ESSAY

GLEANINGS OF THE ROAD

Rabindranath Tagore



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A LETTER BEFORE THE JOURNEY

In the midst of this open field stands our school, our ashram. Here we live crowded together in play; teacher and student sleep beneath one roof; and in like manner we keep other companions too—for we maintain no screened relation with sky, light, and wind. Here the light of dawn falls straight upon our eyes; the stars of heaven gaze directly into our faces. When the storm comes, it shakes out its dust-coloured scarf at the horizon's edge and sends us word from very far away. When some season draws near, its first tidings are proclaimed upon every leaf of our trees. The universal world need not wait a single moment outside our door.

It is our wish that we should keep some such bond with the people of the world as well. Whatever seasons come and go in the history of all mankind, whatever rising and setting of the sun occurs, whatever tumult of storm and cloud takes place—all this, it is the desire of our hearts, we should see clearly, see magnified within a vast sky. Because we live far from the town, this opportunity is ours. Here the world's every tiding does not come pressed into some single mould; if we wish, we may receive it unhindered, in its pure form.

To keep open this connection between our field-school and the world of men, I feel the need of circling the earth. We have received that invitation-letter from the great world. But that invitation cannot be honoured by two hundred students of the school together. So I resolved: on your behalf I alone shall go and keep this engagement. Within this one person I shall complete the travelling of you all. When I return again to your ashram, I shall be able to bring the outer world back, in good measure, folded within my own life.

When I return there will be time enough, at leisure, for much talk; but now, at the hour of parting, I wish to make one or two things clear.

Many ask me, "Why are you going to travel in Europe?" I cannot decide what answer to give. If I gave the simple answer that travelling itself is the purpose of going to travel, my questioners would surely think I was flinging the matter aside too lightly. Unless one can calculate results and weigh profit and loss, one cannot satisfy people.

The question of why a man should suddenly go abroad when there is no necessity for it—this question is possible only in our country. That the desire to go abroad is itself natural to man—this truth we have utterly forgotten. Home alone has bound us so, has tied us in such fashion, that when the time comes to set foot beyond the threshold, we suffer such reluctance, such delay, such sneezing and superstitious pausing, such shedding of tears, that "outside" has become, for us, altogether too much outside; its connection with home has become entirely severed. Kinsfolk in our country are so dense, so unbroken a web, that we have nothing left that is truly "other" to us in the way that a stranger is other. This is why, even to go out for a short while, we must render such heavy account to everyone. Being bound and bound again, our wings have grown so stiff that the very idea that flight might be a joy is not credible to our country.

When in my youth I went abroad, there was in it a financial motive—entering the Civil Service, or the attempt to become a barrister, was a fine excuse. But that excuse does not serve at the age of fifty-two; now I must invoke some spiritual purpose.

The people of our country do believe that travel is necessary for spiritual advancement. Hence some imagine that this is my purpose at this age. And so they are astonished—how can such a purpose be fulfilled in Europe? Wandering about

the holy places of India and gaining the company of the saints and seekers here—this alone, they say, is the way to liberation.

I have said from the very outset: my purpose is simply to go forth and set out. By fortune I have come into the world; I shall complete my acquaintance with the world as far as possible—this is enough for me. I have been given two eyes; the more variously, the more thoroughly, those two eyes look upon the vast, the more fulfilled they shall be.

Yet I must also confess this: I too have a hankering after gain. Not pleasure alone—hidden deep within this resolve to travel lies also, profoundly, a wish to accomplish some purpose.

I think that if Europeans could visit India with true reverence, they would reap the fruits of a pilgrimage. Such Europeans I have met, and them I revere.

The reason for that reverence is not that the greatness of our India is reflected through their devotion and thereby shines brighter in our eyes. It is the power of their own hearts, seen directly, that bows my mind before them. We do not always find in ourselves the power to pierce the barrier of unfamiliarity and acknowledge truth, to embrace what is good. Without going to another's country, one does not gain proof of the power to move easily within the truth. To accept as great truth only what is habitual, and to reject as trivial or false whatever is unfamiliar—this is the mark of a poor and narrow soul.

When we can push open the shutters of habit's temple and go to worship truth, then we can realise, in a special way, devotion to truth itself. That worship of ours is free; that devotion of ours is not driven blindly by custom.

If we journey to Europe with the faith that there, with vision freed from preconception, we shall behold truth directly, then where else in the world could an Indian find such a place of pilgrimage? In India I have seen Europeans full of reverence, whose eyes, I do not deny, may have missed some of our miseries; but that dust could not blind them; even through the veil of decay they beheld the innermost truth of India.

Nor is it true that Europe is without any veil over its truth. That veil is not decayed but resplendent. For that very reason, perhaps, it is harder there to perceive the innermost truth. Guarded by armed sentries, studded with fringes of pearl and gem, we may take that curtain itself for the most precious thing there is, and return home marvelling—while the deity seated behind it we may never come to salute at all.

If we go there with such a foolish, strange irreverence as to suppose the curtain remains but the god behind it does not, then nothing could be a greater waste than the expense of such a journey.

That European civilisation is material, devoid of spirituality, has now become a catchphrase current on every side. Whatever its origin, once such hearsay begins to circulate widely, it no longer needs to be true. What five men say, the sixth does not hesitate to repeat, and the mere repetition of many voices then usurps the place of reasoning.

This much must be remembered from the outset: wherever in human society we see any good whatsoever, at its root there is spiritual power. That is to say, man can never obtain truth as a mere puppet; he must win it as a soul. If we see in Europe any advancement of man, we must surely know that at the root of that advancement lies man's soul—it can never be the creation of dead matter. In outer manifestation, it is the power of the soul itself that is revealed.

That man in Europe is not expressing the human soul but merely heaping up dead matter—this too, if I may say so, is like saying: "The great tree merely sheds withered leaves and covers the earth; it does not manifest its own life"—yet that too is precisely how it is. In truth, it is the tree's own overflowing vital force that showers down such abundance of foliage; the ceaseless shedding of dead leaves does not prove its death. Life itself may die at every moment—true death comes only when dying itself has ceased.

I have seen that in Europe, man moves along a path of ever-new trial and ever-new change—what he accepts today, he abandons tomorrow. He never stays still anywhere, quietly. Many say that this very fact proves the absence of his spirituality.

In the universe too, we see nothing but change and death. Yet did not the sages not say of this very universe that all this has arisen out of joy? Does not the deathless itself pour forth continually, without pause, through the very fountain of death?

If we look only at the outward and take it for the final thing, we do not see the inward, and even the outward cannot be truly grasped. Europe too has an inward; it too has a soul, and that soul is not weak.

When we behold that spirituality of Europe, only then shall we see its truth—only then shall we come to know a thing that can be received into the soul, that is not mere matter, not mere learning, but joy.

The point I have been trying to make has been given a form easy to grasp by an event that has recently occurred. A ship, carrying two thousand passengers, was crossing the Atlantic Ocean; when that ship, colliding at midnight with a moving iceberg, began to sink, the majority of the European and American passengers,

without showing anxiety for their own lives, made efforts to save the women and children. Under the shock of this vast, sudden death, the outer veil of Europe slipped aside, and in a single moment we beheld a true image of its innermost human soul.

The instant we saw it, we no longer felt shame in bowing our heads before it. In that instant the joy of the soul revealed itself, generously, in the very recognition of soul.

Not long after this event, some of our friends were returning by steamer from Dacca. Struck by the steamer, a boat in the middle of the Padma sank; three of its passengers fell into the water. Not far off, another boat was passing under sail—all on the ship shouted together, calling repeatedly to its boatman for help—he did not even turn his ear, but sailed on; there was no danger involved, he was quite near, and the task could not by any means be called difficult.

I recall another day. In the night there had been only a storm. By morning the wind's force had lessened, but the river was restless. My little boat was moored at the bank of the Gorai river; suddenly it seemed that in the middle of the river a woman's body was floating past, her hair spread loose upon the water—nothing else could be seen. I called out to all who were near the ghat, "Row out my little life-boat and rescue her—who knows, perhaps she still lives." No one came forward. I said, "Whoever goes, I shall give each man a reward of five rupees." Then a few men floated a boat, lifted her out, and the unconscious woman gradually returned to her senses. Without the hope of reward, no one would have gone.

Another day I was returning by boat from a great marsh. Where the marsh-water flows into the river, fishermen, to make it convenient for catching fish, drive in great stakes and narrow the water's outlet, so that the current becomes exceedingly strong there; in such places I have seen many a laden boat come to grief. Passing through this narrow channel, my boat, trying somehow to avoid the

blow of a stake, got caught fast in a very dangerous spot. Only eight or ten cubits away, fishermen were catching fish. We called out to them for help, but though they looked, they did not see. The boatman offered a reward. In expectation of the fee being raised, they feigned deafness. When the fee, being raised, reached a fairly substantial sum, the fishermen's obstruction of hearing suddenly vanished altogether. And yet it was the fruit of their own contrived act that we had sat down to suffer—needless to say this to any reader of our country; had it been the boat of a magistrate, a very different result would have appeared in the test of their hearing power.

You will remember that when a shop caught fire in the Bolpur bazaar, it was four foreign Kabuli merchants who helped in putting out the fire; the neighbours were called, but no response came. I recall that those from whom water-jars were sought, fearing lest their jars be defiled and ruined, refused to give any.

This miserliness of self-sacrifice, which we see all around us, need not be proven by piling up further instances. For, whatever we may say with our mouths, in our hearts we all secretly acknowledge this poverty of our character.

Has self-sacrifice, then, no connection at all with spirituality? Is this not itself a mark of the strength of religion? Does spirituality consist only of shunning company, sitting in purity, and repeating names? Does not spiritual power give man valour at all?

In the sinking of the Titanic we beheld, in a single moment, a great many men shining brightly in the face of death. This does not show the exceptional quality of one man alone. Most astonishing of all is this: those who, cradled in the lap of fortune, were pampered darlings; those who, by the strength of their money, had always thought themselves greater than all others; those who had never met obstruction in enjoyment, and who in sickness and danger had always found it easier than others to secure their own safety—these, of their own will, gave up the

path of saving themselves, leaving it open for the weak and the helpless, and embraced death. Such fortunate ones on that ship were not merely one or two.

In sudden calamity, man's primitive instinct seeks to break the restraint of civilised society; given time to think, man can command himself. On the Titanic, in the dark of night, some woke suddenly from sleep, some came suddenly out from amusement and pleasure, to see before them the black shape of violent death. If, then, it had been the case that men went mad and, thrusting aside the helpless, tried only to save themselves, we would have had to conclude that this heroism was accidental, not personal—that in this terrible trial, upon the very brink of death, the spiritual strength cultivated through the ages-long penance of an entire race had achieved its victory over death.

The very power that we saw concentrated together in this shipwreck—have we not seen this same power in Europe, variously, in various forms, on every side? Are not the countless examples of self-sacrifice, and of laying down one's life for country and for fellow men, to be seen there daily, by the thousand? Has not European civilisation, by virtue of that boundlessly accumulated treasure of sacrifice, risen up, head lifted high, like a coral island?

No true progress can ever occur in any society whose foundation is not built upon sorrow. This sorrow can be embraced only by those who are not materialists, who are not slaves to matter. Those whose supreme joy is in things will never give up things. Why should they acknowledge good as dearer than their own life? For that self-seeking merit which men know, as prescribed by scripture, in the manner of wealth to be reaped in the next world, man may indeed accept suffering—but that merit which is no commodity of scriptural injunction, which is not the suffering of pilgrimage, which is not a gift owed to auspicious stars, but the free impulse of the heart—can any worshipper of matter ever accept that suffering, that death?

In Europe, for country, for man, for knowledge, for love, in the free impulse of the heart, we have seen that sorrow, that death, embraced every single day.

Not all of this is genuine, of course; much of it is mere bravado—but that reproach should not be used to belittle the truth. On certain nights a halo of light is seen around the moon. We know that this is not the moon; it is a shadow, a falsehood. Yet if the moon were not there in the middle, even that shadow-ring could not exist. In every society, whatever is the finest substance, gathering around it, borrowing its light, a false circle comes to be created. But that counterfeit does not contradict the original; rather, it confirms it. Seeing a false ascetic, it would be foolish to lose faith in the true saints of our own country.

Those in Europe who are exceptional souls—of them we have read in books, we have not seen them close at hand. Of the one or two I have seen closely, they did not hold a place among Europe's constellation of the great. Long ago I met a man of Sweden; his name was Hammargren. Sitting there in that far country, by chance he came upon some small mention of Rammohan Ray in some book. From this a devotion so vivid awoke in his heart that, despite his poverty, leaving his country, crossing the ocean with great hardship, he arrived here in Bengal. He knew nothing of the language here, knew no one, yet, finding shelter in the house of a Bengali, he embraced this land, the country of Rammohan Ray, as his own. In the few days that he lived, with what unbearable hardship endured, with what devotion and perseverance, and yet with what complete humility keeping himself hidden, he sacrificed his own life for the good of this country—those who witnessed it can never forget it. His dead body was cremated at Nimtala ghat; on that account, that a Hindu cremation-ground was defiled, one of our weekly papers had expressed indignation.

How Sister Nivedita, bearing devotion to Swami Vivekananda, dedicated herself to India through such astonishing self-sacrifice, is unknown to no one.

In both these instances we have seen these two devotees give themselves up in such a place, in such a condition, where no easy, familiar path lay before them; where the accumulated prejudices of their hearts and minds from birth met hard resistance at every step; where not only did they sacrifice themselves, but at every step they had to hew out the path of self-sacrifice for themselves—for their entrance was blocked on every side.

This power of devotion to truth, and this strength of crossing, day after day, undauntedly and unstintingly, the difficult obstacles for the sake of truth—this they had gained from their own nation's spiritual discipline. Can anyone ever attain this astonishing power through the practice of matter-worship? Is this not truly spiritual? And I ask: do we see this power in sufficient measure in our own country?

But that is not to say that our country has no spirituality. That I do not say. Here too a certain aspect of spirituality has found expression. Among the seekers of our land, some through knowledge, some through devotion, can easily acknowledge the undivided universal form within all divided things. Here, in the direction of knowledge and in the direction of feeling, through long ages of contemplation and discipline, their obstacles have worn away considerably. This is why the holy men of our country can easily perceive the connection of the inner spirit with the boundless, in the realm of consciousness or in the abode of the heart.

If some foreigner should come with reverence and insight to see this power in the human nature of our land, he would surely be blessed, and would perhaps be able to fill, and carry away with him, a certain lack within his own nature.

What I wish to say is this: that we too have within us a lack of this same kind that needs filling, and it is this very lack that has, for a long time, drawn us into the stupor of weakness.

The moment they hear this, our patriotic countrymen exclaim: yes, there is a lack indeed, but it is not of spirituality—it is of material knowledge, of worldly wisdom—by the strength of which Europe has surpassed all the rest of the world.

I have already said this can by no means be so. On mere accumulation of matter no nation's advancement can ever stand, and by the strength of worldly wisdom alone no nation ever gains strength. However much oil you pour into the lamp, the lamp will not light; however skilled you become in twisting the wick, the lamp will not light—somehow, fire must be kindled.

That Europe today rules the world by the strength of matter is the talk of the faithless atheist. The root power of its dominion is undoubtedly the strength of religion; it can be nothing else.

That Buddhism is not a religion of attachment to worldly ends, all must acknowledge. And yet in India, at the time of Buddhism's rise and in the age that followed, under the influence of that Buddhist civilisation, such an expansion of art, science, commerce, and imperial power occurred in this land as never at any other time.

The reason is this: when man's soul is freed from the bondage of matter, then in joy all its powers gain impetus toward full flowering. Spirituality is the very centre of all man's powers, because it is the power of the soul itself. Fullness is its nature. It does not wish, in any direction, inward or outward, to belittle man or to wound him.

Whatever the outward form of the power of Europe, of its inner nature—which is the strength of religion—there is, to my mind, not the least doubt.

This strength of religion of theirs is exceedingly awake, exceedingly conscious. It cannot let any sorrow, any lack of man's, lie carelessly neglected. To remove every kind of human misery, it is engaged day and night in the most arduous efforts. What is the free, pure reason at the centre of this endeavour—the reason that makes man renounce self-interest, drags him out of comfort, and calls him to unfaltering death—who supplies it with strength? Where is that nectar which has kept this generous benevolence so ever-fresh?

It is the very seed of religion, fallen from the tree of Christ's life onto the field of Europe's mind, that has borne fruit there in such abundance. What is the vital force within that seed? It is the acceptance of suffering as the highest wealth.

That the love of God takes to itself all the sorrows of man—this idea Europe has been hearing, for many hundred years, in various mantras, rites, and songs. Hearing it again and again, this idea has come to occupy so deep a place in its heart that it lies below even consciousness, in the realm of the unconscious—from whose secret silence all man's seeds sprout—it is in that unseen depth that the foundation of all man's wealth is laid.

That is why we can still see, in Europe, this astonishing phenomenon: those who verbally reject the Christian religion and wander about proclaiming the triumph of materialism—they too, when the occasion arises, sacrifice themselves so utterly, in wealth and in life, bear censure and sorrow with such heroism, that it becomes clear then that, even without their own knowledge, they acknowledge the deathless above death, and hold the good, above pleasure, to be the truth.

Those who, on the Titanic, unhesitatingly disregarding their own lives, strove to save the lives of others were not all men of devout Christian faith; among them there may even have been some atheists or agnostics—but how could they, merely by holding a different creed, entirely cut themselves off from the religious discipline of their entire race? Among any nation, those who are ascetics perform penance

on behalf of the whole nation. That is why, even if fifteen-sixteenths of that nation throw mud upon those ascetics, they are still not entirely deprived of the fruits of that penance.

That love of God which bears within itself, by its own power and discipline, all the small and great sorrows of man—we cannot say we see this pervasively in our country, however unwelcome the admission; yet it must be acknowledged. The emotional surge, the play of feeling, in devotion of love, we have in abundance; but the acceptance of suffering, the self-sacrifice, the longing to serve, that is achievable only through heroic strength, is weak in us. What we call the worship of God does not, among sorrow-afflicted men, amount to the service of God. We have accepted, one-sidedly, only the amorous play of love; we have not acknowledged love's tragic play of suffering.

To accept suffering for the sake of gain is not spirituality; to accept suffering for the sake of love is spirituality. The suffering that the miser endures in hoarding wealth, the vow of suffering that the merit-seeker undertakes in greed for other-worldly prosperity, the discipline of suffering that the seeker of liberation practices for the sake of liberation, and the suffering that the pleasure-seeker embraces for pleasure's sake—none of these is, in any way, the achievement of fullness. They express only the poverty, the wretchedness of the soul. The suffering that is for love's sake alone is the true wealth of sacrifice; only through it does man conquer death, and raise the soul's power and joy above all else.

It is only in this field of the drama of sorrow that we can, leaving self aside, truly receive the universe as real. The value of truth is precisely this sorrow. This wealth of sorrow is the chief glory of the human soul. It is through this sorrow that its strength is revealed, and it is through this sorrow that it profits both itself and others. Hence the scripture says, nāyamātmā balahīnena labhyaḥ—that is, one who has not the strength to accept sorrow cannot truly realise the self. One proof of this is that we have not been able to gain our own country for ourselves. No one in our country has become another's own; the country, whomever it calls, receives no

answer. Our population is by no means small, but that very abundance of numbers, instead of manifesting its strength, only expresses its weakness.

The chief reason for this is that we have not been able to make one another our own through suffering. We have given no value to the people of our country—how, without giving value, shall we receive it? A mother continually gives value, receives worth, from the very pain of serving her own child born of her womb. Whomever we truly hold sacred in our hearts, to that one we naturally give this worth—no one need be reminded of it. We have not been able to accept the people around us, with our whole heart, as real—that is why we could not, with joy, give ourselves up for them either.

To see man thus, as real—this is the true vision of the soul, that is, it happens only through love. When metaphysical knowledge says "all beings are one," that is merely a statement; by that abstract proposition one cannot make all beings one's own self. Without that supreme power of the soul called love, whose patience is infinite, whose natural joy is in self-surrender, in that service-devoted love, nothing else can ever make another one's own. It is only through this power that the patriot realises the Supreme Soul within his whole country, and the lover of mankind attains the Supreme Soul within all humanity.

The religion of Europe has given Europe initiation into that sorrow-illumined, service-devoted love. By its strength, the union of man with man has become easy there. By its strength, the sacrificial fire of the penance of sorrow is not extinguished there, and in every department of life, hundreds upon hundreds of ascetics, performing the sacrifice of self-offering, are continually infusing vigour into the whole nation's mind. It is by the nectar arising from that unbearable sacrificial fire that such vast expansion of art, science, literature, commerce, and statecraft has occurred there; this could never be manufactured in any factory by any machine of iron—it is the creation of penance, and the fire of that penance is man's spiritual power, man's strength of religion.

That is why we see that in the Buddhist age, when India embraced that religion of self-sacrificing love, there occurred in society precisely such an efflorescence as we have recently seen in Europe. Arrangements for medicine for the sick, even hospitals for animals, were established here then, and efforts to relieve the suffering of living beings appeared in manifold forms; then, counting their own lives and comfort as nothing, missionaries of religion crossed difficult paths in troops, and without hesitation bore suffering for the salvation of foreign and barbarian peoples. In that day, India, by revealing love's very form of sorrow, gave devotees initiation into a vigorous and noble humanity. It was for this very reason that India in that age was able, through religion, to conquer not merely her own soul but the whole world, and could unite, in the fire of spirituality, both worldly and other-worldly progress together. At that time the Christian civilisation of Europe was beyond even dreaming. India's brilliant radiance of that day—of sorrow-vowed, self-sacrificing love—has since been overshadowed by artifice and sentimentality, but has it truly been extinguished? If from anywhere its awakening should be seen, will she not again recognise it as her own? What today dwells in another's house—shall it not, then, be recognised as her own possession? Where the fire of strength burns abundantly, ash too accumulates in abundance—this must be remembered. The heat of lifelessness is little, its debt is trifling, and even the image of its wretchedness is very tranquil. The turbulence of unrest and the violence of sin are as visible in European society as they are not in our country—this must be acknowledged.

But they have not accepted this indifferently. It does not overwhelm their minds; rather, it keeps them ever vigilant. From the malaria-bearing mosquito to the sin lodged deep within society, a hand-to-hand struggle rages there against every ill; no one sits back, leaving matters to fate; risking their own lives, bands of heroes wage the struggle.

Recently I was reading an astonishing book named [omitted]. In that book, beneath the dark depths of London, the capital, the squalor of poverty and the mire of sin are unveiled and described. However dreadful this picture, the wondrous patience, valour, and compassionate love of the Christian ascetic rise above all this ugliness

and shine forth in brilliant light. There is a hopeful verse in the Gita: even a small measure of religion saves from great fear. In any society, as long as that religion is seen to be alive, it must be counted greater than the abundant measure of misery found there.

It is not that there is no violation of justice toward weaker races in Europe—there is—but that is not the whole story. Alongside it, from the very midst of that cruel, arrogant, exploitative greed, rise indignation and reproach. There too exist many courageous heroes who can protest and wish to remedy the injustice of the powerful. There is no lack, there, of steadfast, devoted persons who, taking up the cause of a distant foreign people, do not hesitate to endure persecution. Indians who desire broader rights in the governance of their own country's affairs—a few such Indians engaged in that effort exist in our land too—but from whom have they received their initiation, and who is their true support? Those who, bearing the mockery and hostility of their own kinsmen, invoke religion upon the people of their country in order to narrow the field of their own race's self-interest—of what country are they citizens? They are few in number, but seen with the eye of truth, it will be seen that they are not few. For their end does not lie within themselves. Throughout the country there runs a lineage of them, visible and invisible; it is not that they all do one work, or exist at one time, but they are the very justice-power within society. They are the Kshatriyas; for the salvation of all the weak of the world from destruction, they have assumed an easy armour. Following him who accepted death to lead man from sorrow to the realm of the deathless, they walk in file along the difficult, blood-stained path of their divine Master's dishonour. Through the very heart of the whole nation's wilderness, they alone are the stream of the river of immortality.

We are always consoling ourselves by saying that we are a religious, spiritual nation, that we care nothing for outward things; and that this is why we have grown weak in outward matters. We wish, in this way, to diminish our shame regarding outward wretchedness. Many of us boast aloud, saying: poverty is our ornament.

Poverty is the ornament only of those who have the power to possess wealth. An ornament that has no value is not an ornament at all. Hence the poverty of renunciation is an ornament, the poverty of lack is no ornament; the poverty of Shiva is an ornament, the poverty of misfortune is degrading. Those who are perpetually soiled with despondency because they cannot fill their bellies, those who somehow wish only to save their lives yet lack the strength to adopt the difficult means of saving them, and so repeatedly fall grovelling in the dust; those who, being poor themselves, exploit other poor when opportunity allows, and those who, being helpless themselves, strike other helpless ones when power comes to them—for such as these, poverty can never be an ornament.

This sorrow, poverty, humiliation of ours—we have by no means been able to expand the field of spirituality by claiming it as reward for our religious devotion; we have confined it within individual devotional practice, we have not gathered all mankind together at its call; wherever, through the blind convulsion of social rule, we have ground man's reasoning power and free benevolent intelligence beneath the millstone of custom and rule, reducing all to one uniform mass—there it is the narrowness and unconsciousness of religious sensibility that has turned us into a lump of matter, fit only for slavery. We still believe that law will remedy our wretchedness, that gaining a seat in the legislature will make us men—but a nation's true well-being is not a product of machinery, and until man's soul is prepared to pay, from within itself, its full price, nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya—there is no other path to salvation.

That is why I was saying: if one goes to Europe with the intent of pilgrimage, it will not be fruitless. There too we have a guru; that guru is the innermost divine power of that human society. Everywhere the guru must be sought out through the merit of reverence; he is not seen merely by opening one's eyes. There too, the vital spirit of that society may, through blindness and the bondage of arrogance, be missed altogether, and it is not impossible to return without having seen him; nor is it strange that one should return with some such absurd notion as this—that England's might is created by Parliament; that Europe's wealth is manufactured in factories, and that all the greatness of the Western continent is constituted by

weapons of war, ships of commerce, and heaps of outward goods. One who has no true inward sense of power very easily comes to believe that power lies outside, and that if by some chance we too could seize hold of just those material things, our own lack would be filled. But yenāhaṃ amṛtā syām kimahaṃ tena kuryām—"what should I do with that by which I shall not become immortal"—this too is the inward truth of Europe itself. Europe surely knows that she is not measured by rail, telegraph, machine, and factory. That is why Europe has taken up the vow of truth like a hero; like a hero she offers up wealth and life for the sake of truth; and however much she errs, however much she fails, with redoubled zeal she begins anew—never abandoning the helm. From time to time evil appears, in clash upon clash the fire blazes up, in the churning of the ocean poison too, at times, rises to the surface—but they never, in any way, accept the evil as final. Their weapons are ready, their armies undaunted, and through their initiation into truth they have gained a strength that conquers death. We have been slothful in facing truth, indifferent in the pursuit of truth; we have entangled our own heads in rickety, patched-together bindings and imagined that very entanglement to be a refuge of truth. That is why, when the day of danger draws near, when we have no other recourse but the path of truth, we can by no means rouse ourselves, we cannot renounce ourselves. Even then we think play to be work, expect the fruits of the real from mere imitation, cannot keep artificial enthusiasm alive, cannot bring begun tasks to completion, and, entangled again and again in the net of excessive sentiment and emotionalism, continue to fail repeatedly. That is why the initiation to accept the responsibility of truth heroically, with one's whole being; that unwavering devotion, dearer than life, to that truth; the discipline to earn, at the cost of one's utmost suffering, all the finest treasures of life; and, on every side—of intellect, of heart, and of action—the working for man's welfare and, through reverence for man, the undertaking of God's most arduous service—for a pilgrim with such faith, a journey to Europe can never be fruitless. Of course, only if faith remains in his heart, and only if he believes that the fullness of universal humanity is itself the true sign of spiritual success.

