CHAPTER - ONE

Her Times, Life and Works

Introduction:

Men generally raise their eyebrows at women taking to creative writing as their chief concern in life. In reply to one of the letters of young Charlotte Byonte, Robert Southey advised her not to take to literature for the frequent indulgence in imaginative work was likely to interfere with her domestic duties and responsibilities. He wrote: "The day dreams in which you habitually indulge are likely to induce a distempered state of mind; and in proportion as all the ordinary uses of the world seem to you flat, and unprofitable you will be unfitted for them without becoming fitted for anything else. Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be."¹

The truth, however, is that women since the time of the illustrious Sapho, 'the tenth Muse', have in all ages and countries, made a very significant and salutary contribution to almost every branch of literature and art. There is hardly any language worth the name, the literature of which has not been enriched by feminine talents and which would not be much

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the poorer were their contributions to be effaced. Though it is true that we have not among them some of the very greatest writers of the world, yet their achievement is none the less very substantial and significant, if not for anything else, at least for the interpretation and understanding it has given to us of the feminine mind and nature. As Arthur Compton Rickett points out: "Sex is not merely a simple matter of physical differentiation as some imagine it. Indeed in its ultimate analysis it is a psychical problem; and it is this fact that lends so great an interest to the contributions made by women to literature. Woman is not undeveloped man but diverse. Her outlook is essentially different from that of a man and her work, therefore is complementary and supplementary to the man's."¹

Indian literature has ever been refulgent with the radiant lustre of the splendid writings of its women writers. From the Vedic age to the modern, many Indian authoresses at different stages of India's history, have tried to reveal through their writings in the various regional language, their outlook, their deepest longings, their profound urges, and the chief concerns of their daily lives. The modern age has, however, witnessed the growth of a totally new type of feminine writing in India. The impact of English education and Western

ideas, which led to the growth of Indian English literature, has inspired many Indian women writers to choose English as the medium for their creative writings. Most of the Indian writers owed their feeling for the alien English medium to the opportunities they have had of getting on to the inside of English either by a stay and schooling in England during childhood or from English education in India. English had become almost like their mother tongue and they were fully familiar with its cliches, idioms and licences. It is fallacious to allege that their writings in English were the outcome of an Anglomania which seized some upper class Indians in the early years of the English rule. They wrote in English because they could not express themselves better in any other Indian language. As has been pointed out by Prof. C.D. Narasimhaiah: "The medium is a matter of inner compulsion and it will be rejected if it inhibits response, distorts truth, does not create what it pretends to convey."\(^1\) If Indians wrote in English it was obviously because English was in every way a language of their sensibility and mental processes.

In the early stages of the growth of Indian English literature it was poetry more than any other branch of

literature that attracted Indians most. The writing of English verse was in reality the first response which India gave to the touch of the west and the teaching of English; and women no less than men were thrilled to sing in the alien language with sweetness and fluency of native genius. Internationally acclaimed as the 'Nightingale of India', Sarojini Naidu is the most talented and well known of these Indian women poets who wrote in English. She is "an ardent, versatile and dynamic genius."¹ Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse have showered unreserved praises on her and Sri Aurobindo, the profound judge of life and literature has remarked that she had "qualities which make her best work exquisite, unique and unchallenged in its own kind."²

Sarojini Naidu's Times:

Sarojini Naidu's span of life (She had completed Biblical span of human life) of seventy years from 13th February, 1879 when she was born to 2 March, 1949, when she died, comprises one of the most momentous periods of Indian history. It was the age of cultural renaissance and national upsurge in India. Earlier Keshub Chunder Sen, Dayanand Saraswati, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Surendranath Banerjea and later Mrs. Annie Besant, Dadabhai Naroji, Balgangadhar Tilak, Gopal

Krishna Gokhale, Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi had infused new life and boundless enthusiasm in the country. Sarojini Naidu too like Keats could sing:

Great spirits now on earth are sojourning;  
And other spirits there are standing apart  
Upon the forehead of the age to come;  
These, these will give the world another heart  
And other pulses, Hear ye not the hum  
Of mighty workings?........

