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The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER



JULIEN OFFRAY DE LA METTRIE.

The Open Court Publishing Company

CHICAGO

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

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JULY, 1913

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RABINDRANATH TAGORE,

INDIA'S GREATEST LIVING POET.

BY BASANTA KOOMAR ROY.

ALTHOUGH it is perhaps not known to many, America is at the present time harboring a guest who is not only the greatest living poet of his own country, but whose work bids fair to live for all time. With the nations of the West, poetry has come to be looked upon as the language of the unusual, perhaps even the eccentric. The epic and lyric feeling does not penetrate into the masses of Western population as it did when poetry was still transmitted by oral tradition; nor do many of the West have the feeling that thought and sentiment expressed in poetry is a necessary element in every-day existence. So the great poets live their immortal lives confined largely to the book shelves. It is the written, rather than the living, word that tradition preserves. Only a very few have their memories stored with treasures of poetry, and even those who have literary tastes are often more ready to read about great poetry than to steep themselves in the poet's own thought. Now there has come to America one who, indeed, is one of the choicest intellects of his race and nation, but whose thoughts are not confined to the printed page; if his verses are read by the thousands, they are known by heart, sung, and recited by the millions. No Western poet has ever had such a constituency of contemporaries. Not only is this Hindu singer imposing through the vast chorus whose feelings he has interpreted, but his lines have a force which ranks them with the finest things the world has yet produced.

William Butler Yeats, in introducing Rabindranath Tagore to the literati of London, at a recent banquet in the Trocadero Hotel, said: "To take part in honoring Mr. Rabindranath Tagore is one of the greatest events of my artistic life. I have been carrying about with me a book¹ of translations into English prose of one hundred of his Bengali lyrics, written within the last ten years. I know of no man in my time who has done anything in the English language to equal these lyrics."

The enthusiasm at the banquet waxed high. The British literary men were lavish in showing admiration of a very "unusual degree." Some even, in Hindu manner, touched his feet by way of salutation, others were disappointed in not being able to do so. Rev. C. F. Andrews, a British missionary to India, and one of India's truest friends, thus tells us of his own disappointment: "I should like to have made obeisance to the poet, who has so raised his nation by his songs, but in a moment he had clasped my hand." It was a scene of great international significance. As art transcends all physical limitations, so in this gathering of artists everything else but art was lost sight of. The feeling of race difference, the apathy between the conquerors and the conquered, the gulf between the European and the Asian, all vanished before the illuminating spirit pervading the finer things of life.

As a result of Rabindranath's visit to England, British literary men are demanding the translation of his works; and already some half a dozen Hindus are at work to accomplish the task. On the other hand, many British literary men and women have begun studying the Bengali language so that they may read his works in their original beauty. The poet's short story "Dalia" has been dramatized as "The Maharani of Arakan" and produced in the Royal Albert Hall Theater in London.

If family tradition has anything to do with culture, then Rabindranath has nothing to complain of. He was born in the illustrious Thakur, anglicized into Tagore, family which has loomed high in the horizon of the intellectual and social life of India ever since the tenth century. Amongst the Tagores are counted men like Prosonno Koomar Tagore, a landowner, a lawyer of great reputation, an editor, a writer on legal and educational subjects, founder and president of the British India Association; Raja Sir Sourindra Mohun Tagore, undoubtedly one of the highest musical authorities in India, the founder of the Bengal Music School and the

¹ *Gitanjali* (song offerings) published, with an introduction by William Butler Yeats, by the India society of London.

Bengal Academy of Music, and author of many volumes on Hindu Music and musical instruments; Mr. Abanindranath Tagore, a distinguished painter, and an undisputed leader in the Hindu art revival; Maharaja Ramanath Tagore, brother of our poet's grandfather, a political leader and writer; Dwarakanath Tagore, the grandfather of the poet, a landlord, a founder of the Landholders' Society, a philanthropist, a social reformer, preeminently an agitator against the *suttee*, an ardent worker for the "identification of the feelings and interests of the Indians with their government," anxious to "strengthen the bond which unites India with Great Britain."

Debendranath Tagore, the father of the poet, was not a Maharaja (great king). He did not care to be decorated that way. Instead he was decorated by the people with the title of Maharsi (great sage). He was one of India's greatest spiritual leaders and intellectual giants. His godliness was contagious. Once a skeptic friend of his came to him and asked: "You talk of God, ever and again of God! What proof is there that there is a God at all?" Maharsi pointed to a light and asked his friend, "Do you know what that is?" "Light," was the reply. "How do you know that there is a light there?" "I see it; it is there and it needs no proof; it is self-evident." "So is the existence of God," replied Maharsi, "I see him within me and without me, in everything and through everything, and it needs no proof, it is self-evident."

