

INDIAN HORIZONS

BY

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FOREWORD

India has awakened, but its national life is still in the making. "Indian Horizons" opens up a process of experiences and ideas which are fast changing our religious orthodoxies, our social institutions, our drama, our poetry and even our patriotism. This growing renaissance has a background which is not a stage-scene set up for the moment by the exigencies of the past few years. The background is permanent, for it emerges out of the very soul of India. It is the spirit of religious idealism. All the ideas that shape the future of this country will be always touched and moulded by it. "Indian Horizons," in giving account of them, also describes this permanent background. Every patriot has to reckon with it, and so if he hopes to develop his country's consciousness out of its deepest roots, he cannot make the ungracious, if not the impossible attempt at imposing an utterly Western scheme of things on India. And

yet no national awakening can thrive only on idealism. The patriot must visualise somewhere a meeting of earth and sky—the horizons where the religious ideals touch deeply the real world of political and cultural endeavour. The essays of this booklet trace the renascent movement unfolding the many horizons in every field of national life.

It was during the last national movement that these essays were first published as journalistic contributions. Forced by the demands of space then, some have been all too brief and most of them bear the stamp of easy journalistic writing. But they have an eager enthusiasm and a broad grasp of principles which it is worth while reviving at the present day for any one who has the Indian ideals at heart.

H. D. SETHNA

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Ramkrishna

“ THERE is neither East nor West for the naked soul; such things are merely its trappings. The whole world is its home. And as its home is each one of us, it belongs to all of us.” This is the message which M. Romain Rolland gives to Europe from his interpretation of the life of a simple, illiterate Brahmin of Bengal—Ramkrishna. Specially to-day, this message seems to be most opportune; for, though not many years have gone since Ramkrishna died, the influence he exercised was so great that we already feel the purpose behind his personality seeking expression in the re-awakening of the spirit of India and clamouring for a harmony between the East and the West. The efforts and sacrifice of all our patriots are but the manifestation of that tireless search for this harmony.

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“The Life of Ramkrishna” by M. Romain Rolland is therefore an outstanding literary event. There have been biographies of saints and also of Ramkrishna, but there have been few so powerfully written. The touch with which M. Rolland brings the man before us and the vigour with which he weaves the life of the saint into the grand canvas of the Indian Samajist movement, leave us in rapt admiration. But Ramkrishna can hardly be understood with this book alone. He has for his background the philosophy of the Upanishads, the profound meaning of which baffles still the greatest of scholars; woven into this background is the cult of Radha-Krishna,—a cult which has often great importance in the life of a devout Hindu, and further, together with this cult, there is his devotion to the Mother, the Goddess Kali, which, without its deep mystical

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significance is gross idol-worship. Thus Ramkrishna becomes at once the most interesting as well as the most enigmatic subject for study. At every step, we are confronted with problems, either philosophical, religious or mystical. Ramkrishna is the living expression of the conflict between them as well as of the final reconciliation of it. Often we perceive the links that form the chain of reconciliation; but as this chain is the very fibre of his being, we sometimes fail to perceive some of the links and are plunged into profound darkness, illumined at some moments by the mellow light of his soul.

Ramkrishna, like many a saint before him, was from his childhood, filled with a deep religious thirst. He was for years a searcher after the Divine, yearning to see and feel it; but unlike a saint of the type of St. Augustine, who breathed the free air of rational speculation, Ramkrishna in

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his early years lived in the atmosphere of temple worship. This difference accounts for his intense worship of Kali. And it was during the time when he was wrapt in his devotion to the Mother that he met Tota Puri, the Advaitan. M. Romain Rolland makes use of this meeting to describe to us vividly the little worshipper of Kali in contrast with the fearless Advaitan. "He was a small brown man with a short beard and beautiful eyes," M. Romain Rolland describes him, "long dark eyes full of light, obliquely set and slightly veiled, never very wide open, but seeing halfclosed a great distance both outwardly and inwardly!" Against this frail sensitive being rises Tota Puri, "very tall and robust, with magnificent physique, resolute and indestructible,—a rock with the profile of a lion. His constitution and mind were of iron. He had never known illness or suffering and regarded them with smiling contempt. He was the strong leader of

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men. Before adopting a wandering life he had been the sovereign head of a monastery of seven hundred monks in the Punjab. He was a master of disciplinary method, which petrified as argil the flesh and the spirit of man." For about a year the two men stayed with each other. Ramkrishna instilled into the ascetic Advaitan the essence of Bhakti, whereas Tota Puri gave the former the main principles of Advait Philosophy, the knowledge of which marked a change in Ramkrishna's life.

The meeting of Ramkrishna and Tota Puri reflects the meeting of two great forces in Indian thought,—that of Ramanuja and Sankara. For Ramkrishna, as for Ramanuja, God could only be conceived as personal and hence as an object of devotion. For Tota Puri, as for Sankara, He was the undifferentiated Brahman, the unqualified Absolute, and hence devotion as a religious attitude, implying a personal God, was not the highest religious

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experience, which was union with the Absolute. Out of the difference between these two schools of thought also arise the two traditional views of maya. The one conceives maya as pure illusion—something which is distinctly antagonistic to and separate from Brahman. The other asserts that maya has a real existence and hence conceives it as the creative expression of the one personal God. This broad statement of the two most important schools of thought is made by bringing them into contrast with each other; but it is possible that a research into the respective systems may reveal meaning in one which may embrace the truth of the other. There has never been a thorough reconciliation between the two views; for Indian thinkers, since the old halcyon days, have contented themselves more with wrangling over details than evolving a synthetic philosophy out of the elements of the past. In the West too, broadly speaking, Spinozism,

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like the philosophy of Sankara, may be found in opposition to Personal Idealism, and though many an original and bold attempt like that of Croce or Bergson has been made in our times to give us a fresh solution of metaphysical problems, not one philosophy has been synthetic enough to absorb well the opposition. It is only when we go back to Plato that we discover a freedom from this opposition and a perfect concentration on the meaning of first principles.

