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THE PHILOSOPHY OF
BINDRANATH TAGORE
S. RADHAKRISHNAN
THE PHILOSOPHY OF
RABINDRANATH TAGORE
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RABINDRANATH
TAGORE

BY
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To

Sir Rabindranath Tagore
PREFACE

The book explains itself. The popularity of the writings of Sir Rabindranath Tagore shows that there is neither East nor West in the realm of spirit, and that his work meets a general want and satisfies a universal demand. What is the demand, and how it is met, are questions which I have tried to answer in this book.

In interpreting the philosophy and message of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, we are interpreting the Indian ideal of philosophy, religion, and art, of which his work is the outcome and expression. We do not know whether it is Rabindranath's own heart or the heart of India that is beating here. In his work, India finds the lost word she was seeking. The familiar truths of Hindu philosophy and religion, the value of which it has become fashionable to belittle even in the land of their birth, are here
handled with such rare reverence and deep feeling that they seem to be almost new. My acquaintance with the soul of India from which Sir Rabindranath draws his inspiration has helped me in the work of exposition.

It may be said against this book that the author is trying to find a definite meaning where there is none, and is confusing his views with those of Sir Rabindranath. This charge raises a question too wide to discuss within the limits of a preface. But it must be remembered that Rabindranath writes poetry, while this book is in prose. Poetry is indefinite and suggestive, while prose is definite and expressive. What I have done here is simply to convert the vague suggestions of the poet into definite statements, supply the premises, draw out the conclusions, and give the setting where necessary. The book is an attempt to interpret Rabindranath's philosophy in the light of its own fundamental principles. I may here mention that the poet has been pleased to express his appreciation of this interpretation of his philosophy.

As the book would be lacking in wholeness without an account of Rabindranath's views
about Nationalism in the East and the West, we have noticed his views on this subject in Chapters IV. and V., keeping literally close to his writings while giving an inward account of them.

It is the privilege of a preface to acknowledge obligations. I am very grateful to Sir Rabindranath Tagore for the permission given me to dedicate the book to him. Not to speak of the pleasure derived from association with such an honoured name, I seem to myself to repay in some degree the great obligation I owe him for having left a permanent impression on my mind, by inscribing this slender volume with his name. I am greatly indebted to Mr. C. F. Andrews of Shantiniketan for reading the proofs and making many valuable suggestions. My thanks are also due to the Editor of The Quest for granting me permission to use the two articles which originally appeared in his journal.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN.

MADRAS, May 27, 1918.
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