



**Rabindranath Tagore The famous Hindu Poet**

Who is now lecturing in the United States. He was awarded one of the Nobel Prizes for Literature, but spent the entire \$40,000 on a school in India in which he is interested.

### East and West.

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

[The following poem by Rabindranath Tagore, who was awarded one of the Nobel prizes for literature, gives a glimpse into the Eastern point of view as regards "East and West." Speaking a short time ago in Japan, Tagore used these words: "In your land the experiments will be carried on by which the East will change the aspects of modern civilization, infusing life in it where it is a machine, substituting human heart for cold expediency, not caring so much for power and success as for harmonious and living growth, for health and beauty."]

The blood-red line  
That crimson the Western sky  
Is not the radiant red  
Of the rays of thy soothing dawn.  
It is rather the terrible fire of the dying day.

On the seashores of the West  
The funeral pyres are emitting  
The last flames  
Caught from the torch of a selfish and decadent Civilization.

The worship of energy  
In the battle fields or factories  
Is not worshipping Thee  
The Protector of the universe.

Perhaps the all-embracing rays  
Of Thy light of joy  
Are lying hidden on Eastern shores  
With patience  
Under the veil of humility  
In the darkness of silent sorrow.

Yes, the rays of Thy light of joy  
Are lying latent  
In the East  
To liberate  
The Soul of the world.

## Among the Books

### The New China.

(Continued)

["The New China," By Henri Borel, T. Fisher Unwin Pub. Co., Adelphi Terrace, London, Eng.]

One of the first strolls that Mr. Borel took in Peking, led him to the Legation Quarter. Here two things struck him: first that the entire district given over to the foreign legations was practically a fortress, with walls and glacis,—then the ugliness of the buildings. "Everything secluded, separated, suspicious, hostile," he says, "They would scarcely live farther away from the Chinese

national mind, these ambassadors, if they had established their Legations at the North Pole."—And, in regard to the buildings, "what I, as an artist, cannot forgive my white brethren is that they have made this European Ghetto in Peking so ugly and commonplace. Almost every Chinese cottage in Peking, even the smallest and poorest, has some beauty of line and color, but nearly every European building in the Legation Quarter is a vulgarity. . . . A dull, crude, commonplace city of barbarians, shapeless, colorless, lacking in distinction, huddled in the midst of the exquisite old Chinese architecture which makes Peking a magnificent dream."

And so he launches into a description of the city.

### The Forbidden City.

Peking, he explains, consists of three divisions: the outer or Chinese city just within the outer walls; the Tartar city, inside of a second wall; and the Imperial city in the heart of all, doubly walled and guarded by watch-towers. At the time of which he wrote the last Emperor was still alive, "The Son of Heaven," and resided in this inner precinct with the ladies of the court, and the old dowager-empress, one of the most remarkable women who ever lived.

Through these concentric cities, from tunnel-like passages in the walls run great avenues, bordered by wonderful temples and adorned—accentuating the perspective—with colossal arches or gateways. Each avenue ends at a closed gate, which marks the boundary of the "Holy of Holies, the heart of hearts, the Forbidden City," which then enshrined the sacred person of the Emperor.

Mr. Borel's description of this kernel of Peking is picturesque:

"Whereas the three outer walls of the Chinese, the Tartar and the Imperial City are sombre and dark, striking one with dread and terror, the wall of the Forbidden City, far from being warlike, is a delicate pink, like the rosy hue of blossoms, and is covered with bright tiles of a golden color, shining brilliantly in the sun. All buildings in the Forbidden City are covered with these gold-colored tiles. . . . and on each corner of the wall there is a magnificent pavilion also covered with golden tiles. This pink wall and the glittering golden tiles impress one like something in a fairy story. In the clear, pellucid sunlight, under the cloudless sky of Peking, stands this Forbidden City, glimmering like some legendary city of enchantment."

—Symbolic of mystery and power, and yet even as he wrote the foundation of the throne was tottering, and the revolution simmering which was to transform the great Chinese empire with its Manchu overlords into a republic.

### The Streets and Houses.

The great surprise of Peking for the foreigner, Mr. Borel notes, is its long wide streets, outlined with fine, stately *p' ai-lous* or three-story arches of marble or wood. Some of these streets still remain essentially Chinese, although everywhere electric lights and other western conveniences are being installed; other streets show European influences more markedly. Along the Chinese streets, the houses are unlike each other. "Very rarely," he says, "are two adjacent ones similar; most of them are old and decayed, but what splendor of color, what outlines! The carving of the doors, the posts, the window-frames, the roof-work, is fine and sometimes as delicate as lace. The roofs—one notices this particularly when looking from the top of a wall—are very slender, in the form of tents,

a remembrance and relic of nomadic times. They look like barges, slowly floating through the sky; the signs and shop-posts flame in gold on black or red, and all the houses are painted in harmonious colors. If one looks down from a wall, one beholds the rosy walls of the Forbidden City with its brilliant yellow tiles and everywhere the green and blue *p' ai-lous* and pavilions of gold and red and blue, roofs of red and brown, white pagodas, grey towers with borders of old-gold, and all these colors seem to sing in the light. Yes, that is the right word, Peking is a town singing in color."

Along the streets outside of the Imperial City moves a motley crowd—foreigners of every nation; native Chinese in the long blue national costume; Mandarins in carriages with glass windows; solemn riders on donkeys; caravans of camels; with coolies darting about everywhere with rickshaws. "In the street," notes the writer, "the Chinese are the most orderly people in the world. They do not push. There is not in the whole of Peking a street-boy who would throw mud, or jeer at a foreigner."

