

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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THE war was still young when word came of the death of the Hindu poet, Rabindranath Tagore, one of the most enlightened and perfect figures of modern times. As poet, philosopher, essayist, mystic and trenchant critic of western civilization, he has been instrumental in directing the attention of the West to the great past of India. It is true that the West owes much to the culture of Greece, but we ignore the fact of how much Greece and Palestine owed to the spiritual teaching of India, forgetting that long before Plato taught in Athens, long before Christ was conceived in the womb of a Virgin, Brahmins had taught in the holy city of Benares.

It has been pertinently said that England sends men into the world of Indian affairs—into professions, politics and business—who are completely ignorant of the wisdom and thought of a people whose civilization was old when the British Isles had hardly emerged from the unknown. "I would suggest, therefore," goes on this critic, "that all candidates to the British Indian Government be compelled to pass an examination in Tagore's writings, and learn something of the people whom they exploit and somewhat despise." In a noble address given before the University of Cambridge, Professor Max Müller expressed his views on Indian culture and what it can do for western civilization. "If I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe—we who have been nurtured on the thought of the Greeks and Romans and of one Semitic race, the Jewish,—may draw the correction which is most wanted to make our life more perfect, more universal, in fact more human in life, not this life alone but a transfigured and ethereal life, I should point to India." In *The Story of Civilization* this theme is continued and enlarged. "It is true that even across the Himalayan barrier India has sent such gifts as grammar, philosophy, logic, and our numerals and decimal system. But these are not the essence of her spirit, they are but trifles to what we may learn from her in the future . . . Perhaps in return for our arrogance, conquest and spoliation, India will teach us the tolerance and gentleness of the mature mind, the calm of an understanding spirit, the unifying and pacifying love for all living things." That love which broke into the muted silence of the forests,

and was taught by the Rishis long before Christ said "Love ye one another". It was given voice in the Hindu sacred books, the *Upanishads*.

Slowly we are learning that all religions have one root, that Christianity is but one of many, and, above all, that—as Dean Inge says—it little matters whether the Supreme Being whom men seek is called by the name of Brahma, Buddha or Christ. The Christianity of the West has retained little of the strong gentleness of Christ, of His tolerance towards other religions. Instead it has adopted the intolerance of Judaism, and its arrogant belief of being the chosen people of a God who will tolerate no other gods, no other religions. Instead of this harsh intolerance, Hinduism has taught a fellowship with all religions. Now and then, in the minds of men who are not enslaved, this fellowship with other religions is recognized. Christ Himself had no intolerance, but had a deep sympathy with other religions. In mystic vein Matthew Arnold writes:

Children of men—the Unseen Power whose eye
Forever doth accompany mankind,
Hath looked on no religion scornfully
That man did ever find.

Which has not taught weak wills how much they can?
Which has not fallen on his dry heart like rain?
Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man
Thou must be born again?

It is such tolerance, breathing a "unifying and pacifying love"—the very essence of Hindu thought—which is found in Rabindranath's poetry and life.

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He was the youngest of seven children born to Debendranath Tagore, the God-intoxicated man who in his oneness with God saw Him "without me and within me, in everything and through everything", a union with the Infinite such as Catherine of Siena had when she envisaged the presence of Christ within her "as the fish is in the sea and the sea is in the fish".

Looking back on his childhood, Tagore tells a friend he was lonely: "I was very lonely, that was the chief feature of my childhood—I was lonely." But in those days he found a friend who was never to fail him, as Nature, the old nurse, took her child upon her knee, and listening to her lore, he grew in knowledge of the Finite and the Infinite. "I do remember", he told a friend, "that at morning every now and then a kind of unspcak-

able joy used to overflow my heart, the whole world seemed to me to be full of mysteries. I used to dig in the earth with a little bamboo stick, thinking I might discover one of them. All the beauty, all the sweetness, the cry of the kite, the shadows on the water—all these used to make me feel the presence of a dimly recognized being assuming many forms just to keep me company. It seemed as if Nature used to close her hand and ask me, 'Tell me what I hold in my hand'."