With this explanation of the two principal schools of Indian thought we can understand the full significance of the meeting of Tota Puri with Ramkrishna. Tota Puri gave him the main principles of Advait Philosophy. The idol worshipper suddenly awoke out of his devotional trance to the knowledge of the existence of the Absolute, the One without a second, which was beyond everything in the Universe and yet was the supreme

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cause of it. This knowledge, this jnana became for the sensitive soul of Ramkrishna, a vital force transforming his entire outlook, nay even his very being. In no time he fell into what he ardently craved for, "nirvikalpa samâdhi," the union of the soul with the Absolute. But when he awoke from this trance, he realized to his surprise that the Mother whose image he had so devoutly worshipped was no other than the Advait Absolute. She was the Divine Shakti, through which and with which the Absolute expressed itself as a world process. The Absolute, if conceived without the world, is the undifferentiated Brahman; if conceived with the world, it is the Divine Shakti, the Mother and the creator of all things. As Ramkrishna has well put it, "When I think of the Supreme Being as inactive, neither creating, nor preserving, nor destroying, I call Him Brahman or Purusha, the impersonal God. When I think of Him as

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active, creating, preserving, destroying, I call Him Shakti or Maya or Prakriti, the Personal God. But the distinction between them does not mean a difference. The personal and the impersonal are the same being, in the same way as milk and its whiteness, or diamond and its lustre, or the serpent and its undulations. It is impossible to conceive of the one without the other; the Divine Mother and Brahman are one." This is the truth which he realized through his personal experience of the identity of the Absolute and the Mother, the Divine Shakti. In the realization of this truth, the Bhakta had become a supreme Jnanin. For thereby he went far beyond the philosophy of his austere guru, and even far beyond the highest Indian speculation. As much as he had, for the time being, been the ground of conflict between the two views of the one God whose love he craved for, now he became the very embodiment of the recon-

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ciliation between them. The conflict between Ramanuja and Sankara, which had arisen out of two extreme interpretations of the Upanishadic doctrine, seems to have sought its reconciliation in Ramkrishna. What the Upanishads had always meant he actually felt and expressed in his experience. Thus, Ramkrishna's life, as Vivekananda has rightly said, "was a living commentary on the texts of the Upanishads, was in fact the spirit of the Upanishads, living in human form,.....the harmony of all the diverse thoughts of India."

With the birth of this harmony in Ramkrishna, the great love in him swept out of the narrow precincts of the temple and embraced the whole world. The rest of his life, and hence the rest of this great book, is the expression of his love, his catholicity of religious outlook, his simple beautiful friendship with Keshab Chunder Sen and Narendranath Dutt, and his hours

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of companionship with strangers and disciples. This love which is the main basis of his later life, is of great significance for our culture at present, for it is the key to a better understanding of the relationship of the East and the West. It breathes of the Immortal Spirit that is in everything and in whose presence all differences melt away like waves into the bosom of the ocean. It is with the desire of bringing the voice of this Immortal Spirit "to the ears of fever-stricken Europe" that M. Romain Rolland has written this book. "I wish to wet its lips," he tells us, "with the blood of Immortality!"

The New Way of Life

The Doctrine of Satyagraha and its Purpose.

THE doctrine of Satyagraha as advanced by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is born out of a life's experiment with truth, and thereby out of his own suffering. And as his life has been united with that of the whole nation, India has been the ground of the practical application of it. The greatest minds of Europe have been watching this experiment and at a time when the West is facing a mental frustration consequent upon an economic crisis, Satyagraha, if understood, in all its implications, as an attempt to undermine the very foundations of human greed and exploitation and violence, would be a great solvent of it. But it takes an age to learn, and the Westerner has still to learn much from the Indian. If ever

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there was a perfect representation of the idealistic as well as the practical traits of the Indian people, it is Gandhi. If we meet him in the street, we shall mistake him for the poor Indian peasant; but if we know him, we cannot fail to touch in him the supreme ideal that is at the heart of Vedic culture,—the ideal of otherworldliness coupled with the sincerest practicality.

Satyagraha, as a new way of life, is against many ethical theories. It pulls out from its roots every vestige of hedonism, as found in the life in the West. On the other hand, it does not claim the highest seat for the intellectual self at the loss of other elements that enrich the soul, as Kant had done in his 'Critique.' In practical terms, Satyagraha means the recognition of the brotherhood of mankind and the correction of man by the instrument of abstinence from evil, and active non-violent co-operation

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in combating it. But this should not be regarded to convey too general an ethical meaning. For an ethical theory often does not keep in view the fact of the brotherhood of man; obviously because all theories that are existent, sanction violence, whereas violence is directly antithetical to social brotherhood. Thus, Satyagraha implies a definite meaning which is made explicit in its assertion of the instrument which it uses,—active non-violent co-operation. Through the use of this instrument, it issues a new way of life and thereby all the old values which we have been apt to consider as great from a puerile imitation of the Western point of view, tumble to the ground. If a man therefore wishes to practise Satyagraha, he has to keep non-violence engraved in his heart; but as it is one of the most difficult of all principles, it means that he has to walk in isolation till the people are taught the principle and the right use of it. Till that

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time, he has to pass through "the fires of hell."

