ON PATHS OF LIFE

by

PURAN SINGH

Author of

"Sisters of the Spinning Wheel", "Spirit of Oriental Poetry," etc.,

Foreword

by

M. S. RANDHAWA

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FOREWORD

IN THE foot-hills of Siwaliks in the districts of Rawalpindi and Jhelum is Pothohar, the land of poets, thinkers and lovely women. The heavily eroded foot-hills, bare of all vegetation, present an unearthly landscape with craters like that of the moon, and rugged rocks are eroded into most fantastic shapes. Nibbling at the scanty tufts of grass are flocks of sheep and goats followed by ferocious-looking shepherds. This land was not so barren and dreary during the first five centuries of the Christian era when Buddhism was wielding its sway as far north as Afghanistan and Central Asia. Even now ruins of Buddhist monasteries and Viharas can be seen among the barren rocks of Pothohar, gentle reminders of a creed of love and sympathy, which once prevailed in this region. While Buddhism has vanished before the onslaught of Islam, the traces of this creed can still be seen in the faces of at least some of the gentler sex. The University of Taxila, now in ruins, produced saints and scholars, the lotus-bearers, who carried the message of the Buddha far into the heart of Central Asia. Then came the Greeks with their philosophy and the art of sculpture, and they left an imprint on the sands of time as well as on the race of Pothoharis. Even now the brown soil of Pothohar and its bracing climate rear a race of men and women who are unusually handsome and surprisingly intelligent. One often comes across madonna-like faces, the straight Greek nose is still prominent, and the eyes of women sparkle with love and laughter. Who are the descendants of the monks and scholars of Taxila? These are the scientists like Birbal Sahni, and poets and writers of distinction, like Mohan Singh, Teja Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal and Gurbakhsh Singh. However, in the galaxy of the poets and writers of Pothohar, Puran Singh shines as the brightest star, whose writings will be read with joy in all centuries.

I made my acquaintance with Puran Singh in my student days at Lahore in 1926 through his "Sisters of the Spinning Wheel." This book of songs, where every song is a prayer, gave me great comfort. Listening to the somnolent music of the spinning wheel and the heart-piercing melodies of the village girls I found myself wandering in the Punjab countryside of the past. Then I lost contact with Puran Singh and his writings for well over a decade. On return to the Punjab, while posted at Jullundur in 1949, I happened to visit a bookshop at Ludhiana, which belonged to a refugee bookseller and publisher. A small book bound in Morocco leather bearing the title, "The Spirit Born People", came to my notice and I found that the author was Puran Singh. I was happy to have the book, and kept it as my constant companion and read it with great joy in lonely bungalows while out on tour. This book had a strange fascination for me; the charm of the language and the music of the words entranced me. In the company of Puran Singh I could hear the music of the spheres, around me were the souls of the pure, and I found myself soaring in the company of angels. I read this book again and again and its charm was unfading.

In 1953 I came in contact with his son, S. Madan Mohan Singh, at Simla, and he very graciously gave me the manuscript of 'On Paths of Life,' his father's auto-biography. I found charming descriptions of Pothohar and Japan in this manuscript, and felt that it ought to come to the notice of all admirers of Puran Singh. Many of us do not know that India, which is the mother of thought, has very close cultural links with China and Japan. It was through the mountain passes of the North-West that India poured her intellectual torrents upon the Far-Eastern world. A lively communication was maintained between India and China through these passes, and travellers, pilgrims and traders carried Indian art and religion to China. Kasyapa Matanga, the Indian Buddhist, arrived in China in first century A. D., and he prepared the first translation of Buddhist texts. Kumara-jiva visited China in 401 A. D., Gunavarman from Kashmir came to Nanking in early fifth century. Bodhi

Dharma and Amoghavajra were greatly honoured by the Chinese. Hieuen Tsiang's visit to India in 630 A. D. was another memorable event in history. Passing through the desert of Gobi, 'where the winds whistle through your sleeves and cut you to the bone,' he crossed the Great Ice Mountains, and reached India. He studied and meditated in the shade of Amra groves of Nalanda and admired the deep translucent ponds bearing on their surface the blue lotus intermingled with the *kanaka* flowers of deep red colour. He returned to China with 657 volumes of sacred books, 74 of which he translated into Chinese. In Loyang, on Chinese soil, there were more than 3,000 Indian monks and 10,000 Indian families during the Tang rule (618-907 A. D.). India was then the centre of the Buddhist universe, and Indian monks carried the message of the Buddha to the Far East. From China, Hindu ideas reached the remote island of Japan. There may have been earlier contacts between the two countries, as the Japanese have traditions of solar descent and a number of Hindu Gods have found place in the Japanese pantheon. The Islamic conquest of Northern India closed the channel of communication between the Far-Eastern countries and India, and the result was that a period of stagnation followed. In the early 20th century with the renaissance in Japan we find Indian saints and mystics like Ram Tirath and Puran Singh, reaching Japan by the sea-route. In Japan Puran Singh met Okakura, the great Japanese thinker and artist, who was a believer in the synthesis of Chinese ethics, Indian thought, Japanese aesthetics, and Western science.

Puran Singh returned to India in 1903, a shaven monk, thus providing a great shock to his Sikh parents. A few months after his return to the Punjab, he became Principal of Victoria Diamond Jubilee Hindu Technical Institute, Lahore. In 1906 he oined the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, as Chemical Adviser, and left that institution in 1919 to oin as Chief Chemist to Gwaliar State, where he remained till 1924. In 1925 he oined as Chief Chemist in a Sugar Factory at Sardarnagar, and after an unhappy experience returned to the Punab, and

started a venture of growing Rosha grass in a farm in district Sheikhupura. His earthly journey came to end on the 31st March, 1931, with a tragic suddenness. He was hardly 50 years of age when tuberculosis claimed him. Though Puran Singh is no longer amongst us, his songs of love and beauty and his musical prose will live forever. Years have passed, and time rolls along. Thousands of people who acquire momentary importance sink into oblivion, but among men of understanding Puran Singh is still loved and appreciated, and his name is still surrounded by that aroma of passionate love which tinged his writings, and gave them an unusual quality.

In Puran Singh's writings one notices deep love for Nature. He rejoices in the glory of the rosy dawns and the golden sunsets of October. He is happy in the company of mountain rills with their pure ice-cold water sparkling in sunshine. He enjoys the beauty of the Indian Spring when the dark leafless peaches unfurl their pink blossoms, and the plum and the pear burst into a white universe of flowers. He enjoys the mighty silence of the forests and the mountains. In his writings one feels the freedom of the Punjab plains, the beauty of the green fields of wheat, and the joy of the care-free flow of the five rivers.

He is in his elements when he describes the amours of Krishna and Gopis in his immortal translation of Jai Dev's Geet Govinda. This is a poem which is spontaneous like the song of spring birds. One feels the joy of spring when Palases blossom flame red like the golden finger nails of Kamdeva, and Keora pierces the heart with the keen-edged aroma of its spears. The blossoms of Nagkesar dance in the air, and the breezes are laden with the fragrance of Jasmine and Malati. The yellow blossoms of the Mango shake under the weight of the passion of the black humming bees, and the Koel trills forth its wild lyric maddening the hearts of lovers. Radha is in search of Krishna, "Whose body is the colour of the purple cloud, adorned with the rainbow in the sky, whose tresses are embellished with peacock feathers that ripple with a hundred crescents." As Krishna raises his flute

to His lips, the very clay of Vrindavanam grows lyrical and sings. Describing the love-play of Krishna with Radha and the Gopis, Puran Singh's lyrical soul bursts forth into a flood of oriental passion, and compared with his descriptions, translations of other scholars appear pale and anaemic. Radha waits for Krishna on a bed of forest leaves in a bower. Krishna comes and gathers her in his arms, tastes the devotion of her lips, and lies for hours in raptures resting on her bosom. While dark Krishna is the rain cloud, golden Radha is the lightning which shines in the cloud. The dark limitless space of the Universe is Krishna, and the cosmic radiation which shines on the azure vast of His bosom is Radha.

Puran Singh is a mystic, who in the madness of his ecstasy lifts his head among the stars, and dances with the sun and the moon. There is music in his words, which flows as a mighty torrent irrespective of the fact whether the medium of expression is prose or poetry. His words jingle like the bangles of the Punjabi bride, and in fact even his prose is poetry. Such deep feelings, such vital radiations of the soul cannot be trammelled by the restrictions of metres and rhymes, and they must find expression spontaneously like our rivers in the monsoons bursting their banks and overflowing in any direction which pleases them.

The poetry of Puran Singh is his mystical autobiography. His unusual metaphors, strange similes and hyperbolic exaggerations are in a way literally true to life as felt and lived by him. Poets, such as Goethe, Dante, Shelley, William Blake, Noguchi, Hafiz, Omar Khayyam, Jai Dev, Tulsi Das, Mira Bai, and Iqbal, were his companions. He used to get intoxicated for days by some particular couplet and would keep repeating it to himself, singing it, and at times dancing to its melodious tunes. It was thus that he entered into a mystic trance.

A study of his poetry is like an adventure into a strange land. In the poem entitled "I am the child—lost in the World-fair" in "Sisters of the Spinning Wheel", is a description of the soul's journey from its infancy to maturity, from the time when the soul by entering into a

body became separated from the Eternal and began to dwell in the world of senses, to the time when it regains re-union with the Beloved whilst still clothed within this flesh. It appears to be a record of many previous births, the memory of which came up to him spontaneously from the unconscious during a trance-like state of mind in which the whole book was written in one continuous stretch of three days and three nights. The narrative can be split up in four periods, viz., 'Infancy of the soul,' 'Youth of the soul', 'Noon-time,' and 'Man in the hut.' The path traced by the soul as viewed from the vantage-point above Time and Space is described. From this point he had a panoramic view of Eternity; past, present, and future merge into one, and thousands of births and deaths appear like the acts of a drama.

The period of the infancy of the soul covers those births in which in-spite of many attractions of the senses and intellect the soul could not forget its longing for "My father! My mother!". Later comes the 'Boyhood of the soul' and the search for the "Father and Mother" becomes still more intense.

"I knew not my madness grew and flew into the arms of any man and woman, crying "My father, My mother."

"I was mad, I saw my Father in clouds, in air, I saw him under the shades of the stars, I was restless."

"I saw a young old man, he had a white beard, a snow-white turban, I flew into his arms and cried "Father!"

"My soul returned to me, still not finding for itself that no one else could find for it."

"I saw a rider, a splendid rider on a splendid steed; I ran after the horse, the rider turned not, the horse galloped away."

The third period described as Noon-time is a remarkable mystic experience when he received "One glance of all-creating Beauty,"

The last phase relates to his present life. The hut is a kind of lodging just sufficient to provide shelter without making him attached to the things of this world and to let him live with his "Father", forgetful of the world

affairs. The past tense employed in the earlier part of the poem changes to the present:—

"I am with my Father
I sleep and wake in Him
He encompasseth me, when I stumble, wonder!
Of wonder! I fall in His lap!"

Thus the soul's journey from one birth to another is visualised by him as a holy pilgrimage which is a quest for the Beloved from whom he had separated. The union with the Beloved is a mystic experience. It is a contact with the "Akalmurat," the Timeless Form, the Eternal Being—The Absolute. The complete identification with that Being is described in "The Pilgrim's Quest"—"Years ago, someone came, entered into me like a figure of light, his hands becoming my hands, his legs my legs, his hair my hair. I was thus made soul alive. In my declining years, and in my decaying flesh I had thus caught the glowing warmth of the future youth of the Unborn Rose. I distinctly heard the mighty sounds of the aurorial uprushing of a new life into me. Within me he sat on the lotus throne of my heart, whom I never met in the ordinary sense though I heard him, though I clung to his arm. My body had become a soul, a temple. He and I walked together in the Golden City of Angels. This world was annihilated for me. The portals were flung open and I saw a new universe. I felt those steps, his and mine, were leading me to the heart of everything. In those steps beat a rhythm of the journey of a pilgrim to the sacred and holy places of the Universe."

This mystic person is sung of again and again by him as "The Turbaned Man," "The Unknown Man," "The Man who becomes me," "The Man in me," etc. The visits of the Strange Friend cannot be predicted. He "has his own laws of love." At times He would leave him, "as if never to return." But He might return unexpectedly at any time of the night or the day after a long interval of separation. Such a mystic visit is described in "When? I Know Not."

"When? I know not ! My dawn might break at night
My man might return to me in sleep, in dreams!

lovelit with the splendour of a thousand days !
And a thousand may be the number of my forlorn nights.
One moment but of this Fairy sleep so condenses
for me, Life, Love, Faith, Joy, God, Man, Heaven, and Earth in one.
sleep with my soul aching and wake with the song of 'Hail, Lord !' on my lips and tongue,
And happy life like a wave flows in a thousand streams from translucent walls of flesh, that should retain it all,
But it flows to rivers, rocks and air and all
I give a feast of myself to the Universe !"

The Divine one in His Wisdom ordains the gift of His bounties to be spread by certain natural means: rain through the clouds, warmth from the sun, and fragrance from flowers. Even so does He scatter in the Universe the mystic essence through gifted personalities like Puran Singh who perform this function in obedience to His will. This ineffable ambrosia is as essential for the spiritual life, as water and sunshine are for the physical.

Men like Puran Singh are citizens of the world, for their sympathies are not cramped by narrow nationalism, racialism or sectarianism. He is the poet of humanity for whom the fictions of religion, nations and races do not exist. His prayer is not the mechanical mutterings of the so-called man of religion, but the song of the heart. He has experienced the supreme oy of spiritual awakening-the awakening in the inner depths of the heart, when man sees beauty everywhere, life becomes an infinite Paradise, sorrow is banished and every fibre of muscle and nerve in the body tingles with joy. What is the substance of joy ? Joy does not lie in the empty doctrine of renunciation and mortification of the flesh. God has made our bodies as temples of the spirit, and the temples must be kept clean and beautiful, and we should seek salvation in life, not in death. The God of Puran Singh is the God of Guru Nanak, who is not confined within the four-walls of a temple or a mosque. The temple of his God is the Universe itself, with countless stars, suns and moons as his

lamps, the blossoms of entire vegetation are his flower offerings, and the breezes of the spring laden with fragrance are his incense. According to Puran Singh "Self-forgetfulness in the joy of His beauty, in other words, Self-realization is the way to happiness. So long as selfishness saays the individual, so long will the whole world be sick. "Safety lies in the shelter of the Great Man of Good; we seek it vainly in our brilliant sands of mere intellectuality. Safety is within me, with God in Self ! Only by the touch of the beauty of God-personality can selfishness be turned into the holiness of self-sacrifice." It is such men as Puran Singh, who by the flashes of their intuition give us glimpses of the world of souls beyond the black curtain of death. For us, who are entangled in the meshes of the Great Illusion, they remove the veil from the face of God, and "We see Life amid a shower of joy, with man standing as a pillar of beauty between the earth and the firmament, surrounded by a circle of dazzling radiation."

30th November, 1954.
Chandigarh.

M. S. Randhawa

Preface

And strange has been my fate in this precarious world, almost stranger than fiction. I confess passionate love of every kind has been to me in youth an experience of intense pleasure. The moments that came thus were brief and they came flying and departed flying, but they were measures of everlasting sweetness. A whole life of pain and struggle, and the expectation of death as a refreshing change to still greater moments of passionate love are all made blissful by the brief brilliance of those happy moments here and I always loved to be alive with passion of one kind or another. Always explosive and volcanic at times, when I swept everything before me.

I do not know of what interest my life can be to anybody when their own are of no interest to them especially when mine is as absolutely uneventful as of a bird perching now on one flower spray then on another, glad that its lovely coo and claw-grasps make the flowery twigs swing with inward passion which no one knows. The making of love with my fellows and then unmaking it, in irresistible fascinations, has been a whole life's doing and undoing.

It might have been of some pleasure to my mother but she is dead, to my sisters but they have been already gathered to my ancestors, to my brothers but neither of them has leisure to listen to my meaningless chirpings. What they and all serious people call "frothy gossip." Little knowing that perhaps blowing of soap-bubbles is better use of one's days than taking upon one's delicate shoulders the duties of life and dying under the groans of self-imposed pains. Of all things my father has been quite negligible in such matters of childish boys as he is made of too inferior human stuff as compared with my mother. A man of rigid stupidity and obscure intellect, glad to be counted a kind of Hindu metaphysician, a man of stone-like attitude to the world. Little knowing that tall talks on god, like the one he has, is waste of opportunity called life.

Owing to my variegated and many coloured inconsistencies I have well high lost the active not the potential friendship of my friends. I differ from every one of them as to the fundamentals of life and love and civility. My every moment differs from every other. I have never fully agreed with any one. Not even with myself. And human friendship is but some kind of agreement. The perfect accord of souls must need be adjusted in other worlds, surely nothing of the kind is possible here. The oterie of such good and noble friends is dispersed in distances so far as the idle turning of the past pages of my days on this earth is concerned. But what need of an audience when it is only revolving certain remembrances on my mind for my own joy? Can I not read them aloud to myself? It seems to be a family trait, for my daughter was once told by my wife in a delightful humorous mood that she was the daughter of those who would pay heavily if some one would come and listen to them, when my daughter failing to get her mother to hear her story began to relate it to the wall, turning her back on the whole family. She was a mere child of seven years then.

When I was born and when I put my little thumb into my mouth for the first time, I was conscious of no friends at all, I looked at the moon, I laughed, I cried, and I slept all by myself. I feel like talking to myself as I used to do when a mere child and recall the bright happy irresponsibilities of a gay youth. I thank God and live. Before my vision's eyes, all the details of my life open like written pages and I am rekindled with the innocence of infancy, she naughtiness of boyhood and passion's red dream of rosy youth. Those moods are still mine. I give them new bodies again and again. I can have as many births and deaths as I choose. Some people are tired of births and deaths. And there is much to tire one hopelessly out. But life renews its joys endlessly, the roses bloom, the birds sing, the child of man laughs. The philosophers of the East have prayed that they be not born again. Deep is the hopeless pessimism of the old musty philosophy, but I find nothing so interesting as a new birth. To be

an old man and to be an infant playing with the moon at the same time in a body of pure imagination is of intense fascination for me. Ah, to be multiple of myself and know of it not. To escape the dirt of knowledge, that wretched wrinkled prudence that comes and sticks to the bones and flesh of old age, is a blessing even through death. The wisdom of the old man is poisonous. The ignorant enterprise of the youth and its fresh sensations are so full of divine surprises.

Thus this book is an attempt to relive back in the infancy, in dreams of youth and forget the calculations and plans of an experienced and tired intellect. The joys of life are the only realities.

And the opening of a bud, in the garden, the blossoming of youth are soul absorbing topics for ever and for all—both for the dead and the living. Remembrance is life and the gathering of roses and men and stars in the basket of the mind its most glorious task.

Chak No. 73/19,
Via Nankana Sahib,
Punjab.

1927 Puran Singh.

CHAPTER 1

ABBOTTABAD

(1881-1889)

I WAS BORN in a mud house in village Salhad near Abbottabad, the District headquarters of a Frontier District of Hazara. Salhad is a Pathan village. And my father used to tell me how superior the Pathan felt over the shopkeeping Hindu. All Pathan villages must needs have a Hindu Bania to sell them soap, tobacco leaves, sugar, cloth, salt and sundries.

Salhad is situated on a little perennial hill brook. It has its own little waterfalls and pools which have been fixed up, some for Hindus and some for Mussalmans. The Pathan women instinctively feel themselves to be above Hindu women, the difference is in the soul and freedom-idea of the two. Once some Pathan women were bathing in the stream when they were disturbed by some men coming their way and they hurried to screen themselves behind their veil clothes. But as they saw it was the village Bania, they resumed their bath saying, "O, it is the Hindu." This inner superiority of elevated and spontaneous feeling makes the Pathans the kings of those places. I am sure we felt superior to the Pathans, for I was the beloved child of the village and the Pathans loved me. I loved the Pathan children more than I did the Hindu, the latter I commanded for sundry services and errand-running and they meekly obeyed me and did as I bade them. My mother was worshipped by the Pathan women and men, for they found her superior to themselves in courage and enterprise. She was heroic in little acts. My mother helped the Pathan women against the tyranny of their husbands and bestowed so much real love on them that the whole village looked up to her.

I passed my infancy in this village and every day I grew with a spontaneous feeling of freedom and superiority. My mother put me below the waterfalls and the cold

water fell upon my backbone. Once I played with the iron pipe that was stuck in the wet clay to lead the water-current down, and down fell the pipe on my foot. I bled profusely and I still carry the scar. Do what we may, whatever we do we have to bear the stain or spark thereof all our life. I wonder at the omnipotence of our freedom to do little things like this when afterwards we become slaves of our toyish freedom. Our best sparks of feeling degenerate into black stains.

As a little child of five or six I must have been extremely eccentric, for I am still so. The infant grows into the man and we think in vain man is so superior, while he is just an enlargement. As an old man now I am called half mad by my friends to whom for the very quality which I prized in my mother and she in me I am not of much interest. They think me wild and savage, much too sentimental, much too fervent, and over-enthusiastic. One day, as my mother used to tell me afterwards, I insisted on breaking a white metal cup and she allowed me to break it. I threw it bang on a stone and it fell into pieces. And as I broke it I cried, "O why has the cup fallen into pieces?"

I cannot forget a red-haired goat which yielded milk to my little bowl as I ran after her many times a day. I had a profusion of golden-coloured curled hair flowing over my neck, and as I ran after the goat for milk, my hair shook in the air giving a suggestion of my, in some way, being related to the goat. In those days my young maternal uncle came, my mother's only brother, and he was very dear to her. I was fonder of my uncle than of my father. He insisted on killing my goat's kid for his dinner. And my uncle promised me some fun. H killed the kid. I was flattered in being the giver of my lovely kid to my uncle. That evening when the goat came home from the mountain after the day's browsing, she looked for the kid, she called him out and hearing no voice in reply, she went away. God knows where she went without stepping in, without even accepting my tears for the hurt I had caused her. The goat was gone. I was then crying for both the kid and the goat.

My mother had once strung a gold mohur in my forehead braid and she did my hair for the first time in the fashion of girls. All Sikh children when their hair grow too long have their hair tucked up. And with it I had gone out further up in the village street. And I saw a beggar with a knapsack on his back, a begging bowl in hand, and a lot of beads hanging at his neck coming and speaking to me sweetly. I caught hold of his right hand which he offered me as my father always did, to lead me further up, and I went on, clinging to his hand. It seems meanwhile he used his scissors and clipped my mother's gold mohur and put it in his knapsack. And he left me all of a sudden. I came home with my sacred tresses cut off along with the mohur. My mother asked me where the mohur was, and it is said, I only pointed my finger towards the place and said "*Bava,*" and just opened and turned down both my tiny palms like the two leaves of the peepul tree. My mother kissed my empty palms, took me up in her arms and thanked God that I was not kidnapped for the wretched gold mohur.

The business of my father took him from place to place, and the next station we moved to was Abbottabad. The Punjabi soldiers who came thither called it Hebtabad. This name of a lovely little hill station about 3,000 ft. and more above the sea level sounds like an infliction. Why Abbottabad? Because a good Englishman liked the level green plateau and fixed up his headquarters there. It is simply grotesque to have called it by the name of the said Englishman. In India the old memories of India should be awakened in the names of our new cities and streets, otherwise some opportunities for doing lasting good to the memory of a people are lost. Why should individuals however good and noble inflict an inorganic memory on another country? To rename our loftiest peak, our glory and heritage, Gauri Shanker, as Mount Everest is an example of mental vandalism and I wonder why the English Geographical Society endures such barbarism with any true scientific conscience? It is uprooting our gods and planting Everests in our breasts.

But to me Hebtabad meant a new cradle swinging on

the silver threads of streamlets that flowed all about it: its crisp cool waters, its tall eucalyptus trees on the roads, the beautiful stupa-like hill covered with baby pines, the winds that blew full of pine perfume and the dry pine needles littering the hill sides, and my slipping over them and rolling for sheer delight of falling. I used to have morning baths with my father in pools made by our own hands in the sands of the running brooks. My father used to say, "Ram, Ram," and I, "Father, Father;" how I used to return with maiden-hair tucked in my turban, swinging our wet clothes catching the red rays from the rising sun, who I thought was like ourselves bathing in the blue of the sky.

And I remember the small stone-built school on whose windows and doors grew the rose-creepers laden with roses. By the side of the school at a stone's throw were the municipal gardens from whence whiffs of strong odours of mint and verbena blew to our class rooms. I am so sensitive, I dilate my nostrils and I still smell those perfumes of yore, as strongly now as then. The lawns were like green velvet floors to me. I was much too wild to sit on the benches provided. I used to roll on the grass and I loved to soil my dress with its colour and its openness. The yellow Mongol-featured quinces hung low on the branches and remembering them my mouth still waters. I think I got my passion for fruits from those temptations. The prunes in the season and the grapes and the luscious pears and the hill "stone pears" all, all were my tempters. The gardener was kind. His only son Prema was my class-fellow and we had full permission to pluck what we liked. There was a little *diggi-pond* in the municipal garden and a little white painted skiff floating on the *diggi*. And round the pond grew the weeping willows in profusion. It looked like a fairies' favourite resort. Many times I stood under the willow and saw "fairies" coming. People were afraid of them and Prema's father trembled at their sight, though he was a terror to the little gardeners under him. He always asked me not to go near the *diggi*. He only said, "Bara Sahib—Great Lord comes there." One day I saw the "Bara Sahib" and his wife going to the *diggi*

and I followed them. Prema was in attendance and he tried hard to dissuade me to hold back, but I went on. The "Memsahib" looked back and smiled and beckoned me. I ran up. That day I was put into the boat with her, a desire that no one else could fulfil. "O! I walked upon waters today," said I to my mother. And my father was proud that I had the company of the master of the District. I too thought that they were the kindest of men. The gardener who gave me flowers and fruits was so good and any one who did me a kind deed I thought must be good. I still think so. While in infant classes, I remember a stout burly-looking fellow, Beli Ram who taught the higher classes. He was a terror to us little children in his very talk. I now think that the physically defective and awkwardly developed men should never be appointed as teachers of young ones. The educational codes of all nations should have aesthetic sense in choosing the teachers. His son, a tiny stripling was my class-fellow, and we grew very intimate. This little boy would tell me: "My mother died years ago and my father has married again. I cannot love the new woman, a mere girl, as my mother, but my father beats me if I don't. She starves me and hates me. Can you give me some money?" On this I used to get a few copper pice from my mother for myself and give these to him. The little boy would weep, apparently deeply satisfied. And on many occasions, he would give me details of the tyranny of his step-mother. I still feel how cruel are those parents who, unmindful of the little children, go after their own lusts.

As my father was changing places, I felt my home everywhere in the Gandhara country. I felt like a bird in flight who has the sovereign right over hill and dale as far as his wings can cover. I still feel those streamlets running like silver ribbons in my hair. I feel my hair alone makes me one with nature. The clean-shaved people must be alien to Nature, made so by a clean shave. Those villages of Gandhara still swing as humming beehive nests in the sky of my memory.

The Pothohar, the mother-country of both of my parents, attracted me. There were in those days kith

and kin whose main business was, as it seemed to me, to receive us, love us and drink and dine with us. All these trifles of waiting for us at the door, bidding us welcome and bidding us adieu, the little human touches, embraces and warmths and tears and smiles and sharing of joys and sorrows made life an interesting religion. Even today the Margalla pass, the holy Nanak fountain, Punjasahib, the bleak dry hill of Vali Qandhari, and that portion of Margalla of the great Trunk road running from Calcutta to Peshawar, connecting India with Western Asia, inspires me. Mere sight of these places makes me feel young again, their magic effect is a rejuvenation for me every time.

Here lies Taxila the great University to which came the whole of the East and the West to learn the spirituality of the great, truly great Buddhist Humanity.