He was finally sent to school, but as his unhappiness there equalled that of Shelley at Eton, he was taken away and put into the hands of a tutor. His studies were practically those of a western boy, except for the Indian classics. For a time he took an intense dislike to English literature and poetry as taught to him by his Bengal tutor. "When my tutor read passages from the English poets, I used", he said with some shame, "to fall into shrieks of hysterical laughter." A strange beginning for one who later was to astonish England by the surpassing beauty of his English which, Mr. Yeats said, stirred his blood as nothing else had for years.

The India of the past paid more honour to her Rishis than to her warriors, statesmen or princes, because they were free from all selfish desires, and had attained the supreme soul in knowledge and wisdom. They had reached the Supreme God from all sides, had found peace, had become united with all that had entered into the life of the Universe, and as such could pass on their knowledge to others. This was the India whose great past was threatened by the British Indian Government, when Raja Ram Mohun Roy and other great Indians, in defence, brought about a revival of India's ancient learning.

In 1835, Lord Macaulay advocated the use of the English tongue as the chief medium in the "higher education" of the Indian schools. "Never", wrote Sir John Seeley, "was a more momentous question discussed", and never was a greater piece of Philistinism intended. Lord Macaulay, who had a provincial mind notwithstanding his great learning, had showered scorn on the Sanskrit classics and the Bengali literature and tongue, as he would yet shower scorn on Matthew Arnold's wish to revive interest in Celtic literature by having a chair established in Oxford. To Matthew Arnold, Shakespeare was England's greatest glory, but he recognized what was owed to Celtic influence. Coolly, he reminded his countrymen of the debt England owed to Celtic poetry, and that if it were not for its natural magic and something of its style, Germanic England

would not have produced a Shakespeare. Who, remembering such lines as "Bare ruined choirs where late birds sing", cannot fail to see the influence of Celtic literature on Shakespeare?

This is the service the Hindu poet rendered England. All that Rabindranath wrote in the common tongue of the Bengal people and translated into English has enriched English literature. The advice of Lord Macaulay, whose *Lays of Ancient Rome* will lie on dusty shelves while the *Upanishads* will live while the world lives, was taken by the British Indian Government. English was to be the chief language taught in the Government schools. But India rose and fought for her birth-right. The verdict acted as a challenge, which resulted in the Bengal Renaissance under the leadership of Raja Ram Mohun Roy and Debendranath Tagore, Rabindranath's great father.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy was both a patriot and a statesman—a lover of all culture, whether it belonged to the East or to the West. So, tolerant of all religions, he instructed that the Brahmin Temple should be a universal house of prayer open to all men without distinction of caste, colour or race, thus following in the footsteps of that earlier Renaissance when his ancestors, the Brahmins, had taught side by side with the Helot poet, Kabir, and where the God of the Hindus was worshipped in hymns composed by a Moslem. Although Ram Mohun Roy lent his genius to the revival of Sanskrit learning and the Bengali literature, he did not despise the culture of the West, but sought, as Rabindranath was to do, to make a union of the knowledge of West and East. This work was so successful that all India was fired by the revival of the learning of the past. Into this rich heritage Rabindranath entered.

He was to reach his early manhood before he received his first vision into the Infinite, where, as Plotinus says, "the seer and the seen are one". If a man, continues the great mystic, could preserve the memory of what he was when mingled with the Divine, he would have in himself an image of God. Tagore, when relating his experience to a friend who cleaved to him as Jonathan did to David, said:

I was watching the sunrise, when a veil was suddenly withdrawn from my eyes. Everything became luminous. I found the world wrapt in an inexpressible glory, with waves of joy and beauty bursting over it. I seemed to witness in the wholeness of my vision the movement of the body of the whole of humanity. I have tried to explain in my poems what was my goal, to express the fulness of life, its beauty and perfection.

So keen was his rapture that he could have cried out with an

earlier Rishi who in the forest became one with God, "Listen to me, ye sons of the immortal spirit; I have known the Supreme Being whose light shines forth from the darkness".