Listen a while, ye nations, and be dumb.¹

Or like Wordsworth could reminisce:

Bliss was in that dawn to be alive,  
but to be young was very heaven.²

It was a period in which there were taking place radical changes in every walk of life and people had begun to look at everything from a national revolutionary point of view. Sarojini refers to these changes when in her poem, "Past and future", she sings: "The new hath come and now the old retires."³

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The national upsurge acquired an organized form and followed a definite direction when Alan Octavian Hume who had been secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department and had sensed for the British Government "extreme danger of a most terrible revolution",\(^1\) founded after his retirement, the Indian National Congress in 1885 to counteract unrest by appealing to the Government to initiate reforms for the amelioration of the lot of Indians and concede to their demands for greater political participation. The fast developing political events in India, however, turned the National Congress by the beginning of the twentieth century into the platform of anti-imperialism and struggle for the country's freedom. The atrocious partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon in 1905 led the Congress to play a more militant role in the political life of the country. In 1908 it clearly declared its objective to be "the attainment of a system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire".\(^2\) The two national leaders, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who dominated the Congress, however, differed in their view of the means to

2. Ibid., p. 71.
be adopted to attain the objective of freedom. The congress followed the moderate policy of Gokhale to achieve freedom "by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration". The extremists who led by Tilak supported the violent activities of the terrotists, left the Congress in 1907 and remained out of it till the reapproachment in 1916.

With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on Indian political scene in 1918, the national awakening percolated to Indian masses and peasants who became conscious of their stark poverty, suffering and humiliation under the alien rule. With the active support and participation of common men, the struggle for independence launched by the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi became a powerful mass movement. With the massive following of his countrymen Mahatma Gandhi launched Non violent Non-cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement against the British rulers at the different stages of freedom struggle till within three decades he ushered in freedom in India on 15 August 1947.

1. Ibid.
Sarojini Naidu did not only participate actively in the freedom struggle but also became one of its chief leaders. She was inspired to serve her motherland by Gopal Krishna Gokhale when she met him in Poona on March 26, 1912. Stirred by some deep emotions Gokhale spoke to Sarojini of the unequalled happiness and privilege of service for India. "Stand here with me", he said, "with the stars and the hills for witnesses, and in their presence consecrate your life and your talent, your song and your speech, your thought and your dream to the Motherland. O Poet, see visions from the hill tops and spread abroad the message of hope to the toilers in the valleys." It was, however, when Mahatma Gandhi assumed the leadership of the Congress that she bade good bye to her poetic career and threw herself heart and soul into India's freedom struggle, braving all its trials and tribulations till the country attained freedom. Describing her transition from poet to politician, Yusuf Meharally writes:

There is something of oriental magic about Sarojini Naidu. Born at another period in Indian history, she would have been more concerned with her exquisite and delicately perfumed verses than with

1. Sarojini Naidu, Lovely Comrade (Bombay, 1915), Sarojini's reminiscences of Gokhale were first published as an article in Bombay Chronicle soon after his death on February 19, 1915. Later she brought it as a booklet.
the rough and tumble of politics. In India of today, so gifted and sensitive a personality, feeling acutely her country's humiliation under foreign rule, could not possibly take to the ivory tower.¹

Sarojini Naidu's keen poetical sensibility, however, did not desert her even after she had stopped writing verses and entered politics. It expressed itself through her conversations, letters and particularly her memorable speeches. Speaking on her death Jawaharlal Nehru said: "She did that amazing thing, she infused artistry and poetry into the national struggle, just as the father of the Nation had infused moral grandeur to it. "Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel called her a great politician and remarked that thoughts came to her like verses and she wove them into a pattern which has the immutable mark of her gifts of poetry. The famous Singhalese journalist, D.B. Dhanapala, said about her: "She talks politics but in the words of a poet".² Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya made a very significant observation when she wrote: "Those who are poets first and last, continue to be poets, whether they be lying in the trenches or in the enemy's

¹ Quoted by Kamaladevi, At the Crossroads (Bombay: National Books, 1947), pp. 33-34.
dungeons .... If Sarojini has stopped composing verses, she has certainly not ceased being a poetess. That same spirit comes out in all her movements and forms of expression."