While passing here I many times thought that I might be some wandering soul from Takhtbahi where once a thousand Greek artists sat chiselling the Buddha's immaculate face out of the blue stone of the Gandhara rocks, with the continuous slow murmur of "Namo Buddha, Namo Buddha." And here on this spot I still think the East as East ceases and the West as West ceases and both mingle in the rectified humanity, in one great civilised, truly civilised humanity, in an everlasting fellowship of the love of man. This dream lies buried here, and this state of humanity lies awake in the future there. I still fancy this is the spot where the Divinity of Guru Nanak would mingle with the great humanity of Buddha and here would assemble Heaven. The international Universities would people this place with soul-culture. This shall be the centre of New Pilgrim Places for the Humanity of the soul as dreamt by Guru Nanak, once again. American millionaires would awake, German scholarship and science would travel, Japanese art would come on a holy pilgrimage, and vitalising centres of humanity would be established here. It would be the modern culture of universalism as dreamt by Gurus of the Punjab, Guru Gobind Singh who first laid the foundations of free normal humanity, united and whole. The past of all

nations of the earth will be forgotten, it might be in their blood, but not in their brains. The dirt of ages that sticks to old nations like the dear dirt of an old home would be washed away in floods of human love. The gods of nations have failed, here the men of nations will meet in a Sangat. The Son of Man will be the universal religion, and love of men the creed. Human mind forever liberated, Intellect and Will would serve the flashes of illumined intuition and shall work only as the *Viceregent-Agencies* of the Great Soul.

Once when on the banks of the Indus, the great Attock, my mother told me that the Indus is truly a spirit, a soul; she told me then that once as the girl-mother she had lost me in the rapids of the Indus and the goddess restored me to her. She sat on a huge quartzite white boulder and had her bath by throwing the river waves on her body with the folded palms of her hands. After she had had a bath, she thought of giving me the sacred dip. So, holding me by my tiny arms and bending down she lowered me into the rapids. I slipped away from her hands, she gave me up for lost. She hardly realised her loss, so light and cheerful was her maidenly consciousness yet. But soon she sank in thought, a rising wave brought me up and put me softly in her quivering arms, which she kept still lowered to the mercy of the rapids.

"The Indus is a goddess," she said. And I think she was quite right. When the river was in flood and Maharaja Ranjit Singh was to cross it, no one of his army dared ride his horse into the waters; the Maharaja rode in and said, "Attock (literally obstruction), obstructs those who have Attock—(obstruction) in their hearts." As long as the Maharaja's horse was in the river all crossed it safely.

CHAPTER II
HAVELIAN
(1886—1890)

STRANGE name. Now a little village. It might have been the capital of some king—the *real palatial buildings*, once. It is now a railway station on the North Western Railway, Punjab. In this village I first went to school. My first school was a mosque. I remember the mosque, its pearl white little dome and slender minarets. The holy space was filled with the evergreen cypress trees which shook with the passing winds, its pure bare floors were covered with rushes soft to the touch, almost as sympathetic as the touch of human flesh. I do not know why, but a strange sensation still comes to me that I heard the name of Solomon there for the first time, that the mental atmosphere of that mosque was of ancient Babylonia, of Syria and Persia. There was the past of Iraq and Baghdad reflected in its simplicity of thought and its solemn majesty of a long spiritual past.

There was the old maulvi in charge with a huge white turban and a long flowing beard. At first sight I thought it was the duplicate of my father and somehow my father bade me to address him as '*Baba*.' On the first day when my father placed a basket of sweets and some candy as an offering for my initiation to the Arabic alphabet, the maulvi received me very kindly, I felt it was the same kind of love which my father used to give me. The maulvi passed his hand over my back and blessed me saying, "Bismillah, We begin with the name of Allah." I think now it was a very good beginning. His way of giving me lessons was like my mother's giving me, one after another, good things to eat, his method of teaching was deeply personal and affectionate. I felt as if he got into me and repeated himself what he wished me to repeat. Otherwise how do I still remember him as if he, by his miracle, had introduced to me the ancient countries of Solomon and Darius and the

Prophet. He might not have been learned but he was certainly informed, much was on his back and still more behind him.

It was at Havelian again that my mother put me under the tuition of a burly, fat, fair, large-limbed, well-knit hill Sikh, a Bhai, for learning the alphabet of the Guru. He was more like a white, patient bull than a man. I remember I had a fine *Kahu* tablet that I had to besmear with soot or clay and trace on it the letters that the Bhai would write with his pen by which the soot or clay was removed and mere hollows were indented out for me. Bela Singh was his name and he was a bearded baby. A simple man who invoked sympathy for himself in every heart. We children loved him and teased him. He treated us with his laughter. Reading the word of the Guru to the people, he would cry and make others weep with love of the Guru. He laboured and earned his bread, he carried water from the stream and did other sundry services for the villagers. Bela Singh did not know how to refuse a request nor to spare himself from any task that might come in his way and which had to be done. The Bhai was not only my teacher but also the teacher of all the Hindu ladies of Havelian. They came every morning after their cold bath in the stream, to Bela Singh to learn the Japji of Guru Nanak and some came to learn the Sukhmani Sahib of Guru Arjan Dev. These ladies used to commit to memory the line that Bhai Bela Singh read to them and the next day they recited that line and the next one and thus they committed large portions of the hymns of the Guru to memory. The Sikh Dharamsala which was in charge of the Bhai was managed by a Panchayat, consisting of the important Hindus of the village. I noticed that the Hindus bowed down to the Guru and listened to the Song and the lives of the Guru with great devotion, but their notions were full of old Hindu systems of thought and worship. Their women were more emancipated. Bhai Bela Singh was a simple straight man, he believed in a good dinner and a continuous lilt of the Guru's Song resounding on his tongue and in his blood. He was gay and roseate, ever happy like a bird. He recounted to us

the lives of the Gurus and made us weep in their sacred memory. I loved the morning and evening singing at the Dharamsala, it was so natural and sweet, for my sisters sang, my mother joined the choir and all the old and the young women and men of the village joined; there was so much pleasure, and one or other kind of feasting. When the time for the distribution of the Guru's Grace in the form of *Karah Prasad*, the grace in the form of Manna came, I felt delightfully agitated. All children were eager and ready and I saw that young girls and wives were equally excited though subdued for fear of the old men. The Havelian Dharamsala had a fine peepul tree. I sat under it and I wondered when its leaves quivered with life. The peepul, of all trees, is so very much nearer to man.

I distinctly disliked the solemn and serious arrival of the *namazis* at the mosque, especially their using the mosque as a bath, making it filthy thereby at the entrance, and their wooden routine of getting up and bending down. There was certainly no colour, no music in the mosque that could attract me. But to lie on the rushes was delightful. The austere simplicity of the mosque suggestive of great freedom for once from the decoration that superstition gives to the temples of the dreamy East was a refreshing contrast.

I often fell suddenly ill, which was attributed in many cases to "evil eye". And my maulvi was reputed for curing the beautiful sufferers from "evil eye" as it affected only the beautiful boys and girls and good things. And whenever I was taken there by my father, the maulvi muttered something between his lips and after a while spat at me and gave my father a few threads from his cloth which were to be thrown on glowing charcoal and their smoke sent into my nostrils till tears came and I felt choked. I was disgusted with the process and I resisted a lot but after all a child has no voice in such things. The child dare not offend his parents who however ignorant always mean well and love more.

I do not know whether on account of this uncanny ghostly thing, or the habit the Mussalman votaries had of using the Mosque as a bath room, the enchantment of

the mosque began to vanish from my mind. I only sat there for my lessons in Persia and ran home. The strange illusion that the shape and atmosphere of the mosque were those of Solomon's old temple of cedars, was disturbed by the filthiness of the habits of the mosque-goers.

Or as I now feel there was something subtle and unseen in my very blood as a Sikh child, so that when I saw the Dharamsala, I lost my faith in the mosque.

I remember I played with my Bhai as if he were a brother of mine, while I only respected the maulvi. A hush fell upon my soul, almost an oppression when with the maulvi; and a blossoming of my soul came to me in the company of the rustic Bhai. The maulvi inspired a fearsome awe and the Bhai a joy. I feel now I imbibed a much sweeter and lighter spiritual sense from that ignorant Bhai than from the maulvi who had wandered with Saadi, contemplated with Tabrez and Maulana Rumi and regularly rendered five Namazes in great awe of the Prophet, perhaps because the former was more homely and the latter so foreign and distant. I was a beautiful child, fair and rosy, my features were perhaps carved by the invisible Greek artists that roamed in the air of Gandhara and Hazara as the eternal beautifiers of man, those old Buddhist devotees who chiselled the face of Buddha in the rocks of Gandhara. This feeling that I carry in my features the master-touches of those lovers of spiritual beauty has been intoxicating me all through. I looked like a Pathan child with something of the fairy about me. Only my eyes were small due to the bashfulness of the surrounding Hindus of Hazara. I believe if my father had migrated to the inner frontier, both in my size and stature and eyes I would have been a better synthesis. Snow tells on the features of man, on Nature's scenery and on the hearts of the people who live round about. Mothers sometimes do miss whole fortunes of beauty for their offspring by little neglects.

The Pathans loved me as I was uncommon, and there was much greater freedom in my limbs than they saw in the limbs of a Hindu child. I was open, naughty and

straight, and had an entertaining manner of speech. Many an elderly Pathan would fondly take me on his knees and tell me stories of the giants of the Gandhara rocks that were still, as they said, imprisoned in the mountains and that still send forth roars at times. The mountains that rose before me after that training seemed as living giants. I many times called out for them to let me hear their roar. And I passed a lot of my time in the Hujra—an open place of meeting for Pathans provided with slab-seats fixed along the walls or set in stone work on a raised platform.

Once my mother left me with my father and two sisters at Havelian, and she was away for a month. I fell ill. The "evil eye" again was suspected and this time of my father himself who once became overjoyed on seeing the glow of my face. The great maulvi was out. The village Hindu physician treated me without any relief. It was high fever, and I was reduced to a skeleton. My golden-coloured Sikh tresses were in sweet confusion as I would allow no one but my mother to comb and dress them. They were much too bushy and every combing gave me pain, which I did not feel when my mother did the combing. Even in bed I looked like a miniature of the Hindu ascetic. The maulvi returned and my father went and wept before him that I was perhaps dying and begged him to cure me by his touch. The maulvi came to see me. And looking at me he smiled and said to my father, "It is the calf ill of separation from the mother cow, you as father cannot send into his soul the stream of *Ab-i-Hayat* (the water of immortality) which his mother always does." The maulvi was right. As soon as my mother returned, her one embrace cured me.

The maulvi when he next saw me after that in company with my father, shook his head and remarked, "This boy will always fall ill, unless someone is by his side to overfeed him with love, especially the sentiments of love. He needs overfondness of someone for himself, otherwise he will be a plain, sad, average thing. But with his food coming to him in abundance, this boy is destined to be remarkable in many ways. His life is in the hands of

others. It was never in your hands, now it is in the hands of his mother. I fear his fate in this world where all things are mostly in the hands of matter-of-fact people, where sentiment is madness; and to get unselfish "over-fondness" for a child of this type is only possible from angels and gods. I do not know why God has put his genius and its manifestation outside him. But if the world about him would excite him, great performances would be to his credit. And if the world treated him ordinarily and dulled his soul, the boy would spend his days in anguish, in self-cursing; I fear he may even go mad." As usual my father asked him to spit at me and pray for me and begged of him a few threads with whose smoke he that night again choked my nostrils.

I do not know how far the venerable maulvi was right in his forecast of my destiny, but I always fell ill when my father rebuked me or slapped me for a slip in pronunciation, or for not rounding the bellies of my Arabic characters while doing caligraphy directly under his instruction. My mother would then rebuke my father for having made me ill,—"Burnt be your alphabets, you have made my child ill." I do not know why it never hurt me when my mother took me to task for anything. Perhaps she smiled at the end of it and kissed me as I wept.

I remember if any one of our kinsmen surprised us by their visit in that far-off village, (for there were no trains in those days) my mother, my two sisters and myself used to go into ecstacies over such an event. The house was full of strange and deep-felt welcomes. My mother would tire herself out in feasting our guests. At that time we used to feel it as a great spiritual blessing. It seemed to us a story of love, a romance of other worlds. This perhaps, a mere nothing, filled us with joy and our memory with keen relish. Alas, those beautiful emotions are all gone, those ecstacies at the meeting of friends are perhaps considered now as some kind of madness. It is all business now. Cold logic argues and weighs the pros and cons, and the main thought is how much will it pay? The human heart is running dry, the soul is being blinded. How shall we live in such a desert? Perhaps we are already dead.

CHAPTER III

HARIPUR

(1890—1893)

HARIPUR is a British Tehsil in the Hazara district, the headquarters of a revenue-collecting assistant, the Tehsildar. It then had one Anglo-middle school. We lived in a mud house with a joint courtyard where many other families lived together. This living together was essential as a safeguard against thieves and dacoits, especially when my father for most days of the month was out on tour. Our mother cooked for us and we children sat round her hearth-fire, chatting nonsense and partaking of her gifts and laughing at nothing. We had no servant, the common servant a *mehra*—the Hindu water-carrier, filled our pitchers with fresh well water and came twice a day to scrub our brass and white metal Hindu vessels.

Haripur has a beautiful green little market-place where the people of Tanol and Khanpur and also the Amb frontier villages outside the British administration come for all kinds of purchases and sales. To Haripur come grain, jaggery and wools and ghee and out goes the salt, cloth and dyes and trinkets and toys. Pretty little canals cut out of the Dor stream run racing about the town. The borders of Haripur are draped with a voluptuous profusion of jasmine flowers and gardens full of prunes and apricots and mango and mulberry. The cool shades of the gardens and the flowing canals make Haripur a little, poor man's paradise in hot summer. In this illusive town of gardens I myself was a little garden of good features and lively colour. And every one treated me with a spontaneous warmth of feeling. The grocers, the fruit sellers, the confectioners, all welcomed me as a lovely customer. I thought they paid me special attention because I never haggled; and always valued their articles more than they could. How could a cucumber be worth a pice? How could a bunch of grapes be equal in value to a few

burnt copper coins? I always thought and I still think that these things and the service of the shopkeeper is beyond price. Things are priceless. We cannot ever sufficiently pay the price of the surrender of a labourer of his muscular strength in our service of whatever kind, and so on. But I learnt afterwards from them all, when I was about to leave Haripur for good, that their regard for me was more superstitious than spiritual. They told me when I made the purchases from them to start their day they got roaring business the whole day. Such was their invariable experience. And they treated me as a symbol of their luck.

I was tempted by boys older than myself to go out roaming with them as they found my company pleasant, and they tempted me out by the merest trifles. They just promised me a bouquet of roses. The rose is my flower, though I am ever exclusively hers So much was my fondness for roses that I wandered gladly for them from garden to garden. And I came home with them almost like a victor and ornamented my little mud room with my roses. I was made happy when I saw my roses smiling at me. They looked so entrancingly at me from the little brass bowls, the poor accommodation that I could give them.

The school was presided over by a Mohammedan-Christian, a middle-aged man who had risen to the dignity of a head-mastership by slow stages. He was a tall, amiable person who, like the then converts to Christianity or what I should call Churchianity, insisted on the spotless cleanliness of clothes. He advised us that a well-washed homespun was always better than a dirty velvet suit. On account of the English education he had received he held himself in conscious superiority.

The people suspected that Mr. Ghulam Mohi-ud-din, the Christian Headmaster, was in league with missionaries and had the weakness to preach Christianity to the Hindu boys. He was surely afraid of Mohammedans who could not tolerate apostacy. They would kill the boy and the perverter. So he was mighty careful.

These suspicions were confirmed when a high-caste Brahman boy, Shanker by name was missing from Haripur

Two "urpeen missi loks" had come and Shanker was gone. The Headmaster had been many times to them. For a couple of years no trace was found of Shanker. His old grandfather and his mother became almost blind with crying. Great is the distress of parents when their children while alive go like that. After Shanker was adult and able to stand in court and declare legally that he embraced Christianity of his own free will, he was brought back to Haripur with some Christian missionaries. They all encamped in a military camping ground near the garden of Mehta Kuldip. News of Shanker's coming spread like wild-fire. As his people went to see Shanker, he came out in English dress with a sola hat, a pucca brown Sahib made by the tailor. It was for this Sahibism and its hauteur, and not love for Christianity, that apparently Shanker was so tempted. His future life proved the guilt of the Christian missionaries to their entire satisfaction. I only remember the appearance of his grandfather fair as snow, with his grey flowing beard, dressed in spotless white longcloth apparel waiting to see the grandson who would come to him. He must first wait. The missionaries kept all of them waiting as if they were poor farmers waiting for the District Officer who, as it is said, has to keep such people waiting at the door before he will see them. They must all inspire awe, otherwise the hypnotism, their foreign dress and colour and life exercises on the half-wondering and half-enslaved and all terrified Indians, will be lost. The disappointment of the old man, I saw, was acute when Shanker came and stood before him with his hands in the pockets of his English trousers and while he stood thus the old hoary patriarch was shedding tears, and the sun was just setting. The meeting was mechanical. Shanker stood mute and he must have been tutored to those beautiful Christian manners, just as the English officers as they land in Bombay get to know how to be un-English to the Indian and quite English to the Topee-wallas. The grandfather broke the silence, "Go my son, the Sahibs are waiting for you." Shanker had gone and his grandfather looked wistfully at the tent that had devoured his child. This

was the first conversion, a tragedy at Haripur and the Hindu parents dreaded the Christian Headmaster, but they could do nothing. The parents even bore the loss as if death had taken their child away.

So when the Headmaster began paying extra attention to me and when I got to be very friendly with his sons and began staying with them late at night apparently doing my lessons at his house with his boys, rumours about another coming conversion ran thick. The people went and told my mother that she might similarly lose her child. She was a bit alarmed.

One day she gently drew me out in a conversation : "What do you do so late at the Headmaster's house, my boy?"

"Ma, we just read together at night. At exactly nine they get me tea without milk with only a little rasped jaggery, *gur* in place of sugar. And they are so pleased that I have really no objection to take tea with them. To them it seems a good advance on my part to their Christianity. And Ma, I love to sit by Albert the second son of the master, he is so good. I feel excited, and I can study much better with that excitement than at home here. He is really so nice, mother, he helps me in mathematics in which I feel weak. If I come away I go to sleep thinking of him. You know Ma, his upper row of teeth is somewhat protruding above his lower lip and ever since I commenced to love him I think that this protruding set of teeth is the best sign of man's beauty. I wish my teeth were also like his, I wish my nose and cheeks were also like his. He is so good."

Mother said, "Silly boy ! Ah, that brown black boy that came the other day with you with a red muffler ?"

"Yes, Ma, the very same boy."

"My boy, you have gone mad, you are comparing my full moon with someone's black cloud, all so mis-shapen and ugly."

"No, mother, you do an injustice."

"But for what earthly reason do you wish to be like him? See yourself in a mirror first."

"But when I love him, is it not natural that I should be

like him and wish to be him. You love me and your face is like mine. I love him and my face should be like his. Is it not right, mother? I fancy, mother, if it be love I should be exactly like him, otherwise what is love that cannot remould us like our beloveds, if we cannot be so transmuted we only say we love. Why? Our flesh and bones must melt like wax in love? How is it then that I am just like you and you like me?"

"So people are right, you have already turned half a Christian and they have taught you all this."

"No, mother, what do these ignorant villagers know? Mother, I have seen the pictures of Christ with them. The tresses of Christ are long like those of a Sikh. I love his face, it is so noble. This much I feel is good, now and then to name Christ and to remember him is very sweet. I feel its sweetness. I feel some comfort. But to run away from you I cannot do."

My mother laughed and embraced me giving me a big orange to eat. I was so greatly excited by her cares that I ate the whole of it up with seed, bark and all.

"Do not eat the bark," said she.

"No, mother, Albert tells me the orange bark goes in and perfumes the intestines."

I would take out my plush coat and ask Albert to be seated on it on the roof-floor of the school where we sat in the interval to bask in the sun. On winter nights when sitting together I would put my good warm blankets on Albert's knees and take his rougher and worn-out wools myself, so I spent my time in trembling fondness for him and all he did. I aped his gait, his accent and I actually tried to put my upper row of teeth out of my lower lip while talking and I thought in myself that I was thereby made much sweeter to myself.

Of this Haripur life, I still remember the spiritual anguish of a young woman, a goldsmith's wife who lived with us in the same courtyard. Her husband fell ill with Asiatic cholera and there was no hope of his recovery. The good girl mad with despair left her husband and went to the Dharamsala, the "Guru's Door" and began rubbing the sacred dust of the floor with her braids and begged for the

life of her husband the whole day. Her husband recovered. Her intensity was like that of Savitri of old. When she returned home, her moon-like face was covered with the holy dust of the Guru's door, her hair was fullof the same sacred pollen. And she wept bitterly in thankfulness, putting her head on her husband's bosom.

CHAPTER IV

RAWALPINDI

(1893—1895)

I had passed the Anglo-vernacular Middle School examination from the Haripur School when I was twelve years of age. And I had to migrate with my mother and sisters and two brothers from Hazara to Rawalpindi for joining the Matriculation classes in the Mission High School at Rawalpindi.

Its strategic position makes Rawalpindi the largest Frontier British cantonment in India. In the country round about, the Buddhist stupas are seen here and there. Ages mingle here in the memories of its dust. And the child of Pothohar grows unknowingly with the subtle urges of all religions and creeds dissolved in the blood of his soul. Homely sweetness and a long, centuries-long intimacy meets me from the face of rock and river in the land where I was born and where the ashes of my ancestors lie scattered by the wind and the rain, and the dust of my parents mingles with the plough of the farmer in the furrows of the ancient soil, an intimacy which I can find nowhere else—not even in other provinces of the same country. I am, I feel a stranger, an alien in Bengal and Madras. I find my patriotism cannot travel beyond a few little round horizons which have hemmed me in from infancy.

We came and settled at Rawalpindi in a rented red brick house, the brick buildings being something quite new to me and my sisters and brothers. We did not very much take to such houses as they were very ill ventilated and they were suffocatingly closed in by similar surrounding buildings, some of them three storeys high, shutting off sky, light and air. And round us were new people quite unlike those Pathans who were so full of both friendly as well as hostile savagery. These city people, their calls, gossip, smiles, dainty clothes and

winsome manners struck us as very strange. All the merest nothings were made the whole substance of life of the city. The merest shadows were enlarged into eternal truths and indeed charming was the new artificiality as compared to the naive simplicity of the rural life, by way of the change of mental standards.

My eldest sister was married by this time and as her mother-in-law took into her head to make her life miserable, my mother brought her back home as if she was not married. This was against all the decorum of society. The daughters must all bear silent tyranny at their husband's hands, but my mother would not bend. She was quite savage. The society put all the blame on her. So we were not quite happy on her account and I saw my mother and sister many times weeping together.

My younger sister, a paradise of colour and line was rich with maidenly grace and charm and she was coveted by many rich families of the place as a bride for their house. But she had slowly imbibed sad indifference to marriage which was the cause of so much suffering both to her mother and sister. I even as a boy stood in indignation against the social environment that condemned girls to a life-long slavery. And so degraded was the mental outlook on the subject, and so little the provision of intellectual opportunity for the girls to be anything except wives. I read Mill's "Liberty of Women" when I was in the Matriculation classes. So we three sat together tucked up in our beds talking and weeping and laughing. Whenever emissaries came to take my sister away to her husband's place, my mother responded like an angry lioness. Always a fight, a scene. She would say, "Go and tell them if need be I would sweep the floors of a dozen houses and do the scrubbing of the dirty vessels of a dozen more and support my daughter by the sweat of my own brow rather than see her being slowly killed by the silent, bitter and piercing arrow-like words addressed to my daughter by that tyrant of a woman." Thus for years this fierce lady, who though not lettered and educated in that sense had the mind of a modern man-woman. If the conutry had provided any intellectual

opportunity for the girls to be free and self-supporting, my mother would have trained both my sisters for an absolutely independent womanhood. She had wonderful elasticity of mind and openness of heart. Nothing daunted her, she went on in her own way, unbending when she thought she was right. She was now in tears and a moment after in smiles. Her face shone like the sky through the tribulations of her soul after every home-storm that raged so constantly, due to the peevish narrow-mindedness of my father and other difficulties. She was, an unlettered but a cultured lady. She served her guests with all her soul and heart, she nursed the sick, her own her neighbours, or her relatives, ever awake day and night. If trained, my mother would have been an ideal nurse with a blessing and a comforting shadow. An untiring spirit, she helped every one aggressively. Even if people did not wish to trouble her, she said, "No, no, you want this to be done," and she did it. Her love was aggressively active for her neighbours and her fervour was many times misunderstood. Unselfishness is so rare that motives are ascribed to it, its genuine sympathy is valued in pennies. This unholy spirit vexed her, she called it mean. Meanness bored her, and she could sense from very far off the faintest traces of intellectual and other kinds of subtle meanness. She felt deeply hurt when they misunderstood her. And those she served with her life-blood for months at the cost of her health and wealth, she would make her enemies all in a moment. She wiped out so to say, all the traces of any thankfulness that they might feel towards her by her strange harshness. But the reconciliation came when they called for her help again. The best way to please her was to invoke her feelings of doing some service to someone. Evidently she needed no reward from any one for when such time came she was so upset for some little word of worldliness uttered in her presence that she flew into a rage and broke the pot. No one called at her door in vain. Of us children she was omniscient. She would relate to me any unbecoming deed I might have done to someone or someone else to me and say that she was present with me all the day and

she saw me doing such and such a thing. So many times she showed me this power that I thought she knew all about me—this gift of celestial sight would certainly have been developed to an extraordinary extent had she been put in clement surroundings, and had my father been sympathetic. As it was, I think for want of proper environment and facilities, my mother died fighting with the inclemencies of society and the backward mental tendencies of a husband who never knew her worth. On the whole, she lived a heroic life, hating the rich, loving the poor, and fighting for her views of life.

The lot of women all over the world is similar. Men command their love in a hundred subtle ways and society condemns them to a wretched routine of compulsory faithfulness to man. And religion combines with society to call this galling slavery a virtue. In George Meredith's words none of us have yet doubled down Cape Turk.

Even as a school-boy I saw the inner sadness of my sisters. The elder after sometime had to go and live with her husband who was kind to her but much too poor to maintain her and the many children that she bore him. She died at the young age of thirty-five of tuberculosis of the stomach. Her name was Lajan, an incisively critical woman who passed her days in heroically fighting with her slender circumstances.

My younger sister Ganga had to pass through a worse tyranny of marriage with a man of inexplicably brutish tendencies. He many times beat her with his boots. After a few years of wretched married life she died of her first child-birth in the lap of my mother who had gone temporarily insane with the shock of her sudden death. She was giving gentle slaps on her face saying, "O why, stupid girl, do you not take medicine? Here is medicine." I drew my mother away, rebuked her and beat her, saying, "You are slapping a dead child." She fell on the floor crying for her. And she decorated the dead body with the best silks. She parted her tresses with vermillion. She waxed them and combed them smooth. My sister was the Bride. And my mother wept and sang auspicious wedding songs of a mother in

celebration of the wedding of her daughter. My mother was insane. The story of my sisters' suffering has provided me with life-long sorrow at the fate of woman. Man can never be too kind to her. Alas ! men are uniformly cruel, both when they marry her and when they seduce her. Man is responsible for the degradation of woman. I am glad Buddha accepted the dinner of a courtesan, and Lord Christ saved Mary Magdalene. I am proud of the Sikhism of Guru Nanak who made women fight and die side by side with man. More than Buddhism, for the first time Guru Nanak admitted women to equal rights in his Discipleship. For the first time in human history he was the Prophet who gave them freedom and an unconditional equality of social franchise. And I am eternally sick of the Brahmanical mental barbarism which produces the wholly inequitable social construction in which woman has had to suffer for centuries and she is still suffering. The Sikhs never understood the Guru, they are still mentally conquered by subtle Brahmanism. How refreshing it is to find some Hindus of Bombay making of Manu Simriti a bonfire in defence of the equality of woman with man.