When night falls all the gates of the city are closed except two, the Ch'ien Men between the Chinese and Tartar cities, and the Hsiao-shui Men, a very small water-gate giving admission from the Legation quarter to the station of the Tsientsin Railway, and so, with the dusk, Peking is cut off from the outer world until next morning.

### Modern Innovations.

Among the modern innovations in this ages-old city, one of the most striking was a theatre. "It was hardly conceivable to me—that huge, Russian circus filled with Chinese up to the rafters. How the modern, formerly so bitterly hated, attracts in Peking now! Not only the cheaper seats were full, but also the boxes, where Chinese and Manchus of the upper classes sat with their ladies. So, Chinese ladies and girls show themselves not only in hotels, but also in public places of entertainment, whereas a few years ago they could not appear in public under penalty of being taken for prostitutes. . . . In all the boxes ladies and gentlemen sip tea; small teapots and dishes with biscuits and fruit are handed round."—Moving pictures have also become very popular in China. . . . Mandarins and rich merchants in the Hotel des Wagons Lits, it is noted, do not use chopsticks, but knife, spoon and fork, "and are entirely at their ease among the 'foreign devils.'"

### Temples.

Notwithstanding the reform movement in China, and the innovation of western customs, even to the turning of many temples into schools by order of the Emperor, Mr. Borel still found numbers of the old temples in which Chinese rites and ceremonies, ages old, were still performed.

Among the most interesting of these was the Lama Temple, and one would like to quote in full his description of this weird place, with its occult atmosphere, rich and ancient yellow silk hangings, dim lights, chanting priests, and three immense Buddhas sitting on gilded altars, "with their strange smile full of ecstasy." In front of the Buddhas, he tells, there are five marvels of Pekingese art, immense altar-pieces of antique cloisonné, a sacred secret lost forever, "golden, red, green and white, on unique deep blue." . . . And last of all he sees the northern temple hall, the sanctuary of a wild and furious god, a horrible vision. As he leaves this spot "Bang—bong—pong" sounds the humming gong, vibrating in faint ethereal waves. A wonderful never-to-be-forgotten tone," and he sees presently a wonderful procession of priests in

violet and flaming orange, and the scene closes amidst the clanging of strange music, the singing of mystical hymns and the wailing of prayers.

One would like to quote, also, his descriptions of the Yellow Temple, the Temple of the Five Pagodas, and the Temple of Heaven, with its towering pure white altar in the midst of a green field, but it must suffice, perhaps, to tell a little of what he says of the Temple of Confucius with its famous Hall of the Classics. No gorgeousness here, everything plain, simple and severe like the serene wisdom of the great Eastern Sage himself: "I went on under the old sung-trees, and came at last to the temple structure. The roof is a square mosaic, gold and green; the many wooden pillars are red. The first thing noticeable is a red wooden niche draped in imperial yellow cloth, between two pillars at the back of a square recess in the wall; it is touching by reason of its plainness. In this niche stands the simple wooden soul-tablet of Confucius, lacquered in vermilion." (The soul-tablet is supposed to contain some part of the soul of the deceased.)

Near by, in the Hall of the Classics—a group of immense temple-like halls in a large garden, he found the texts of Chinese classics engraved on stone tables: "the wisdom of an empire engraved on two hundred stone tables in a palace of beauty."

Another interesting chapter is devoted to the strange and brilliant funeral of the Dowager Empress, that terrible and wonderful woman who, wedded to old traditions and old customs, holding even the Emperor, her nephew, under her power, first fought the coming of the West, even to instigating the horrible attempt to exterminate all Europeans, then, seeing that change was in the air and too strong for her, turned right-about-face and "introduced all the reforms."—More of her in a later issue.

For the present we must close with a few of Mr. Borel's comments on the modernizing of China.

### The Modernizing of China.

Two of the greatest influences in the modernizing of China have been the unification of language—the introduction of Mandarin Chinese everywhere to supplant the many dialects—and the running of railways, both of which influences have tended to a growth of national spirit. The work in railway building even at the time upon which he finished his book, in 1900, had been pushed to a remarkable extent. He found that they were being built by Chinese engineers and workmen even over very rocky and mountainous country, sometimes necessitating the boring of tunnels nearly a mile in length, and the building of bridges up to 400 feet in length.

Some of the most memorable reforms were made, despite the Dowager Empress, by the Emperor Kung Hsu, the most sweeping of these the edict by which, with one stroke of the brush, he destroyed the entire ancient system of education, and issued the order to demolish ancient temples full of idols and build schools from the materials—a most significant change. Another, equally so, has been China's strong fight against opium, so long the curse of the Empire.

Nor must the fact be passed over, that in China the spirit of reform has worked chiefly from below upward. It is among the masses that the ferment has worked, for the most part, and so the foundation which is being laid has the surest basis of solidity.

True, there are still many foolish superstitions in China, much cruelty, conditions that are revolting, and progress is hindered by a tremendous burden of debt. Even at the time

of this writing conditions there are in a state of and misrule in rampant, confusion, but the fact is the condition is ago, gigantic and are being

Pondering on Borel asks: "What four hundred a to a loftier co be a mutual in is good between And, he asks aspect be cha of 400,000,000 into the ment America? Ho be broken up? how much new the comminglin both?"

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A sailor who was secured to music between picture shown in the Garden cudgeled his br his repertoire, l any piece exactl

"Play up, pla Chaplain.

Suddenly an sailor, and to t Chaplain and the the gramophone

"There is only for me."—New