But the fruit of his suffering is the inner awakening in him. His soul flowers forth in the realisation of the unity of love and the unity of the subject and the object in experience. We must note that the question of the relation of subject and object belongs to epistemology and is strictly a philosophical one; but often we touch upon such a question and even the solution of it by a direct contact with life. Without the verbal technicalities of philosophical debate, the truth then appears clear as crystal. Epistemology has wrangled hard over the problem of the subject and the object in knowledge; and the West, driven by speculative realism on the one hand, and scientific research on the other, has tried to assert the opposition of the object to the subject. Nature has thus been regarded as an enemy of man, and man's work has been looked upon as one endless

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battle with the elements of Nature and a conquest over them. The conception of the victory of man over Nature is healthy if understood, with certain limitations. But it has been taken to apply blindly to social and national life, and the victory of man over man in bloody warfare, has been looked upon as a glorious phenomenon. The destruction of the object by the subject for material ends is therefore regarded as the purpose of life. For a person or a nation that adopts Satyagraha, the whole aspect is entirely different. The question here is not of the opposition between the subject and the object, but of the cultivation of the ground on which the subject and the object co-exist. Satyagraha aims at making fruitful the resources of the whole which underlies the subject and the object. To do so is, in practice, a rigorous discipline. To seek the seeds of co-operation at any cost and make them bear fruit even at the risk of one's life, is a hard

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task. But it has to be done if there is to be Satyagraha. This task and discipline involve two fundamental principles, humility and service. Humility may be so severe that it may entirely lower, from the worldly point of view, the status of the man; and service may be so rigorous that he may not be able to find time even for the harmless pleasures of the moment; and finally, without distinction and without honour, all his humility and service may be doomed to silence. What then? To this question, the Satyagrahi should be able to answer that, when all is said and done, there is nothing greater in life than humility and service for the sake of the awakening of the Spirit. He should be able to believe in truth that all which

“—men ignored in me

This I was worth to God whose wheel
the pitcher shaped.”

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With humility and self-sacrifice, there need must follow simplicity in life. The movement to spread the use of Khaddar and the vow of Swadeshi have brought this in, but the use of Khaddar is not only a matter of simplicity, but also the closest link between the poor Indian peasantry and the people. As much as Satyagraha aims at uplifting the Indian peasant, it has a purpose similar to that of socialism. But whereas socialism, though it may have the loftiest of ideals, aims only at a change of power, Satyagraha means to change the very meaning of life. Thus socialism, when in power, has, on the one hand, been too weak to use it, as witnessed in the work of the Fabians in England, or, on the other hand, has been too blind in its methods, as found in those of the Communists in Russia. Socialism has succeeded in so far as it has brought the poor man's case before the world. But it has tried to bring the poor man in the fore-

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front without dispelling the ignorance he was wrapt in, and the result is that the poor man, thus enthroned, may become a greater enemy of civilisation than the capitalist. Thus, as a new way of life, socialism may be said to have failed. The alternative to capitalism therefore is not socialism, but Satyagraha. For Satyagraha has not only the poor man's lot at heart, but more than anything else, it is also determined to bring about the victory of the highest self in man. The person who believes in it as his religion will do this with all possible renunciation. "My religion has no geographical limits," said Gandhi; "if I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself." This was said in 1920, but India, to a great extent, has proved herself by now worthy of the mighty trust which Gandhi has put in her.

Vivekananda

And His Philosophy of Action

THERE is no better way of understanding the meaning of the Indian Renaissance than to study the work of Vivekananda and the dynamic influence of his personality. At every momentous stage of our country's progress, we must seek him for fresh inspiration. For his one purpose in life was to turn the Vedantic idea into action, to realise the Divinity in man by means of work and service. Vivekananda's interpretation of the Vedanta is a philosophy of action, and as such, in the historic process of to-day, it is as rebellious and as significant as the theories of Gandhi or Lenin. Like them, he is the prophet of liberation in life, and is, therefore, an important link in the chain of socialism which some of the greatest minds are at

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present forging to protect the world from chaos. Much has been written on him, but undue emphasis has been put on his idealistic metaphysics. There is therefore room for interpretation of the ethical and political aspect of his teaching, and it is by means of this interpretation that we can find in him a great force making for a world-wide socialism.

The dynamic nature of his personality Mons. Romain Rolland has brought to light with great energy in his* life of Vivekananda. In no biography of Vivekananda is there a more consistent picture of him as a man of action than that which Mons. Rolland has given us. He has picked out those very traits of Vivekananda's character that have sprung from the nature of freedom on which Mons. Rolland's own soul has been nourished. At an early age, Vivekananda came in touch with the misery and poverty

* "The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel" by Mons. Romain Rolland.

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of the people, and that made a lasting impression on him. He was convinced that no religion can be real which sacrifices service to humanity at the altar of its idealism. "If you want to find God, serve man!"—this was his dictum, and in thus flinging aside the temptation to enter into the spiritual experience of mystical union with the Absolute, he was different from his master, Ramkrishna. It is a most interesting fact that the Master was often afraid that he might lose Vivekananda and that he sought him day after day, for here was a force which had the strength which even the disciple of Tota Puri lacked. Thus whereas Ramkrishna was a mystic *par excellence*, Vivekananda had his face turned towards service. "He very rarely realised the calm air, the limpid spaces of thought whereupon Ramkrishna's smile hovered," Mons. Rolland tells us. "His superpowerful body and too vast brain were the predestined battlefield for all the shocks

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of his storm-tossed soul. The present and the past, the East and the West, dream and action, struggled for supremacy. He knew and could achieve too much to be able to establish harmony by renouncing one part of his nature or one part of the truth."