Indian English Poetry Before Sarojini Naidu:

The Indian English poetry had an Eurasian Christian, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-31), as its first significant poet. The son of an Indo-Portuguese father and an English mother, he was astonishingly precocious poet like Toru Dutt and died like her at an early age of twenty one. He worked for sometime as a clerk in Calcutta and on an indigo plantation at Bhagalpur, before joining the Hindu college, Calcutta, as a lecturer at the age of eighteen. He had a Westerner’s modern outlook on life and was highly critical of superstitions and backwardness of Hindus. Young Indian students among whom he was very popular, felt the deep impact of his radical and Christian Western ideas and turned sceptical of their orthodox religious practices. The Hindu fundamentalists were alarmed by his increasing influence on young students. They mounted public opinion against him and charged him for corrupting young minds. The pressure of hostile opinion compelled the college authorities to terminate his service in 1831. Undaunted, he started a daily, The East Indian, but suddenly died of cholera six months later.

Deroze published two volumes of poetry: *Poems* (1827) and *The Fakeer of Jungheera: A Metrical Tale and Other Poems* in his very brief poetic career. Though an Eurasian he was a great Indian Nationalist and patriot. His poems like "To India—My Native Land", "The Harp of India", "To the Pupils of Hindu College", etc. reveal his burning nationalistic zeal and authentic patriotic aspirations. His love for India is also reflected in his rich use of Indian myths and legends along with Western classical myths in his poetry. It is because of his great love for the country of his birth that he has been called: "National Bard/Modern India." In his moving poem "To India—My Native Land", he bewails the loss of glory that India was:

My country, in thy days of glory past
A beautious halo circled round thy brow
And worshipped as a deity thou wast,
Where is that glory, where that reverence now?

His love for his students finds expression in his poem, "To the Pupils of Hindu College":

Expanding like the petals of young flowers,
I watch the gentle opening of your minds,
And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds
Your intellectual energies and powers.

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What joyance rains upon me, when I see
Fame in the mirror of futurity,
Weaving the chaplets you are yet to gain,
And then I feel I have not lived in vain.¹

In "The Harp of India", he traces his lineage to the great ancient poets of India:

Mamy a hand more worthy far than mine,
Once thy harmonious chords to sweetness gave:
These hands are cold, but if those notes divine
May be by mortal wakened once again,
Harp of my country, let me strike the strain.²

Derozio's poems reveal a strong influence of English romantic poets in sentiment, imagery and diction. His most ambitious work, the long narrative poem The Fakeer of Jungheera, is full of Byronic echoes in its powerful sentiments and satiric tone. The Indian English Poetry which has just made a start suffered a great loss in Dleroziq's early death.

Kashiprasad Ghose (1809-73) laboured hard, studying English prosody, to compose original verse in English. His volume of poems entitled The Shair or Minstrel and Other Poems which appeared in 1830, though marked by correct verses, lacks authentic emotion or poetic imagination. His use of Indian

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¹. The Indian Contribution to English Literature, p. 10.
². Ibid., pp. 11-12.
material in his poems about the Hindu festivals and in lyrics like "The Boatman's Song to Ganga", however, indicates his honest attempt to strike a native note in his poetry.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-73) who earned great fame as a brilliant Bengali writer and the author of the Bengali epic, Meghnad-Badha, began his literary career as a poet in English. He became a christian, married English women twice in succession, absorbed English influences and identified himself with the Christian West. Dutt's interest in European culture extended widely to include Greek, Italian and Spanish. In addition to some sonnets and shorter poems, he wrote two long poems in English, The captive Ladle (1849) and Visions of the Past (1849). The former is a narrative poem dealing with the story of the Rajput king, Prithviraj and his abduction of the daughter of the king of Kanouj. The influence of Scott and Byron is clearly visible on the poem which is full of vigour and energy. The latter is a poem in Miltonic blank verse dealing with the Christian theme of the temptation, fall and redemption of Man. The poem is characterized by weighty, abstract diction, and Latin inversions.