Though we had our sorrows, just little human sorrows, our mother's natural gaiety and her robust hope akin to that of Browning, "God's in His Heaven and all's well with the world," was ever victorious. And mother would go to the market and come with her veil-cloth folds full of fruits, and she would put them before us and make us rob her. That of which we could rob of her came to our share. She would fill our souls with laughter. And we would all laugh and laugh till our sides could bear it no longer. Our bones actually ached with merriment. My mother spent profusely, and she was through my father's month's earning before the month was half through. We had good clothes, fruits, and mutton and puddings twice a week. And so great was the glitter of our joy that many a rich family was made ridiculous by our life. And they would be jealous of our exuberance. And they called us extravagant. They came and advised us to be economical, and save something for a rainy day and all that nonsense, but my mother made them small by her light hearted

replies. What matters if one is slightly wetted in a rainy day.

And we were all the happiest and brightest spots in all communal gatherings where on wedding night festivities a lot of singing under the stars was done to the accompaniment of the drums. The girls and young boys and women of all ages gathered and sang and composed music. On all such occasions, the spontaneous lyrical spirit of the woman-soul fascinated me. I unconsciously absorbed the music of it all. And I know that I stole the Promethean sparks of my life-fervour from the soul of the Pothohar girls. All the girls of my community loved me, perhaps I was sparkling. Perhaps they were much too kind. Even now they love me and I think it is perhaps because of my natural friendship for them and my soul-felt sympathy with the lyrical tragedies of their earthly lives. Or perhaps I have a woman's soul though a man's body, and they instinctively know of it.

Once when I was about thirteen I saw for the first time a drama played by the Rawalpindi Favourite Theatrical Club, a society of amateurs. One Teja Singh then a beardless, handsome Sikh youth with deep black fairy eyes was then the sweetest singer and the best actor of the place. He had a feminine face shadowed by an exquisite arched Persian eyebrows, much too lovely for a boy and he always played the female roles. On that particular day he was playing Damyanti in "Nala and Damyanti" which was dramatised by the poet of this popular Club in Urdu, interspersed with poignant poems and songs. As the curtain rose on the palace scene, Damyanti was seen talking of love to the White Swans, my heart fluttered with new sensations that I had never felt before. I did not know the secrets of a theatrical Club and I thought Damyanti was a Princess of exquisite beauty. Everything about her struck me as a revelation of Heaven. I was charmed. I thought of going away from my mother and home to be near her somehow. My heart began aching and I could not rest without seeing Damyanti on the stage and when I could not I passed the interval thinking about her. It was as if I was transported to the realm of an Arabian Night's fairy. The drama affected

me fatally. Vain longings for Damyanti possessed me. I would eat and drink little and pass my days revolving the scenes I had seen and the Princess of my mind before my mind's eyes. My mother saw I was losing weight and I had lost appetite. She fell upon me, "O foolish boy, what is the matter with you. Tell me truly ; you know I know your mind. There is something wrong with you."

"Nothing particular, mother."

So she took me to the physician of our town and he declared my liver was upset. I seldom missed my chance of going to the theatre and I felt better when I went. I ate better, I slept better. My mother must have noticed this.

My mother called her brother who was living at Dera Khalsa the village near Rawalpindi and told him that I was under the fascination of the stage, and that I should be freed from the effects of the strange phantasmagoria.

"How can that be done?" enquired my uncle.

"I know my child," said my mother, "Whenever he gets a glimpse of some perfection, he grows mad. In this world in a dream or in an illusion one does see the section of a broken arch of perfection and the rest is supplied from within one's own self and one is thus irresistibly fascinated. He pines for a higher memory of his own past. Just take him one night behind the curtains and show him all those actors in their personal private hideousness."

As soon as I saw Damyanti again on the stage, my face shone like a flame of fire, and I suddenly cried, "Uncle, uncle!" I said, "It is superb. The best is that Damyanti. I wish to be with her, I wish I were an actor on the stage. I wish to go and kiss her robe. Her voice is the voice of an angel. She surely does not belong to this earth of ours. Isn't it so uncle? How superhuman is her gait and that entrancing swing of her queenly dress. Her pain of separation from Nala in the forest is godly."

After the play, my uncle took me to the ward-robe room where they were undressing and washing. And he introduced me to Teja Singh saying, "This is your Damyanti."

"No", cried I, "this cannot be she!"

Teja Singh shook hands with me, and embraced me saying, "I am Damyanti. Why? did you like me very much?"

"No you are not because she was taller than you are."

"It is the clothes and the stage lights that make me Damyanti. Be sure I am Damyanti as you saw me."

"No. No!" said I and wept bitterly.

Teja Singh again embraced me and began dressing for Damyanti and when he had completely dressed himself he came and said, "Look, here I am again your Damyanti."

"So you are", said I and asked my uncle to take me home.

At least the Damyanti of my soul was a myth of my mind nowhere to be found in the real world. And I found so were many other things. I was many times deceived like this, and was many times undeceived, but unlike other people I never grew wise either before or after the event. It has been my habit to drop the so-called experience of life and start afresh everywhere like a new man come to this world.

I was peculiarly fascinated by the Pothohar Bride. As she shook the red-lacquered bangles on her arms, her youthful beauty shook my very soul. Her aroma of innocence, her henna-dyed youth, her passionate gaze, her rustling gold-starred silks, her smiles hiding unutterable things of the soul all combined to charm me. I found I loved every bride, and always at anyone's wedding I wished to be near the bride. I knew her so well. So every one would fain let me be near her. I loved to hear her bird-like twitters. The jingling of the little silver anklets on her ankles chimed in my very heart. A thousand mingled odours of *mehndi* and cloves and cardamoms being chewed in mouth beat like music on my senses. Many times intoxicated by these voluptuous scents of amorous youth, I took up the veils of the bride, and put my head against hers, covering my head also with her veil and gazing into her eyes. She was always kind enough to gaze into mine, and I quivered as if I was stealing into someone else's Garden of Roses. Many a time I dared a little more, and grazed my face against hers, and felt an exquisite bliss stealing over my soul.

CHAPTER V

LAHORE

(1898-1900)

THE DAY CAME when I had to leave my mother and go away to Lahore for my College studies, having done my "little go" of the Punjab University at the age of fourteen. I felt I was a fledgling who was ready for a flight. "Go my son", said my mother with tears, "we are very poor, and you be the bread-winner of the family. They say after reading at Lahore one becomes a big government official at whose doors wait many men. I wish you, my son, to be a good straight man. Hurt no one's heart. Hurting others is the only sin and living with God the only virtue in this life. Always remember your poor mother."

Strange were my first impressions of Lahore. Though I find those and my later ones are somewhat mixed up. It was full summer, the hot Lahore summer, when I arrived. Panting for air, lying bare on a wet palm leaf mat, fan in hand and imagining syrups of *Keora* and *Bed Mushak*, I would pass my night tossing from side to side, now dosing, now waking till after midnight I could have a wink of good sleep. Early in the morning, I used to put my half-scorched body under the lazy and reluctant flow of the municipal waterpipe and hurriedly clothing my clay somehow I used to hasten away to College. I did not use a towel, the water was drained off by a rapid passing of the hand. And the wet clothes soon dried on my body. My first residence was in a narrow street of Lahore and after some months I shifted to the College hostel. I still remember the syrups of *Keora* and *Bed Mushak* marked the only moments of life to me.

I then wondered why the educational Institutions were made in such a hell of a place but later on I understood that such is our *Qismat.*

Heat, hell heat, the crowding of bullock carts laden with grain and merchandise and with municipal refuse, creeking of clumsy cart wheels, the "ho, ho" of drivers, the Punjabis cursing each other in the filthiest Billingsgate, the flying culinary odours from the open air booths of the Lahoree confectioners and bakers all tumbled and jumbled along in the same street. The bustle of Shahalmi Gate, the smell of pepper and ginger and salt and coriander being weighed to the crowds of customers, the hawker's yells, the haggler's discussions, the transactions of the shopkeepers and the confused noise of everything called "business", the suffocating dirt and filth of the streets of Lahore city proper, were only relieved by the occasional sight of girls and boys on the roofs of the houses flying kites. I must admit it was so secretly entrancing to feel without much seeing the beautiful women sitting behind the window chink veils and at times to meet some furtive glances of these veiled women peeping out of these window-chinks at the outer world.

Most delightful was the thronging of women in their best dresses in the street temples of Hindu gods and goddesses, and beautiful indeed was the sight of their promenading round and round the little temples, sweeping the very souls in spreading silk gowns of deep blue, red and yellow colours. The very rustling sounds of silk were exceedingly mysterious to me. I purposely went to be tossed about in strange hilarity by the veils that fluttered in the air. The briskness of those lovely crowds was life-giving. I remember once I fell on a young woman, having lost my foothold in the flood of excitement. And she did not help me to get up, I got up myself. And when I looked up she was angry, frowning at me. I smiled and she began saying many bitter things to me, she rebuked me in unmeasured language. I still smiled. She again threw red sparks of the fire of her anger. By this time a few more came. They all asked me why I had molested her? "Molest her?" said I, "I am only a looker on from the wild Pothohar, what kind of girls are the Lahore girls?" I said in astonishment.

"Foolish girl, abusing such a lovely boy! Foolish," all said to her as if blaming her for abusing me. "No"

said I, "she can abuse me as I slipped." The couplet of a Persian poet seemed appropriate when she had so abused me, "The bitter word, O Beauty, coming from thy honeylips sets off so well thy loveliness."

They all burst into laughter and I took leave. But before I left, I looked to see if my enemy also thought of me. And I saw her looking at me from the corner of her eyes, almost sorry why she so abused me. We never met again. Only I still remember that last glance of her at me from the corners of her eyes.

The streams of men and women going to the river Ravi early in the morning, and in greater numbers on some special day of the month was another sight of human processions that delighted me. All went with slow and tardy pace, their steps still drowsy and faltering, but when they returned they were muttering "Ram, Ram," and some livelier ones were reciting the Japji of Guru Nanak. There was a lightness of soul and springiness of step in the women pilgrims of Ravi, and I thought there was more life in the Lahore women. The men of Lahore always struck me as a stupid lot.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's marble Baradari with Hazuri, that dainty twelve doored structure nesting in the green apron-edge of the Shahi Mosque was the place I liked most. In the west of Lahore, on that side of the city, there was some verdure and a few flowers gazing at what it had been and what it was now. A little below is the monument in memory of Guru Arjan Dev, who bathed there for the last time and passed away.

For me, a Sikh boy, these places had memories which made me spiritual for some moments. The rest of Lahore city was flowerless, lightless, reeking still with the blood of the Sikh tragedy ; there was massacre and torture of the Sikh in every particle of its walled enclosures.

In this historic muck of Lahore there was but one shining sight: the new Bride walking in its streets in her bridal clothes interested me. I thought Wazir Khan's Golden Mosque in Dabbi Bazar was a Hindu Bride gorgeously dressed for her wedding. To make a mosque full of the music of architecture such as this, almost humanised by decoration is the sign of the conquest of the

dream of India over the semitic rocky hardness of Islamic piety.

The Hindu Bride in her beautiful apparel and decoration was the only piece of relief against the humdrum dread of the daily life of Lahore. Her hands dyed with henna, her ivory bangles passionately clinging to her arms, the tinkle of her ornaments as she walked, her hair bedecked like that of the tresses of night bejewelled with stars, all symbolised some secret sacred life of the city. In the Lahore streets, however, one rarely met young women. In a night it seemed they became old and bent. Poor Anarkali's tomb did cast its shadow on Lahore, and one almost felt that every Lahoree husband was a little Akbar and the women of Lahore were buried alive in the high walls of Lahore for one stray furtive glance of life.

In spite of these drawbacks, there was an artistic delicacy in the life of the then Lahore that has all gone now. People tried to come out of the ancient walls and they did, and by so doing they fell into the ghostly grip of the spectre of business that covers with smoke and filth cities like Bombay and London. The old perfumes of *Keora* and *Bed Mushak* have flown, and the old temple fairs are gone. The life of the Lahoree has left its old city street where strangers were welcomed by the generous women, and has gone to sit in formal stiffness in badly fitted imitations of the western drawing-rooms. The drawing room—dusty, oily, clammy, hot, is an oddity.

On the whole, I think the superstitions of worshipping stones and *seetlas* were more artistic, the flirtation of those old colours of life with the passing breezes than these Parsi Saris, powders and paints, the stuffy, dusty drawing rooms, idle turning of the pages of modern prayer books without faith, and without the old love burning invisibly in the heart of woman for man. The modern Lahore has become a city of dolls which run about and mimic games of the Paris and London streets.

To have some solid virtue, the vice of the people also needs to be indigenous. It is the product of ages. There is virtue in life which no inorganic virtues imported in shiploads can substitute without the disaster that has overtaken the Lahore of today.

CHAPTER VI

A Few Memories

The Kids

AS A CHILD, I was fond of kids. I ran after them, took them by the new horns that were just coming out and they stood aiming both of them into my nostrils. But we always parted in peace, the kids shaking their heads and frisking and I having had the satisfaction of pulling them by their horns. And I put a string round the neck of my kid and took him to browse among the young shoots of the newly germinated wheat. And I went from field to field of the village we lived in, and no one complained about these small thefts from their crop. And it always happened that my fattest kids were killed in honour of our guests, or in snowy winter, when we were all shut indoors, for ourselves. I now feel I had no conscientious feeling then for them, no notion of justice was inculcated into me with sufficient clarity to indicate that the killing of kids for food was not humane. Pure justice therefore is such an impossibility in this world and life, that total self-elimination alone approaches it. I am now forty steven and I feel one should abstain from animal food as the animals are so much like us, but we are, all the same, as cannibalistic in this respect and in many others as the primitive man. The Civilisation the great ones have been seeking came and passed with their minds, and for us to get one genuine and even fugitive feeling of that kind takes years.

This does not mean that feeling when genunine can differentiate between the kids I reared, and the carrots they dig out from earth. We eat love-nourished things. We are driven to such contradictions of thought and feeling. Life is thus an impossible thing, and one fails to realise the consistency of feeling from a physical view-point

When we are biting at red-blooded carrots or when eating a leg of mutton we are as if having only green peas just roasted on a red fire. One fails to find in the wretched hungry man be he a pure vegetarian, that superb delicacy of human feeling with all its grandeur that comes to one when he is well fed and properly nourished be it on beef or pork. A beef-eating Swiss may be more humane than a pulse-eating selfish Bania of India, fond of hoarding money. I admit it was foolish for those who fed me to have killed my pets to feed me with, but with what else could they have fed me if I were to be fed at all. The nobility of feeling in spite of my Buddhist compassion for animal life rises clearly like the peak of Fujiyama up above these plains of melancholy details.

A flowing River.

Romantic as is the country of Gandhara, the Hazara and the most of the North West Frontier of India, of all things a flowing river or a pebbly hill-torrent always excited my imagination. I still believe when the sun sets, the rivers halt to have rest. Life is as the river in flow. Whence? whither? Asking no question, looking neither to the right, nor to the left, but with the direction fixed, passing on and on, dashing forward. The leaping waves and the pecking of the waves by the tiny long-tailed black birds whisking their tails and crying on the waves with joy reminded me of the wandering Psalm-singers that go about awaking people early in the morning in the streets of the cities of the East. 'They filled their beaks, the millions of birds and the waters of the rivers never grew less,' says the Psalm-singer, and great is the abundance of the true Giver. By giving away of knowledge and beauty, the divine treasure is never reduced. The Infinite passes out of the Infinite. Glory becomes new and newer every day. Great hearts build no walls of reservations, they cast their blood and bones into flowing rivers for a universal feast. To sit on the banks of these rivulets and to build houses of sand was the artistic game of the village children. And we tried to make ropes of sand and bind the waves and hold them to ourselves like the garlands of the white

flowers of water—such were our ambitions.

The flour mill.

The flour mill was a new universe to me. Entering a stone roofed structure, on the way side bank of the river, I sat there wondering how the two huge stones moved and the white flour flew about. The miller's every hair was white, his face was powdered white and though a young man he looked like a grey old grandpa. The women came with baskets of wheat, and gave it to the miller and went away. Men came and left their bags of wheat with him. He would take his quota for milling and deal with every one as his or her turn came, strictly in order of their coming. He was a hard looking man, the miller. He never played with us. Whenever we tried to enter and jeer at him, he would raise his stick and drive us out like so many pigs. Afraid of him and his stern face full of frowns and his terrifying ghostly shape, we ran out. I now know how foolish it was for us to be afraid of him, but we were afraid. The strict justice with which he dealt with those graceful women of the village who came, without any preference or pity for them, had made him a hard hearted fellow, I thought. I always asked my mother why was he not kind like her, and she always replied because the miller is wise.

The red earthen pitchers.

A caravan of women going down the river banks to fill their empty pitchers and coming home with their pitchers full was a sight, that I can never forget. I sat on the road and idly saw them passing and heard them talking to each other. My lips parted even as a child while looking at them. And I could sit quite still for hours gazing into their eyes, as they passed casting strange love-lit looks askance, and strewing mystery of love on their way. Life at its best is caught in their red earthen pitchers that moved on like a river. Was Goethe thinking of this attitude of non-attached look at life as it passes? And what is the sin of passion, the most full-blooded, if it

mingles through eyes on the way and lifts up the veils of the soul of those who gaze into each other's eyes and think kindly forever and ever of each other. The wind may blow, the roses may bloom, the perfumes may mingle in utmost freedom as the women pass laden with empty pitchers swinging in their arms or with their pitchers full of water from their beehives to the river or from the river to their beehives. I now think all true art is sitting on the roadside idly watching them pass.

Wonderful indeed is it to contemplate that both Christ and Krishna, the prophets of Passion sat watching them at the wells of Palestine or on the banks of the Jamuna, and they came to them giving up their tasks of drawing of waters from the wells or the river, and forgetting themselves in the contemplation of the Divine before them in flesh.

The blacksmith.

I stood before his furnace at Abbottabad, at Haripur and watched him shape the red iron. This shaping of hard material at that high temperature struck me as wonderful. Out of a piece I took him, he made me a little sword. I thought he must be a king to have made a shining sword for me. I felt joyous as if he had conferred military rank upon me. I walked home strutting as the military officers do.

The parade ground.

I can never dissociate myself from the parade ground, the glistening sabres of the red-jacketted soldiers who marched past their officers on the parade ground. I went and mixed with them when the soldiers came and rested in the camping grounds on the wayside. And when I saw them playing the drum and pipe and marching on an expedition to the Black Mountain to punish the free recalcitrant people of the unknown frontiers of the Hazara District, who killed an English officer, I felt like becoming a soldier and marching with them. And I always went to see the soldiers pass on the road to Abbottabad. I never could dream that those glistening

sabres kill men as we did kids. If they were not to kill, and only convert people to the truths of God and brotherhood! How fine indeed is the spectacle of soldiers in uniform. I now think that the Divine Power has also a martial tinge in His mercy, and that martial tinge is as beautiful as that shining steely colour of the glistening sabres. The Tommies and the Gorkhas never terrified me, if at all, a subedar or two said, "What a fine boy" and passed.

In imitation of what I saw, in small villages where we wandered, I gathered my soldiers and taught them. "Right, left, right, left," and made them march past me as if I was a king seated on old Solomon's throne of a slab of stone projecting out of a village wall made of mud.

The gypsy cup.

Upon the ridge of Mohri Wad Bhain in the Hazara District, we lived in the village of the same name. The Revenue officers would come on tour, and astonish me by their greatness. One day my father and I and a revenue officer were seated on a hill, and he began talking of me. My father took my copy book and showed him the rounded bellies of the Arabic alphabet I had written and he was much pleased. The officer was rolling out of the sands at the same time with the end of his stick a tiny wooden cup just as the Indian jugglers use for the pebble trick. It seems to have been left by wandering gypsies. He picked it up and gave it to me as a prize for my good caligraphy. I greedily took up the little naughty cup that had deserted the juggler's bag with the idea of winning its freedom from there. He had got all his fine-lacquer polish rubbed off. I thought he was then almost weeping with the pain of those bruises of life. But I took him up whispered to him, "It will be all right now." So he became my slave, and gave up his freedom of his own accord. So I fancied. I had that cup turned and lacquered, and I put my choicest little trinkets in it. I knew they were glass beads, but I whispered to the cup to be quiet as I told him they were diamonds. The poor cup believed and was happy. When the cup glowed with life in the little clay toy of a chest, my sisters

wished to have him. I would not give the gypsy cup away saying he will die. But one day when I was not wary they gave me a handful of wild berries and in exchange took it from me. And one day as we all sat on a jutting rock up on a hilly slope, the gypsy cup suddenly rolled away and fell on a stone on a road below, and a donkey laden with grain just put its hoof on it and the gypsy cup was broken. We all followed like a rescue party but it was too late. The cup was broken into pieces. My sisters cried with me and we gathered all the pieces, made a fine little grave and buried the gypsy cup. I still remember all the idle tears that we then shed in his memory.

The falling snow.

If we got snow to play with, we were very happy. I have an instinctive superstition that snow makes races white. But my theory was falsified as I looked at our buffalo next morning. My mother had been melting snow and giving it to her to quench her thirst, for water could not be had for her, and in spite of so much eating of snow she was as black as ever. So I talked to my sisters and changed my theory with their consent. It is those born of the Light that are white, those born of night are dark. The sisters made my philosophy complex, when they gave me a cup of white milk that the buffalo had yielded. So this white colour is deeper than skins. The black may yield white products and the white may give black products. I confessed defeat and gave up my wild philosophising. The flakes of snow falling, falling from Heaven like milk-white locusts cover every tree on the hills. And this sight—the whole country blossoming white always filled my eyes with a strange fantastic delight. The mountains are white. The impurities of our foot paths have also been buried out of sight. All is pure. We count our stains I now think too seriously, Heaven's grace makes all white in a winking.

The falling rain.

The rain whenever it came from Heaven was like

meeting an old friend of mine and it always excited the best in me. But it was never so sweet, as when my sisters and I sat in the verandah of a house, looking at the bubbles in the little ponds of rain water in our courtyard. And our mother sat turning her spinning wheel and singing to us her Pothohar rain songs. We thought the rain was the ancient monk that blessed everybody and counted no one's faults or sins. After all, all things are created of joy and in the joy of the Creator, there can be no place for sins and sorrows. Those who know of Him are ever happy.

The stream bank.

The hill stream lays a bed of white soft sand in the quiet places of her heart. As a boy, I used to frequen tthese places, strip myself bare of clothes, and sit on it, throwing my head on my knees, my long, skipping hair falling over my eyes and the sun caressing them with his long thin fingers. I looked, sitting in the sun like a young Hindu Sadhu with golden bunches of my hair. Only the Sadhu must be too heavily burdened by his philosophy and the vows and sorrows of the world, and I was happy like a chirping canary bird. I would put my legs into the flowing water and feel some hidden ones touched me. I quite believe there are maids living in the waters, they rise as dreams and love the beautiful bathers in the hill streams. Certainly the hill streams are haunted by these nymphs. As the waters flow down, and are laden with the mud and dirt of the plains, the nymphs fly away like swans up towards the sources. The death by drowning of poets like Shelley, Swami Rama Tirath of the Punjab, may after all be love-affairs of the deep. Who knows?

Our green parrots.

My mother was fond of the parrot as a pet. And twice we saw the parrot came to her without her seeking. Once when we were living at Mohri Wad Bhain towards the Gullies of the Hazara District, a parrot one day came and sat on her shoulder while she was embroidering the

madder-dyed red cloth for my sister's dowry. And she gently caught it, gave it raisins and pudding to eat, and the parrot was another little baby she had to feed. And she got a cage made for it, and in a few days the parrot began talking to her. The mystery of the coming of the parrot to my mother deepened, when again years after, when the old parrot had died, another came to her at Rawalpindi in a similar way.

My First Primers.

I do not know why I was very fond of my little primers with alphabets in Arabic and Punjabi and English. There was a delight in knowing the alphabets that I never found afterwards in books. I wish I had kept on with the alphabet. Each was so similar in shape and so different, so mysteriously giving round shapes to my little mouth. And then to know them by writing without end till they became a very part of my soul. I am not in agreement with those fine intellectual writers on art and style and other perfect things, that repetition is tedious and inartistic. In striking friendships whether with the alphabet, or with persons, it is the repetition of an endearment, a fear of losing them that solidifies the ties. The more we repeat, the more we become alive.

I now realise what my beloved Master Guru Nanak says, 'This universe is a letter.' All objects are *Akhars*, Alphabets or words. And the Name of the Guru whom we know, see, and touch, and sense, and believe in, is the only Reality of Godhead or the indwelling Creator, Soul of the Universe. The best of our spiritual aspirations therefore resumed, both as the way and the end in the letter of the Guru's Name. Repetition then of the Beloved's Name is like learning the language of Heaven, of Love. And it is by repetition that the shapeless matter of us is shaped into a beautiful soul. The stone knows not, the chisel of the craftsman knows not, the hand also possibly is ignorant, but the mind of the craftsman works, the chisel chips off the stone, and there comes out the face of the Buddha. The creative repetition is the technique of love's remembrance. The recalling of the face of the

Beloved out of nothing like a baby crying for his mother when she is gone away, is all creative repetition which imparts life without our minds ever realising it, till something happens and inspiration floods us.

The child with the primer is the picture of the Saint of Simrin. Love of God is saying aloud "A, A, A," and filling one's inner mind with the sound.

It is like filling a pitcher full of water with rubies by throwing letters of His Name down to one's being one by one, till the subliminal mind is filled. The outer mind then can be safely directed from within. The nectarian floods engulf the man.

The best of saints tells me now that what shade and light is to the painter, what chiselling is to the sculptor, "Naming Him" is to the Saint of Simrin. Imagination, the only real sense that binds us to the Truth, and is the only inner sense of religion, is activated by "Naming Him." And no one can name Him, unless the Guru so decrees. They are absolutely right. As a child, I did not know the first letters of English A, nor of the Arabic Alif. I was introduced to them. I was taught. People say this is not all Truth. Truth transcends the teacher. Who denies? But what my teacher is to me, the child, no other truth can be so personal.

It is still a great sight to me: the children going to school, the children repeating their lessons, and repeating their alphabets to themselves.

Our Tinni.

My mother's spiritual kindness is seen in her taking animals under her care, as she took us. She kept a little bulldog for me and before us all, her children, she fed the little pup with milk, made a cotton-padded coat of red for him and called him Tinni. To me it was so wonderful how Tinni began crouching at her feet, and waving his tail, as she went out and came in. We children knew no higher providence beyond our mother, nor did our Tinni. And it was not only when I was a kid of five or six at Abbottabad that she was kind to animals, but a little time even before her death, I remember, she had

pets. All her life she had them. *Lain*, a brown little dog slept under her bed at Dehra Dun. Her pets looked up to her. This instinctive kindness to animals was certainly a factor in her training of us, though in the ordinary way, she was an unlettered woman. To have been bred up with her parrots, her dogs, was a privilege and few teachers know how good it is to be living from day to day in that spontaneous sympathy with birds and animals.

Our Cup of water and a bowl of bajra.

As Wordsworth recalls a glory that is gone, I recall a sympathy with the sparrows that is gone from the homes of the Punjab. We have become too busy in sordidness. My mother kept every morning as an act of her daily worship, a red-coloured terracota half-baked cup full of fresh water and a bowl of the same material full of *Bajra* and *Kangni* for the sparrows that came every dawn and chirped on the eaves of her house. I think she infused me with the exquisite poetry of this act for all my life.

The horse.

My father being a petty revenue officer was always on horse-back, measuring matured areas and assessing revenue. The horse to us children was a winged glory that brought our father home. He had large blue glass beads garlanding his neck as it arched in an exquisite curve, standing in the centre of our courtyard thumping the ground with his hooves demanding to be caressed, to be given a little jaggery and the two seers of oats. We all, sisters and brothers, crowded round the horse and some of us embraced his long neck and hung by it, and others went and caught his tail. He was so gentle that he did not mind our teasing him.

From my early childhood, the horse and the rider fitted in like a picture painted in the sky. From the distant horizon also came our guests riding on horses and they went away disappearing right before our staring eyes over the distant horizon, riding on horses. All these

things still in my mind partake of a mystery that fills me with wonder. Whither they went ? Whence they came? Is it not all a philosophical coming and going, not real, not real for we meet and part !

The cow and the calf.

