CHAPTER VI.

The Influence of Modern Europe on Indian Art.

"It is on the architecture of to-day that the preservation of Indian Art in any semblance of healthy life now hinges."

J. L. KIPLING, Journal of Indian Art, VOL. I.

The fate of Indian decorative art in modern times needs no elaborate demonstration. A comparison of the manufactures of a hundred, or even fifty, years ago, as seen in the museums of Europe and India, with the productions of to-day, reveals a degradation in quality of material and design which it would be practically impossible to exaggerate. There is no more depressing aspect of present day conditions than the universal decline of taste in India, from the Raja, whose palace, built by the London upholsterer or imitated from some European building, is furnished with vulgar superfluity and uncomfortable grandeur, to the peasant clothed in Manchester cottons of appalling hue and meaningless design. The Delhi exhibition was a sufficient revelation of the extent to which the degradation has advanced. References to it appear on every page of books like Sir George Birdwood's ' Industrial Arts of India,' Sir George Watt's ‘Indian Art at Delhi,' and amongst the incidental references of almost every traveller and writer on Indian matters. In 1879 an address to Sir George Bird-wood, signed by William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Monier Williams, J. E. Millais, Edwin Arnold, Walter Crane and others spoke of "the rapid deterioration that has of late befallen the great historical arts of India." They further remarked that "goods which ought to be common in the market are now becoming rare treasures for museums, or the cabinets of rich men." Let us examine a few instances of this degeneration, selected from various authorities.

“The carpets of Masulipatam were formerly among the finest produced in India, but of late years have also been corrupted by the European, chiefly English, demand for them. The English Importers insisted on supplying the weavers with cheaper materials, and we now find that these carpets are invariably backed with English twine. The spell of the tradition thus broken, one innovation after another was introduced into the manufacture. The designs, which of old were full of beautiful detail, and more varied than now in range and scheme of colouring, were surrounded by a delicate outline suggested as to tint by a harmonising contrast with the colours with which it was in contact. But the necessity for cheap and speedily executed carpets for the English market has led to the abandonment of this essential detail in all Indian ornamentation. Crude inharmonious masses of unmeaning form now mark the spots where formerly varied, interesting, and beautiful designs blossomed as delicately as the first flowers of spring: and these once glorious carpets of Masulipatam have sunk to a mockery and travesty of their former selves." (Sir George Birdwood, 1880).

The following quotation from Sir George Watt's ' Indian Art at Delhi' illustrates the nature of the process now taking place throughout the East:

"While examining a large series of old designs, one of the chief kinkhab manufacturers expressed amusement at the interest shown in worthless old mica sketches, long out of fashion. He explained that he possessed a book of great value from which all his most successful designs had, for some years past, been taken. On being desired to show this treasured pattern book he produced a sample book of English wall papers…….. This at once explained the monstrous degeneration perceived in the Benares kinkhabs……. not in Benares only, but throughout India the fine old art designs that have been attained after centuries of evolution are being abandoned and models utterly unsuited and far inferior artistically are being substituted. The writer can confidently affirm that he found in at least 50 per cent, of the important silversmiths' workshops of India the illustrated trade catalogues of European firms and stores being employed as the pattern books upon which their silver plate was being modelled."

The same is true of Ceylon, where Western influence is stronger; every jeweller uses European trade catalogues; it is now the fashion to melt down old jewellery, the most beautiful in design and perfect in workmanship, in order to have copies made of Birmingham designs which a machine has already reproduced a thousand times (the people want, in their own words, "improved jewellery;" but they will find it only where they will last of all turn for it, and then too late, in the workshop of the hereditary craftsman). To take other examples; of Benares brass work—by which Indian art is typically represented to the tourist mind—only two pieces were good enough to show at the Delhi exhibition.

“All but one or two pieces were bad in design and worse in execution. They had departed from the fine old patterns that made Benares famous for its brass wares, most being poor imitations of swami work or of Poona copper ware. Many were in European shapes and purposes." (Sir G. Watt.)

