ESSAY

DIARY OF A TRAVELER TO EUROPE

Rabindranath Tagore



DEDICATION

To my dear friend Sri Lokendranath Palit,
I dedicate this book
as a token of remembrance.

—The Author

Friday, 22nd August 1890. There exists between space and time an ancient intimacy, and the steamship is striving to erase it. In former days, distance was measured by time; men spoke of a journey of one watch, a journey of two days. Now only the measure of miles remains. Through the midst of this timeless companionship of space and time, great engines of steam—trains and ships—now pass unhindered.

Nor is that all. The embrace binding Asia and Africa as sisters has been severed, and between them now flows a river of the salt of separation. The northern and southern halves of America have clung together since birth like twin brothers, yet I hear that even between them there was once a design to drive an iron blade. Thus does civilization everywhere sunder the ancient bonds of place and season, forging its own path through the rupture of home and hearth.

In former times, when it took half a year to reach Europe by circuitous ways, one had ample leisure to form a true sense of the distance between these two continents. Now that leisure is steadily diminishing.

But however much the intimacy of time and space may lessen, the habits of ages do not vanish so easily. Though I hold no more than a three months' ticket for Europe, I cannot banish from my mind the specter of some imagined vast duration. It feels as though I have set out for many, many days.

In Kalidasa's age, when there were no railways, steamers, or postal services, separation was pure and unmixed; and when the Yaksha, exiled for a year's time to Ramagiri, lamented through the long months, his grief was not without cause. But just as a mountain of cotton is compressed by machine into a single modest bale, so under the pressure of civilization all our experience is being condensed and compacted. What once took six months is now crammed into three; what was once a porter's burden now fits into a pocket. Soon the song of separation will be complete within a page or two, and when the telegraph becomes commonplace, separation will grow so intense that even the fourteen-syllabled verse will seem too loose a vessel to contain it.

The sun was nearly setting. Standing near the helm on the ship's deck, I gazed toward the shore of India. The sea's water was green, the line of the coast tinged blue, the sky
overcast with cloud. Evening advanced toward night, and the ship pressed onward into the sea. To the left, the long line of Bombay harbor was still visible.

Gradually the harbor fell behind us. The dusk's cloud-veiled darkness spread its form over the infinite bed of the sea. No stars showed in the sky. Only far off, the lighthouse's flame flickered into brightness; near the sea's pillow, that trembling lamp-flame seemed like the anxious, wakeful gaze of Mother Earth watching over her floating children.

The ship passed beyond Bombay harbor.

The vessel set sail at evening,
I thought—here is water-play,
Sweet breezes shall blow, and I shall drift away in joy.

But who remembered sea-sickness!

When the green water gradually turned blue, and the waves mingled with the ship to raise their commotion, I saw that the play of water suited the sea well enough—but not me.

I thought, at this moment I had best slip quietly into my cabin, wrap myself in a blanket, and lie down. Entering my cabin as best I could, I threw the blanket from my shoulder onto the bed and shut the door. The room was pitch dark. I understood that my elder brother had put out the light and lain down on his own bed. Wishing to arouse a little sympathy by reporting my bodily distress, I asked, "Dada, are you asleep?" Suddenly, in a thick and utterly foreign voice, someone roared, "Who's that!" I said, "Good heavens! This isn't Dada at all!" At once I offered a humble, apologetic reply: "Forgive me, I have entered the wrong cabin by mistake." The unfamiliar voice said, "All right!" Picking up my blanket again, I tried to withdraw with my body contracted in misery, but I could not find the door. Amid the strange jumble of boxes, trunks, sticks, and bedding, I groped about with a great clattering

noise. One might, on this occasion, have understood something of the mental state of a rat caught in a trap—but the complication of seasickness made the matter considerably more intricate.

As my mind grew ever more distressed, my body broke into a cold sweat, and the rebellion of my inner organs, rising to my throat, became increasingly unmanageable. After much searching, when suddenly a smooth, cool, white-glass door-handle came into my grasp, I felt that I had not experienced such a pleasurable touch in a long while. Opening the door, I rushed out and made straight, without a doubt in my mind, for the next cabin door. Arriving there, I saw the light burning; but scattered on the floor lay a discarded gown, petticoat, and other feminine garments. I fled before my eyes could take in anything more. According to the received proverb, everyone has the right to err thrice, but I did not have the courage to attempt a third trial. Nor, indeed, did I have the strength for it. I made straight for the ship's deck without delay. There, in utter distraction, I leaned against the ship's railing and found some slight relief for my body and mind's extreme distress. Then, like a much-chastened offender, I slowly gathered up my blanket, laid my bowed head upon it, and stretched out on a wooden bench.

What calamity! Whose blanket is this? I see now—it is not mine at all! It must surely belong to that peacefully sleeping, trusting gentleman into whose room I had intruded at night and spent several minutes engaged in my investigative labors. I thought for a moment of stealing back, quietly replacing his blanket, and retrieving my own; but what if his sleep should break? And if I must beg his pardon a second time, would he ever trust me again? And even if he did, would it not be an excessive imposition upon the Christian forbearance of a weary foreigner to beg pardon twice in a single night! A yet more terrifying possibility occurred to me. What if, by ill fortune, I should again mistakenly arrive at the very cabin door I had reached the second time, and leave there the blanket of the gentleman from the first cabin, taking instead some garment belonging to that place—what a hair-raising puzzle of confused evidence would then arise! Amid such anxious thoughts, I passed the night sitting upright on the wooden bench, beneath a stranger's blanket strongly scented with tobacco.

23rd August. My countryman companion, after a full night's blissful sleep, appeared on deck in the morning with an extremely cheerful, plump, and healthy face. I gripped his two hands and said, "Brother, this is my condition." Hearing this, he cast aspersions upon my intelligence and, laughing, applied one or two epithets to me such as I had not heard since parting from the company of my schoolmaster. After a whole night's suffering, I bore this morning insult too without protest. At last, moved by pity, he summoned my cabin servant. To him too I had to relate the entire episode from the beginning. At first he could not understand at all, and simply stared into my face. In his life's experience, no doubt, such an incident was without precedent. Finally, he slowly turned his face once toward the sea and smiled faintly; then he departed.

Seasickness gradually increased. That affliction's torment cannot be conveyed to the inexperienced landsman. Not a grain of India remained in my stomach. Before entering Europe, the sea seemed determined to shake this body until every trace of India had been thoroughly wrung out of it. I lay in my cabin for four days.

2nd September [likely a diary slip, meaning continuing from Saturday]. From Saturday until today, this Tuesday, the time has passed. The world's events have not been few—the sun has risen four times and set thrice, and through the varied duties that carry countless creatures of this great earth from birth to the grave, three days have passed in mighty industry—the struggle for existence, natural selection, self-preservation, the propagation of species, and other great affairs of the animal kingdom proceeded with vigor—while I alone lay bedridden, as good as dead. Modern poets sometimes call a moment eternity, sometimes call eternity a moment, subjecting common language to various contrary calisthenics of meaning. I cannot decide whether to call these four days of mine one vast moment, or to call each moment of them an age.

However it may be, there is no limit to suffering. That so great and evolved a creature as man should suddenly suffer such extreme distress ought to have some great moral or spiritual cause; but that the soul should suffer so much merely on account of a little wave rising upon the water seems utterly unjust, incongruous, and inglorious. Yet there is no pleasure in blaming the laws of nature, for such

censure causes no pain to anyone, nor does it correct the cosmos by the smallest fraction.

I lay upon my bed of torment, nearly unconscious. Sometimes the faint strains of a piano would drift down from the deck above and enter my ears, and then I would remember that outside this narrow prison-chamber of mine, the eternal stream of joy in the world flows on undiminished. Far away, at the eastern border of India, I remembered that music-resounding, affection-sweet home of mine. The healthy, prosperous, beautiful world of the living seemed like a realm of shadows, impossibly distant. I thought only of how, once I had crossed this long desert-path of the middle sea, I might return to that festival of life there. On Tuesday morning, when scarcely a spark of life remained in my body, my friend, offering much encouragement, took me up onto the ship's deck; there, seated with my feet stretched out on a long cane deck-chair, I regained once more the touch of this mortal earth and the taste of renewed life.

I do not wish to describe the passengers of the ship. No inky-fingered writer, however near at hand, could imagine that his sharp gaze might rest upon them; they move about the deck in perfect confidence, playing the piano with its tinkling notes, betting and playing games of win and lose, sitting in the smoking-room slapping down cards; with them I have no connection whatever. We three Bengalis, occupying one entire end of the ship with three long deck-chairs, regard the rest of the population with the utmost indifference.