A little white calf was just then born. It could hardly stand upon its legs. It trembled while standing like a terrified child. It fell on earth from some high Heaven. It was hurt. It was a stranger. And the cow began licking it, and power came to the limbs of the calf. By the secret charm flowing from the soul of the cow, with each separate lick she gave, the calf stood up. This is certainly faith. And the udders were full, and in the wilderness of this world, there is milk for the new born calf. And if it tries to hurt the mother, the mother cow feels blessed, soothed. No Yogi ever enjoyed his fancied tear of ecstacy so much, as the cow almost sleeping away in ecstatic calm and half closing her eyes, feels when giving milk to her calf. In the animal world, perhaps the purest image of the Madonna and Christ is the cow and the calf. To be lying round about the cow's manger, to be placing a piece of salt before her to lick, to be bringing a few soft tufts of fresh grass for her to chew, to be making up a big bowl of oil cake for this animal monk of absolute renunciation of self was to us children a school. I now see it. Our mother made us help her to feed her cow.

And I gazed and wondered why the calf cries when the cow goes out for grazing ? Why does the cow keep looking back all the while? There on the turf, why does she lift her ears, and her face up and look in the direction of our house? Does she still hear the low murmur of her calf? And how she comes running home when she is left to meet her calf.

How can Semitic and Aryan races be truly cultured, when they kill the fatted calf for their guests, and in countries where the mother cow also goes under the treacherous knife of the butcher. To kill so kind an animal is to kill saints to feed the cruel vultures with their flesh.

Washing the Feet.

I read my Bible afterwards. But I knew long before that when the guests come, we had to take up our brass vessels full of water and wash the feet of our guests. Sometimes we only poured water and the guests washed their hands and feet. But we all sisters and brothers loved to stand in attendance on them. We paid them the reverence due to gods. Their arrival gave us joy, and their going away made our eyes full of tears. The kind ones who came also felt a similar affection for us.

The Fast of the New wheat.

My mother took a few barley or wheat grains and germinated them in a clay pot, and lighted lamps before it for seven days and seven nights. She called it lighting lamps to the goddess of the harvests of barley and wheat. It must have been once a communal prayer and fast for the sowing of winter crops. On the seventh day, she took the plants to the stream and floated them on the waves. All the virgins of the village were then invited by her. They came. And she with her own hands washed their little bare feet, and bejewelled their foreheads with a vermillion mark and gave them seats of honour, as she began singing the hymns to gods and served them with sweet milk and boiled rice. This feast of the virgins. I still remember and the classic poetry of such acts still impassions my soul.

Karva Chauth.

Men who wished to enlighten people have swept away in sweeping the old superstitions, the whole romance of the Punjab life. Dust now flies and fills our mouths, and with our superstitions has departed our lyrical joy of daily life. Karva Chauth was the fast of the wedded women for a whole day, and the vow of the fast was made to hang on the slender thread of a beautiful story. It is related thus: A newly wedded sister of many brothers kept a love-fast. Her husband had gone away. She was pining

for him in separation. Her brothers knew not the pang of her soul, they only knew their sister was starving. They could not endure her physical privation, knowing not, how lyrically strung was her soul in love. They remonstrated with her. She told them she would break her fast when the moon came up in the sky. It was the dark fortnight. The moon would not come till early next morning. The whole night their sister must fast. They were impatient. Quietly they went away and on the distant horizon, behind a high mountain, they set a whole forest on fire. And they came and told their sister, "Behold the moon is rising now." She broke her fast of love. So all wedded women must keep a fast of love that day and then break it as the moon rises. As the moon rises, the wedded women of the village assemble in their scarlet dresses, their very best silks, and hold a very pretty ceremony. Their shining plates are laden with nuts and honey, and they keep bowls of metal below them, and they let the plates circulate being passed on from one woman to the other, all sitting in a circle. As the plates go round, there is a delicate jingle of bowls and plates and they sing the songs of love. The red lacquered ivory bangles on the wrists of the new brides, and their glimmering dresses, their shining plates, and the moon shining above—all this composition made a very superb moment in the lives of the village wives. They were gathered all by themselves, congratulating each other on their felicities.

The new moon.

The prophet Mohammed did an extremely poetic act in making the crescent and the star the symbol of faith. But my mother knew naught of it, nor did we. But every new moon, as the crescent came up, she quietly went out either to the crossing of the village paths or on her roof and saw the new moon. And then she called us all up. She had a few gold threads in her hand which she threw up in air for the moon, and tossed a few others as offerings, and asked us to look up at the new moon. We, seeing the moon used to say, "Auspicious look, mother!"

And she replied to each one of us, "Auspicious to you." Thus we were reared by the unlettered woman in the love of the moon. The sky too in many ways entered into our infant lives and all things were made to give us children the greatest joy of the day and night.

The stars.

A story was told us of the Pole Star. We were told it is the devotee Dhruva. Our mother related the story to us how a man became a star that is fixed. Dhruva was the little child of an Indian king. The mother of Dhruva was a noble, saintly woman. She did not much care for the pomp of thrones, or for the sharing with her husband of the glories of his empire. She was spiritual, large and ecstatic, her own ecstacy secluded her from all vulgar engagements of the rich. She neglected the functions of a Queen and lived the inner life of the soul. She was lost to herself and to her husband. Seeing this, the king took another beautiful woman of the kingdom to be his Queen, and he was infatuated with her charms. She began sitting on the same throne with him and ruling the State for him. He began neglecting his noble Queen. The child Dhruva who was about five years of age, went to the court and up to the throne and sat in the lap of his step-mother. She was jealous as she had no child of her own. She gave Dhruva a smart slap and said, "If you wished to come and sit in my lap on this throne, you ought to have been born of my womb." And saying this she threw the child away very cruely. Dhruva went weeping to his mother and told her the whole story.

"How do these kings get thrones, mother?"

"My child, they love God and get thrones," said the mother.

"Tell me how to love God, mother? I would have my own throne, not this one of my father, where there is so much pain about."

"You are too young my child," said the Queen, taking the child in her lap, wiping his tears, caressing his face and kissing him profusely.

"No, tell me how to get to God?"

"You are too young, my child."

"No, tell me, mother. I will go wherever He be and love Him."

"Go to the woods then and think of Him. He will come to thee, my child, of Himself. He responds to love."

Dhruva went to the woods and thought of Him. God came. "What is your wish child?" said He to him. "Give me first a song in my throat that I may sing of Thee." Having got the song from God, he sang His praise. And it is due to his great devotion that he has now got that high throne in the sky.

"Do you see, my children, that shining Star in the North? There it moves not. Round Dhruva go in worship those seven stars. They are Seven Saints. All those who do great acts, become stars like Dhruva. Up above are the great thrones that are given to the devotees of God."

In this cheerful way, that unlettered woman taught us astronomy. I still think of Dhruva and the seven stars. The story of my mother seems to be full of deeper truth than the names the modern astronomer gives to them. We, ever since, in hot summer, love to sleep on our open roofs in the plains of the Punjab, and we open and shut our eyes to fill our little bosoms with the burning glory of Heaven. When a child I had a secret urn in which I kept these stars as my toy pearls, and, grew proud of this great celestial wealth. And I still dream of my old wealth and feel vain like a very rich man even when my shoe is torn, and my shirt all threadbare.

The weaver.

At Haripur when I was in the middle classes, I first made the acquaintance of the weaver who lived just outside our door. For the first time then I saw the pit, the loom and the shuttle. I saw the weaver-women making up the loom, starching the threads, and I saw the weaver at work. How threads broke and how dexterously he mended them. How he put red silk threads at the borders, and how with his feet on the treadle, he threw the shuttle catching the broken red threads of silk between his lips.

There were the stories of the weavers told to us. And surely, as told in the folklore, they were innocent craftsmen who knew nothing more of this world than weaving garments for it. I always sat by them, watching them at work with my mouth agape.

The potter.

At Haripur, the house of the potter was near by us. And I used to go to him to buy little lamps for the Diwali. The Diwali was a great night for us. They said the king Ramchandra had come home from his exile and his war with the kings of Ceylon. The victor was to be welcomed home. All homes must be illuminated. So busily that day we put hundreds of lamps in rows on our roof, on our doors, on every wall, and light them till late at night. So it is the potter who gave us lamps for the Diwali. He gave us red earthen pitchers to keep our well water cool in summer. He gave us toys of clay. And it was a rare delight for me to sit by him and see him bring forth shapes out of chaos. He is the creator of life in the lifeless. If lamps were not living, why could there be so much joy in the lighting of them. The midnight companion of the student was the same quietly burning lamp. Poetic indeed is the legend that a Queen saw herself in the mirror at night, when her lamp spoke to her of various secrets. Carlyle, too, felt the same mystery when he said if chemistry had no stupidity in it, the burning of the lamp is forever a mystery, the same mystery that flashes in the beaming of stars.

CHAPTER VII

Carving a Career

(1900-1901)

AFTER four years of college life at Lahore, it so happened that Bhagat Gokal Chand, my High school teacher and a distant cousin of mine, an M. A. of the Punjab University, a highly intellectual man, thought of sending students from Rawalpindi to Japan. By the way, Gokal Chand loved me as his promising pupil and he was anxious to help me to carve some career out-of-the-ordinary for myself. He thought of sending me immediately to Tokyo University for the study of glass-making. I was all on fire. Though many friends advised my getting the degree before going as only a year more was left, I was excited. I was ready to go without knowing why, without any thinking whatsoever. Enough, my friend has decided about my going, it must be for the best, no more thinking, I was restless. I am always restless when there is something to be done. Either by abandoning it altogether or by accomplishing it I get peace, not till then. Even an engagement of any kind is a torment for me, I cannot rest till I have punctually fulfilled it. Ever since I can remember I have made it a point not to live the life of fixed engagements. All my engagements must be in the natural course of the flow of my life, flowing. So I was full of that impulse with all the vehemence of soul and I gave up my studies in the college without consulting my parents because I knew that I was the brain of the family. And I had to get their permission to go, which I could not possibly procure merely by writing, so I left for village Havelian where my father, after moving to many places, was again settled for the time being. When they heard of my decision to go to Japan by the very next

steamer, my sisters felt bereft. They thought among other troubles that they would be harassed by their husbands and without me mother would be forlorn. My father thought I might not care to return to them. I explained to him that I knew I was to return to my sisters and mother and wipe out the comparative poverty in which we were then living. And I appealed to him to let me go. Finally he agreed. But it was no easy matter to get my mother agree to it. She said, "Be with me, come, do not study any more. We will divide half a loaf of bread and be contented. That family love of sisters for you and yours for them was much too precious to be lost in the vague expanse of mere hopes. What will we do with your wealth and greater ability if by chance by foreign travel your heart goes dry, and you love us no more."

"Mother, this is impossible. I know how and with what hard labour you have brought me up. I know how you lived at Mohri Wad Bhain and toiled for us day and night. And do you think I will forget you, mother? I go to bring greater love in my heart." And I fell into her arms and cried bitterly. My sisters clasped me and we wept bitterly for hours. "No, let my son go," said mother suddenly, "And we too can go there if need be. The other day he fell ill at Lahore and I went and saw him. Let us make him cheerful. We are so many who remain behind, and he goes alone."

The sisters too agreed.

I left Havclian for Rawalpindi from whence Bhagat Gokal Chand was to send me away fully equipped with clothes and money.

By the time I got ready another near relative of mine, Damodar Singh too got ready to go to Japan. I for learning glass-making and he for Electrical engineering. And no one in 'Pindi had the slightest notion what they were talking about, it was just the sensation of sending us out, and great hopes of our returning and starting factories. In the Punjab, let it be said, it was Bhagat Gokal Chand who first felt so dissatisfied with the want of independent careers for young men. He tried to get together the necessary money but all that was needed could not be collected. He got together passage and

six months allowance for me, while Damodar Singh managed a private loan for himself on the security of his father's property. My father had none, so the rich people of my 'Pindi community joined together to pay Rs. 50 a month for me in Japan.

Thus we had the honour of being the first students from the Punjab to Japan, and for once, not for a barristership but for ushering a new era of industries in the country. Alas, little did we know then what would happen to us, and still less did our benefactors know about the subject. When law and the lawyers carry on all administration of a country, it is meet that all bright young men of that country should be brilliant and clever lawyers especially when the country is under foreign governance where naught but law alone can secure the fundamentals of the prosperity of the country. The scientists and technical men can be bought as servants by a politically prospering country.

For the first time at Rawalpindi, we two were made gentlemen by the tailors. It was a great sensation to me to be in a pair of English trousers for the first time in life without having had the necessity of turning Christian like Shanker of Haripur. Damodar Singh even as a boy was a level-headed, cool and self-collected man, who would take everything rationally. I thought he was quite old in his mind. Nothing boyish in him, wisdom, prudence, foresight and scrupulous care, economy in all matters, slow, considered judgment of things and events were his exact qualities. At times I would give him love-blows for these tardinesses of soul. But it seemed to have been my fate to be called "foolish, impulsive fool". Though then a mere boy, I was all enthusiasm with the excitement of my new dress. The Sikh beard was just beginning to cover my temples and chin, and I loved to arrange a high collar below it. Like my mother I was hurt by a word, uttered to me with some sting or sling in it, and I was immediately reconciled to my tormentor with a tear when he explained that he never meant what I thought he meant. I judged people hastily, and still more hastily forgave them. Damodar Singh was enthusiastic about nothing. "Such is life" was his attitude.

My life, as I find has been a series of errors, and his a series of wise acts. Perhaps he has done more good to his friends in his own gentle, patient persevering way. And I, though intending to do much, have done little or have done all wrong to all my friends and like my mother, my reward from the best beloved ones has been their groaning at my unsatisfactoriness in every dealing with them and their final rejection of me as a mad man. But I have been, despite this, always what Nature made me and I quivered with fervent friendship for all I knew till my last nerve gave way. Into the bargain I became a nervous wreck, my hair turned grey much quicker, and I became prematurely old, because I and things around me have never been able to keep pace with each other for the difference in emotional velocity of soul. I fell out finally with everybody.

We two Punjabis on our way to Japan had peculiar ideas of hotel life to which we were utter strangers. We did not know how to use a knife and a fork. From the Victoria Terminus we were driven to the Apollo Hotel. We had a letter for Mr. Bodas, a Bombay lawyer, who was expected to give us some introductory letters, as he had sent one Mahratta young man, Salig Ram, to Japan for Applied Chemistry. We thought all that a matter of great importance and found it was of no use whatever when we reached Japan. All ideas developed by our people were very much out of focus. We saw Mr. Justice Ranade with a letter from Bodas. A mountain-like man who was then living in a tent on the Black Bay. He was dictating possibly a judgment, being the puisne judge of the Bombay High Court. He went out and came in again when we were seated. We had the honour of shaking hands with this great man of India. We, of course, could not see what was great in him but as everybody told us he was great we met him with awe in our hearts. He went on dictating his judgment to his clerk and also kept talking to us. Had it not been Ranade, I at least, would have got up, seeing so much coldness. But it was wonderful that he put his questions to us, and gave us his advice without his other work at all interfering with his conversation with us. He

wished us well, and we came out of the tent somewhat puzzled as to what particular virtue he possessed. But later on we learnt in Japan how great he was. One sentence of his still rings in my ears just as I read it. Speaking on the condition of India and his hopes for his country, Ranade said, "We have so far done nothing for ourselves, all that has been done for us has been done by the Englishman, but when we do achieve things there will be Himalayas where there is ocean, and ocean where there are Himalayas." This one sentence established his true intellectual greatness in my mind forever. I am in the habit at times of loving people, not only at the first glance, but by one strange good word of theirs.

When we returned to the hotel all our things were neatly tucked up by the boy. And we were alone in the room, thirsty for a drop of water. It struck us as strange that neither Bodas nor Ranade had offered us a drink though it was a steaming hot April in Bombay. There was no affection of the old, stupid 'Pindi here in Bombay. In big towns possibly everybody looks after himself or everything is most conveniently provided in the restaurants. And now how should we call any one in the Apollo Hotel ? We felt like guests in a new house where we must wait for the convenience of our host to provide things. Damodar Singh suggested shouting out "Boy, boy" as our neighbours were shouting, but I did not dare call an old man a "Boy." By this time a gold-bangled gentleman in a faultless English suit came in, "I suppose you are Punjabis. I am also a Punjabi. I am Imperial Engineer here, just joined from England." We had a little chat and asked him where we could get water. "Oh why, immediately." And he shouted, "Boy." The boy came in running. "Lemon squash and soda, quick," he said. And we three together soon after had big bumper glasses of iced water. The good Engineer paid for it. I still wonder why he wore the gold bangles.

Two or three days of waiting for one of the Nippon Usen Kaisha cargo boats thus passed in shy residence at the Apollo Hotel. We were almost starving, but both of us got our dinner and tiffin in our rooms, and tried our

hands at the knife and the fork way of quarrelling with our grub.

Of all the sights of Bombay which the hotel guide took us too, Damodar Singh liked the Bombay Museum most; and though I did not whisper my secret joy to him, I was delighted most by the fluttering of the many-coloured Saris in the evening at the Black Bay. I saw the restlessness of life in the traffic of victorias and glittering phaetons plying like a stream of sea-breeze-stirred hearts and pleasures, and leisures. Separation from land and sea-travel with all its dangers were nothing to us as we knew not well enough to be afraid. We boarded the streamer as if it was the bullock cart of Pothohar.

The next dawn we awoke to the wonder of the waters. We were lonely, sometimes we laughed and sometimes I put my head in the lap of Damodar Singh and wept bitterly. He would assuage me. I remembered mostly my mother. The food to me was unpalatable, boiled mutton with all the raw white fat sticking to it, saltless roast beef, horrid coffee, and thick black tea, a few yellow plantains all the time, every time. "It is a cargo boat, not a passenger boat." the Japanese steward would tell us. Most of the other passengers were Japanese who managed to get the Japanese food between themselves I could swallow nothing except at the risk of losing it, except Bananas, fish and toast with a mouth-ful or two of tea to swallow the toasts with. But my companion, the rational Damodar Singh, took calmly as a Hindu born everything he could possibly take. He told me he took it as bitter medicine for the disease of hunger and I was a fool to starve for a sentimental fancy for the flavour of Pothohar dishes cooked for me by my mother. I was starving, hoping to go ashore at Colombo, so I believe I practically starved for ten or more days before we touched Singapore.

At last land came in sight. We two comrades like a pair of team horses, one willing, brisk, and restless, and the other unwilling, languid and slow saw before us the emerald green garden of Singapore floating on blue waters.

CHAPTER VIII

SINGAPORE

AS OUR steamer touched Singapore, Sampans came hurrying to the side of the boat crying, "Go shore, Sahib." I had already come out on deck ready, apparelled in the lined flannel suit of which I thought so much, and I had attended to the polish of my shoes, and the crease of my trousers, and had tightened my buttons in the right places. I felt a little vain of what I then considered a faultless get-up, though I now know nothing at all was right with it or for the matter of that with any suit. I began coaxing Damodar Singh to accompany me ashore. I imitated the Chinaman's accent and pressed to my friend's side like a little lambkin and said to him, "Go shore, Sahib." Damodar Singh gave me a faint smile but chilled all my enthusiasm by saying, "Oh, what use is going ashore? No," continued he, "What is on shore? It is the same kind of land we have left. Men exactly the same, I know all. I do not go. You go if you like."

"My friend what strange views of things you have. These ten days of voyage have made my eyes hungry for land. The sight of land has pleased me like Columbus, though we have not those vast difficulties of his nor his genius for discovery and joy. But we are not the animals of the sea. Our holes are on land, I am dying to kiss the very dust. See what splendid green covers the turf yonder. But you are such a great sight-seer. Why not have a go at the Singapore Botanical gardens? And to tell you the truth, I am feeling a strange hunger for the Indian *chapati*. You have been able to do with the fat and mutton and fish such as they gave us on board the ship these ten days, but I have practically starved. The horrid tea. The burnt toasts. The only relieving feature was the good supply of the yellow Bombay bananas. And the horrid stinking odour of this cargo of onions on board. To escape this hellish odour for a while, come like a good man, we go shore. We will see some new

faces of men and trees and roads. All are persons, all will become the friends of our memory later on."

"Ah! this is how you persuade people to your views. It is emotional and intellectual tyranny. But I must respond to your such entreaties," said Damodar Singh yielding like a man to a girl.

Oh, I was so girlish. There is a feminine spirit of dependence in me. and I am sure I would not have gone to shore without him. I cannot go even now to a new city where there is no one to flatter me and coax me. And I cannot come out without the warmth of genuine friendship, almost like the little chicken coming out of the egg. The other day a friend told me I had the soul of a woman, because my soul can shine only when coaxed by some one. For when his guest. he had made me insane, maddened me into self-expression of all that was in me. All the same I was grateful to Damodar Singh for giving his arm to me to shore. And I know he was delighted.

A tall Sikh with a huge pyramid of a turban. of the Singapore police greeted us with the Punjab's Sikh salutations just as we touched shore. Lal Singh—Scarlet Singh—was his name, and in keeping with his name deep scarlet was his pugree. He was very kind and he was brimming with joy at having seen us of his country and of his great faith.

It was my habit, and it is still with me, that if any one treats me with some kindness I imagine him to be so much mine as my brothers and sisters and parents. I had not seen then any more of the world, and even now I have not seen any more truly than that little world of my cradle. And I always asked such kind ones to do anything for me as I would ask my own, and the unfortunate part of my training in childhood had been that my sisters and brothers and my parents did all I wished them to do. I was a little King made by them, and now in the wide world wherever I found a kind man I felt a divine right over him. By his own kindness no one ever felt bored with me except perhaps those who only pretended to be kind to me. I only beg favour from the kind ones who smile and who pity my everlasting babyhood of the cradle. And those who laugh at me behind my back

must be very unkind to their own children also. Those who jeer at me perhaps believe that there is no place for little children, the veritable princes in this hard, cruel, matter-of-fact sordid world. But the children like me lay no more claim than what their smiles or tears can have. And if my beggary of love and kindness has been at times misunderstood in some wise and calculating quarters I have not ceased to be a beggar all my life. Their wisdom at least has been wasted on me. They laugh at me, and I laugh at them with equal right, as there are no bigger fools in this world than those who do not wish to be kind if they can. These are large questions. Leave them. Lal Singh of the Singapore police was kind and I immediately caught him by the arm and began clinging to him. "I am hungry" said I, "I have not eaten for the last ten days on board the ship. The savour was so distasteful to me. O friend of the red turban, I am hungry for the Punjabi *chapati*."

"Why trouble Lal Singh about it?" said Damodar Singh rebuking me a little for my making people look after me as though the whole world were but a cradle for me, and the people were only there to swing me, and had no other business of their own. And he added, "You are always so fussy about your eating and drinking. Drink poison and eat arsenic if that would keep you going. Fool as you are in your enthusiasm for the *chapati* you have forgotten that beautiful turf and sod of Singapore of which you said so much on the deck. Come let us go to see the Botanical Gardens. You are wasting your time in making requests and expecting people to do all for you."

"Dear God. But they are in the habit of doing every thing for their roses, are they not? The roses only look at them, and they do the whole year's labour for them. I mean good people like you. You are fond of roses, are you not?"

"Please don't be hard on this boy," pleaded Lal Singh, "perhaps his tastes are like mine. I starved on ship for ten days when coming. When I landed here I was hungering for a morsel of the *chapati*. After all our taste for a particular food is beyond our little wills. The will of the clan we are born, the will of the country all

is there. Nothing is in our will. Why do I hate the Chinese food which a Chinaman loves and whose mouth waters at a cooked frog."

"This is quite true, Lal Singh," replied Damodar Singh in a slow wise studied accent which made me bow at once to him as a wiser man than myself, "But we are students. We must discipline ourselves. If we give ourselves away like this to stray desires, and run after particular savours and flavours of mere curries we violate the seriousness of our student life."

"This is quite true. But I am at your service with all the gladness of my heart and you are not talking to any stranger. I am your brother. I can cook for you. Be quite free with me. It would be kindness on your part to let me do something for you. I would love to please you. Come, buy me a little ghee, flour and chicken and I will do the rest. You could go to the Botanical Gardens, and on your return your meals will be ready."

"But I do not wish to trouble you, Lal Singh," said Damodar Singh, "for I know you cannot do what he expects. You might do your best and yet it might be a poor soldier's rough fare. My friend is in the habit of rising on the crest of his own imaginary expectations, and imagining something which never comes up to his hopes, he feels sorely disappointed. Many times events teach him, but he is never the wiser for it. He is a pleasant kind of fool, who is content with his own fancies and he never looks facts square in the face. We love to do what we can for him, for these little things done for him delight him so much. I know the disappointments do not last with him, for his fervid fancy sweeps away actualities clean from his mind. But there is no occasion to sit here waiting for the cooking of an Indian meal when our purpose is to do Singapore."

I flared up. "Dear D. I refuse to go with you to Japan. With you I refuse to get on board. I will live in Singapore. I will become a policeman like Lal Singh. Why do you think I am such a fool and you are all wise? Here is a Punjabi soldier, kindly and good. See his gushing love for us. He has kindly offered his services to cook for us. What is in the Indian cooking? A little ghee

and onions rasped and allowed to simmer in it till they are red roasted, and then one removes the spoon and the fire does the rest. There is no occasion for wasting so much wisdom on mere nothings."

"You see, Lal Singh, how he flares up. He gets into temper for nothing. He imagines the whole world must endure him as his mother did bear with him and obeyed his behests. He is so inflammable, explosive. But why should the world stand this? Come, Lal Singh, buy all you want. Here are four chips; and do please him. After all, I was guarding against his disappointment." And turning to me Damodar Singh said, "Look here, you fool, I do what you wish because I belong to your city and street and I know you. The world is a hard one. What matters it if you do not go on board with me or you become a policeman? What of all those threats? But I know you will judge me better after you have had your imagined Punjabi meals at Singapore." Damodar Singh was a bit cross too. And as I had had my share of losing temper I kept absolutely quiet. Lal Singh went with us and made his purchases. Damodar Singh was sullen; he did not advise him one way or the other. He went on saying mechanically, "Yes, yes," to everything that Lal Singh chose.

We went away in a horse carriage to the Gardens. It seemed Lal Singh was fairly busy all the morning, and it was about midday when we drove up to his small place on the bank of a canal. Lal Singh was apparently not yet ready. He had a huge brass pot on the fire and a roaring fire underneath. But ready or not ready we had no time. He gave us *chapatis* which were half cooked and he poured ladle after ladle of that diluted concoction of wonderful chicken he had bought, which he thought was chicken curry. The turmeric was not properly powdered, the onions were white, and the red chillies floated on the water which still gave up an odour of raw chicken meat. Damodar Singh got up as he could not stand that horrid meal. But I had my *chapati*, dipped in that saline solution. I cannot think now why I partook of it, but I must have imagined it was delicious. I thanked Lal Singh

for his trouble, and he replied, "I am sorry this chicken turned out to be a very old rooster. The fowler cheated me. The whole brass pot full of boiling water could not soften it all these hours. I am ashamed nothing could be made at all."

As we drove again to the quay, I told Damodar Singh that he was perfectly right and I a fool to have imagined that the Sikh soldier would cook for us as well as my mother did for me. Poor Lal Singh, he could not distinguish between a chicken and a old rooster. Oh, after all that boiling, even a sharp knife could not cut the blessed meat.

"I told you." said Damodar Singh very tenderly, "but you were then on a high horse. In spite of this disappointment, on the next occasion you will be exactly in the same mood."

"Mr. D. tell me kindly when shall I get wise like you?"

"Really you must learn to be less and less childish. You have wasted four dollars for nothing, and the poor man made his eyes red by poking the fire for many hours."

"Damodar Singh, I could never imagine for the life of me the incapacity of Lal Singh for such a simple thing as chicken curry. Still this waste will afford us a life-long fun at the expense of the goodness of our Lal Singh and his affectionate folly. The bargain has been quite a good one. Has it not been dear, dear D ?"

"Ash ! your fine compensatory interpretations of your disappointments and follies. They carry us along as long as you talk, but we men of this world soon return to our own grooves of thinking and think you are such a fool. It is admitted you have more sunshine out of all bargains, and we more of distress and dollars. But what can one do without dollars? You detest dollars as if you were a born Prince and I know with what hard labour your father earns a pittance, and how hard your mother toils to keep you so happy."