But not quite yet was Tagore to find Brahma in his daily work; often he felt as St. Augustine did, "Too late have I loved Thee, O Thou Beauty of Ancient Days. Things held me far from Thee, which, unless they work in Thee, were not in Thee at all." Some mystics are inclined to dwell apart from the turmoil of life, but Tagore was not to judge it easier in solitude to find the soul's completeness. He was to find that "Deliverance is not for me in Renunciation". He was to enjoy to the full all his senses, not, like St. Bernard, to close his ears to the song of the birds, or to cover his eyes from the beauty of women or of Nature. All spoke to him of the Divine Being. "The world will light its hundred different lamps with Thy flame, and place them before the altar of Thy temple."

After his first vision, his wise father sent him to manage the large family estate "Shilaidah", situated on the banks of the river Padma, a tributary of the sacred Ganges. His work on the estate was to influence his future life; a flame of patriotism rose in him as he saw the misery of the people. Passing from village to village, he grew to love the patient villagers and peasants so buffeted by Nature, who is no more indifferent to man than those whose *laissez faire* prevents them storing up food for an emergency as Joseph did in Egypt. All that Tagore could do on his father's estate was done to relieve his tenants, but that he felt was little. In 1893 he writes: "There is a flood here, and the peasants are carrying home unripe rice." "When I look at the Indian farmers", he continued, "my heart is full of sorrow . . . they are so helpless as if they were babies of Mother Earth, they suffer from hunger unless she feeds them with her own hands. When her breast is dry they suffer, but if they get a little to eat, they forget their past sorrows."

It was in Shilaidah that he wrote his famous short stories of Bengal village life, written not in Anglicized Sanskrit or in the classical Bengali tongue, but as Pushkin wrote, in the tongue of the people. It was when drifting about in his houseboat on his beloved river Padma—whose face now mirrors the silent dead of those stricken by famine and disease, as their emaciated bodies float silently past to their last home, the sea—that his love for humanity blossomed into full flower, a love to which he gave utterance in these words:

My heart is full to the brim with transcendent joy—and
 I find the world without a single human being in it.
 It is all empty—oh, I know,
 How can it be otherwise, when all have entered into my heart?

When he left Shilaidah, he was to begin his life work. With his father's consent he opened a school at Asram Saniketan—the House of Prayer. Over its door Debendranath Tagore had carved the gospel of the religious tolerance of the Hindus, "No man's faith is to be despised here." And yet, in the face of this tolerance, those who hold the destiny of India in their hands persist in saying India has too many sects to unite, forgetting Voltaire's jibe, "England has many religions, but only one sauce." India would unite if the policy of *Divide and Rule* (a policy which entered Ireland in Elizabeth's time, and still lingers there) was abolished. That India has men of standing who deplore this policy is found in the protest of Sir Ferez Noon Khan, a member of the Viceroy's Cabinet, when present at the War Cabinets Conference. "The time has arrived when the British Government will have to decide whether they can any longer follow the policy of saying to the Hindus that they cannot have a united India because the Moslems do not agree, and saying to the Moslems they cannot have their Pakistan because it would break up the unity of India and the Hindus do not like it . . ." "Such a policy", he went on, "cannot be continued without trouble to the British Government." Perhaps there is more than one way to *liquidate an Empire*.

Rabindranath was not blind to the defects he saw in the Hindu character, defects largely due to an inertia resulting from long subjection to an alien rule and the meagre education provided for them. "India," he said, "must look within herself to find improvement." With this object in view, he opened his school. "I wish," he said, "to revive the spirit of our ancient systems of education, where the pupils would realize there is a nobler and higher thing than efficiency." In no respect was the education narrow; in it the cultures of the East and the West had a meeting ground; but politics, for which he held the same scorn as Plato, were eschewed. "The sage or the saint", wrote the great Athenian, "has no place in practical politics. He would be like a man in a den of wild beasts . . . The world does not want truth, which is all he could give it."

Tagore's wish for his pupils was that they would learn to understand the beauty and joy that lay in truth. It was up-hill work to keep his school going, not alone financially, but also because the British Indian Government had placed it on

its black list. Letters were sent to the Government officers telling them to take their children out of the school, but when this command failed, a more subtle move was made to gain control over the school by an offer from the British Indian Government of financial aid—an offer declined by Tagore, who knew what lay behind it. By the sale of his books and his copyright, he was able to keep his school going, and when he later received the Nobel Prize, he gave the money to the school, which in time he hoped would be the nucleus of the International University he wished to found.