Thus Vivekananda was bent on getting the truth out of the very elements of life,—not by utter renunciation of it. Hence the philosophy of action he sees in the Vedanta. There are two important aspects of this philosophy, his attack on duty and his explanation of the true meaning of liberty; and his defence of the masses and the spirit with which they can rise to "their proper stature." The concept of duty is the basis of any socialistic theory, and it is the meaning of this concept that he repudiates and then explains. In this respect, he is more like Christ than any other leader of the world. "When an attachment has become established," he

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says, "we call it duty.....we baptise it with the high-sounding name of duty. We strew flowers upon it, trumpets sound for it, sacred texts are said over it, and then the whole world fights, and men earnestly rob each other for this duty's sake.....To the lowest kinds of men who cannot have any other ideal, it is of some good; but those, who want to be Karma Yogins, must throw this idea of duty overboard. There is no duty for you and me. Whatever you have to give to the world, do give by all means, but not as a duty. Do not take any thought of that. Be not compelled. Why should you be compelled? Everything that you do under compulsion, goes to build up attachment. Why should you have any duty? Resign everything unto God." At their face value, these words seem to be the very ethics of revolt, and if blindly followed, will bring about the downfall of the whole social organism. When Christ preached thus, he was cruci-

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fied. But, on the other hand, this denial of duty, if well understood, contains the very essence of liberation. It is difficult for the West to put itself into the attitude of a Karma Yogin. But this much is certain,—that Karma Yoga does not advocate boundless, in the sense of blind, freedom. This is impossible, for Karma Yoga is a strict discipline, and its repudiation of duty and advocacy of freedom is to be understood on ethical grounds. The words “resign everything unto God” contain ethical significance only if we understand them from the point of view of the doer, as the Vedanta does. The Vedanta asserts that there is not only divinity in man, but that man is divine, that everything and every individual is the divinity itself. Once this idea is recognised, we can easily grasp how every concept of duty is repudiated except the resignation of everything unto God. For God here is the complete integral self of man. This self cannot brook

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any utilitarianism of Mill or Bentham; neither can it submit itself to the "will that wills nothing" advocated by Kant. Thus, according to the Vedanta, the selfish ends of the individual are to be sacrificed to the assertion of the integral self, which does not annihilate these ends but embraces them and goes beyond them. Thus, in action, the ends of one individuality are not to be radically opposed to those of another, but are to be made subsidiary to the assertion of the whole integral self. Where this is done, there can be no use of violence, for it is the blind opposition of ends that breeds violence. Thus, if we draw out the implications of Vivekananda's interpretation of the Vedanta, we touch upon the doctrine of non-violence of Gandhi. For non-violence enjoined by Satyagraha can only be practised in trying temptations by one who has resigned all his duties to God. The suffering and fearlessness by means of which a satyagrahi

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has to contend against the use of violence, draw their main strength from spiritual sources,—from faith in God, the integral self in man. The repudiation of duty and its subordination to faith in God implied in Satyagraha have never been made clear. Vivekananda has done it thoroughly, and we therefore must recognise the debt which Gandhi must thus owe to him. If Satyagraha is a new method in socialism, the ethics of Vivekananda is the very key to this Satyagraha.

And here therefore we have linked up the renascent teaching of Vivekananda with that of Gandhi. The Satyagraha movement is a world event in as much as it has paved the way for the awakening of the masses. But the philosophy of Vivekananda is one further step towards the mass awakening. His is the inspiration that will act as a leaven for Satyagraha to raise itself to the very summit. For it is not enough to awake the masses by bringing

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home to them their own miseries and their ruin. It is not enough to offer them the means of Satyagraha without instilling into them the meaning of the divine selfhood in men. "For centuries, people have been taught theories of degradation," says Vivekananda. "They have been told that they are nothing. The masses have been told all over the world that they are not human beings. They have been so frightened for centuries that they have nearly become animals. Never were they allowed to hear of the Atman. Let them hear of the Atman,—that even the lowest of the low have the Atman within, who never dies and never is born,—Him whom the sword cannot pierce nor the fire burn!" There is no greater vindication of the rights of the masses, no greater condemnation of all that has tended in our country to bring about the curse of untouchability and the caste-system. But it is once again the assertion of the Vedantic idea that

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every individual is the eternal Atman, is the divinity itself. Vivekananda is not out to feed the masses with this idea, as is evidenced by the practical work of reform done by the Ramkrishna Order which he founded. But the idea can be a potent means of awakening the masses. It may be, as Gandhi tells us, that "we cannot feed the starving millions with a song," but the spirit which is in a song may live in the hearts of millions. Even Satyagraha, Gandhi will have to admit, is nothing without its idealism. We may call the essence of this idealism an inspiration or put it in the words of a song, but it is there to move the minds and hearts of the masses. Such is then the Vedantic idea of the eternal Atman in man,—the conception that even "the lowest of the low have the Atman within who never dies and never is born,—Him whom the sword cannot pierce nor the fire burn ! "

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Thus one important side of Vivekananda's interpretation of the Vedanta is a philosophy of action and devotion to service. His God is "Daridra Narayana" (the Beggar God),.....the only God that exists," says Vivekananda, "the only God in whom I believe, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races." In common with Vivekananda and the Man on the Cross, Gandhi has also accepted this God. But Vivekananda appears to be a greater prophet than Gandhi. An intellectual genius, he has given a whole constructive system of thought and opened before us a vision which the Indian mind had not witnessed for centuries. And when many a work will perish owing to its own inherent weakness, the Vedantism of Vivekananda will survive. But before the advent of Gandhi, the Vedantic view of action only lived in the heart of the Ramkrishna Order. Gandhi has instilled it into the life of the masses. And even in his own life,

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idea and action are closely linked together. Nothing that he says does he count as said, if not done. Week after week, he translates his sayings into action, in his daily life, in the Ashram, in his political methods, in his work for the masses. Thus he weaves action into his very soul as much as a weaver weaves the fine thread into khaddar. And if we take the work of these two men together, we can see before us the Indian Renaissance brought to life. Asia has run madly for conquest, and from the material point of view, she has even won. But she has not thereby conquered Western civilisation. With the use of violence, she has, on the contrary, sown the seeds of it on a new soil. May we not prophesy that, though history may have to suffer rude shocks in its course, Vivekananda and Gandhi will pave the way for a rebirth of the whole of Asia ?