It was in such a family—a family that combined culture with wealth and leisure, that Rabindranath first saw the light of day. It is said that born poets are generally handsome. Rabindranath was no exception to the general rule. He has long been famous in India both for his poetry and beauty. Indeed, his youthful portraits bear a striking resemblance to the best pictures of the poet of Galilee who wrote not a single verse, but who hallowed the world with the majestic poetry of his life and sayings. The Hindu poet's flowing hair; his broad, unfurrowed forehead; his bright, black, magnetic eyes, chiseled nose, firm but gentle chin, delicate sensitive hands, his sweet voice, pleasant smile, keen sense of humor, and his innate refinement, make him a man of rare and charming personality. To look at him is to notice the true embodiment of the artist.

That Wordsworth is right when he says, "The child is the father of the man," is witnessed by the early life and later development of Tagore. His childhood was the most constructive period of his life. It was then that he was imbibing the spirit of nature

which was to color all his life and all his writings afterwards. It really did bid fair to be of supreme importance to himself and his motherland. In one of his letters, the poet tells us about some of his childhood experiences:

"I but faintly remember the days of my early childhood. But I do remember that in the mornings, every now and then, a kind of unspeakable joy, without any cause, used to overflow my heart. The whole world seemed to me full of mysteries. Every day I used to dig the earth with a little bamboo stick thinking that I might discover one of them. All the beauty, sweetness and scent of this world, all the movements of the people, the noises in the street, the cry of the kites, the coconut trees in the family garden, the banyan tree by the pond, the shadow on the water, the morning perfume of the blossoms—all these used to make me feel the presence of a dimly recognized being assuming so many forms just to keep me company."

The future poet was then only six or seven years old. He was so busy looking at and enjoying things natural, that he hated to be hemmed in by the walls of the class-room. They were all the more unbearable for him because of his dislike for the teacher of Bengali literature, a man of ordinary intellect who was notorious for his coarse manners. The impertinent pupil would not answer any oral question asked by this man, consequently he used to gravitate to the bottom of his class. But he surprised the same teacher by capturing the first place in every written examination.

Maharsi Debendranath, after closely studying the inborn proclivities of his son, took him out of school, never to return for any length of time, and started with him for a trip to the heights of the Himalayas to train him in the school of nature. Young Tagore was glad to get out of school and beyond the reach of his teacher's care, and his heart leaped with joy now that he was about to see the mountain world. The first night out of Calcutta, as he was being carried in a *palanquin* to the Bolpur Shanti Niketan (peace cottage at Bolpur, his father's country home for meditation), he closed his eyes all the way to the bungalow simply not to see the beauties of nature by the faint light of the falling darkness, that he might take keener delight in the rich landscapes under the morning light.

When in the course of time the boy reached the Himalayas, he knew that he had found what his heart was craving for—a wealth of the beauty of nature resplendent with the luxury of lovely color and majestic form. Here his father introduced him to the sylvan deities, who, in their turn, unfolded to the boy poet a thousand and one mysteries of nature and the majesty of all these mysteries. Here

his father also taught him English, Sanskrit, Bengali, and in the sciences, botany and astronomy.

Then a boy of only eleven summers, having been born in the spring of 1860, Rabindranath had already finished reading some of the most important books in Bengali literature, and had just begun to "lisp in numbers for the numbers came." The next year his mother died, and his intense love for her now went to reinforce his worship of nature. At this time he was living at Chandranagore, in a garden house by the River Ganges. Such a contrast of change from the majestic grandeur of the Himalayas to the soft melody of the Ganges enriched and strengthened his imagination, and sharpened his intellect, until he became inspired with the nectar of nature; and he would spend hours together watching the mystic flow of the Ganges or seeing the moon kiss the sacred river into ripples. Here he would spend night after night upon the flat roof of the house, musing on the mystery of the star-lit universe.

Thus he spent several years in dreaming, studying English and Bengali literature, (Bengali, a daughter of Sanskrit, and the language of Mr. Tagore's poems), composing poems, and writing essays for different magazines, especially for his family magazine, *The Bharati*, which is now edited by his erudite sister, Sreemati Swarna Koomari Devi. At the age of seventeen, he made a short visit to Europe. His learned letters from there show his command over the Bengali language, his breadth of vision and keen sociological insight. In England he perfected his knowledge of English and acquired a lucid prose style which few have equaled in India.