It is a truism that the pin-pricks of an alien rule act more as an irritant than a mental sword thrust. Tagore rarely showed his anger, but now and then he showed his contempt for the petty espionage of India's rulers. "In this unfortunate country", he writes, "each one of us is looked upon with suspicion. Our British rulers cannot see through the dust they raise, humiliations follow us at every step. What is radically wrong with our rulers is that they are fully conscious they do not know us and do not wish to know us. Conditions rise from this which are not only miserable but unspeakably vulgar."

For some time he had been translating his prose and poems into English. His patriotic songs are perhaps the least beautiful of his poetry, but when the partition of Bengal was threatened and riots naturally broke out, and the methods used to put them down savoured of barbarism (deportation without trial or the gallows), Tagore encouraged the young Bengalese, Hindus and Moslems in their revolt. "Brothers, do not be discouraged, for God neither slumbers nor sleeps. The tighter the knot, the shorter will be the bondage. The harder the strokes of oppression, the sooner the flag will kiss the ground."

Again at this time he writes in *Follow the Gleam*—

If in the stormy night
 You do not find a single soul
 To hold the light for you—
 Follow the path all alone, all alone,
 Follow the gleam, follow the gleam.

His work had long been known in Asia and the Scandinavian countries, when in 1912 he was persuaded to go to England. He was met in London by W. B. Yeats, who had long been interested in the *Upanishads*, the sacred literature of India. The Irish poet introduced Tagore to his first English audience, who received him with an appreciation not only of his physical beauty and grace of bearing, but also for his reading of his poetry,

first written in the Bengali tongue and then translated into English, which fell on their ears like music. Later, when speaking before a gathering of some of the greatest minds of England, Ireland and Scotland, he touched on Kipling's cheap summing up—"East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet", and said: "East is East and West is West, God forbid it should be otherwise, but I have learned that if our tongues are different and our habits dissimilar, at the bottom our hearts are one. The twain must meet in amity, peace and mutual understanding before the common altar of Humanity." He had hoped much from this meeting in bringing East and West into closer union. In one of his letters home, writing of the colour prejudice of the British people, he said: "It affords one of the greatest problems that men have been asked to solve. It is, I believe, the one question of the present age, and we must be prepared to go through the martyrdom of suffering till the victory of God is achieved."

While he was still in England, the shadow of the coming war was stalking among the nations of Europe. His sensitive nature felt the unrest and disillusion about him, and he longed to be back in Saniketan among his pupils. But when he returned, he was in a state of mental distress which even the beauty of the Himalayas could not allay. He felt as if he were passing through a death agony. What his mental pain was, we can guess by his poem *The Destroyer*:

Is it the Destroyer who comes?
 For the boisterous sea of tears heaves
 In the flood-tide of pain.
 The crimson clouds run wild in the wind
 Lashed by lightning, and the thundering laughter
 Of the mad is in the sky.
 Life sits in its chariot crowned by Death,
 Bring out your tribute to him of all that you have.

It is strange that, when the nations actually clashed with one another, his desolation of mind left him. "I have found myself," he writes. "I am filled with wonder that the Infinite Power and Joy have become as I am and what the blade of grass is. But the pain was great, my Master, when the strings were being tuned." The horror of war still held him, for the injury it had done to truth and beauty.

On Christmas Day, 1914, when speaking to the masters and pupils of his school on Christianity, he said that Christ, whom the West has called the Prince of Peace, had been denied in Europe. Christ, like all spiritual personalities, had a pure

love of Truth with all its relationship to Humanity; therefore we find great-hearted men on the side of the oppressed. On the other hand, he said, we often find the Christian Church on the side of vested interests, in fact it is ready to make its bargain with those very powers which crucified Christ.

When Tagore was about forty years of age, he lost at one fell blow his wife, daughter and son. No more perfect love song has been sung than the beloved *At Night and Morning*. In it is found the ecstasy of the spiritual and physical meaning of marriage:

I hold before your mouth the brimming cup of the wine of youth,
 You looked in my eyes and slowly took the cup in your hands,
 I took off your veil with my hands trembling
 And then placed your dear hands, tender as the lotus leaf,
 Next to my heart . . . I unbound
 Your hair and slowly hid your radiant face against my heart.