Drama

And its Material in National India

[IF we follow the progress of the Bengali drama, we see new life in art blossoming at every step. For drama is action, and the urge for an expression of action in art dawns on a nation only when it is roused by fresh ideas, their implications and the necessity of putting them into practice. In the Bengali drama, we observe two tendencies, one that strives to emphasize the idea of action, the other that lays stress more on lyricism than on action and renders the tone of the play symbolic. The first is found in the dramas of Dvijendralāl Ray, the second in those of Rabindranath Tagore. Both these tendencies are necessary for the development of the dramatic art. But they are not enough for the progress of the Indian drama. For, in these few years, even after the best plays

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have been written, the nation has awakened beyond measure, and the life of the people is surging with the tumultuous wave of nationalism and freedom. The old tenets of art cannot hold it within their bounds. The wave is sweeping them away, and with it fresh material is brought to us, like a huge shoal of sea-life swept to the shore.

The Indian dramatist has to take this material of new life and new ideas as his field of work. If before he dwelt with emotion on the traditional aspects of jealousy, love, and righteousness, here he has to face new values. The love of one's country is a passion which has its conflict as well as its exaltation ; and by its power, it changes the life of a nation. It is something of a great renunciation ; it conflicts with the ties of the individual home and the conventional conceptions of the old generation. Now, in India the obliteration of communal distinctions and caste preju-

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dices is one aspect of the goal, aimed at by patriotism out to find victory. As a matter of fact, if there are greater ends at stake, like the salvation of one's own country or one's own "dharma," surely these distinctions and prejudices have to be brushed aside. But the Indian mind, however much it may prattle about progress, still clings to its prejudices. The parting from them entails pain. This happens because we have not yet understood the meaning of patriotism. We have not taken a deep breath of freedom, and inhaled it into our lungs and hence into our very body. We still have fears, for we do not realise that real patriotism means the growth of a fearless manhood. If our patriotism does not mean this, it will have yet to be given up or purified. As Dvijendrlāl Ray makes Manasi say in his play *Rana Patan* : "Patriotism is greater than self-seeking, but manhood is greater than patriotism. If patriotism

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conflicts with manhood, let patriotism be drowned in the sea of manhood!" The conflict of patriotism with ancient caste and communal prejudices, the ensuing test of manhood and the rise of a new and courageous freedom,—these are the elements which the Indian drama of to-day must picture to us.

Another instance of the rise of new values in Indian life which the dramatist must take account of, is the conflict between patriotic and individualistic life. Patriotism, if it is to be alive, must be based on a community of idea, of feeling, and of sacrifice. But as such, it needs must conflict with individualistic ties. The mother will cling to her son, the lover to his beloved, the husband to his wife and dream the whole world is in their individualistic life. There is a certain sanctity in this partnership. But its sanctity and the spirit behind the partnership may still remain, if the son struggles for his

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country, the wife works for the cause of *swadeshi* or the lover puts sacrifice before pleasure. There is great virtue developed by the spirit of individual pure love, but this flame of virtue need not be burnt out, if it expands and consumes the individual in the fire of love for his nation. If the sanctity of individualistic life breeds fear and brings bondage, it is not worth preserving, for then it is defended on grounds of religion when really it is meant to serve selfish ends. Such a religion must be sacrificed at the altar of sincere work. Patriotism is greater than a religion of cowardice.

All these new ideas which vivify the national ideals are the material for the Indian dramatist. He must utilize them if he wishes to make the stage a powerful institution. This revolt against the bondage of the Past to which our minds are opposed, is to be expounded vigorously through the mouths of the characters. The

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intricate problems which patriotism brings into the mind of a sleeping nation, must be discussed and solved by the creative forces of drama. The battle for freedom must be first won through art before it can be won in actual reality. The elements of renunciation in patriotism are to be pictured in the character of the wife who has to leave her husband and work for her country, or of the man who has to trample upon caste prejudices and help his fellow-men, or of the student who has to leave his individualistic duties and plunge himself into the community of patriotic life. The lyricism behind the Indian ideals is to be tuned to embody the call for a broader and greater manhood. In Europe, this was already done half a century ago. In the whole struggle of Western drama, in the work of Ibsen, Shaw, Galsworthy and even in the energetic pieces of Noel Coward, we see the same forces of revolt at work. But these forces have to be moulded

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altogether in a different way for us, for the material is different according to the ideals which our country has in view.

But the picturisation of conflict is not enough. European literature, in emphasizing this conflict, has dealt too much with the triviality and ugliness of life. For us, the dramatist must also lay stress on the moments of exaltation, consequent on the period of awakening and the struggle for freedom. For, if patriotism is a renunciation, it has its own intense joy, similar to that experienced in the Gaelic renaissance. Thus, the high flushed face of spiritual courage and the exalted look of sacrifice are some of the pictures which the dramatist must bring to the stage in living form. Such material is found, for instance, in some of the phases of the national movement in the villages of Gujerat. Here we see the passionate devotion of a people to their patriot, which even a lover would envy. We see the poor

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peasant risen to a towering height of strength, by his renunciation of all that has been dear to him—his land, his lodgings, his cattle. We look with admiration at the Indian woman,—the timid peasant girl who would not dare utter a word in disobedience to her husband—out on the war-path against the Imperialistic regime at the cost of her life. Her greatest joy is the darshan of her master-patriot. Those last words* of a dying woman in the village, “Cover me with a piece of pure white khaddar when I go,” will always remain with us. And in the moving story of satyagraha, there is one piece after another of heroism which the dramatist can well weave into his plays.