Mr. Tagore's versatility is astonishing. To name a few of his activities and accomplishments: he is a profound philosopher, a spiritual and patriotic leader, an historical investigator, a singer and composer, an able editor (having edited four different magazines, *Sadhana*, *Bangadarsan*, *Bharati* and *Tattwabodhini*), a far-sighted educator, and a kind and considerate administrator of his vast "Zamindary" estate. But he is, above all, the poet—the poet of love. Love flows from his heart, mind and soul in a continuous stream, assuming all different forms in its windings from the gross to the spiritual, from the known to the unknown, from the finite to the infinite. He interprets love in all its multiform expressions—the love of mother, of son, husband, wife, lover, beloved, patriot, of the Dionysian, nature-drunk, and of the God-frenzied. Each and every one of these he portrays with his characteristic softness of touch that recalls the lyrics of Théophile Gautier, and with the exquisite felicity of Shelley and Keats. His verses carry within them

an emotion which thrills, enraptures, and causes every fiber of a human being to ache with joy that almost stops the throbbing of the heart and draws tears to the eyes.

Expression of love is so natural to him because of the fact that he has, like many other poets, passed through all the phases of love and life. Like the prose-poet Tolstoy, he has traveled from the worship of the senses to the quiet of sainthood. He understands the thrills of love, the romantic passion, the gloom of disappointment, the depth of despair, the profundity of quiet, and the ecstatic realization of "being, intelligence and bliss" (*sat, chit, anandam*).

When the surging tide of youth overtook the young poet quite unawares, he, in the onrush, could see only love and romance. The same nature, the same people, the same life; still everything looked different to him. He was at a loss to know whether it was himself or the world that had changed; and it did not take him long to discover that as he changed first, so the world changed to keep in touch with him. Love was no longer a thing far off—something to be imbibed from without; but instead, it became a reality to be drawn out from within. It was no longer a fancy, but a thing tangible, that first overpowered him. Thus for a time he became an epicure and *bon-vivant*; fashionable dress—the finest of silk robes—delicious dishes, ardent romances, love lyrics, literary production, constituted his interests, though there was always present in his sub-conscious self a strong under-current of spirituality which he inherited from his father.

It cannot be denied that in spite of this under-current many of his youthful poems were colored by the still stronger surface-current of his life. Indeed, some of them shocked the old-fashioned Hindu moralists, who received them with disdain. I remember one day in a students' boarding house in India, when I was trying to sing one of Mr. Tagore's songs, some of the young men that were present shouted: "What makes you sing that nautch-song?" When told that it was one of Rabi Babu's songs they were more than surprised and would not believe it until the printed verses were shown. Then they all changed their mind and confessed that it was quite proper to read or sing anything that Rabi Babu wrote. The song in prose translation reads:

"Hither, O beloved, come hither! step forth in this pleasure garden of mine and see where my flowers are blowing in beauty. Gentle breathes the west wind laden with the perfume of the blossoms. Here moonlight glimmers and a silvery stream murmurs down the forest ways.

"Hither, O beloved, come hither! for we shall unfold the depths of our

hearts gleaning the beauty of the immortal flowers; and in consuming ecstasy weave garlands each for the other, and watch the stars until they fade in the dawn.

"Beloved! in this joyous garden of ours we shall ever dwell and sing songs in rapturous joy. Here shall our hearts thrill in the mystery of life. Yea, and the days and nights shall pass as Visions of the Lord of Love, and we shall dream together in a languor of everlasting delight."

Again listen to his musings on "The Pensive Beloved":

"The young girl who sits by the window alone has forgotten to garland the flowers for her beloved. With her head resting on her hand she seems entirely rapt, while about her the gathered blossoms of the summer lie all neglected.

"For the breeze gently blows in to her, whispering softly, caressingly, as she sits by the window in a solemn rapture.

"The clouds fleet in the blue, and the birds flutter in the forest, and the odorous *bakul* blossoms fall intermittently before her eyes: Yet she is unregardful.

"But in sweet repose she smiles, for now the tender chords of her heart stir melodiously in the shadowland of dreams."