I know that in one place our interests have collided with those of Europe, and that in that collision we have had to suffer, inwardly and outwardly, in many places, deep pain. That pain, though it be the sorrow of our own spiritual poverty and

though it be the atonement for our accumulated sins, is nonetheless pain. Those who, on our side, are the occasion of this pain—we receive, in various forms, proof of their pettiness and cruelty. This too we have witnessed daily: that they have concealed their own baseness beneath arrogant pretension, and have denied, through ignorance and pride, the greatness of other races. It is for this very reason that, carrying this wound, we find it inwardly difficult to see the truth of Europe and to receive it. We distrust their religion too, and condemn their civilisation as a gross, material thing entangled in the web of matter. Not only that—we fear lest we give to the strength of the strong the very seat of truth, worship it, and defile ourselves grovelling in the dust before it; lest we be unable to receive another's glory along with our own; lest, in the languor of self-distrust, abandoning our own truth, we, in the emptiness of imitation, become mere shadows of another's form and echoes of another's sound, and thus utterly nullify ourselves in the world's affairs; lest we fall into this strange delusion—that in trying to acknowledge another, we deny ourselves, and call this the path of true generosity.

All these obstacles and dangers exist; that is precisely why this journey in search of truth is a pilgrimage. One must pass beyond all falsehood as one goes; one must advance while enduring the sorrow of obstruction; one must cast behind the futile burden of wounded pride, yet guard, with the utmost care, the provisions of one's own dignity. In truth, it is only through such very great obstacles that we can hope for the full fruit of this pilgrimage; for what we obtain easily we do not receive consciously; whereas the true success of any great gain lies in the fuller flowering of consciousness itself—that is to say, whatever we truly gain, we come, through it, to realise ourselves more truly—if we do not do this, if we find the outer thing merely outer, then it is illusion, it is falsehood.

THE CITY OF BOMBAY

I went out yesterday evening to cast a glance over the city of Bombay. On seeing the first view, it struck me that Bombay has a distinctive character; Calcutta, it seemed, has no character at all—as though it had been thrown together anyhow, cobbled up in patches.

The truth is, the sea has given Bombay its form, has embraced it with its crescent-shaped shore, holding it close. The sea's pull works through every street and lane of Bombay. It seemed to me as though the sea were one vast heart, drawing the current of life through Bombay's veins and arteries and pouring it back again. The sea has forever kept this city's face turned toward the great outside.

Calcutta's one bond of union with nature was the Ganges. This river's current was the open path by which the message of the distant flowed toward the horizon of distant mystery. This was the one window of the city where, if one put one's face to it, one could understand that the world is not confined within this human settlement. But the natural majesty of the Ganges remains no more; they have clothed her, on both banks, in such tight-fitting garments, and bound her waist so firmly, that the Ganges too has taken on the very image of the town's own errand-boy; apart from ferrying jute-laden boats and carrying sackloads of goods, one can no longer even guess what other great task she might have had. In the thicket of masts of ships, where has the trunk of the sea-monster's steed hidden itself, in shame?

The special majesty of the sea is this: whatever work she performs for man, she does not wear the mark of servitude round her neck. The business of jute cannot cover over the sapphire jewel set in her vast breast. That is why, at this city's shore, the sea's image remains unblemished; even as, on the one hand, she scatters man's labour across the world, on the other hand, she takes away man's fatigue, spreading a vast leisure before the very face of intense toil.

That is why it pleased me greatly to see hundreds upon hundreds of men and women, dressed and adorned, gone to sit at the sea's edge. No one there could disregard the sea's call at the leisure hour of evening. Their work is at the lap of the sea, and their joy too is at the lap of the sea. In our city of Calcutta there is an Eden Garden, but she is the daughter of a miser's household—there is no invitation in her voice. That is a garden made by rulers—how much rule, how much prohibition, is there! But the sea is no one's tenant; there is no way to fence her in. That is why, at the sea's edge, Bombay holds such a daily festival. Nowhere in Calcutta is there even a little corner for such unrestrained joy.

What most gladdens the heart to see is the gathering of men and women here. How great is the poverty of Calcutta's life, deprived of women, becomes apparent only when one comes here; in Calcutta we see man halved, and that is why we do not see his joyous aspect. Surely that not-seeing carries its own penalty.

Surely it narrows man's mind, deprives him of his natural flowering. In the evening, men, women, and children have gathered together in the same joy at the sea's edge; there can be no greater misfortune for man than to be unable to see this one utterly natural beauty of truth even for a single day. The sorrow to which we have grown accustomed keeps us unconscious of it, but there is no doubt that its harm accumulates day by day. Within the corner of the home we mingle, men and women together, but is that union complete? In the free world outside, where all may mingle, will there never be a single day when we meet one another with simple joy?

Our carriage came to a stop before a garden atop Matheran hill. Around the small garden, benches were placed on every side. There too I saw respectable women, of good family, sitting with their kinsfolk taking the air. Not only Parsi women, but Marathi women too, wearing the mark of vermilion on their foreheads, were sitting there—their faces wore a calm, radiant contentment. That their very existence was some terrible danger, something to be shielded from every gaze on every side—

not the least trace of such an anxiety was in their minds. I thought to myself: what a great burden of restriction has been lifted from the head of this whole country, and how, because of it, life here has become, in so many ways, easier and more beautiful than ours. How man himself becomes an unnatural obstacle to himself when the simple right to move freely in the world's open air and light is taken away—this one can understand by seeing the perpetual timid helplessness of our women. Seeing our women at a railway station, the long-standing cruelty of the whole country toward them becomes starkly, plainly visible. Wandering through this garden at Matheran, I thought of our own zenana enclosures and secluded ponds—what wretched, joyless misery is there!

When butterflies flit about the flower-garden searching for honey, it is not that they are idling—in truth they are busy at their task. But they do not, for that reason, put on the dull garb one wears for going to the office. That thought comes to me when I see the varied colours gathered in the dress of the people here. That there is any absolute necessity to make the bustle of work an excuse for stripping life of beauty—I, for one, do not believe it. In the variegated colour I see here—in their turbans, their cloths, the saris of their women—there is expressed a joy in life, and that joy awakens the joy of life in turn. Coming from beyond Bengal, all this long way, I have seen this everywhere as I have travelled. The farmer is at his ploughing, yet his head bears a turban and his body a little jacket. As for the women, there is no need even to speak. This outward difference between us and the people here did not seem trivial to me. For, taking hold of just this small difference, a certain reverence for them arose in my mind. They do not disrespect themselves; through cleanliness they have granted themselves distinction. This much is owed by man to man, one to another; this much of covering, this much of adornment, if each does not maintain it, then the poverty of man appears exceedingly ugly. If each person does not try to save his own society from squalid degradation, then what a vast slackness disgraces the whole country in the eyes of the world—that, through the insensibility bred of habit, we simply cannot understand.

One more thing struck me, on a very large scale, in the city of Bombay. It is the wealth-pride of the native people here. I saw so many names of Parsi, Muslim, and

Gujarati merchants engraved on the great buildings here. Such names are nowhere to be seen in Calcutta. There, wealth lies in salaried service and in landlordism; that is why it is so dull. The wealth of the landlord estate is like stagnant water; it only diminishes with use and grows turbid through indulgence. In it one sees no manifestation of man's own power; in it there is no ever-fresh, ever-new play of the waves of wealth's flow. That is why, in whatever wealth exists in our country, I see an exceeding timidity. Among Marwaris, Parsis, Gujaratis, Punjabis, I see open-handedness in giving, but Bengal gives the least of all. The subscription-lists of our country are like our country's cattle—one might as well say they have no grazing ground. Our country has never been able to feel the thing called wealth consciously—that is why in our country miserliness is ugly, and extravagance is repulsive. That the life of the wealthy here is simple, and yet the very form of their wealth is generous—to see this brings a feeling of joy.

WATER AND LAND

We are creatures of the land, yet on every side of us is the sea. Between these two opposing powers, water and land, stands man. Yet what courage there is in the heart of man! The water whose shore he cannot see, he did not accept even that as an obstacle—he flung himself, floating, into the midst of it.

The water that is man's friend flows through the very heart of the land. Those rivers are like sisters to the land. They bring water on their hips from many a distant, stone-bound ghat; it is they who quench our thirst, who prepare our food's provision. But how strange, how terrible, is our conflict with the sea! Her boundless expanse of water is, like the desert of the Sahara, filled utterly with thirst. Astonishing—yet she could not deter man. Like the blue buffalo of the god of death, she only tosses her horns and shakes her head, but she could never make man turn back.

The world has these two divisions—one a refuge, the other refuge-less; one still, one restless; one calm, one terrible. That child of the earth who has dared to embrace both of these has truly won the world's full treasure. He who bowed his head before obstruction, who turned aside from the path at the sight of fear, never won the goddess of fortune. This is why, in our mythology, it is said that the restless Lakshmi rose from the restless sea; she was not born in our still earth.

Lakshmi's vow is this—that she will take shelter only with the hero. That is why she has spread before man this vast wave of fear. Only if he can cross will she then let herself be caught. Those who sat curled up on the shore in slumber, who never held the helm, never spread the sail, never rowed across—they were deprived of the wealth of the world.

When our ship, whitening with foam the angry heart of the blue sea, began proudly to advance toward the shorelessness of the western horizon, I fell to pondering this very thought. I saw clearly: the day the European races embraced the sea was the very day they embraced Lakshmi. And those who, biting into the earth, stayed rooted, advanced no further; they came to a place and there they stopped.

It is the earth that binds and keeps. Like an exceedingly affectionate mother, she will by no means let her child go far. She feeds him full with rice and greens and vegetables, and afterward, beneath the dense shade, lulls him to sleep on her green lap. If the child wishes to step even a little outside the home, she frightens him quiet with tales of untimely hours, ill-omened departures, and the terror of goblins and demons.

But man must go far. Man's mind is so vast that only within the confines of nearness does its wealth suffer harm. If one tries to keep it forcibly confined within just that much, a great deal of it is lost. Among men, those who have been able to go far are those who have been able to fulfil themselves. The sea is that very far, unending road that lies before man; toward the rare, toward the difficult, she does nothing but raise her hand again and again, calling. Hearing that call, those whose hearts grew restless, those who came forth—it is they who have triumphed in this world. In that blue expanse of water, Krishna's flute plays, calling men to leave the shore and come forth.

On one side, the earth wears the face of completion; on the other, the sea wears the face of the unfinished. The land is already made; whatever slow shaping still continues within it moves so gently, so mildly, that it scarcely meets the eye. And even that little shaping and unshaping has its chief craftsman in water. But in the womb of the sea, the work of creation is not yet finished. The rivers that labour for the sea bring, from distant and more distant lands, basketfuls of silt and sand upon their heads. And how many millions upon millions of snails, shells, and coral insects supply, day and night, the materials for this royal mason's work! On the side of the land a full stop has fallen, or at least a semicolon; but on the side of the sea there

is no sign of a period. Amid the ever-restless, mystery-darkened uncertainty spread across the horizon, who knows what is happening there? Restless and unquiet is this sea; boundless is her endeavour.

Whichever race of the world has embraced this sea in a special way has taken into its own character this shoreless striving of the sea. It is they who say such things as: no single fixed end is the goal of human life; the very purpose of life is to expand oneself in ceaseless, ever-advancing motion. Plunging fearlessly into uncertainty, they go on gathering, endlessly, ever-new treasures. They could not remain settled, nesting in any one corner. Distance calls them; the rare draws them onward. The wave of discontent, beating a thousand thousand hammer-blows day and night, is perpetually at work, breaking and remaking, within their very being. Even when night comes and closes the eyes of the whole world with sleep, the lamp-eyes of their workshop do not know how to blink shut. These will not accept completion; even with rest, they wage a hand-to-hand struggle.

And those who have built their nest on land say only, "No more, we need nothing further." It is not merely that they wish to narrow the food of their hunger—they wish to kill hunger itself, root it out entirely. Whatever little they have gained, with the intention of somehow making it permanent, they go on building, all around, an eternal hedge of certainty. They swear upon their own heads, saying: "Whatever else you do, do not by any means try to cross the sea. For if you catch the sea-wind, if you taste the flavour of uncertainty, then that intoxication of discontent that lies within man's mind—who then will be able to restrain it?" So that this call of the black sea's flute, with its unfamiliar new melody, in some restless gust of wind, might never manage to reach inside the home, they strive only to raise, as high as possible, their artificial walls.

But I think the time has come to fully acknowledge this kinship of sea and land and to end their opposition. Together, these two make up man's world. It is the awakening of division between these two that is the source of all man's calamity. Then why has this division persisted so long? Only because these two shall attain

each other through penance, like Shiva and Gauri. On the one side, the ascetic sits absorbed in meditation, naked, ash-smeared; on the other, Gauri goes on adorning herself, again and again, with the fresh flowers of spring—the god of heaven waits for their auspicious union, for without it no beneficent outcome will ever be born.

We, the people of the land, have taken as truth only the aspect of God's completion, and in that there would have been no harm; but we have wanted to cast away, entirely, as falsehood, as illusion, His aspect of expansion. If truth is called false in one part, it is thereby made false in the other part too. We acknowledged stillness, we acknowledged joy, but we did not acknowledge strength, we did not acknowledge sorrow. That is why, though we insulted the queen and praised the king, we still could not save ourselves; truth has been striking us, in various blows, for hundreds and hundreds of years.

The people of the sea have seized upon the aspect of God's expansion as the sole, entire truth. They will not, by any means, accept completion—that is their vow. That is why, on the outward side, though they go on only gathering, they find no contentment and gain profit from nothing; and likewise, in the direction of metaphysics too, they have begun to say that in truth there exists no such thing as a destination—there is only going. Becoming, and becoming, and becoming again—but what it becomes has no fixed location anywhere at all. This is like a sea that has neither shore nor bottom, only waves—which quenches no thirst, ripens no harvest, but only rocks, endlessly, to and fro.

We saw joy, and called sorrow a false illusion; they saw sorrow, and called joy a false illusion. But in perfect truth, nothing at all can be left out; if east and west do not meet there, then east becomes false, and west becomes false too. "From joy alone are all these born"—as true as this saying is, so too is it true that "from tapasya, from suffering, all this is created." As true as the full joy of a song, existing beyond time and space in the singer's heart, so too is true the pain of expressing it, of singing it forth through time. This joy and this sorrow, this completion and this expansion, this eternally-old and this eternally-new, this wealth-and-grain-

abundant earth and this sorrow-tearful restless sea—to acknowledge both together, uniting them, is to acknowledge truth itself.

That is why I have seen: those who, refusing to accept the final, acknowledge only expansion, grow frenzied and rush headlong toward violent death; at every step their ship strikes upon the hidden rock of sudden catastrophe. And those who, calling expansion false, wish to acknowledge only the final, grow lifeless and decayed, and, sinking into a single bed, die overwhelmed.

But, going on and on, one day that carriage of the land and that ship of the sea will arrive together at the same harbour, and an exchange of goods will take place between the two sides—then, at once, both shall be saved. Otherwise, by giving only one's own goods, no one can dispel his own poverty; without exchange, commerce does not proceed, and without commerce, the sight of Lakshmi is never won.

It is precisely through this commerce that man will meet man—for this very reason wealth has become scattered in every direction across the earth. Just as, once the division of male and female took place in the animal kingdom, we have seen, through the diverse attraction of joy and sorrow, the life-wealth of living creatures rise, astonishingly, to ever higher excellence—so too, human nature, by embracing, some the still, some the moving, in a specially chosen way, gives us hope, even now, for such a union as shall bring the civilisation of man to a rich and manifold fulfilment.

Arabian Sea, 16th Jyaishtha, Wednesday, 1319 (Bengali calendar)

BY THE SHORE OF THE SEA

Having crossed the harbour, I went aboard and climbed onto the ship. I have boarded ships many times before; yet each time, at the very first, a certain reluctance arises in the mind. That reluctance is not the diffidence of entering among strangers in an unfamiliar place. I feel, more than anything, the severance of my own life from the ship itself. Those who built this ship, those who sail it—they are its true masters; I, having paid money and bought a ticket, have merely found a place here. Upon this trackless path of the sea, how many generations of their sailors have left the invisible trace of their lives; through how many hundred deaths, again and again, has this path gradually become straight and safe. That I today, upon this ship, eat and take my leisure fearlessly, and sleep at night with an untroubled mind—is this fearlessness merely a thing to be purchased with money? Behind it, layer upon layer, what thought, what accumulated store of courage lies piled high; and to that store I have contributed nothing at all.

When I see these English men and women, playing upon the deck, sleeping, conversing and laughing, I see then that they are not merely upon the ship—they rest upon the strength of their own race. They surely know that whatever needed doing has been done, and whatever will need doing shall be done, for their entire nation stands surety for this. Should a crisis threaten life itself, then not merely is there a captain in charge, but the innate energy and unrelaxing vigilance of their whole race stands ready to struggle against death to the very last moment. Upon this firm foundation they move about with such untroubled, contented faces, giving no heed to the waves on every side. In this place, whatever they themselves have given, that alone they are receiving—while we, who have given nothing, are taking; and so, crossing the sea, we go on, deeper and deeper into debt. That is why, sitting on the deck among the English travellers, my mind cannot in any way shake off this constraint.

Living on land, I make use of many foreign things, yet I feel no such poverty of spirit then; on the ship, it seems, we are taking something more still. This is not merely

engines and machinery—alongside it stands man himself. Those who sail this ship are bringing it across by their own courage, their own strength; if there were, among ourselves, any acquaintance with that same human quality on which we rely, then the very jingle of the money with which we bought our tickets would carry within it the resonance of some other, worthier payment. Today a great sorrow rings within my heart—that they steer with their very lives, while we merely travel by paying money; and between the two there lies a vast ocean which we can never, in any age, hope to cross! Not even begun, and how much of life remains yet to be given unstintingly—how many bonds must yet be torn, how many prejudices crushed—when I think of this, I understand that today, having made paper boats out of a few newspapers, the puff of oratory we blow upon their toy sails shall accomplish nothing for us at all.

Leaving behind the bonds of shore and harbour, we have come out into the very midst of the blue sea. I had feared that this creature of the land would not be able to bear the sea's rocking—but the Arabian Sea has not yet begun its monsoon turbulence. Not that there is no restlessness at all, for a headwind blows from the west, and the shock of waves strikes the ship's prow; but as yet it has been unable to stir any disturbance in the depths of my body. And so my first exchange of greetings with the sea has begun as a lovers' greeting. The great ocean has not shaken the poet's verses to pieces and rendered them empty; the dance of my blood is keeping perfect time with whatever rhythm he is beating upon his drum. Should some sudden whim take him, and should he once raise his thousand hands and sound the terrible cry of the tandava dance, then I shall never be able to lift my head again. But, from the look of things, it seems he will not, upon this timid devotee, employ the tumultuous mockery of that great laughter.

And so, holding the ship's railing, gazing at the water, my days have been passing. Our voyage has begun near the end of the bright fortnight. As is the sea, so is the sky above the sea; standing still, I watch the beautiful union of these two boundless things; I listen, in silence, to the horizon-spanning conversation of the still and the restless, the silent and the eloquent. On the two sides of the ship, glowing foam cuts and falls away, and its gesture seems to me exceedingly beautiful. It seems,

precisely, as though the ship were like the seed-pod of some flower, and on either side of it white petals were blossoming and scattering, moment by moment.

Before me lies the profoundly deep, tranquil play of waves of this great ocean under the silent night sky; and behind me, the ceaseless laughter and merriment of this ship's passengers. As often as I have come aboard a ship, this same thought has occurred to me each time: that all around this small life of ours there stands some boundless infinite, and toward that, these fellow-travellers have not a moment's glance to spare. Their attachment to life is so exceedingly great that, to perceive the profound truth of life, however much distance from it may be necessary, they cannot go even that little distance for even one moment. That is why their worship of religion seems to be a matter of some occasional arrangement—as though one must, for a brief while, cut oneself off, in some special way, from one place, and be carried to another. Had this ship been a ship of Indian travellers, I would surely have seen, in the very midst of the day's work and amusement, men without hesitation joining their palms and bowing to the infinite; amid all the laughter and talk, some hymn of devotion would every so often, quite naturally, have sounded forth. The finite is joined, quite entirely, with the infinite, the creature with the Lord. That truth is fulfilled everywhere through the cooperation of these two—this thought has become so natural, so easy, within our minds, that we feel no hesitation whatever regarding it. But these English travellers, were they to see, amid some pause in their laughter and talk, some fellow countryman sitting on a chair, absorbed in worship, would surely think him mad, and all would inwardly feel irritated. That is why I cannot see, in their lives, any easy and gracious beauty of spiritual awareness—in their work and their laughter there is manifest only a certain one-sided intensity.

What a wondrous arrangement there is within this ship. This vessel, which moves forward doing ceaseless battle with time and space, has all its mystery hidden from our view. Its iron-ribbed heart rises and falls; day and night we feel that throbbing pulse. But where its inward fire blazes, and where the force of superheated steam churns within its arteries, all the tremendous effort of that fierce energy remains hidden from our eyes. Upon our upper deck, amid this abundant leisure and

idleness, the bell only sounds to announce the hour of bathing and eating. I wonder where all this arrangement for the food and comfort of one or two hundred passengers is being carried out—that too lies beyond our sight. We hear no sound of it, catch no scent of it. When we go and sit at the dining table, everything lies ready, elegantly prepared. The stream of service of these provisions flows on effortlessly, like the current of a river.

What deserves special thought in all this is that these people will not accept even the least inconvenience; crossing so vast a sea—well, if there must be some pinching in food and comfort, or if the work must be done in some rough-and-ready fashion, so be it. But no; they will not, on any excuse whatever, accept any excuse as an excuse; in every circumstance they wish to keep every kind of demand of theirs stretched to its very highest limit. The result is that, in the end, even that seemingly impossible demand is met. It is only those who lack the courage to demand who somehow compromise with deprivation and pass their days—it is they who say: artham tyajati panditah, "the wise man abandons wealth for the sake of righteousness." What happens then is that even from that righteousness, only the righteousness itself keeps slipping away, and the wise man goes on becoming ever more foolish within his own wisdom.

But to claim every comfort—what an immense burden one must then bear! Every small arrangement for ease occupies such a vast place! The strength to bear this burden they possess, and in that they are not the least bit reluctant. On this occasion I recall the arrangements of our own school. There too, food must be provided four times a day for two hundred people. But there is no limit to the effort—I see no end to the clamour and commotion from four in the morning until one at night. And yet, one might well say that nothing here exceeds what is strictly necessary. The burden of arrangement has been reduced as much as possible, but the burden of waste and refuse is not lessened in the least. Confusion mounts, filth accumulates—no one can decide what to do with the scum from the rice-pots, the vegetable peelings, and the leftover scraps. Gradually one abandons all thought of the matter and, entrusting oneself to crude nature, somehow gets through the day. We cannot, by any means, forcefully declare that this simply will not do—for to say

so is to commit oneself to bearing the burden. In the end, going back to the root of the matter, we see that we lack the confidence and the strength to bear that burden; and so we merely endure sorrow and inconvenience, but we do not wish to bear responsibility.

We have among our fellow travellers a high-ranking engineer of the Railway; he was telling me, "I have made many attempts to procure from this country itself the small necessary items—keys, locks, and the like—for the Railway Department. But I invariably find that their price is high, while the goods themselves are not particularly good." Meanwhile, the price of goods and the amount of wages keep rising, yet the articles produced here cannot keep pace with world market prices. He said that the factories run here under European management have very little influence upon the people of this country. And where work proceeds under native management, he said, one sees that full work is not extracted—of whatever strength a man possesses, there seems to be no zeal in exacting the greater part of it into use. That is why, even though the amount paid in wages is small, the cost does not wish to come down. For men are exerting only so much of their strength as they choose, not as much as they truly have.

This is unpleasant to hear, but if one looks toward the country, this very thing meets the eye everywhere. In our land every task has become arduous—the sole reason being that we cannot obtain a man's full sixteen annas' worth of effort. That is why we must conduct our affairs with a great many people, and yet to manage a great many people properly, and to fill their bellies adequately, lies beyond our strength. That is why the mischief caused by work far exceeds the work itself; waste exceeds provision; and cracks in the vessel appear so often that more energy must be spent bailing water than in rowing—whatever task our country has set its hand to, this much must be acknowledged of it.

I said to that engineer, "Is it not because of the strength of joint enterprise and machine-industry in your country that the cost of things has fallen so?" He said that this might be so, but that one cannot say, of any country, that joint enterprise came

first and progress followed after. When men become fit to combine in joint enterprise, only then does joint enterprise arise of itself. He said, "I have seen, around Madras in South Andhra, many instances of the rise and dissolution of native joint enterprises. I find that what none of them possess is loyalty to the institution—that is, the devotion and reverence it requires; each person looks separately only to his own interest. This can never hold anything together securely. If this firm, unwavering, wholehearted loyalty could be infused into national character, then all cooperative benevolent undertakings would become possible."

This remark struck me. That good can be accomplished merely through institutions is not true—man comes first, at the root of everything. In our country a single individual, taken as a foundation, gives rise to some particular work; but afterward, those who take up that work do not give it as much support as they receive from it. For they do not look toward the work as much as they look toward themselves. At every turn their grip grows slack; rather than striving to overcome obstruction, they wish to abandon the task and flee from obstruction, and they keep thinking, "Had circumstances been otherwise than this, a still better result might have been obtained." In this way they become disunited—one becomes five fragments, and all five come to nothing. Until the resolve grows common among us to accept, heroically, all good and ill, all obstacles and misfortunes, and to carry the work once begun to its end with utter, undivided loyalty, cooperative philanthropic endeavour and joint commercial enterprise shall remain, for our country, altogether impossible.

This loyalty is not a matter of intellect—it belongs to the heart, to life itself. Through what force does man sustain himself amid all imperfection? Through the deep attraction of some living purpose. In the whole reckoning of profit and loss, the pull of that living purpose counts for little. Were this not so, then at every trivial cause, every small loss, every minor discontent, men would commit suicide and be done with it. In the very same way, if we have no lifelong devotion to whatever work we have set our lives to, if we have no reckless attraction toward it, if we cannot stand firm, with unbroken reverence for it, even among the ranks of the defeated, if we lack the strength to hold its victory-banner aloft even in the face of death, if, like

Abhimanyu, we altogether refuse to accept the anguish of breaking free from the midst of the labyrinth—then we shall be able to create nothing, nor to preserve anything either. "This is ours, therefore this is mine indeed"—we need, above all else, the strength to say this with all our might, to the very last, amid every gain and loss, every victory and defeat; only then, whatever institution we may embrace, shall we one day, sooner or later, be able to cross the sea of obstacles.

That the life of Europe is being worn away by the relentless striving after work—this saying is now heard even in the West itself, and it is not altogether false. I have said before that Europe will not, in the least, accept any lack, any inconvenience—this is her vow. Her faith in her own strength remains unshaken. Because that faith persists, her strength works in full glory and has accomplished the impossible. Yet even so, strength has its limits. To make the flame burn ever brighter while never consuming the wick—this simply cannot be done in any way.

This is why, in the Western world, even as life's demands increase on one side, they consume it that much more upon the other. Having vowed that comfort and convenience shall nowhere be curtailed, its burden only grows more and more immense. This burden is, after all, pressing down somewhere. Wherever that pressure falls, the sorrow generated there is not compensated in equal measure. That is why the effort toward equilibrium, like a volcano, keeps threatening, moment by moment, to raise its head from within the whole afflicted society. The machinery for producing man's comfort keeps growing endlessly, and the machine keeps occupying man's own place. Where is the end of this? Man is turning himself into the very instrument of his own want's fulfilment—but at what leisure shall he ever attain that self? However it must be done, somewhere a line must be drawn and it must be declared: "Here lies my equipment; now I myself must be rescued. Whatever is truly necessary to me must certainly be supplied to me—but all this beyond, I do not need."