When Death came and knocked at his door, taking her with him, his grief was such that he could hardly live. "In desperate hope I go and search for her in all the corners of the room." Pitifully he prays, "Let me for once feel that lost sweet touch", but he was brought back to the knowledge that Death is the fulfilment of Life.

When criticizing British rule in India he did not hesitate to criticize the lethargy of his own race. "If the inside is not healthy, it will breed disease. When the attainment of an ideal does not depend on our efforts but upon the charity of others, it is inglorious. We must do away with the narrowness of our minds and the weakness of our character. Let none fan us into sleep, let none increase the dose of our servitude. India must depend on herself. The British are getting strong by the possession of the Indian Empire, and if they wish to make India weak, then their one-sided advantage will defeat its own purpose. "What has Britain given us," he asks, "in place of our birth-right?" Let Plato answer, who in an hour of despair saw what the rulers of Athens were giving to their people. "They have filled the city with harbours and docks and walls and revenues and such-like trash, but without righteousness." India had gained things which she felt she could do without, to be master in her own house.

The school at Asram Saniketan had waxed so strong that Rabindranath felt he could leave it in the hands of its masters and begin his work to found his International University. For this he needed the co-operation of the Far East, Europe and

America. He had taken his passage for Japan, which was clamouring for him, when riots broke out owing to the indentured system Fiji and Natal had pressed upon Indian labour—a system which amounts to slavery. This system somewhat improved, he left for Japan.

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Of the three lectures coming under the heading of *Nationalism*, that on Japan is by far the best. It has been translated by him into an English rarely seen now, which falls on the ears in a measured flow of musical words, so that I give it almost in full. Apart from that, it is interesting when we realize what is now happening in Japan. We have, he began, been repeatedly told that Asia lives in the past. There is some justification for this. We lay in torpor for ages, forgetting that in Asia great kingdoms were founded. Philosophy, Science, Arts and Literature had flourished, and all the great religions had their cradles.

In ardent words he urged Japan not to lose her soul in the pride of acquisition:

The political civilization which has sprung from the soil of Europe is over-running the whole world like some prolific weed . . . You must apply your clarity of mind, your spiritual strength, in order to cut a new path from the unwieldy car of progress which the Western world has mistaken for civilization. The genius of Europe has been given the power of organization which has specially made itself manifest in politics and commerce, but the danger lies in that organized ugliness storms the mind and carries the day by its power of mockery against the deeper sentiments of heart. I ask you to have the strength and clarity of mind to know for certain that the lumbering structure of progress, riveted by the iron bolts of efficiency, cannot hold together for long: some day it will fall in a heap of ruins.

Japan must have faith in the moral law of existence to be able to assert to herself that the Western nations are following a path of suicide where they are smothering their humanity to keep themselves in power and others in subjection . . . Fear lies at the heart of Europe whenever the rise of an Eastern nation is discussed. She has felt the conflict of things in the Universe which she thinks can only be brought under control by conquest . . . Never for a moment think that the hurt inflicted upon others will not infect you . . . But through the smoke of cannon the light of Europe's morals shines . . . When we truly know the Europe which is great and good, the East can save herself from the Europe which is mean and grasping.

When he saw that his audience was wearying of his spiritual plea, in its new lust for power, he finished by saying:

Now, in the name of Japan, I offer my salutations as my ancestors, the Rishis, did to the sunrise of the East.

When he returned to India he said he was tired to the marrow of his bones: "I have founded a University but I have lost my little song". Much had been done, but he had still much to do before his life work was finished—as poet, philosopher and man of action, he had put before the world his aspirations for the future of India—freedom for its people to live their own lives, protection for the poor, and sufficient food for them to eat. All his life he had seen an alien ruler housed in a palace of more than Midas splendour. On the other side he had seen men, women and children living and dying in misery and want.

Perhaps from the dust of Empire Plato's dream city may rise—"A little city set on a hill-top, remote from riches and commerce and the bitter and corrupting sea which carries them, where life shall move in music and discipline and reverence for those things that are greater than men." And the songs sung there will not be common songs, but songs such as the Hindu poet has always sung, breathing of love, truth and joy.