There is therefore a vast field ready for the development of the Indian drama. National India is full of psychological

* From “*The Story of Bardoli.*” By Sjt. Mahadeo Desai.

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problems which call for a solution and a whole world of outward facts which can well supply the situations necessary for the unfoldment of stories on the stage. The dramatist has only to look around him, both in the village and in the city, and he will find the new ideas touching every sphere of life. India is on the march and as it proceeds through the long winding path of struggle, there shall arise a thousand scenes worthy to be used by an artist with an eye for dramatic situations. If our dramatist is afraid to express himself at the moment, his silence will be written in letters of blood in the country in time to come.

The New Poetry

THE West is agile and active and responds to every stimulus of the moment. It is shaken with a thousand changes and hence its poetry, though virile and emerging from deep sources, exhausts itself early and spreads itself into different streams of thought and feeling, without a great central idea merging them together. The Orient, though active, has its face turned towards the eternal. It does not shake and run after many sounds and thoughts of many ages, and hence its poetry is rich with its springs of preserved inspiration. Arabia, Persia, Japan and China have all given their contribution to it. But when we come to India, we approach poetry which takes the mind by a great surprise. In his hymns, in his vast faith in the truth of the illusoriness of the senses, in his ecstatic delight in union which goes beyond

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physical bonds, the Indian poet takes the mind into a deep intense solitude. As in the ancient poetry of the Rig-Veda, of Jayadev and even the Vaishnavas of Bengal, so in modern Indian poetry, we listen to the footfalls of beauty lingering in the inner temple of the heart and soul. Here there is at the same time an effulgence of colour and a burst of rhythm, expressed with the intensity of the soul's devotion to nature and to God. The mind has to pause before it as it might before the blazing beauty of a flower or the speechless rhythm of a deep melody.

In modern Indian poetry, we can perceive two distinct lines of movement, one is that of Rabindranath Tagore, the other that of Mohammad Iqbal. Both draw their inspiration from ancient roots, for Tagore expresses often the emotional longing of the Vaishnavite, coupled with the music of the hymns. On the other hand, Iqbal infuses into the strength of his Urdu poems

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the drunken joy of love for nature with which the ancient Arabian singers were inspired in the days before Mohammad preached Islam. But both are mystical in a different sense and degree. Iqbal's imaginations stalks out into the open and courts God in star and flower, while Tagore's mind takes every human emotion,—the disappointment and joy, the rapture and longing of man,—into the solitudes of the spirit and there transforms it into a pure flame of beauty. This is a process of the imagination akin to that found in the poetry of Keats in English literature. But, whereas Keats was purely an artist, the Indian consciousness uses this process to express religious emotion and here the atmosphere of the temple is always present before the poet's soul. There is a deep hush over the mind's feeling when the spirit bursts into flower, for, as the poet puts it,*

* From "Gitanjali," by Rabindranath Tagore.

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“entering my heart unbidden, even as one of the common crowd, unknown to me, my king, thou didst press the signet of eternity upon many a fleeting moment.” But often the longing in the heart of the seeker after God remains exquisitely unappeased. “The blossom has not opened; only the wind is sighing by. I have not seen his face nor have I listened to his voice, only I have heard his gentle footsteps from the road before my house.”* And when this longing has gained fruition, the lover finds the beauty of the awakening season within him. “It seemed to me that it was the eager breath of summer seeking for its completion. I knew not that it was so near, that it was mine and that this perfect sweetness has blossomed in the depth of my heart.”* Both the East and West are familiar with this idealistic poetry of Tagore. But we must fully

* From “Gitanjali” by Rabindranath Tagore

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realise that in this idealism of his, the poet introduces a new conception of religion which India has even now not fully defined for itself. The *Gitanjali* is a testament of it, and it is this religious experience which the poets of the coming generations have to nourish on. On the technical side of poetry, they will derive from the *Gitanjali* a rare delicacy of touch and feeling for which they will search in vain in the West.

Mohammad Iqbal, on the other hand, gives us a mysticism which penetrates not so much the temple of the soul as it does the "deep passion" that lies in nature. For he is not ashamed to recognise the soul's kinship with the rude wild surge of the elements.

“ When world-illuminating sun
Rushed upon the night, like a brigand,
My weeping bedewed the face of the
rose.
My tears washed sleep away from the
eyes of the narcissus,

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My passion waked the grass and made
it grow.....

My being was an unfinished statue,
Uncomely, worthless, good for nothing,
Love chiselled me : I became a man
And gained knowledge of the nature of
the universe,

I have seen the movement of the
sinews of the sky,

And the blood coursing in the veins of
the moon."

Before the power of these lines, many a Western mind would quail. For there is an opening of the poet's imagination on a different plane altogether,— not of the shapes and shadows such as the poets of the Irish Renaissance picture to us, but of an intense realization of union of sky, sun and earth with human nature. A glorious nuptial indeed! "My passion waked the grass and made it grow..." says Iqbal. Whereas in Tagore, love breaks through

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physical ties and loses itself in a contemplation of pure beauty, in Iqbal it leaves contemplation and philosophy behind and seeks, as a lover might seek his beloved, the very spirit at the root of things. Poetry that has been curbed for centuries in our country, has shaken itself free with its strength.

With Tagore and Iqbal, the new poetry is born. Side by side with these two figures, there has arisen a group of poets mostly from Bengal,—Sarojini Naidu, Aurobindo Ghose, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, James Cousins, and Chitta Ranjan Das who have led the poetic movement through all the changing measures of rapture and rhythm. For, if Indian poetry is mystical, it does not shut itself entirely from the gay song of the bird or the passionate glory of a sunset, or the tender silence of a broken heart or the simple faith of a child. Even if the temples are closed and the hymns are not sung in our

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country, its vast sights and scenes and the deep emotional heart of its people will create the poetic mind. For who can fail to detect the essence of pure poetry in the song of Sarojini when she sees the soul of all colour in such simple things as the different shades of the bangles of a girl.

