his goat, has departed with the animal, leaving the stake behind him. What is to be done about it? Reason alone can deal with new facts, unreason needs must assume that it was always there, and that whatever is, should be allowed to remain. Thereupon some sanctimonious simpleton turns up, who besmears it with vermilion, and enshrines it within a temple raised around it. And the almanac compiler follows with the date of its festival and a list of the merits to be acquired by its worship.

Thus, in the realm of unreason do all accidental stakes put into the ground stick there in sanctified permanence, and so it becomes easier for the people to remain bound to them, than to steer clear of them in order to move onwards. Nay more the pious section of them soon begin to proclaim that they are the anointed of the Lord, different from all the other peoples of the world, so, what though all progress be blocked, to remove any of the stakes is desecration!

Finally, those who have no faith in the sanctity of the stakes, even including sentimental foreigners, then hold up their hands in admiration saying "Ah, what a spiritual people!" In the same breath they add "Of course it would never do for us, with our different temperament, to do likewise, but we do hope they will not be so silly as to give up the serenity of their repose within their pristine fence of sacred stakes, so beautiful to contemplate from a distance!"

As to the beauty of it, I will not argue. That is a matter of taste. Like religion, beauty is sufficient unto itself. But a mere modern like myself will nevertheless make bold, from the view point of his reason, to inquire how the car of freedom can possibly progress to its goal through this stake studded road. And yet however bold in questioning the modern man's pride of reason may impel him to be,



he puts his question at the risk of his night's rest, for, as his curtain lecture will remind him, his womankind are mortally afraid of the evil eye

'Why take risks, with our precious children about?' they cry "Who knows what may be the effect on their fortunes of uprooting which stake? There are plenty of desperate youths without ties, now-a-days. Why not leave the clearing of the road to them?"

Upon which admonition even our modern souls cannot help confessing to qualms, for, say what we will, all tradition cannot be strained out of our blood. So, the very next morning, there we are at the Stake temple, bearing a little over the regulation offerings prescribed in the almanac!

This then is our main problem. How to get rid of the stakes of superstition which make thorny the highway along which alone we can march side by side to a common prosperity, how to uproot the stakes of callousness and contempt which permanently fence us off from one another and prevent our coming together at all, how to cast out the unreason which stops us from working to remove these obstacles, nay more, impels us to make a fetish of them

Our sentimental pietists stand before these age-long obstacles with tears in their eyes, saying that the big, the beautiful thing is the devotion,—the particular stake for which it happens to be felt being a mere accident of no moment. We, the moderns, must reply that the big thing, the beautiful thing, is Reason, while the stakes, as well as the worship lavished on them, are alike rubbish

"But O how unutterably sweet is it to see our women, for the sake of the welfare of their loved ones, pledge even their right hands in a very ecstasy of devotion, as a thanks offering to their deity!"

Whereat the staunch moderner must still aver "Where the right hand is purposefully dedicated to a good cause, with open-eyed, courageous acceptance of consequences, there alone does beauty blossom. But where a blind fear of unmeaning evil visitations eats into the sweetness, with its canker of ignorance and poverty of spirit, there is all beauty spoilt, all goodness destroyed, at the core."

Another of our urgent problems is the closed door to the mutual approachment of

Hindu and Moslem. The solution of this is so difficult because of the impenetrable barrier of religion with which each of them has hedged himself round their religion itself having marked out, in their respective views of humanity, the white and black spheres of the *ins* and the *outs*

In this world, all separation cannot be avoided between self and not self. But, when the gap between them yawns too wide, evil finds entry. The bushman type looses his poisoned arrow at the stranger on sight, and consequently he has kept himself deprived of all expansion of his manhood which is the outcome of relations between man and man. On the other hand, the people which succeeds in reducing this gap to the lowest dimension attains the highest expression of its humanity, and in the co-operation of its individuals with one another, it raises its thought and work and character to their fullest development

The Hindu prides himself on being religious and so does the Musalman. That is to say only a narrow margin of their lives is left outside the enclosure of religion, which therefore becomes the main barrier keeping them at a distance from each other and from the rest of the world, militating against that expansion of their manhood which depends on the maintaining of true relations with all humanity. This religious separatism likewise keeps them, screened off within their own narrow bounds, from the grand universal aspect of Truth. That is why, with both of them, outward injunctions and artificial customs carry more weight than the ideal of Righteousness, in their dealings with others. In their world, the gap between self and not self has been allowed to become too wide

In modern Hindu orthodoxy the *outs* must always remain out, for with it the one endeavour always is to prevent the outsider, whether *mlecchā* or *pariah*, from gaining any means of entry. With the Musalmans it is the opposite. With them, too, the man outside the pale of their religion is an utter outsider, but they are only too glad to have him come into the fold and there to secure him as one of themselves. We need not trouble to ferret out scriptural texts in support of this, for it is clear enough from their age long practice that the one, with its protecting walls against the outside world, is huddled up within itself

while the other has its fortress within which it seeks to bring in and confine its captives.