Enamelling has been called the master craft of India; of the most famous centre Sir George Watt remarks :—

“Formerly every attention was given to effect, and a background or field colour was regularly employed, most frequently a rich creamy white. Within the past few decades this has been discontinued, and complex and intricate designs substituted in which it can hardly be said there is a field colour at all. The result is distinctly inferior and may be described as garish rather than artistic. The utilitarian spirit of the times is also marked by the production of a large assortment of sleeve links, lockets, bracelets, brooches and the like, and the decoration of the backs of pieces of jewellery, in place of enameling, being the chief ornamentation of charms, sword-hilts, plates, etc, as in former times.”

Notice particularly the degradation of the art, from its application to objects entering into the serious life of the people of the country, to trivial objects intended mainly for the passing tourist.

Taste in dyed and printed textiles has declined enormously. Perhaps the most glaring example known to me is the replacement of beautiful Indian printed cottons in Madras, by cheaper products of Manchester, having greatly degraded imitations of Indian ornament, or perfectly meaningless decoration such as rows of bicycles, or pictures of banknotes. Some of these have been published as an object lesson, in contrast with Indian prints. It has been well remarked that such monstrosities are an insult to European knowledge and an outrage on Indian art. Yet I have known educated Indians defend their use on the ground that Indians ‘cannot be expected to keep to one pattern always,' and that 'if it is right for Europeans to admire Indian patterns, why is it not right for Indians to make use of European forms?' In the same way, it is sometimes asked why Indians should not copy modern Western, classical, or any forms of architecture that may please them, with the suggestion that the European advice to build in an Indian style is merely the result of a particular fancy, and that there can be no real guiding principle in such matters. Only a century of education, entirely false in aims and method, could have produced such a result as this. Those who gave and those who accepted that education are equally at fault.

In illustration of architectural degeneration, a few quotations will suffice.

"The modern palaces of the Nawabs of the Carnatic, of the Rajas of Ramnad or Travancore, are all in the bastard Italian style, adopted by the Nawabs of Lucknow and the Babus of Calcutta. Sometimes, it must be confessed, the buildings are imposing from their mass, and picturesque from their variety of outline, but the details are always detestable, first from being bad copies of a style that was not understood or appreciated, but also generally from their being unsuited for the use to which they were applied. To these defects it must be added, that the whole style is generally characterised by a vulgarity it is difficult to understand in a people who have generally shown themselves capable of so much refinement in former times."

A Buddhist building lately erected in Colombo, is thus described by a local paper: “The building is a very pretty structure, a vaulted roof with a fine dome, gothic windows, doors and a porch, with parapet battlements of classic design, being very effective." This is a typical illustration of Mr. Growse's statement that in India "the essence of European architecture is supposed to consist in a reckless disregard of all recognized canons of ornament and proportion."

It would be easy to multiply examples of the degeneration of Indian crafts, but, as the fact is generally admitted, it will be more profitable to consider the causes of this degeneration and the possibilities of arresting it. The causes fall into two groups, external and internal, very closely related, it is true, but for convenience considered separately. To take the external first, we have to consider chiefly the attitude of the British Government in India and in England, the influence of the general export demand, the tourist demand, and the influence of the personal example of Europeans in India. We meet first with the deliberate discouragement of Indian production where it in any way competed with English, and sometimes even where it did not. The first result of British trade with India was to open to India a new market for her textiles in particular. But when it was found possible to manufacture goods of the same character in England,