My young companion's daily occupation is to lose his tobacco pouch again and again, then search for it and recover it. I have warned him repeatedly that if there be any obstacle to his liberation, it is his cigar. The great sage Bharata, even at the moment of death, fixed his mind upon a deer's fawn, and was thus born in his next life as a deer. I am forever apprehensive that my friend, in some future birth, will spring up as a great tobacco plant before the hut of some Burmese peasant. Without proof, he does not believe these matters of scripture, but rather argues to destroy my own simple faith, and even tries to get me to take up cigars—though so far he has not succeeded.

27th, 28th August. The gods and demons, churning the ocean, drew forth from the sea all that it contained. The sea could do nothing for the gods, nor could it do anything for the demons; it has taken its revenge upon poor, weak mankind. I know not where Mount Mandara has gone, nor where Vasuki the great serpent has since rested in the underworld, but that primeval whirl of churning still remains within the sea is felt by every stomach-bearing creature who takes to it. Those who do not feel it, I suppose, must be of divine or demonic lineage. My friend, too, belongs to the latter category—that is, he does not suffer from it.

Having left my sickbed, I now sit up on deck. I have not yet fully recovered my strength. There is a certain sweetness in this state of the body. At such a time, one begins, as it were, a fresh acquaintance with the sky, the air, the sunlight, and all of external nature. Since our daily close intimacy with them has been severed for a while, a soft, shy, sweet exchange of words begins again between us, as between new lovers.

29th August. Tonight we shall arrive at Aden. There we must change ships tomorrow morning. In the sea, one or two lines of mountain ridges can be seen here and there.

A moonlit night. The ship halted at Aden port. After dinner, my friend and I, wishing to engage in confidential talk, sit comfortably with two deck-chairs joined together at one end of the deck. The still sea and the moonlit, mountain-girdled coastal scene appear, to our languor-drooping, half-closed eyes, like a mirage of dream.

Just then word came that we must board the new ship immediately. That ship would sail this very night. The scattered belongings heaped in the cabin were somehow stuffed into leather trunks, upon which three or four men stood and danced mercilessly to force them shut. Having given the servants their due reward, we set off by boat, carrying boxes, trunks, and bedding of every size, toward the new ship, the "Massilia."

Not far off, the mast-studded Massilia, her long rows of illuminated cabin-windows thrown open, floated motionless upon the moonlit sea like some colossal, thousand-eyed sea-creature of primeval times. Suddenly, from somewhere, a band

struck up. In the strains of music and the silent moonlit night, it seemed that at midnight, upon this Arabian shore, some magical event out of the Arabian Nights was about to unfold.

The Massilia was bringing passengers from Australia. Curious men and women watched with amused interest from the deck-railing as the new passengers came aboard. But that night, in the matter of novelty, we three were the greatest curiosity of all. When, with great effort, we had rescued our belongings and climbed onto the deck, in an instant an entire shipload of eyes rained down upon us. Had those glances the power to leave any mark, our whole bodies would have been covered with black and blue bruises. The ship was immense. Its music-room and dining hall were paved with white marble. Electric lights and the sound of the band made it a scene of festivity.

Late at night the ship set sail.

30th August. On this ship there is, above the main deck, another second deck like it. It is smaller and comparatively secluded. There we took refuge.

My friend was silent and preoccupied. So was I. The distant coastal mountains appeared sun-wearied and hazy. A shadow of midday drowsiness seemed to have fallen, making everything indistinct.

I think a little, write a little, watch the children at play a little. There are many small children aboard this ship; today, whatever mirth there is belongs only to them. Taking off their shoes and stockings, they roll oranges about on the deck to play; their three nurses sit on benches, sewing silently with bowed heads, and now and then glancing sideways to note the state of the passengers.

Far off, one or two ships can be seen. Now and then a mountain rears up from the sea—barren, hard, black, scorched, treeless. Standing in the middle of the sea like an absent-minded sentinel, it gazes indifferently, taking not the slightest notice of who comes and who goes before it.

Thus, gradually, the hour of sunset arrived. If any place may be called the "Castle of Indolence," it is the ship—especially on a hot day, upon the calm Red Sea. Passengers lie all day sprawled comfortably on deck, hats pulled down over their brows, sunk in waking dreams. In the midst of all this motion, only the ship moves, and its two flanks of ruffled blue water, jostled awake, part in weary protest with a faint murmur and somehow shift aside a little.

The sun set. The sky and water took on a magnificent hue. The sea's water bore not a single line upon it. That horizon-spread, unbroken mass of water resembled a body in the full ripeness of youth—utterly smooth and shapely. This boundless, unbroken completeness lay thick from one edge of the sky to the other. The great sea seemed to have suddenly arrived at some place beyond which there is no further motion, no change; the final consummation of eternal, restless turbulence, the ultimate extinction. As at sunset a kite, near some topmost limit of the sky's blueness, spreads its great wings level and suddenly halts its flight, so the ever-restless sea seemed to have arrived, all at once, at the final boundary of some supreme tranquility, and, lifting its face for a moment toward the western horizon, lay utterly still. The coloring that appeared upon the water—whether it was the sky's shadow or the sea's own light—could not be told. It was as though some divine moment, from the sky's silent, unblinking blue eye, had, with a sudden flash springing forth from the sea's unfathomable depths, endowed it with an extraordinary radiance and glory.

Evening came on. Dong, dong, dong, dong—the bell rang. Everyone went to change their attire and dress for the evening meal. Half an hour later, the bell again. Men and women, in groups, entered the dining hall. We three Bengalis occupied a separate small table. At another table before us, two ladies sat down to dine, surrounded by a company of worshippers.

I looked and saw that among them was a young woman who, having uncovered a great deal of her youthful beauty, was engaged, smiling, in eating and conversation. Upon her fair, well-rounded, smooth neck and arms, all the unblinking light of the electric lamps, and the astonished, amused gaze of the assembled men, poured down. Seeing one bared beam of light, the glances seemed to leap upon it from every side like dark moths in swarms. Indeed, many turned their faces again and

again to observe her, and a suppressed ripple of laughter rose throughout the room on that account. Many referred to that young woman's costume as an "Eve-costume." But for foreigners like us, it was somewhat difficult to grasp the propriety of such undress. For in a ballroom, such attire, or even more revealing, excites no one's wonder.

But it is not wise to speak with too much enthusiasm on the subject of foreign social customs. In our country, women display such unrestrained lack of modesty in the bridal chamber and on certain special occasions, and were they to behave thus in any other gathering, it would doubtless appear improper to ordinary folk. Just as society has its bound customs, so too here and there it has its one or two exceptions.

31st August. Today is Sunday. Rising in the morning, I sat in a deck-chair above, breathing the sea air, when from the deck below, Christian worship began. Though I know that many among them were merely intoning the accustomed prayers dryly, counting on their fingers like Arjuna singing—yet still, that this handful, this scattering of small human beings, should stand calmly and humbly in the midst of the boundless sea and send, in grave, united voices, the tribute of devotion from tiny human hearts toward some eternal, ever-unknown mystery, is a matter of great wonder.

But in the midst of this, once or twice, peals of laughter were heard. Last night's dinner-table heroine, not joining the worship, sat above on deck, absorbed in jesting conversation with one of her worshipping young men. Now and then she burst into loud laughter; and now and then she also joined, humming, in the hymn.

Today at mealtime a fresh piece of news was created. We three were sitting at our small table taking breakfast. Attempting to cut a hard round loaf of bread with a knife, the knife slipped violently and fell upon the two fingers of my left hand. Blood spattered on all sides. I fled the meal at once to my cabin. Much bloodshed has been recorded in history—I have recorded my own bloodshed in my diary; I do not seek the glory accorded to great heroes, but perhaps some among the present-day Bengali populace might, for once, say "Alas!"

1st September. After dinner in the evening, we took our accustomed places up above. In the mild, cool breeze, my friend had fallen asleep, and my elder brother was indolently smoking, when suddenly, from below, dance music struck up. Everyone joined together for a whirling waltz.

Then, in the east, the nearly full moon of the new dark fortnight rose slowly from her bed of sea. At the eastern edge of this shoreless, water-bound great desert, from just beneath the path of moonrise to our ship, a broad, long path of light glimmered across the dark sea. This moonlit evening spread the petals of its silent, tranquil beauty, without a sound, upon some unearthly stem, like a wondrous white flower of the night blossoming forth. And the human figures, clasping one another tightly, whirled about in fierce, mad revelry, panting, growing feverish.

3rd September. At ten in the morning, the ship arrived at the entrance to the Suez Canal and halted. All around, a splendid play of colors. Upon the mountains, sunlight, shadow, and blue mist. At the edge of the deep-blue sea, the sun-scorched, deep-yellow line of the sandy shore.

Through the canal, the ship moved the whole day at a very slow pace. On both sides, treeless sand. Only here and there a small hut, encircled by a handful of trees and plants raised with much labor, appeared restful to the eye.