That is to say: when man's endeavour continues on and on without pause, then at some point he arrives at a place where he renders himself entirely futile. The path

to fulfilment does not lie along a straight road. That is why what is Europe's sorrow today can never, in truth, be our sorrow. Europe wishes to perfect the body and thereby establish the soul within it. Our soul, having lost the body, wanders the earth futile as a ghost. Where is that soul's outward establishment? Whatever divine likeness exists within it cannot live without expanding its own splendour. It wishes to express itself in manifold ways—in statecraft, in commerce, in society, in industry, in literature, in religion—but here, where are the instruments of that expression? Where is its mastery over those instruments? I have seen that if its body finds moorage in one place, it comes loose in another—if for one instant it stands firm and dense, in the very next moment it turns to vapour and flies away. That is why, today, however it must be done, we must accomplish this embodiment; however it must be done, we must understand this truth—that a bodiless soul is never real, for the body is itself one aspect of the soul. It is the aspect of motion, of power, of death—but it is only through its cooperation that the soul attains stability, joy, immortality. It is precisely because of this incompleteness of embodiment that our country's glory-stripped soul has wandered, wailing, century after century. Casting the outer truth far away, our inward soul goes on, unrestrained, weaving mere dreams. It has lost its own weight; that is why its blind faith has no proof, no measure; that is why, in some places, it plays with truth as though with illusion, and elsewhere treats illusion as though it were truth.

Arabian Sea, 17th Jyaishtha, 1319

THE JOURNEY

Once, man was wild, and the horse too was a beast of the forest. Man could not run; the horse sped like the wind. How beautiful was its bearing, how unfettered its freedom. Man would look upon it, and envy would arise in his heart. He thought, "Had I such lightning-swift legs, four of them, I would acknowledge no distance too far—I would go on, conquering horizon after horizon before my very eyes." For that one joy of running that danced in quick rhythm through every limb of the horse, man's heart came to feel a great covetousness.

But man is not one to sit merely coveting. "How might I obtain the horse's four legs?"—sitting in the shade of a tree, this very thought he began to ponder. Such a strange notion, no creature but man would ever conceive. "I am a two-legged, upright creature; how could I possibly acquire four legs? Therefore, forever must I move step by slow step while the horse gallops swiftly away—this arrangement can admit of no exception." But man's restless mind would not, by any means, accept this.

One day he set a snare and caught the wild horse. Seizing it by the mane, mounting upon its back, he joined the horse's four legs to his own body. To bring these four legs entirely under his own control took him many a long day; he fell many times, he nearly died many times, but nothing could discourage him. That he would plunder the horse's very speed—this was his vow. And he won. Slow-moving man bound swift motion to himself and set it to work in his own service.

Travelling on and on across the land, man arrived one day at a place and saw, before him, the sea, with no way to go further. Blue water, whose depth none could tell, whose farther shore could not be seen. And lakhs upon lakhs of waves, raising their fingers in warning, threatened the people of the land, saying: "If you set foot forward even one step, we shall show you—here your tricks shall not avail." Man sat upon the shore and gazed at this unbroken denial. But through that denial there

also came a vast summons. The waves danced with peals of laughter—unlike the earth of the land, nothing could restrain them. Watching them, it seemed as though lakhs of schoolboys had been let out for recess—shouting, running wild, they could not satisfy themselves in any way; they seemed to want to kick the world about like a football and hurl it into the sky. Seeing this, man's heart could not remain seated peacefully on the shore. This intoxicating frenzy of the sea began to beat cymbals within man's very blood. He wished to make his own this horizon-spanning freedom of unhindered waters. Man began to covet this untamable joy of the sea. Like the very waves themselves, man's desire was to plunder the horizon.

But how might such a strange longing be satisfied; even the shoreline itself marks the limit of man's dominion—all his desire must come to an end here at this very border. But the more one tries to set a limit upon man's desire, the more overflowing it becomes. In no way would he accept this obstruction as final.

At last, one day, just as with the wild horse, man seized the foaming mane of the sea and mounted upon its back. The angry ocean shook its back; countless were those who drowned, countless those who died. Yet at last, one day, man harnessed even this unruly sea to himself. From one shore of it to another, the sea now sits at man's feet, its head bowed low.

What manner of being this man is, joined to the vast ocean—today, aboard this ship, we feel it directly. We are, after all, but this small creature, standing silently at one edge of the vessel, yet far, far, exceedingly far has everything become joined with me. Even that distance of which today I cannot glimpse so much as a line, even that I have, standing firmly here, taken into my possession. Whatever is obstacle, that very thing is carrying me forward upon its own back. The whole sea is mine, as though it were my own vast body, as though it were my outstretched wing. Whatever is our obstruction—that very thing we must make into our path, must fashion into the means of our liberation; this is God's command to us. Those who have accepted this command have found release upon this earth. Those who have not, for them this earth becomes a prison. Their own little village hems them in,

the corner of their own room binds them fast; with every step they take, their fetters clank and rattle.

I am travelling now in joy of heart. I had feared that the sea's rocking would be more than my body could bear. That fear has passed away. Whatever jolts I am receiving do not strike as blows—they seem, rather, like caresses. The sea is carrying me in its lap, bearing me along—just as a father carries his sick child, with just such tender care. That is why, in this voyage, up to this moment, I feel no pain of travelling at all—I am tasting only the joy of travelling itself.

It was for the sake of this very joy of travelling alone that I set out. For a long time now, a certain restlessness for this travelling, this setting-out, had been stirring me. Many a time, sitting alone on the upper veranda of our ashram building, when I gazed at the sky above our sal trees before us, that silent sky, pointing its finger toward the distance, would beckon to me. Though that sky was silent, yet the unfamiliar summons of mountains and rivers in lands beyond lands, of unnamed forests, rising up and overflowing from horizon to horizon, filled the blueness of this very sky. The soundless sky would carry to me, from far away, all that murmuring, all that clamour of unseen voices. It would say to me only, "Come, come, come out." That is not the going of any particular purpose—it is going for the joy of going itself.

Life of its own accord wishes to move; that is its very religion. Should it not move, it comes near to death. That is why, under manifold pretexts of necessity and of play, it merely goes on moving. In the sandbanks of the Padma, in the season of autumn, I have surely seen flocks of wild geese. Leaving behind the peak-ringed, solitary lakeshores of some inaccessible Himalaya, flying day and night without pause, they arrive at last upon this very sandbank of the Padma. In the season of winter, when snow and ice grow fierce, the Himalaya drives them forth—they set out to change their dwelling. So, at that season, geese indeed have some necessity for their journey southward. And yet, beyond that mere necessity, there exists something more. This very crossing of far mountains and rivers by flight—in this

the inward vitality of these birds finds its joy. Whenever the call comes to change abode, then at once the whole of life, shaken from its rest, gains the opportunity to feel itself anew.

Within me too, a call to change my dwelling had arisen. From the enclosure within which I sit, I must go somewhere else. Go on, go on, go on. Go like the waterfall, go like the wave of the sea, go like the morning bird, go like the light of dawn. It is precisely for this reason that the earth is so vast, the world so various, the sky so infinite. It is precisely for this reason that throughout the universe atom and particle dance, and countless constellations of stars, bearing their own encampments of light, wander through the sky like nomadic Bedouins of the wilderness, going none knows where. That we should build our nest forever in some single fixed place—this is not the way of the universe at all. This is precisely why the call of death is nothing but the call to change one's dwelling. Life shall never allow itself to remain bound within any eternal wall—death exists precisely so that life may advance further along life's own path.

That is why I am setting out today: just as the prince of the fairy tale would suddenly, one day, set out for no apparent reason to cross the seven seas, so too, in just such a way, I am setting out today into the world beyond. The princess has fallen asleep; that sleep will not break—the golden wand is needed. Sitting long, long in the same place, in the same routine, torpor creeps into life; it becomes insensible; it clings only to its own little bed; it becomes utterly unable to comprehend this vast earth; then the golden wand must be sought out; then a distant voyage must be undertaken; then one needs some such awakening as will, at the closed doors of eye and ear and mind, keep striking, again and again, blow after blow of the ever-new—one that will shatter our decayed foothold into fragments and lay bare the eternally new. How vast, how beautiful, how open is this world! What life, what light, what joy! In how many ways has man, encompassing this earth, gone on seeing it, thinking about it, shaping it! In the playing-field of his life, his mind, his imagination, nowhere has it come to an end. This mental world of man's, surrounding the earth—what inexhaustible and wondrous variety it holds! It is of all this, indeed, that this earth of mine is made.

That is precisely why the call comes, within the mind, to go once around the whole of it and see it directly, with one's own eyes.

No one has the capacity or the leisure to examine this vast diversity thread by thread and see it utterly, to the very last. If one goes forth before the world resolved to behold it, the fruit of that beholding is already gained. Though, in one sense, the world exists everywhere, yet only by casting off indolence, breaking free of habit, opening one's eyes, and setting out upon a journey does the dullness of our power of vision wear away, and our life become awakened to perceive the touch of the world's life. He who is inert, who lacks all impetus, loses precisely that thing which lies closest at hand of all. That is why, if one can, treating the wealth close by as something to be sorrowfully sought far away, seek it out and discover it, one attains it in far greater intimacy and depth. The true purpose underlying all our travelling is this—that which already exists, which can never be lost, that very thing we should go on saying, at every step, "it is, it is, it is"—making the eternally old ever new, and new, and new again, touching it and touching it once more with the whole of our heart.

Red Sea, 21st Jyaishtha, 1319

THE FORM OF JOY

This morning I stood on the deck of the ship, holding the railing. Through the pale blue of the sky and the deep blueness of the sea a soft, cool breeze was blowing from the western horizon. My forehead was anointed with sweetness. My mind began to say, "This, indeed, is the flowing stream of His grace-nectar."

The mind does not always speak thus. Often we behold outward beauty only outwardly—our eyes are refreshed by it, but we do not receive it into our inmost being. It is as though we merely inhale the fragrance of some immortal fruit, without tasting its flavour.

But on the day when beauty touches the innermost soul directly, on that day the infinite bursts forth entirely from within it. Then, in a single instant, the whole mind rises up singing: "No, no, this is not mere colour, not mere scent—this indeed is nectar, this indeed is the current of His universal grace."

Between sky and sea, in the light of dawn, this indescribable sweetness that has blossomed forth, layer upon layer, on every side—where does it exist? Is it in the water? Is it in the air? Who can grasp that which lies beyond all such grasping?

This alone is joy, this alone is grace. This alone, in country after country, age after age, has been refreshing the life, stealing the heart, of countless living beings—and this has never come to an end. It was by this very touch of nectar that the poet wrote his poem, that the artist fashioned his art, that the mother's heart melted with tenderness, that the lover's mind grew restless with love—cleaving, vein by vein, through the breast of the finite, in how many kinds of play has this fountain of nectar of the infinite gone on flowing, pouring forth from world to world—I cannot see its end—I cannot see its end. It is wondrous, it is beyond all wonder.

Its form is joy immortal. Here form is not the final word; here death does not mean an ending. It is through this very form that joy comes; through this very death that immortality comes. If the mind, coming only as far as form, is satisfied, if thought is exhausted upon reaching only as far as death, then what indeed have we gained by taking birth into this world! We have seen the object, but we have not seen the truth!

Do I have only eyes, only ears? Is there no truth within me, no joy? When, filled with that very truth, that very joy of mine, I look upon the world with a gaze made whole, then, at once, I perceive: before me lies this billowing sea—this flowing air—this outspread light—not mere matter, all of it is joy, all of it is divine play; the whole meaning of it lies solely within Him; what He is showing, what He is saying, what indeed do I know of it! Where the millions of streams of this sky-flooding joy, meeting in one great current, flow back again into His very heart—could I but stand there, even for an instant, I would behold the great meaning of all this, its supreme culmination. This inconceivable power, this indescribable beauty, this boundless truth, this immeasurable joy—if I should come to know it merely as earth and water, what a terrible failure that would be, what a mighty ruin! No, no—this indeed is His grace, this indeed is His manifestation, this indeed is touching me, encompassing me, sounding music upon every string of my consciousness, sustaining me, awakening me, calling to my mind from every direction of the universe, filling me, moment by moment, through ages upon ages; there is no end, nowhere is there an end, only ever more, and more, and more; yet still that One, only that One, that joy-filled, nectar-filled One! That fathomless, shoreless, undivided, boundless, silent, wordless, profoundly tranquil One—yet how many are His waves, how many His songs of tumult!

Fill my life, take away my thirst,

Give me more, more, more of life!

In Thy world, in Thy dwelling,

Give me more, more, more of place!

More light, more light,

Pour, Lord, into these eyes of mine!

Fill full my flute with melody upon melody,

Give me more, more, more of tune!

More pain, more pain,

Give me more, more of awareness!

Breaking the door, shattering obstruction,

Save me, oh save me!

More love, more love—

Let this self of mine sink and drown!

Into Thine own stream of nectar,

Give more, and ever more.

Red Sea, 22nd Jyaishtha, 1319

TWO DESIRES

Only man says that desire has no end. No other creature on earth speaks thus. All other living beings sustain life within a certain limit set by nature, and even the mind's every aspiration keeps within that limit. The eating and roaming of animals do not seek to transgress the boundary of their natural need. At a certain point their longing is satisfied, and there they know how to rest content. When want is fulfilled, their desire ceases of itself; they have no second desire whose task is to goad and keep that first desire awake again.

What is astonishing in man's nature is this: that one desire rides mounted upon another. When the desire to eat one's fill is naturally satisfied, even then man's other desire keeps insisting that this first desire be forcibly kept awake. Somehow, by taking condiments, by using medicines, he drives the exhausted desire for food even beyond its necessity.

In this, man does himself considerable harm. For this is not a natural desire. Natural desire is easily satisfied within the bounds of its own inherent nature. But this unnatural desire of man's will not, by any means, accept contentment. There is something within it that goes on saying only—more, more, more!

But why should man possess this desire at all, when it can only harm him? Looking only at this unruly desire of his own, man has conceived, in the affairs of the universe, the idea of a Satan. When, in Hebrew mythology, the first man and woman dwelt in the garden of paradise, God bound their desire within the limit of nature, saying, "Be content within this. The kingdom of life shall be yours; covet not the kingdom of knowledge." Every living creature of paradise remained bound within the limit of that contentment; man alone said, "I want more than what has been given." This very stepping forward toward "more" is a very perilous kingdom. Here no limit of natural satisfaction has been fixed anywhere, and so there is no counsellor to say how far, in which direction, one may go. That is why, in this

pathless kingdom of discontent, the fear of death is scattered on every side. Man, having been drawn by irresistible force into so terrible a field, cursed that force and called it "Satan."

But however much we may rage, however we may act, we cannot, after all, acknowledge Satan in the universe. This much must be granted: this "more"-desire of man's, superimposed upon his ordinary desire, is not an attack from some external enemy. Man may call it his baser nature, but this very desire is his true, essential human nature. Therefore, so long as he cannot make this desire victorious, he shall have no peace whatsoever—so long, he must go on wandering, struck by blow after blow, unto death.

But how shall he make this desire for "more" victorious? Eating will fill the belly regardless; enjoyment must, at some point, come to its natural cessation—the desire for "more" must, at some limit or other, admit defeat. Not merely admit defeat—at that point it will suffer pain, and cause pain. Disease will come, distortion will come; he will go on hurting himself and others. For where nature has drawn a limit, to transgress it is to invite punishment.

Nor is that all. If, within nature's bounded field, we let this desire for "more" run its race, then we inevitably come to trample upon one another's necks. To take more than what is truly mine, I must lay hands upon what is yours. Then, either secret deception or open violence must be resorted to. Then society is thrown into chaos through the weak man's falsehood and the strong man's tyranny.

It is in just this way that sin arrives, that ruin arrives. But had this sin never come, man would never have found his path. Where this thirst for "more" drags him, and where the fire of sin blazes up there, then the thought occurs of somehow bridling the horse and turning it back. That is why, above all other teachings, humankind has established this discipline: to bring that "more"-desire under control—for God has given man this one terrible steed, and none knows where it may carry us and

cast us down. Put a bridle on its mouth, learn to control it. But that does not mean we should altogether stop its feed and kill it outright. For this very desire for "more" is man's true steed.

The desire for meeting one's needs is the steed of animals. Without this, their life could not proceed at all. This desire is the root desire of natural life. This is the desire to remove suffering. Wherever this desire meets obstruction, there lies the animal's sorrow; wherever it is fulfilled, there lies its joy. That is why we see that animals have pleasure and pain, but no sin and virtue.

But this desire for "more" that exists in man is not the desire for comfort, not the desire for pleasure; in truth, it is the very desire for sorrow. That man, casting aside mere life itself, again and again sets forth to discover the North Pole and South Pole of the kingdom of knowledge, of love, and of power—this is not his search for pleasure. This is not any desire to fulfil some present necessity of his.

In truth, there exist in man these two levels of desire: one, the desire of necessity, and the other, the desire of non-necessity. One is the desire for that without which nothing can proceed at all; the other is the desire for that without which one could get along quite easily. What is astonishing is this: the power of this second desire in man's mind is so great that, when it awakens, it utterly shatters this first desire entirely. Then he pays no heed at all to any claim of pleasure, comfort, or necessity. Then he says, "I do not want pleasure, I want only the More; pleasure is not my happiness—the More alone is my happiness." Then he says, bhūmaiva sukham—"only the vast, the boundless, is happiness."

What is meant by pleasure is not the boundless. The boundless is not pleasure, but joy. The difference between pleasure and joy is this: pleasure's opposite is pain, but joy's opposite is not pain. Just as Shiva drank the poison halāhala, so joy accepts sorrow just as effortlessly. Indeed, it is through sorrow itself that joy fulfils itself,

realises its own completeness. That is why the penance of sorrow is itself the penance of joy.

That is why we see: like other animals, man's lower desire is the desire for the removal of suffering, while his higher desire is the desire to attain joy by absorbing suffering into itself. This very desire alone keeps telling us, "nālpe sukham asti, bhūmaiva vijijñāsitavyaḥ"—"there is no happiness in the small; the vast alone is to be sought."

That is why, within the field of nature, taking its own simple understanding, the animal remained bound within the eternal cage of its effort to remove suffering. But man, in the field of his mind, refused to be confined within any limit whatsoever of knowledge, love, or power; he said, "Not habit, not prejudice, not custom—I shall know the Boundless."

If this is so, then what need was there for man to make such desperate effort to bring this desire for "more," this desire for joy, under control at all? Would it not have sufficed for man's humanity to close its eyes and surrender itself entirely to the powerful current of this vast desire?

The chief reason for putting reins upon desire is this: that man has fallen into a terrible predicament in trying to determine the proper domain of these two desires. There is a certain field of our natural necessity within which we are bound. There, if we try forcibly to stretch our craving beyond its natural limit, danger will follow. This boundary-fence is, to some degree, elastic—it will bear stretching to a certain point. But if, driven by reckless daring, one keeps only stretching that pull further and further, Ravana's golden Lanka is destroyed, the towering splendour of Babylon comes crashing down; and if we turn the churning-rod of our desire for "more" in that very direction, disease, distortion, and the poison of sin are churned up.

We see, then, that it is precisely the domain of the ego that is narrow. There, whatever you wish to take in excessive measure becomes a burden. To try to make one's own pleasure, one's own self-interest, one's own power boundless is an attempt at self-destruction. In that place the fullness of the boundless cannot be endured at all. In eating, in enjoying, in the pursuit of self-interest, the boundless is exceedingly monstrous.

For this reason, when this desire for "more" in man, like a mad elephant, enters the fragile arena of his petty ego, terrible danger follows. It would be one thing if it merely brought suffering to oneself and others. But its misfortune extends far beyond that. In this lies sin; its measure is not that of mere sorrow. For I have already suggested that sorrow alone does not harm man—indeed, sorrow may even work for man's good—but sin alone is man's supreme loss.

Look, too, at the other side of this matter. When man's desire for necessity, that is, his bounded worldly desire, abandons the field of self-interest and enters the field of higher, spiritual purpose, then too it becomes exceedingly repulsive. Then it does nothing but keep count of merit. That which is perfect joy, that which lies beyond all reckoning of consequence, it reduces to sums of profit and calculates in the arithmetic of results. And relying upon that calculation, man grows arrogant, becomes entangled ever more deeply in the net of outwardness, and goes on hoarding his self-interested purity with the utmost caution, narrowly, like a miser's wealth. Then, in the field of the boundless, he erects his own little fence, like a worldly-wise man of affairs, and creates duality. This too is another form of sin—turning the spiritual into the outward, and the higher purpose into mere self-interest.

If we examine what this sense of sin that arises in man's mind actually is, we find this: our noblest desire, which is meant to lead us toward the boundless, when dragged instead in the very opposite direction toward the petty ego, does not merely cause sorrow—indeed, in particular instances, sorrow may not occur at all—but even then, we lose the boundless. Our higher aspect, our aspect of truth,

becomes destroyed; for an animal, this makes no difference at all, but for man, there is no greater destruction than this. This sense of ruin is not equal in every heart—indeed, in some hearts it is exceedingly faint. But, on the whole, in the mind of all humanity, this sense of sin has grown far greater than the sense of sorrow. So great, indeed, that man wishes to expiate this sin through much suffering. Through the word "sin," man has given verbal expression to one of his own deepest calamities, and through this very word he has given his truest account of himself.

That account is this: man's natural field of movement lies not within bounded nature but in the infinite—there lies his joy; the direction of the ego is not the direction of his ultimate truth—his truth lies in the direction of Brahman. Man has found within himself a certain supreme desire, a desire that will, by no means, accept the small—one that, through arduous discipline, has been carrying man's mind, through knowledge, through science, through art, through literature, ceaselessly toward joyful liberation, and one that, through love, devotion, and purity, is raising the whole stream of man's consciousness up into one boundless, unfathomable ocean of nectar. Whatever obstructs that supreme movement of man's, whatever drags him in the opposite direction—that alone is sin, that alone is calamity, that alone is his great ruin.

Red Sea, 23rd Jyaishtha, Wednesday, 1319

WITHIN AND WITHOUT

When first I woke from sleep at dawn in the cabin bed, I looked out through the porthole and saw that the sea was rolling in waves today; a strong wind was blowing from the west. Listening intently to the murmuring speech of the waves, it seemed to me at one moment that some invisible instrument had struck up a song. That song's sound was not, indeed, as overwhelming as thunder—it was deep and drawn out; but just as, amid the mighty clamour of drum and cymbal, the single unbroken note of one violin-string plays on within the breast, rising above all else, so too did that calm, grave, unbroken current of tone well up, filling the very heart's core of the whole sky. At last it came to this—I began trying to catch, in my own voice, the tune I was hearing within my mind. But such an effort is a kind of violence; it destroys the peace of that vast melody; and so I fell silent.

One thought came to me: could it be that this song which the great ocean had wakened at dawn in the instrument of my mind was but the echo of the wind's roar and the murmuring speech of the waves? No—I could not call it in any way an imitation of this sky-filling clamour of water and air. It was wholly its own; it was a single song; within it, tones were unfolding one after another, slowly, layer upon layer, like the petals of some fragrant flower.

And yet it seemed to me, too, that it was nothing separate—that it was itself the innermost sound of this ocean's own vast surge of noise; that this very song was ceaselessly rising upward, filling the sky pore by pore, like the fragrant smoke of incense rising in a temple of worship. That which surges up with every breath the ocean draws—outwardly, it is sound; inwardly, it is song.

There is indeed a connection between the outer and the inner, but that connection is not one of resemblance; rather, I find, it is a connection of utter dissimilarity.

Upon the eye falls the blow of vibration, yet in the mind I behold light; the body encounters matter, yet in consciousness beauty awakens; without, events occur, yet within, joy and sorrow surge up like waves. The one has extension, and can be analysed; the other has no extension—it is undivided. This "I," by which I mean that which, through so many outward sounds, touches, thoughts and feelings of so many moments, yet reveals itself in its own wholeness through all of these—that is the I; and it is not merely a reflection of its outer form, but rather is expressed precisely through the outer's very unlikeness to it.

It is for the sake of revealing this matchless inner form of the universal form that artists and men of genius feel such restlessness. For this reason their effort can never succeed through mere imitation. Often, through the stupor of habit, a dullness settles upon our perception. Then we see only the surface of what we look at, and nothing more. When the visible form gives itself to us as its own final truth, and we accept that account as the whole of it, then our consciousness does not awaken to that dulled acquaintance. Then we walk about the world, move here and there, and do our work—but we do not receive the world through consciousness. For it is this world's innermost matchlessness that is the true sustenance of our consciousness. It is the task of poets and men of genius to lift the veil woven by habit and disclose that hidden marvel.

For this reason, they do not follow our accustomed forms but give them a hard shake instead. They take one form and carry it into another, refusing to honour its claim to finality. What is given to the eye they set instead at the threshold of the ear; what is given to the ear they transmute and hold within the lines given to the eye. In this way they show the world that form is not an absolute truth—it is merely a metaphor; only when one can penetrate into its inner depth is there release from its bondage, and only then is there deliverance into joy.

Our men of genius composed a melody in Bhairon and Todi and called it a morning song. Yet within it can one find any copy whatsoever of the manifold sounds of the newly-wakened world of morning? Not the least trace. Then what can it mean to call Bhairon-Todi the melody of morning? It means this: our men of genius, through their inner faculty, have heard the inmost music of all the sound and silence of

morning. Should one try to match this melody against any outward event of the morning hour, that attempt would fail.

This particular quality of our country's music pleases me greatly. In our land, melodies have been composed for dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, midnight, and for the rains and for spring. Whether that melody will ring true for everyone, I cannot say. At least I myself do not feel Sarang in my heart as the tune of midday. Let that be as it may—but into the inner ear of our men of genius has entered something of that eternal music which sounds, hour by hour, season by season, in the hidden royal chamber of the Lord of the Universe. Behind the outward manifestation lies a manifestation of some deeper depth—and this our country's Todi and Kanada make known to us.

Europe's great composers have surely, by one path or another, sought to express in their music that very message of the universe's inwardness; when I come to know their compositions in such a manner, that subject may be discussed. For now, a thought or two has arisen in my mind concerning what little I have overheard, in the outer courtyard of European musical gatherings, amid the crowd of ordinary listeners.

Among the passengers on our ship, some sing and play music of an evening. Whenever such a gathering convenes, I too go and sit in a corner of that room. It is not that English songs draw me merely because I find them naturally pleasing. But I know for certain that there is a discipline behind finding a good thing pleasing. What captivates us without such discipline is often mere infatuation, and what disciplines us is the true nourishment. For that reason I make a practice of listening to European music. Even when I do not care for it, I do not dismiss it in disrespect and put it away.

On this ship there is one young man and one or two ladies who, I believe, do not sing badly. I observe that the listeners take particular delight in their singing. On

days when the gathering grows especially lively, one song after another continues for a long while. Some song of England's pride and glory, some despairing lover's farewell-song, some lover's declaration of love. In all of them I notice one particular trait: at every turn, a great effort is made to lend force to the melody and to the singer's voice. That force does not seem to be the music's own inner strength—it seems rather an effort applied from without. That is, an attempt to make the rise and fall of the heart's feeling utterly vivid and immediate through emphasis of tone and voice.

This is natural enough. Along with the surge of our own hearts, our voices too naturally grow now soft, now loud. But song is surely not a mimicry of nature; for song and acting are not the same thing. If we mingle acting with song, then song's pure power is obscured. Thus, sitting in the ship's saloon listening to their singing, it constantly seems to me that they are, as it were, thrusting the heart's feeling at me, pointing a finger before my very eyes to make me see it.

But in music we do not wish to look at things from without in that fashion—it is not my concern to know just how the lover feels in his particular circumstance. It is that music which plays deep within that feeling, in its very core, that we wish to know through song. This inner revelation is utterly different in kind from outward expression. For what is passion, viewed from without, is—viewed from within—beauty. Just as the vibration of ether and the manifestation of light are distinct, so too are these two things distinct.

That we weep by shedding tears, and express joy through laughter, is natural enough. But if the singer of a sorrowful song borrows the aid of actual weeping, or the singer of a joyous song borrows actual laughter, then, without doubt, an insult is done to the goddess of music. In truth, it is precisely where the tear within the tear does not fall, and the laughter within the laughter does not ring out, that music's true influence begins. There, through man's laughter and weeping, consciousness spreads into some infinity where, in the melody of our joys and sorrows, the voice of every tree and plant, every river and stream, becomes

articulate, and we come to understand the very waves of our hearts as but the play of the universal heart-ocean.