Among the other Indian English poets of the former half of the nineteenth century, Rajnarain Dutt (1824-89) published his verse narrative, Osmyn: An Arabian Tale in 1841, Shoshre
Chunder Dutt, his *Miscellaneous Poems* in 1848 and Hur Chunder Dutt (1831-1901) his *Fugitive Pieces* in 1851. His second volume of verses, *Lotus Leaves*, came out after twenty years. It incorporates many of the poems of his earlier anthology of verses. The poems in these volumes fail to impress readers because they lack genuine emotions and creative imagination.

The Indian English poetry of the latter half of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century is less derivative and imitative and more authentic and original. Most of the poets of this period hail from Bengal which felt the powerful impact of Renaissance and English education earlier than other regions of India. The first notable work of Indian English poetry in this period is a family anthology. *The Dutt Family Album* (1870). It is a collection of 187 poems by three Dutt brothers, Govind Chunder, Hur Chunder and Greece Chunder, and their cousin Omesh Chunder. The Dutts were descendants of Rasmoy Dutt, a close colleague of Rammohan Roy. They had abjured Hinduism and embraced Christianity. Though they had developed Western outlook on life, they could not completely cut off themselves from their ancient Indian cultural heritage. Like the earlier generation of Indian English poets they also wrote under the influence of the English Romantic poets, and the major themes
of their poems were Christian sentiment, Nature, and Indian history and myths. Though full of technical competence their poems do not reveal much freshness and genuineness of response.

Babu Nobo Kissen Ghose (1837-1918) who is better known by his pseudonym "Ram Sharma" was a copious and versatile poet. He wrote lyrics, odes, satires and rare mystical verses based on his practice of yoga for forty years. His works include Willow Drops (1873-74), The Last Day: A Poem (1886), Shiva Ratri, Bhagabati Gita and Miscellaneous Poems (1903). A Collection of his poems, The Poetical Works edited by his friend D.C. Mallick appeared in 1919. Ram Sharma wrote many commemoration verses addressed or dedicated to important personalities like the Prince of Wales, Gladstone, Lord Ripon, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar, Kesub Chandra Sen, Dwarkanath Mitter, etc. Though they express genuine sentiments of the poet, they lack authentic poetic qualities. Though not critical of the British rulers, Ram Sharma responded to the sentiments of national upsurge in India.

Among his most impressive poems are sustained verses like The Last Day, Shiva Ratri or A Glimpse of Maya Fair, Bhagabati Gita or the Doctrine of Sakti Worship, Willow Drops, Daksha Yagna and the Swayambhara Lila. In Bhagabati Gita, The goddess Bhagabati is visualized in all her sacred and awful
majesty, as the Eternal She, "the home-of-all, womb-of-all" created things:

Hai! Ten-armed Goddess of the lion-throne,
Whose power Time and Space and Being own!
The seed of things was in thy mighty womb,
Their source prolific and their final doom!
From Thee the mystic Trinal Unity -
Vrinchi, Vishnu, Shiva - one in three -
All sprang. Thou primal dread Divinity.¹

Ram Sharma wrote rhymed poems as well as poems in blank verse and ballad measures. An accomplished poet, he sometimes uses Western myths to convey Indian religious sentiments. In the poem, "Music and Vision of the Anahat Chakram", he describes his yogic experience as "a very sabbath of the soul' and in the poem, "The Memory of Swami Vivekananda", he shows Vivekananda meeting his master in 'Elysium'.