"endeavours were made, which were fatally successful, to repress Indian manufactures and to extend British manufactures. The import of Indian goods to Europe was repressed by prohibitive duties; the export of British goods to India was encouraged by almost nominal duties. . . In 1816-17 'India not only clothed the whole of that vast population, but exported GBP1,659,,438 worth of goods.' Thirty years later the whole of this export had disappeared, and India imported four millions sterling of cotton goods ... When Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, the evil had been done. But nevertheless there was no relaxation in the policy pursued before. Indian silk hand-kerchiefs had still a sale in Europe; and a high duty on manufactured silk was maintained. Parliament enquired 'how cotton could be grown in India for British looms,' not how Indian looms could be improved. Select committees tried to find out how British manufactures could find a sale in India, not how Indian manufactures could be revived ... During a century and a half the commercial policy of the British rulers of India has been determined, not by the interests of Indian manufacturers, but by those of British manufacturers. The vast quantities of manufactured goods which were exported from India by the Portuguese and Dutch, by Arab and British merchants, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, have disappeared."—(Romesh Dutt).

The same policy has been maintained until a later period. As late as 1905, Mr. Pennington reviewing the book from which I have just quoted, could say:—

“One cannot read such an indictment of England by one of her most capable Indian officials without a feeling of humiliation. .... The quite recent story-of the imposition of an excise duty on Indian goods which did not compete at all with any Lancashire goods and yet affected seriously the rival mills of India, is a disgrace to Lancashire as well as to the English Government. It is quite certain that if India had as many votes as even the single county of Lancashire, that scandalous duty would never have been imposed. When shall we get to govern as, 'men of truth, hating unjust gain.' ?"

Mr. J. Nisbet, writing in the 'Nineteenth Century' for November, 1908, repeats the same well-known facts:—

"As regards Swadeshi, certainly so far as fiscal matters are concerned, the history of the Indian tariff under Crown Government has been one long and almost continuous betrayal of Indian interests in order to win the Lancashire vote for party purposes,"

Here is the result of such an attitude.

"The weavers of India were, until recently, a very prosperous class, but the importation of machine-made piece-goods from Manchester has, of late, thrown many thousands of them out of employ. These dragged on a life of poverty for some years, and at last either died of semi-starvation, or were forced by necessity to become menial servants or tillers of the soil."— J. N. Bhattacharya, ' Hindu Castes and Sects.'

These disastrous results have been often enough insisted on by Indians, but from an economic point of view only, it being supposed that, if the weavers and dyers could take to other employment, and if the trade in textiles could be restored to India by the establishment of flourishing mills in towns, the evil would be ended. The disaster is more serious far than that; for you might take as tribute from every weaver half his earnings and still leave to the country his technical capacity,-and, a greater thing still, his art knowledge, his power of applying to the productions of his loom the traditional ornament which is still a live expressive thing, embodying the hope of the past and with an ever fresh message to the future; but if you so disorganize society as to make it impossible for him to live at all by weaving —when English manufactures " successfully contest the village weaver's market"—you destroy, not merely the national wealth, but also the national culture.

Let us turn to the direct influence of the British Government in India itself.

"The worst mischief "says Sir George Birdwood, "is perhaps done by the architecture foisted on the country by the Government of India, which being the architecture of the State, is naturally thought to be worthy of all imitation. The Nawab of Bahawalpur was installed the other day on the throne of his ancestors, and in anticipation of the auspicious event, the Indian Government built him a palace, which is the ghastliest piece of bare classicalism it is possible to imagine, even with so many examples before us in this country of the dissenting chapels and vestry halls of the last century. And now Holkar, in obvious emulation of this preposterous production, is building for himself a vast Italian palace at Indore, which is to cost many lakhs of rupees, and will be like Trentham, or Buckingham Palace, or anything else in the world but a habitation meet for kings. This sort of thing has been going on all over India ever since the establishment of the British peace."

Just how the process is carried on in detail is explained by Mr. Havell in an article entitled ' Indian Administration' in the ' Nineteenth Century' fop June, 1907.

As an example of Government at its best I give the following details of endeavour to build in the national style, in a particular case in Ceylon. Needless to say traditional craftsmen were not employed.