But when we force tone and voice, applying pressure to imitate the rise and fall of feeling, that very depth of music is obstructed. Music has its own ebb and flow, like the tide of the sea, but that is its own affair; like the metre of a poem, it is but the footfall of its own dance of beauty; it is not a puppet-show performed for our emotions.

Though acting, on the whole, leans toward imitation more than other arts, still it is not entirely a matter of childish sport. It too undertakes to part the veil of the natural and reveal the play of what lies within. But to lean too heavily toward the natural is to obscure that very inward aspect. One often sees upon the stage that, in order to portray human passion as immensely large, actors resort to violence of voice and gesture. The reason is this: one who, instead of revealing truth, wishes merely to copy truth, exaggerates like a false witness. He has not the courage to embrace restraint. In our country's theatre, one may daily witness this laboured gymnastic of the false witness. But of this the supreme instance I saw was in England. There I went to see the famous actor Irving in Hamlet and in The Bride of Lammermoor. Watching Irving's tremendous acting, I was left dumbfounded. Such unrestrained excess utterly destroyed the clarity of the matter to be enacted; it drew one only outward—never before had I seen such an obstacle to entering into depth.

Of all things, art has the greatest need of restraint. For restraint alone is the gateway into the inner world. Even in the discipline of human life, those who wish to apprehend spiritual truth curtail the outward apparatus and take refuge in restraint. It is for this reason that in the discipline of the soul this strange saying has been uttered: "tyaktena bhunjīthāḥ"—by renunciation shalt thou enjoy. The supreme discipline of art, too, is the discipline of the boundless. For this reason, to rock the heart into intoxication through violent blows is not art's true business. Its true aim is that, through restraint, it shall carry us into the depth of the inner world.

It will not merely copy what the eye already sees; nor, by daubing that very thing with a coarser brush and exaggerating it, will it beguile us as one beguiles a child.

This tendency—to keep merely jolting our minds through emphasis on force—is generally to be seen in the domain of European art. On the whole, Europe wishes to see the real exactly as the real. Hence, where I see a painting of devotion, I find the two hands joined, the face lifted to the sky, the pupils of the eyes rolled back, the outward gesture of devotion rendered with utmost distinctness. Those students in our country who go about imitating European art have taken to just this path of gesture. They think that mere forceful emphasis upon the real will somehow suffice for the work of art. Hence, when they set out to paint Narada, they end up painting the Narada of the travelling players—for meditation's own vision is, of course, no discipline of theirs; nowhere save in the travelling players' troupe have they ever beheld Narada at all.

In our country, once, in the age of Buddhism, Greek sculptors carved images of the ascetic Buddha. That is an exact likeness of a body wasted by fasting; in it one may count the very ribs, one by one. Indian sculptors, too, carved images of the ascetic Buddha, but in theirs there is no realistic record of the fast—in the inward image of the ascetic there is no reckoning of bone and sinew; it was not made to obtain a doctor's certificate. Precisely because it paid no heed whatsoever to the real was it able to reveal the true. The tradesman-artist bears witness to the real; the artist of genius bears witness to the true. We see the real with the eye, and there is no way to see the true save with the heart. The moment we set out to see with the heart, we must curb the violence of what is given to the eye; we must have the courage to say to the outward form: "You are not the ultimate, you are not the absolute, you are not the goal—you are merely a humble occasion."

Arabian Sea, 15th Jyaishtha, 1329

PLAY AND WORK

The first port of the Mediterranean is Port Said. From here we must cross over to the shores of Europe. We reached the harbour toward evening. Lights had already been lit in the windows of the town. Small boats and motor-launches, in order to carry the passengers ashore, had come crowding from all sides and encircled our ship. Many went ashore to wander through the shops and bazaars of Port Said. I did not descend into that crowd. I stood holding the ship's railing and watched. At the meeting-place of the dark sea and the dark sky, in one small patch of space, mankind had lit its handful of lights and utterly denied the night.

A number of new passengers were to board at Port Said. The old company had grown quite restless at this news. All other new things men seek out, but a new human being!—there is no subject of greater anxiety. Once he draws near, one must settle accounts with him, within and without. He is no mere object of curiosity. He pushes his mind against the minds of others. There is no crowd like the crowd of humanity.

Those who boarded the ship at Port Said were almost all French. Our deck is now thronged with people upon people. To move about, guarding against collision with one another, now truly requires the skill of a sailor.

The daily round of the European men and women upon deck, from morning until ten at night, I have watched before on other occasions, and I watch it now again, and yet again. At first sight, one notices that they are perpetually restless. Such restlessness is foreign to our habits. In our hot country we wish, by whatever means, to remain cool—even the sight of another's restlessness before our eyes makes us feel the heat. "Be quiet, stay still, do not needlessly stir up trouble"—this is the discipline of our whole land. But these people say only, "Let us do something." And so, young and old together, they keep on romping and frolicking. Laughter, talk, play, merriment—without pause, without cessation.

When I set aside the obstruction of habit and look at this scene, it seems to me that I am watching a play of Nature herself. It is as if a fountain were playing, as if a river were flowing, as if trees and plants were reveling in the wind. Even after all its needs are met, the vital force cannot exhaust itself; then, through that very surplus abundance, it manifests itself by itself.

When we take a small child somewhere with us, we bring along some arrangement of toys; otherwise it is hard to keep him quiet. For the flow of his vitality runs beyond the bounds of his need. That surging tide of life, if it finds no material for its play, grows restless. This is exactly why children must run about without cause, why their shouting has no meaning at all, and why watching their play brings a smile to a wise man's face and irritation to some others'. But however great a nuisance their play may be to us, there is no doubt that stopping the play would make the nuisance graver still.

These European passengers who have boarded the ship—for them too, arrangements for countless kinds of amusement have had to be made, past all counting. If it were our own ship, we would scarcely have given a thought to providing such a running riot of games, apart from thoroughly sedate pastimes like cards and dice. Especially for a journey of a few days, we would certainly have dispensed with such needless burdens at the very outset, and no one would have minded in the least.

But European passengers need games to keep them cool. In the flow of their vitality there is a vast surplus beyond daily use—who is to make that sit quiet? It must be kept ceaselessly occupied. Hence toy after toy must be supplied, and game after game must be devised, to keep it beguiled.

So I observe: young and old alike, these people are forever fidgeting and frolicking. That struck me, at first, as wholly unnecessary and rather strange. I thought to

myself: for grown people, all this childishness is nothing but a token of pointless excess. Play befits children because play is their proper age; at the age for work, such enthusiasm for play is thoroughly unseemly.

But once I understood for certain that, for the European, this restlessness and this zeal for play are entirely in keeping with nature, then I began to see in it a kind of gracefulness. It is like the needless abundance of springtime. Far more buds appear than the fruit that will ever set. But without this superfluous wealth, want would creep in at every step of what is truly needed.

There is nothing whatsoever shameful in their play. For this play is not the idler's way of passing time; for we have seen that the strength of their vitality does not spend itself merely in play. In the field of work, this same strength shows tireless zeal, and its influence is irresistible. With what astonishing capability they have spread their vast web of work across the whole earth—to consider it is to be struck dumb with wonder. Behind it lies what immeasurable exertion of body and mind. Nowhere is there any dullness, any slackness; vigilance is ever awake; not a moment's opportunity is seen to go to waste.

The very strength that flows perpetually into the enterprise of work is the strength that quivers in the exuberance of play. This abundance of strength I cannot dismiss with a wise man's contempt. It is this that has spread man's glory into ever new creation. It sacrifices itself effortlessly in every direction, and precisely for that reason wins itself back manifold. It acknowledges no limit anywhere—in empire, in commerce, in science, in literature—striking day and night with tremendous force at the barred gates of the unattainable.

This surging strength, whose one face is play and whose other is work, is true beauty. In woman, where we see the manifestation of Lakshmi, we see on the one hand the sweetness of adornment and grace, and on the other, tireless devotion to work and the merit of service. The severance of these two is ugliness itself. In

truth, strength alone reveals itself as beauty, while the lack of strength, through slackness and disorder, sinks itself only into squalor. Squalor is the very defeat of man's strength; here lie ill health, poverty,

and superstition; here man says, "I have let go the helm—now let fate do as it will." Here alone does mutual severance occur; work begun is never finished, and whatever we try to build up crumbles into ruin. Lack of strength alone is true lack of grace.

I see this same truth even amid the abundant merriment of these people on the ship's deck. Within all their games and sports there naturally appears a certain order. For this reason their merriment never grows disorderly. Each one must come dressed properly, at the proper time, in the proper attire. Within their mutual conversation and acquaintance a hidden rule prevails; there is no possibility of overstepping the bounds of that rule. Because it rests upon this ordered discipline, their gaiety can flow in such an overflowing, powerful current without ever running into disaster.

I cannot help imagining, in my own mind, what this scene would be like if only people of our own country were gathered upon this deck, and none other. It would first appear that no single arrangement could suit everyone alike. Our habits and manners do not know how to reconcile themselves with one another. Among Europeans there exists a certain domain in which they are private, and another in which they belong to all. Where they are private, that domain is theirs alone—it is closed off. There, none has unrestricted right of entry, and everyone readily accepts that exclusion. There, each person conducts his individual life according to his own wish and habit. But the moment they step outside that domain, they submit themselves to the discipline that governs all—there, under no circumstance do they drag their private world along with them. It is precisely because these two domains remain so distinctly separate that mingling with one another becomes, for them, so easy and so well-ordered. Among us, because no such division exists, everything falls into disarray, for no one is willing to observe any boundary anywhere. Were

we given this deck, we would each behave according to our own convenience. We would scatter our bundles and baggage wherever we pleased. Some of us would be cleaning our teeth; some would spread out bedding wherever we liked, blocking the way, and sleep; some would be rinsing out hookah-water, and turning the hookah-bowl upside down, would empty the ash and burnt tobacco into whatever spot happened to be near; some would have a servant come and knead their limbs, rubbing in oil with much noise. No one could ever discover where any household article had got to, and there would be no end to shouting and calling out. If anyone even attempted to introduce order and discipline into all this, we would feel deeply insulted, and a great uproar would follow. Further, no one would give a thought to whether some other person might have reading or work to attend to, or might, now and then, wish for some solitude—indeed, one would suddenly find that the very book one had been reading had been snatched up and was being read by someone else; one's binoculars would be passing from hand to hand among five different people, with no urgency whatever about returning them to their owner; someone would casually pick up and pore over the very notebook lying on one's table; people would walk into a room uninvited and settle down to chat, and some person fond of his own voice would burst, regardless of hour, into loud song, feeling not the least embarrassment even though his voice lacked all sweetness of tone. Whatever fell wherever, there it would remain lying. If we ate fruit, its peel and seeds would lie scattered right there on the deck, and days would pass in nothing but endless searching for shawls, socks, and neck-scarves.

Not only would this cause mutual inconvenience to everyone—health, happiness, and beauty too would vanish on every side. Merriment would not run its course unhindered, and as for work, that goes without saying. The very strength that succeeds at work by observing rule and order is the strength that also preserves order within merriment and renders it wholesome and beautiful. Just as a warrior naturally loves and cherishes his sword, so too the man of strength naturally guards discipline with heartfelt affection. For discipline is his very weapon; if strength does not honour discipline, it renders itself futile.

That strength honours discipline—it does so not merely for discipline's own sake, but in order to honour itself. And when weakness honours discipline, it honours discipline only as such; then, whether from fear, or from greed, or merely from the inertia of long habit, it bows its head and accepts discipline as its lord. But wherever it is not compelled—wherever discipline must be observed for its own sake alone—there weakness cheats discipline and, in cheating it, cheats itself. There lies all its ugliness, all its wilfulness.

In whatever country the government of men has been conducted from without, wherever man has never honoured man's own free strength, and where king, teacher, and scripture, without reasoning, have forcibly driven man toward what was deemed good for him—there man has been deprived of the natural impulse to observe discipline through the joy of his own strength. Once men have been habituated to work under compulsion, one cannot, merely by cutting the bonds, obtain work from them thereafter. This is why, where we do observe discipline, we observe it as a slave does; and where we do not, we cheat it as a slave does too. This is why, when the rule of our society was intact, water in the tanks, teaching in the schools, shelter in the wayside inns, were all readily to be had; but now that the outward discipline of society has grown slack, we have no roads, no landing-ghats, no water in our tanks; the wants of the common people go unrelieved, and nowhere does any natural strength to serve the people rouse itself into action. Either we curse Fate, or we look wistfully toward the face of the Government Sahib.

But in all these matters, it is difficult to determine, with certainty, which is cause and which effect. Those who tamely allow outward discipline to bind them afterwards find themselves bound by outward discipline alone; those in whom the abundance of their own strength makes it wholly impossible to accept that discipline passively are precisely the ones who, through their own joy, evolve their own discipline and thereby win their freedom. Otherwise, this freedom cannot be put to use merely by placing it, ready-made, into one's hands. Freedom is not a thing from without—it is a thing from within; hence there is no possibility of begging it from anyone else. So long as we have not won that freedom through our own natural strength, outward compulsion, in one guise or another, will continue

to put blinkers on our eyes and a rope around our neck and drive us along. So long, whatever we may say with our lips, when it comes to action we ourselves, wherever we find the opportunity, will wish to impose discipline upon others. When it comes to gaining political rights, we shall recite the scriptures of European history; but in matters social and domestic, we shall go on narrowing the rights of the younger before the elder, and of the weak before the strong. Whenever we wish to do good to someone, it must be according to our own opinion, by our own rule; we have not the courage to let the one whose good we intend become good according to his own rule. Thus do we nurture weakness in our very bones and marrow, even as we wish to obtain the rights of the strong, from without, as though they were some treasure won in a dream.

For this reason I observe, with the deepest sorrow, that wherever we have come together to undertake some joint task, wherever we have had the opportunity to govern some institution of our own by rules of our own making, there, step by step, disunion and slackness creep in and reduce everything to ruin. Not at the hand of any external enemy, but this weakness within, this lack of grace—to save ourselves from that is our one and only problem. The day must come when we tell ourselves, with the whole of our mind, that the discipline which is man's necklace shall not become a fetter round his feet. We must know clearly that truth must somehow be honoured—but when we honour truth within, that is joy; when we honour it only from without, that is sorrow. It is precisely when the strength to honour truth within is lacking that its rule from without grows tyrannical. Therefore let us not try to absolve ourselves of our own fault merely by heaping curses upon what is outward.

IN LONDON

Our days upon the sea came to their end. On the last two days a strong wind arose; and with it, in step with the sea's own turmoil, an inward agitation stirred within us as well. I reflected that in this the sea was not to blame—the fault lay with the Captain. We arrived two days later than we had been scheduled to arrive. The god of the waters had, no doubt, made careful calculation of wind and weather for this weak-hearted traveller—but man's reckoning went astray.

From Marseilles I ran in one bound to Paris, and there, for a single day, drew breath. I scoured the salt of the sea from my body, and surrendered myself into the hands of dry land. After a meal, I got into a motor-car and once went whirling round and round through the streets of Paris.

Seen from without, one feels that Paris is the playground of the whole of Europe. Here the lamp of the theatre never grows dim. On every side, vast preparations for merriment and delight. What adornment the beautiful city of Paris wears, all to make mankind happy! One thought alone comes to mind—that there is no effort here to make happiness come easily. In the days when kings held sole dominion over the earth, the height of pleasure belonged only to the palace of the king. Now every man is a king. What a vast enterprise this pleasure-house of the whole of mankind has become! For its sake, how many slaves toil ceaselessly, day and night, beyond all reckoning. For its sake, how many ships, how many trainloads laden with goods, come daily from how many inaccessible corners of the earth—who keeps count of that?

This king that is Man has grown so vast, so manifold in his pleasure, that one is loath to compare it with the languid delight of the idle voluptuary. This is the mighty pleasure of a mighty mind; a hard task indeed it is to please one who does not easily consent to be pleased. Many enjoy, and many labour to supply that enjoyment,

drowning in this ocean of pleasure—yet still, on the whole, from within all this one glimpses a certain triumphant image of human strength that one cannot despise.

On a Sunday I crossed the sea from Calais and reached Dover. There, when I boarded the train with English fellow-travellers, I felt a great sense of ease settle upon me. It seemed to me I had come among my own kin. It is the English tongue that I know. Man's speech is like light. As far as this speech extends, so far does man's heart of itself unfold and reveal itself. The moment I gained the English tongue, I gained the English heart. Wherever there is understanding, there is joy. In France I had only the eye's knowledge, but was deprived of the heart's knowledge—and this alone obstructed my joy. The instant I set foot in Dover, it seemed to me that obstruction had vanished. Wherever I stood, it was not merely that I stood upon the soil—I had entered into the heart of man.

After a long time I came to London. Even then I had seen crowds enough on London's streets, but now a new affliction—the motor-car—has been added to it. Through it the city's restless bustle has taken on an even more powerful embodiment. Motor-chariots, motor-omnibuses, motor-vans go rushing in a hundred streams through every artery of London. I reflect that, merely in terms of the sheer velocity of movement through all of London's streets, how terribly immense a thing this is! And how fearsome, then, must be that inward force of mind of which this is but the outward embodiment! With what tremendous power do they wrestle with time and space! Pedestrians who go about on foot must sharpen their vigilance day by day. Whatever else the mind may be thinking—no matter what—it must, side by side with that, come to constant terms with this manifold movement without. A single miscalculation spells danger. Just as the deer's alertness has grown keen in its effort to escape the claws of the beast of prey, so here, buffeted continually by the press of haste on every side, the people's wariness attains an extraordinary sharpness. The power to see quickly, hear quickly, think quickly, and resolve upon action is forever increasing. Whoever needs time to see, to hear, and to reflect will simply be trampled underfoot here.

Gradually, meetings with friends began to take place. Whatever kindness and affection I received, I received it from foreign hands, and for that reason it rose doubly precious in my eyes; how near one man may be to another is felt more intensely, and more deeply, through the very medium of distance.

In the course of this, one day I was invited to a luncheon given by the paper The Nation. The Nation is the foremost weekly journal here of the liberal party. Those great souls of England who do not weigh their own country and foreign lands, their own people and other peoples, upon the false balance of self-interest; who will grant refuge to injustice under no pretext whatsoever; who are the unfeigned friends of the whole of mankind—it is the Nation that is charged with bearing their message.

The editors and writers of the Nation gather together once a week at a luncheon; here they converse as they eat, and after the meal discuss the subjects for the coming week's articles. Needless to say, the writers of so first-rate a journal are, every one of them, persons of extraordinary learning and ability. That day, having found a place at their table of discussion, I derived very great pleasure indeed.

Sitting among them, one thought kept recurring to me, again and again—that every one of them knows he bears a genuine responsibility. These men are not merely composing sentences; each of their essays surely gives some tug, to the right or to the left, upon the very rudder of the British Empire's ship. In such circumstances, a writer cannot help but bring the whole of his mind to bear upon what he writes. In the newspapers of our own country there is no such necessity; we demand no such responsibility of the writer, and for this very reason the writer's powers do not wholly cast off idleness, and he slips through with makeshift work. This is why our editors see no need to train or caution their writers—any casual person writes whatever he pleases, and readers read it uncritically. It is because we do not truly cultivate the field of truth that so little grain appears in our harvest-basket—the food of the mind is not being properly grown.

I have seen, in our own country, gatherings for discussion of political and other matters; how much greater is the force of the voice there than the force of the argument! Here, how calmly, and with what deliberateness, did the debate proceed. Instead of letting disagreement of opinion obstruct the matter, they let it carry the matter forward. In this brief while I came to understand how thoroughly natural to them has become the habit of working together, many hands as one. Their work is weighty indeed, yet in the very method of their work there is not the least trace of needless friction or waste. Their chariot is vast, and its pace is swift too, but its wheel turns effortlessly and makes not the slightest sound.

FRIEND

Having come to London, I took shelter in a hotel; it felt as though I had come and settled by the wayside of the coming-and-going of this locality's populace. I get no news of what is happening within; I form no acquaintance with the people either—I merely see people going and coming. This much alone strikes the eye: there is no limit, no bound, to the bustle of humanity; what such an excess of urgency could possibly be for, we cannot fathom. Where this tremendous bustle strikes, in the end, whether it causes harm or brings increase—whether anyone keeps any account of that at all—I do not know. The clock strikes, clang, clang; I go to the dining-place and see one small table after another, each surrounded by two or three men and women, dining in silence; the waiter, tall of stature, tray in hand, moves about with grave face, swift step, and deft hand, serving all; some, even as they eat, finish reading the newspaper; then, opening their watch, glancing at it once, clapping their hat upon their head, off they go, briskly, briskly; the room grows empty. Only at mealtime do a handful of people gather together for a while; after that, who goes where, no one keeps track. I myself have no need to; in false imitation of everyone else, I too open my watch once, glance at it, then close the watch again and put it back in my pocket. When it is neither time to eat nor time to sleep, the hotel feels like a boat moored to the shore—if one must remain there at such times, one cannot think of any reason why one is there at all. For those who have no home of their own, only a place of work, the hotel suits well enough. For someone like myself, utterly without necessary business, so wholesale, so impersonal an arrangement for lodging simply will not do. Opening the window, I see the tide of humanity rushing off in every direction. I think to myself: these people seem like the hammer-blows of some invisible smith. And the very thing that is being forged is also, on the whole, invisible; it is some vast factory of history; countless hammers, swift and mighty, are falling in countless places at once. I stand outside that engine and gaze on—I see only that these living hammers, driven by the steam of hunger, are flying about with a double velocity.

To one who is a foreigner, arriving here for the first time, it is only this most vast image of humanity-as-Time, the maker of this land's history, that strikes the eye.

What heat, what noise, what a whirl of wheels! I try, closing my eyes for a moment, to imagine the whole of this city of London's movement, all its labour—what a fearful exertion! Toward what goal is this ceaseless force forever striking, and toward what expression is it forever rousing some unexpressed thing?

But the day cannot be spent merely watching mankind from this mechanical side. There, man is man; unless one gains acquaintance with him there, what has one come for? But where man is a machine, the eye falls easily enough; where man is man, it is not so easy. Unless the inner man himself comes forward and calls one in, there is no entry to be had. But that, surely, is not like buying a ticket to a theatre; it is not to be had for money—it is a thing beyond price.

By good fortune, an opportunity arose—I found a friend. Just as the rose is one particular kind of flower in a garden, so friend is one particular kind of human being. There are certain persons in this world who are born friends. Their capacity to honour their fellow men is extraordinary, and entirely natural to them. All of us love someone or other in this world, but not all of us who love have the power to be a friend. To be a friend, one must be able to honour. Like every other kind of gift, this gift too requires a fund of its own—mere willingness is not enough. Just as light shines forth effortlessly from a jewel, so from the life of a person of special capacity, sociability of itself keeps radiating outward. This natural fellowship, woven of delight and serenity, of service and goodwill, and of a compassion-steeped, penetrating gaze—there is precious little in this world to compare with it. Just as a poet expresses his own joy in language, so those who are friends by nature express, in their daily life among men, their own joy.

The friend I found here possesses this joy in receiving and this boundless capacity for giving joy. The advantage of gaining, in this manner, so wealthy a friend is this—that in gaining one, one gains many. For the chief treasure of such people's lives is precisely this treasure of human beings, gathered like a hoard of the mind.

He is a well-known painter, William Rothenstein by name. Not long ago he went to India for a short while. In that brief time he came to see the very heart of India. Seeing with the heart is like seeing with the eye—it is no matter of analysis, and so it does not require much time. How many are born blind to India, and yet spend their whole lives there; they never saw that one light of our country by whose seeing all else, effortlessly, comes to be seen. For those who have eyes to see, brief acquaintance is worth more than a lifetime's familiarity for those who have not.

It was in India that I first met him, briefly. His warmth of heart always expresses itself so unreservedly that even then my mind was drawn to him in a special way.

It was the longing to become intimately acquainted with him that, of all things, drew me most strongly when I set out on my journey to Europe.

The moment I met him, in that instant I passed clean through the courtyard of the hotel's crowd—no one remained to hinder me further. Just as, in the jostle of a crowd where the show cannot be properly seen, a father lifts his little boy onto his own shoulder to make room for him to sit, so too London city has, in a place or two, kept a clear space upon its own high shoulder; for those children who wish to see over the heads of the crowd, further and further afield, these spaces are of special use. Hampstead Heath in London is just such a high, hill-like open ground; here London has, as it were, lifted itself up out of itself. Here one edge of the city's stony heart is still young and green, and amid the fearsome

crowd of its offices, in this one spot, there is still set an armchair by an open window, for one to sit alone.

Behind my friend's house, on the slope of a hill, there is a small patch of garden. That little garden has filled itself with the beauty of flowers, like the fold of a joyful child's garment. Facing that garden, a long veranda adjoining their sitting-room is

half-hidden beneath a rose-vine fragrant with an abundance of blossom-clusters. On this veranda, whenever I wish, I sit with a book in hand—and after that, I feel no further need to read the book at all. His two small children, a boy and a girl, in their carefree, blissful newness of childhood—it delights me greatly to watch them. Between our own country's children and these I see a deep difference. It seems to me as though we are people of an exceedingly ancient age; even our country's children seem to arrive in this world carrying, from somewhere, the burden of that very antiquity upon their backs. They are good children, their movements restrained, their large dark eyes full of a kind of pathos—they do not ask many questions, but seem to work out their own answers within themselves. But these children here have been born into the very palace of the world's youthful age; they are intoxicated with the taste of life's freshness; everything must be thought over, considered, and done by them themselves—and so their restless feet long to run everywhere, and their restless hands reach out to touch everything. Our own country's children too have, no doubt, a natural restlessness, but alongside it there is always some drag of an unrestless gravity that seems, always, to hold them fixed to a considerable degree. Because these children have no such invisible weight, their life seems to go on sparkling, ceaselessly, like a young waterfall dancing with a murmuring sound.

My friend's wife, too, is a lover of friends. Toward her husband's vast circle of friends she must fulfil the duties of a wife. To serve and tend them, to cultivate in every respect the beauty of kinship with them, to ask after them and console them in sickness and in sorrow—this forms a principal part of her domestic duty. This is no mere kinship of blood-relations—it is the kinship of the friend-community; and the seat that a virtuous wife occupies at the very heart of this vast kinship is, in this country, by no means an empty one.

I have said already that my friend is a friend by nature—his genius for friendship is extraordinary. Precisely because, to him, friendship is a true thing, he must choose his friends with special care. A man who is not a genuine artist may, merely for form's sake, hang up any old picture on the wall to fill an empty space and be done with it; but one who is a true artist, to whom the picture itself is a real and living

thing, cannot by nature fill his room with worthless pictures—he chooses his pictures by his own natural discernment. So too my friend has not let himself be overrun merely by the social convention of casual acquaintance. All those with whom he has any bond are his friends, and every one of them is a person of merit, and specially worthy of honour.

It goes without saying what particular quality is required of one who can gather round himself, and hold, so distinguished a circle of friends. He has taste. Just as the bee can effortlessly find the hidden path into a flower's honey-chamber, so he too enters effortlessly into the path of savour; he can seize hold of what is good, with an utterly undivided force. Many people have a certain timidity about liking and about saying they like something—they cannot rid themselves of the fear, "lest I make a mistake and be disgraced." For this reason, when it comes to welcoming what is good, they invariably lag behind others. He is free of that fear, because there is a genuine strength in his power of judgment. And so it is not that he, like the bee, knows only how to gather the honey-essence—he has also the capacity to love the very flower itself. He is not merely a consumer—he is a lover. And therefore he both receives and also gives.