Toru Dutt (1856-77) is the most well-known and genuine poets of the early period. With her the Indian English poetry acquires an authentic and mature voice. The third and youngest child of Govind Chander Dutt, Toru Lata, born a Hindu, was baptized along with the other members of the family in 1862. She learnt English at a very early age and reading and music

¹. The Indian Contribution to English Literature, p. 25.
were her chief hobbies. Sailing for Europe in 1869, she spent a year in France, studying French, and was thereafter in England for three years. Returning to India in 1873, she died of consumption four years later, at the age of twenty one.

Toru was a prodigy who achieved the maturity of her work at the age of seventeen. Her death at the early age of twenty-one cut short a bright poetic career which held promise of great achievement. Edward Thompson spoke of her as a poet whose place was with Sapho and Emily Bronte.1

Edmund Goss wrote on her death: "It is difficult to exaggerate when we try to estimate what we have lost in the premature death of Toru Dutt. Literature has no honours which need have been beyond the grasp of a girl who at the age of twenty one, and in language separated from her own by so deep a chasm, had produced so much of lasting worth."2 During four years her pen was active she produced translations from the lyrics by about a hundred French poets, A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields (1976), and numerous poems in English, the best of which are in Ancient Ballads and Legends (1882). The amazing naturalness and spontaneity of the rendering from French Romantic poetry in A Sheaf, attracted immediate attention of eminent French and

2. Jha, p. 22.
English scholars. Edmund Gosse declared emphatically: "If modern French literature were entirely lost, it might not be found impossible to reconstruct a great number of poems from the Indian version."¹ The ballads were the outcome of her deep study of Sanskrit and Vedic literature and despite the fact that she was of Christian percentage, they are deeply imbued with Hindu feelings and sentiments. In simple and aphoristic style, she makes sententious remarks suggestive of deep Hindu thought:

"Death comes to all or soon or late;
And peace is but a wandering fire;"²

or

"I know that in this transient world
All is delusion, - nothing true;
I know its shows are mists unfurled
To please and vanish. . . . . . ."³

The narrative verses in the Ballads, whih sing of India's heroes and heroines - Savitri, Lakshman, Jogadhyaa Uma, Dhruva, Prahlad, Ekalavya (Buttoo), Sita, etc. hold a mirror to the soul of India and breathe a Vedic solemnity and simplicity of temper. They are not mere tales, but are instinct with great moral values. Her short lyrics are rich in emotions and treatment of nature. In the sonnet, "Sonnet - Baugmave", she envisions Indian nature in all its rare splendour:

1. The Indian Contribution to English Literature, p. 17.
2. Ancient Ballads and Legends, p.47.
3. Ibid., p.66.
The light green graceful tamarinds abound
Amid the mangoe clouds of green profound,
And palms arise, like pillars grey, between;
And o'er the quiet pools the seemuls bean,
Red; - red, and startling like a trumpet's sound.¹

"Our Casuarina Tree" is an expression of poignant grief for
the loss of sister Aru and brother, Abju, recollected through
the sight of the tree under whose shadow they played as
children:

But not because of its magnificence
Dear is the Casuarina to my soul;
Beneath it we have played; though years may roll,
O sweet companions, loved with love instense,
For your sakes shall the tree be ever dear!
Blent with your images, it shall arise
In memory, till the hot tears blind mine eyes!²

Toru Dutt's poetic technique shows a sure grasp of more
than one poetic mode—lyric, ballad, narrative. Her imagery
makes evocative use of local colour and natural scenes. Her
diction is of the Victorian Romantic school and, the true to
the Ballad motif she employs archaisms like 'hight' and
'dight'. Her best work has the qualities of quite strength of
deep emotions held under artistic restraint and an acute
awareness of the abiding values of Indian life.