By this time we reached the quay and took a sampan to our ship. The bell rang, the captain shouted, the anchor was heaved up, and we were again on the sea.

On the deck bench we sat, gazing at the liquid infinite

and talking about Singapore. We admired everything we saw as when one goes to a theatre for the first time. We had walked on the ochre roads of the garden and admired the emerald fringes of its well-mown lawns. We admired the growth of trees and the red fruit on the thick leaved *litchis*. There was a great inexpressible joy in coming in contact with so many new things even vaguely, and we said travelling was an education and culture in itself. By the way we did remember our good Lal Singh, and we both agreed he was full of goodness and affection towards us. It was indeed very kind of him to have taken all that trouble for us.

CHAPTER IX

HONGKONG

"WHAT a huge hotel on the banks of the sea here!" I said to D., when we landed at Hongkong.

"Grand! Look at its spacious building. What a palatial lodging for those who can pay and have home comforts. I like hotel life. One has not to bother about running a home. And there is great solitude in the midst of the most complex civilisation. No one interferes with you. You can pass a whole life undisturbed," said Damodar Singh.

"No, D. I was looking at it from quite a different point of view. You are of the Occident; I still dream of the follies of the Orient. To me this hotel appears to be a monster that eats up so many sweet homes. My imagination sickens at this impersonal hugeness. When thinking of going into it, an oppression seizes me. With all its busy-hiveness, it is a desert of *maya*. There is no story-telling as of old, no sitting together round the fireside, no mingling of higher and truer elements of cultural intimacies of old. All come in a devil of a hurry with Gladstones and trunks, and counting their belongings, go out again all so meaninglessly. The hotel has no organic sympathy of the honeycomb. Here man is always a stranger. Welcomed in a straw-thatched hut with mud-plastered floors, he has the fragrance of human fellowship, and he is never a stranger. Where is the delicate aroma of human intercourse that one has in a river ferry? Sometimes while going to a temple beyond the river one strikes everlasting friendships."

"Puran Singh, you will always talk in air. Always over-imaginative, sentimental, foolish. Without these hotels, life would be impossible in these modern days. Travelling will not be possible in those conservative countries of the East who have one prejudice or the other against foreigners. Here it is political, there social, further

down religious, as they say. You have conveniently forgotten that no one in India receives foreigners. They do with great difficulty even men of their own caste and clan. Your Indian lives in hovels, in wretched caste ridden exclusiveness. You are so inhospitable; yet you plume yourself on being religious and spiritual. All that is nothing but stupidity. You talk of the Eastern welcome Pshaw! What about India, the premier region of your spirituality? They only welcomed those of whom they would be in one way or the other afraid. To me it is all degenerated animality. Vice, too, in its own manifestation has some merit about it. But even vice as found in your country is in degenerated form. Animality, not pure enough of the lamb, not powerful enough of the lion. Animality of the creeping insects talking of heaven and earth in impertinent verbosity. That is your India. They shout at all nations and themselves are lying low under the heels of the English. Who is superior, the rider or the ridden? There ends all your cobweb finery of the East, and running down of the West which is adapting at least all old religions and philosophies by solid application to the good of the greatest number, on the railway track for all. Anybody who pays for the ticket goes to Heaven. The modern is trying to create equal opportunity for all. Is that not a great overhauling of the world?"

"My dear D. I do not talk to you of any world outside myself. I have no notions of India or Europe. I would welcome all to my hut if I have one. I will treat a guest like God come to me. Personally I would not go to a place where I do not get the home welcome. The world to me without that sweet human intercourse is hell. I dislike impersonality even in religion and ethics. Without man playing his part in this life, as we know it, all is tinsel."

By this time we reached a place on the Hongkong main road which runs along the sea front where there was the Sikh Gurudwara. The Sikhs, we thought, are so enterprising that they come out in search of work or service. And most of them are masons or carpenters. We entered. There was a huge gathering of all the Sikhs

of Hongkong in the temple that day. Our entrance thrilled the assembly with delight, and they gave us, the two humble Sikh youths, so great a welcome that Princes might well have envied us.

I also spoke to them. From my boyhood I had been fond of public speaking, and I always made them extempore. But my extempore succeeded only when someone in the background helped me. The sign of that help was always clear to me. I felt a kind of circle of light moving round the solar plexus within me, that would at first begin to glow and then burn up, before my speaking to an audience. My eyes would be moist, my bosom aflame, and I would quiver like the strings of a sitar. In this emotional melting of myself if ever I made a speech I knew it would be all right. I may only sound meaningless like a cloud, but surely there would be the atmosphere of delight as of the rainy season after hot months in India. On the contrary whenever I tried to prepare a speech, write it down, and commit it to memory, I stood like a corpse that somehow repeated what was written and that too without any effect or accent. That day I felt superb, for their reception had excited me. I remember I said something on the love of one's country. I write now as my memory once more reads the old record in its past pages.

"Hongkong and Singapore are evergreen gardens of Nature, but those arid regions of the Pothohar had greater friendship for me in their dust. The very trees of the Pothohar speak to me. Some of them were born on the same day I was born. We have grown up together. We have suffered together. We have played together. The hill brooks of my country treasure the voices of my ancestors, and when they sound I think my old fathers have come to speak to me. I look back astonished again and again. It takes centuries for Nature to tie our knots of friendship. Those intimacies are loves of ages. It has taken aeons to ripen those beautiful feelings. When we come away from our homes we feel what a tearing of these threads of affections takes place. When we return how the very flowers of our land look at us. We are also like plants; we send our roots of love into the soil that

gave us birth. Our affections are fibrous. We grow well where our fibres have struck roots. We cannot flourish if uprooted from these intimacies of soul and life and love. And we cannot call forth those dearnesses of old by the magic wand of mere knowledge gathered from books or out of mere principles which one can make as many as the day is long. Men and women are great mysteries, perhaps the only mysteries which we cannot fully unravel till we associate with them for centuries. The exotics take time to get acclimatised. All love in the ordinary sense is a sweet familiarity that we inherit in our blood from man and nature. Now that waters separate us from our dear ones, our sisters and mothers, our very God, we feel how dear are the very particles of dust which bear their footprints."

When we came out, D. said to me tenderly and half jokingly, "That nonsense put together made a splendid speech. Every one was greeting you with yells and cheers but I bet no one understood a word of what you said."

"I did, dear D, and you did."

"No, to confess the truth I was carried away by the sweetness of your soul speaking, and I did not hear what you said."

The priest of the Temple had invited us to his house and he had cooked for us the greens and *paranthas* which we both ate to our fill. And what was more, Damodar Singh praised the Bhai for his wonderful cooking. The Bhai prayed for our success, and we parted from each other in mutual embraces.

Hongkong gave us a joy-ride on its aerial ropeway Tram to the Peak. And here seeing the Peak embroidered with beautiful residences and gardens, I confessed to Damodar Singh, "Dear D, you are right. I was wrong. Perhaps I was always wrong. But the moment I feel I have the truth, the whole truth with me, then I do not yield. Perhaps that is someone else in me. Now I confess you are right in condemning the foolish indolent India. Look how the British people have turned this Peak into a Paradise. While we talk, they work. While we think of our soul vainly, they sit and build a comfortable house for their bodies. For us, for even our children.

this world is but a passage to some other world, and to them, old men, also their soil yields potatoes and they are happy. We defer our happiness, they take it cash down. To them a good ride in the morning is quite a prayer while we go to the temple and weep for our sins. Look at this Peak where the Englishman lives in exile and down there the dirty hovels of the Indians and the Chinaman."

"There again you are one-sided. It is all so. But the Englishman loves no one but himself. John Bull is quite satisfied if he gets a good house to live in and a hearty dinner. The rest of the world can go to hell."

Hongkong with its Peak was more picturesque than Singapore. I thought it was also cooler. But there was sunshine at Singapore and there was rain at Hongkong.

"Dear D. ! Buy me a straw hat. Oh, it looks so fine. I wish to toss it on as these other people do. Why should we be bound down by turbans always. The Chinaman throws his cue and wears a straw hat. Why should I not throw my long hair down and wear a straw hat."

"Again funny. It would look so odd. What a foolish wish for a Sikh boy to wear a hat? Man, it is forbidden to the Sikh."

"O, forbidden to a man whom the Guru freed from all bonds of empty religious ceremonials, whom the Guru planted forever in the Truth of right feeling, taking him out of all dead formalities and superstitions ? What has that emancipated love to do with dresses and clothing? There you think unless the women of China wear the Punjabi veil cloths of the Sikh women, they cannot be Sikhs. And if the Englishman cannot grow a beard, and tie a turban on his head, he cannot have the glow of that great love of the Gurus.

"You foolish men have always thought so. Your foolish countrymen think so. Your co-religionists are so conservative. I think they will certainly say without wearing the Punjabi veil cloths and without speaking Punjabi, no Chinese woman can be a Sikh of the Guru, and without a turban no American or Japanese a Sikh. That is, of course, nonsense.

"But dear D., do buy me a hat. I will wear it once

and look at myself in the mirror. I only wish to put it on my head and toss it and then again place it there. This gesture of tossing one's hat is so captivating. There is some spirit of halloing in it and there is a kind of comradeship in the tossing up of hats."

"You had better buy a sola hat. That is something useful. And that would cover the huge grass-knot on your head."

"No. No, D. let me have a straw hat. I don't wish for any other. Others are made of rags and painted This straw is pure and there is some scent in it."

Damodar Singh bought me a straw hat and pleased as a child with it I thought of nothing else for some days but of my straw hat.

CHAPTER X

In Japan

(1900-1904)

I

THE CUP OF INDIAN FELLOWSHIP

FRESH from the savage Punjab we did not know parts of India nor India's castes and religions except that our mothers would not give the Mohammedan servants food with us on the same square, though if we as children longed to dine with them, we stole to them. But still we were never invited by a Mohammedan neighbour of ours; they knew well the limitations of their and our so-called religions.

As we both landed at Yokohama, Mr. Ray and other Indian students who had come to receive us took us to Messrs. Essabhoy & Sons. They lived in a palatial house and as we entered we were welcomed by a glorious youngman, wearing a *surti* turban with gold brocade work. And we were treated to a most homely cup of tea, perfumed with our countryman's genuine love. It was like drinking *soma* of old. Young Mr. Essabhoy taught us there could be no such thing as Mohammedan tea in Japan. It was the cup of Indian fellowship. How strange, I thought, was the communal savagery in India that cried on railway platforms, "Hindu water," "Mohammedan water" and so forth. All love of man degenerates as soon as it touches India, and how it revives when once it comes out of that dungeon-like country.

Young Mr. Essabhoy had an angelic face, his eyebrows black, his eyes full of a divine culture of exquisite courtesy. A merchant Prince. From him we took affectionate leave. And he said, "Consider this your home. Whenever you are tired of Tokyo, come here. Command me and I am at your service."

From Mr. Essabhoy we were taken by our friends, Mr. Kulkarni and Mr. Ramakant Roy, to Messrs. Wassiamull Assomull, a Sindhi firm, perhaps the very first of the Indian merchants that had opened their office in Japan. And here an old Sindhi greeted us with the triumphant yell of Guru Gobind Singh's "*Wah Guru ji ki Fateh*". And after some talk about the voyage we all sat down to dinner. We took a late evening train to Tokyo.

The Yokohama Railway platform under the wooden Japanese footwear croaked like a big frog. The train took us to our destination and there many Indian friends and others welcomed us with a warmth that one finds in the affection of one's own countrymen fired with patriotic impulses beyond the sea. We again sat on a short legged table where boiled rice, *daikon* (radish), red ginger, and some *mame* (pulse) was arranged. The first night on the Japanese *titamis* (mats) under the Japanese *futans* (quilts) was as if sleeping in the tents of gods. The poor, uncreative, idle Indians build such palatial brick buildings and choke the breath of cities and insist on foundations. While here every house is less than a tent. Four or five huge stones formed a house, a light wooden screen goes up on all the four sides, it is plastered with mud, and the tiles cope a roof down. The two sides of the house are wide open and shut like the studio of a painter, the *shojis* (moveable paper-covered doors) move about and let in sun and moon and sky. The Japanese light houses move like birds, as they ruffle their wings. And in India, they say we do not believe in this but in the next world. And there they make of this world the very eternity.

One Japanese maid, a true Mongol in her features with her slitty eyes, high cheek bones, and a strong working pair of arms served the whole of this batch of Indian students in a house full of them at Hongo, Tokyo. And it was wonderful, how active she was from early morn to late midnight. She did everything for us. And in those days, six yen per month were all the wages we paid her.

Mr. Kulkarni was sent by Maharaja Sindia for Mining Engineering. An elderly boy of about thirtyfive years,

father of many children, the only qualification he had was his patriotic ardour, to find gold mines for the Maharaja, to dream again of a Mahratta Empire and to throw out the English from India. A Congress-man, a great admirer of Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak, he extolled the Brahmin brothers who had murdered an Englishman who had interfered with the zenana in the plague days at Poona. Tears flowed from his eyes when he talked of India to us. "W. C. Bannerji", said he, "one day taking turns on a railway platform, as he came to attend the Congress session, came close to me and put his hands on my shoulders and said 'These young men, these are to make India free.'"

Kulkarni would talk of the eloquence of Surendra Nath Bannerji, and his bones would reverberate with strange thrills. One day he got up and said, "Look here, I tell you how one sentence of Bannerji once silenced all disputes as to whether the Indian National Congress should be dissolved." He said, imitating the roars of Surendra Nath, "A—ban—don—con—gress, rather a-ban—don life." And once he quoted the gibe this orator had at the editor of the *Pioneer* who had come to attend the Congress at Allahabad under the presidency of W. C. Bannerji. Kulkarni got up and told us that as Bannerji said these words, he pointed to the Editor of the *Pioneer* and then to the worthy President. "Perhaps like the *Pioneer* we shall be eaten up by the worm of time, but men like our President shall live forever in the memory of their countrymen." After having heard Mr. Bannerji, the Editor of the *Pioneer* gave a handsome donation to the Congress funds. In this way, our house at Hongo was full of nationalistic exhortations. We two Punjabis also became Indians. Mr. Rama Kanta Roy, a straight tall young Bengali hailing from Sylhet was another type. He called himself "Sikaijin," *The citizen of the world*, and he would snap his fingers and smile and say, "I have nothing to do with your India. A small stupid country. I am for loving all mankind. I know, I know, I have seen what your countrymen are. Do not boast of yourselves. A lot of idle bunglers, caste ridden, superstitious, foolish, backward men. You have

condemned child widows to life-long imprisonment. Unjust cruel people. You treat your women as galley slaves. You have no liking for liberty. Slaves are always afraid of open air. How else should God treat you wh n you treat your mothers and wives and daughters so ill."

He would talk to us in his jerky, eccentric style, of Pandit Ishwar Chander Vidyasagar and what he did. He talked of the great pandit's self-respect that made the Viceroys and Governors of Bengal treat him with respect. Once he said the Viceroy sent his Private Secretary to ask Panditji to come and give him some advice on a particular law measure. The Secretary was some new hand, he went with the usual official manners to the Pandit's house and in a way suggested by his tone and word that it was the order of the Viceroy. The Pandit dismissed the Secretary saying he had no time to see the Viceroy. The Viceroy at once understood the mistake his young civilian Private Secretary had made, in displaying the roughness of a juvenile official and he sent him back saying, "Please go and say that Lord—requests the pleasure of the Pandit's company", and ordered him to go and apologise to the Pandit for his bad manners. This was done and the Pandit went to the Viceregal Lodge.

He would not wear *choga* and *chapkin*, as the Pandit loved the loose garments of a simple Bengali. The Lt. Governor of Bengal had asked him to his house, but after the interview the Pandit said, "I shall not be able to come to you aga'n. It is too uncomfortable for me to wear this *choga* and *chapkin*."

"Panditji, do come as you please."

The Pandit was a great friend of Ooriya coolies. He was then the only champion of the poor labourers in Calcutta. There were no trade unions then and the Pandit was their saviour from the tyranny of their employers. They worshipped him. Once the Pandit chanced to go to Puri side and visited his Ooriya friends in their jungle homes. They thought their god had come. One of them killed a hen and skinned it and brought raw fresh meat still warm to Panditji as an offering. The immaculate Pandit who never ate meat, nor ever thought of killing a bird spread his pure

yellow silk robe to receive the gift, touching with it his heart. And they fell at his feet in worship. Here was actually for once a live vegetarian who had no cant of "principles" about him. A humble servant of God who must have accepted the gift the worshipper had to offer to his god.

Then Roy would talk to us of Anand Mohan Bose's congress lectures which he told me were but the sweet sermons of a priest. He would tell us how Shiv Nath Shastri fought against the stupid orthodoxy of Bengal, how he once chastised as a boy Dr. Mahendra Lal Sirkar for being callous to a patient's father. He would read Shastri's poems to us. He would tell us of Keshab Chandra Sen. And he in fact made us imbibe the modern culture of Brahmo Bengal which stood for humanity and truth, so unlike the narrow-minded Hindu and orthodox Bengali. To Roy patriotic motives were very narrow and they were the vice of nations. Individuals when they sinned harmed themselves, but when groups of men sinned they disturbed the world's social balances of goodness. Our love thus generated for men like Keshab, Shiv Nath Shastri, Anand Mohan Bose, and other Brahmo luminaries was very great and I almost became Brahmo under the influence of Rama Kanta Roy. And whenever we exhibited any smallness of spirit, he got angry. His one ideal was—"be large men of ever-enlarging sympathy." These were the first Indian students in Japan who devoted very little time to their studies.

Rama Kanta's thesis was written by his friends on the coal mines, coal being his special subject. Some one who got devoted to him worked for him and others enabled him to satisfy the University Regulations. He thus did the practical work and very little of the theoretical. A man of great tact and administrative ability, he could certainly manage any mine. His teachers knew him as a capable Engineer, though he studied little. But he had wonderful powers of organisation. His professors judged him as a whole man and not as a crammer of books. At the end of his career in the Tokyo University they gave him the usual certificate. But Rama Kanta Roy was an ideal preacher though he had neither the gift

the gab, nor much systematic learning. A beautiful spirit, talking in parables, he would carry his deep-seated emotions and sympathies to every one who came in close contact with him. He never seemed very warm nor intimate, unlike Kulkarni, but it was only self-imposed restraint. He never gushed. The spark he hid in his heart and its radiating warmth alone gathered his friends around him.

Rama Kanta Roy on his return to India joined the Kashmir State, but he could not put up with the State intrigue and eventually joined as an Engineer in the Raneegunj coal mines. But here too arrayed against the capitalists, he was more of a public man than an Engineer. His profession could not contain him, he was too large for it. He it was who became the great effective preacher of *Swadeshi* and boycott of British goods in that great agitation caused by Surendra Nath Bannerji in the Bengal Partition days. Rama Kanta Roy was the leader of the young Bengal students by his silent work. They yelled in the streets of Calcutta, and Bengal youth was a power under him. Unfortunately he died of typhoid and his great qualities as a man remained still unfolded.

Neither did Kulkarni ever study seriously. He lived in Tokyo more like a self-appointed Ambassador of Future Freed India, paying visits to Japanese nobles and enlisting their sympathy. He made friends with Phillipine patriots who had come away from their native Isles complaining against America's high-handedness, as Kulkarni complained of the Englishmen. And a common grievance brought the Indians and the Phillipines together. We went stumping platforms at times, Kulkarni and I talking of the barbarities of the English in India. The curious Japanese editors and public men sympathised with us and encouraged us in idle curiosity. We thought we were going to free India on our return.

The patriotism of Kulkarni and internationalism of Roy both made deep impressions on us. And both these Pioneers were busy more as preachers of soul, rather than as students of Mining Engineering. Sindia sent a lot of funds to Kulkarni thinking he would have his own expert, but Kulkarni spent it well in winning sym-

pathies of Japan for helpless India. And let it be said that both Roy and Kulkarni made excellent impressions on the Japanese people. And it was due to their character that we other students got concessions in schools and factories. Wherever we went, we were received with special consideration. Under their guidance, we made long and varied excursions to all kinds of factories, *e.g.*, dyeing, sugar-refining, leather-making, cement, paper, umbrella, needle, where the managers helped us to learn any of such crafts that we might wish to specialise in.

II

THE FLOWER SHOWS OF JAPAN

I WAS very fond of going with my Japanese school mates to the flower shows which are as soft revelations of the Japanese soul, art and religion as the early dawn is of the mystery of creation. They infused an unutterable spirit of true religion into me. Judging by the way in which festivals are held in Japan, round the innocent saints—the flowers, it seems the Japanese nation as a whole is immersed in deep prayer. Every blossoming Cherry tree is a Buddhist temple in Japan. There are national holidays to honour the arrival of the cherry-blossom. The whole people are literally drunk with the joy of the cherry. At the great fairs in Uyeno park and the cherry dances of Geishas in romantic Kyoto, the genius of great Japan can be seen at its best and truest, and truly adored.

The chrysanthemums in terraces, the morning glory in pots, the wistarias arranged under bowers like grapes falling in clusters like the braids of village maidens, the lotuses in ponds living like sages untouched, the heroic plum—all have distinctive traditions of art and love. The Japanese essentially is a great lover of plants, less of gods. Where are gods purer and more beautiful than the flowers? And no nation has such infinite passion for flowers as the Japanese. The Princesses loiter with the peasant girls in these pleasure gardens without pride or vanity or any distinctions, all equally self-inebriated, a sight which fills the human heart with rare gladness.

Once in a crowd of chrysanthemums near Bijitusen, I became crazy with delight. There was no difference between the Japanese girls and flowers, the glow and divine smile of the chrysanthemums was so universal. Nature was lost in man, he was so highly artistic.

I once sat with my friend Honda in a sequestered

garden where the dawn-fair was held in the season. Honda had kindly dragged me from my bed. I was ashamed of my English dress but it was an almost constitutional misfortune now for Indians to go so vulgarly attired on such a spiritual pursuit. And Honda was in his flowing silk *kimono*. I wonder why he suffered me in his company when I was so outrageously out of tune. To have gone there all nsked like a child would have been better. The dress I was wearing was good for stoking coal into a steam engine. But I have always endured myself in a creaseless English dress of a vague sort and an English language of a still more faulty accent, for unless one decides to go stark naked in the matter of dress, and absolutely dumb in matters of language, any change from one to the other would be a mere ceremony.

We were there before the birth of the first ray of the dawn. The faces of men could hardly be seen. The fair appeared to be but shadows of men that moved strangely about. Honda and I too sat near a place which I knew not. As the first ray darted from the East there was a revelation of sculptured joy.

A Japanese family sat round a flower pot that had three buds of the morning glory just opening their soul to the morning ray. It was as if the message came from Heaven to the travellers who had strayed to earth from there. So thankful was the reception by the buds of that love-letter of Heaven. And as the morning glories began opening in the joy of that realised Nirvana, the mouths of the Japanese daughter, her father and mother began opening. It took about half an hour for the bud to blossom to fullness and by that time four Japanese mouths were fully opened and all the eyes too were red with the melting of the ray in those pools of wonder. The dawn had blossomed in the sky. And after that complete death of mind in the peace of Nirvana, the men and women became alive and there was the slow rhythm of their feet keeping time with the subtle but voluptuous dance of the dawn in the sky. The Japanese girl as she skipped was the best of the Morning-Glories that blossomed that morning. As the songsters of Heaven beat space for music the little bells rang on the knees of the Japanese pilgrims

to the temple of the Dawn. The flowers and people both were mildly exhilarated and a bit tipsy with the light of Heaven. The flower pots and men all walked out.

It was religion, not merely an aesthetic pleasure. Verily, verily no nation of the East or of the West has merged itself so completely with the spirit of gods that is manifested on earth in the fatal innocence of flowers.

"Flower stories are endless," says Okakura in his Book of Tea. "In the sixteenth century the morning-glory was yet a rare plant with us. Rikiu had an entire garden planted with it which he cultivated with assiduous care. The fame of his convolvuli reached the ear of the Taiko. and he expressed a desire to see them, in consequence of which Rikiu invited him to a morning tea at his house. On the appointed day the Taiko walked through the garden but nowhere could he see a vestige of the convolvulus. The ground had been levelled and strewn with fine pebbles and sand. With sullen anger the despot entered the tea room. but a sight waited him there which completely restored his humour. On the *tokehname*, in a rare bronze of *Sung* workmanship lay a single morning glory—the queen of the whole garden. In such instances we see the full significance of the Flower Sacrifice. Perhaps the flowers appreciate the full significance of it. They are not cowards like men. Some flowers glory in death, certainly the Japanese cherry blossoms do, as they freely surrender themselves to the winds. Any one who has stood .before the fragrant avalanche at Yoshino or Arishyama must have realised this. For a moment they hover like bejewelled clouds, and dance above the crystal streams, when as they sail away on the laughing waters, they seem to say: 'Farewell, O Spring, we are on to eternity."

This expresses the whole spirit of the Japanese race in a tragic story of the cherry and the morning glory.

III

FUJIYAMA

DAMODAR SINGH induced me to climb the celestial heights of Fujiyama. Every summer, hundreds of Japanese pilgrims ascend to go round the crater. It is indeed a religious merit to look once at the world from those rare heights.

Our first stage was a little inn at the foot of the great mountain. Here the pilgrims from different parts of Japan gathered. And in a homely mixing up with these holy guests, I cried with joy to D., "This is my ideal inn, just a large ferry where we are all gathered in human sympathy nestling so close to each other. Look, every guest has come to us turn by turn enquiring about us as if we were brothers met after long separation. One would fain starve even to death with pure delight where so much fragrance of kinship floats about."

I was interrupted by a jolly kind of fellow who was making a fool of himself with Sake, and disturbing every one with his outgushing warmth of heart. And he had created, late towards the evening, a light exhilaration everywhere like so many rush lights emitting various colours. "Hallo Brothers from Heaven of India! you must have a cup of Sake each. Have you ever tasted this elixir of Japan? No liquor. Just wine, light wine brewed from our Nippon rice. Very good. Nothing like it. Beer, Whisky, Brandy, all poisons." And he ran like a boy of fifteen and brought three quaint little bottles of glazed porcelain full of his ambrosia. The bottles were warm to the touch, they had been kept for a while in warm water. So far we were not initiated into the mysteries of this strong *teaism*. We drank and we were glad to have mingled so indistinguishably with the pilgrims who were all mildly excited. They sang squeakily snatches of Utas and Hokkus, weird tunes of sadness. As their red cheeks swelled with sound they looked like so many conch-

shells blowing in a temple. The night was soothed and we slept light, washed with wine.

With bells tinkling on their knees the climb began early in the morning. Pure straw sandals on their feet, and huge basket-like straw hats strapped on their heads, with long clubs in their hands, tight Japanese indigo-dyed peasant pyjamas and the *kimonos* all tucked up, it was a sight as we ascended. Only we two had white muslin turbans quaintly out of tune with our English shoes and trousers and coats. Funny we did indeed look, but they all comraded with us. Someone of them good-humouredly made fun of us in Japanese which we could not catch. Others encouraged us to keep pace. "It is the Buddhist pilgrimage. Fujiyama is our Saint," they said. A man who knew a little English remarked, "These Indojins wear a turban like our Fujiyama, but all is wrong below the head." He was so terribly correct about being all wrong below the head in the case of us poor wretched, enslaved Indians, who wore the English dress.

Towards evening, we reached the summit. While passing the eastern rim of the crater to reach the Japanese inn on the top we had to jump over a chasm about half a yard broad which still smoked. We were a bit afraid there, and had we been alone we might have been nervous to jump over. But where all jumped we followed without much tremor. On crossing we saw that an egg placed there could be boiled and some of our friends did so and also gave us a repast which was very refreshing.

There were about fifty guests all huddled up under a thatch. As it was very cold, our flesh touching each other's was at once very precious. A few quilts, the Japanese *futans*, were provided, and we all had to make ourselves quite comfortable. And we were. While our breaths were mingling and our limbs were touching each other's, I cried while tucked up under the *futans* to Damodar Singh who was cosily being pressed in some other precious company, "My good friend ! This is the true Guest House. Ah ! If the world were knitted like that."