The building referred to is a memorial rest house at Ruvanvella. The moulding round the wall, a few feet from the floor, instead of forming an actual part of the wall, as in all old work, consists entirely of plaster applied to the surface of the wall, and is already breaking away. But perhaps the worst feature is a part of the doors. The contractor has remarked the massive arched lintel of a Kandyan door, and by way of imitation, has fastened on to each half of the double door a half sham lintel, so that when the doors are closed, it would be just possible at a little distance to suppose that a real lintel was there. And so on with other details. I have pointed out that such work is the inevitable result of employing ignorant contractors and ignoring the traditional craftsmen; and that the only method of saving the traditional skill of Sinhalese craftsmen is to return to the old system of State recognition. If men in the future are to be able still to avail themselves of the spiritual and economic benefits of the union of art with labour characteristic of all true civilization in the past, the State must assume, as for example in thirteenth century Florence, the role of protector of the craftsmen, who must be supported, endowed, and respected no less than the other servants of the State, or of the church.

British influence has been adverse to Indian Art in other ways. The output of cheap and inferior carpets in jails went far to destroy the trade in well-made and fairly priced carpets, a fact so well-known as to need no further mention. Of the influence of art schools little need be said; by some the whole degeneration of Indian art has been attributed to them and while this is a great exaggeration, there can be no doubt that their influence has been pernicious. It is now otherwise in the case of certain art schools, particularly Lahore and Calcutta, but it is too late to arrest the harm already done, and still being done elsewhere. So also with the jails, there are many, such as Agra and Poona, where work of good quality is now done, and chemical dyes are totally avoided; but much of the evil is done, and the force of example is still seen in the case of such jails in Native States as continue to make use of chemical dyes, to the detriment of the quality of their productions (e. g., Gwalior).

Indian kings have been great religious builders from the earliest times, spending their resources gladly on temples built to the glory of God, and hostels for the shelter of man. They were just such great builders as the earlier English kings. But now imagine the injury to English art that would have come about, if English independence had ceased in the time of Henry III, as a result of the rapacity of some nation of materialists and agnostics—Westminster Abbey left unfinished, Gothic art no more the vehicle of the national religious sense; imagine the invaders also destroying the possibility of popular art in the other ways referred to, and you will have some picture of what has taken place in India.

But it is but fair to refer to the few efforts that have been made, directly or indirectly, by Englishmen, officially or otherwise, to save the Indian arts from extinction. We have occasional efforts to build in the style of the country, as in Lahore, but these are not more successful than XlXth century efforts in Europe to build in XIV century wise. We have the establishment of schools of art in India, with good intention, but, in the opinion of even most English artists, bad results; even where great and good work is done, as now in Calcutta, its continuance is at the mercy of chance selection of a Principal having knowledge and sympathy adequate to the situation. We have the publication of books and journals illustrating fine examples of Indian art; but these, valuable as they are, are really written by Englishmen for English-men, and are of more use to the English manufacturer than to the village craftsmen; and does the reproduction of details of architecture and jewellery (often ill-drawn by men not in the tradition) compensate in any way for the deserted workshops and forgotten knowledge of the hereditary craftsmen? Lord Curzon has done good service in securing the preservation of Indian monuments; but archaeology is not art: and even his appeal to the Indian aristocracy at the Delhi exhibition seemed to them little more than the Englishman's strange fancy for Indian ' curiosities.' A certain Maharajah shortly after the utterance of that appeal had to entertain Lord Curzon ; his own palace was a modern building, designed and furnished in a French style. To please the Viceroy he sent to Bombay for 20 lakhs worth of Bombay blackwood furniture, and put away the French stuff; but when Lord Curzon left, the latter all came out again! Now Bombay black-wood is but half Indian at best; but the Maharajah neither knew this, nor was actuated by any deeper motive than a desire to please the Viceroy. And so it must ever be, that the best meant endeavours of outsiders can effect but little; while a little germ of love for the motherland might effect everything. It is easier to destroy than to create ; it is impossible for England to build up what she has demolished; if the re-awakening is to come at all, it will be the fruit of India's recognition of her national self; but that, alas, will be in spite of England's opposition, not with England's help! Not that all sympathetic and disinterested counsel is altogether thrown away; but that advice is a totally inadequate solution.