¹. Ancient Ballads and Legends, p. 171.
². Ibid., p. 174.
Aru Dutt, like her sister, was a versatile genius. Besides being a poet, she was an accomplished musician and could paint with ease and grace. Her creative period was, however, barely a few months as she died very young. Some of her exquisite poems, eight in number, including beautiful rendering of Victor Hugo's "Morning Serenade", which filled Edmund Gosse with surprise and almost rapture, appeared along with Toru's, in A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields. The haunting melody of the following lines is an evidence of the mature understanding of English prosody by the young poetess:

Stil barred thy doors! — The far east glows,
The morning wind blows fresh and free,
Should not the hour that wakes the rose
Awaken also thee?
No longer sleep,
Oh, listen now!
I wait and weep,
But where art thou?

Like Bengal, Bombay Presidency also showed the impact of English on Indian sensibility through its writers. The Parsi Poet, Behramji Merwanji Malabari (1853-1912), though less known now, was very popular as a social reformer and writer in his own times. His collection of verses, The Indian Muse in English Garb (1876) comprising thirty-two pieces appeared in the same year as Toru Dutt's first collection.
Some of these poems are written in praise of Queen Victoria, Prince Concert, Prince of Wales and Dr. John Wilson, his benefactor. The more impressive ones are, however, his satirical poems of social criticism. Among other poets of Bombay are Cowasji Nowrosi Vesuvola (Colouring the Muse, 1879), M.M Kunte (The Rishi, 1879), Nagesh Wishwanath Pai (1860-1920) and the poet who wrote under the 'spicy' name Chili Chutnee (Social Scraps and satires, 1878). Nagesh Wishwanath Pai's The Angel of Misfortune:A Fairy Tale (1904) is a romantic narrative of about 5000 lines in ten books, recounting the legend of King Vikramaditya of Avanti and Ujjain. It is one of the important Indian English longer poems. Its verse is flowig, the story is well-knit and full of incidents that surprise and satisfy. The atmosphere of the poem is wholly Indian and contains sensuous and vivid descriptions of seasons, birds, beasts, flowers and trees.

The four Indian writers who became classics in Indian English literature and gave a stature to Indian English poetry emerged in Bengal towards the close of the nineteenth century. They are Romesh Chunder Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Manmohan Ghose and Aurobindo Ghose. Romesh Chunder Dutt (1848-1909), a cousin of Toru Dutt, was an Indian Civil Service official. After attaining the rank of divisional commissioner in Bengal, he retired voluntarily at the age of forty nine to devote
himself exclusively to creative writing. He earned a great name in Bengali literature as its leading historical novelist. In Indian-English literature he is known for his artistic translations from Sanskrit and Prakrit classics and of the famous epics, The Mahabharata (1895) and the Ramayana (1809). His Lays of Ancient India (1894) contains verse translations from the Rigveda, the Upanishads, Kalidas Bharavi, and Buddhist texts like the Dhemmapada. His most impressive works are the condensed versions of the two Sanskrit epics. Though he skips over the vast portions of the original texts, what he presents are the original incidentals of the epics as described by their poets, Vyasa and Valmiki. He very skilfully employs the "Locksley Hall" metre as the nearest equivalent to the Anustubh or sloka metre of Sanskrit epics to give his English translations the musical movements of the original texts. It goes to the credit of Romesh Chunder Dutt that he has succeeded to a very great extent to capture the real spirit of the Sanskrit epics.