The conservative Hindus were up in arms against Rabindranath, thinking that he was likely to demoralize the youth of India by the sensuousness of his love poems and songs, especially the ones in "Love" (*Prém*), "Youthful Dreams" (*Jouban Sapna*), and "Chitrangada," a poetic drama. They were afraid that he was going to introduce the romanticism of the West, of Byron and Shelley, into India, and to depart from the classic severity of Indian literary treatment of the human passions. But they, in their over-zealousness to preserve for the youths of India the pleasures of Nirvanic bliss, forgot to take notice of the fact that in the writings of the young poet there could not be found anything like the coarse vulgarity of an earlier Bengali poet, Bharat Chandra Rai Gunakar, who was widely read by the young Bengalis at the time.

Mr. Tagore has all along held that he was not for salvation by *Bairagnya*, renunciation. In one of his poems he plainly says:

"My salvation shall never come through renunciation. I shall enjoy the triumph of salvation amidst the innumerable bondages of this world....My *Maya* will evolve itself into *Mukti*, and my love will transform itself into adoration."

Dividing his time between his palatial home in Calcutta and Bolpur Peace Cottage, he was on the one hand receiving the

message of life, action, noise, politics and society in Calcutta, while on the other he was profiting by the inspiration of nature and quiet at Boalpur, but devoting most of his time to writing plays, essays, songs and poems. As the two outward forces were acting and reacting on each other; similarly, the opposite currents of the sensuous and the spiritual within him were struggling to harmonize themselves. During this period of doubt, despair and uncertainty, the poet wrote poems on such subjects as, "The Call of Sorrow," "Lamentation of Happiness," and "Despair of Hope."

At last the under-current of spirituality came to the surface again and in the process drove the opposite current out of existence. His entire life was now saturated with the spirit of this renaissance. He got what he sought; and the story of such a transformation he gives in a letter which in translation reads:

"One morning, the moment I saw from my veranda the sun rising from behind the foliage of the trees in the garden, the scales fell from my eyes. A singular glory covered the entire universe for me—bliss and beauty seemed to ripple all over the world.... Then nobody and nothing whatsoever remained unwelcome to me. The people whose company was heretofore unpleasant to me, now on their approach my heart would run before me to offer them a cordial welcome. Even the coarse forms and features of some of the members of the laboring class, as they passed by on the street, had an inner glory for me."

With the change in the man, changed the tone of his poems. Now, filled to the brim with the love for God and looking upon this universe as the visible expression of God's love, he touches nothing, he writes nothing, that he does not saturate with the thought of divine love of spiritual life, and of eternal beauty and splendor in nature. The sun, the moon, the stars in heaven, and the trees and flowers on earth speak a language of love for the Supreme Being whose handiwork they are. Mr. Yeats speaks of the spirituality of Mr. Tagore's later poems in these words: "In all his poems there is one single theme: the love of God. When I tried to find anything western which might compare with the works of Mr. Tagore, I thought of 'The Imitation of Christ' by Thomas a Kempis. It is like, yet between the work of the two men there is a whole world of difference. Thomas a Kempis was obsessed by the thought of sin; he wrote in terrible imagery. Mr. Tagore has as little thought of sin as a child playing with a top. His poems have stirred my blood as nothing has for years."

Here follow two of his spiritual poems in prose translations. In the first he thus addresses God as a passer-by:

"In the deep shadows of the rainy month with secret steps, thou walkest, silent as night, eluding all watchers.

"To-day the morning has closed its eyes, heedless to the insistent calls of the loud east wind, and over the ever wakeful blue sky a thick veil has been drawn.

"The woodlands have hushed their songs, and doors are all shut at every house. Thou art the solitary wayfarer in this deserted street. Oh, my only friend, my best beloved, the gates are open in my house—do not pass by like a dream."

In the second he dwells on the mysteries of the final home of the soul:

"Thou art the sky and thou art the nest as well. Oh, how beautiful! There in the nest it is thy love that encloses the soul with colors and sounds and odors. There comes the morning with the golden basket in her right hand bearing the wreath of beauty, silently to crown the earth. And there comes the evening over the lonely meadows deserted by herds, through trackless paths, carrying cool draughts of peace in her golden pitcher from the western ocean of rest.

"But there, where spreads the infinite sky for the soul to take her flight in, reigns the stainless white radiance. There is no day nor night, nor form nor color, and never never a word."