So much for external influence on Indian art; it has been on the whole an influence contributing to “the rapid deterioration that has of late befallen the great historical arts of India." Let us for a time consider the changes in Indian society and ideas which have from within contributed to the same result.

The internal influences are complex, and closely related to the external. Architecture is the mistress of all arts; and where architecture is neglected the lesser arts must also perish. Even Native States no longer give employment to the hereditary builders; and so blindly do individuals also imitate the examples of Europeans, that it is the echo of the English suburban villa which shapes the ideal of a house in the modern Indian mind. If England has in her public buildings set before us examples of bastard Anglo-Classic and Neo-Gothic architecture, we have made haste to blindly copy example. If Brussels carpets come from Europe, it is we who buy them in preference to the productions of Indian looms. If coloured crystal balls are made in England, it is we who buy them to ' adorn' our temples. If English dress appears unlovely and absurd on us, it is we ourselves who are responsible for the wearing of it. Nothing can possibly be more fatal to the arts than this attitude of snobbishness, or, at the best, weakness, which leads us to imitate without consideration. The Art of Life is now less and less for us ruled by principle, but more and more by impulse; and so it is natural that in our attitude towards art itself we are undisciplined and unprincipled. For this we are ourselves responsible; the fact of foreign rule need not compel the Indian to acquire a foreign mind; and as long as we so carelessly contribute ourselves to the decay of art amongst us, our complaint against others for the same thing loses force. Hope alone lies in the National ideal.

What has Swadeshi done for Indian art? Almost nothing; when a decaying industry can be used to political advantage it gives it loud support, and in this way the hand-loom industry of Bengal is receiving attention now; but the whole country from north to south is full of decaying industries and perishing hereditary skill, to save which no effort is made. Efforts are made to establish all sorts of factories for making soap, matches, cotton, nibs, biscuits and what not, while the men who can still weave, still build, still work in gold and silver, copper and wood and stone, are starving because their work is out of fashion. Swadeshi often ignores the things which India has from time immemorial made perfectly, to seek to manufacture things which it would be better to do without altogether, or to frankly buy from other nations more able to make them easily.

The Swadeshi impulse is as yet a too purely commercial one, too unimaginative, too solely based on an ideal of dull prosperity to greatly help the cause of Indian art. It is, indeed, rather art that can help Swadeshi, than Swadeshi, art. Things are bettering as the national consciousness develops; but those who now are benefited are the enterprising promoters of small capitalist concerns—not the traditional craftsmen. What cares the South Indian village weaver whether his Zemindar buys Manchester or Bombay cotton 1 What avails it for Indian culture if the mean design and glaring colours are printed in England or in India? Ought we not rather to starve than to compete with Europe on such degrading terms? Yet men must live; material necessities now more than ever control our lives; the day is far distant when work for an hour and a half will again suffice for daily bread-winning.

(Some Swadeshi exhibits at the Calcutta exhibition of 1906 were so vulgar and stupid that, if it had been shown in an exhibition under European control, it could only have been done as a deliberate insult. Not without reason does Mr. Havell, in a most valuable article (Art, Ethics, and Economics in' Hand-loom Weaving) appearing in ' East and West' for August, 1907, make the following statement, the truth of which cannot be disputed: "In India there has been during the last hundred years a continuous decline of public taste, so that at the present time the educated Indians probably stand behind the rest of the world in artistic understanding.")