Late at night, a half-moon rose. In its faint moonlight, the two banks appeared vague and desolate.—At two or three in the morning, the ship anchored at Port Said.

4th September. Now we are in the Mediterranean, within Europe's domain. The wind too has turned cool, and the sea a deeper blue. Tonight we shall not sleep on deck.

5th September. Toward evening, the coastal mountains of the island of Crete came into view. A stage has been erected on deck. There is a troupe of actors traveling on the ship, and they will give a performance. Earlier than usual, dinner was taken and the amusement began. First, among the passengers, those who knew a little of music, and those who knew none, some with a feeble tinkling of piano, some with

a faint, thin voice, sang. Then the curtain was raised, and the players performed a "ballet" dance, along with Negro songs, magic tricks, farce, and various other entertainments. In the midst of it, a collection was taken up from the audience for the sailors' fund.

6th September. Sitting by the open window in the dining room, I am writing letters home. Once I looked up and saw, to the left, the island of Ionia in view. In the lap of the mountains, right at the sea's edge, a compact white town built by human hands could be seen, like a beehive. This is the town of Zante. From afar it seemed as though the mountain, with its great outstretched arms, held out white flowers to offer to the sea.

Rising to the deck, I saw that we were traveling through a narrow sea-passage between two mountain ranges. Clouds had gathered in the sky, lightning flashed—there was a chance of storm. The canopy over our topmost deck was folded away. Very dense clouds had settled upon the mountains; only, far off, upon a single peak, a long red gleam of cloud-freed evening light had come to touch it, while all the others were wrapped in the shadow of the impending storm. But the storm did not come. Everything passed with only a little wind and a burst of rain. The weather over the Mediterranean is extremely uncertain. I heard that ships do not usually travel by this route we were taking; the place is said to be very stormy.

At night, after dinner, the passengers drank the Captain's health and sang songs of praise. Tomorrow we shall reach Brindisi. Our belongings must be packed.

7th September. This morning we reached Brindisi. The mail-train stood ready, and we boarded it.

When the train departed, a light drizzle had begun. After eating, we sat by a corner window.

At first, on both sides, only fields of grapes. Then olive groves. The olive trees were utterly crooked and twisted, knotted and cracked, wrinkled, oddly stunted; their leaves pointed upward; where in nature's handiwork one usually sees an easy, effortless grace, in these trees the opposite prevailed. They stood utterly unlucky,

bent double with hardship; some had drooped and bowed so much that stones had to be raised to prop them up.

To the left, tilled fields; white, broken bits of stone scattered here and there in the plowed earth. To the south, the sea. Right at the sea's very edge, one small town after another could be seen. A city crowned with church-spires, gleaming white, like a neat and slender young woman, holding up the sea as her mirror by her side, laughing at her own reflection. Beyond the town, fields again. Fields of maize, fields of grapes, fields of fruit, olive groves; the fields fenced with broken stone. Here and there a well with a covering. Far off, one or two solitary small white houses.

The hour of sunset drew near. I sat with a bunch of grapes in my lap, putting one or two into my mouth now and then. Never before had I eaten such sweet, juicy, fragrant grapes. Seeing that Italian young woman with the colored kerchief tied round her head, I recalled the image of a newly-married couple from our Bengal. It occurred to me that Italian women are like the clusters of grapes here—each a stem full of soft, rounded beauty, brimming with the sap of youth—and, like those very grapes, the color of their faces—not overly pale.

Now we are traveling along a high sea-coast. Right below our deck, on the right side, is the sea. Broken, sloping land descends into the water. Four or five sail-covered boats are hauled up on the shore. Along the lower road, people ride donkeys. A few cows graze along the seashore—what they eat, they alone know; sometimes there is only something like dry stubble.

At night we sat down to dinner in the train's dining car, when suddenly the train came to a halt at a station. A crowd of men and women pressed against the platform, watching our meal with especial curiosity. Amid them, in the gaslight, one or two pretty faces could be glimpsed, which somewhat distracted our attention from our plates. As the train pulled away, our fellow travelers waved many hats and handkerchiefs, sent many kissing gestures, and raised many loud cheers toward them; and they too responded with nods of their heads in salute.

8th September. Yesterday we came through the flat, charmless coastal lands of the Adriatic; today the train runs through crop-rich, verdant country. All around, fields

of grapes, olives, maize, and mulberry. The grapevines seen yesterday were like small clusters. Today I see, in the fields, tall wooden stakes planted, over which the fruit-laden grapevines are trained to climb.

Gradually mountains came into view. The mountains were thorny with vineyards from top to bottom, and here and there a settlement.

Beside the railway line, at the edge of a vineyard, stood a small cottage; holding one door of it with one hand, and her waist with the other, an Italian young woman watched, with amused, dark eyes, the progress of our train. Not far off, a girl held the rope of a sharp-horned, huge ox by its neck and led it about grazing, unconcerned. This reminded me of a picture of a newly-wed couple from our own Bengal country. A great, huge, cummerbund-wearing graduate bull, and holding its rope, a small girl of thirteen or fourteen, in her wedding sari, leads the beast about most obediently, glancing now and then with wide eyes at her lord and master.

We arrived at Turin station. One is amazed to see the extraordinary pomp of even the minor police here. Great crested hats, abundant fringe, long swords—every constable seems fit to be the crown prince of the emperor.

To the left, the snow-lined, deep-blue mountain range. To the right, a dense, shadow-drenched forest. Wherever a slight break in the forest occurs, there some new and wondrous scene of cultivated field, tree-line, and mountain opens up. On the mountain-tops, old fortress ruins, and at the foothills, small villages here and there. As we advance, the forest-mountains grow ever denser. The villages that appear now and then are not so proud, bright, fresh, and tidy; they seem somewhat faded, poor, secluded; a half-broken church spire is all that shows; but there is no tall, smoke-belching, roaring factory chimney.

Gradually we ascend the mountains bit by bit. The mountain road winds serpentine; on the sloping mountainside, cultivated fields rise tier upon tier like steps. A mountain stream, carrying its clear, foamy waters, tumbles down through the narrow rocky path.

Light was brought into the carriage. We were now about to enter the famous long railway tunnel of Mont Cenis. It took nearly half an hour to pass through the chasm.

Now, France. To the right, a river flows foaming along. Like the French people themselves—swift, restless, laughter-loving, quick of tongue.

At the entrance to France, an official came once to the carriage to ask whether we had anything liable for duty. We said, no. One of our elderly fellow-travelers, an Englishman, said, "I don't parlez-vous francaise."

That stream still flows on our right side. On its eastern bank stands a mountain bearing the "Fahr" forest. The restless waterfall, winding and foaming, dances and roars, pushing at the rocks with its entire body, racing alongside the train. Now and then an iron bridge attempts, with its fist, to measure its slender waist. In one place the waters are very narrow; the tall trees lining both banks, entwining branch with branch, try in vain to imprison the wild current within an inner chamber. From above, a waterfall comes and mingles with that stream. All along the eastern bank a mountain path runs level with the stream, winding along with it. At one point we lost sight of our companion-stream; suddenly it went from right to left and vanished into some unknown narrow rocky path.

Amid the green, grass-covered mountain range, here and there a mountain, bare, showing its skeleton of rock lined with a thousand streaks, stands naked; only here and there some patch of forest still covers it. It is as though some giant, in a fierce battle, has torn away much of its green skin, leaving the marks of a thousand fierce claws.

Then suddenly our former companion appeared to the right for a moment, then went off to the left. Now to the south, now to the left, now hidden from view. Perhaps, going along, from behind some mountain's shelter, it will suddenly, with a burst of laughter and clapping hands, show itself again unexpectedly.

The olive groves and vineyard-clusters had greatly diminished. Fields of various crops, and rows of tall, straight poplar trees. Maize, tobacco, various vegetables. It seemed nothing but garden after garden. In the midst of this hard mountain

country, man has for long, with much labor, tamed nature and stripped it of its wildness. Upon every patch of land, man's effort shows. It is no wonder that the people of this country should love their own land. They have made their land their own through their care. Here, between nature and man, there has long been an understanding; a gradual exchange has continued between the two, bound in mutual familiarity and close relation. On one side, vast nature stands aloof; on the other, ever-vigilant humanity lies watchful—not that indifference which one sees in Europe. This beautiful land of theirs is the very object of their supreme devotion; they cherish it constantly with great affection. If they will not give their lives for it, then for what will they give them! Who can bear that anyone should lay the slightest hand upon this beloved of theirs? We, on the other hand, dwell in the jungle; we live beside broken roads and stagnant, weedy ponds. We bring home two handfuls of rice from the field, our women gather greens in the folds of their saris, our boys wade into the mud to catch shrimp, pluck a few tamarinds from the trees in the courtyard, then gather some dry firewood and manage, somehow, one or two meals a day; when malaria comes and shakes our long-suffering, skeletal frames, we lie wrapped in a blanket in the sun; in the rainy season, when cholera rises from the greenish, shrunken pools of stagnant water and attacks our homes, we worship the goddess of cholera and, gazing with hollow, hopeless eyes toward Fate, begin to die in droves. Have we ever truly possessed our land, or even tried to? We show such indifference toward this world that we lie about here and there like unwilling travelers, and, as quickly as we can, hasten through twenty or twenty-five years before arriving finally in the next world.