“Silver and blue as the mountain mist,
Some are flushed like the buds that
dream

On the tranquil brow of a woodland
stream,

Some are aglow with the bloom that
cleaves

To the limpid glory of newborn leaves.”

or when she draws for us a little picture of human caprice with a touch as light as

“You held a wild flower in your
finger-tips,

Idly you pressed it to indifferent lips,

Idly you tore its crimson leaves apart

Alas,—it was my heart !”

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this wealth of beautiful imagery is sufficient to indicate and prove to us that the movement of new poetry is already with us,—fresh and vigorous in its expression.

But when the poet has sought nature as his mate and when her beauty is revealed to him, still he shall feel that he has only revelled. For he has missed some element which his art has failed to express. He may sing of God, he may rhapsodize about nature, but he shall yet not grasp the rapture of truth born out of intense suffering. For he does not respond to the deep-throated Promethean agony of the nation as a whole and echo her cry for freedom, whose reverberations now shake the country and will be heard through centuries to come. Suffering India needs the poet. She is yet “full of dreaming and desire,” and for the realization of them, the poet must tune his soul to make her live. But somehow the poet, like the

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painter, is to a great extent, dumb for the task. He still harps on old ideals and fills them with tunes which cannot keep time with the glorious symphony of the nation's soul. He has not yet grasped fully the tragedy of the fall of a nation. To learn this, he must go to the patriot. Once the tragedy of the fall is realised, how great is the rapture of the awakening! It may be that he shall lose a part of the old emotional background, but he shall create a new and wider poignancy, for he shall have the courage to say: "Behold! I rise to meet the destined spring, and scale the stars upon my broken wing!"

After Satyagraha

THE West has had its life of revolution, its turmoil and its passions, its new ideas and claims for a greater and a vaster ideal. The near East has also tasted of it and has experienced a vigorous rebirth. And now the revolution has swept into our own country. Those who have something to get out of it for their selfish ends or are accustomed to view ideas in a narrow sense, interpret it only in political terms. But the revolution is a far greater force than what politics can ever mean to us. The revolution in India has all the powers of the West, brought to it to interpret our ancient ideals. But with this interpretation, it also invokes an energy that forces the spirit of the ideals to break through our crusted intellectual philosophies and in consequence to give birth to a new

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vision. It creates altogether a fresh ideal which, if well understood, may give us the breath of a sun-kissed dawn or plunge us into a starless darkness.

The revolution in every country is an evolutionary process which has a meaning beyond politics. In India, it has already passed through various phases, from the first awakening and its glory, to the determination to sacrifice and to suffer for its ideals, and thence to a definite realisation of its goal and an exalted feeling of victory. But we have now come to a stage when the process seems to break and whirl itself round in endless eddies. The movement of satyagraha has brought to us a sense of conquest but together with it also, to a certain extent, a feeling of futile effort as its result. Its moral implications, its faith in the ethical law of the soul, its creation of courage and fearlessness, have given such strength to the Indian that he is now prepared to face the hardest battle.

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It has infused the emotion of the ideal into his very blood and sinews. But this very emotion has been also its weakness, for it has not lifted him out of the sphere of his individuality. The patriot has thrown aside everything to work for his ideals, but he has failed to realise the great freedom which his soul has been hungering after. At the end, he has been thrown behind prison bars and compelled to endure pain and solitude. But is that the consummation of his ideal? Suffering sharpens the edge of the soul, but when it strains it, it often breaks it and leaves it a shadow of its substance. A satyagrahi may be temporarily satisfied by the fact that he has worked and suffered. But how far has he realised his great ideal of liberty? Will the prison-walls echo to the call of his spirit? Will his youth regain its lost lustre? Suffering may act as a bond to bring our countrymen together, but it is not strong enough to bring about the

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final leap for conquest. For there is a sense in which suffering throws us back instead of impelling us forward towards the goal. It has an intense retarding power, for it leaves the spirit breathless without a constructive energy to prepare it for fresh endeavours. This is manifest to any keen critic who has watched well the patriotic movement, its visions and its darkness. Satyagraha, with all its motifs and conditions is a great step in the revolutionary movement, but with suffering as its goal and result, it has broken itself into waves of effort that are full of a sense of ruin and futility, as the waters of the sea, rushing towards the hard voiceless rock on the shore, are thrown back in despair.

The hard voiceless rock is the Individual in man,—bold in his powers of execution, but lame, if entirely confined within himself, to utilise the strength of his beliefs. The ideal of

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the patriot is to free his country and to enjoy the fulfilment of his love for her in this freedom, just as the ideal of the lover is to win his beloved and at the same time to render her happy and to experience the joy of his love in her happiness. The lover suffers, so does the patriot. But patriotism, like love, often deceives itself. For, as suffering has a purifying quality, he considers it as one of the chief instruments for the realisation of his ideal. But giving suffering such an exalted place, he only gratifies the suffering idealistic individuality in him. By limiting himself thus, he darkens his own vision and restricts his powers of achieving his ideals and even fails to enjoy the realisation of them, just as the lover by taking suffering to heart, shuts himself up within the circle of his own personality, and thus fails to realise his ideal of love and share the beauty and glory of the expression of it. When patriotism, like love, becomes thus one

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long torturous mood of the soul, it loses its expanding power. If satyagraha makes suffering its main constructive aim, it becomes an assertion of the role of personality alone, and the blind assertion of the latter, whether within prison bars or outside them, cannot lead us far.