The path from unacquaintance to acquaintance is a very long one. I had no time to traverse so arduous a road. My own strength, too, is slight. Being accustomed always to remain in a corner, I cannot even try, by my own force, to push and shove my way through a crowd to reach some desired spot. Besides, I do not hold in my hand the front-door key of the English tongue; I must always go round by the hedge—and to walk one's path in such fashion is itself a kind of strain; one cannot preserve one's own nature while walking so. Unless one has the power to make oneself freely known, it is not possible to gain easy acquaintance with another. And so, for a while, having grown weary trying to save my wheels from the crush of this land's motor-cars and its chariots of giants, I would at last turn back from these very streets, back to the bank of my own river-embraced Bengal, edged with the autumn-moonlit fields of ripening rice. Just then my friend entered, and drew back the curtain. I saw a seat laid ready, I saw the lamp lit; leaving outside the great burden of a stranger's unfamiliarity, casting off the traveller's dust-laden garb, in a

single moment I came in from the midst of the crowd, into seclusion, and entered in.

THE POET YEATS

Even in a crowd the poet Yeats is not lost; one recognizes him at once as someone apart. Just as his tall frame rises above almost everyone else's head, so too, on looking at him, one feels that there is about him a kind of abundance in all things—as though in one place the surging force of the Creator's own creative power had lifted him up, fountain-like, in lavish overflow above the flatness on every side. This is why, in body, in mind, in spirit, he seems to one so inexhaustibly full.

When I read the poetry of England's contemporary poets, I often feel that many of them are not poets of the world, but poets of the literary world merely. In this country poetic literature has been in the making for a long time, and in that making the language, imagery, ornament, and gesture of poetry have spread over a vast domain. In the end it has come to this—that for the sake of poetic craft, poetry need not draw upon the fountainhead of human life at all. The poets have become, as it were, mere artisans; that is to say, the inner necessity of singing because life demands it has left them, and now song arises only out of song. When word does not come from pain, but word comes only from word, then the artifice of the word grows ever more intricate and more skilled; being no longer, in immediate and profound fashion, the true possession of the heart, passion does not remain simple; not trusting itself, it rushes by main force toward excess; newness not being easy for it, it must, merely to prove its own originality, forever go wandering in search of the bizarre.

My point will become easy to grasp if one compares Wordsworth with Swinburne. Among those who are not poets of the world but poets of poetry itself, Swinburne stands foremost in genius. Such is his extraordinary skill in the dance-play of words that its very joy has intoxicated him. With threads of manifold colour he has woven pictures, richly wrought, in the most vivid and burning hues; these are astonishing achievements, but they possess no broad and abiding foundation upon the world.

It was from the direct clash of the heart with the world that the poetic music of Wordsworth rang forth. That is why it is so simple. But to be simple is not to be easy. Readers did not receive it readily. Where the poet writes his poetry straight out of immediate experience, there his writing blossoms of itself into completeness, like the fruit and flower of a tree. It does not explain itself; nor, in order to render itself charming or endearing, can it do any violence to itself. It shows itself as it is. To receive it, to savour it—that is the reader's own task.

Some persons are born who, allowing no mediating substance and no interval of need between their own perception and the object of that perception, can express, with unhesitating trust, the essence of the world and of human life in the language of their own hearts; and it is they who pass, with courage, beyond all the artifice of the poetic literature of their own age.

Once, in an age of artifice in English literature, Burns was born. He felt with his whole heart and expressed with his whole heart. Thus, piercing through the fixed conventions of that time, the unguarded heart of Scott, as it were, came from somewhere into the midst of poetic literature and took its seat there without hesitation.

The root of the particular esteem that the poet Yeats has won in the present age of poetic literature lies in the same cause. His poetry, without following in the wake of the echoes of the poetry of his own time, has given expression to the poet's own heart. This phrase, "his own heart," must be understood with some care. Just as a fragment of diamond expresses itself only by expressing the light of the sky, so the human heart does not find expression in its own individual existence alone—there it is darkness. Only when it can reflect within itself a light greater than itself does it receive that light and express that light. In the poetry of Yeats the heart of Ireland has found voice.

Let me make this point a little clearer still. The same sunlight falls upon many different clouds, but according to the state and position of each mass of cloud, different colours come to play upon it. Yet this difference of colour is not a contradiction among them; through their own particular distinctiveness they are able to blend, each with all. Coloured cotton-wool, however hard it tried, could not mimic the cloud and thereby blend with it.

So too, whether it be Ireland, or Scotland, or any other land whatsoever, the light of the universe falls upon the minds of its common people in such a way that it draws forth from them a particular colour of their own. It is thus, through diversity, that the consciousness-sky of universal humanity grows beautiful.

The poet does not merely express the light of thought; being a man of the country he is, he gives that light expression made a little more beautiful still by the colour of that country's heart. Not everyone can do this, I do not say; but blessed is he who can. In our own land, the Vaishnava lyric poetry, though composed in the form of Bengali poetry, is universal poetry. It gives to the world what belongs to the world, but adds to it a flavour of its own; it fills it into a vessel shaped by itself.

He whose profession is to do battle upon the field of the world must wear armour; he must accept the whole outer covering the world provides; otherwise, at every step, he will be struck from every side. But for one whose work is to express himself wholly, the very absence of covering is his true adornment. Speaking with the poet Yeats, this very thought kept coming to my mind. Here was one man who was receiving the world through the unguarded, open sensitivity of his own heart. The seeing that comes through various forms of schooling, through habit, through imitation—by which men generally look about them on every side—is not this kind of seeing.

When any man sees the world thus immediately, and gives report of it, one finds that it bears kinship with the ancient experience of humankind; it is not something

disjointed. All who have seen with an open, guileless eye have seen in this same manner. The Vedic poets too beheld water, earth, life-force, not as scientific truth but as willed forms, manifesting themselves to their vision. Whatever experience of joy and sorrow was made manifest in human life seemed, in a myriad wondrous disguises, to have spread its own play across heaven and earth. As in our own hearts, so in the whole of nature. The pain of laughter and weeping, of wanting and having, of the game of losing—just as it is in this small heart of ours, so, greatly magnified, it is displayed upon the stage of light and darkness of this vast universe. It is so immense that we cannot see it all at once, and so we see water, we see earth, but we cannot see the vast play working within the whole. But when man does not look through the spectacles of education and habit, when he looks with the whole of his heart, mind, and life, then he feels a pain so universal, present everywhere, that he cannot express it save through story, save through image. When man, engaged in the affairs of the world, was gaining a certain deep acquaintance with himself—understanding, in a manner, that whatever does not exist in the whole world does not exist within himself either, and that whatever exists within himself exists, vastly magnified, within the universe—it was then that he beheld everything with the poet's vision, that is, the vision of the heart, the vision of life; that is not the vision of the eyeball, the nerve, and the brain. Its truth is not factual; it is of feeling, of pain. Its language too is of that same kind—the language of melody, the language of form. This is, in the literature of humankind, the oldest language of all. And even today, when any poet feels the world through his own pain, one finds in his language a kinship with man's ancient tongue. For this reason, in the scientific age, man's mythic tales are no longer of use for any other purpose, but for the poet's use they have never become old. Man's ever-new perception of the universe comes and goes along the path of that old tale, leaving its own mark there. It is that newness of perception which awakens the mind of one drawn naturally to make use of that ancient ground.

The poet Yeats has made that ancient mythic path of Ireland the channel of his own poetic stream. Because this was, for him, entirely natural, he has been able, by this path, to win such extraordinary fame. He touches this world through his life—through the eye, not through knowledge alone. This is why he does not see the world merely as a world of matter; beyond its mountains and its plains he perceives

a living presence attainable only through contemplation. If one attempts to express this through the idiom habitual to modern literature, its savour and its life are lost; for modernity is, in truth, not new—it is old; through constant use it has grown rusted, and it does not respond everywhere; it is like fire buried under ash. Fire itself is older than ash, and yet it is ever new; the ash is modern, indeed, but it is only decay. This is why one finds everywhere that poetry wishes to slip past the modern idiom.

Everyone knows that for some time now a pain of national longing has awakened in Ireland. It is because English rule pressed down so heavily upon the Irish spirit from every side that this pain became, at a certain moment, so intense. For a long time this pain sought chiefly to express itself in the form of political rebellion. At length, alongside it, another endeavour appeared. Ireland, coming to realize the distinctiveness of its own spirit, rose to express that very thing.

On this occasion I am reminded of the case of my own country. Here too, for a long time, an effort to gain political rights had grown strong among the educated classes. It has been seen that many of those who led this effort had no real connection with the language, literature, and manners of their own country. It might almost be said that they had no bond with the common people of the land. Whatever they did for the country's advancement, they did entirely in the English tongue and in concert with the English government. They gave scarcely a thought to the country's people, with whom, after all, any real work for the country must be done.

But fortunately, at least in Bengal, we had begun to realize our own spirit through literature. Bankimchandra's chief glory is this—that he inaugurated in Bengali literature an age in which the Bengali could feel joy and pride in speaking his own thought in his own tongue. Before him we were mere schoolboys; mixing dictionary with grammar, we wrote English-school exercises; we held our own language and literature in contempt. Suddenly, with the advent of Bangadarshan, we beheld a power of our own. I felt that we too could have a literature, and that in it our mind's

hunger could find true satisfaction. What thus began did not end there. Before this we had said, with closed eyes, that we possessed nothing; now the search began for what we did possess. It was those who, in the pages of Bangadarshan, first enthroned Comte and Mill who at length, banding together, strove to give that same throne to the religion of the country.

The current of this endeavour still flows onward through many branches and offshoots. That the number of Indian ministers in the royal council should be increased—the fulfilment of that wish lies in the king's hand; but that our mind should become free and advance, of its own path, toward its own success—the fulfilment of that wish depends upon our own strength. Whosoever among us, in whatever direction, by his own effort can make his own strength effective, that man will enlarge the nation's realization of its own strength. The joy of that realization is the sole sustenance of our journey toward progress.

The overweening pride that arises at the very outset of the realization of one's own strength greatly hinders the realization of truth. It inclines us more toward deceiving ourselves than toward teaching ourselves. Giving false coin the same worth as true, it insults the true. It forgets this—that by knowing precisely what I do not have, can I not thereby come to know clearly what I truly do have? To know clearly in this fashion is the only path to the gaining of strength. Pride, by blurring the boundary of self-knowledge, leads us toward weakness and failure. Self-respect is founded upon truth. Therefore pride can never attain it by any means. The more pride, dashing itself again and again against the fortress-wall of truth, is defeated, the more we come to know ourselves.

In Ireland too, as in our own country, an endeavour has for some time been at work to give distinctiveness to its own power of thought. In the first expression of such an endeavour a great deal of froth naturally appears; unable often to bear its own weight, it becomes strangely and laughably absurd; that something of this sort happened in Ireland too may be understood somewhat from reading the famous Irish writer George Moore's book called Hail and Farewell.

Be that as it may, in the endeavour that Ireland made to express its own spiritual distinctiveness by relying upon its own language, thought, story, and mythology, the genius of one or another exceptional person has found its true field. The poet Yeats is one among them. He has been able to unite the voice of Ireland in triumph with world literature.

By the time Yeats came bearing the standard of Ireland's victory into the field of literature, the vigour of literary endeavour in Ireland had, some while before, grown weak. At that time in Ireland, the days of political rebellion having passed, the era of crooked political manoeuvring had arrived; then, in the country, cunning had gained ascendancy, thrusting aside the power of feeling.

One critic of Yeats writes—

"At such a time the war-messenger came once more to be seen; but this time, with the lightning-flash of terrible passions of the heart, no thunder of social apocalypse was heard. That all-conquering human spirit which had come to know itself, and which was touching, with its secret finger, the mystery of all the great changes in the world of men, that self-fulfilled human spirit's vast and boundless peace took possession of the sky. Expressing within himself a fuller loosing of the bonds of the human heart, Yeats once more awakened the voice of rebellion with a deeper and subtler strength. This time it was no clamour from without; this time the poet spoke the word of the inner heart of the human spirit—and that was the word of Ireland, and of all mankind. He thought deeply, and set aside the poetic manner that had prevailed fifty years before. But the method of composition to which he at last gave completeness was itself the perfecting of the manner of composition of the old poets. He turned his poetic attention toward the subtlest and most delicate beauties of nature, and was able to master the innermost music of harmony of sound. Whatever material of thought he wove into his early incomparable lyric poetry was an inheritance received from his forebears, the ancient Druids; that

inheritance, entering into the mystery of this manifest world-nature, has recovered the supreme unity of nature, man, and god."

The critic writes further—

"It was with the publication of The Wanderings of Oisin—in 1889, if I remember aright—that Yeats sprang into the front rank of contemporary poets, and threatened to add to the august company of the immortals. In the qualities by which he succeeded—an exquisitely delicate music, intensity of imaginative conviction, intimacy with natural and (dare I say?) supernatural manifestations—he was typically Celtic."

This phrase "imaginative conviction" is exceedingly true of Yeats. For him imagination is not merely the material of play; whatever he has seen by the light of imagination, he has been able to accept its truth into his own life. That is to say, in his hands imagination is not merely a tool of the poetic trade; it is the substance of his life. Through it he draws the food and drink of his soul from the world. Every time I have talked with him in private, I have felt this very thing. Whether he is a poet I have not yet had full opportunity to know by reading his poetry, but that he is touching all around him, living and vivid, through a heart lit by imagination—this I have been able to feel simply by coming into his presence.

37 Alfred Place, South Kensington, London

19th Bhadra, 1319

STOPFORD BROOKE

That some piece of writing of mine has pleased people, I do not consider a matter for shame in being glad of it. Indeed, there is no greater arrogance than to say one was not glad. Whenever I have had a book printed, there has lain hidden within it the hope that this book would please people. If that is to be called pride, then the very printing of the book is itself the pride.

At some season of leisure I attempted to render a number of my own poems and songs into English prose. That I can write English—this conceit I have never entertained; hence I had no aim at winning applause for my English composition. But I was possessed by the pleasure of receiving my own feeling anew, made slightly fresh again, from the mouth of a foreign tongue. I was, as it were, clothing myself in another dress and thereby taking fresh acquaintance with my own heart.

After I came to England, when these translations fell into the hands of a friend of mine, he received them with particular regard. And having had several copies made, he gave them to a number of literary men here to read. That these writings of mine, in this foreign hand's English, have pleased them—I suppose the reason for this is, in part, that my power in English composition is not so overwhelming that I could utterly and completely destroy, in my translation, the foreign savour of the original.

A copy of these translations of mine had fallen into the hands of Stopford Brooke. On that occasion he one day invited me to dinner. He is old; I believe his age has passed seventy years. There is something like an inflammation in the blood-vessels of one of his legs, so that walking is painful for him; that leg he keeps raised upon a stool as he sits. Old age subdues some men and lays them low, while with others it makes a kind of peace and dwells with them as a friend. In this man's body and mind, old age has not been able to raise its banner of victory. Wonderful is his freshness. It kept occurring to me, again and again, that when youth is seen within

old age, then it is seen at its finest of all. For that youthfulness is the truly real thing; it does not know how to grow old along with the flesh and blood of the body; it can, by its own strength, disregard disease and pain. The volume of his body is vast, his countenance handsome; only, looking at his afflicted leg, it came to me that just as Arjuna, when he engaged in battle with his teacher Dronacharya, let fall, as an offering of homage, his first arrow at his teacher's feet, so old age has cast the first arrow of its onslaught at this man's feet.

Whatever life Providence has granted him, it has made a source of joy from every side—pictures, poetry, the beauty of nature, and, in the ways of the world, the manifold play of human life—toward all of these the eagerness of his mind is intense. This sensitivity of touch to the world on every side, this power of drawing its savour, has not diminished with the increase of his years. It is this very power of receiving that is youth itself.

His sermons and his criticism of poetry I had read before. That day I saw that he had a passion for painting as well. Many of his paintings of natural scenes lay heaped in a corner of the room. All of these were painted straight from the heart. My painter friend, seeing these pictures, praised them particularly. That these pictures were not meant for exhibition, nor to entertain people, but were purely the play of the mind—this very thought I kept turning over: his age is great, he has much still to write, his body too is not wholly sound, and yet even in all this his energy has not come to an end. The vigour of a life-force finds leisure even to play alongside so much labour! Indeed, it is through this very play that one recognizes true vitality. It is in the free space around necessary work that man's true wealth lies. Among those in this country who have won fame, I notice this very thing in many of them. In whatever it is that they are chiefly engaged, their whole life is not entirely absorbed and filled up by it; some open space remains all around, and there is their play-ground. I have seen a very great scientist whose chief hobby was the painting of China. In the treasury of these men's lives there remains a good deal of surplus. For most of them their profession is only a portion of their life. The office is but one room of their dwelling-house.

Climbing many stairs, I met him in a small chamber on an upper floor. For a good while we had the leisure for private conversation, just the two of us. From his talk I understood this—that the outer framework of Christian religion, which in English is called □□□□□, whatever need it may once have served, is now obstructing the pure flow of religion's essence. When man's mind outgrows and overflows its own shelter, then there is no enemy for it like that very shelter. That in this country many minds have turned averse to religion is chiefly due to this outer structure of religion. He said to me, "In these poems of yours there is the smell of no particular □□□□□ of any religion; I think, for this reason, they will be of especial benefit to the people of our country."

In the course of conversation he once asked me whether I believed in rebirth. I said that I had no clearly defined conception in my mind regarding the state of our present life prior to birth, and that I did not consider it necessary to think about that matter. But when I do think it over, it seems to me that it can never be that this human birth, in the midst of the stream of our existence, is an entirely disjointed thing—that it never existed before this, and will never exist again after this, that the cause by virtue of which life has found expression in a particular body began fresh entirely within this birth and will end entirely within this birth. My mind hesitates to accept the notion that this bodily birth, being manifested again and again, is perfecting itself ever more fully—this alone seems possible to me. But that some man was, in a former birth, an animal, and would, in a future birth, take on an animal body again—this too I cannot bring myself to believe. For within nature one observes a continuity of habit; that this continuity should suddenly be cut off entirely seems incongruous. Stopford Brooke said that he too considered belief in rebirth to be consistent. His belief is that when, through various births, we complete one cycle of life, then all the memory of our previous births will awaken in full. This thought stayed in my mind. It occurred to me that when we finish reading a poem, then all of its meaning arises together in our minds, interwoven; if it is not finished, we do not always grasp that unifying thread. Each of us, relying upon some particular purpose, is stringing together, one by one, a garland of births; when the stringing is finished, it does not entirely come to an end, but a single round of it is completed. Only then can I grasp the whole thing clearly and take hold of it.

Among all the thoughtful and feeling people I have met here, I have noticed one thing in every one of them—they truly wish to cast injustice and inequity aside. This may seem a superfluous thing to say, but it is not superfluous, for a nation that rules over vastly scattered subject countries, and whose various interests are bound up with those subject countries, cannot help but have its sense of right and wrong regarding other peoples grow dim. So long as it is necessary, for one reason or another, to keep another people subjected as far as possible, its moral sense regarding human freedom can never remain unimpaired. The very benevolence by which man gives supreme worth to his own nation's freedom is weakened by man himself the more intense becomes his desire to keep another people subjected. And yet, it is this very benevolence that is man's ultimate resource for national progress.

In such a state of affairs, when one sees among the intellectual community here a group of men who hold national justice in higher regard than national self-interest, one can understand that just as in the body a door stands open for the entry of disease, so too, on the other side, medical knowledge and remedy are at work. So long as this thing exists, hope exists. This benevolence can be felt in many of the sensitive people here.

Here the field of thought and the workshop of action lie side by side. Here the throne of statecraft and the altar of religion stand close to one another. It is by the cooperation of the two that the chariot of the state here, with its double wheels, moves forward. Now and again a time comes when the smoke of action turns the wind of thought entirely black; then here, in poetry and in literature too, the sound of political drum-beating, of self-vaunting, seeks to drown out the whole of the music; suddenly then the poison of □□□□□ grows strong in the blood of the nation, and in that season of eye-deceiving, people brand the higher endeavour of humanity as the cowardice of the timid weak, fearful of morality. But even in that state of frenzied delirium, moral conscience does not entirely let go its hold; that is why, even in the days of the Boer War, there was here too a group of people who,

though bearing the whole nation's onslaught upon their own chests, still strove to hold aloft the victory-banner of justice. It is they who, though beaten by the hand of their own country, though bearing the calumny of hatred of country, remain engaged, with unconquered spirit, in the work of the nation's expiation of its sins.

But the system of government that the English possess in India lies right in the midst of the harshest field of action. There, the wind of thought that can purify the poison of that action does not blow strongly. For this reason this poison keeps accumulating within, deeper and deeper. The Englishman who, at an unripe age, having somehow passed a difficult examination, goes there to administer a kingdom, enters entirely into that poisoned, burning atmosphere. There, the intoxication of power becomes very quickly entangled in the marrow with the delusion of strict deference, and the arrogance of prestige refuses to bow its head even before religion. And yet, precisely there, there is no company of that thoughtful society of England which can forever repeat the great mantras of the prevention of corruption. This is why the Englishman in India keeps our minds pushed away in this fashion; this is why the true acquaintance with India is never gained by the Englishman in India. To them we are extremely small; our literature, our religious movements, our striving for the welfare of our own country do not exist for them at all. We are, to them, customers of their market, clerks of their offices, defendants' babus for the barrister, plaintiffs and defendants of the court. They do not see us with a full human heart, nor do we receive from them full human acquaintance. In such a state of affairs, the arrangements of governance and the maintenance of order may all be very sound, but something greater than that is lost. For the good is surely not mere order and discipline; and if, along with receiving some good thing from a person, we do not also receive the person, then that gift we cannot accept with our whole mind—so that gift neither honours the giver nor satisfies the receiver.

ENGLAND'S THOUGHTFUL SOCIETY

It seemed to me as though I had gone from the crowd outside straight into the crowd within. The more I came into the company of this country's writers, its thinkers, the more I began to feel how intense, along the pathway of their thought, is the jostling press of ideas.

That the society here draws the strength of everyone with full force is plain to see even outwardly, in people's running about, in the rush of motor-cars. No one has time; work must be finished quickly; this society will let no one fall behind, and whoever falls even a little behind must accept defeat. When I see this terrible urgency of rushing forward, I think to myself—who is it that sits there ahead, waiting? He calls, but he does not show himself. Like a blue ocean, wave upon wave raising its hand far and wide unceasingly, but from some mountain-peak's cavern, streams, mad with haste, pushing pebbles and stones this way and that to left and right, without asking anyone the way, rush headlong onward.

Just as there is this shouting and racing in the field of outer work, so it is exactly the same in the field of thought. There is no reckoning how many thousands upon thousands of people are, breathlessly, engaged in thinking. In daily papers, weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies, in lecture-halls, schools, Parliament, in books, in pamphlets, the current of mind flows on without rest. Whatever mental power anyone has, and in whatever measure, the whole of it is under strain. "More, we want more"—this call goes forth constantly, everywhere, from the very heart of the nation. At so great a call no one's patience holds out; if one must stay silent even for a moment, the mind grows restless. Whoever has once supplied something to this mental market of the nation has no release; the demand for more falls upon that person; like a date-palm tree, cut after cut continues year after year; if in any year there is the least decrease or pause in the flow of sap, that whole neighbourhood becomes a subject of inquiry.

So if this mental kingdom here could be seen with the eye, one would see that on the high roads and in the lanes, in office-quarters and public squares, there is a jostling crowd; it is hard to make one's way through. There too, some walk on foot, some drive motor-cars; some labour for wages, some engage in money-lending; but all are terribly busy. From morning till late at night there is no end to the coming and going.

This is nothing new to say. Even in the drowsy, motionless midday of our own country, we can guess, with half-closed eyes, what terrible clamour and jostling there must be in this country's marketplace of thought. But when the pressure of that crowd bears down upon one's own mind, one understands clearly just how great its force is. To those in this country who deal in matters of the mind, coming near them, one does not take long to understand that force.

My acquaintance with these people is neither of very long standing nor very intimate—merely a brief meeting. But within that short span I have, again and again, been astonished to notice one thing—the quickness of their minds. The mind is ever ready, as it were, like the wire of an electric light; the moment the switch is pressed, it flares up instantly. Our use of the lamp is: twisting the wick, pouring the oil, striking flint and steel, we manage somehow to get on—there is no particular urgency, so it does not matter if there is delay. Hence, given our accustomed habits, this swiftness of the electric light is, for me, something wholly new.

I had already read, before coming here, one or two novels by Mr. Wells, the well-known writer of the present age, and a book of his on American civilization. From that I knew that his power of thought, like a sword of steel, is as sharp as it is bright. When my friend invited me one evening to a dinner with him, there was, in my mind, a certain fear. I had thought that in the world, sharp intelligence certainly accomplishes much, but its company is perhaps not restful.

Be that as it may, that evening I had a long conversation with him. I was reassured at once, when it turned out that the man was not of the porcupine sort, but altogether gentle. I saw that his sharpness lay in thought, but not in temperament. The truth of the matter is, he has a genuine sympathy for man, a hatred of injustice, and an ardent devotion to the universal advancement of humanity; when that quality is present, the mind does not take pleasure merely in the acrobatics of thought. In this country that is a great thing. Man here is forever present to direct observation; there is no end of curiosity here about man. It is precisely because of this absence of indifference to man that these people's minds have grown so richly fruitful. For a good crop needs not only seed and soil, but a field that is always kept moist; the attraction of man for man is that eternal moisture—by which every kind of harvest of the mind can ripen to overflowing abundance. In our own country I have seen many powerful men who could not bring their capacities to full fruition, simply because their heart's connection with man was not sufficiently deep and constantly present. Man does not turn to them with the same demand, and hence they cannot draw out the full measure of man's wealth. In sparsely populated country-life man does not produce much beyond his own bare necessity, and much of even that is wasted, lost. Such is our sparse manner of living; man, sifted and searched out, is not drawing forth our heart and mind. That is why many of us can think, but that thinking cannot shake off its indolence and express itself; many have heart, but that heart finds no field to labour in beyond children, grandchildren, nephews and nieces.

Be that as it may, in talking with Wells I could understand this much—that the foundation of these people's thoughtfulness and creative power is man; hence it is not merely a play of power, like the hunter's desire for the hunt. This is why the keenness of their thought is not like the keenness of a knife—it is a living keenness, the keenness of vision; with it there is heart, there is life.

Another thing I saw, and was astonished by again and again—I have already spoken of this—is the swiftness of their thought. As long as the conversation between Wells and my friend continued, at every step the flow of talk shone bright with sparks of thought. At the touch of word upon word, sparks fly out of themselves;

not a moment's delay occurs. In this one can see clearly that their minds are ever prepared. It is not that they are thinking; the pressure from every side is constantly making them think; and so their minds can think even while running, and can speak even while thinking. Behind each individual mind of theirs the mind of the whole nation lies awake; waves of thought, the roar of words, from all sides and in all forms, are constantly striking against one another's minds. In such conditions the mind cannot help being kept awake and articulate.

My friend is a painter; dealing in words is not his trade. I have had many long conversations with him over the years; I have always noticed this—whatever subject comes before him, he can that instant think about it forcefully and speak about it forcefully. That force is not physical strength at all; it is the force of thought. His faculty of perception too is quick and intense. Whatever is to be liked, he takes not a moment's delay in liking it, needing no one else's opinion on the matter; whatever is to be accepted, he accepts entirely and without hesitation. His easy power to accept man, and to accept man's strength, is so intense that he has been able to bind, in this fashion, into the bond of friendship, various powerful people of various classes in his own country. Among them are some who are poets, some critics, some scientists, some philosophers, some men of accomplishment, some men of learning, some wits, some connoisseurs; they are not, of themselves, people who could naturally meet on one common ground without friction, and yet in him all of them are able to meet.

In talking with my friend, it kept occurring to me that on many subjects these people no longer need to think from the very beginning; they have thought many things through, to great lengths, already. The greatest delay comes at the first push of a thought; once that is done, it becomes easy for the thought to move. In this country, thought is, so to speak, already moving; its wheel turns of its own accord. On most subjects of human thought they are already midway along the road. This is why, when one converses with any educated person here, one gets, right from the start, a stream of well-considered talk, and that stream moves swiftly.