All the Athenian asks for his city is found in the Hindu's prayer for his country—

Let the earth and the air and the fruits of my country be sweet,
 my God,
 Let the homes and marts, the forests and fields of my country
 be full, my God.
 Let the promise and hopes, the deeds and words of my country
 be true, my God.
 Let the lives and hearts of the sons and the daughters of my
 country be one, my God.

Will the Hindu poet's faith in the ultimate justice of England in conceding freedom to India be fulfilled? Time will show. Have we, in the 150 years of our occupation in India, shown that we can govern without force—a force which no civilized man or woman should contemplate without shame? That India wants her freedom, no chicanery of her rulers can deny. By giving back to her the birthright we took from her, we can gain a friend and lose an enemy—a friend we will need, who will stand by us when the clash of arms comes between East and West for supremacy. That the parting of the ways has come, is obvious. Shall we go on in the old reactionary way, unwilling to give up what we took by force and must maintain by force, not understanding that what is not given is lost?

SCOTLAND IN 1945

EDMUND G. BERRY

THIS year is the two hundredth anniversary of the "Forty-Five", the last great Scottish attempt to throw off the bonds of union with England which had been made in 1707. It is interesting, then, to survey briefly from this vantage point the state of the union two hundred years after Bonnie Prince Charlie. If any Jacobitism survives, it is now purely sentimental, the cult of a few old highland families who figured prominently on the Stuart side in 1715 or 1745, or the pose of a few of the more literary and artistic figures of the Scottish national movement. Scotland is now as strong as England in loyalty to the Royal Family, and the fact that the present Queen comes from an old and famous Scottish house only increases that loyalty. She has made Scots people feel that the Royal Family is as much "ours" as it is the Royal Family of England. King George V and Queen Mary had already made Holyrood Palace habitable and held Courts there;—a small thing, but it made Edinburgh at least temporarily a capital and not merely another provincial city.

Still the union is not a strong one, and if the war has absorbed all the interest and energy of the Scottish national movement, that is only temporary, and there can be little doubt that the movement will revive after victory has been won. It has, too, much right on its side. Scotland has in many ways not received a fair deal. Of the last eighteen prime ministers of Britain, seven have been Scots and eight Englishmen (the rest being one Welshman, one Irishman and a Jew), yet even of these seven none has paid any attention to Scotland's particular problems and difficulties. The greatest Scotsmen in political or in industrial life during the past century have been in the Dominions and colonies, most of all perhaps in Canada. Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, Lord Selkirk, John Galt, Lord Elgin, William Lyon Mackenzie, Sir John Macdonald, Lord Strathcona, Lord Mountroyal and Lord Dalhousie are great names in Canada, and all pioneered in various ways. Yet Scotland during their time had no leaders in such fields comparable to these men. The home country in Victoria's reign had an insignificant history; Scottish nationalism was pure sentiment, and Scotland was largely but a summer holiday spot for the Queen and English noblemen. It was not until the years imme-

diately after the last war, when Ireland was fighting for Home Rule, that Scotland seemed to awake and take stock of the situation.

Prospects were far from bright, say, from 1920 on. The population was declining; between 1921 and 1931 eight per cent of the population emigrated, against one-half of one per cent for England, and the emigrants were often the best type of Scots people. Physical welfare perhaps improved, but there was much poverty. The population had become urban: in 1931 four-fifths of the entire population was living in cities and towns, and slum conditions were appalling. Scottish industry had steadily declined. Farming was declining: by 1936 the acreage of Scotland under cultivation was smaller than it had been for sixty years. The fishing industry was not protected by London, and by 1938 the number of Scottish fishing vessels was decreasing by five a week. By 1935 Scotland was no longer economically autonomous; banks, railways and shipyards were controlled from London, and small businesses were being closed down by English chain-stores. Revenue and average annual income fell far below that of England, and in 1938 there were more than twenty thousand men who had not been employed for three years. When in 1934 commissioners for distressed areas were appointed, it was found that in Scotland one-quarter of the population must be included in these areas.