But what a magnificent picture this is! In the lap of the mountains, along the riverbanks, on the shores of lakes—rows of woodland bordered by poplar and willow. Nature, thornless, secure, healthy, and abundant with fruit and grain, receives at every instant the love of man, and loves man doubly in return. This, surely, is the fitting dwelling-place for a creature such as man. If man's love and man's power cannot render his surroundings ordered, beautiful, and radiant, then what difference is there between man and the beast that dwells in tree-hollows and cave-mouths in the forest?

8th September [continued]. Along the way, there was a proposal that we halt at Paris. But this train of ours does not go to Paris—it passes by a little way off. A telegram was sent to have a special train ready at a station near Paris.

At two o'clock at night we were awakened. We had to change trains. Tying up our belongings, we came out. It was bitterly cold. Not far off our carriage stood waiting. There was only an engine, one first-class car, and a brake-van. Among the passengers, we three were Indians. At three in the morning we reached the vast, deserted station of Paris. One or two well-dressed "messieurs" appeared, lanterns in hand. After much fuss, having roused the sleeping Customs House and passed its examination, we hired a carriage. By then Paris, all her gates shut, lay silent, wrapped in slumber, her rows of lamps burning along the still royal roads. We entered our bedchamber at the Hotel Terminus. Neat, clean, electrically-lit, adorned with crystal, carpeted, its walls painted, its bedroom curtained with blue drapes; the bed, soft and white as bird's plumage.

While changing our clothes and preparing for sleep, it was discovered that among our belongings was another man's overcoat and traveling clothes. None of the three of us knew one another's belongings well; and so whatever unfamiliar garment came to hand, one or another of us had confidently and unquestioningly gathered it up. Finally, when each had separated his own things, the surplus item that remained had no opportunity of being returned to its former owner. The overcoat had been brought from the train; its owner, poor fellow, was at that moment sunk in deep and trusting sleep. By this time the carriage had drawn near the seaside channel town. Who the man was, and where in the whole of the British realm he might be found, we had no idea whatsoever. Meanwhile his long coat hung upon our sinful shoulders—the path to atonement closed. It occurred to me that this coat, too, must belong to that man whose blanket I had once stolen. That poor fellow was old, chilled, lame with rheumatism, an Anglo-Indian police superintendent. Through his work with the police, his faith in human character must already have grown thin; and later, when tomorrow at dawn, crossing the English Channel, the sharp cold wind should set his lost coat's long-suffering, aged body trembling, his faith in the goodness of mankind would tremble along with it.

9th September. This morning, while changing our clothes for the second time, it was discovered that a portmanteau belonging to my friend was missing.

Having informed the police, we three set out on foot in the morning through the streets of Paris. Through great boulevards, shops, gardens, palaces, statues, fountains, crowds of people, and carriages, we wandered a long while and finally sat down at a corner table of a vast crystal hall belonging to a restaurant, ate a light meal, and, having paid a considerable sum, went to see the Eiffel Tower. This iron tower stands on its four feet in the middle of a garden. Riding up in a mechanical lift, we ascended to the fourth floor of the tower and, looking below, saw the whole of Paris spread out like a great map.

Needless to say, one cannot in a single day so quickly lick the outer surface of things with the eye and taste the essence of Paris. It is like the women of a wealthy household, confined within their palanquins, going to bathe in the Ganges—one gets only what one dip near the very edge can afford. Panting is all one gains. Returning to the hotel, we found that, with the aid of the police, my friend's portmanteau had been recovered, but we were still utterly at a loss regarding that overcoat we had taken.

10th September. We set off for London. Arriving in the evening, we searched one or two hotels only to find no vacancy. At last we took refuge in the home of a respectable family.

11th September. In the morning we set out in search of our old friends.

First we went and knocked at the door of the house in London I knew best. The maid who opened the door was unknown to me. I asked her whether my friend was at home. She said he did not live in this house. I asked, where does he live then? She said, I don't know, please come in and sit, I'll go and ask. We went into the room where we used to dine before, and found everything changed—there, upon the table, lay newspapers and books—that room had now become a waiting-room for guests. After a little while the maid brought a card with an address written on it. My friend now lived somewhere outside London, in an unfamiliar place. With disappointed hearts, we left that once-familiar house.

Our carriage stopped before the house of Miss S—. Going in, we found her sitting in a lonely room, tending to a sick puppy. A few customary courtesies were exchanged regarding the climate, mutual health, and the changes wrought by time.

Leaving there, we tried to return home relying upon the underground steam-railway that runs beneath London. But in the end we saw that not all efforts succeed easily in this world. We two brothers were sitting quite contentedly in the train, when suddenly, arriving at a distant station called Hammersmith, our trusting minds grew uneasy. Asking someone, he made it plain that our destination did not lie in the direction this train was going. We had to go back three or four stations and change trains again. This was done. Finally, alighting at our destination station and going out onto the street, we could not find our lodgings. After much searching, at half-past three in the afternoon, we returned home and had a cold tiffin. We gained this much self-knowledge, that we two brothers are not fit for the work of geographical discovery like Livingstone or Stanley; if we wish to earn imperishable fame in this world, we must certainly turn our attention to something else.

12th September. Our friend has one virtue: however much he may indulge in flights of fancy, he never loses his way. So we have made him our guide through London. Wherever we go, we drag him along with us, and wherever he goes, we refuse on any account to let go of his company. But there is one fear: such indissoluble friendship as ours is not always esteemed in this world. Alas! In this life there is a thorn amid the flower, a blemish upon the moon, and separation from friends—but thank heavens, there is also good fortune!

15th September. I went to see a performance of an opera called "Gondoliers" at the Savoy Theatre. Amid the light, music, beauty of color-arrangement, the scenery, the dance, the laughter and jest, it felt as though I stood in some realm of imagination. At one point in the middle, many dancers, male and female, joined together in dance; I felt as though suddenly, on some occasion, a mad wave of youth's breeze had risen, sweeping the whole world of men and women into an upheaval—and in it, light and color, music, and the bright laughter of exuberant eyes struck out on every side in a thousand postures.

16th September. Today my host's unmarried daughter played on the piano a number of old, previously-heard tunes; hearing them, I began to think of my home. That sun-drenched morning of India, the open window, the unbroken sky, and that dreamlike, familiar music from the piano.

17th September. That unfortunate coat we have been carrying about and dragging along—it has, via the India Office, written us a letter. On the subject of our having collected its garment, the letter-writer expressed his firm conviction; he had added to it the word "mistakenly." One matter of some satisfaction is this: the blanket I had taken was not his. Had it been proved by mistake, twice over, that someone's warm clothing had been taken, it would have been somewhat hard to establish the mistake as genuine.

19th September. Here, walking out into the street brings pleasure. A beautiful face will surely meet the eye. If the devoted patriot can forgive me, I shall confess: upon skin as soft and fair as fresh butter, a thin, ruddy pair of lips, a well-formed nose, and clear blue eyes fringed with long lashes—seeing such things, the sorrows of exile fall away. Well-wishers will be alarmed and troubled, dear friends of my own age will mock me, but I must confess this: a beautiful face looks beautiful to me. To be beautiful, and to smile sweetly, seems to me one of humanity's most wondrous powers. But sadly, by my ill fortune, I receive this smile in somewhat excessive measure. Often, upon the royal road, the moment I come face to face with some blue-eyed lady traveler, she looks at my face and cannot restrain her laughter. At such times I long to call out to her and say: "Beautiful lady, I do love laughter, true, but not quite this much. Besides, however sweet a smile touched with mockery may be, it ought to have some rational cause; for man is not merely beautiful—man is also a rational creature. O blue-eyed one, I do not, like an Englishman, wear an uncivilized, ill-fitting coat and an absurdly tall chimney-pot hat—then at what do you laugh? Whether I am fair or foul, it would be indelicate for me to raise the question—but this much I can assert with force: the Creator did not paint my face for mockery. Yet if my color is dark, and my mustache appears somewhat long, laughter results—then I can only say that between different natures, a strange divergence of taste concerning humor is evident. What you call 'humor,' I hold, has no causal connection whatsoever with a dark complexion. I have seen it indeed—in your country, blacking one's face and staging a Negro dance is counted among

the entertainments. But to me, O golden-tressed one, this appears mere heartless barbarity."