This has resulted in two different types of separatism becoming ingrained in the mentality of these two communities, who, between themselves, have been destined by Providence to occupy the chief position in India. The Moslem is *mleccha* to the Hindu, the Hindu in turn is *lafir* to the Musalman. Neither will have anything to do with the other by way of acknowledging or permitting kinship. There is only one narrow ground, that of opposition to the third party, the foreigner, on which they now and again try to make a united stand.

If the story of Shibu, the Brahmin, had come down to us in more complete form we should probably have found that ordinarily, there was a common understanding, against his favourite, between the first wife who did the cooking without any part in the eating, and the third wife who, getting nothing, had to betake herself to her father's. But when the second wife would be away from home, then the erstwhile political alliance between the other two would give place to a bout of mutual hair pulling!

I have seen on the sand banks of the Padma river, when the wind was high, how both crow and wagtail in their efforts to save themselves from being blown away, would flutter side by side, wing almost touching wing, busy digging their bills into the ground. Such a spectacle, however, need not make us rush to sentimentalise about bird friendships because during the much longer periods of calm weather, I have also seen their beaks otherwise occupied—with each other's bodies!

At the time of the Swadeshi upheaval in Bengal, Hindu and Moslem did not unite. For, to the Musalman, the dismemberment of the province of Bengal was not a real sorrow, such as is the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, which recently made him join the Hindu in the non co operation movement. Now, this kind of union cannot by its very nature be permanent. There has been no real union of hearts, but only a temporary flutter side by side, one facing East, the other facing West. So that, no sooner has the weather changed, than the fluttering wings have given place to pecking beaks. And political leaders have to spend all their time cogitating how they can divert them from damaging each other.

But the real mischief is deeper in the blood, and no mere diversion will do as a remedy. Religion is not the only thing standing in the way of Hindu Moslem unity. A difference of social strength has also arisen between them. The Islamic system has brought about a compact solidarity amongst its followers, while the Hindu system has operated to spread wider and wider disunion through its ranks.

The result is that, with or without cause, Hindus are always battling amongst themselves, while even for the best of causes they cannot stand up against a foe. The Musalmans, on the contrary, even when no outside cause is operating maintain their ranks intact, while when occasion arises they can give most vigorous battle to the aggressor. This is not due to superior physical prowess, but to more effective moral support from their own community.

How can two such unequal rivals come to a permanent understanding? They may hang on together during some temporary stress, but they are sure to fall out again over the division of spoils, whereupon the lion's share will go to the lion by virtue of the strength of his paw.

During the late European war, when the whole English nation had gone pale with fright, they had occasion to call upon even us weaklings to come to their aid. Not only that, but they were swept by a wave of universal good feeling,—such as comes for the time upon even the most worldly minded in the face of a great calamity,—under the influence of which they felt a sudden generosity towards their dusky fellow participants in the carnival of carnage. But no sooner was the war over, than came the demoniac doings of Jallianwalla Bagh, to be followed by the order of the boot from Kenya for all Indians. This may make us angry, but it should also make us remember that to be treated as an equal one has to attain equality.

That is why our Mahatmaji made his stupendous effort to rouse the power of the masses. He knew that so long as this gulf between powerful and weak remained unbridged, peace between the two was out of the question. And a peaceful solution was his one object. Had our soul force been able to set up a quake beneath the king's throne, all the king's horses and all the



king's men would have tried to invite us to confer on a settlement. But Asop has recorded once for all, the history of the conference between the wolf and the lamb on the question of the right of drinking at the stream, and the easy settlement of the difficulty which was eventually arrived at by the stronger party.

If we desire the welfare of India as a whole, Hindu and Moslem must not only unite, but they must come together on a footing of equality,—not the personal equality of two rival champions, but equality in regard to the social support at their back.

The ugly incident of the Mopla outrages occurred at the very height of the *Khilafat entente*. Both the contending parties had been for ages in the habit of applying their religion as a weapon to defeat the dictates of universal morality. The religion of the Nambudri Brahmins has always contemned the Musalman, the religion of the Moplas despised the Brahmin. It is futile to expect a lasting bridge between the two to be made with the feeble cement of the brotherhood manufactured on the Congress platform.

And yet we persist in saying "Let our old religion remain just as it is what if the means be unreal, the results will be real and will right the wrong." We are anxious to checkmate first, and then think of our moves to gain *Svaraj* to begin with, and wait for the development of our manhood afterwards!

Dr Munji, in his report on the Mopla incident made to the Sankaracharya, the head of the Deccan Hindus says

'The Hindus of Malabar are, generally speaking, mild and docile, and have come to entertain such a mortal fear of the Moplas that the moment any such trouble arises, the only way of escape the Hindus can think of is to run for their lives leaving their children and womenfolk behind, to take care of themselves as best as they can thinking perhaps honestly, that if the Moplas attack them without any previous molestation, God the Almighty and the Omniscient is there to teach them a lesson, and even to take revenge on their behalf.'