A versatile man and beloved of all Muses, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was a unique figure, who enriched every aspect of Modern Indian life, literature and art by his rare genius. Poet, dramatist, novelist, short story writer, essayist, composer, painter, actor, thinker, educationist,
nationalist and internationalist, such were the various roles he played with uniform distinction during his long and fruitful career. Though his writings influenced the literatures of various Indian languages, he wrote mostly in Bengali. His original writings in English comprise his essays, lectures, addresses, a solitary poem - 'The Child' (1931) -, a few epigrams and translations of some of his works, particularly the collection of poems entitled *Gitanjali* (1912), which took the literary world of London by storm. Tagore was awarded in 1913 the Nobel Prize for literature for his work. W.B. Yeats, Rothenstein, May Sinclair, Professor Bradley, Henry Nevinson, Ezra Pound, Andre Gide and others showered unreserved praises on Tagore for the poems in *Gitanjali*. Yeats in his well-known Introduction to the poems wrote: "I have carried the manuscript of these translations about with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest some stranger should see how much it moved me. These lyrics - which are in the original, my Indians tell me full of subtlety of rhythm, of untranslatable delicacies of colour, of metrical invention - display in their thought a world I have dreamt of all my life long".¹

¹. *The Indian Contribution to English literature*, pp. 45-46.
Gitanjali made Tagore a world poet. It left sensational impact on the war-ravaged West and aroused such acclamation in the literary world as is very rare. The songs of Gitanjali are firmly rooted in the ancient tradition of Indian saint poetry and deal with man's longing and quest for the Divine. They are, however, characterized by a great variety of woods and approaches. Some poems describe the eternal play of love between god and man while score reveal how God waits eternally for the love of man. In some is expressed the poet's longing to realize God through joy as well as pain and in some through visions of nature. In some poet's humanism asserts itself against all religious orthodoxy:

Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads...
He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground, where path-maker is breaking stones.

(Gitanjali, poem 11)

Taken together these poems reveal the relationship between God and the human soul, God and Nature, Nature and the Soul and humanity. In some of the poems the poet's longing for the divine to refresh his 'arid' heart is clothed in the metaphor of the Indian seasons:

The rain has held back for days and days, my God, in my arid heart. The horizon is fiercely nacked - not the thinnest cover of a soft cloud, not the vaguest hint of a distant cool shower.

Send thy angry storm, dark with death, fit is thy wish
and with lashes of lightning startle the sky from end to end.

But call back, my lord, call back this pervading silent heat, still and keen and cruel, burning the heart with dire despair.

Let the cloud of grace bend low from above like the tearful look of the mother on the day of the father's wrath.

(Gitanjali, 40)

The influence of the Passion play of Germany on Tagore's mind is visible in his poem The Child which he wrote directly in English while staying in Germany. The poem deals with a Biblical theme, the nativity and birth of Christ, transformed by Indian myths, symbols and imagination into a moving drama of the ever-renewing life of man symbolised by the new-born. Men from the valley of the Nile, the bank of the Ganges, from Tibet and the 'dense dark tangle of savage wildnesses', all gather in one place and start on their journey; the trials are unendurable to everyone except the Man of Faith; he is denounced by his erstwhile followers as a false prophet. Nonetheless they reach the journey's end; the child is discovered:

They kneel down the king and the beggar, the saint and the sinner, the wise and the fool, and cry 'Victory to Man, the new born, the ever-living'.

As different from Tagore, Manohan Ghose (1869-1924) and his younger brother, Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950) wrote only in
English. They were alienated from their nature language Bengali because of their long stay in England. Their father Dr. K.D. Ghose had blind faith in Western education and hence sent his sons at an early age to receive a purely English upbringing. In England Manmohan Ghose studied at St. Paul's School and from there went to Christ Church College, Oxford on an open scholarship. Having lived in England from the age of seven i.e. 1876 to 1894 when he returned to India, Manmohan Ghose became completely English. The gods he worshipped were the brightest lights of European literature - Hesiod and Homer, The attic tragedians, Theocitus, Heleagar and Simonides, Dante and Petrarch, Shakespeare, Milton and Arnold. His love for Western, particularly English literature was so deep that on his deathbed he asked for not the Gita but Lear and Macbeth to be read out to him.