22nd September. This evening a number of Bengali songs were sung. Two or three of the listeners present much appreciated them. I hope that was not merely verbal courtesy. But Chanakya has said—and so forth.

23rd September. These days, almost the entire day passes in shopping, going from store to store. As soon as we return home, my friend says, "Come, let's rest." Then with great ceremony we go to rest. Entering the bedroom, my friend takes refuge in bed without the slightest delay, while I sit sunk in a deep armchair alongside. Then I either read some foreign volume of poetry, or the two of us together, gazing at whatever unfathomable subjects the world contains, gradually sink into oblivion within them. These days we rest so excessively that not the slightest leisure remains for work. In the drawing-room, ladies and gentlemen engage in music and pleasant conversation; we have no time for that, we are occupied with resting. For the sake of bodily health, everyone takes a stroll for a while in the open air; even that we are deprived of, so excessively do we rest. Two o'clock strikes, the lights go out, and everyone sleeps in comfort—only we two unfortunates have no leisure to sleep, being so extremely busy with our exceedingly arduous rest.

25th September. Today I went to see a small exhibition here. I heard it was a very inexpensive and abbreviated second edition of the Paris Exhibition. Entering the picture gallery there, I saw a painting of an unclothed woman by a famous French painter named Carolus Duran. We see all the beauties of nature, but upon this ultimate beauty of the mortal world, upon this supreme masterpiece of living expression, man has himself drawn an eternal veil. Upon the moist, pure softness of this body, and upon every graceful, skillful pose, one seems to see the careful, gentle touch of infinite beauty's fingers. This is not merely beauty of body—though I cannot say that bodily beauty is so trivial or negligible even to the virtuous—but there is in this something of far greater depth. A lovable, tender, feminine nature, an immortal, beautiful human soul, dwells within, and its own divine grace is illumined throughout. From afar, as if by a flash of lightning, that inexpressible eternal mystery was, for a moment, glimpsed through the crystal window of the body.

27th September. Today I went to the Lyceum Theatre. Scott's novel "The Bride of Lammermoor" was performed in dramatic form. The famous actor Irving played the hero. His pronunciation is indistinct and his gestures strangely awkward. Yet, by some theatrical art, he can gradually establish complete mastery over the hearts of the audience.

In a box before us sat two young women. Of these, one girl's face had drawn the attention and opera-glasses of the entire audience in the theatre. A perfectly beautiful small face, of tender age, a long braid hanging down her back, without any excess of adornment in her dress. During the performance, when all the lights were extinguished save the stage lights alone, and that light, falling from the nearby stage upon half of her mirror-like face, cast a splendid picture of her illuminated, delicate features and graceful neck against the darkness—the well-wishers will again forgive me—my gaze was fixed there during the performance. But I could not manage the opera-glass. To use opera-glasses upon one another so shamelessly and without hesitation seemed to me utterly rude.

2nd October. I met a Gujarati gentleman. He had come all the way from India traveling on the ship's deck. It was then winter. He ate neither fish nor meat. He carried with him flattened rice, dried fruit, and the like, and would gather some vegetables from the ship's stores. He knew very little English. He had little warm clothing on his body. In London, there is a vegetarian restaurant here and there, where his meal was managed for sixpence. Whatever there was to see or know, he sought it all out. He met with great personages without the slightest hesitation. How the conversation proceeded is hard to say. Occasionally he would come back from discussing religion with Cardinal Manning. In the meantime, during the Exhibition, he had spent two months in Paris and now intended, at leisure, to go to America. I had known of him back in India. He had studied Bengali and translated many good Bengali books into Gujarati. He has neither wife, son, nor family. Traveling, learning, and cultivating the progress of his native literature are his sole occupations. The man is utterly gentle, withered, diminutive, occupying an extremely small space in the world. Seeing him, I felt a sense of wonder.

6th October. The time of our sojourn has not yet expired, but I find I can no longer endure it here. I am ashamed to say it, but I am still not enjoying myself. This is not a matter for pride but for shame—it is a fault in my own nature.

When I search for the reason, it seems to me that the image of Europe which had become vivid in our minds was formed by reading its literature and history. That was an ideal Europe. Without entering into its very heart, there is no way of witnessing it directly. From here, for three months, six months, or even six years, we can only see the hands and feet, so to speak, of European civilization moving about. Great buildings, great factories, our own places of interest; people come and go, moving back and forth, quite a spectacle. However strange or wondrous it may be, it wearies the observer; the excitement of mere astonishment cannot fill the heart—rather, it keeps continually distracting the mind.

At last this thought comes to mind—very well, my good friend, I grant you are a great city, a great country, your power and splendor without limit. There is no need for further proof. Now if only I could go home, I should be saved. There I know everyone, I understand everyone; there, piercing through all the outer trappings, I easily attain the taste of humanity. I can enjoy easily, think easily, love easily. If only I could go, unhindered, to where the real man dwells, then even in a foreign land, seeing my own countryman, this place would no longer feel like exile. But here, arriving, I see only the Englishman, only the foreigner; whatever is new in their manners and customs alone strikes the eye continually, while whatever is eternally old remains hidden; hence with these people acquaintance continues, but no true intimacy is ever formed.

Here I recall a fable from the fable-book—

A clever jackal once invited a wise stork to dinner. The stork, arriving at the gathering, saw great big platters filled with sweet, delicious things. After the first pleasantries, the jackal said, "Friend, let us begin." Saying which, he at once began lapping unabashedly. The stork, thrust his long beak repeatedly into the dish, but could get nothing out of it at all. At last, desisting from his effort, he sat with natural, unshaken dignity meditating at the edge of a lake, as it were. The jackal, I think, kept glancing sideways now and then, saying, "Friend, you're not eating. This

has been nothing but a false trouble to you. The arrangement was not fitting for you." The stork, I believe, replied with a shake of his head, "Ah, what are you saying. The cooking has been most excellent. But my bodily state today is such that I feel no hunger." The next day, at the stork's invitation, the jackal went and saw various delicious items arranged in tall jars. Seeing them made him greedy, but his mouth could not enter into them at all. The stork promptly began his meal, working his long beak. The jackal, from outside, licking the vessels and tasting one or two scattered scraps of food, went home in utter hunger.

The condition of the foreigner at a national feast is just the same. The food is equally delicious to both, but the vessel differs. If the Englishman is the jackal, then upon his broad, white silver platter, the exposed rice-pudding we can only view with our eyes and must return hungry; and if we are the ascetic stork, then the jackal cannot even properly see what lies within our deep stone vessel—he must return after only a faint sniff from a distance.

Every nation's past history and outward manners are advantageous to itself, but an obstacle to other nations. For this reason, though English society is, outwardly, open to public gaze, we can taste only a drop or two at the very tip of our tongue, and cannot satisfy our hunger. A universal feast is possible only in the field of literature. There, whoever has a long beak is not deprived, and whoever has a greedy tongue is also satisfied.

Whether the reason be generally moving to the heart or not, I have grown weary of saying "how do you do" to the people here, walking about with mouth agape touring the streets and wharves, watching theatre, wandering shops, ascertaining the facts of factories—even of seeing beautiful faces.

Therefore I have decided: now I shall return home.

7th October. A cabin was secured on the ship "Thames." The day after tomorrow the ship will sail.

9th October. We boarded the ship. This time I am alone. My companions remain in England. Going to my designated cabin, I found it to be a place for four persons;

and one man's belongings lay heaped up in a corner. Written attached to the name on the box and trunk was "Bengal Civil Service." Needless to say, seeing this inscription did not fill my heart with boundless joy at the thought of the future roommate to come. I thought that some extremely tough, dried-up, wizened, exceedingly irritable, seasoned Anglo-Indian had been put in the same cabin with me. Sitting with my chin in my hand, thinking this, a young, handsome English youth of tender years entered the room and greeted me with a smiling "Good morning"—in an instant all my fears vanished. He had just passed his examinations and was setting out for India. His body still retained wholly intact the natural warm courtesy characteristic of the Englishman raised in England.

10th October. A beautiful morning. The sea calm. The sky clear. The sun had risen. Through the morning mist we could faintly make out, from our right, traces of the shore. Gradually the mist's veil lifted, and the mountainous coast of the Isle of Wight, and the town of Ventnor, gradually emerged into view.

This ship is very crowded. There is no possibility of pulling a chair to some quiet corner and writing a little; so whatever comes before my eyes, I gaze at that.

Our countrymen often make fun of English women's eyes, comparing them to a cat's. But it is invariably seen that when they themselves come again to England, they no longer think so much of their homeland's doe-eyes. As long as I am far away, I feel no such trouble, but the moment I enter the region of sight, the gaze of an English beauty pierces the veil of habit and enters within. English beautiful eyes are clear as the cloudless blue sky, bright as diamonds, and shaded by dense lashes—there is no shadow of languor in them. I know such an Indian son who is overwhelmed even by blue eyes and cannot in any way overlook doe-eyes. Black tresses too are a bondage for such a fool, and golden curls are no small snare either.