Where there exists such a momentum of thought, it is easy to understand just how great is the joy of thought. That joy is one of the chief elements of the sociability of the educated society here. In the social gatherings here, the play of the mind constructs its own field of recreation. The traffic of thought is not confined to lectures and books alone; it is in the meeting of man with man. Many times, listening to their conversation, it has occurred to me that these things ought to be written down and kept, not scattered and cast away. But the human mind cannot gain any great fruit by being miserly. Where there is no capacity for scattering freely, there is no capacity either for putting things to good use. If one keeps count of every single seed and plants it stintingly, no great harvest can result. One must sow with an open hand, scattering broadly—much of it fails, but on the whole the balance still comes out to profit. This is why, in the practice of thought, there must be that same joy that allows it to be born in far greater abundance than mere necessity requires. It is this very absence of that joyous play of the mind, more than any other poverty, that I feel weighs most heavily upon our own country.

I stayed for a couple of days as a guest, in the university town of Cambridge, at the house of a professor. His name is Lowes Dickinson. He is the author of the book Letters from John Chinaman. When that book first appeared, it had raised, in our country, a strong current of Oriental pride. The fantasy and the longing that all of Europe's mind, gathered together like a single civilization-thread on every side, might likewise one day gather all of Asia together, on the stalk of a single civilization, into a hundred-petalled lotus, and lay it, offered up, at the feet of the world's Creator—this fancy and this longing had intoxicated us. At that time, taking this Letters from a Chinaman as my text, I wrote a substantial essay and read it aloud in an assembly. I knew then that the book was genuinely written by a Chinaman. I now saw the author himself; he is, without doubt, not a Chinaman; but he is a man of feeling, and hence he is a man of every country. During the two days I stayed at his house, I had conversation with him nearly continuously. As one current merges effortlessly with another current, so, in tireless joy, my mind flowed, drawn along by the pull of his mental current. This was not any particular gain or profit; it did not serve the purpose of reading some particular subject's book or of preparing college lectures; it was the joy of the mind's own movement. Just as in spring everything is not merely leaf and fruit—there is with it the southern

breeze too, and in the warmth and stirring of that breeze the joy of the leaves comes to full flower—so too, around here, in the intellectual flowering, there blows a certain spring-breeze of conversation, in which fragrance spreads and seeds scatter and fall, in which, along with the activity of life, the festival of life intoxicates every quarter of the horizon; and I got a strong touch of this within the book-strewn lodging of this warm-hearted, thoughtful professor. When, at one point, a well-known mathematics professor here, Mr. Russell, came and joined him, the stirring of their conversation struck my mind, at every turn, with delight. From the fire of mathematics some men's minds are scorched and withered, while others' minds are set alight. Mr. Russell's mind seemed to blaze with a keen light. Along with that light of thought there mingled an abundant playfulness of laughter, and that, to me, seemed the most delightful thing of all. After dinner we would sit in the college garden; there, one night, until eleven o'clock, amid the deep silence of the ancient assembly of trees, I listened to the conversation of these two professor friends. The subject of their talk ranged far and wide. In it there was literature, sociology, philosophy—every kind of thing. That night's memory is, to me, very lovely. On one side, the sky-spanning stillness of the vast universe of nature; on the other, in the very midst of it, man's restless mind, spreading out its own waves, going forth on a quest to bind the whole universe in its embrace. It was as if a range of mountains stood, piercing the sky, in fixed and silent grandeur, while at their very feet a series of waterfalls went rushing round and round, which nothing could hold back; their tumultuous outburst went on questioning ceaselessly, and the deep mountain-caverns rang out, echoing with sound upon sound. I felt, sitting in that old garden of the ancient seat of learning, the union of Nature and Mind. The silence of the vast universe is expressing itself, ceaselessly, in the form of speech, within man alone; it was in that very stream of speech that I, that night, most intimately realized the universe's own self-realization, its unending joy. It occurred to me that the great darkness of the world is boundless. In the infinite sky that great darkness is expressing itself in the play of light; the whirl of that light is restless, ever trembling; sometimes it flares up, sometimes it flashes as a spark, sometimes it shines for but a moment, sometimes for a long while; but this restless garland of light is itself the utterance of the unmoving, mighty darkness. So too, this restless stream of the human mind, running along one edge of the vast universe, going this way and that in its many paths, divided into many branches and offshoots, goes on, endlessly, expressing the universe. Wherever that expression is full and complete,

there the fulfilment of the universe grows festive with the pageantry of joy and glory. In the silent night, in the murmuring conversation of these two friends, I was feeling that very joy, that very glory of the whole universe, within the mind of man.

ENGLAND'S VILLAGES AND PARSONS

It is not always that man gets the opportunity to judge his own aptitude and take up a vocation accordingly—that is why the wheel of the world's work moves creaking with so harsh a groan. The man who ought to have opened a grocer's shop becomes a schoolmaster; the man who was made to be a police-inspector must instead carry on the work of a parson. In other professions such misplacements do not do very much harm, but in the profession of religion they cause great mischief. For if man, in the field of religion, fails to be as true as possible, that not only brings failure but breeds positive evil.

There is, in one respect, a great incongruity between the ideal of the Christian religion and the human nature of this country; the utter meekness and forbearance preached by Christianity is not consonant with the temperament of this country. The excitement of establishing oneself as victor, in struggle with nature and with man, has run in the blood of this people, from generation to generation, since ancient times; hence, those who ought properly to have enrolled in the army, when they instead enter the service of the church, abandon the white purity of religion and turn a fierce, glowing red. This is why in Europe we do not, in every instance, see the clergy on the side of peace, on the side of universal justice among nations. In times of war these men set up God particularly as the commander of their own side, and use the worship of God as the prelude to bloodshed.

It is often to be seen that these men are incapable of doing true justice to those whom they call heathens. It is as though they held it in their minds that the heathen are the creation of some rival deity opposed to the Christians' God, and that to condemn them is somehow to increase the glory of their own God—some such notion lodges in their minds. By this hostility, this fierce rivalry, the clergy have constantly tormented people of other faiths. Like armed soldiers, they have wished to conquer by wounding others.

That is why the notion we in India have formed of the padres is one of hostility. That they are utterly separate from us—this is what we have felt. They are ready to make us Christian, but not ready to blend us with themselves. They will conquer us, but they will not make us one with them. The burden of uniting one people with another ought to have rested with them. It is surely their task to build that bridge by which mutual respect can be preserved and true justice done. But the opposite has occurred. The Christian padres have depicted, to their own countrymen, the religion, society, and customary practices of the non-Christian people as blackened and besmirched as far as possible. There is no people whose faults or virtues cannot be shown in isolation, apart from the rest. And yet it is an absolutely certain truth that every people can only be truly known when judged by its highest qualities. The absence of love in the heart, and self-conceit, are what obstruct such judgement. Those who dedicate their lives to the love of God may be expected to overcome this obstacle. But by showing other peoples as inferior, the padres have, I think, created a wider and deeper division between Christian and non-Christian than perhaps anyone else has done. In looking upon others they have put on the dark-tinted spectacles of sectarianism, even in the practice of religion. Between a conquering and a conquered people there naturally exists an intense pride—the pride of power—and hence a great barrier already stands in the way of the human union that should exist between them; the padres have made that pride grow greater still, from the standpoint of religion and social ethics as well. Thus Christianity too has, in various ways, become an obstacle to our union; it has kept veiled from each of us the best in the other.

But I have learned, by experience, that no such general statement can be made about any community whatsoever. Coming here, I have become acquainted with a Christian padre who is more Christian than he is padre—one in whom religion has not appeared merely as a business-like idol standing rigidly apart, but is manifest in harmonious union with the whole of life. No one could ever think of such a man, "This one is not of our party, he belongs to the other side." One feels intensely: this man is human—he feels joy in seeing truth and goodness in all mankind—he does not regard that as the special property of Christians alone, and feel envy accordingly. What is even more remarkable, his field of work is India itself. There, for an Englishman, there exists every possible obstacle to being a true Christian—

for there he is king. There, statecraft is the rival wife of religious ethics. Often indeed statecraft is the favourite wife. This is why the India-based padre cannot maintain a bond of sympathy with the whole life of the people of India. On one great point their national self-interest clashes with ours, and in another they cannot bow their heads and hold as inviolable the teaching of their own Master. He said that the meek shall inherit the earth, but that is the law of the kingdom of heaven. These men are the rulers of the kingdom of this mortal world.

The man of whom I speak is Reverend Andrews; he is known to the people of India. He has utterly vanquished the English king that dwells within him, and has won the sacred right to become one of our own. Where Christianity has become the very substance of the whole of life, what sweetness and generosity that yields—I count it a rare good fortune to have seen this directly manifest in him.

It was he who said to me one day, "Before you return to your country, you must go and see a country household here. In the town it has undergone many transformations—without going into the village, one cannot get its true picture." A friend of his, Stapleford Shire, serves as a padre in a certain village; it was in his house that Mr. Andrews arranged for our stay for a while.

August is counted, in this country, within the domain of summer. At that season the people of the town grow restless to get away to the countryside for a breath of air. In our own country we have such unrestricted access to nature—sky and light are so abundantly available to us there—that we need make no special arrangement to be in communion with them. But here the eagerness of people's minds to see nature with her veil lifted will not be quieted by anything. On holidays they rush, in crowds, to wherever there is a bit of open field; when they get a longer holiday, they pour right out of the town. In this way nature keeps these people constantly on the move, never letting them settle and remain fixed in one place. The holiday trains are absolutely packed with people. One cannot find a seat. Mingling with that restless crowd of townsfolk, we too set out.

At the station of the destined place, our host was waiting for us with his open carriage. As we drove along, the sky was clouded. In the covering of that shadowed atmosphere, the countryside showed a pale face. Before we had gone very far, the rain began.

When we reached the house, our hostess took us into her fire-lit sitting-room. The house was not an old parsonage. It was newly built. In the ground where the house stood, no ancient row of trees murmured, in the inarticulate language of its leafy clusters, the vanished memory of long generations of human life. The garden was new, probably made by these people themselves. Along the edges of the thick green grass-fields, flowers of many colours had bloomed, opening before the eager eye an unstinted feast of beauty. Such freshness and abundance of flower and foliage in the English summer I have not seen anywhere else. How thick and how deeply green is the carpet of grass upon the earth here—one cannot believe it without seeing it.

The rooms of the house were neat and clean; the library was full of readable books; nowhere, within or without, was there the least trace of neglect. This very thing has struck me particularly in the good households here. The materials of comfort and household adornment that these people use are far more numerous than ours, and yet the householder's mind is alertly watchful over every trifling object in the house. That any negligence toward one's own surroundings is a dishonouring of oneself—this these people understand very well. This spirit of watchful self-respect is at work in matters both small and great. It is because they do not regard their own human dignity as a trifling thing that they have made their own households, with the utmost care, fit for their purpose; and in exactly the same way their eagerness stands ever ready to keep their neighbour, their society, their country, in every particular and from every side, cleansed and set right. Fault, for whatever reason and in whatever quarter, they will never forgive.

Towards evening our host, Mr. Ottom, took me out for a walk. By then the rain had ceased, but there was no clearing in the sky. Just as the men here go about, wearing

black hats on their heads and dark-coloured coats, so too the deity of this place appeared, veiled in a most solemn dark garb. But even beneath the shadow of this dense solemnity, the beauty of the countryside did not remain hidden. The deep, tranquil verdure of the wave-rippled plain, marked out by rows of shrubbery, anointed both eyes with a soothing calm. The place is indeed hilly, but there is nowhere any harsh ruggedness of hill—just as in our country's ragini, note melts into note, drawn by the pull of the melody, so here the swellings of the earth, sloping gently, blend one into another wave by wave; it is as if some deity, in the silent night, were playing on the vina of the cloud-garland, upon the stringed instrument of the earth's own melody. Those regions of our own country that are mountainous have a certain haughty grandeur that is nowhere to be seen here. Looking about on every side, it seems as though wild nature here has become altogether tame. It is as if the bull that is Mahadev's mount—its body sleek and glossy—obeying the beckoning finger of Nandi, had lain down quietly at his master's feet, not even lowing for fear of disturbing his lord's meditation.

As we walked along the road, Mr. Ottom fell into conversation about some matter of business with a passer-by. The matter was this: to encourage the local farming households to cultivate a bit of garden around their homesteads, these people had formed a committee and arranged for prizes according to merit. A little while before, an inspection had taken place, in which this passer-by had won the prize. Mr. Ottom took me to see the houses of several farming households. Each of them had, with great care, made a little garden of flowers and vegetables around their cottages. These people, having laboured all day in the fields, return home in the evening and do this work in the garden. In this way they feel such a joy of attachment to plants and leaves that this extra labour does not weigh upon them. It has one further good result—that this enthusiasm keeps away the temptation of drink. In this endeavour to make the outside beautiful, one's own inner self too comes gradually to be tuned to the melody of beauty. I have seen, in various other ways, the relation of Mr. Ottom's benevolent work with the village folk here. Seeing him, I have come to feel how beautiful is a life constantly devoted to good works. His life, through the nectar of God's service, has grown mellow and gentle as a ripened fruit. Within his own house he has kept a lamp of merit burning; through

study and worship his domestic life is daily purified; how simple and how beautiful is his hospitality I shall not be able to forget.

The effectiveness of these men, each stationed in this manner as the centre of a few villages, I now clearly saw. Through this nationwide, systematically bound endeavour, a spirit of progress has been awakened in the midst of what would otherwise be entirely humdrum villages. In this way religion, in this country, has spread out on every side in the form of good works. By the thread of one great system, all the settlements of this country have been strung together like a garland. Only those of us who are suffering for lack of such a universal system know what a great blessing this is.

Man can never build any such flawless system, made permanently fast forever, into which no crookedness, no wrong, can ever find a way at any time. That there is some incongruity between this country's religious doctrine and religious institutions on the one hand, and the progressive spirit of the present age on the other, everyone knows. I have heard from many good people here that going to church has become impossible for them. They do not wish to be entangled in the sin of blindly professing belief in things impossible to believe. In this way, as the doctrines prevalent in the country have grown decayed in various quarters, they have entirely abandoned the shelter of religion. It is at just such times that all manner of hypocrisy takes shelter under an aged religious doctrine and makes it still more diseased. Nowadays there are without doubt many padres who have taken their seats within the Church, preaching what they do not believe, and who then set about the effort of persuading themselves, with great labour, to believe what they preach. That this falsehood strikes society in many ways, there can be no doubt. Bigotry has, in every age, kept the gate of religion so narrow that only littleness can find its way through, while greatness is left standing outside. Thus in Europe, many who are great in knowledge, in life, and in heart, have fallen outside the pale of Europe's religious institutions. This state of affairs can never be a happy one.

But Europe's own vitality is protecting it. It does not remain stuck fast in any one place. Since motion is its religion, it goes on, at the cost of injury and diminishment, striking against its own obstacles. To the degree that Christian doctrine, by contracting itself, resists the force of this current, to that same degree it must, absorbing the blow, grow broader. That process goes on every day; at last, what the thinkers of today are calling by the name of Christianity has cast off its own crude outer covering entirely. It does not accept the Trinity, it does not acknowledge Jesus as an incarnation, it has no faith in the supernatural events described in Christian scripture, nor is it Unitarian either. A great ferment has arisen within the religious nature of Europe. Hence it is certain: Europe will never let its own ancient creed hang lower than the whole progress of its being, and thereby burden itself forever with so great a weight.

Be that as it may, though the padres, casting this net of doctrine, have kept the whole country in their grip—thereby at times somewhat obstructing the country's progress—yet, on the whole, there is no doubt that they have kept the higher pitch within the country's inner life bound and preserved. In our own country the Brahmins used to perform this office. But the Brahmin's duty having become hereditary, it has naturally lost its own moral authority. However exalted the ideal of a Brahmin's duty may be, it will depend upon the special education and capacity of specially qualified individuals; the moment that responsibility is made hereditary within some particular class of society, that ideal is thereby crippled as far as it possibly can be. Because our society has, with closed eyes, borne this utterly unnatural, false burden—that a man can become a Brahmin merely by being born in a Brahmin's house—its religion has degenerated into lifeless and customary blind superstition. The Brahmin whom society has been compelled to worship does not feel himself bound to be worthy of worship in character and conduct; he governs society solely by the leash of paternal inheritance, and in what manner he is degrading it, in various directions, into what pettiness, we, out of the blindness of habit, cannot even perceive. I do not believe that every single padre here has, with genuine sincerity, taken into his own life the ideal of Christian religion; but these are not hereditary padres—they are accountable to society, they cannot besmirch their own character and conduct—hence, if nothing else, they hold up before the country, as far as possible, that tune of pure character, that religious-ethical

striving. Whatever the scriptures may say, in practice our society feels not the least shame or hesitation in having religious rites performed by an unrighteous Brahmin. In this there cannot but occur an internal rupture between religion and true merit—by this we dishonour our own manhood every day. Here, society will never forgive an unrighteous padre; that padre may perhaps not be a man of devotion, but he must be a man of character—by this very means society preserves respect for its own humanity, and without doubt reaps its reward in wealth of character.

That is why I was saying that the body of padres here has arranged a kind of coarse-rice-and-coarse-cloth religious-ethical provision for the whole country. But that alone is no cause for satisfaction. The great religious problems that arise before the whole country, moment by moment, the padres do not resolve by tuning their note to the voice of Christ. In the responsibility they have taken upon themselves of establishing Christ within the mind of the country, I see, at every step, its violation. When the Boer War arose, how did the padres of the whole country judge it then? When two great fat housewives of Europe sat down, wielding their carving-knives, to cut Persia into two pieces and gobble it up—why do the padres remain silent! In the matter of India's coolie-recruitment, in the arrangements for coolie-labour, in the administrative system there, in the treatment the English mete out to the natives there—even so, no injustice occurs there such that, invoking the name of Christ, they could all come together to stand beside the weak and the insulted. Have we ever seen such a heavenly sight? In English there is a current saying, "Penny wise, pound foolish"; we are getting proof of that, every day, in the religious-ethical conduct of great Christian nations; they wish to keep tight hold of their private moral ideal, and yet the whole nation, banded together, is engaged shamelessly in such glaring wickedness that it creates, over vast reaches of time and space, unbearable misery and suffering; in such evil days I have seen many great souls fighting fearlessly against this universal wickedness of their own people, but among them how few are padres. Indeed, if one were to count, it would be found that most of them do not even have faith in the Christianity currently professed. And yet, if the least disturbance occurs in some traditionally sanctioned outward ritual of the Church, a tremendous uproar breaks out throughout the whole community of padres. Was it for this that Jesus shed his blood? What gospel is this that they are proclaiming to the world—that this body of padres of Christian

countries hoard, penny by penny, halfpenny by halfpenny, the funds of their own nation's religion, but when it comes to blowing away vast sums of "Company paper," they have no hesitation at all. They honour their God with the value of a farthing, and dishonour him with the value of a sovereign—this I see every day. Among the padres there are men of such great heart that they are true friends of the world, but that is their individual greatness. But looking at the body as a whole, one thing comes to mind—that to surrender religion into the hands of a body of men is, to some extent, to degrade it. In this too a kind of caste is created, which, though far better in many respects than hereditary caste, still retains something of caste's poison, and that poison keeps accumulating. Religion sets man free; hence religion above all must be kept free; but wherever religion becomes caught within the fence of a body, there gradually its lesser aspect grows greater than its greater aspect, the outward thing overshadows the inward thing, and what is merely temporal keeps tormenting the eternal. This is precisely why, though the body of padres sits enthroned throughout the whole country, the political leaders feel not the least hesitation in perpetrating the most merciless brigandage and butchery; they possess not that sacred light before which the blackened stain of these vast sins would be exposed, in all its hideousness, before the eyes of the whole world.

MUSIC

We have arrived in this country toward the close of the summer season; here the music season is now on the verge of breaking up. No grand gathering of any great master's song or instrumental music remains here now. In these groves in summertime birds come crossing many seas, and then again they break up their assembly and depart. The music of man, too, does not sound here in every season; it has its appointed time—at that time, various masters from various lands of the earth come and worship the goddess of music, Saraswati of song, in this place.

In our own country too there was once such a season of song and instrument. At the time of worship-festivals, in the houses of great and wealthy men, connoisseurs from various lands would come and gather. Into those assemblies of music the entry of the common people of the country was unrestricted. Then Lakshmi and Saraswati mingled together, and the spring-breeze of music flowed over the heart of the whole country. In every land, it was once the well-established wealthy who gave shelter to and preserved the country's art and literature and music. In Europe now the general public has taken the place of that established wealthy class; what, in our country, is accomplished through community subscription, that has become universal throughout Europe. It is the common subscriber here who brings the master and listens to his song; it is by the grace of the subscriber that the destitute poet's poverty is dispelled, and the painter, having painted his picture, obtains the grace of Lakshmi. But in our country the wealthy of the present day have no obligation attached to their wealth; by that wealth only the profit of Lazarus, Oslar, Hamilton, Harman, and Mackintosh-Burn Company keeps increasing; in this regard the general public has neither the power nor the taste. In our country Lakshmi has abandoned the artist's wife, and even in the house of Ganesh she has as yet found no place.

By good fortune, some weeks after I arrived in London this time, a Handel Festival was arranged in the concert-hall of the Crystal Palace. The renowned composer Handel was German, but he spent most of his life residing in England. Certain

portions of the Bible he set to music, and these have received particular favour in this country. It is these very songs that are sung at the Handel Festival, with the accompaniment of many hundreds of instruments and the voices of many hundred throats blended together. Four thousand instrumentalists and singers together carried through this year's festival.

I was present at this festival. In the vast assembly-hall, tier upon tier, the singers and instrumentalists had taken their seats. So immense was this undertaking that without the aid of binoculars one could not clearly discern any individual—it seemed as though clouds upon clouds of human beings had gathered. The women and men singers were seated in different sections according to their pitch—soprano, mezzo, and treble. The same colour, the same kind of clothing; the whole effect seemed as though, upon some vast canvas, someone had woven, row upon row, a pattern in wool.

Music arose from four thousand throats and instruments. Amid all this, not a single note lost its way. Four thousand streams of melody, dancing, emerged together, and yet none of them struck against another. And this was no unison, but a vast confluence of intricate and varied rhythms. In the binding together of this manifold variety into such indescribable, faultless completeness, I perceived a mighty power, and I was filled with wonder. In so vast, so immense a field, nowhere in this awakened power, within or without, was there the least trace of carelessness or inertness. From the very seating arrangement at the outset to the finest niceties of the vocal art, its unfailing order governed and coordinated every single part with the whole.

Now and again I opened the printed programme and tried to match the words of the song with the melody. But I cannot say that I found any correspondence. There is no doubt that when so vast, so colossal an undertaking is built up, it must become, in some sense, the product of a machine. The outer scale has grown vast, varied, and flawless, but the essence of feeling has been overwhelmed. It occurred

to me that just as a great serried army marches, so moves this music; in it there is power, but there is no play.

Yet it would not be true to say that the whole of European music, everywhere and always, is of this kind. That is to say, it cannot be credible that in European music mere skill of form is paramount, and not the essence of feeling. For it is plainly to be seen how intensely the nectar-essence of music intoxicates Europe. From merely observing the bee's eagerness toward the flower, one can understand that the flower contains honey—even though that honey may not be perceptible to me.

That there exists, at some point, a fundamental difference between the music of Europe and that of our own country—this much is true. Harmony, or the concord of notes, is the chief substance of European music; whereas raga and ragini form the principal reliance of our own music. Europe has fixed its gaze upon variety; we, upon unity. In world-music, we see, variety's melody surges forth in a thousand streams; one is not the mere echo of another, each has its own distinctiveness, and yet the whole becomes one and fills the sky. Harmony shows us, in melody, that same vast dancing-play of the manifold forms of the universe. But surely, in the midst of the mind, one single, one-raga song continues to flow; and it is that song's rhythm and tempo which, circling round and round, renders fruitful the manifold motion of the outer world. The music of our own country strives to grasp that inward song—that deep, secret, that One, which is attained through meditation, which stands still in the sky. To move along with ever-moving variety, keeping time with it—this is the nature of Europe; and to lean the ear toward the ever-still One, keeping the mind fixed there, and thereby calm oneself—this is our own nature.

Do we not feel this very thing in the music of our own country? In European music we find that man's every wave-and-ripple has its correspondence in rhythm and measure; there is a direct relation between it and man's laughter and weeping. Our music does not rise up out of the play of man's life—it flows in from outside that life. In European music man has lit up the light of his own home, the light of festival, in manifold colours, chandelier and lamp; in our music the light of the moon has

come falling from the horizon. That is why I have felt, again and again, that our music passes beyond our joys and sorrows. On the night of a wedding, the shehnai plays in the courtyard. But within the notes of that shehnai, where does the wave of merriment play? There is not the slightest restlessness of youth in it; it is grave, and pathos lies folded in every turn of its melody. In our country, in the modern wedding, the blaring of the foreign band alongside the shehnai is one element of pompous barbarity. The distinction between the two is altogether plain. To the strains of the foreign band, the pageant of man's revelry and merriment sets the earth trembling; just as there is the crowd of people, the laughter and chatter, the finery, the profusion of flowers, leaves, and lights, so too is the outburst of the band's music, exactly of that kind. But surrounding on every side the festive hall of the marriage there stands the silent, dark night, where the endless festival of world upon world enters, bearing the message of that region, in the calm light of the silent assembly of stars, through the tranquil, deep tone of the shehnai's melody. Our music slowly, gently opens the great gate of man's hall of merriment, and calls the Boundless into the midst of the crowd. Our music is the song of the One, the song of solitude—but that solitude is not the solitude of a corner; it is a solitude that spans the universe.

When harmony becomes excessive, it overwhelms and stifles the song; and where the song wishes to become utterly distinct and its own, there it does not let harmony come near. For a while, this separation between the two is good. In order that each may attain its own fully ripened form, it is proper, for a time, to give to each the freedom to grow apart. But that does not mean that we can call their remaining forever unwed a thing to be desired. So long as the bridegroom and bride have not attained the fullness of youth, it is well to let them grow up separately; but if, even after that, they cannot come together, then they remain incomplete. That the day has come for song and harmony to unite—of this there is no doubt. The preparation for that union has also begun.

In the village, on a certain day of the week, the market is held; once a year, on a certain day, the fair takes place. On that day, by exchanging goods with one another, men make good whatever they each lack. So too, in the history of

mankind, one age or another brings its own "market day"; on that day, each brings his own particular goods, gathered in a bundle, to collect the goods of others. On that day man can understand that his own poverty is not removed merely by the things he himself produces; he can understand that the sole fulfillment of his own wealth lies in this—that thereby is born the right to obtain what belongs to others. Such an age is called, in the history of Europe, the age of the Renaissance. In the present age of the world, such a market of the Renaissance has opened as never before, on so vast a scale, in any earlier time. Its chief cause is this—that today, on every side, the roads of the world have opened up as they never were before.

Some time ago a certain sage said to me that in Europe an age of Renaissance for India is drawing near. The wealth that lies stored in India's historical treasury has suddenly fallen under Europe's gaze, and Europe is coming to feel that it has need of these things. Until now, India's painting and architecture were objects of Europe's contempt; now Europe has come to see in them a particular grandeur.

Very recently, Europe's attention has fallen upon Indian music as well. While I was still in India, I saw that European listeners had grown eager, attentively listening to the strain of the Bageshri raga. One day I saw an English listener seated in an assembly, listening to what he took to be Sama-gana—the song of the Samaveda—from two Bengali youths. The two singers, in the manner of Vedic chant, blending in the melody of Yaman-Kalyan, Bhairavi, and other drawing-room modes, were presenting it to him as Sama-gana. I had to tell him that this thing could not be accepted as Sama-gana. To warn him of this was, I found, quite unnecessary on my part, for he knew far more than I. When he asked me to recite the Vedic chant, I recited it according to the little I knew. He said at once, "But this is the mode of recitation of the Yajurveda." Indeed, I had recited a hymn of the Yajurveda. Beginning from Vedic chanting up to the raga-classification of dhrupad and khayal, he had searched everything, minutely, thoroughly—there is no chance of easily deceiving him. He is now writing a book on Indian music.