If by a natural disaster all of Mr. Tagore's thoughtful essays, profound philosophical dissertations, learned historical interpretations, soul-stirring short stories, powerful dramas, carefully wrought novels, and his exquisite books of ballads and lyrics are destroyed forever from the face of this earth; still as long as men live in India he will be remembered as one of India's greatest poets, for they could never forget the message of his national songs. His songs have made such an indelible mark on the life of the nation that they will continue to shower their beneficent influence as long as the name India shall endure. Imagination itself is at a loss to comprehend, and language feels its inadequacy to express, the real usefulness of his patriotic songs in the up-hill task of nation-building in India. The Philippics of the political agitators, and the diatribes of the caustic editorial writers are mere pin-pricks when compared with the majestic sweep of the patriotic-fire songs of our poet. These deep appeals are lashing the little ripples into mountainous waves of unalloyed nationalism that are, in the India of to-day, dashing against and engulfing the rocks of selfishness and provincialism and thus helping to form a mighty, homogeneous nation out of a multitude of conflicting interests.

His patriotic songs are sung everywhere. In the morning

when the rising sun darts its rays of liquid gold we hear his songs being sung in the bathing *ghats* and in *sankirtan* parties that go about in the streets to wake people up from sleep to join in the service of God and Motherland. At scorching noontide, under the shade of the spreading banyan trees in lonely *maidans* when the shepherds play the king, they sing the same songs to themselves, to the birds on the trees and the cattle in the fields. And again, when the Indian landscape is bathed by the vermilion sprays of the setting sun, and as the boatmen go down the river or as the village peasants flock homeward—they all sing the songs of Rabindranath. They are sung in the national congresses and conferences, they are sung by the athletes in the gymnasiums, the beggars in their begging excursions, and the washermen in the *dhobi Khanas*; and they are sung at weddings and at times of religious ceremony.

There are critics who claim that Rabindranath's national poems are too gentle, too effeminate, to suit the present requirements of India. It is true that he has not the fire of Hem Chandra Bandopadhyaya, nor the masculine force of Nabin Chandra Sen. It is also true that he appeals to the softer emotions, and they to the sterner, and it cannot be denied that the latter also is needed in India. Indeed, the "Sleep no More" of Hem Chandra Bandopadhyaya, and some of the stanzas of "The Battle of Pallasy" (*Pallashir Judho*) of Nabin Chandra Sen are mighty factors in the present crisis in India. Yet, in spite of all, it must be acknowledged by those who know anything about the imaginative and speculative nature of the Hindus, that of the two sentiments—"Awake, arise, conquer and dash to earth the oppressor's rod," and "Your Motherland is struggling, she is suffering, O! she is starving, who else but a dutiful son can assuage the sorrows of the mother!"—the latter appeals to the Hindu soul more strongly and has a more enduring influence than the former. Rabindranath decidedly follows the latter path. He idealizes the motherland, he speaks of her in a thousand different ways, arousing in the hearts of his readers as many different shades of passionate emotion. He speaks of her waving rice fields, her smiling blossoms, perfumed flowers, singing birds, talking streams, awe-inspiring mountains, noisy bazars, sweet homes, her granaries and her play-grounds full of dear little children—and he clothes them all with the hallowing love of the motherland—*Bharat Mata*, as she is called in India. Over and above that, with his characteristic insight into Hindu traits and temperaments, he gives some of his best national songs a touch of colloquialism and the cadences of Baul and the Ramprasadi religious songs. They

both have peculiar tunes that appeal to Hindu higher emotions and devotional nature. Incessantly he pleads the cause of India in a hundred different ways and always in his inimitable style. Thus he sings of consecration :

"To thee, my motherland, I dedicate my body, for thee I consecrate my life; for thee my eyes will weep; and in thy praise my muse will sing.

"Though my arms are helpless and powerless; still they will do the deeds that can only serve thy cause; and though my sword is rusty with disgrace, still it shall sever thy chains of bondage, sweet mother of mine."

Then in another place he rebukes the mother by saying :

"Mother should you send your children as beggars to the doors of strangers, who, at sight of begging bowls, begin to hate and throw stones at them in contempt?"

Again he consoles her by saying :

"Sweet mother! You can hope nothing from these children of yours. they will give you nothing, though you are giving them everything you have. —air, water, grains, and your age-long culture. Forgive your ungrateful children, who promise you so much, but at the next breathing break all their solemn promises."