Regarding music too, it is seen that whereas formerly one derived amusement by mocking English music, now, paying it attention, one derives even greater pleasure than that. Now, through practice, I have gained just enough taste for European music to understand that, if one cultivates it, complete enjoyment can be derived from European music. Needless to say at length that I love our own country's music.

Yet there is no doubt whatever that there exists a complete difference of nature between the two.

13th October. A lady told a story—that on a former sea voyage, she used to inflict harsh mockery and torment upon the Captain or some male passengers—one instance being that of sticking pins into deck-chairs. Hearing this, I did not find it particularly amusing, nor did any great desire arise in me to be included among those specially-favored gentlemen. It is seen that here, women can practice considerable rudeness toward men. Just as mischief from children is often felt as an amusing sport, so too do men display similarly affectionate indifference toward women's tyranny, and often even enjoy it. Delivering harsh criticism to men's faces is something of a privilege among women. Through that swift sharpness, they wound man's pride of superiority and feel a sense of glory. Due to social custom and various inevitable causes, being subordinate to men in many matters, women often find pleasure in transgressing against men in matters of worldliness and etiquette. In the field of action, where there is no competition, it is not unpleasant to see the weak somewhat wild and the strong entirely tolerant. This is, for the man proud of his strength, a form of education. Woman's weakness has gained strength only through man's will; therefore the man who possesses true manliness bears woman's mischief without rebellion and with joy, and in that very tolerance, his manliness is further cultivated. In those countries where the men are cowardly, it is precisely they who shamelessly proclaim the worship of men, the lifelong service of men, as woman's highest religion; in that very country one sees the husband walking briskly ahead empty-handed while the wife carries the burden and follows behind, the husband's party traveling first-class while a number of disheveled, veiled wives are packed into the lowest class; in that very country one sees that in eating, in recreation, in behavior—in every matter—pleasure and comfort belong to men alone, leftovers and excess to women alone, and over this shameless cowards boast without hesitation, and regard the slightest deviation from it as a matter of great ridicule. That constant, careful attention to every kind of comfort and relief from suffering for naturally weak, delicate women ought to be an inherent virtue of the physically strong—this they cannot even imagine; they know only this much: that a woman, timid of punishment and full of affection, will anoint their bodies with oil, will supply food to their mouths, will fan their heated bodies, will arrange for their idle amusements, will not let their feet touch muddy paths

without shoes, will not fail to give them warm clothes in winter nor an umbrella in the sun, will eat less when hungry, will remain behind the veil during amusements, and will herself remain deprived of the light, joy, beauty, and health that exist within this vast, open nature. Selfishness exists everywhere in the world, but shameless, unhesitating selfishness exists only in that country where men are not wholly men.

Women serve men out of their own affectionate warm-heartedness, and men serve women out of their own generous tenderness toward the weak; where women do not receive that service, but only give it, there they are dishonored, and that country too is bereft of fortune.

But the matter under discussion was women's mischievousness. Just as a rose must necessarily have its thorn, so, where there is no distinction between husband and wife, women too must have that same sharpness; the habit of wounding to the quick with sharp words is often useful to the weak.

Are our roses entirely thornless? But I shall refrain from further discussion on that point.

14th October. We reached Gibraltar. It was raining torrentially at Musselera.

Today, at the dinner table, a fat-fingered, bushy-mustached, huge white man of ruddy complexion was telling his beautiful neighbor a story about an Indian punkah-puller. The beauty said with slight complaint in her nasal voice—punkah-pullers fall asleep at night while pulling the fan. The white man said his sole remedy was a kick or a stick. The discussion continued in this vein about fan-pulling. Suddenly a hot spike, as it were, pierced my heart. Those who converse thus, husband and wife, between themselves—that they should one day, without remorse, kick a poor weak human wretch into the abyss of existence—what wonder is there in that? Am I not too of that same dishonored race? With what shame, with what pleasure, do I sit at this same table with these people and eat, and engage together in table-talk! All the anger of my body rose up to my throat, but for all my effort, not a single word could reach that point. Especially since that English language of theirs was so utterly foreign to me—the moment my mind grew

a little agitated, I could not manage that language properly. Then, from all around my head, a whole kingdom's worth of Bengali words would come crowding, buzzing like disturbed bees, pressing against the door of my mouth. I thought, getting so excited will not do; let me cool down a little and gather two or three grammatically correct English phrases in my mind. If I am to quarrel, at least the language should be good.

Then, in my mind, I began to compose the following thought in English:

The matter is quite right, sir; punkah-pullers, if they doze off now and then at night, cause great inconvenience. Bearing a body means one must endure certain such things, and for that very reason Christian tolerance is needed. And it is at such times that one learns who is gentle and who is not.

That a man who is utterly incapable of retaliating against your blow should be kicked without hesitation is the height of cowardice; worse than incivility.

That our race is weaker than yours is a natural fact—we cannot deny that. Your bodily strength is far greater—you are truly mighty wrestlers.

But is that reason enough for such pride, that mankind should be given a lower seat than you?

You will say—why, do we have no other superiority?

Perhaps there may be. But when you plant a kick upon the hungry, half-starved belly of a bone-weary poor man, and on that subject exchange pleasantries with ladies, and the delicate ladies feel no particular pang at it, then in no way can you be reckoned superior.

Let us see what fault this poor wretch has committed. He went out at dawn on an empty stomach, and has toiled the whole day. In hope of earning two extra pennies, this unfortunate man has sold you his night's rest for a few annas. It is precisely because he is so extremely poor that he engages in this trade—not to cheat the great sahib has he conspired.

That this man, while pulling the fan at night, sometimes falls asleep—this fault he must be granted to have.

But I think this is the result of some primal sin of mankind. Sitting like a machine, continually pulling a fan, sleep will surely come to the eyes of any son of Adam. The sahib may test this himself once.

If work cannot be got from one servant, a second servant may be kept, but the coward who kicks him dishonors himself, because at that very moment he becomes liable to a counter-kick—only there is no one present at hand to administer it, that is the sole difference.

Whenever you get the chance, you tell us that since such social evils as child marriage prevail among you, you are not fit to receive any independent rights within the machinery of government.

But it is truer to say this: that race which, seeing itself safe, becomes "terias"—that is, what you call "bully"—there is no other Bengali equivalent—toward the weak; whose nature it is to display unpleasant, uncivilized behavior, who assume a humble demeanor only where their self-interest lies—such a race is not fit for any foreign rule.

Fitness, of course, is of two kinds—by virtue and by capability. There are certain fields where sheer efficiency alone is not proof of fitness. Where there is bodily strength, many tasks can indeed be carried out by force; but the true right to carry out particular tasks is gained only through the particular moral qualities suited to those tasks.

But it cannot be said that because the rule of virtue is not immediately visible, the kingdom of virtue is therefore anarchic. These petty cruelties and this daily arrogance are accumulating day by day, and one day they will break upon your own heads.

Even if we bear all these insults silently, or with some slight murmur, even if we have no power whatsoever of retaliation, still no good will come to you.

For unchecked power attacks the very root of national character. The pride of independence upon which your national glory is founded is, bit by bit, destroying the purity of that very love of independence. That is why one hears from Englishmen living in England that the Anglo-Indian Englishman is an altogether distinct race. Not merely a diseased liver is the sole cause of this; man has organs subtler even than the liver, and these too become corrupted.

But no one will be frightened by this dreadful prospect of mine. He whose door has no bolt sits down, out of necessity, to preach righteous doctrine virtuously to the thief; as though it were for the thief's own good in the afterlife that he cannot sleep at night.

Kick for kick—that is how justice is most swiftly obtained. We know this ancient truth, but the Creator has bestowed strength upon our whole body and mind only at the very tip of the tongue. So, O white man, hear a little moral instruction.

It is said that the stomach-organ of the Indian is somewhat defective, which is why they cannot even bear the weight of their English master's mere "paternal treatment" upon their belly. But how the Englishman's own spleen fares has, so far, never been actually tested.

But that is not the point at issue; that we die from ruptured spleens is written on our foreheads. But that you should wish to wave the whole matter away so lightly—by that you insult our entire nation. By that, it is somehow implied that you do not consider us human at all. That two or four of us should chance to be annihilated at your feet is the fault of our spleen. Had the spleen been sound, we would have taken the kick, survived, and had the opportunity to take another kick a second time.

Yet, be that as it may, one need say so much only to one who feels no compunction about insulting the helpless while claiming the name of gentleman; especially when

the person who bears the insult, even though weak, cannot help but feel contempt in his heart.