Mrs. Mott Macarthy's writings appear now and again in the Modern Review journal. From childhood she has shown extraordinary genius for music. From the age of six she astonished audiences by playing the violin in public performances. Unfortunately, a nervous ailment in her hand has stopped her playing. Having stayed in India, she has for some time studied specifically the music of South India; she too is engaged in writing a book on the subject.

One day I went to a dinner-invitation of Dr. Coomaraswamy's; he said he would have me listen to the singing of Ratan Devi. I could not understand who Ratan Devi might be; I thought she must be some Indian lady. I saw that she was an Englishwoman, and the very lady of the house where I had been invited.

Sitting on the floor, taking the tambura in her lap, she began to sing. I was astonished. This was not "hillimilli poniya"—she sang, in proper alap, a raga in Kanada or Malkauns or Behag, I do not now recall which. She employed all the difficult meend and applied the tala, marking the beat with gestures of her hand; she did not, with a flourish of Western showmanship, deface her Indian character with even a sixteenth part of foreign polish. The difference from our own masters was this—that there seemed to be no obstruction anywhere in her throat; no sign of any laboured, strained effort was to be seen in her bodily posture or the tone of her voice. The very form of the song appeared entirely unblemished and untiring.

Those in this country who are thus engaged in the study of Indian music are not merely satisfying idle curiosity; within it they have discovered a rare beauty—and, in order to grasp that essence, they are eager, even so far as possible, to incorporate it as an integral part of their own music. Their number is at present still exceedingly small, no doubt, but if a fire catches even at one corner, it will spread abroad by its own force on every side.

I have met here Dr. York Trotter, head of the London Academy of Music. He has gained some acquaintance with Indian music. He has repeatedly expressed to me

his eagerness that some means should be found in London for the discussion of this music. He believes that if some wealthy Indian king could keep some great master of the veena here for a while, much benefit might result.

The benefit would be ours most of all. For we have lost reverence for our own art of music. Its connection with our life has grown exceedingly weak. When the tide goes out from a river, only mud is left exposed; likewise, since the flood-tide has receded from the flowing stream of our music, we are today wallowing in the mire of its lower depths. In this, the very purpose of bathing is defeated. Merely by hearing the tunes played nowadays in our households on the gramophone, and the songs learned from the theatre, we can understand that not only has the poverty of our spirit become manifest, but that we have taken to wearing that very squalor as an ornament of the body. No one can banish cheap, worthless things entirely from the earth; in every society there exists a certain class of people whose taste can never rise above such things—but when it is precisely such people who overrun the whole country, then Saraswati becomes a puppet dancing to a cheap tune. Then our striving grows feeble, and our attainment correspondingly poor. Thus the country will be overrun, before our very eyes, by the weeds of the gramophone and concert parties; and the golden crop that ought to be cultivated is being allowed to die.

Dr. Coomaraswamy once said to me, "Perhaps a time will come when, to gain acquaintance with your own music, you will have to go to Europe." Many things of our own country we have already, hands outstretched, come to receive back from Europe. Perhaps if we send our music too, once, across the sea, and then, afterward, receive it back again, we shall receive it in better form. We have spent a long time crouched in a corner of our own house; hence we do not know the market-price of anything; to appraise our own possessions and know for certain wherein our glory lies—that power we do not have.

Where every effort of man is being poured out, ceaselessly, in manifold forms, from a rich abundance of vital energy; where the whole wealth of man is being put to

labour in the great commerce of life, and multiplying in profit—there, if we do not bring our own goods, if we cannot join that ongoing commerce, we shall not be able to give our full account of ourselves; and so much of our strength will simply go to waste. We have long heard it said that we fear we shall forget ourselves in the company of Europe; but that is not true—rather the opposite is true. At the first shock of this vigorous, living force, we lose our bearings for a time, but in the end we come to find our own nature more fully awakened. Europe's vital literature has awakened the endeavour of our own literature; the more powerful it grows, the more it drives us, evading mere imitation, forward along the path of self-expression. The awakening that is now visible in our art has, at its root, the impact of Europe's vital energy. I believe that in music too, we need this same contact with the outside world. It must be freed from the iron chest of ancient custom and set circulating in the marketplace of the world. Only when we have gained a good acquaintance with European music shall we learn to use our own music truly, and to its fullest extent. Sadly, music is not, for our educated classes, a part of their education; in our clerk-manufacturing factories called colleges, there is no place for the art of music, and, astonishing to say, even in those institutions to which we have, with great pride, given the name "National," the study of art found no place at all. How great is its necessity in man's social life—that awareness we have entirely lost, memorizing notes and taking degrees as we go. This is why, to this day, music remains bound up among those uneducated people, before whom the world has no manifestation; who, like a helpless woman, have had all their wealth fashioned into ornaments, only able to carry it about, unable to make full use of it in every way; indeed, the very suggestion of putting it to use terrifies them—they think it is a scheme to rob them of everything they possess.

Where all of man's effort, out of an abundant vitality, is constantly emerging in manifold forms, where all of man's wealth is being put to work in the great commerce of life and steadily gaining in profit—there, if we do not bring our own goods, if we cannot connect them to that ongoing commerce, we shall never be able to gain full recognition of ourselves; consequently much of our power will simply continue to be wasted. Therefore, since we ourselves have not been able to make good use of our wealth, those who can will one day put it to work in their own business, will bring it onto the path of service to the world. We shall have to

wait for that day; only afterward shall we take pride, saying that what we possess, no one else in the world possesses; and even the materials for that pride will have to be supplied to us by others.

THE DIFFERENCE OF SOCIETIES

When we set out on a journey to England, that is not merely a going from one country to another; for us, it is an entry into an entirely new order of existence. In the outer differences of the manner of living, no great matter is at stake. That in dress, in food, in daily habit, we shall not have the ways of a foreigner—that, of course, is a given, and hence occasions no particular difficulty there. But it is not merely in the manner of living but at one point in the very philosophy of life, that we have a deeper disagreement, and there it suddenly becomes difficult for us to know where we stand.

The moment we board the ship, we begin to feel this. We understand that from now on we must live by the rules of another world. So sudden and thorough a change is displeasing to man—and it is for this very reason that we do not try to understand it properly and see it clearly; we somehow just go along with it, or else we complain inwardly, saying that these people's manners and customs are exceedingly artificial.

The real truth is that the difference in our social condition from theirs is the graver matter. Our society stops at the boundary of the family and the village community. Within that boundary alone do we have a certain number of fixed rules regarding mutual conduct. Keeping our eye fixed upon that boundary alone, what we are to do and what we are not to do has been determined. Among these rules there is much that is artificial, and much also that is natural.

But the society for which these rules have been made is not large in extent, and it is a society of kinsfolk. Hence our manners and customs are of an intimate kind. One must not smoke in the presence of one's father; it is one's duty to take the dust of one's guru's feet and give him an offering; one must veil one's face upon seeing an elder brother-in-law; and close association with a maternal uncle-in-law

is to be avoided. Outside this family or village circle, whatever order of rule prevails is, for the most part, based on caste distinction.

To speak plainly, the thread of caste and stage of life has woven our village society and family circle together like a garland. We have reached a certain conclusion. India has settled, in her society, upon one complete solution to the problem, and has come to think that once this arrangement can be kept firmly fixed forever, there remains no further thought to be given to the matter. It is for this reason that the entire endeavour of modern India has worked toward strengthening, from every side, the provision by which the thread of caste and stage of life binds and holds fast the family-society.

It must be admitted that whatever problem confronted India, India succeeded in arriving at some solution or other to it. The conflict of diverse races she has, after a fashion, settled; the conflict of diverse classes she has, after a fashion, cooled down; by division of occupation, India has restrained the strife of competition, and by the barrier of caste division, she has warded off the clash arising from that pride which the disparity of wealth and power creates. On the one hand, though India has, by every means, made impassable the distinctness between the Brahmins, the leaders of society, and the other castes, on the other hand she has likewise spread out manifold arrangements, great and small, to circulate every kind of comfort and enlightenment among the common people. Hence in India, whatever the wealthy enjoy, on various occasions the common people share in it; and it is only by sheltering and satisfying the common people that the powerful gain their reputation for power. In our country there is no cause for a violent clash of rich and poor, and there has been no particular need to protect the powerless by law.

Western society is not a familial society; it is a public society; it is more extensive than our society. It exists, within the household, to a far lesser degree than it does outside it. What in our country is understood by the word "family" does not bind people together in Europe—that is precisely why Europe's people are scattered.

The nature of this scattered society is this—on the one hand its bonds are as loose as can be, on the other hand it takes on an accordingly manifold and firm character. It resembles prose composition. Because verse moves bound within the narrow limits of metre, its binding is easy; but prose has become scattered—and so on the one hand it is free, but on the other hand its every step is bound, tightly, by the manifold rule of logic, of the varied laws of the development of thought.

Because English society exists over a vast field, and because it has had to cast its whole business abroad far and wide, it has had, by manifold social regulations, to remain prepared at all times. When entertaining a guest at home, formal dress is of little concern. They must dress well, however, because they are not within their own family circle. Kinsfolk forgive, kinsfolk tolerate—but from strangers one cannot expect such indulgence. Each person must carry out each task exactly on time, otherwise people will keep colliding with one another. If a railway line belongs to me alone, or is under the control of myself and a handful of my friends, then I can run trains as I please and can halt each other's trains wherever, whenever I like. But on the general railway route, where a great many trains are constantly coming and going, if there is a discrepancy even of five minutes, confusion arises in many directions, and that becomes hard to bear. Perhaps because our society is exceedingly intimate, or because that intimate habit has become ingrained in our very marrow, our observance of the boundaries of time and place, in our dealings with one another, is exceedingly loose—we occupy whatever space we please, waste time as we please, and we condemn the strictness of manners as a lack of true kinship-feeling. It is precisely there that we first stumble in English society; there, no one has the right to do whatever he pleases in outward conduct and then expect forgiveness from everyone. Following what is convenient for all in general, these people have accepted many restrictions. They have had to keep fixed the rules of meeting and visiting, of invitation and engagement, of dress, of the demands and observances of hospitality. Where it is not, in fact, a society of kinsfolk, if one tries to apply the loose rules proper to a society of kinsfolk, then everything becomes utterly grotesque, and the conduct of daily life becomes impossible.

Europe's vast society has not yet arrived at any settled solution. In outward custom and conduct it has tried to restrain and give order and grace to itself, but the inner forces of society have not yet been able, here, to bind themselves by any single thread of unity so as to preserve entirely their mutual harmony without conflict. Europe is passing continuously through experiment, change, and revolution. There, ceaselessly, conflict is arising between woman and man, between the religious society and the working society, between the power of the state and the power of the subject, between the employer class and the labouring class. Like the surface of the moon, it has not yet become whatever it is finally to become—even now it stands ready for the eruption of its volcanic fire.

But can we say that we ourselves have solved every problem, and, having made our social order fixed forever, sit utterly free of anxiety, like a corpse? Even though the time for it has passed, we may keep the old arrangement standing for a while yet, but we cannot, along with it, keep the underlying condition itself bound and fixed. We stand now face to face with the whole world; we can no longer go on with so intimate a society as before—these people are no longer merely father, grandfather, and uncle; they are outsiders, they are men of different countries; to deal with them we must be alert and vigilant; if we go on absent-minded and slovenly, one day we shall find ourselves brought to a standstill.

We take pride, invoking the name of "eternal tradition," but it is not at all true that Indian society has not sprung up through the course of history. India too, according to circumstance, has had to advance under the pressure of one revolution after another—of this there is no doubt whatsoever—and history bears its traces. But to declare that its movement has come to an absolute end, that from now until eternity it will remain fixed forever—such an absurd claim I do not wish even to utter with my lips. After each great revolution, weariness comes upon society; at that time it shuts its doors, puts out its lights, and prepares for sleep. After the Buddhist revolution, India, under the compulsion of a rigorous discipline, closed all her doors and windows, and lay down, utterly still. Sleep came upon her. But to take pride in calling this an endless sleep would be both laughable and pitiable. Sleep is good only so long as it is night—so long as there is no crowd of people

outside, so long as the great shops and markets remain closed. But when, in the morning, the hue and cry has gone up on every side, though you lie there silent, while no one else keeps still, then to keep your eternal doors and gates bolted and barred will prove exceedingly troublesome.

The dispensation of the night is simple; its arrangements are few; its needs are ordinary. Hence the whole system can be completed quite easily, and, freed from all disturbance, one can close one's eyes in peace; then whatever is placed wherever it is placed, stays there, for there is no one to disturb it. The arrangement of the daytime is not so simple; nor does it do to finish the morning's toilette once and then, thereafter, remain at ease for the rest of the day, smoking one's pipe. Work keeps coming upon one's shoulders, new efforts constantly have to be made, and if one cannot adjust one's own manner of living to the outer current of life, then eating, drinking, work, everything, keeps meeting with obstruction.

For a time, India spent her night peacefully within a fixed and unmoving order of very strict rule. That that condition was one of deep repose does not mean it was destined to remain restful forever. The blow falls hardest, most painfully, when it strikes upon a sleeping body. Daytime is the season of such blows. That is why to remain awake in daylight is by far the most restful course.

Whether we wish it or not, whether languor still clings to every limb or not, our time to awaken has come. We are receiving blows, and suffering, both from within and from without society. We are afflicted by poverty and famine. Cracks have appeared in the social system; the joint family is breaking apart into fragments; and the position of the Brahmin in society is growing so debased that "Brahmin Samaj" and similar assemblies are, by means of societies and committees, having to proclaim themselves by loud outcry as Brahmins, thereby only proving further their own weakness. The panchayat system of village society has hanged itself with the government's official badge round its neck and, turned into a ghost, haunts the breast of the village; the country's rice no longer fills the belly, and one by one, under the burden of famine, people are taking refuge at government relief-

kitchens; the rich and prominent of the country, extinguishing the lamp at the place of their birth, are riding about in motor-cars in Calcutta; and great, illustrious families, having sacrificed their all and their daughter besides, are dying, beating their heads uselessly at the feet of a B.A.-passed bridegroom. For all these evil omens, it is of no use to curse, in this Kali Yuga, either the foreign king or the native English-educated newly-rich. The plain truth is that the Master of our daytime has sent his constables; he will not cease pulling us out of our eternal bedchamber. We cannot, by forcibly shutting our eyes, create untimely night. The world that has arrived at our door must be invited into our house; if we do not receive it with honour, it will break down our door and enter. Has the door not already begun to break?

Therefore, once again, we must think anew to find a solution to the problem. To imitate Europe will not serve; but we must learn from Europe. To learn and to imitate are not the same thing. Indeed, it is only by learning properly that one can be delivered from the disease of imitation. Without truly knowing another, one can never truly know oneself either.

But what I was saying is this—that with our intimate, slovenly habits, we find ourselves greatly hampered in English society. We can by no means manage to make ourselves ready. It feels as though everyone is pushing past us, and no one is waiting for us in the least. We are creatures who crave fondness and indulgence; outside the society of kinsfolk we are greatly at a loss. Coming here, I have noticed this—that because our young men have no habit of entering the homes of others' sons in our own country, most of our students, coming here, memorize their lessons but maintain no connection whatsoever with the society here. Because the society here is so vast, the duty owed to that society is correspondingly greater. Only by acknowledging that duty can we come to harmonize, in the matter of society, with the people here. If that harmony does not come about, we shall be deprived of the greatest lesson this place has to offer.

For the greatest truth here is the society of this place. Indeed, the greatest heroism, the greatest nobility here, is to be found in the field of society, not on the battlefield. The renunciation and self-respect fitting for a vast society are being expressed here at every step; here men are becoming truly human, and in various ways preparing themselves to devote themselves to the service of mankind. The educated gentry of modern India regard the education of the schools, even in their own country, as the whole of education—deprived thereby of the education of the larger society; if, coming here as well, they merely enter the school-factory and emerge as mere manufactured goods of a machine, without entering the true birthplace of manhood in the society of this place, then even having come abroad, they will remain deprived.

THE FULFILLMENT OF LIMITATION

I have heard it said, now and again, that in poetic art there is no complete fulfillment of life. Unless the striving toward God is established, out of the sphere of poetic ornamentation, in the field of action in the world, it does not attain the firmness of truth.

At times, in moments of weariness, I too have thought this. But I know that such a thought is but the spreading of a mirage within the mind. That enemy of man which whispers false mantras into his ear—greed—is foremost among them. It says to man: "That which you are contains no truth; the truth lies only outside it."

But the Upanishad has said: mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam—covet not the wealth of any other. That is to say: do not let your thought and your striving run in pursuit of what lies beyond your own bounds.

The reason why one should not covet is also given in that same verse. The Upanishad says: He pervades all things; therefore, in that in which He dwells, whatever is His gift, there can be no lack whatsoever. When we fail to perceive that abundance within ourselves, we imagine then that abundance exists in another. But it is precisely that poverty by which we have failed to find abundance within ourselves that forbids us the hope of finding it elsewhere.

That there is a Limit is as certain a truth as that the Limitless exists. When we see the two as severed from one another, we fall into the trap of Maya. Then we make the mistake of thinking that only by transgressing our own limit can we attain the Limitless—as though by suicide one could gain eternal life. As though, by ceasing to be myself and becoming something else, I should thereby become blessed. But it is forgotten that what I myself am becoming is, after all, no different from becoming something else. If there is failure within this "I" of mine, I shall never

obtain release from it by attaining some other selfhood. If there is a hole in my pitcher through which the water leaks out, that is no fault of the water. The same would happen were I to pour in milk, and likewise, indeed, were I to pour in honey.

There is but one single thing to be thought of in life: that I should become true. Whether I shall become a poet, or a man of action, or something else—that is an altogether futile question. To become true means only this—that I should determine, with certainty, where my own limit lies. If, tempted by false ambition, I do not remain steady of mind on this point, I shall fall away from true conduct.

The reason we call egotism a vice, and call greed a vice, is this: it does not let us properly understand our own limits. It obstructs the discipline of self-knowledge, and merely goes on saying: "What you are is much more than that, or something else entirely." From this arises as much sorrow, as much hatred, as much strife and violence in the world as from nothing else. It is by trying, through sheer force, to make true that which is false, that all manner of evil is engendered in the world.

We possess a powerful attraction toward the boundless; it is that very attraction which gives motion to our lives. To neglect that attraction and sit inert brings no good. We must attain the Vast—in that very attainment lies our happiness.

But there is no other course than this: that within our own limit we must attain that Boundless One. It is by the mistaken belief that the boundless cannot be contained within a limit that we belittle the boundless. It is true that within one bounded thing another bounded object cannot find complete room. But that principle does not apply to the Infinite. He is infinite even within a single grain of sand. Therefore, when we try to fully and comprehensively grasp even a single grain of sand, we find that unless we grasp the whole universe, there is no way to grasp it at all; for at one point it is inseparably joined to the totality of existence—it has an aspect by which it can, by no means whatsoever, be brought to an end.

That we should realize the manifestation of the Infinite within our own limit—this alone is our spiritual endeavour. For it is the joy of that very Infinite which has fashioned a limit within me; within that limit alone is His delight, His play. To think that by shattering that dwelling-place of His we shall attain more of Him is itself a mistake.

The rose contains within it an infinity of beauty, for the reason that it is, completely and wholly, a rose—regarding this there is no doubt, no indefiniteness. It is for this very reason that in the rose there has appeared, with such clarity, that same manifestation which is found in the moon and the sun, in all the beautiful things of the universe. It is because it is, with such definite certainty, a rose, that its kinship with the whole universe is real.

Indeed, indefiniteness itself is failure; and it is precisely there that the manifestation of the Vast is obstructed, the joy of the Vast concealed. His joy attains fulfillment only through the taking of form. He who is the Infinite is true, is beautiful, only within limitation. Hence, in the history of the creation of the world, the unfolding of form is becoming ever more clearly articulate; from limit to limit has proceeded the advancing pilgrimage of the Infinite. From bud to flower, from flower to fruit—ever from form to more articulate form.

For this very reason, to attain oneself clearly is the endeavour of man. To attain oneself clearly means to attain oneself within bounds. Only when, gathering ourselves together from the scattering of manifold false ambitions along manifold paths, we can stand ourselves up clearly within our own limit, do we attain the fulfillment of life.

So long as one has not learned to swim, one's arms and legs flail about in disorder. The very moment one learns to swim well, our effort becomes bounded, and thereby is manifested as beautiful. When a bird flies, it appears beautiful, because there is no hesitation in its flight; it is well-regulated—that is, it has attained its own

definite limit. To attain this limit is creation, that is, truth; and to attain the Infinite through limit is beauty, that is, joy. To fall away from limit is ugliness—that is joylessness, that is destruction.

Poetic ornamentation, likewise, becomes a vice the moment it becomes false—that is, the moment it, failing to attain its own limit, strives to become something else. Then it flatters; then it makes the small appear great, and brings the great down to smallness. Then it becomes mere talk about words—it is not creation. But where the poet is true, where he establishes his own infinite within his own limit, gives bodily form to his own joy within his own power—there he creates. His place is among all the creations of the world. He who truly labours and creates works, he who truly strives and creates a life—both have equal right to take their seat in the same row as the poet. Carlyle and other writers of prose, who have given a greater place to action than to word, when we consider it, meant by this that they wished to give greater honour to true action than to false word. But alongside this, it must also be said that a true word is far greater than a false action.

The real truth is this: truth, in whatever form it may be expressed, is one and the same. That alone is man's eternal wealth. Just as with money—where truth, that is, power, is expressed in the form of money, there that money is not merely money; it is food as well, clothing as well, education as well, health as well; then that money, precisely because it is definitely bound within the limit of true value, transcends its own fixed boundary—that is, by its own true value it becomes joined in relationship with the manifold true objects outside itself. So too, true poetry has a connection and equivalence with every kind of true human endeavour. True poetry does not remain merely as poetry within a certain number of sentences. It becomes united with the vital force of man, and joins itself with the labour of the worker and the discipline of the ascetic. It is beyond doubt that if the poet's poetry had not existed in this world, every kind of action in human life would have been of an entirely different character. For man's true word has, from time immemorial, been mingling with man's true action, giving it strength, giving it form, advancing it along its path toward its goal.

Therefore, this one thing we must remember especially: that to attain the true limit is the sole path to attaining the true Infinite. Only by transgressing one's own limit does one transgress against one's own infinite self. The difference between the man who has become true in poetry, or in action, or in the discipline of religion, and other ordinary people, is this: that he has clearly discovered the limit of the Infinite, whereas all others wander about aimlessly, however it happens, lost in an indefiniteness devoid of limit. This very indefiniteness is worthless. When a river finds the boundary of its own banks, it is then that it can rush forth toward the infinite ocean; but should it, dissatisfied with itself, in its wish to become greater, obliterate its own banks, then its very movement is arrested, and it scatters, worthless, into marsh and swamp.

This must be kept in mind—that to be bound within one's own true limit is not narrowness, is not inertia. Indeed, it is by being established upon the throne of that very limit that man becomes generous; it is by being confined within that very limit that man's endeavour grows vigorous and forceful. It is by becoming truly individual that the individual gains worth among men; it is only by attaining true nationhood that a nation can find its place among all the nations of the world. The nation that has not attained nationhood has lost universal humanity. He who is a truly great man is the very man who has attained himself with particular distinctness, more than all others. The person who has attained himself no longer has any chance of remaining sunk in inertia; he has found his own work, he has found his own place, he has found his own joy; like a river, he flows on, without hesitation, in his own current—his true limit alone easily carries him along toward his true fulfillment.

Āvirāvīrma edhi. May He who is manifestation itself become manifest within me, within my own limit—this is our true prayer. If I disregard my own limit, then I shall obstruct the manifestation of that very Infinite. Pāhi māṃ nityam. Protect me always. Protect me within my truth, within my limit. May I never lose myself by going beyond my limit. May I, having become, fully, exactly what I am, feel within myself, with utter clarity, Your grace, Your joy. That is to say—may I, accepting with joy that very limit within which is Your delight, be able to fulfill my own life—this is the deepest, innermost prayer of my very being.

London

THE FINITE AND THE INFINITE

The root meaning of the word dharma is that which holds and sustains. If we examine the etymology of the word "religion," we find that its original meaning too is that which binds together.

Thus, viewed from one side, we see that man has accepted dharma as a bond. It is dharma that has confined the field of man's endeavour, narrowing it, drawing it inward. To accept this bondage, to attain this limit, is man's supreme striving.

For limit itself is creation. The more clearly and distinctly a boundary-line is drawn, the more true and beautiful creation becomes. It is the very nature of joy to manifest itself through limitation. The joy of the Creator has bound the whole of creation within the bounds of law. The joy of the worker, the joy of the poet, the joy of the artist—all are but limit taking on ever more luminous form.

Dharma, too, is the power that makes man's humanity more radiant within its true limits. The simpler that limit becomes, the more coherent, the more beautiful it grows. The more truly does man gain strength, health, and glory; the more does joy become manifest within him.

Through dharma man seeks his own limit, and yet through that very dharma man seeks his own infinitude. This is the wonder of it. At the root of every perfection in this world of ours, we find this same paradox. That which makes small, makes great; that which severs, unites; that which binds, grants freedom; the infinite creates the finite, and the finite goes on revealing the infinite. Indeed, wherever this paradox has come together and fused completely into one, there is perfection. Wherever their union is broken and one side alone grows dominant, there lies all manner of evil. Where the infinite fails to express itself through the finite, there it is empty; where the finite fails to point toward the infinite, there it is meaningless. Where

freedom denies bondage, there it is wild excess; where bondage does not acknowledge freedom, there it is tyranny. In our country, the followers of Maya-doctrine have called all limitation illusion. But the truth is this: it is the finite severed from the infinite that is illusion. Equally true is this: the infinite severed from the finite is illusion too.

The song that has wholly attained the limit of its own melody does not merely express the creation of sound—through its own law, through its very limitation, it gives voice to something greater than limit itself. Because the rose has wholly attained its own limit, through that very limit it goes on revealing an infinite beauty. Through this limit, the rose is a particular object in the realm of nature, but in the realm of feeling it is joy itself. This very limit has bound it on one side, and released it on the other.

This is why we find that at the root of all human discipline lies the practice of restraint. Man can walk only once he has learned to restrain his effort; he can think only once he has learned to bind his thought. That craftsman alone is accomplished who has come to know the limit of his work—that is, its law—completely, and has accepted it. That man alone has been able to make his life beautiful who has disciplined it. And just as the faithful wife attains the supreme fulfilment of her love through the very discipline of chastity, so too the man who is pure in heart—that is, who has bound his own will within its true limit—attains Him who is the ultimate fruit of all striving, who is the very embodiment of supreme joy.

This dharma has been accepted as bondage, as suffering; it has been said that the path of dharma is as perilous as a sharpened razor's edge. Had that path been boundless, then any man could have walked it however he pleased, and nowhere would there have been any hindrance for anyone. But that path is bound fast within the limit of a fixed and certain law—and that is why it is so difficult to traverse. Man must accept, as inevitable, the hard suffering entailed in following this discipline of limitation. For it is through this very suffering that joy is being made manifest. This

is why the Upanishad says: through austerity alone, through suffering alone, has He created all this, whatsoever there is.

Keats, the poet, has said: Truth is beauty, and beauty is truth. Truth is limit, truth is law; through truth alone has everything been sustained. The moment this truth—that is, this limit—is transgressed, everything grows unruly and comes to ruin. The beauty of the infinite is manifest within the limit of this truth.

If we regard the finite and the infinite as mutually separate and opposed, then man's religious striving becomes utterly meaningless. If the infinite dwells outside the finite, then there exists in this world no bridge whatsoever by which He might be reached. Then He would remain, for us, a falsehood for all eternity.

But man's dharma tells man: "You will find the infinite only by finding your own limit. Become human; it is within that very becoming that the striving of your inmost self shall find fulfilment." Herein alone lies our fearlessness, our immortality. Within the very limit wherein lies our truth, lies also our supreme fulfilment. This is why the Upanishad has declared: This alone is its highest goal, this alone is its highest wealth, this alone is its highest refuge, this alone is its highest joy. The infinite and the finite, this "He" and this "here," are utterly close together; the two birds sit wing pressed against wing.