When the young patriots of India find themselves deserted on all sides, when their friends, relations, alas! even their own parents disown them for the crime of patriotism, they find a mine of inspiration in the song, "Follow the Gleam":

"If nobody responds to your call, then follow the path all alone, all alone; if every one is afraid and nobody wants to speak to you, then, O, you unfortunate! speak to yourself the story of your sorrow; if while traveling in the wilderness, everybody deserts you and turns against you, mind them not, but trample the thorns and bathe your feet with your own blood and go all by yourself; if again in the stormy night you do not find a single soul to hold the light for you, and they all close their doors against you, be not faint-hearted, forlorn patriot, but take a rib out of your side and light it with the fire of lightning and then follow the gleam, follow the gleam."

Love, pathos, encouragement and the spirit of sacrifice inspire his patriotic poems: but in them there is not even a suggestion of anger, jealousy or hatred for anybody in the world. That is what marks him out as a representative of world-wide humanity. His universalism has reached the very height of perfection. He, as a twentieth century idealist, believes in the unity of the human race —unity in the richness of its diversity. He holds with Goldwin Smith, that "above all nations is Humanity." He holds also that the presence of the national, the racial, the creedal and the continental

elements and their cooperation in human society are essential for the harmonious development of the universal; just as the presence and the cooperation of the distinct organs of the body are essential for the normal development of the man. He thinks that "as the mission of the rose lies in the unfoldment of the petals which implies distinctness, so the rose of humanity is perfect only when the diverse races and the nations have evolved their perfected distinct characteristics, but all attached to the stem of humanity by the bond of love."

That is the reason why he believes that the East and the West have their special lives to live, and their special missions to fulfil, but their final goal is the same. That is exactly why he does not, as no sensible man any longer does, believe in the cynic charlatanism of

"Oh East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

Thus he spoke in the banquet where the master minds of Great Britain and Ireland gathered to welcome him in their midst:

"...I have learned that, though our tongues are different and our habits dissimilar, at the bottom our hearts are one. The monsoon clouds, generated in the banks of the Nile, fertilize the far distant shores of the Ganges; ideas may have to cross from East to Western shores to find a welcome in men's hearts and fulfil their promise. East is East and West is West—God forbid that it should be otherwise—but the twain must meet in amity, peace and mutual understanding; their meeting will be all the more fruitful because of their differences; it must lead both to holy wedlock before the common altar of humanity."

The story of his love for the universal, for "things both great and small," for people both rich and poor, is best told in one of his poems:

"The myriads of human beings that inhabit this globe of ours enter my heart and find unspeakable joy in one another's company; there lovers enter and look at each other, and children stand and laugh in merriment... My heart is full to the brim with transcendent joy, and I find the world without a single human soul in it. It is all empty. O, I know! How can it be otherwise when all have entered into my heart!"

Exactly in the same strain he writes his dainty little poem, "The Small," which in prose translation is as follows:

"What is there but the sky, O sun, which can hold thy image?
I dream of thee but to serve thee I never can hope,
The dew drop wept and said,

'I am too small to take thee unto me, great lord,
And thus my life is all tears.'

" 'I illumine the limitless sky,
Yet I can yield myself up to a tiny drow of dew.'
Thus said the sun and smiled.
'I will be a speck of sparkle and fill you,
And your tiny life will be a smiling orb.' "

In his poem, "The Infinite Love," Rabindranath Tagore, who combines in his poetry the idealistic flights of Shelley, the luxuriant imagery of Keats, the exalted beauty of Tennyson, and the spiritual fervor of Thomas a Kempis, strikes the dominant note of his life and work, both of which have been tremendously influenced by the sublime philosophy and the eloquent natural beauties of India. The poem as translated by the poet himself reads:

"I have ever loved thee in a hundred forms and times,
Age after age, in birth following birth.
The chain of songs that my fond heart did weave
Thou graciously didst take round thy neck,
Age after age, in birth following birth.

"When I listen to the tales of the primitive past,
The love-pangs of the far distant times,
The meetings and partings of the ancient ages—
I see thy form gathering light
Through the dark dimness of Eternity
And appearing as a star ever fixed in the memory of the ALL.

"We two have come floating by the twin currents of love
That well up from the inmost heart of the Beginningless.
We two have played in the lives of myriad lovers
In tearful solitude of sorrow
In tremulous shyness of sweet union,
In old, old love ever renewing its life.

"The onrolling flood of the love eternal
Hath at last found its perfect final course.
All the joys and sorrows and longings of the heart,
All the memories of the moments of ecstasy,
All the love-lyrics of poets of all climes and times
Have come from the everywhere
And gathered in one single love at thy feet."