"You mean men and women all together, or

only men," remarked Damodar Singh merrily. And as regards food there, how could pure snows provide any grossness? There was naught but holy fasting. But the host was kind. I remembered then the Saki of Omar Khayam. Without him the pure summit of Fujiyama were death for us, though there was a very rare kind of spiritual beauty. He, our Saki of the night, boiled a few pounds of rice he had with a large quantity of snow and the broth was as thick as tea when it was served hot in tiny little bowls to every one. We were all saints, just for one night on Fujiyama and all treatment of us was of all due reverence.

The dawn was glorious. The sun was rolling like a huge ruby in the wool of the clouds, under our feet. And we felt we were riding the clouds. We circumambulated the crater with other pilgrims. We saw: the sun came, went round and fell into the crater and then came out like the glory of the Orient robed in the yellow robes of the Buddhist Bhikku.

The descent was easy. The falling sides of Fujiyama were all made flowing slides of small lava gravel and we could let ourselves slip over them to a stage below. It was a pleasure drive on the sands, and we came down as if seated on sledges.

IV

Those days of sacred realisations

I WAS a poor student. I could not travel much nor see many places. Once I went on an excursion with the University students to the copper mines beyond Nikko, and I lingered long at Nikko, wishing to live in a temple under the cryptomeria as near that arched bridge which resumed the space between earth and paradise over the blue foaming torrent of time. And then with the Indian students to the Osaka Exhibition, when I had the unique opportunity of seeing Kyoto. But like one or two well read books instead of skipping lightly over a whole literature, I feel great delights of memory when revisiting anew in thought those places I had thus seen in Japan.

Kyoto and its suburbs and mountains still cast a subtle charm over me. The blue dashing river of the Kyoto looked then to me like the swinging cradle of the Japanese race and on Nature's living Tokonama opposite were the Kakemonos of the Buddhist Temples. Here the gods and goddesses of Buddhistic faith sang lullabies to the nation which was yet like an unborn lotus-bud but wrapped in the darkness of green leaves. Kyoto is the cradle and Nikko the School of religion where the grand cryptomerias articulate "*Namo Buddha*". The famous temples of Nikko are born in Kyoto and grow adult on those beautiful ascents. Kyoto is Zen and Tokyo is Taoist. Nikko and Kamakura are pure Buddhist; Osaka and Kobe and Yokohama are all of the Confucius cult. Of all the places, I think of Kyoto as the paradise of love, art and religion in Japan as I saw it. I remember a kind Japanese friend took me round. I was a *bosan*, a Bhikku then in yellow robes and the reverence my host paid to me was the same as that paid to the ancient Buddhist Faqirs. I was

in the hey-day of my youth, hardly 22 then and suffused with the rose of youth. After a bath in the warm tubs of Kyoto, wrapped in a yellow robe I saw myself at midnight in a mirror and tried to recognise who I was. Not knowing myself I cried with joy. I looked so handsome. My host next morning asked for a photograph which I let him have if he could get himself with me. Full of ecstatic joy, I sat gazing on my own beauty and my friend improvised an offering.

It was in Kyoto that an old priest offered me a whole pure estate of a Buddhist temple, with a beautiful Japanese landscape garden full of plums, cherry and Bamboo trees. But I thought I was too innocent to lead the life of a professional priest. I thought more of the bird on the bough, than of the priest in his huge sacerdotal robes. I was thinking of human liberty and he of religion. He was very kind to me, perhaps he even mistook me for his own lost son for in my youthful glow and inspiration, I was so attractive.

In those very days in Tokyo, Rama Kanta Roy organised a charity performance of Julius Caesar in aid of the Indian famine-stricken people. I was chosen as their Antony. I remember Mr. and Mrs. Swan superintended our recitals at the Indo-Japanese club house. Behind the Shoji they saw me standing trying to think I was Antony. And as I entered, they remarked, "This young man has become Antony;" and they unnecessarily admired my speech though I knew it was my glowing cherubic face that warped their judgment in my favour. The oddities of beautiful things set off their loveliness. The performance came on. Caesar was killed. And Antony came on the stage in Roman toga. The mob was set on fire. But Antony had gone. I was caught in a stream of beautiful ladies—all foreigners to Japan—English and American and Russian, they so admirably shook me taking my hands in theirs and complimented me, "You looked so handsome on the stage." Yes that was my performance. And I tossed my head up evidently spoiled by the unusual encomiums and I smiled and I replied in a pretty vain tone of a self-inebriated person,

"I am the God of beauty." There was a delightful twitter as I moved amongst that sweet bevy.

Strange were my own fascinations in those days of delightful renunciation. What to the old Bhikkus was a sacrifice, to me was a joy, so light I felt in my flowing robes, bare feet and that modern American clean-shaved face which many cameras tried to capture. A maid-servant of the Indo-Japanese Club was in attendance. Damodar Singh had been thinking of my "insanities" and he feared lest I might catch a chill and die. So the maid-servant was made also my sentinel and my ministering angel. I would run out on the fresh fallen snow lighted by the moon, and sit on the "stepping stones" of the garden as the snow fell covering my naked limbs as though they too were the branches of the plum tree near by. The poor maid-servant would search for me and not finding me in bed would cry for me and I would reply, "Alive. Don't fear." And she would run out like a mother and say, "What a naughty new priest ? O this snow is killing!"

"He sends the snow who loves me"

"You are a strange fool !"

I never walked in those days. I would throw my arms forward and feel like flying. I used to cover many miles in an incredibly short time. Now here, then in some friend's house knocking at midnight on his doors. Almost as a restless illusion of Reality I appeared to my friends.

Seeing the cherry flowers floating in air, I thought it was my soul flying. I was fresh like a rose, soft like dew. My friends tolerated my eccentricities, and I spoke as if I had been re-incarnated, and would be re-incarnated again. I talked to them like babbling brooks. A word too sweet would drip from my lips and I would sit before them with my parted lips, in the same sweetness which pervaded them.

I was not real at all. And the Universe appeared to me but a dream of my sleep of ecstacy. My bones yielded to my imagination, and I was every moment a new person. I used to interpret the events as personal happenings to me. It was raining hard on a severe winter night. I got

up suddenly to go out. My maid-servant came with an umbrella and a 'printed' 'Caution' on her lips and eyes. "No mother. Don't grieve over me. I must get wet if it is good for me, otherwise rain would stop if it is good for me."

Rain stopped. I ran miles and reached Hirai's house. As I entered, rain began pouring again. I smiled. Hirai begged me to explain why I smiled. "Nature is my mother you know, Hirai. It was raining when I suddenly thought of coming to you. I got out, rain stopped; I get in, rain starts. Is it not wonderful?"

My feet were full of sores. Dust settled on them. Sores were bleeding. Friends were anxious. Why men, where are sores? Let me wash my feet with indifference. My feet were all right in a day more. Nothing about the body was worth any notice. And yet neglected, it was beaming with the beauty of the presence of angels. I was sane, though people suspected a screw loose, because I was sensitive like the mimosa to this touch of beauty. Like a harp string, I went throbbing, touched by the gentle breath of a passing wind. I was inarticulate, except in my irresponsible babble and the smiles, as vain as a fountain in flow with nothing to give out but water. All else was meaningless; I had nothing but joy. I was taken up in the swinging rays of auroras, and I felt I was being rocked in the cradle of the distant Milky Way. I never wept. How good a child I was. I had thoroughly cast myself to wind and water; it was not my duty to think of living—that was someone else's job. Mine was to be superbly delicious. I was to be an excitant to Nature and to draw the milk of sympathy from the very rocks. I admit the rocks have udders like the kine, if we only knew how to milk them.

They foolishly poetise over things, when one has so little leisure from the joys of one's own beauty of soul. And tears, bead-like would flow from my eyes; and the eyes were ever full of them. They fell on the ground in thankfulness. How sweet is life!

A quivering restless spirit of youth and joy, I would not be caught in any measured tunes. I loved the song freed from the singer's voice, and I loved poetry that had

melted off into the blackness of a love-lorn maiden's eye into silence, into a sigh or a complaint or a whole youth of Spring.

There was more music for me in the Tokyo streets full of Kimonos, in the parks full of cherry trees than in the music halls; more poetry in the winter snows, in the pebbles washed by the Japanese maiden, in the little courtyard of a Japanese house than in the lifeless mingling of words.

I carried a season with me. I lighted the rooms of my friends if there was a cloud, and I shaded them if there was a glare. In the rain, I was sunshine and in the sunshine I was a deep cool shade. The rivers flowed at my feet. And the stars shone as I opened my eyes. I was so young, I thought the best love was to be so beautiful as myself. Self-sacrifice was a thing foreign to me. I was such a spoiled child of Nature. Floods washed out everything, there was no litter of any regrets in my mind. I was absolutely sinless, Divine.

I was loudly crying at times—"I am God", "I am God." What else really can a full blown lotus say? Man is God.

V

KOBE—First Impressions of Japan

OUR steamer after leaving Hongkong sailed straight to Moji. We missed the beautiful port of Nagasaki. At Moji coming from the plague stricken India, the steamer had to undergo quarantine. It was for the first time we, young Indians, understood what a truly sympathetic Government meant. How soothing was the treatment accorded to us by the Japanese Health Officer as contrasted with the irresponsible administration of such things in India. In India the Government official is dreaded like a snake. All things official are suspected. People are afraid and the officials adopt the attitude of vain-glorious bullies. The lower services are not only hopelessly inefficient and ignorant but realising the general tone of administration as degenerate, they become mean and revengeful. The general administration in India treats people as slaves and serfs. Here at Moji we understood the literal meaning of public services. We were taken into absolutely clean all wooden quarters, where we were asked to undress and go into the baths. Clean—no they were spotless, holy like a cloister. The flooring was of the pure Japanese mats. Every wooden fringe scraped, washed and sponged. The sliding door inlaid with porous Japanese paper closed and opened like the white wings of a swan. We had a right royal bath and then we had to clothe ourselves in heavenly robes in those flowing Kimonos of Japan. Meanwhile our woollen suits made so badly by the cleverest tailor of Rawalpindi went through the disinfection processes; they were sulphurated. The ancient world had its own superstitions and the sciences its own. We had to pass through the quarantine vagaries, but we emerged divine from the hot baths.

All passengers then assembled in a common room where we had the first sip of that delightful beverage, Japanese tea, on which Okakura has written a new gospel (The Book of Tea by Okakura Kakuzo). In that aromatice association with the Japanese officers of having a cup of holy companionship I was learning the (new) alphabet of a wholly new culture and art of social romanticism never seen in that spiritual form in any other country except perhaps in Persia as in the imagination of Hafizes and Omars. The quiet of the inland sea following this sight of the elysium of tea, was like rushing irresistibly into divine raptures. We wondered now what will the poets and artists be of a nation whose police officers were such angels. The exquisite bowings to us all in the tea room told us of some spontaneous friendships that were coming, like those of the flowers on the roadside with whom, without much introduction, are struck spontaneous fellowships of life, some everlasting friendships that pass away in loving glances cast on each other.

A ride in the Jinrikisha through Kobe street was a marvellous sensation; it was an exaltation. Kobe agitated me beyond measure. It was the opening out of a new world before my wonder-lit eyes. A land of the fairies, dreams, no substances, all soul, radiance and strange glances. Only glanccs to understand all by the visions of this wonder. I in my young mind thought this was the true China of the Arabian Nights. Here in Kobe, I remembered Alladin's lamp. The elfin soft life of Kobe began to infuse itself into me. I began to feel as though I had gone beyond death's door. The perfection of the flying Ricksha gave the illusion of a winged transport through the clouds. And the Japanese women clad in rainbow hues flying in Rickshas past us struck me as denizens of some higher, intenser, lighter world than the bull and buffalo world in India.

Familiarity is friendship, but friendship destroys that wonder. The strangeness of the vision of the beautiful is everything. It is better to be known to no one except like a stranger and till such time as the charm is not gone. It is better to know the brilliance of transience and the charm of evanescence rather than to be bored by constant

association with mere matter of things and persons. One can well appreciate the prophetic art of Goethe disappearing at midnight, leaving the best beloveds of the moment and the children of the street crying "Dr. Goethe is gone." It occurred to me that India perhaps in the religious fancy of the Japanese was a fascinating Heaven. And rightly, for it is the birth-place of that Prince of Peace who indwells in the soul of Japan and fills home and forest with his holy radiance. It is, therefore, useless to belong to one group or to one country The ideal man is he who makes the world a street where the beloved dwells and roams looking at many windows through which so many new eyes look at the wandering minstrel of love. I thought it was nothing but muddy existence to go on living in one country like in a grave. Why? Because here everything that met my eye astonished me. My hair stood on end with the sensations of new life. All was holy. All was celestial. It was the surprise of peace. It was love of nothing. It was a new revelation of the beauty of the soul about which Indians talk endlessly without realising its music in their life. They have managed to scare the soul away as the Indian housewife scares a crow sitting on the eaves by too much halloing.

The ricksha man offered his dainty vehicle to us and we both went on the wings of that angel-like being to the Kobe waterfall. There was a guide leading us. The ricksha-man was so innocent, while the guide looked so much of an animal. I thought as cats live in our houses, these animals live in such pure homes and cities and lands too. It occurred to me there and then that all higher worlds too drag in their trail the lower worlds in this sense, and much of the nuisance of the very constitution of the world has to be borne by all. We proceeded with our guide. It was like going to meet a man and finding only the shower of foam-bubbles of life's laughter. The waterfall of Kobe. Nothing of that roaring torrent we expected to see. Even the roar of the water-fall was cultured and beautifully restrained. All made so quiet by the music of the falling waters. A tiny silver thread, a spiritual entity hanging delicately by the mountain and the mountain side smiling the smile of a youthful maiden.

A few cherry trees in pink blossom shading the waterfall. It was the Japanese Spring when we had arrived there. How soft the mingling of the voice of the waterfall with the heroic glow of the cherry flower and the carpetted little tea-house like a nest hung on a hedge where the Japanese girls were twittering together like sparrows. Tea was being poured into cups.

We had seen many wild waterfalls in the pine tressed Himalavas, but it seemed that the Himalayan waterfalls were all orphans. No one loved them, nor when there, had we either thought anything about them. Unless the perfection is scattered in the very dust and grass of the country, unless the divine culture of truth of beauty is scattered like light in the souls of a people, how could perfect things be loved and admired? The Kobe waterfall was the child of the nation; it was the beloved of godlike men. So our love for it was awakened. There is a lot of good in human heart but until the kindled social life of the religion and art of the beautiful sets it on fire and makes of every tiny particle a burning torch, what could mere individuals do?

The wooden box-like Japanese tea house struck me as a person of taste. Unlike modern hotels, it was a home. The Japanese girls bending and pouring the amber liquid into the tiny tea cups with that sweet divine grace looked like a group of angels dressed in clouds pouring the golden current of life out of their vases.

Little porcelain cups like the hand-cups of cherubs. The gold-coloured liquid like sunlight in the cups. It was Japanese tea. A spiritual pastime. It was not a human appetite but an angelic discourse. Well does Okakura say:

"Meanwhile let us have a sip of tea. The afternoon glow is brightening the bamboos, the fountains are bubbling with delight, the soughing of pines is heard in our kettle. Let us dream of evanescence and linger in the beautiful foolishness of things."

And compare with it the vu'garity of a tea in a modern hotel. Big cups, milk, sugar, a huge teapot, a clumsy clown, a huge animal in attendance pouring it out. Gathering too much matter on the high legged tea table

and drinking on stilts the vulgar substance in order to quench the barbarous thirst of some exhausted animal, and yet they dare call it the table of civilised people.

Men should really come to Japan to learn by mere tea drinking how gross matter can be transmuted by one kiss of the delicate cup into soul itself.

The cherry petals wafted by the zephyrs as willing victims to this universal infection of ecstacy of life fall into the tea cups here. One gets quite a different view of religion and art here. The grandeur of the spiritual ceremonials of the Roman Catholic Christianity topples down as affected and forced, perhaps the grandest gospel of Divine Grace. The Hindu bathing the Shiva lingam and ringing the bell to awaken himself to the divine sound is rank stone. And Islam with its hammer to break idols and to murder the non-moslems is sheer grossness of conception of life. You are taken completely out of the dark barbarities—the mosque and the church and the temple and the shrine—in a Japanese tea-house under the shower of the frail pleasure-like petals of cherry blossom and in that meaningless prattle of the frisking angels—the Japanese girls. In that mingled laughter and holy sadness, one finds his soul caught in the subtlest passion of art and religion. I at once thought how heavy are countries studded with temples and mosques in every street without this social romanticism of the Japanese tea-house. How vain is the perverted sense of religion without this live calm ! How stupid is the day without this meaningless babble of the kettle round which men and women gather without any of the restraint of the "old fathers of the desert" and yet the atmosphere so produced is as pure as that of their catacombs and dug-outs in the desert of the Nile. Under the showers of those tears of the cherry to think too much and too seriously of a few indiscretions of wind-blown youth is sinful. Pleasure that leaves no stain is in the nature of a divine sacrifice. Too much definition of the path of life is senseless jugglery on the part of the priest who has no business but to mislead the life of man into rigmaroles of what no one truly ever understands, the priest himself least of all. Freedom from the monotonous jargon of the priests in the Japanese

tea-house allows the human soul to dip for the first time into the purity of aestheticism as religion and the tea-house shines in its golden image on the blue heights as the two-domed temple of life's Perfection and its Evanascence.

Later on my first impressions gained definiteness. And I am now definitely of the faith after having come in contact with the Japanese worship of the Beautiful in the sordid daily existence of ours that there is no religion left any more in the cry of the muezzin, no art in the worship of idols by the Hindu, no passion of Jesus for man left in the Church. Asia is full of dust and dirt and the squalor of faithlessness. And Europe's glorious temples are sunk in the quagmire or the new illusions of realistic culture. In the fragility of the tea ceremony of Japan there is a greater universality of the feeling of the Eternal than in all the petty and vague renunciations of the monks of the religious systems who are still spreading the musty odours of a long dead practice by sticking to it as the vermin sticks to an old rag.

Everywhere in Asia, except a few oasis in the desert, it is superstition, slavery, bondage. What business or claim can a subject and enchained race have to show inclinations to true religion or art. Freedom is the very breath of both. In Japan the soul of the Orient is fully free. To us Indians at least the first wafts of that fragrance of human freedom that came from the blue vapours of the tea cup, that sweet fellowship was the greatest realisation of the beauty of religious feeling by a wholesale denial of all religions. Here one understands that any one with Christianity or with Islam or with Buddhism in his sleeves concealed, cannot be truly religious. This dawn of a spiritual experience was extremely exhilarating to me then as is even now. What else is religion? There in Japan the whole people love the cherry blossom more than themselves. They are by their intense love of flowers as gay and as deeply sad and as vain and as divine. In the cherry blossom centres the beauty of the Japanese life, their soul lives in it. In the full spring-tides of joy of the rose-cherry, there is the prevailing undertone of the sadness of a thousand deaths of the very flowers who

make life so beautiful by their universal death. One finds there the Nirvana of Buddhism has filtered into the handsome feet of man and woman, for their wisdom is shattered into those fragile pleasures and everlasting paths of the wind-blown petals of the cherry. Men and flowers, trees, and hill and rivers of Japan lie deep in the Buddha, a dream of distress which is no more felt.

I paid a visit to the Kobe waterfall. I was agitated. I felt as curious as the bee searching the heart of the flowers. I took the edges of the garments of the ministering damsels and felt proud to have so touched them. I touched their hair, their hands, half doubting if they were also like ours. The girls' laughter rang like bells at my foreign foolishness.

The delicate waists of the Japanese girls so artistically and so passionately caught forever by their *obies* made me feel jealous as well as pure in the contemplat in that in the very clothes were the bonds of an eternal ounion with one's self.

I gazed at the *obies* and *kimonos* of those girls and wondered how someone had made the flowing rivers clothe the women of the race. Here in the female dress was the magic embrace of man and woman in an exquisite restraint of love that no one knows yet. The heart-beat of man and beast and angel is one. Whether the Japanese Empire spreads or not, the Japanese female dress will rule over a world-wide empire one day. Alas, modernism is ever poisoning the ancient tastes of such a poetic race also.

Light indeed, I thought, must be the kinships of such people who had found union with their own souls. The sword flashes and snaps all ties, the fields are full of the slain. The cherry petal bestrews the ground and makes the very dust holy. Posthumous fame is more ardently sought than honours while living.

When the cherry just sprouts on the bare trees like a miracle, a thousand flower births again bind the old ties. There is a resurrection of the blessed dead and the spray of cherry adorns the *takemonos* of every house-wife.

The faintness of all endearments is wholly divine in Japan. Nothing of this ephemeral world is so intense

as the love of death and self-sacrifice. They gaze at the moon agape. They devour the joy of opening the mouths of flowers by parting their lips with them and then swallowing down the joy contained within them. The poor Indian Yogi does not know of this real ambrosia that trickles within by loving flowers so passionately. Fujiyama certainly accompanies them in their glorious death and lives with them as a Buddhist sage whose passions have been silenced in the Realms beyond.

The Japanese tea cup thus is the little present moment which they fill with innocent exhilaration, they close their eyes in rapture. Time is kindled as a Torch of Night. Enough are the small delights; and surely they do not know of death or sorrow in that heavy archaic omniscient sense of the old Brahmans.

If the Cherry were uprooted from Japan, I believe the Japanese race would die. What a difference between the Japanese and the English. The English perhaps would die without Shakespeare and the threatre and Scotch Whisky; and the Germans without Munich beer. The Japanese may tide over the earth-quakes, but they would suffocate without their plum and the cherry. This delicate sense of religion is peculiarly Japanese. In Japanese social Communion the body is invisible. One smells flowers when a Japanese maiden stands amidst the Chrysanthemums; it seems she is just one of them. She rains roses around in a rose garden. She is one of the lotuses, one amongst many in the pond. And her tress-knot is not without a white camelia, "the moon hanging by the mountain."

And not only in her cherry-blossom, not only in her home and her flower-loving housewife, but the spirit of Japan is equally and gracefully embodied in her Geisha. The Geisha is truly as fragile as *Ame*, a dainty flower of Japan, she is as essentially national as the cherry, as essentially spiritual as the Samurai chivalry. Dressed in the painted clouds of her *kimono* and her *obi*, fatal as the lightning-spark splashing her round with glory, she is as mildly exhilarating as the tea-cup. With her half closed eyes, she is a statue of Bodhi Nirvana, and with her Uta songs twanged in the delicate rhythm of her soul, Geisha too is

the ideal courtesan who dares to invite Buddha, first entertain him and then give all to Him and be a poor nun of the Lord's Sangha. The ecstacy of Buddha is justified in the singing limbs of the Japanese Geisha too. Without such perfection scattered so broadcast and so apparently unnecessarily, no country nor race can be good nor truly religious without throwing all its best pearls in the streets, its best flowers in the fields.

Let me tell you in company of such passionate lovers of death and such intense aesthetes, a good cup of Sake is assuredly a better religion than a whole life of vow and vigil and suffering with such stupid things as the Hindu Shastras and Christian nonsense of original sin-stuff. In such a country verily a cup of tea sipped with the fragrance of the Japanese life and its unrestrained holiness is as a visit paid to the celestials.

CHAPTER XI

Shanghai

ON my way back from Japan I was a clean shaven monk, a Buddhist Bhikku, though I had not the begging bowl, nor the intense sad renunciation of old. I took delight in things of beauty all about me. My prayers were addressed to the Beautiful. I was always excited by the touch of someone I saw not. The flower dancing on a twig was as alive as a young woman trying to smile at me and to draw me into conversation on the roadside. My blood tingled with poetic fervour which I thought would burn me. It did burn me, and till the last I was a flame, a burning blossom, never ashes. If ashes at all, I sprang out of them again like a rose. Never the dust of intellect, I have been always afraid of the intellect that is not the handmaid of soul, as something treacherous, a thing to which I never felt like trusting my life, although intellectual brilliance has always had my homage and adoration. But the logic of it is much too cold for me. Intellectual concepts are not the truths against which I love to recline, just as a pilgrim might lay his head on a stone for rest.

I was new to the old profession of monkism and its poses of grace and condescension. Its ceremonial was as disgusting to me as the hypocritical mannerisms of the worldly wisdom. And my inexperience gave me away once in Shanghai. When in my yellow robe I landed at Shanghai, I met a Sikh policeman on the seaside road, a splendid specimen of the Punjab peasantry. He was called Sikh but except for the signs of the Sikh inheritance, he had nothing of the Sikh, the Disciple in him. Imagine what I mean by the Sikh when I consider truly that St. Hilarion, Paul the simple, and Malani like persons of the old Christian fathers of the Desert were truly Sikhs, the disciples. He bowed to me in such a way that he almost touched my feet. I did not know why he should

have done so? I was just a university man, fresh from school and he an elderly person with more years in his knapsack, but he perhaps thought me a Mahatma. Anyhow I felt very awkward in thus having been made a worshipful thing by his superstitious and mechanical regard for a coloured cloth. In Japan, the yellow robe brought no such honours and I thought I was wrapping an old romance of religion over my limbs and by adopting it I was giving an altogether false notion of myself.

He was very kind and took me with apparent joy to the Police lines. All there gathered round me, and were anxious to serve me. They gave me a portion of their food which was so rich with butter and jaggery that I could only just dull the edge of my hunger with it. But they learnt from me that I had no objections of caste or religion as to the taking wherever, whatever might happen to fall to my share by way of food, as I thought it was sheer waste of good time and taste to raise objections of any kind so long as the food was fairly edible and such as would fairly agree with one's digestive system, and that I did think that provided we did not over-eat or eat wrongly to tax our system, all foods were equally spiritual. The Icelander's fat-devouring, the beef-eating of the dwellers of the Frigid zones were as good as drinking only milk in the hot plains of India. Fish and fowl and egg according to climate and temperament and habits of infancy were equally good foods for man as wheat and gram and butter and toast. To say that only meat or only vegetables are spiritual foods is insanity. There were men who ate beef and pork and were as compassionate as any Bhikku. The vegetarians are as cruel as tigers. So nothing depends on food. All depends on digestion, assimilation and the essential nature of man.

All this was too much for those Sikhs who were miserable specimens of men of the Punjab mentally conquered by the Brahmanical superstition. They suddenly turned against me as if I was a cheat, a wandering beggar who was masquerading in holy garb to deceive people. They spurned me as some low caste pariah who had spoiled their brass vessels by my touch.

I had defiled them by my opinions. I had to come

out of the Police lines with their odium thrown at me, and go wither I list. I had not a penny in my pocket. This wretched penny I had neither then nor ever afterwards. I chanced to reach a Railway Station. Seeing me somewhat embarrassed a Sikh Railway employee who was standing there asked me where I wanted to go. I told him, "I had to go but I am too late, my ship must by then have weighed anchor. The ship was standing out at sea." And the kind gentleman told me that I could still catch my steamer if I took that very train that was going to sea, and the Chinese Sampanwalla would take me to the steamer.

"But I have no money," said I.

"Here are two dollars for the shipman and I will get you the ticket. It is such a pleasure to serve you," said he with a good smile.

I boarded the train. And as the train steamed out, there stood that brother of mine bidding me a sweet farewell. On the opposite bench to me sat a middle-aged Chinese woman with a child, a girl about seven tugging at her clothes. The Chinese woman was weeping, her tears fell large as grapes. Her feet were large and bare. She had not had the fortune of small Chinese feet. I instinctively felt that like myself she needed help. I gave her one out of the two dollars the kind Sikh gentleman had given me. It was a rare delight to see her face glow. If a Dollar could create a rose-like glow on that divine human face, I thought, and I still think of selling all my bones for a Dollar a-piece. Sympathy without showering out all the gold one has on humanity is typical of the pharisee whom the divine Jesus lashed with such fury from out of the tabernacle of the world.

I got into the sampan, and I reached the steamer just when the ladder was about to be hoisted up. I put my foot on the latter and gave one dollar to the sampanwalla. And he asked for more. By that time I had gone a few rungs up the ladder. He threw his iron hook at the end of a long bamboo to drag me down as if I were a goat. The hook just grazed my heel, it was wounded. The Sampanwalla was rightly indignant. I had cheated him. It was meet he should have

drowned me in sea for he was angry. But it was no fault of mine if his hook missed catching my flesh. By just a hair's breadth I escaped. The ladder was heaved up, the steamer weighed anchor, and the Sampanwalla was thus compelled to give me a dollar in charity.