But there is one thing I cannot quite understand: in England you have so many philanthropic ladies, who, forming societies and committees, show compassion from afar even toward entirely unrelated or distantly related branches of humanity. Do not a sufficient number of ladies come from that English household to this unfortunate country, who might spend some part of that excessive tender-heartedness in the field where it is due, and thereby lighten their feelings somewhat? Rather, I have seen instances of compassion among the men. But your women here only dance and sing, marry when opportunity arises, and, in the course of conversation, wrinkle the delicate tip of their shapely noses to express contempt for our countrymen. I do not know for what purpose the Creator did not make us Indians properly suited to the nervous systems of your ladies.

However that may be, however good a soliloquy may be, it never reaches the ears of the audience except upon the stage. Besides, I do not believe that the things which arose in my resentful mind would have touched the heart of this mustached wrestler in the least. Meanwhile, by the time my wit had sharpened, the thief had fled—they had left the earlier subject and gone on to something else. In vexation of spirit, I could only go on cursing myself.

15th October. I have made friends with an Englishman on the ship. The fellow seems good. Young, speaks openly, does not mix much with others, has become quite close with me very quickly. In my judgment, that last trait is the noblest virtue of all.

There are three Australian young ladies on this ship—I have made their acquaintance too. Quite simple, straightforward people, with no excessive airs about them. My new friend, by way of praising them, says, "They are not at all smart." Indeed, one sees that many young English women are decidedly "smart"—much play of eye and face, much clever talk, much sharp laughter, much witty repartee—pleasing to some, perhaps, but decidedly wearisome for a peace-loving, ordinary person like myself.

16th October. Today two small theatrical performances took place on the ship. Among the troupe, one actress was as beautiful to look at as she was skilled in her acting.

Tonight, very late, standing alone in solitude, holding the ship's rail and gazing absently at the sea, I began humming a native raga to myself. Then I realized that after so many days of singing English songs, something inside me had felt unsatisfied. Suddenly this Bengali melody felt like water to a thirsty man. I saw that the way that melody spread out over the darkened sea, no other melody, I think, could ever achieve such an effect. To me, the principal distinction between our music and English music lies in this: that English music is the music of the human world, while our music is the vast, boundless, unutterable, profoundly melancholy music of desolate, silent nature. In great ragas such as Kanada and Todi, the grandeur and the sorrow they contain seem to belong to no particular individual—they seem to belong to this companionless universe, on the border of the unfathomable infinite.

17th October. Toward evening the ship reached the island of Malta. A hard, fortress-walled, treeless town crowded with buildings. It seems as though a part of this green earth has, through some disease, become hard and rigid. From a distance, one has no wish to land. Finally, at my new friend's request, we went ashore together. From the seashore, a long flight of steps rose through the tunnel-path like a long pier; climbing its steps, we ascended into the town. Several guide-touts pressed close around us. My friend, with much effort, drove them off. But one of them would not leave our company at all. My friend scolded him repeatedly, saying, "I don't want you, I won't give you a single paisa." Still he clung to us until seven in the evening. Then, when he was decisively driven off, he went away with a downcast face. I felt some desire to give him something, but I had nothing with me but gold coin. My friend said, the man is doubtless poor, but no Englishman would have behaved so. In fact, man can forgive even grave faults in someone familiar, but cannot bear even a trivial fault in someone unfamiliar.

Seeing the town of Malta, one thinks of an ill-formed, distorted European city. The narrow, stone-paved streets rise at one point and descend at another. Everything is foul-smelling, crowded, and dirty. We went to a hotel at night and ate. We paid

a great deal, but the food was wretched. After dinner, having heard band music at a paved square in the town, we returned to the ship at ten at night. On the way back, the boatman tried to extract from us somewhat more than the fair fare. My friend was greatly angered at their dishonest behavior. This reminded us that, the very first day we two brothers had gone out in a carriage in London, the coachman had charged us twelve shillings for a fare that should have been five. That man was not so much at fault—the fault was ours. There must have been something in the faces of us two brothers that could suddenly tempt even an honest man to overcharge. However that may be, seeing my friend's excessive anger at the dishonest nature of the Maltese, I felt it my duty to record this incident.

18th October. Today at the dinner table, several people were recounting their own exploits regarding "smuggling." Deceiving the government to escape customs duty through false pretense is considered neither shameful nor disgraceful. Yet it would be wrong to say that they consider falsehood and deception themselves blameless. Man is such a strange creature! If a barrister takes his full fee from his client and does not do the work, and thereby ruins that unfortunate man utterly, he still feels not the slightest shame; but if that same client pays him two pennies less than his due, the disgust-mixed rage that arises in the counsel's mind is called, in English, "indignation!"

19th October. This morning, when the ship reached Brindisi, there was a heavy downpour of rain. In this rain, a group of singers and musicians, with harps, violins, and mandolins, holding umbrellas over their heads, stood on the road to the harbor before the ship and struck up their music.

When the rain stopped, I went out with my friend into Brindisi. Leaving the town, we reached an open spot. The sky was overcast, the mountain road had dried up, only in the ditches on both sides water still stood here and there. Beside the road, up in a tree, two barefoot Italian boys were plucking figs; they gestured to us, asking, will you eat some? We said, no. A little later we saw them arrive with a broken olive branch bearing fruit. They asked, will you eat olives? We declined. Then, gesturing for tobacco, they got a little from my friend. Smoking as they went, the two of them walked along with us continuously. We did not know each other's language—both sides carried on a vigorous exchange of gestures and expressions.

The deserted road gradually rose, running continuously through fields of grain. Only here and there a small house, where, near the window, figs had been laid out to dry. In one or two places, small branch-paths curved off to one side and descended, disappearing somewhere below.

On our way back we entered a cemetery. The graves here were of a new kind. Over most of the graves a small house had been built. That house, decorated with curtains, pictures, colored objects in various ways, seemed like a plaything-house of death—there was something childlike in it, as if Death itself were not being given its proper due.

At one spot in the cemetery we descended by stairs into an underground room. There, thousands upon thousands of skulls were arranged in orderly heaps. At once I recalled the shape of that skeleton which day and night walks about with us, on seeing those skulls. Life and beauty have drawn a painted curtain over this boundless world of the living—if some cruel god should one day suddenly lift that graceful, silken veil from the whole of mortal society, then all at once one would see that, hidden behind ruddy, parted lips, rows of dry, white teeth have been laughing in mockery at the whole world all along. An old subject! An old tale! Moralist philosophers have preached much dread using this image of the skull, but gazing at it for a long while, I felt no fear at all. Only this thought came to me: just as some hot vapor escapes from the fissured waters of a hot spring, so too, from these countless skulls, from these round bubbles of bone, the countless worries, desires, sleeplessness, and headaches of countless ages of the world have found release. And along with this it occurred to me too that in this world many doctors, having discovered many cures for baldness, cry themselves hoarse advertising them, but this vast row of hairless skulls remains utterly indifferent to it, and however much the hair-restorers advertise, this countless assembly of skulls takes not the slightest notice.

However that may be, at present, within the confines of my own skull, the hope of letters from home stirs restlessly. If I receive them, then within this skull a little joy will arise; and if I do not, then within this bony casket an affair called sorrow will arise—precisely resembling what is called suffering.

23rd October. We are passing through the Suez Canal. The ship's motion is very slow.

A bright, hot day. I am filled with a kind of sweet languor. All trace of Europe has vanished completely. Our own sun-scorched, weary, poor India; our own remote, unfamiliar, secluded, river-murmuring, shade-drenched Bengal at the far edge of the world; my own idle, home-loving childhood, my imagination-absorbed youth, the memory of an inactive, ambitionless, contemplation-loving life—all rise up before my eyes now, in this sunlight, in this hot windswept haze, like a distant mirage.

I was reading a novel up on deck. Once I got up and looked, and saw, on both sides, grey sandy shores—along the edge of the water, here and there a little tamarisk and half-dried grass had grown. Through the sandy desert on our right side, a caravan of Arabs, in a row, moved along carrying loaded camels. Against the fierce sunlight and the grey desert, their blue clothing and white turbans stood out sharply. One could see some, sitting with legs stretched out lazily in the shade of a sand-hollow; some saying their prayers; some pulling and tugging at an unwilling camel by its nose-rope. All together it seemed like a fragment of a poem depicting the pale, sun-scorched Arabian desert.

24th October. Our ship's Miss—when I look at her, I think of the ruins of a theatre. There, performances too have ceased, and even sitting is uncomfortable. The lady is very sharp-tongued—no doubt in her youth that sharpness was brilliant. Though even now there is banter on her lips, and a playfulness like that of a kitten just born, still no young man seeks an excuse to exchange two words with her, calls her to dance, or serves her with care at meal-times. There is no grace in her liveliness, and none of that affectionate, serene, profound maternal quality that shines forth on a mature woman's face is visible in her at all.