Men must live by manufacture, agriculture, or trade, or by the practice of some profession. But for all that, India is India still, and shall not even her material production be controlled by the spirit of her real self? If she is to grow wealthy, let it be by as far as possible ministering to the higher needs of men as in the past; let it be possible for the Swadeshist to buy Swadeshi manufactures because they are better, more beautiful or more enduring than the work of others. Let India supply the world again with beautiful fabrics, holding the market by sheer superiority of design and workmanship—a thing still possible if the existing traditional capacity of Indian craftsmen were rightly organized. There is a real demand in other lands for things worth making, things made well; if in England it still pays even a few groups of men to turn out linen, tapestry or carpets by hand, (for the sake of the fine quality of material, and still more for the art qualities of the accomplished work) it should still be possible for those who can work much cheaper, (and could still command the services of craftsmen possessing hereditary skill sufficient to make the fortune of any manufacturer in Europe) to find a market for their own best work. The aim must be for quality not quantity. There is no country in the world where so much capacity for design and workmanship exists; but we are recklessly flinging this, almost our greatest treasure, to the winds, and with it all spontaneous expression in art.

In the opinion of thinking men it must appear that it is not worth while being a nation at all, or making any attempt at political freedom, if India is to remain in the end thus enslaved at heart by purely material ideals. The national movement has no justification if it does not carry with it some hope of a new manifestation of the Indian genius in relation to the .real things of life. The significance of the movement however consists just in this that such a hope is indeed bound up with it.

I have spoken of foreign trade; but what is far more important, from the art point of view, is the Indian attitude towards Indian art. For Indian art can never be great, can never mean to Indians or foreigners what it once meant, until it is again made for Indians and can count upon their sympathy and comprehension as a birth-right. An art, which is primarily concerned with supplying the particular requirements of peoples entirely out of real touch with its producers, must always be slavish and artificial. It is as evil a thing* for us to supply the American market with bales of cheap and vulgar phulkaris embroidered in offensive colours and mean designs and sloppy needlework, as it is for Manchester to send us bicycle-patterned saris. The only true remedies that can be effectual are the re-generation of Indian taste, and the re-establishment of some standard of quality. Nearly thirty years ago Sir George Birdwood said truly that—

"Indian native gentlemen and ladies should make it a point of culture never to wear any clothing or ornaments but of native manufacture and strictly native design, constantly purified by comparison with the best examples and the models furnished by the sculptors of Amaravati, Sanchi and Barhut".

Indian art can only revive and flourish if it is beloved by Indians themselves.

Somewhat apart from architecture stands the question of Western influence on Indian painting. This influence has been exerted very largely through the schools of art. In these schools there is done much oil and water colour painting, some of it clever, some extremely poor, but all quite undistinguishable—unless by general weakness of drawing—from ordinary European work of the same class. The best known exponent of this style, though not I believe a school of art pupil, has been the oil-painter Ravi Varma, whose works, constantly reproduced, are everywhere popular in India. The ' educated' public of modern India, having learnt to judge all things by what was understood to be a Western standard, misunderstood the conventional art of India herself; sincere and tender, it was often over-formal, and represented in many cases the decline rather than the zenith of tradition ; and so the public, seeking for an art easily understood without preparation or effort, welcomed this painter who broke through traditions and gave them realistic and sentimental pictures of familiar subjects.

A picture of ' Sita in Exile' well illustrates the difference between Tagore's and Ravi Varma's work. In the latter's 'Sita in the Asoka Grove' we see only a woman bullied by her captor; in the Sita by Tagore we see the embodiment of a national ideal. In Ravi Varma's well-known picture of Sarasvati, again, the lotus-seat—essentially an abstract symbol of divine and other-worldly origin, is represented as a real flower growing in a lake; so that the spectator is led immediately away from the ideal, to wonder how the stalk can be strong enough to support a full-grown woman. I say ' woman ' advisedly, because Ravi Varma's divinities, in spite of their many arms, are very human, and often not very noble human types. At best the goddesses are 'pretty ': stronger condemnation of what should be ideal religious art it would be hard to find.