CHAPTER XII

Back to India

1904

WHEN one returns from a newly visited country, even after a brief sojourn therein, one is endowed with new eyes. And for some time the impressions keep on crowding in on one's imagination. The balance of one's preferences is disturbed, and one feels like a foreigner in one's own country and the impressions of such an one have the truth of reaction against the old order of things. I remember the return to my own country was anything but pleasant. Signs of centuries old slavery, sophistry and superstition were visible everywhere. The only gladness was to return to my kith and kin and the friends of my childhood, men and trees and roads and dust of dear villages of Pothohar and Abbottabad.

In the cities of the Punjab it seemed all life had turned into brick and mortar. It was all walls, walls, partitions and sub-partitions everywhere. The Hindu system of caste had made even the plan of building new houses and new cities miserable. I almost cried amongst these heaps of dead bricks. "Where are men and women? Both are crowded out of sight by walls. Nature is crowded out. Sunlight is shut out. Air, free air is imprisoned and it is rotting. Man is torn by his desires which can accomplish little for him. There is no free opportunity in the country for genius to shine. The spectre of hunger stalks over the length and breadth of the land and all the people are ready to rend each other for they are hungry. Ethics and aesthetics are but polite arts of the idle rich in order to talk about them and justify their stolid indifference. As Swami Vivekananda remarked rich men and Princes of India are as dead wax toys to adorn our

museums. There is no wholeness of life, no rapture of innocent and happy homes. The richest houses are hovels, they have no music of love, their hearts are empty, theirhomes are as living graves. The wives labour like galley slaves." So I found in India that humanity is generally brutalized and demoralized by excessive idleness and non-development of material resources. Talk of spirituality and religion is all universal cant. And all boasted culture of the East was covered by a supervening blackness of false and dead religious routine that held all the groups of people in their bloody claws and ate of their flesh like vultures.

I felt sick. It was nauseating. The most intelligent men I met looked to me soaked in ignorance. There was no will left in the country to life, power or progress. No presences anywhere, only carcases. Political leaders as usual, selfish hypocrites.

Moreover the fact of my having had a dream-touch of life in Japan and my intimate and affectionate contact with the men and women of Japan had made me much too sensitive. I liked nothing in India then. Full of this world, they all denied it with lifelong established hypocrisy of Vedantic thought—all is illusion. Full of hunger of all kinds, and brothers killing brothers for a small patrimony, one trampling a brother under foot to advance himself to a post of honour under the British Government, or betraying the interests of the people to advance a dogma or a doctrine, or selling away the interest of the future for the small gain of a small community of the present; and then all the mosques and temples and shrines crowded with worshippers! What? Isn't it an organised hypocrisy of ages on a colossal scale invading the huts, houses, offices, temples, and mosques of the people? The country is doomed. The people are damned.

Sitting on this heap of dung, I still dreamt of the Japanese home and life and love and labour. How light their architecture. How soft their voices. Noiseless the busy street. No cry of the child, no exchange but of mutual courtesies. No ill-will to a neighbour. The life of flowers. The Japanese men and women shone in

contrast before me as the lightest companions for they neither thought of the soul like the ancients nor of the body like the moderns. Like the pink clouds of their cherry they were pleased with the brevity of life. The Indian pride of race being so long lived on the other hand was nauseating. The Indians tried to comprehend Truth which they themselves declare from the housetops to be incomprehensible and the Japanese took good comfortable seats in it to live it and lived therein. In the Japanese home for example, no one is treated with such sumptuous hospitality and artistic delicacy as the flowers. Intense grows Okakura in his expression of the Japanese love of flowers, "In joy or sadness, flowers are our constant friends. We eat, drink, sing and dance and flirt with them. We wed and christen with flowers. We dare not die without them. We have worshipped with the lily, we have meditated with the lotus, we have charged in battle array with the roses and the chrysanthemum. .. It frightens one to conceive of a world bereft of their presence. ...Their serene tenderness restores to us our waning confidence in the universe even as the intent gaze of a beautiful child recalls our lost hopes. When we are laid low in dust it is they who linger in sorrow over our graves." And again:—

"The ideal lover of flowers is he who visits them in their native haunts like Taoyuenming who sat before a broken bamboo fence in converse with the wild chrysanthemum, or Linwosing losing himself amid mysterious fragrance as he wandered in the twilight among the plum blossoms of the Western Lake. It is said that Chowmushih slept in a boat so that his dreams might mingle with those of the lotus. It was this same spirit which moved the Empress Komio one of our most renowned Nara sovereigns as she sang, "If I pluck thee, hands defile thee. O flower ! Standing in the meadows as thou art, I offer thee to the Buddhas of the past, of the present, of the future."

There are no windows and doors and walls in Japan to shut Heaven out. The Japanese house is infinite as soul, light as the breeze of *Kosar* when *Shojis* are thrown open. At night the moon rolls on the *titami*—Fujiyama is in every

heart and the sun daily rises all over the mind of Japan out of the Snow-turban of that White Sage of the East.

The Japanese housewife is Nature incarnate and in the subtle decoration of her straw nest-like home there is the image of her beautiful soul. The absolute beauty of the twig sprayed with cherry blossom in her bamboo vase is her own graceful figure and the twig has her arms and also the charm of her flowery smile that makes life worth many deaths. The Japanese housewife is an entrancing magician, she creates almost a human mind in the blessed twig, as silent as her own. The story of life and love is told in a few delicate but conscious turns of the cherry twig. This pathetic silence suggestive of the infinite mystery of life makes the whole country divine. There is the beam of Nirvana on her face and on the face of her cherry. This is why all parks of Japan, the Uyeno and the Asakusa are full of cherry. The Japanese child is the soul of flower. Those girls going in their scarlet *Hakamas* to school bathed in silent smiles of roses are the best roses of the Orient. The little soldiers with their tiny satchels of first books to school are all pictures of joy. And those streams of flowers issue forth from the Japanese homes. The Japanese house with little twig of cherry is so wonderfully creative of beauty, life and death. There in Japan the fragrance of life is thus loosened freely from the garments of the Infinite. As the landscape lies in moonlight so the Japanese hut and home and temple lie in the radiant peace of Buddha's Nirvana. It is the silence that by its peal deadens the roars of the sea and conquers the rage of the thunder of active volcanoes. To the Japanese, life, this side or that side of death, is only a geographical accident.

While in India the people are abnormally obsessed by the uncanny sense of the death and beyond. They are afraid of themselves. They have no art of loveliness. Their cities are houses crawled together for fear. Their Shivas and Vishnus have not been able to awaken that interest in life that strikes root in this earth and only reaches its blossom in the next. The Hindus have not decorated the Himalayas. The teeming millions had no love of nature to create cities of gold on the tops. They have in no sense, except in a supertl-

stitious and a vague one. loved flowers, rocks or rivers. Their holiest pilgrimage places are full of human vermin. They have so ostensibly loved God that in their stupid ignorance they have killed Him and buried Him out of sight in a jingle of empty rhetoric, of confused metahphysical slogans. And there it has already showed itself in its outer bankruptcy of taste and inner richness of soul in the recent "civilisation" of the educated in aping the European's drawing-rooms in the hot plains of Bengal and of Lahore and Delhi and in the centuries long squalor both material and moral in their best cities of pilgrimage such as Benares and Hardwar. And the achievements of the modern Indians in social life are extremely ridiculous. Their political views are soulless verbosity, bombast. What a young Japanese boy just out of his naval school can do, the best Indian thinker is forever incapable of achieving. The Indian boasts of his keen intellect, but it is eaten up by the canker of inane speculation. Metaphysics has driven out all artistic instinct and an average Indian is an insipid being devoid of capacity or "can-ness" as compared with an average Japanese. Theological supersititions and communal biases brutalise almost every Indian; even those of great erudition and culture are stuck in the same quagmire, unable to come out. The life in India on the whole is hoplessly inartisitic, filthy and barbarous as compared with the life in Japan. And the Indian is still so stupid that he glories in his artisitic achievements of the past and even of the present, in spite of the glaring fact that life is getting more and more degenerated. There is no spirit of divine cleanliness in the social and public life, no artisitic sense in the architecture of their homes and pilgrim places, no refined incompatibility of temper with the immoral squalor and dirt of all kinds that is piled on every door, in every street, in every temple and in every public office. And above all like all sick men, the Indian cannot bear the truth to be told him i. e. that he is a barbarian in practical life. Alas, he is hopelessly demented that way.

CHAPTER XIII

I was a wayside flower that was plucked away.

WHEN the environment in India is so gloomy, when man here is but a clothed carcase, what hope had I of running a home? And yet on my return my sister and parents wished me to marry and settle down. How could an irresponsible child of Nature function consistently as a husband? It was hopeless especially as within myself I had no confidence in turning life into a business deal as my other countrymen had a knack of doing. A small, miserable young Indian knew how to think of rainy days and how to provide carefully for his children if possible to his nth. generation, prudent and calculating and careful. I knew I had not in me the self-consciousness and prudery of being a parent in India. I felt like being someone's child all my life. And ridiculous though it may seem, later on when I married I could only be the 'eldest born' to my wife. They say women like men of iron. I do not know if my wife really disliked me on account of my being always a child even when my beard grew grey and people called me a father and I still thought that I was someone's child caught unawares by age and dignity and responsibilities which I always shook off as the duck shakes off water from its white plumage.

Yes, I knew all along that I was a little poppy blossom blooming wild on the roadside. One drop of rain, a big one, and I would be stripped of my foolish glory. One good ray of sun and unexpectedly I could burst out of my prison of leaves in full crimson beauty of my frailities. What could a wife make of such foolish beauty? This much I knew. I was never a man. I recked little of the burden of my *Karma*, while serious, good men were afraid of sins and indiscretions. Suffering comes as seasons come, it is not of my *Karma*, surely not. I was not a man who could resolve or could bind a sheaf of principles and vows and wills to synthesise a character for myself out of the shiboleths of human vagaries. I

was like a green leaf, now happy and now weeping and falling away. I never die, though it may be that I saw I died a hundred times a day and bloomed again a hundred times. I was never defeated nor my blush ever dimmed nor my death ever averted. A kiss of passing love made me glow and a look of scorn withered me. Such a frail thing was I. What hope of running a successful home? Perhaps I tried a home but ran an inn. Perhaps I tried to make a woman my wife and made her a hospital nurse. Perhaps I tried to love a woman of noble soul and smothered her with my inconsistent conduct, now an angel to her and the next moment a beast. This much I may confess, I did my best to love her but perhaps I caused her the greatest disappointment. What use was there in asking a wayside flower to build such heavy cities? Was it not enough if it could adorn the ear of a passing village maiden? Was not a moment's indiscretion of this nature the end of all joy? Did my wife ever feel glory in having me hanging by her ear? Possibly she may many times have pushed me away, teased by my foolish entreaties and still more stupid repetitions of my passion for her without being ever even being serviceable to her. I have no memory. I have no soul. Just a colour and a vain pride that deepens when someone loves me and smiles or speaks a kind word to me. I am surely not born of my *Karma* and I do not live by my *Karma*. My life is so negligible that such mountains of theory need not be imported into it. I am as wayward as a cloud, I am a frail folly of nature in which she loves to preserve her most delicate shades, otherwise why do I not disappear in this so-called savage struggle of life. I also do not believe in disciplining myself to be a man now, when I was not so made, nor in bearing the burden of responsibilities. All discipline must be organic, coming from within me, as spontaneous as the whole of me. My entire being, soul and mind and all, is capable of being washed away in the waters that the glad fountains pour on the head of Shiva in the Himalayas. I could fall in love with a mere flash of beauty and flame up like a heap of gunpowder and blaze away to death for merest nothing. I might lose my way to a temple or pass my days with a

beautiful courtesan if she were to love me. I do not know what might happen to me if some of this beautiful world were to grow a bit kinder to me. I am pluckable.....by other hands, not by my own and I can be treated as my pluckers might list. I am a thing, surely, not a man who thinks so ponderously and behaves so vain-gloriously in an artificial pettiness. I, a frail poppy flower could have perhaps reasonably claimed a Bamboo vase of a kind Japanese housewife, for she loves flowers, and the more her love more fragile the flowers. The fragility is the sweetest tone of beauty for her. It was hopeless to find one in India. But who listens to flowers?

At Abbottabad again. And there I found my plucker had come to me in a strange way. I was transported in a song to the old Pothohar where the Greeks carved the image of Buddha. I was again out of India of the present day for a while. And the beautiful full-voiced women of Pothohar sang in my ears:

"Awake, awake, O Man.
The woman is calling. There is silver in her hand,
And she might lash you with a song, and
With a twig of flowers lest she hurts you.

Awake, awake, O Man.
Truth is announced by the flowers of Pothohar,
Jasmine and rose are abloom.
Or why does Spring breathe so much beauty in our gardens?
O why does the bird sing to her mate?
Beauty, O youth, is religion.
What quaint notions of life the priests O Buddha
Have given you in Japan?
The yellow robe is donned by glories of love,
Yours is of sadness and yet you smile at us.

Awake, awake, O man.
The woman is calling to exchange a glance with beauty
at the village well.
There are two branches of the tree.

One is shivering with someone's voice,
And why is the other not quivering yet?
Fly, O bird and make the opposite branch alive with thy consent.
God has made us all for love,
And what is love if the mate doth not reply to such universal sensations.

Awake, awake, O man,
The woman is calling."

Thus the romance of love lyrics possessed me. I was taken away from the dust on the roadside. Someone they said loved me. The voices of the Pothohar women singing on a wedding day seemed to be spraying the sky with the glory of the dancing sparks of life. Much is concealed in woman for man. For ages he has tried to find her and he has not yet found her. She is still a mystery. I tore up my Bhikku robes. I trampled my vow under my feet. My plucker had come and I was plucked and had been gathered away. What became of me who knows? What after all is to become of frail flowers? They are blamed for their frailities everywhere. And the end of all is utter waste. The sublime insignificance and the dear divine nothingness of life has been mine. Have I thus by this description of myself flattered myself? No, I was, as I have said, neither a full man nor a right kind of animal. I was a weak frail individual. Not as bold as a robber, not as great as a poet. You may not call me a flower, but what was I when at times I shone like an orb and at others I was like a burnt incense, mere ashes? If I had said I was a frail vice it would not be of the same value as a frail virtue. Both are ineffective. I was ineffective, of no consequence. Sometimes pure as a dove trilling songs aimlessly on a *kikar* grove, and at other times, a vile thing thinking ill of those who had done me so much good. But neither for the one do I claim any credit nor for the other any shame, though at times I have wept bitter tears at my barbaric tendencies that sprouted again and again in spite of me and were so difficult to uproot and to cast out. I blamed myself

and I did not blame myself, for surely nothing of the acquired divinity could be in me as I went whither the wind took me. But I cannot forget that at times Someone took me on His shoulders and I shivered under His fingers like the liquid strings of a river-like harp. I stood aghast at what the miracle of His touch could get out of me. Whenever He laid me down I was again the vile little wood and the meaninglessness of mere fiddles.

I sat once under a tree, thumping myself as if I was Someone's lyre. Once or twice, posing as a lyre, I thumped out under the strokes of my own fingers on my face, the music of ineffable peace.

I could not be the bee, that needs some quality of being. I am quite happy in being a lotus now abloom, now closed.

CHAPTER XIV

Japanese Reminiscences

1900—1904

IN Japan, though a University student, I was accorded such warmth of treatment that I began considering myself a great man in this respect, that I was in some way the honoured representative of my country. I represented in Japan, the Land of the Great Buddha and they must have found in me what, even then, I never imagined in myself. Our privilege was that however poor and foolish, we Indians were the countrymen of the Lord Buddha. The pride of this knowledge came naturally to me in Japan. In those days, a group of Phillipine patriots had fled to Japan, and lived as the sorrowful compatriots of Dr. Jose Risal. They were like birds whose nests had been destroyed. The Phillipine Isles had passed into the civilising protection of the Americans. Then there were a few Chinese students and the Korean patriots who were cursing Japan for her Imperialism. And thus the whole of Asia represented in its defeat in Japan the victorious, a picturesque oriental assemblage of a few scattered patriots. And we met as Asiatics, smiled at each other, ate the Japanese cakes and drank the tea in the cherry parks. It was here that now a Phillipine patriot stood up to speak and then a Chinese and then an Indian. Of all the Indian students in Tokyo, I had what they called eloquence, it must have been an unconscious eloquence. I spoke many times in this Oriental Club on India. And we took but boyish delight with all the seriousness of a solemn discussion, in abusing the British for having taken our country, for having ground us fine into a wholesale subjection. We were conquered to our very marrow, our traditions, legends, religions, social pride, all were being Anglicised. Our national costume was being altered, and our homes were being destroyed by these alien influences from within and without. And so we learnt from the Phillipines of the

tyrannies they imagined and have suffered at the hands of the Americans. The "water curing" adopted by the Americans to get news from the Phillipine patriots of the whereabouts of their compatriots was a horrible method of torture. The soap solution was pumped in through the mouth and the American soldiers then sat over the overfull bellies of the poor people till they confessed and betrayed their friends or died. Few could stand this torture and the patriots were hunted out and executed.

We learnt how the Phillipines revolted against the Spanish. And the revolution was caused by one book, the great novel of Dr. Jose Risal. And the scene of his imprisonment and execution brought tears to our eyes and we wept together. His American fiance sat outside the iron grates of the prison door, as Dr. Jose Risal wrote his last song and gave it to her to take to his people and he was taken away to be shot.

The Chinese talked of their country. Our friend Chang told us how they wished to go and get rid of the foreigners.

The Koreans blamed Japan for doing exactly what we were condemning in the Americans and the British.

In this peculiar assemblage of not four *dervishes*, but many *dervishes*, we talked and wept and made resolutions of going and causing wars of independence in our country. Very confidentially we conferred with each other as to whether Japan could arm us and help us in our struggle for liberty. We tried to whisper to our Japanese friends our hopes and aspirations and many of them sympathised deeply and we grew still more hopeful.

It was under the Auspices of this Oriental Association of the patriots of Asia, we met Okakura, Miss Macleod the disciple of Swami Vivekananda, Miss Scheruswesky a beautiful Russian lady, and a few American women painters who had joined Okakura's School of Art, the Bijitsuen as against the Tokyo Art Academy, to learn the secrets of Japanese Art-Idealism.

Okakura met us with great heart. One day, we were invited to his residence. A few Geishas were twanging their *kotos*, a few were distributing Sake in tiny cups and the guests were in the elevated mood of tea-ism.

Mr. Okakura offered us those delights, but being foolishly and ignorantly obsessed with so called "moral notions" of the foolish priests, hanging as appendages in our uninformed minds, we refused. I regret now I refused that beverage of human suffering. I repeat now, I wondered then why Okakura drank. I regret I misunderstood even for a moment that great lover of the beautiful, that king of Japanese aesthetes. But I with another Indian student R. Ray thought ourselves purer than the purest rt-forms of Geisha. How mean and foolish was our outlook on life and art not to have been able to attune ourselves to that soft kissing of the Sake cups, that soft nimbus of glory of inebriation in the whole room, that spiritual atmosphere of art was our unfortunate blindness and positive meanness. Owing to our ignorance we missed all that superb pleasure of the few moments of human elevation that comes like the visits of angels in this universal depression of human sorrow and suffering. It was truly Buddhistic. Alas, we were then much too Hinduistic. Okakura came out as we started to go, right up to the door. The night was dark, the lamps were subdued. And Okakura said, "Puran San, I am for India." And here he tore open his *kimono* knot, bared his breast and said, "Behold this bosom burns for India." And I saw one of the lamps threw up a flame, and the bosom of Okakura was burning for human freedom. The author of the great simple sentence "Asia is one" was trying to sprinkle wine over that flame. Where this flame does not burn, the wine makes but dirty mud of human clay but where the flame burns, only the flame is fed. Alas, I knew not. I loved Okakura. I gazed at him, as he sat talking with his rather large eyes for a Japanese, half closed, shot with the red of that sacred passion.

Miss Macleod was the ardent disciple of the famous Swami Vivekananda. She wished that Swami Vivekananda would visit Japan once. And to invite the great monk, she succeeded in sending Okakura to Calcutta. Okakura met sister Nivedita and here the two great souls worked on Okakura's first great book—"The Ideals of the

Ea[illegible]. Sister Nivedita's introduction is perhaps her master-piece in that particular form of literature.

Miss Macleod seemed to me a child who was pleased with her toy and I think Vedanta as preached by Swami Vivekananda gave her a few good sentences which enabled her to spend her days in a kind of fool's paradise. It was certainly impossible to expect the intensity of an Eastern philosopher in her or even a full understanding of that life. She passed her days in Japan, looking at pictures and sleeping under the roofs of the ancient Buddhistic temples of Japan. Possibly in the Zen sect of the Japanese Buddhism, she found her Vivekananda. More or less man-ised, Miss Macleod shared with greater appreciation and zest the artistic parties of Okakura. Miss Macleod loved to be praised and we praised her to our heart's satisfaction.

About a year after, I succeeded to start with the help of Dr. Takakutsu, Messrs Sakur, Hirai, Tanaka, Yamagata Murai Honda, Yuasa and other friends an Indo-Japanese club of which I was the Secretary. This Indo-Japanese club has now developed into an important Indo-Japanese Association which is doing very useful work in advancing the commercial and social relations between the two countries. And under the auspices of this Association we welcomed Indian guests, and talked on the advancement of Indian students in Japan. We had a house to ourselves with a staff and four or five of us living in the Club. It is here that I was one day surprised by the visit of an angelic Indian monk whose face I loved at first sight, but whose name I knew not. But as he entered, his presence was resonant with song: his very flesh sounded like a flowing stream. There was a sweet divine murmur round him. A murmur that is no more the feature of modern human personality. Where he sat or slept, the murmurs were still audible.

"I have come to seek you. Your name was on my lips on deck the steamer. I was singing of the Infinite. And you are the Infinite." This is how he accosted me. I felt like a woman agitated with passion for a strange great man.

"My aim, Sir, from my infancy has been to turn a Yogi."

"You are a Yogi. What is Yoga but rising above the body consciousness, above the finite and being infinite at all points of self-consciousness."

We had an invitation to speak at a Buddhist Convocation where "foreign" guests were invited in great number. Kanzo Uchimura, the Carlyle of Japan was to speak on Christianity and the newly arrived charming monk, I thought might speak on the Hindu religion. So we started. It was many miles away. In a tram-car, I sat on a bench opposite to the orange-robed monk. But I did not look at him. I threw my head against the pane and began dying in the sound of "O—O—O—mum, O O, You, You, Sum—or OIM", as his very presence recited it. I died all the way in it. When the destination came the conductor touched me. I got down and so did Swami Rama Tirath of the Punjab—this was his name. The hall of the University of many hundred "mats" was full, the Japanese audience was squatting on the floor, the foreign guests were given seats on one side of the raised dais and Kanzo Uchimura had just got up to speak. Kanzo Uchimura did always imitate the pose of Carlyle. I had met him many times ere this. He felt his moral stature was higher than any one he met. He wrote and spoke in lofty tones. And he wished to be left severely alone by his admirers. In his appreciations he was certainly poignant, penetrating and original. He had sensitive nostrils and he was endeavouring to be a prophet and a disciple. But the vanity that he possessed regarding his capacities, which were remarkable, was the very opposite of Carlylean.

Uchimura lectured on, and no foreigner understood a word, as he spoke in his Carlylean Japanese.

Then the President, a Buddhist priest in his grand sacramental robes, who knew me, asked me to introduce Swami Rama Tirath to the audience. I was in a fluid condition and I flowed out in a stream of eloquence. Swami Rama spoke, but he had so much to say that his eloquence took the final form of mere shrieks and cries. The foreign members of the audience said he was remark-

ab[illegible] and they began evincing great interest in him. A Theosophical lady from Australia tried to persuade him to go to Australia.

When we were returning home, Swami Rama told me that I had a great gift of dying and then waking up with strange powers. He was, he said, in search of men of such gifts. "You be mine", said he, "it is wonderful how you were in a trance in the tram-car and how volcanic in eloquence on the platform. Your oration was unpremeditated but it was a treat."

I bowed down and said, "I am yours, for you are so beautiful".

"Yes death-in-life is the spiritual truth. This body is the cross, and we have to bear it and pass."

One morning I brought him two bound volumes of the Report of the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1891. And he beamed on and looked at me and said, "You know how strange it is. Both man and nature work for me. I wanted this book and it is on my table. "Don't desire, only deserve" this is the secret of the fulfilment of desires. You draw the bow-string and it is only when you relax it, that the arrow flies. You must give up all desires, before your desire is fulfilled. When you desire, you are modifying the whole universe for its fulfilment. It must be fulfilled. You are God. All your thoughts are bound to become things, realities. Only renounce.

"Fill your subconscious mind well. If you fill it with ecstacy, your upper mind will flow with it, that stream of nectar comes gushing out at last from the great hidden depths. So you must not hate, because by hating, you fill your real, subliminal mind with dirt and this is poisonous for your personality. In that great chest, have only your jewels and gems, beautiful attitudes toward man and nature, noble aims, divine thoughts, and wonders of ecstatic vision; have nothing else. That is the King's Treasury, have no rubbish there. This is the secret of a happy life. People teach do's and don'ts. The teacher who does not go and sit in the subliminal mind of man cannot regenerate any one. God must sit within on the throne of that Universal mind running through the deeper

recesses of man. Only then is carnality eaten up. The body serves, as oil feeds the flame of a burning lamp.

"Be large. Renounce everything—keep nothing to thyself, own nothing, not even the body and the whole universe is thine".

And he read and sang a remarkable poem of his:

"For myself when I renounced the sense of possession,
All things became mine, as never before, as never before,
For myself when I renounced the flowers,
All flowers of the world's flowers became mine, as never before, as never before."

He was very ecstatic, he would shut his eyes and tears of bliss would roll down his cheeks.

His very bones trembled with emotion, "I am God."

One day an Indian student from amongst a large Indian audience said, "How is it that this Puran is sitting as though dead, without questioning you, without taking any interest in your conversation which you are giving us?"

"He is listening more deeply than you all, he has thrown away the upper layer of mind and his inner mind, the subliminal, has opened its mouth agape to devour all that I say."

This was correct. For those very students in that very room, from that very seat and posture, heard me after he had gone to San Francisco. And they said that I had his shape, his voice, his accent, his "madness," his pangs all come to me. No one could distinguish who was speaking. A Japanese medical man, a friend of ours told me that I had actually transformed my shape which was then almost that of the monk who had gone away to America.

Once I lectured in Tokyo and the report of my speech appeared in the papers. Swami Rama lectured in San Francisco and the report of his lecture came in the bundle of American papers sent by him to me. And all saw how remarkable it was that our phrases, and thought and theme were mostly the same. I had gone "mad" after

seeing him. I began editing a monthly entitled "Thundering Dawn". Many critics said that the Dawn never thunders. And others complimented me for the poetic title. Kipling too they said had written somewhere "the dawn came thundering all the way." So I went on. In one of my editorial notes I had remarked, "Fujiyama is in my courtyard;" and I remember the "Yokohama Herald" felt delighted at such a large rich possession of mine. I wrote on the falling rain, that the rain-strings joined Heaven and earth with the strings of a harp and the passing winds made music as they passed. I felt supreme and thought all that I wrote was right and beautiful and perfect.

I put all my dreams, wet with morning dew-drops into it and they trembled in its pages before my eyes with the rare lustre of the thought that Swami Rama represented to me in a subliminal way. I had never made any study of Vedantic philosophy, but I realised the whole of it as if I had studied it in a subliminal way from Swami Rama. So when any one put any question to me about it, the reply came from I know not whence and I could give answers that satisfied all doubts expressed to me. I was like a blazing fire and the people said that they felt a radiation of vital warmth from me when sitting near me. While walking in the Tokyo streets, Swami Rama would suddenly stop while talking and say, "Wait. The whole world will be moved. Nature co-works with one who is at one with nature."