In government everything was being taken over by London. More and more "social service acts" were passed, until every service was controlled by London and administered by men who knew little of Scottish conditions and cared less. Meanwhile Southern Ireland, after a bloody war, had withdrawn from the Empire; almost all of the Dominions acquired national status. It was thus inevitable that in Scotland there should be a strong movement toward the restoration of self-government. The Scottish Home Rule Association and the Scottish National League were formed. The most hopeful bill was brought up in Parliament in 1924, giving Scotland control of all the most important government departments and services in Scotland, but it was talked out in the House and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's government set it aside. In that same year, the most active in the Scottish national movement, several other schemes were introduced into Parliament, but were easily defeated by English members. In 1928 the National Party was formed under the leadership of R. B. Cunninghame Graham, and later the Scottish Party. In 1934 the two organizations united to form the Scot-

tish National Party which demands a Scots parliament and, in general, equality with England in Defence, Customs and Imperial Status; so far no candidates put forward by the party have been elected to Parliament.

But Parliament claims to have done something for Scotland. Agitation in the nineteenth century led to the creation of a Scottish Office headed by a Secretary of State for Scotland; and in 1939 the administrative staff of the Office was transferred from London to new buildings on the Calton Hill in Edinburgh. The move was intended to be a compromise which might satisfy the Home Rule agitators. That is indeed all that it has turned out to be— a compromise and a makeshift. The Scottish Departments of Health, Education and Agriculture are now housed in St. Andrew's House; the chief ministries have "regional" offices in Scotland, but are still controlled by ministers in Whitehall who spend most of their time on English affairs, and the Treasury which indirectly controls everything is in London. In Parliament, Scottish affairs are crowded into perhaps two days' debate, the same time often devoted to the affairs of the London Traffic Board. Financial assignments are based on English requirements, and the Scottish education estimate is automatically eleven-eightieths of the English estimate. If it were not for the Carnegie Endowment, Scottish education would be extremely poor.

In portraying in dark colours Scotland and Scottish life and enterprize in the twenties and thirties, however, it would not be fair to lay the entire blame for the wretched state of affairs on Scotland's southern neighbour, who, after all, was going through very difficult years at the same time. England and the English cannot be blamed for the "General Depression" which manifested itself throughout the entire western world and whose impacts were felt in every country—especially in those which were heavily industrialized. But it is equally fair to point out that, in general, affairs in Scotland were always several degrees worse than in England, that any ameliorating measures could not be originated in Scotland but in London, and that London was always more immediately concerned with, and knew more about, conditions south of the Tweed.

The general picture looked discouraging for Scotland, but still there were elements in her life which gave and which still give ground for strong hopes after the war. Economically, there was the work of the Rowett Institute near Aberdeen in the field of agricultural research and experiment, and the work

of another institute for the West Highlands, founded by Mr. T. B. Macaulay of Montreal; there were the extensive schemes for the reforestation of large areas in the Highlands (if the emergency need for timber during the war has not led to premature cutting); there was the big programme for the electrification by hydro-electric of large sections of the country which needed and still need electricity very badly; and there were attempts by large corporations like *Lever Brothers* to introduce factory industry into the Highlands, counterbalanced largely by the fact that the Highlander does not generally make a good factory worker.

These trends were often encouraging and, if Scotland is to be revived at all, they will have to be resumed and still further enlarged after the war is over. While the Scottish national movement for cessation of the two hundred years old union with England seemed to exemplify within itself a disunion which could be nothing but harmful, there were elsewhere—and it was certainly time for them to appear—encouraging signs of united action and effort. In 1929 the Church of Scotland and the Free Church, whose dissensions had wrecked Scottish life a century ago, at last united, and that epoch-making move, in spite of a general decline of the Church's influence, can still mean much in a country always famed for the prominence of religion and for the permeation of all parts of life by its influence.

But perhaps the most encouraging progress in Scotland in any field during the years before the present war was made in literature and the arts. The founding of the *Scottish National Players* led to a new resurgence of interest in the drama, both amateur and professional, and there may some day be a Scottish National Theatre. In painting there is a new school, French Impressionistic in style but Scottish in character and subject; there is fine new work in architecture and music. Poetry had produced a new school interested once more in the Scottish tongue, and one of its best known examples, Hugh MacDiarmid, is also a leading Scottish nationalist. The novels of Norman Douglas, Eric Linklater, Ian Macpherson, George Blake, Neil Gunn, and Edwin and Willa Muir are various in style and treatment, but all are fresh, vital leaders in a field which had been unworked in Scotland for some time. These are all encouraging signs of new life in Scotland, but it is still hard to assess their value against the almost complete collapse of the Scottish economy.