It has indeed been Ravi Varma's reward for choosing Indian subjects, that he has been to some degree a true nationalising influence; but had he been also a true artist with the gift of great imagination, this influence must have been tenfold deeper and greater. He is the landmark of a great opportunity, not perhaps wholly missed, but ill availed of. Theatrical conceptions, want of imagination, want of restraint, anecdotal aims and a lack of Indian feeling in the treatment of sacred and epic subjects are his faults. His art is not truly national—he merely plays with local colour. His gods and heroes are men cast in a very common mould, who find themselves in situations for which they lack a proper dignity. Ravi Varma's pictures, in a word, are not national art; they are such as any European student could paint, after only a superficial study of Indian life and literature.

A reaction from these ideals is represented by what has been called the New School of Indian Painting, founded by Abanindra Nath Tagore, Vice-Principal of the Calcutta School of Art. In Mr. Havell, late Principal of this School, India for the first time found a European artist able to divest himself of early prejudices and willing as well to learn as to teach. In the 'Studio' of July, 1908, Mr. Havell relates how when he went to the Calcutta School twelve years ago, it was like other schools, an institution established by a benevolent Government for the purpose of revealing to Indians the superiority of European art. Mr. Havell succeeded in revising the whole course of instruction, making Indian art the basis of the teaching. This was not done without opposition from the Bengalis themselves, who saw in these proceedings only a sinister attempt to discourage ' high art' in Bengal. Two pieces of good fortune attended Mr Havel's efforts, one the opportunity of acquiring for the Calcutta gallery a large number of paintings of the finest Moghal period, many of them by Shah Jahan's court painters, and secondly, and most important, the discovery of Mr. Abanindra Nath Tagore. This artist had until then followed European ideas of artistic expression, but soon realised the significance of Indian art traditions and set himself to study their technique and recover something of their spirit. Mr. Tagore afterwards became Vice-Principal, and finally acting Principal of the Calcutta School of art,—the first, and with the exception of Lahore, and now, perhaps, of Madras, the only modern school of art in India related effectively to the past traditions of Indian art, and to the new national spirit of self-realisation. Tagore's own work is a significant omen of what may be given to the world of India, when the Indian people realize to the full the duty which is theirs, not to borrow what they can from others, but themselves to give.

Of Tagore's work, a number of examples have been reproduced in the ' Studio,' and others in the ' Modern Review'. The best of them is perhaps ' The Banished Yaksha', illustrating the well-known work of Kalidasa, the Megha Duta. Mr. Tagore has painted also ' The Passing of Shah Jahan '; the ' Siddhas of the Upper Air'; ' Aurangzib Examining the Head of Dara' and there are other important works, some of which are reproduced in Mr. Havell's 'Indian Painting and Sculpture'. There can be traced in these works both European and Japanese influence; but their significance lies in what is after all their essential Indianness. These delicate water colours, portfolio pictures like those that delighted the Mughal Emperor's courts of old, are supremely tender, and carry in them that mingled reticence and revelation that belong to all great art, but which demand something also of the public, before they can be fully understood and realised. Such work, a true expression of Indian nationalism, is the flowering of the old tradition; a flower that speaks not only of past loveliness, but is strong and vigorous with promise of abundant fruit.

Two pupils have indeed already followed in Tagore's footsteps. The pictures, 'The Flight of Lakshman Sen ', by Surendra Nath Ganguly, and ' Raia Vikram and the Vampire'. by Nanda Lal Bose, reproduced in the ‘Studio’ of July 1908, are full of promise; and indeed remarkable as the work of men so young. The best of Nanda Lall Bose's work is the wonderful ' Sati' reproduced by Mr. Havell. Almost equally perfect in another way is the ' Kaikeyi,' of which a number of copies have been reproduced in Japan for the Indian Society of Oriental Art.

Great art or science is the flower of a free national life pouring its abundant energy into ever new channels, giving some new intimation of a truth and harmony before unknown or forgotten. It is not strange that India, after a thousand years of alien government, often puritan and now philistine, economically and morally impoverished, should have lost her position in the world of art. But we believe that India stands upon the threshold of a freedom and a unity greater than any yet realised. If this be so, we need not fear for Indian art; for the new life must find its self-expression. It rests with each individual to make this fruition possible.