His fervour was inspired. Prof. Takakutsu said he saw in him the true Buddhist of the Golden Age of Buddhism, just as they read about the Bodhisatvas and bhikkus in their sacred scriptures. Baron Naibu Kanda was excited with strange joy at his very sight.

Thus I had met this remarkable man who created a stir in America by his divine personality. Mrs. Wellman, an old lady, much oppressed by the little tyrannies of her daughter-in-law and the son who in the fascination of his youth had forgotten his mother and had become as she thought callous and cruel, harboured an unending grievance for many years. He told me she had met Swami Vivekananda who gave her no peace. And then

she was actually disgusted with the Indian monks. But again there, years later, she was pursuaded to see Swami Rama for the gift of that peace, she so longed to have. And she met me and told me that Swami Rama gave her the private interview she sought and for hours she wept and complained against her son and daughter-in-law and what distress she was in. All this while the Swami sat with his eyes closed and silent. She thought he was so boorish as not to utter a word of sympathy for her while hearing such a tale of woe which had been to her a life-long tragedy. But as he opened his eyes, the clouds vanished, the sun shone, she saw the clear sky and felt a strange ecstacy. His lips pouted softly and his eyes were red, shot with the strange seraphic blackness of an inspired poet, and he looked at her full in the eyes and said just one word, "Mother." And she told me she felt she was "The Mother of the whole universe." And she felt she had more kinship with the Indian than with the American and that her home could be anywhere. Every home was hers. "This INNER DAWN of peace was his gift to me," she said "and I am now more a song than a person. The glories of the sunset and the sunrise tingle in my blood."

After Swami Rama had come and gone like a meteor from Japan, there came another Indian Swami whom I met in a strange way. I was away at the University Laboratory working and on my return one day, I saw seated in my room a tall, coarse man with a huge Punjabi turban of crimson merino bound hap strap, the very size of which struck me as vulgar, a big, burly, bulky fellow sitting and talking to another Indian, a miserably wretched specimen, a pale, haggard lifeless weakling who was kow-towing to the other with the abject attitude of a thoroughbred slave.

I came all the way from the University singing "Glory Glory." I was brilliant with the glory of some indescribable feelings of bliss, tears stood in my eyes, I was light like a bird. A mute poet who could write no verses. I came in and did not look at my guests, as they had not cared to look at me. Their ignoring of me, I knew afterwards, was deliberate. I went past them and placed my satchel of chemical note-books on my table standing in

a corner of the room. As I looked up, and wondered who the gross, burly man was and why he was so indifferent-looking and impertinent, he accosted me very roughly, as if I met a bear in the jungle.

"Who are you?"

"Puran." (Puran in Sanskrit means "the perfected"), "Perfected in folly?"

"Yes Sir."

"You are a good Vedantin? I am Swami Paramtatva Aggamya, M. A. Swami Rama is my disciple. He is a young enthusiast. He knows little."

I afterwards learnt that this M. A. suffixed to his long high sounding name was in imitation of the name of Swami Rama Tirath.

"Yes Sir, you are welcome."

"No. You are poor students. I come with a note of introduction from Prof. Anesaki of Kyoto to a high priest of the Buddhist University here and it is he who has to find funds and friends for me and arrange for my lectures."

"All right Sir. I will take you there immediately."

"Come let us go. Get up boy."

That small rickety skeleton disciple of his got up and we three began steering through the Hongo streets. We took the tram car to the Buddhist University. He had no money. The "poor student" had after all to pay his fare too in addition to his own. I took him in. The High Priest sent word that he would soon come and see the Mahatma. Meanwhile his Secretary appointed seats for us. The bull-Swami sat quietly, but when the door opened and the High Priest came himself, he suddenly got up, left the seat, and began looking through an open window turning his back on us all, disdaining to see him to whom he had gone to seek friendly help. I delivered the introductory letter on his behalf and apologised for his bad manners. The High Priest took no notice of him and told me that he would send something to me at the Club for him. Saying this, he went in. As he went in this Swami returned to his seat. Evidently he was watching my talk with the priest from the corners of his eyes. He pre-emptorily ordered me to leave the place. I did. And then he ordered me to take him to Yokohama.

"I have no money to buy tickets."

"Never mind. You ask the Station Master, and he will give you on credit."

"Railways don't do that."

"But you must take me to Yokohama, I am fed up with Tokyo."

I borrowed from a passing friend the required amount and I took him to Yokohama.

"Now," said he on alighting from the train, "you take me to rich Sindhi merchants. I want to go back to India and they must give me a first class ticket."

I knew some of the Sindhi merchants well, so I took him first to Messrs. Pohumull & Sons. On entering their office, he began abusing the Manager in the filthiest possible language. And finally he said in a very high tone, "I have come to check your accounts. You are a lot of thieves. You rob your masters. I know them and I will bring you to book." And so on. The Agent bore all this, thinking him to be a Mahatma. And there was some peculiar mystery about him, as he had an autograph letter from Prof. Max Muller commending him as a great Sanskrit scholar. He had a photograph in which he was seen on a table lying apparently dead and Kaiser William of Germany in it and the Doctors with their stethescopes. "I had stopped my heart beat here for five minutes and the doctors declared me dead and rose up again," he told us, while explaining that peculiar photograph. Prof. Anesaki and others also sympathised with him on account of Prof. Max Muller's letter.

So we came out of the same door by which we had entered in.

"You are a fool," he said to me standing in the Yokohama street. "You went and told them straight that I want money to go to India."

"And what should I have said to them?"

"You fool, you ought to have told them that I was a great sage of the Himalayas and excited their spirit of worship for me. Then they would have done what I should have commanded them to do."

"I cannot do that."

"But you must."

"I won't."

And on this we entered the firm of a friend of ours, Bose and slept for the night there with him. The two Swamis also. The lot of his disciple was very hard that night. He burst with the full fury of his anger, and the slave bore it as if it were raining and thundering on him and he was but a piece of rock. Early in the morning I gave him the slip and started for Tokyo.

Towards the evening, as I returned from the University I found him and his disciple sitting exactly where I had found them on the first day and exactly in the same style, ignoring everybody but themselves, apparently busy in writing lectures. The Swami was dictating some horrible stuff and his disciple was taking down faithfully.

Again the same way, he accosted me, "So you left us at Yokohama."

"I had to go to the University and I could not go with you to different merchants after what had happened."

"You don't know the world. People only give money as the oilseeds give oil. By pressing in some kind of mill. You are a fool."

And he began giving me the details of his life and his great powers of stopping his heartbeat. It was midnight when I exploded almost like a human dynamite. I was so disgusted with the man that I could not contain myself any longer. I, a young man made that burlesque bully quiver with fear. I blamed him for his imperialistic tendencies in the domain of religion. That spirit of overlording could be tolerated in a conqueror, but not in a man of renunciation. In fact all the dirt he had thrown into my subliminal mind floated up and besmeared him. He ordered his man to bear all the load of his luggage and to walk out with him there and then. It was Tokyo winter and midnight when this happened. And they both walked out of the home of the Indo-Japanese Club. In my indignation, I was so excited I did not know if he was really going. He went. Later on I heard he reached Tokyo Railway Station on foot a distance of about two miles from Hongo street and began weeping like a little child in the retiring room, when a kind Japanese came and brought him 3rd class tickets for Kyoto as he desired to

go back to Mr. Anesaki. He threw the tickets away and actually rose to kick his benefactor. "I travel first class. You insult me by giving me these tickets." The kind gentleman brought them first class tickets. On their arrival there at Anesaki's house he wept again like a child and Mrs. Anesaki who was in, began sympathising with him. Meanwhile Anesaki returned home. Mr. Anesaki finding that he wanted a passage home to India, went and collected some funds from his friends for him. But as he presented the Swami with yens gathered in his hat, he got up and kicked the hat. "I want saloon accommodation," and somehow it was provided and the mad Swami was sent back to India.

In this way, a Swami tried to impress the Japanese people, trying to capture the reputation that a young educated monk had won in Japan. He must have gone insane with too much yoga sticking to him. Swami Paramtatva Aggamya was a fraud of a kind and I heard afterwards he died in an English jail while trying to establish a Paradise in his lodging in London like the black man of the mountain. Before going to England and to this fate, while in India, he lived in Mussoorie as the guest of Pandit Anant Narayan at Dehra Dun with a French lady as his Secretary. I heard that she became fed up with his insanities and left him as he reached France. It seems he got the power of stopping his heartbeat at the expense of his mind for surely when I saw him he was a lunatic carrying Prof. Max Muller's letter as a passage of honour to different persons and places.

The night on the breast of Osaka river

AT OSAKA, I wandered as an orange-robed young monk, so made by the enthusiasm and love of Swami Rama, but hankering after the sight of beautiful things of the world. A youngman that I was, I knew nothing deeper than the joy of living. At night, on the wooden platform thrown half across the breadth of the Osaka river, I loved to go from booth to booth, exchanging pretty words with the sale-girls. They, too, by their instinctive Buddhistic reverence for the yellow-robe wished me to stay as long as I could before their booths and their eyes. They saw me and I saw them; the idle throwing of flower-words at each other was a pleasure akin to the pelting of sprays of water at each other.

One of them held me a long time. She was the Kori seller—ice-vendor. Ice was reduced into a fine powder by her hand-machine in the shape of fresh-fallen snow. And as no customers came for a long while, she made two cups, (one for me) and I was wondering for whom she had made the other. She offered me my cup by way of charity to a Buddhist priest. And I held her offering in my hands, I was simply and idly looking at her. She took the other cup with a little syrup herself and with a spoon began "eating ice." A tall, thin, snow-white maiden with a long swanny neck supporting a Semi-Mongolian, Semi-Aryan face, and extremely fascinating blend very common in Japan. The blue veins of her neck were quite visible under the municipal electric lamp, so fair was she. And I imagined I saw the ice actually going down, so transluscent was her neck. I saw my lips parted, like hers above her pretty chin and my lips tightened as if quaffing ice when she tightened hers while swallowing it. I swallowed it with her. She did it very leisurely, now smiling, then looking at me and then alternating her looks with a spoon of ice put into her own mouth

with a grace and sweetness unknown in any other country or clime. When she had finished, she saw the ice in my cup had gone liquid and she expressed her sorrow that I did not accept her offering. I put down the cup of ice after holding it for half an hour or so, and I hardly knew that I had not eaten her offering. I swallowed it with her rose-red lips. And as I smiled, she laughed heartily.

The boats embellished with paper lanterns on the helm and the steer ran to and fro like the artificial pleasures on the river and the Japanese had the midnight all to themselves. The hilarity of the scene of flitting lights and the mingling of the music of man's heart with the heart of the stream, the mingling of their laughter with the leaping of waves in white bloom, infected one with the lighter side of life. Such pleasures on the river I counted as great virtues of the Buddhist race and it is so common a trait in Buddhist people. The Burmese are the same. It was Japanese summer and they all felt the Osaka streets so suffocating. They lived till midnight on the river and breathed the breath of Nature. It may seem quite meaningless, but standing on the wooden platform, seeing men and women going and coming on their *getas* sounding the wooden floor, the delicate twitter of their speech to each other, the mingling of the red lights in the flowing dark of the river below, the Japanese girls vending ice, and lanterns and flags and the stars shining above as paper lanterns on the blue river above was to me a most engaging wondrous bustle in which I felt delirious with the joy that was being diffused in soft, tender radiations—from smiling men and women of the town.

II

The Kankoba

The Japanese Bazar or the Kankoba is a Universe where many unrealities are sold. You can have everything from slate pencil to the love of a woman. I remember when I took Swami Rama to the Uyeno Park Kankoba.

As he walked, with me by his side, all the sale girls followed him, leaving their stalls. They were saying to me in Japanese, "What a beautiful *Bosan* (Buddhist priest)!" They must have read many romances of the Bosans, so many of them said, "Will this man not return to marry."

"What do they say?" said Swami Rama. I misinterpretted them. He smiled at the sight of so many laughing girls gathered around him evidently feeling conscious of the way his soul was drawing them to himself. "You are so fascinating, Swami," I said.

"No. These innocent maidens who are attracted to me are more charming. Tell them to come to me freely and to listen to my philosophy."

"They have heard already much about "Buddhism", I thought to myself "and what interests them most now is their hair-dressing and the flowers with which they adorn it. The task of earning their bread engrosses them and these beautiful girls have to sweat like the doves that fly and expend their soul in picking rice grains from the scattered straw. Real religion to them is a mirror and self-adornment. But the Japanese girls are never pessimistic: they are like birds, fond of death, soaring above the sordid realities of physical life." And I told the Swami semi-jokingly that they wished to know if he could lighten the labour of earning bread for any of them.

And he said, "Naughty boy," and we passed on buying an umbrella for the Swami.

The circular shape of the wooden construction of the Kankoba is in effect similar to the magical splendour of the Mina Bazar which the Emperor Akbar held in the interior of his palace where Rajput princesses sold wares, as charming, perhaps more so. The atmosphere of the Kankoba is light, the bargains are made to the music of mutual acquiescence. There is little haggling. Prices are fixed. There is no waste of time nor manners there. Polite words greet the customer and bid him good cheer. And one finds in the Kankoba, how delightful it is to go marketing even without necessity.

III

The Japanese house

THE Japanese house has a very dull exterior. But if one enters, it has the purity of a paradise, the simplicity of a bird's nest, and the silence of a saint's cave. The neighbour's voice is not heard through the thin paper covered walls. The children do not cry. The women at the well in the street wait their turn, and chirp like a troupe of sparrows. The baby is either nestling cosily tucked in a basket like a bundle of clothes on his mother's back or is pulling in divine satiation at her breasts. And the delight of the children is the first concern of every home. However small the house, it is full of the national pride of a great victorious race. Every child feels at his back the Dai Nippon—Great Japan. I found in the little steps of the Japanese School children, the subliminal pride of a free nation. Every woman is a glow with *Banzai*. Each one of them realises perfect identity with the whole race of Yamoto. And a great responsible feeling keeps the head of the humblest above water. We Indian students felt very small, when we saw that compared with the smallest Japanese the greatest Indian was, as a living plant compared with a shining but dead diamond. And all things develop with the same difference. Their institutions all take the shape of the inner man. In the Japanese home, there is a divine simplicity which can be seen nowhere else in the world, especially as this simplicity of home life is the net result of a highly developed racial artistic consciousness, so uniquely peculiar to the Japanese. Buddhism engrafted on the race consciousness of the Japanese has borne fruit which it has borne nowhere else. If the Burman looks like the Japanese on the lighter side of his social life, he is open to exploitation by the foreigner. Not so the Japanese. The martial spirit of the Samurai, his love of death, his sense of honour live upon the soul of Buddhism. It seems

Buddhism came on earth to make the homes and society of the race of Yamoto alone. It gave the doctrine of Peace and Nirvana and renunciation of the phenomenal, and took for itself from the race the sword; and this blend of soul and body in the racial consciousness has perfected Buddhism as religion here as nowhere else. While sitting with the Japanese in their homes, I remembered, how the Sikh Gurus created happy homes in the Punjab and created Bushido in the Punjab. The religion of the Gurus shines with the same organic reconciliation of body and soul, in the social reconstruction of man as does the religion of the Buddha shine when so blended with the spirit of Yamoto of Japan. The outlook in every Japanese home is Nirvanic, but every Japanese acts in a way that involves a total self-sacrifice for his race. The individual in Japan has in his personality the plural feeling of a whole society and in it the small self of man, if not altogether absent, is deeply socialistic in its assertions. The Buddhist Bhikku clad as a Samurai warrior contemplates life as a full-blown cherry blossom that gives itself to the winds that blow and unsheaths his sword as the black cloud its lightning. In Guru Gobind Singh's character is resumed for a philosopher the racial consciousness of Japan as modified by the tenets of noble Buddhism.

IV

The Japanese Pine

Wherever I saw the Japanese pine, Matsu, I stood for a long time making friends with it, especially when the snow fell and the pines of Japan became a race of angels. I was not able to see why the Japanese made them dwarfs in their pots by using scissors on their tap roots. And seeing the dwarf plants being offered for sale in the peripatetic night-bazar on a small Bamboo on the seller's shoulders, with a bell ringing on the knees of these palanquin-bearers of pines, I realised why I felt a strange fascination in seeing the pine growing to its full size in the outer courtyard of the Imperial Palace at Tokyo. The

Dwarf pines could not fly, but the pines in the parks were flying. I thought they were soaring. The dwarf pines were like canary birds in a cage, and the pines in the woods the canaries on free wings. But whatever the naive beauty of the full grown pine, there was culture concealed in the rearing of dwarf plants. And the Buddhist priests of Japan wrote many *no-dramas* in which the sacrifice of the dwarf plants calls for the intensest fellow-feelings. With the pines of the forest, there is no personal relation possible, but the dwarf pines in the pots are as the companions of soul. And when they rise and fling themselves into the fire to make one of a Buddhist Bhikku's night warm, the silence of the plant life is broken and the dedication of a martyr comes to the very veins of the dwarf plants. The pine is the Buddhist tree, par excellence, and in its piny odour, there is the scent of the incense of the Buddhist faith.

V

The Plum

As Bulbul and the rose, possibly a poetic fancy, are to Persian poetry, the Plum is the inspiration of beautiful poems of sadness and war in the Japanese. The snow has not melted yet and the plum buds forth into white, heroic flowers. The Japanese sees in it the heart of a oldier who has also learnt the secret of Nirvana.

VI

The Lotus Pond

The Lotus is the Buddhist flower. The Buddha is seated on the lotus: the Buddha's feet are as lotuses. The lotus borne on delicate stem is blossoming in the old stone carvings of the Buddhist stupas. The Lotus is a symbol of His Remembrance of the Japanese. Near the Uyeno park, there is a large pond full of lotuses. And there

came the faint throbbing of their strings under the gentle excitement imparted by the fingers of the Japanese Geishas living along the edge of the Lotus pond, and the ripples in the pond wove the self-same music in a liquid form. On the opposite side were the Buddhist temples.

VII

The Wistaria

Those violet bunches hanging from a trellis-work. No woman's braids were ever woven with so much passion, as the Japanese weave these *Bride's Flower Braids*—the purple blossom of the Wistaria.

VIII

The Japanese woman

THE Japanese woman in her own racial-dress is surely not a denizen of this earth. She trails a Heaven in her garments. She has in her the whole artistic culture of the angels. Her very sight is a blessing, her friendship is akin to saintship, the mild exhilaration in her association is surely, the foretaste of Nirvana, so purifying and ennobling is her personality. She is the true interpretation of Buddhism: all books on that religion or any religion for the matter of that are meaningless. The living snow sparkling on the brow of the Japanese maiden reminds one of Fujiyama's pure snow, and the radiance of her smile now of the sunrise, then of the moon-rise. She has the mystery of the cherry-flower in her deep-seated spontaneous philosophic sadness of this "impossible thing" called life. She is also the serious goddess of the Tragedy which pervades the Japanese life and love. War is declared by her for the greater Japan of the after-death and of the after-birth. She gives her son, her husband, her friend for the good of gods. It is easy to sacrifice ourselves but it is extremely hard to sacrifice one's beloveds. The Japanese woman in the act of self-sacrifice is of a whole race for the greater victory of the race. How strange. It strikes me that had the Japanese women seen Guru Gobind Singh, they would have understood Him. Buddhism made Japan pure and peaceful; but the Japanese woman made herself god-sacrificing. There has been no teacher of men who sacrificed his beloved god to create new life as did Guru Gobind Singh. The spirit of Guru Gobind Singh is distinctly Japanese in this aspect of its manifestation. Buddha and Guru Gobind Singh both are the sacred inspirers of Japanese womanhood and man-hood. The Japanese woman thus, to me, symbolises something inexpressibly spiritual in which war and peace meet in a transcendental contradiction as in life itself.

I learnt all my Buddhism from the Japanese women, the wives and daughters of my Japanese friends like Messrs. Hirai, Hara, Yuasa, Kawakami Watanabe, Sakurai and others. They were bodiless angels. And I can now remember them only as life-givers with golden pitchers on their shoulders pouring the water of life down from the skies. I still see before my vision Mrs. Hirai as the smiling statue of the supreme philosophic Buddhist sadness. In her welcome I found joy trembling in the braids which she pushed back from her forehead as if she was trying to control an insane impulse. Truly I have never seen such unconscious kindness, not even in my mother. Every Japanese woman with whom I came in contact had a halo of holiness round her person and she diffused this light wherever she stood or sat. Almost like a rain of soft music her shadow fell on the room she lived in, and in her paths of life. Her silence was full of the divine mystery that smiled like snowy peak up in the azure heights. Very happy in her *obi* amd *kimono*, she took delight in the little things of life. A twig of cherry or of plum in her vase engaged her whole soul. The cleaning of the wooden borders of her matted house, rooms, and the *shojis* was fo her as light and pleasant a task as the singing of a song by a perfected songster, as spontaneous and effortless. The little stone jar full of water outside the bathroom and a clean towel of rough Japanese cloth hanging on a slender golden bamboo hung by its side were picturesquely renewed by the Japanese housewife. It reminded me of a fountain of crystal water on a lonely hill-side provided for the comfort of travellers. Her home-keeping is that simple art which beautifies Nature itself and creates a personality out of the simplest materials like a Bamboo vase, a twig of flowers, a few pebbles and a miniature of a pond which things mean nothing to those who unlike her are not initiated into the perfection of human goodness. At night she converts the day's sitting-room into a bedroom for the family by spreading the warm quilts over the mats. At day break she conceals them in the wooden drawers that run along the breadth of the room and whose doors when closed form one of the walls of the room. The night is thus spent by her as if in a wayside inn. There is

no permanent furniture fixed in the room for the night's rest. By placing a small table the same room can be converted into a dining room. And over it, on the first floor is another room which can be used as a room of solitude for study or silence or love or joy or worship. For a small family one room below and one above, with a kitchen and a bathroom suffices for all unnecessary requirements of daily life. Renunciation and its pure simplicity is thus seen in the very architecture of the houses in the divine neatness of space. For even if earthquakes were not a feature of the land, the Japanese housewife is so deeply inspired of Buddha that no commonplace pleasures of life can draw her out to take any abiding interest in such things made of colour and evanascent feeling without decorating them and ennobling them with the pathetic passion of her Buddhistic soul. She is Nirvana. Having seen her, I feel an inclination for higher soul-worlds now. There one might live with such sweetening and soothing love-radiance shining upon, as without holding us in fee for its beautiful gifts. She could not be mine as the inmost me for she has no soul that binds. A moment of intense union, and then a freed personality I am immortal made to imbibe the bliss of it. Moments of separation from the Beloved also full of the richness of union—this is the meaning of Buddha's renunciation and the love of a Japanese woman. The poppy flower, the cherry blossom cannot strike eternal friendships; one feels in Japan eternal friendship is a myth and yet life is but clinging tragically to nothing. What is eternal is feeling, and all brief moments of life must feed that feeling. Its forms are as shadows of warriors marching to death. And in the darkness all around, the Japanese woman is the burning lamp that lights the path to the shrine of beauty and love. But only those are admitted who are informed of the secret doctrine of Buddha's great renunciation and Nirvana, and of the life that smiles in the human child and spreads its arms in the branches of a cryptomeria to catch itself.

IX

A volatile love affair

MUCH too fragile to grip tightly anything I love, I have been waiting all my life to be loved. Love is a gift which the kind ones give me, not because I deserve it, but because God persuades them. No one can love me for long because such love as I need cannot last long. It comes to them also as an inspiration and they dispense it to me also as the gift of inspired moments. And my reception of it can also be only at rare moments also under the same inspiration. Noble passion is a virtue if it sustains someone like me for a few flying moments. I am a small thing with the soul of a flower, not of a man with its awful dead body 'moral responsibilities.' If you have ever loved the rose when it is in the full richness of colouring you then know why at times my friends take a fancy to me, and why they go on to lose it. Because I am a moment's glow of Love. I always thought that introductions are unnecessary. We know the wayside flowers even without knowing their names. Why not meet men in the same spontaneous way, crossing each other's paths as the paths themselves meet and part? There is beautiful fluidity in such friendships. In this way, I met a Japanese maiden once. I met her many times again. But once in spring under the cherries of Uyeno park, all of a sudden I fell foolishly in love with her. I wanted to melt into her, to lose myself in her being. Under the cherry tree she stood as the sun rose in the east in the Uyeno park, and she smiled indescribably a whole Spring to me. I had never seen her at any time till that moment, so entrancingly ravishing—she forgave me out of her generous feeling for me for my madness in gazing at her with my red poppy eyes. I was much too intimate, almost rude, but I so depended on her. And then I put my head on her bosom as she stood, desiring to be caressed. I felt I slept in a death-like joy as she touched my flowing

tresses, I felt I was a twig of cherry and she held me by the hand. When I rose from that delicious frenzy, I saw she had gently rested my head against the stem of the cherry tree and I was pelted with the half-insane cherry petals. And as she passed, she smiled and said, "Such passions, no woman can cool, that is why I surrendered you to a person more beautiful than myself."

I got up and walked with this old friend of mine to my house, there was still that lingering desire in my dead limbs to think of her as the most beautiful person in the whole world. And one thing was certain that no one else could love her more than myself. And with this idea in my mind, I was excited and happy for many days, not knowing what it would mean if she fell in love with me in return. She was wise, I foolish, and so she kept on kindling the fire in me, lest I die. And I fed my soul on her, now thinking of the moon, then of the stars, and gathering all beautiful objects as metaphors of her loveliness. I began loving the whole of womankind, all women looked to me like her. Japan, the whole country became mine in a special sense which was dear to me only in my worship of her.

Such has been my love story repeated endlessly throughout this life, without gathering any moss whatever. Now I loved a woman and then a flower and then a stone as intensely. Fitful flashes of beauty make of me a man. And the radiance of love soothes me beyond myself and I feel to live outside these sensations is blasphemy. Little life shrinks again and makes its own cocoon. The cocoon must however burst again and the little worm become a butterfly with tender white wings and go and die in the light that burns beyond. Such is the way to truth. Well does Shamas Tabrez sing this Truth:

"The sky and the continents could not
contain me, I was too much, too much
for Space,
The centuries could not hold me, I was
too much, too much for Time."

My life thus has been always a volatile love affair but an affair that has trained me to obedience. It is of no use being oneself. The world outside me cannot be, in the nature of things, as interested in me as I am in my own moods. Especially when the youth of Heaven has departed as spring from a garden. But to the perfected mind, even the sad autumn is deeply spiritual, decay has its glory as well as growth. So from a practical point of view, my love has now become a thought which makes my very bones throb with that old youthful passion.

The other day while standing with friends, I saw many beautiful things and persons pass before me. My eyes grew red, my whole being quivered with joy. And they said, "A bevy of beautiful women so charmingly dressed going past you has inspired you."

"No," said I, "a few sparks have fallen on an inflammable heap of feelings in my bosom and I have taken fire."

Who knows what was beautiful, the women or the clothes they wore, or my own liquid mood of absolute sadness reacted upon by a sudden glory that flew past me in the seen spaces of soul.

Though years have passed and my hair has grown grey, strange as it may seem, I am still in the fervent moods of my youth. I still fall in love with many things, now one, then the other: lovely women, great books like the Bible, great conver ions like those of Mary Magdalene, sweet poets and beautiful painters, now a wandering minstrel girl of Rajputana excites me, then a common courtesan on the stage wearing white clothes, her eyes aflame, her blue vein of her forehead swelling with the noble pleasure of her song, the stars shining in the bosom of dark night, the tiny neglected wayside flowers lying in dust, the pines of the Himalayan woods, the roses swimming in air. When one dies to one's yesterday-self by means of a fresh sensation of truth, life is a new passing beyond one's self, after every lyrical glance. And this is the path of love, of passion. As Emerson says so truly in his essay on inspiration—"All spiritual progress is through lyrical glances." I definitely

come to the conclusion that the love of men and women is always a volatile affair, it is an inspiration which comes in flashes and leaves us half dead to ourselves. Every fresh visit of this angel, though rare and far between, makes us unselfish. Nothing else. As in Japan, it is the evanescence of feeling that makes everything so beautiful. This volatile unselfishness and that fascinating evanescent feeling for beauty is to me all the essence of religion and of love.

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