In our country, the inner truth of the doctrine of devotion is this—that the bond between the finite and the infinite is the bond of joy, that is, the bond of love. That is to say, the finite needs the infinite exactly as much as the infinite needs the finite; neither can do without the other.

Man has sometimes banished God to a far and distant heaven. At once man's God has grown terrible. And in order to subdue that terror, fear-ridden man has taken refuge in manifold rites and rituals, in priests and intermediaries. But when man has come to know Him as dwelling within, then his fear has been dispelled, and setting the intermediary aside, he has longed to unite with Him through the bond of love.

Man sometimes heaps every kind of abuse and reviles the finite altogether. Then, tormenting his own nature and forsaking the world, he sets out, through impossible austerities, to strive after the infinite. Man then imagines that limit is somehow his own private possession, and so whatever disgrace he heaps upon it touches no one else. But whence has man obtained this limit in the first place? What does he know of the infinite mystery contained within this limit? What power has he to destroy it?

When man comes to know that the infinite dwells within the finite, then he understands—this very mystery is the mystery of love; this very truth is the truth of beauty; herein lies man's glory; and He who is man's God—in this same glory lies His glory too. The finite is the infinite's own splendour, the finite is the infinite's own joy; for it is within the finite that He has given Himself, and it is within the finite that He goes on receiving Himself.

London

THE METHOD OF EDUCATION

When we set out on this journey, one of our resolves was this: to look carefully into the schools of this land—to see and to hear, to understand and to judge—whether any of the arrangements made here for education might suit our own country. We have observed a little; we have also read some discussions in the newspapers and periodicals concerning the educational methods here. Examinations of various kinds are being conducted; systems of various sorts are being devised anew. One party says that children's education ought to be made as pleasurable as possible; another party says that unless a sufficient measure of hardship enters into children's education, they cannot be made fit and hardy enough for the world. One party says that the best arrangement is to let children absorb the subjects of learning through the natural process of seeing and hearing, through impressions gathered from their surroundings; another party says that the true and fruitful method is to make children exert their own strength deliberately, mastering their subjects through disciplined effort. In truth, this conflict will never be resolved anywhere—for this very conflict is inherent in human nature itself; both happiness and sorrow are man's teachers; he cannot do without discipline, yet without freedom too he has no salvation. On the one side stands open the gate through which the ready-made comes pouring in; on the other side lies open the path along which what he himself has laboriously earned may come and go. It is easy enough to say: fix and mark out clearly the exact middle path between the two—but in practice this is impossible. For the course of life never runs along an absolutely straight line—buffeted by manifold obstacles and countless pressures from within and without, it winds and bends like a river; it does not lie straight like a dug canal. Therefore the middle line is not fixed once for all—it too must continually shift its place. What is the middle path for one age becomes, at another time, the very extreme boundary for that same people; what is the extreme path for one nation becomes, for another, the middle way. For manifold inevitable reasons, sometimes war comes into the history of man, sometimes peace comes; sometimes there comes a tide of prosperity, sometimes the days of its ebb set in. Sometimes he grows exalted in his own strength; sometimes he is overwhelmed by a sense of his own helplessness. In such circumstances, when man is leaning too far to one side, the sound education for him is to pull him forcefully toward the other. When man's

nature remains vigorously alive, then from within himself, through some innate power, he chooses the path of his own equilibrium. The man who holds mastery over his own body, when struck from one side, naturally throws his weight to the other and steadies himself; but the drunkard, at the slightest push, topples over and remains lying in that very state. The methods by which the children of Europe are reared into manhood are being transformed of their own accord. The more their minds grow awakened through contact with the manifold experience of knowledge, the swifter becomes the transformation of their path.

Therefore, the path of education must be guided by the movement of the mind itself. But since that movement is manifold, and cannot be clearly seen by all with the naked eye, no single man or group of men can ever fix and prescribe this path once and for all. Through the combined endeavours of many different people, the natural path traces itself out. This is why, for every nation, keeping open the road of its own experimentation is the sole means of discovering the path of truth.

But in a land where to stray even a hair's breadth from the fixed custom of the social schoolroom means the loss of caste, there stands, at the very outset, a colossal obstacle to becoming human. Change in social conditions is occurring, and will go on occurring—no one can hold it back. And yet, to fasten one's institutions rigidly upon an eternal, unchanging line can become no small cause of man's misfortune. It is rather like this: the river shifts its course, but the fixed ghat remains lying in the same place; the ferry-boat's route is fixed to that same spot; and should one land at any ghat but that one, the washerman and the barber refuse their services. And so, the ghat remains, but we get no water; the boat remains, but its movement is stopped.

In such a state, our society is not giving us the education suited to our own age; it is giving us the education of two or four thousand years past. Thus the greatest school of all, for the making of men, stands closed to us; it makes no claim whatsoever upon our present-day life. Once, in a particular condition of our history, our society bade some men be Brahmins, others Kshatriyas, others Vaishyas or

Shudras. Toward us it then had a demand suited to its age, and so, keeping this demand in view, the arrangement of education fashioned itself, of its own accord, into manifold forms. For such is the law of creation: the seed of a central idea, driven by the urgency of life, spontaneously spreads and enlarges its own branches; no one comes from outside gathering twigs and binding them on. Our present society has no such living demand—yet still it goes on telling man, "Be a Brahmin, be a Shudra." What it commands cannot, by any means, be truly fulfilled, and so man accepts it only from the outward side. In the season of becoming a Brahmin there is no longer any brahmacharya; the head is shaved, and after three days of farcical performance, the sacred thread is hung about the neck. The Brahmin can no longer bestow the teaching of a life sanctified by austerity, but when it comes to giving the dust of his feet to be touched, his foot is offered without the least hesitation. Meanwhile, the very foundation of caste-division—division of occupation—has utterly crumbled away, and to preserve it has become wholly impossible; and yet all the outward prohibitions of caste sit on unmoved. The cage must still be honoured with all its iron bars and chains, though the bird within has died. We go on ceaselessly supplying grain and water, though it serves the sustenance of no living creature.

In this way, since a rupture has occurred between our social life and our social law, we are not merely hindered by needless, anachronistic arrangements—we have become incapable of preserving social truth itself. We pay a price and we receive a price, and yet in exchange there stands no true substance whatsoever. The disciple bows to the guru and pays his fee in full, but the guru makes no effort even to repay the debt he owes the disciple; and the guru instructs the disciple in the forgotten language of ancient times, though the disciple has neither the reverence, nor the capacity, nor the desire, to receive it. The result is that we are gradually losing the very belief that this true substance serves any purpose at all. We feel not the least shame in admitting that it is enough merely to keep up outward appearances. We do not even hesitate to say: act as licentiously as you please in practice, so long as you do not openly confess to it. Man is driven by necessity to resort to such hypocrisy. For when your reverence has already gone elsewhere, and yet society, through harsh discipline, still binds practice to the very same spot, then fifteen out of every sixteen persons in that society feel no shame in resorting to falsehood. For

heroic souls are few among men, and where the penalty for openly confessing the truth is unbearably excessive, hypocrisy can no longer be reckoned a crime. This is why we witness, every day in our country, this strange phenomenon: a man can readily acknowledge a thing to be good, and yet, in that very same breath, declare with an unblushing face, "This I cannot practise in social life." We too forgive this hypocrisy when we consider how impossibly excessive is the toll exacted, in this society, for putting one's own true convictions into practice.

Therefore, where society has left utterly no path open toward wholesome harmony with the flow of life, the school of man that is most natural and most spacious of all is not, in fact, entirely absent among us; it is, rather, far more terrible than absence—it exists and yet does not exist; it does not clear the way for truth, and it goes on hoarding falsehood. This society, refusing utterly to acknowledge motion, only pollutes what should be stable repose.

Such, then, is the closed condition of the social school; and after it comes the royal school. That too is a colossal affair, cast all in one single mould. Its one endeavour is to harden and set, in a single mould, all the educational systems of the land. Its greatest dread is that the country might, of itself, devise some independent method of its own. Its aim is to extend sole dominion over the very mentality of the land, and there to enforce its own law. And so this vast engine of learning is turning into an engine for the manufacture of clerks. Here man gathers up pebbles of notes and loads sacks of degrees, but that is no food for life. Its glory is merely the glory of the load, not the glory of the living spirit.

Both the old chain of the social school and the new chain of the royal school bind our minds to a degree far exceeding whatever freedom they grant. This alone is our one great problem. However far the new system has made the memorizing of history easier, or the working of sums more pleasant, I do not care to give that much weight. For I know that when we go searching after "systems," we are searching after some impossible, cut-rate shortcut. We imagine that, since it is difficult to obtain suitable men on a regular basis, perhaps that want can be

supplied instead through some fixed and rigid system. Man has tried this again and again, and again and again has failed, and fallen into trouble. However we may turn and twist along the way, in the end we must come to rest upon this inescapable truth: that the dispensation of education is accomplished through the teacher, not through the system. The mind of man is a living, moving thing, and only a living, moving mind can comprehend it. In this land too, from ancient times down to the present day, one great teacher after another has been born; it is they who, like Bhagirath, have drawn down the sacred stream of learning, lightening the world's burden of sin and dispelling the torpor of death. It is they who, even through all the fixed obstacles of educational regulation, have poured the flow of living spirit into their students' minds. Recall the early days of English education in our own land. Derozio, Captain Richardson, David Hare—these were teachers; they were not moulds of instruction, they were not vehicles for carrying notes. In those days the labyrinth of the university had not yet become so terribly rigid; in those days there was still a way for light and air to enter it; in those days, within the gaps of regulation, a teacher could still find and make for himself a seat.

However it may be accomplished, the field of learning in our country must be freed from its walls. Through outward methods like political agitation, we scatter our efforts and gain no particular result. We ourselves must take upon our own shoulders the task of teaching our country, guiding that same strength and zeal, independently, along the channel of success. For those who wish to dedicate themselves to the service of their country, this is the foremost task of all. Only if we can, through the various trials of various teachers, set flowing the current of education in our land, will it become the natural possession of our country. Only then shall we, here and there, from time to time, encounter the true teacher. Only then will the succession of teachers awaken of itself, by the very law of nature. We cannot, by branding it with the name "national," conjure up some one particular system of education. That education alone can be called national which is carried forward, in manifold ways, through the manifold endeavours of the manifold people of the nation itself. Whether under the rule of one's own people or under foreign rule, whenever any one particular system seeks to bind the whole country to some single fixed ideal, we cannot call that national—it is sectarian, and therefore perilous to the nation.

We had once learned a great truth concerning education. We had come to know that man can learn only from man; just as a reservoir is filled by water, so a flame is kindled by flame, and life is transmitted by life. The moment man is stripped and pared away, he ceases to be man at all—he becomes merely the necessary equipment of office and court, of mill and factory; at that very moment, instead of being a man, he wishes to become "Master"; at that very moment, he can no longer give life, he can only dispense lessons. Only through the fullness of the kinship between guru and disciple can the work of education flow like the bloodstream through a living body. For the true charge of nurturing and teaching children rests upon the parents. But where parents lack either the capacity or the means for this, the help of some other qualified person becomes indispensable. In such a case, the guru cannot do without becoming, in effect, father and mother. We cannot purchase, with money, or receive only in part, the greatest things of life; only through affection, love, and devotion can we make them our own; that alone is the digestive juice of the stomach of humanity; that alone can assimilate organic matter into the very substance of life. In our country's education today, it is the living presence of that guru which has become the most indispensable thing of all. There is no burden so terrible, in childhood, as lifeless instruction; it grinds and squeezes out of the mind far more than it gives. In our social order, we are searching for that guru who will grant motion to our life; in our system of education, we are searching for that guru who will free the pathway of our thought from all obstruction. However it be accomplished, in every direction we want men; no physician, by making us swallow the pill of any system, can save us in their stead.

AIM AND EDUCATION

A certain friend of mine engages in the study of predictive astrology. He once told me that for those men who amount to nothing in particular, whose lives bear no clearly marked line between "yes" and "no," the calculations of astrology cannot find their true bearing. It is difficult, for such men, to reckon the effect of favourable and unfavourable planetary influences. When the wind blows hard, one can say, without a moment's hesitation, that a sailing ship will cover in a single day what would otherwise take two; but of a paper boat one cannot say whether it will simply drift about aimlessly, or sink, or what will become of it at all—for one that has no particular harbour of its own can have neither any true past nor any true future. For what shall it wait, for what shall it prepare itself? On the thermometer of its hope, the highest mark of its longing lies close beside the mark of despair in other lands.

This very condition is the most perilous prevailing in the society of our land today. There is no clarity in our lives. Nowhere in this country is it drawn, in a bold, unmistakable line, what we may become, how far we may dare to hope. It is the very right to hope that renders man's strength mighty. In the good housewifery of nature, strength can never go to waste; and so, wherever hope is absent, strength itself takes its leave from that place. Natural science tells us that when creatures possessed of sight dwell for a long time in caves, they lose the very power of sight. Just as nature cannot endure the incongruity of light being absent while sight remains, so too nature cannot endure the incongruity of hope being absent while strength remains. And so, when there is no means of escape in the face of danger, even the power of flight grows numb and paralysed.

For this reason we find that the larger the field for hoping, the larger and mightier grows the strength of man. Strength then sees its path clearly, and walks forward, setting down its feet with force. The greatest thing any society can give to man is the greatest hope. It is not that every single member of society attains the full realization of that hope. But because, known to himself or unknown, there is always

this constant urging toward that hope, each man's strength is able to advance to the very limit of his own capacity. For a nation, that is the mightiest matter of all. The mere number of people has no value in itself—but it is prosperity when the strength and resource possessed by the greater part of a people are put to work as fully as possible, and not left buried in the ground. Wherever strength remains in motion, there is welfare; wherever wealth remains alive and labouring, there is true splendour.

In these Western lands, everyone has heard the summons to strive for the mark; on the whole, everyone knows what he wants; and so everyone has come prepared, bow and arrow in hand. Each has pledged himself to pierce that target hanging so high aloft, in the hope of winning the daughter of sacrifice, born of the sacrificial fire. We have received no such invitation to strive for any mark. Hence, for us, it is unnecessary to think much upon what we ought to attain, and neither is it made clear before us where we ought to go.

This is why, whenever I hear such a question as, "What shall we learn, how shall we learn it, which system of education is working where and in what fashion?"—it strikes me that education, after all, is no artificial thing, disconnected from life. What we shall become, and what we shall learn, are two matters utterly, inseparably bound together. A vessel can hold no more water than its own size permits.

We have not much to long for. Society issues to us no great summons, draws us toward no great sacrifice—apart from a handful of artificial and meaningless rules governing how we sit and rise, eat and touch, it demands of us no accounting in any other matter. Nor has the ruling power thrown open before our lives any field for large movement; within that little fenced enclosure of thorns, whatever we may hope for is utterly trifling, and even what little we can glimpse through the chinks of that fence is exceedingly slight.

It is precisely because we cannot see the field of life as large that the thought of enlarging life, and of dedicating it grandly, does not naturally occur to us at all; whatever little thinking we do on that score is bookish thinking, and whatever little work we do is mere imitation of others. Our misfortune runs deeper still: those very people who will not open, for even a single moment, the door of our cage, are the ones who cry out day and night, "You have no power of flight!" The fledgling does not learn to fly by passing some examination; it learns to fly precisely because it has the power of flight. It sees all its own kindred flying about it; it knows, beyond any doubt, that fly it must. No doubt as to the very possibility of flight ever enters its mind to weaken it. Our misfortune is this: because others are forever expressing doubt about our strength, and because we find no field in which to prove that doubt false, a doubt about ourselves, too, becomes rooted deep within us. In this way, a man who has lost faith in himself cannot even attempt to cross some great river; he wanders about, within some pitifully narrow bounds, close along the shore, and in this he remains entirely content—and on the day he somehow manages to push his way upstream from Bagbazar to Baranagar, he thinks to himself: "I have accomplished a feat every bit the equal of Columbus's."

You are greater than any clerk, greater than any deputy magistrate; what you are learning is not meant merely to soar, like a rocket, as far as a schoolmaster's post, and then, worn to tatters, living on a pension, to fall back to earth as burnt-out ash. This truth—that the teaching which instils this very conviction is, in our land, the most necessary teaching of all—we must keep in mind day and night. The stupidity of failing to understand this is the greatest stupidity of all among us. Our society does not teach us this, and our schools contain no such lesson.

But should anyone suppose that I have thereby fallen into despair concerning our country, he would be mistaken. We must know, with perfect clarity, where we stand and in what direction we are moving. However unwelcome that knowledge may be, it is, before all else, essential. Up to now we have repeatedly tried to console ourselves with some manner of self-deception regarding our own misfortune, and thereby find ease. There is no profit in saying that our ancient society is, for the making of men, the finest of all societies in the whole world. To

proclaim, with such pomp, an extraordinary exaggeration which the plain evidence of human history has, every single day, disproved before our very eyes—this is nothing but the brazen self-justification of inertia. The man who will do nothing, and stir for nothing, seeks in this very way to preserve his dignity before himself and before others. This delusion must, at the very outset, be shattered by a hard blow. When the surgeon lances a boil, the wound itself constantly wishes to close over the very mouth of the incision; but the skilled physician pays no heed to that impulse—he keeps the wound open, day after day, until the signs of healing appear. Our country's great festering sore has received a mighty stroke of the lancet from the hand of Providence; this pain is its due—yet every day it tries, through some deceit, to cover it over and hide it away. In trying to disguise its own disgrace as a falsehood, it labours to make that very sore permanent, nursing and feeding it. But every time it tries to cover it, the physician's stroke will only tear open afresh that falsehood, that false pride. This truth it must one day clearly acknowledge: the sore is no accidental thing, patched on from outside; it is a disease from within. The fault does not lie without; its own blood has grown corrupted—for otherwise, so grave a weakness, so stupefied a torpor, could not have kept man overpowered, in every respect, for so long a time. It is our own society that has afflicted our own humanity, that has overwhelmed its intelligence and its strength—and that is precisely why it has been utterly unable to hold its own in the world. To let this delusion about ourselves be broken forcefully and clearly is no mark of despair or inertia. This alone is the way to free the path of endeavour, and to shatter the nest of false hope is truly the only means of uprooting despair itself.

What I mean to say is this: in no country does education ever come entirely from schools, and in our country too, it is not doing so. The power of digestion is not manufactured in the confectioner's shop; only food is made there. Wherever man's strength is engaged in vigorous, large-scale endeavour, there alone does his learning blend with his very nature. It is precisely because there is no true motion in our life that we have been unable to master our book-learning within the depths of our being.

This thought may well arise: then where lies our hope at all? For the field wherein life is set in motion does not lie wholly within our own hands; and to a subject people, surely, the door to power cannot stand open.

This, though true, is not the whole truth. In fact, the field of power is, for every nation, bounded in one direction or another. Everywhere, inner nature and outward circumstance together, by mutual accommodation, mark out their own field. This bounded field is necessary for everyone; for to scatter one's power is not to use one's power. In no country does a favourable condition grant man unbounded freedom, for that would be futility. Whatever fate gives us, it gives only by way of division—wherever more falls to one side, something less will inevitably fall to the other.

Therefore, what we have received is, for man, not so great a matter; how we shall receive and use it—that is the great matter. Whatever social or mental arrangement obstructs that power of reception, that paralyses that power of use, is the very root of ruin. Where man is not permitted to test anything for himself, where he is told to accept all things, small and great alike, upon fixed belief, and to use them only according to fixed rule—there, however favourable the circumstances may be, humanity is bound to wither and shrink. We lament the narrowness of our condition, but we do not even truly know what our condition really is; we have never examined it from every side—indeed, that very impulse to examine and test, we have, before all else, condemned as a crime and bound hand and foot with rope. Having lost all confidence in human nature, we have utterly forgotten that unless man is permitted to err, man cannot be permitted to learn. We will not grant man the ample right to grow good through his own courage; we will stunt him in every direction by ancient rule and sentence him to lifelong imprisonment in the jailhouse of mere respectability—so long as those under such a dispensation do not themselves strike off their own fetters, and abandon worshipping those very fetters as something more sacred than their own hands and feet, no bounty from the dispenser of fortune can ever bring them any lasting benefit.

There is no meaner poverty of spirit than to reckon a man's circumstance as more powerful than a man's own strength. If the surge of man's aspiration can once be roused upward, away from the petty temptations of personal interest, personal pleasure, personal liberation, then there exists no outward condition whatsoever out of which he cannot rise; indeed, in such a state, even outward poverty helps him toward greatness. In our country, to hasten the rapid growth of a jackfruit sapling, the young shoot is enclosed within a bamboo tube. That shoot cannot spread its branches to either side, and so, striving to break through the confines of that tube and reach the light, it directs all its power singly toward that end, and, growing straight, transgresses its own bondage. But within the very marrow of that sapling this irrepressible urge must remain alive: "I must rise, I must grow; if I cannot find the light beside me, I shall seek it out above; if I cannot find freedom in one direction, I shall not abandon the effort to attain it in another." When any living thing says instead, "To strive at all is a crime; I shall remain just as I am"—then, for such a creature, the bamboo tube and the boundless sky are all one and the same.

I hold firm in my heart this belief: that which is man's supreme object of hope can never be beyond his reach. If the liberation of our people be not found sideways, then surely it lies above—this we must not forget, even for a single moment. We see on every side only that growth which spreads its branches sideways, and so we have clung to that alone as the sole true good; but the movement upward, too, is the movement of life, and there too the fruit of fulfilment ripens fully and completely. The truth of the matter is this: whether in one direction or the other, the pull of the earth's vastness must be acknowledged; we must grow great, and greater still. We must strain our ears to hear that call which draws us out of our corner, which grants us strength to sacrifice ourselves without a second thought, which does not confine our aspiration merely within the walls of an office and the narrow cage of employment. When that impulse is once set flowing through our national life, when that power once grows mighty within us, then, at every single moment, we shall go on surpassing our own condition; then no constriction of our outward circumstance will be able to bring us the least shame.

One cannot view the history of the present with settled clarity; and this is why, even when the light is close at hand, we still fear the darkness as though it were eternal. But I, for my part, believe firmly that some shock of awakening has already reached and touched our minds. Its force will go on, ever more, doing its own work; it will never again let us remain complacent. Our vital force can, by no means, die; by whatever path it must, it will surely live on; and it is precisely through whatever small crevice this indomitable life-effort of ours can find that it is even now thrusting us onward, toward the light. I see clearly that the path most open of all before man—the very path which man, for that reason, forgets—the path which no king can obstruct and which poverty is powerless to strip of its provisions—that path of dharma is drawing our minds, everywhere thwarted as they are, toward liberation. In our country, this summons to set out upon that path is rising up again and again, from many directions, in many voices. There is no awakening in this world so great as this awakening of the sense of dharma; it is this that makes the mute speak, and the lame scale mountains. It will kindle our whole mind, will set every effort in motion; with the light of hope and the music of joy, it will crown with glory our long-deprived lives. The more clearly that supreme goal of human life stands revealed before us, the more unstintingly shall we be able to give of ourselves, and all the net of petty desire shall be torn asunder. If we hold this goal for our country fully and consciously in mind, only then shall we be able to give true form to our country's education. That there should be no goal in life, and yet that there should be education—this is meaningless altogether. Let our land of India become a land of austerity, a field for the seeker's striving, a place of labour for the saint; here alone let the sacrificial fire of the renunciant's supreme self-offering burn—if we hold fast to this hope of glory, the path will of itself make ready, and the unfeigned discipline of true education will, of itself, cause itself to sprout, put forth leaves, and bear fruit.

Chalford, Gloucestershire, 19 August, 1912

A LETTER FROM AMERICA

Today is Sunday. The church bell is ringing. Opening my eyes this morning, I saw that everything had turned white with snow. The sloping black roofs of the houses, bowing beneath this world-wide advent of whiteness, seem to say, "Rest here, upon my breast!" All dominion of dust and mud upon the roads where men come and go has been utterly banished, and the still stream of whiteness seems to flow on, branching into a hundred channels. Not a single leaf remains upon the trees; pure, spotless, unstained by sin, His blessing has rained down upon the topmost boughs. The grass along the two sides of the road, like the last faint traces of youth, has not yet been wholly overwhelmed, but slowly, slowly, it bows its head and yields. The birds have ceased their calling; nowhere in the sky is there any sound at all. The snow keeps falling, flake upon flake, yet not the faintest whisper of its footfall can be heard. The rains, when they come, come with the sound of falling water, with the rustling of branch and bough, filling every quarter of the horizon like the beating of a royal drum—but while all of us lay sleeping, the gate of heaven's archway opened, silently; no herald came bearing tidings, and no one's sleep was broken. From the secluded hermitage of the heavenly world, silence itself is descending upon the earth; she has no chariot rumbling and thundering; no charioteer drives her maddened steeds forward with the lash of lightning; she descends instead upon outspread wings of white, most tender her movement, most unimpeded her course; nowhere does she meet resistance, nothing at all does she so much as touch with a blow. The sun lies veiled, and the light has lost its fierceness; yet from the whole earth there rises up a mild, unassuming radiance, a light as though wrapped in peace and humility—its very veiling is its revealing.

In this hushed winter morning, I bow low in reverence before this wondrous and stainless coming of whiteness—we welcome it deep within our hearts. I say: "Go on covering everything thus, gently, slowly; wrap over all my thought, all my imagining, all my labour. Let your purity, having crossed the boundless darkness of deepest night, descend, without a sound, into my life; let it awaken my new-born morning amid an unblemished whiteness—drive far away every evil thing—leave nowhere any least stain of darkness; even as your heavenly light is unbroken white,

so too, this once, wholly and completely, wrap the very ground of my life in one unbroken whiteness."

In this fathomless whiteness of this morning I am plunging my inmost soul to bathe. Great is the cold, and hard is this bathing. One must strip oneself utterly naked, like a child, and, sinking down and down, let absolutely nothing at all remain—white above, white below, white before, white behind, white at the beginning, white at the end—He alone, who is all peace—surrendering body and mind entirely, without remainder, into that whiteness—I bow down, I bow down to Shiva, and to Him who is more auspicious still.

How majestic, how profoundly beautiful is the grace of old age—that is what I now behold. Every variegated hue has, slowly and silently, been overlaid; the unbroken whiteness of the One has drawn everything away behind its veil. Every song lies hidden, every pulse of life lies hidden; the whole play of colour has melted into white. Yet this is no shadow of death. That which we know as death is black; emptiness, after all, is not white like light—it is dark as the night of the new moon. The sun's white rays have utterly covered over every flash of red and blue—but they have not destroyed them; they have taken them wholly into themselves. Today the deep, hidden music of this stillness has filled my heart, within, with sweetness. Today the trees and plants have shed every ornament, not a single leaf left remaining; they have gathered up the whole abundance of their life into the unseen depths within. It is as though the forest trees, having exhausted all their utterance, now silently repeat, each to itself, only the single mantra, Om. It seems to me as though the ascetic Gauri, casting off her ornaments of spring blossoms, now meditates, robed all in white, upon the white form of Shiva. That desire which kindles fire, that desire which brings about separation—this she is wasting away. Little by little, all the darkness of that fire-scorched desire is vanishing there before us; as far as the eye can see, all has turned utterly white upon white, and nowhere any longer stands an obstacle to union with Shiva. This time, the auspicious union now approaching—whose tidings are written in the sacred light of the constellation of the Seven Sages in the sky—its hidden preparations are even now proceeding, in the depths of this very penance; there the music of celebration is growing dense,

and, unseen by the world's eye, the basket of flowers for the exchange of garlands is filling, filling, ever fuller. Welcome this penance, O my heart; bow yourself down and grow still—let this white peace enfold you, layer upon layer, and gather up all your striving into a fixed, unshaken depth; let the angel of purity come, this once, and utterly efface all the refuse of this life, from one end to the other; and then, one day, this hushed veil of penance shall itself be lifted, and there shall appear, filling every quarter of the horizon with songs of joy, a new awakening, a new life, the blessed festival of a new union.

9th Agrahayan, 1319