This is one of the examples which make it so clear that the Hindus have not yet learnt the lesson of dealing with the world in a worldly manner. Spiritual and material

have become utterly jumbled up within their brains, and so wrought havoc with their intellect, and because of their resulting inertness of mind, they fail to understand how this insult to Divinity, offered by the depreciation of their own humanity, is at the root of all their sorrows.

In another part of Dr Munji's report he states that, eight hundred years ago, a Hindu king of Malabar, on the advice of his ministers, offered special inducements to the Arabs to settle in his territory, going so far, in his pro-Arab proclivities, as to assist them in the conversion of Hindus to their faith by promulgating a law that one member of every fisherman household should embrace Islam. The reason appears to have been that this extremely religious king, together with his extremely religious ministers, dreaded to violate the *shastric* prohibition against sea voyage, so that, for the protection of their coast they had to fall back upon those who preferred the dictates of Reason to those of Manu, the law giver!

Here, again we have an illuminating instance of how those who make a religion of obeying the behests of unreason cannot achieve independence, even on the throne itself. For them the light of day is no more than the night for sleep so that even in the full blaze of midday their backs are pelted with the brickbats of the ghost in the nursery rhyme.

In the old days the Malabar king merely wore the mask of kingship leaving the sovereignty to unreason. The same unreason is still the *de facto* occupant of the Hindu throne of Malabar. That is why the Hindus there get all the punishment, whilst they keep on asseverating that God is on high.

Throughout all India we Hindus cringe and fawn before the Unreal which our unreason has enthroned in our midst. That empty throne, that awful void forsaken by God's providence, leaves a vacancy to be filled from time to time by the Pathan, the Moghul, the Englishman. We ascribe our punishment to them, but they are but the tools of Providence,—the brickbats, not the ghostly thrower whom we, ourselves, have conjured up by shutting our eyes to the light of reason, converting day into night. And so, while the rest of the wide awake world is busy thinking and doing,—*bang, bang,* on our devoted heads shower the brickbats!

Our fight must consequently be with this spectre of unreason, of unreality. This is what keeps us asunder, what imposes foreign dominion on us, what keeps us so blind that we can only rave against the missiles while dedicating our very homestead to the ghost of our adoration. If we confine our view to the brickbats, our future seems hopeless, for their number is legion, and they are to be found on every side, but the ghost is one, and if that be exorcised, the bricks will remain lying at our feet and not come hurtling on our heads.

The time has therefore come to utter once again, with a full heart, that same ancient prayer of India, not by our voices alone, but also in thought and deed, and reverently in our mutual relations

Ya ekah avarnah sa no budhya  
subhaya samyunaktu.

May He, who is beyond distinctions of colour or caste, unite us by good understanding

Translated by

SURINDRANATH TAGORE

## ON THE EVE OF A GREAT STRUGGLE

**D**URING the voyage to England, which I was unexpectedly called upon to make, in April, 1923, at the wish of the Kenya Indian delegates, my mind was acutely absorbed by the greater issues of the East African struggle and its world significance. It became necessary for me to unburden myself to one, who could understand the deeper meaning of the situation. Before I started on my long journey westward, I had been travelling with the Poet, Rabindranath Tagore, in Sind and Gujerat, and he had very strongly urged me to leave my work at the Asram and undertake this new task in England. It was natural, therefore, that I should write to him rather than to any one else. On board the ship, I had abundant leisure to think out the problems, but in London, every hour of the day was taken up with interviews and visits and consultations. The extracts which follow were written on the voyage and they represent the thoughts that came to me before I reached England.

S S Kaiser : Hind April 15

This boat is crowded almost beyond human endurance. Everyone is tired and hot and cross including the waiters and the cabin stewards. What a strange experience it has been to come from the strike of the mill labourers at Ahmedabad into an atmosphere such as this! It was a very great relief to me to read, that Shankerlal Banker would be

immediately released, and therefore could take the burden of the Mill strike off Anasuya Bapu's shoulders.\* For it was very difficult for me to go away and leave her to bear that burden. I felt so deeply the suffering which was in her eyes, and the tired look she had.

Just before starting, I received a communication from the Government of India. It appears, that the Kenya authorities have warned the Government concerning the danger of a visit from me, which would be resented by the white settlers. For this reason, the Government of India would suggest, that I should not land at Mombasa. However, my plans have been changed by the Kenya Indian delegates' insistence on my going to England with them and therefore all this information is out of date. The sea has been more than usually calm, but I have had sea sickness all the same, though only in the form of 'malaise'. Yet it makes serious thinking somewhat difficult. Perhaps it would be better to give way to tiredness, till it is past, and read novels. But the novels, which fill the library of a great steamer like this, are so utterly inane and insipid, that a

\* Shankerlal Banker and Anasuya Bapu had been the organisers of labour in Ahmedabad under Mahatma Gandhi. Shankerlal had been imprisoned along with Mahatma Gandhi but his term was ended about the middle of April.