What is wanted to free the energy within the individual and use it for pushing the evolution of the patriotic movement ahead, is a bold expression of the "universal man." To visualise it, we must wrest patriotism entirely from its political meaning, and see the descent of its spirit,—far mightier and more unifying than our aspirations,—a force that transforms as well as elevates the individual. The transformation and the elevation of the individual is really the manifestation of the "universal man." It is a new term in the evolution of life, and as such, its expression goes beyond the practice of satyagraha. The philosophy behind

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satyagraha has paved the way for it by emphasizing soul-force. But it has only aimed at conquest of the soul over the lower elements of the brute in man. It has to see soul-force as a vast releasing power which can free the patriot from the narrow limits of his own individuality. Both the aspects are to be seen together, for otherwise, the soul, seeming to conquer over the body, is really hemmed in by it. When the soul of the individual is conceived to have such vital force, the "universal man" does not appear only as an idealistic fetish. It is felt as a concrete reality which can be translated into practical terms. To do so will be at first, in the eyes of the orthodox school, a heresy, for surely the transformation of the individual is a challenge to all the moral and religious traditions of the past.

The Indian is as reluctant to accept the challenge as the Westerner. For Indian idealism is often seen only in its

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superficial aspects, and thus when it is practised it becomes the experience of an introvert, who, failing to plumb the depths of his soul, turns almost always into an individualist. And as in the West, so in the East, the Indian claims sanction for the expression of his desire for exploitation from religion. But it is rather the misinterpretation of religion rather than its truth, that gives him such a sanction. It is therefore only by rejecting all false religious conceptions that room can be made for the establishment of the real self in the individual. With the death of a misinterpreted religion, the breath of a new consciousness, like a sea-born breeze, will be brought to us. For our mind will be open to the reception of the true Being, the spiritual Godhead. Without the assertion of the One without which nothing can be seen in clear light and nothing felt in the depths of the heart, the Indian mind finds every-

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thing so futile and so vain. Our best paintings and our greatest poetry, our frescoes and our monumental carvings are a testimony of His presence. But our ideal is not merely to feel His presence in our hearts. It is to bring it down to earth in the form of the consciousness of the "universal man" by unified work and expression. What is the nature of the "universal man"? From the intellectual point of view, he is the term between the divine and the human,—the Great Mediator between the two levels. From the practical point of view, he is the concrete consciousness of humanity, raised, nourished and created by the transformation of the individual. The urge to realise the "universal man" will be thus both an aspiration to bring the Godhead down to earth and a fire to shape a new society of selves. This double enthusiasm will have the sanctity of a practical religion. For if the power behind

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satyagraha is proved to be no mere visionary impulse but an useful means of turning the soul to a higher life, the keen desire of surpassing the individual manhood and transforming it will be a strong practical movement with all its live bearings on our conceptions of love and marriage, society and the state.

With the shaping of the new consciousness, born out of the faith in establishing the "universal man," there will begin a revolutionising of everyday life. Love and marriage, the two points of exultation, will have a different significance, now that they will not be motivated by the passion for individual joy. They will be part of the movement of the transformation of human personality. Thus men and women will gather together and build homes not to cherish their own loves, but to work out the new life on a collective basis,—to build vast institutions for an unified production of culture, progressive colonization and

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efficient industry. The emotion of selfish satisfaction that is fostered in the bourgeois world, will be supplanted by the zest to voice and translate the aspirations for collective effort. Here the poet and the lover, the artist and the workman, will find themselves. For all their activities will correlate with one another and thus supply the necessary impulse for an unified expression. Drama, poetry and art will be a part of the machinery to mould the forces of the collective consciousness. So when the lover and the artist in man will try to look into culture to nourish their emotions, they will discover there, with rapture, their own rejection of individuality, their own effort of surrender to the " universal man. "

But it is only when we come to the peasant that we realise the hell-begotten results of the exploitation of the individual. He who has the strength to face the storm and the wind, is made to suffer starvation.

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To offer him the Charkha is to relieve only a part of his misery. For how can the darkness of his mind be dispelled? He is the victim of exploitation, but he is so rooted also in his own personality that he cherishes his own poor life. For him, the aspiration given to him of establishing the "universal man" will be like the glow of an undreamt-of morning. Like the immense wide spaces of the fields around him, his consciousness will enlarge with the idea of the transformation of personality, its efforts and its passions elevated by and merged into the larger consciousness of the "universal man"—a power that will work in reality to offer him a larger area of earning his bread. In practical terms, it will mean for him the experience of a vast co-operative work, of the building-up of huge farming and field institutions and planned organisations and it will thus bring about a regular change in the very conception of the Indian village.

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Out of this change, will emerge a new humanity which will look back towards the past of a world, forgotten perhaps a century after.

But behind all this constructive enterprise, there must be a deep concentration on the effort to transform the individual. For we are bent not merely to build institutions and establish co-operative planning. We are out also to bring to birth a new concrete term,—the “universal man”—in the evolution of life. The individual must open his soul to the “universal man,” the larger consciousness of humanity, like a flower its petals to the sun. This transformation is an evolutionary process. It begins as an impulse and a creed the advocacy of which the individual fights for, but as he intuitionally experiences its truth, he discovers that he needs must translate it into practice. And hence arises the disintegration of the individual,—of his religion, his passions, his

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moods and his relations to society. He discovers that the egoism of his mind and vital being must be surpassed. And out of the rejection of egoism there emerges patriotism with its glorious visions. But patriotism soon becomes an individual mood, and must yield to a higher law of the being,—the necessity of merging the individual with the consciousness of humanity, the “universal man.” It seeks its fulfilment in a collective effort and organisation, for without a unified outward expression, this concrete consciousness does not exist. But the very act of surpassing his individuality brings him such delight and rapture in his work. This rapture is born not only out of breaking the egoism of his being, but also out of shaping the ideal state,—with the great love and power, the vast generosity and the conscious elevating shakti that knit together the heart and soul of our country, the qualities that so well make her a great Mother.

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