25th October. This morning, finding the bathroom occupied, I stood waiting before the door. A little later, the second person—sparse-haired and of ample girth—appeared, towel and sponge in hand. As soon as the room was vacated, that Englishman, with an impassive face, went past me, who had arrived first, and entered the room. At first I thought of pushing him aside and forcing my way in,

but a physical struggle seemed too base and crude, and did not come to me naturally. So, giving up my claim, I stood aside in amazement and thought—humility may be a very fine virtue, but even after nineteen centuries of Christian era, it seems ill-suited to this world, and looks rather too much like cowardice. In this instance, entering the bathroom did not require so much struggle as it did in righteous indignation. But the prospect of a clash, first thing in the morning, with a fleshy, tawny-eyed, rude fellow felt uncomfortable. Self-interest triumphs—not because of strength, but because of excessive, unattractive fleshiness.

26th October. Let me describe a day on the ship.

In the morning the deck has been washed, and is still wet. On both sides, deck-chairs lie piled up in disorder upon one another. Men in nightclothes, bare-footed, some with friends, some alone, pace briskly along the middle path. Gradually, as eight strikes and the ladies begin to come up one by one, these sparsely-dressed men disappear one after another.

There is a great crush before the bathroom door. Only three bathrooms; we are many claimants for the door. Towel and sponge in hand, we stand waiting for the door to open. No one may occupy the bathroom for more than ten minutes.

After bathing and dressing, going up, one sees that on the deck a promenading crowd of men and women, taking in the morning air, has gathered. Frequently lifting hats to the ladies, and exchanging morning greetings with head-nodding acquaintances, opinions are exchanged regarding the relative degree of the summer heat.

Nine o'clock strikes. Breakfast is ready. The hungry men and women descend the stairway into the dining hall. Not a soul remains on deck—only rows of empty chairs, facing upward, awaiting their masters.

The dining hall is a grand room. In the middle, two rows of long tables; and on both sides, sections of smaller tables. We, on the southern side, occupy one small table and, seven souls, satisfy our hunger there three times a day. Meat, bread, fruit,

sweets, wine, and laughing jest and chatter fill this not-too-lofty, spacious hall from corner to corner.

After the meal, going up, each seeks out his own chair and is busy placing it in its proper spot. Chairs are hard to find.

While washing the deck, no one keeps track of whose chair has been thrown where.

Then, wherever there is a bit of a corner, wherever there is a bit of a breeze, wherever the sun's heat is a bit less, wherever one is accustomed to sit—pushing and pulling, squeezing past this way and that, if one can manage to place one's chair there, one is content for the whole day.

One sees some chairless, pale-faced lady casting anxious glances here and there, or some distressed woman unable to distinguish her own chair from this forest of chairs and place it where she wishes—then the men, engaging in the mission of aiding damsels, undertake the task of chair-rescue and earn well-deserved and sweet thanks.

Then, whoever occupies his chair, sits down. The smokers, either in the smoking-room or gathered at the stern of the deck, smoke contentedly. The women, in various states of undress, some read novels, some sew, and now and again one or two young men sit beside them for a moment, humming in their ear like bees, then go away again.

As soon as the meal has been slightly digested, a game of quoits begins among one group. Two buckets are placed some ten feet apart from each other. Two teams, men and women, taking opposing sides, alternately try, from their own positions, to throw a number of rope-rings, like a potter's wheel, into the opposing bucket. Whichever side scores twenty-one first, wins. The lady players cry out sometimes in triumph, sometimes in despair, at the top of their voices. Some stand watching, some keep score, some join the game, some are absorbed in their own reading or conversation.

At one o'clock, the bell again. Meal again. After the meal, returning up above, from the weight of two layers of food and the heat of noon, languor grows exceedingly dense. The sea is calm, the sky deep blue and cloudless, a light breeze blowing. Leaning back in deck-chairs, silently reading novels, most half-closed, indolent eyes are heavy with sleep. Only one or two are playing chess, backgammon, or draughts, and one or two restless, industrious young men are occupied all day with the game of quoits. Some lady, paper and pen in her lap, writes letters with concentrated attention, and some artistically-inclined, humor-loving young lady tries to sketch a sleeping fellow passenger.

Gradually the sun's fierceness diminishes. The heat-oppressed, weary bodies, descending, refresh themselves with tea, bread and butter and sweets, casting off the body's stiffness, and reappear on deck. Once more the paired figures begin their eager promenading and soft, low-voiced laughing conversation. Only two or three lady readers cannot in any way detach themselves from the last chapter of the novel, following, with concentrated gaze in the fading dim light of dusk, the fate of hero and heroine.

To the south, the sky is coated with a hot golden hue, and in the water, like liquid fire, the sun sets; and to the left, even a little before sunset, moonrise begins. From the ship to the eastern horizon, the line of moonlight glimmers.

On the ship's deck and in the cabins, electric lights come alight. At six, the first dinner-bell rings. On the occasion of changing dress, everyone enters their respective cabins. Half an hour later, the second bell. We enter the dining hall. Rows of men and women are seated. Some in black clothes, some in colored clothes, some with white breasts half-bared. Overhead, rows of electric lights. Along with the low hum of conversation, the clinking sound of knife and fork resounds, and, at the various courses of the diverse meal, the servants move to and fro, silently, like a flowing stream, from hand to hand.

After the meal, one goes on deck to breathe the cool air. Somewhere a young man and woman, drawing their chairs into some dark corner, hum together; somewhere two, leaning over the ship's railing, are absorbed in confidential talk; some couple, talking as they go, appears now and then through the light and shadow of the deck

at a swift pace, then vanishes again; somewhere five or seven men and women, along with the ship's crew, gather in a group and burst forth in loud laughter and merriment. The idle men, some sitting, some standing, some half-reclining, smoke cigars; some in the smoking saloon, some below in the dining room, placing whisky-soda beside them, four together, playing cards for stakes. Over there, in the music-room, two or three music-lovers gather, and now and then singing, playing, and occasional applause can be heard.

Gradually it becomes half-past ten, the women retire, the lights on deck suddenly go out, the deck becomes silent and desolate darkness. All around, the stillness of night, moonlight, and the restless murmur of the boundless sea.

27th October. The heat of the Red Sea is steadily increasing. The ladies on deck, all day, suffer like thirst-stricken does, distressed and languid. They only wave their fans wearily, sniff smelling salts, and when sympathetic young men come and inquire after their welfare, their nearly-closed eyelids open slightly, and with a faint smile, only by the movement of their necks, they indicate the utter exhaustion of their delicate frames. The more they take tiffin and lemon-syrup to fill themselves, the more their languor and exhaustion increase, their eyes drowsy, their whole bodies growing slack.

28th October. Today we reached Aden.

2nd November. There is a Parsi fellow-passenger on our ship. His pointed, trimmed beard and large eyes strike the eye first of all. Young in years. Having toured Europe for nine months, he has adopted foreign dress and manners. He says he does not like India. He says that three hundred letters have accumulated for him from his European friends (mostly lady friends), and the poor fellow is now in great difficulty, not knowing when he will read them or when he will reply. The man himself is quite reluctant to make friendships, but through Fate's mockery, friendship keeps falling unbidden and unsought upon his head. He says friendship serves no "use." Moreover, it is a mere nuisance. Why, he says he has "flirted" with hundreds of German, French, Italian, and English girls, but derived no fun from it whatsoever.

2nd November. We have come near India. Tomorrow we are due to reach Bombay. Today is a beautiful morning. A cool breeze blows, the sea dances in foaming waves, bright sunlight has risen; someone plays quoits, someone reads a novel, someone chats; in the music saloon, singing; in the smoking saloon, cards; in the dining saloon, preparations for a meal are underway—and in a narrow cabin, one of our elderly fellow-passengers is dying.

At eight in the evening, Mr. Dillon died. Tonight a play was scheduled to be performed.

3rd November. In the morning, after the funeral rites, Dillon's body was committed to the sea. Today is the last day of our sea voyage.

Late at night the ship reached Bombay harbor.

4th November. Disembarking from the ship and setting foot on Indian soil, I now have no further quarrel with my fate. The world, on the whole, seems a rather pleasant place. Only one confusion arose—I had left my bag, with money and all, in the ship's cabin, which suddenly caused a rather considerable alteration in the world's atmosphere. But I went back to the ship from the hotel without delay and retrieved it. The possibility of forgetting this bag flashed through my mind once yesterday, like lightning. I cautioned myself at once that the bag must not be forgotten. My mind said—shame on you! This very morning you scolded him needlessly. Having retrieved it and returned to the hotel, I felt relieved after bathing. Fortunately, there is no dear friend present who might, on account of this incident, cast aspersions upon my intelligence. So when, at night, we sat down in the Calcutta-bound train, though I had mistakenly left my pillow at the hotel, still there was no great disturbance to my sweet sleep.