Both the country and her people are deeply involved in the war. The Scottish regiments, with so many honours to their

credit already, are again in the forefront of battle; they appear prominently in the news of the fighting along the German-Belgian frontier. They are in Italy and India. At home the factories are hard at work, and the big Clydeside shipbuilding yards are never idle. The fishermen on every coast are working hard, and the farmers must turn to production every available acre. Scotsmen are sharing with Englishmen all the war-time restrictions and deprivations; the larger cities suffered the same damage in the "Blitz" of 1940 as Bristol and Coventry. The continuous strain of six years of war weighs upon everyone to a degree which we in Canada can hardly appreciate. But "Business as Usual" is everyone's motto. The old universities are carrying on, under severe limitations; yet Edinburgh has been able to take a large number of Polish exile students into the medical school; indeed Edinburgh has been for several years the centre of Polish exile life. A number of city boarding-schools have been evacuated to old estates in the Scottish countryside; other old houses have become rest centres for troops from the Dominions and allied countries.

Canadian soldiers in their letters from Britain take special delight in visits to Scotland. Several have told me that while England seems better off and does more for Canadians in the way of canteens and clubs with more elaborate appointments, yet they would rather spend their leave in Scotland. They tell us that the Scots folk are more friendly and are much kinder in their welcome to Canadians and make them feel completely at home, with a spontaneous generosity and simple friendliness. The beauty of the Trossachs leaves an inevitable impression; one Canadian thought Edinburgh the finest city he had ever been in, and has gone back there on every leave; and those interested in the old Scottish universities find a special welcome in Aberdeen, a city which has exported many good men to Canada, and the principal of whose university held a similar position in Canada for several years so that he knows Canada and Canadians well.

It is specially interesting to hear from Scots Highlanders of Cape Breton or Glengarry County, whose grandparents perhaps "had the Gaelic", that they have visited the parts of the Old Country from which their ancestors came, and have found the same names as their own there—Campbell, McDonald, McLeod and McLean. Many of them say that in their old ancestral homes they can still feel the pull of race and are completely at home there. It is the next best thing to going home to Canada.

In Ontario's Glengarry County there are now many French-Canadians, and some of the French-Canadian boys have visited Scotland. When one of them told me how much he liked Scotland and how he felt at home in the glen of the Garry from which his county in Ontario had taken its name, my first feeling was one of resentment that a Frenchman should claim Scotland as his home. And yet, on second thought, there was that old kinship and alliance between Scotland and France in the time of Mary, Queen of Scots, when France was a friend and, through the royal house, a relation, and England was a very bitter enemy. That feeling of kinship seemed then natural and eminently right. Much of it is still alive after four hundred years, and the French are being welcomed again in Scotland. General de Gaulle received a tremendous ovation when he visited Edinburgh, and the Free French magazine in London, *Entente*, recently published a Scottish number; I read there of new organizations to promote Scots-French friendship, of hostels and rest homes for Free French soldiers in Scotland, and of a new revival of the old friendship of the two once great countries. So perhaps in Canada in a small way the Scots can do their part to bring British and French-Canadians together.

These last few paragraphs are intended to show to some small degree the part Scotland is playing in the present war, as far as we can judge it from the limited information which reaches us at present. After the war we shall hear more and be able to see for ourselves the state of the nation. They may also serve to indicate what seems to be new strength in the bond between the Mother Country and people of Scottish birth in Canada. The new attachment is perhaps only one of affection and sentiment. It is valuable none the less, and Scotland feels the same attachment to those who are abroad. But it is made more valuable if to it is added a real appreciation of the nature of Scotland's problems.

The years after the last war were not good for Scotland. The present war may well be another turning-point in Scottish history; this time we hope it will mean a turn in the direction of real progress. There is no place for a national movement like the Scottish one in war-time; but when victory comes, it should bring with it a realization that Scotland has contributed more than her share, and that she deserves some of the rewards in the shape of repair and reconstruction and above all in some serious attention to the problems which are hers.