At Christ Church college, Oxford Manmohan Ghose made friends with the poets of the Decadent School, to which belonged Laurence Binyon, his life long friend from the days of St. Paul's School. His earlier poems appeared in the anthology Primavera (1890), which also included the work of Stephen Phillips, Laurence Binyon and Arthur Crips (brother of Sir Stafford Cripps). They are typical of the mood of world weariness and yearning and the colourful aestheticism of the Eighteen Nineties. Praising him in the Pall Mall Gazette in 1890, Oscar Wilde described him as the "young Indian of
brilliant scholarship and high literary attainment who gives some culture to Christ Church".  

About his poems in Primavera, Wilde wrote: "His verses show us how quick and subtle are the intellectual sympathies of the Oriental mind .... Mr. Ghose ought someday to make a name in our literature.

His first independent volume of verses, Love Songs and Elegies (1898), while expressing the old strain of weariness and wistfulness, adds to it a celebration of Nature, and a surer command of image and phrase. Songs of Love and Death (1926), Orphic Mysteries ('Songs of Pain, Passion and the Mystery of Death') and Immortal Eve ('Songs of the Triumph and Mystery of Beauty') written following the death of his wife, were published posthumously. The last two collections appeared as late as 1974, in the collected edition of his poems. Describing his wife's affliction in one of the poems of Immortal Eve, he writes:

My dropping flower, my Moloto,
Your dear head hang not so;
You wither on the stem, alas;
But tell me, then, your woe,
You gaze upon me speechless, dumb,
The sorrow that constricts
Your throat no utterance gives, to tell
What 'tis your heart afflicts.  

2. Ibid., p.1.
3. Ibid., p.7.
In Ghose's life and poetry, there is a cruel realization of his being the product of one culture and the inheritor of another. In "Myvanwy", the very first of the poems in *Songs of Love and Death*, he writes:

Lost is that country, and all but forgotten
Mid these chill breazes, yet, still, oh, believe me,
All her meridan suns and ardent summers
Burn in my bosom

In his 'Introduction' to *Songs of Love and Death*, Laurence Binyon wrote discerningly: "His verse follows the forms and traditions of English poetry, but his temperament and attitude were Eastern .... Mentally he was torn in two." On returning to India in 1894, Ghose felt himself to be an exile. He was a thorough misfit in the society of the newly-awakened and proudly nationalistic Bengalees. He was not happy at Dacca and Patna where he worked as Professor of English for some time. He was, however, finally appointed Professor at Presidency College, Calcutta, where he was immensely popular among his students.

Manmohan Ghose's younger brother, Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950), provides a striking contrast. Though like his brother, Aurobindo also had his upbringing and education in England, he found his roots in Indian culture and thought immediately on his return to India from Cambridge in 1893. At Cambridge he

1. *An English Miscellany*, p. 5

was awarded a first in the classical tripes and later passed the Indian Civil Service open examination. An excellent linguist, he added German and Italian to his highly competent grasp of Latin, Greek and French. On returning to India he stayed for thirteen years in Baroda as a Professor and Vice-Principal in Baroda College. Here he learnt Sanskrit and other Indian languages and acquired through knowledge of Indian religion and Philosophy. He returned to Calcutta in 1906 and got involved in nationalist activities as a political radical, which landed him in jail for one year. In 1910 he escaped to Pondicherry and made it his permanent home thereafter. While in Alipore jail he practised yoga, which led to a remarkable mystic experience described as 'Narayana Darshan' by him. Continuing his yoga at Pondichery, he was joined in 1914 by a French lady, Madam Miera Richard (later known as the 'Mother'), who recognized in him the guru of her own quest. Henceonwards Aurobindo started his Ashram and became a spiritual leader and thinker. He became famous as Sri Aurobindo, a great religious savant.

During all these changing facets of his like Aurobindo continued writing from 1890 to 1950 when he died. Though his writings included prose, poetry, drama, speeches, treatises, and journalism, poetry was always his first love, and English remained his principal and most rewarding medium of expression. His poetical works included verse of several kinds
lyrical, narrative, philosophical and epic. The early Short Poems: 1890-1900 reveal the influence of the Eighteen Nineties and deal with the themes of love, sorrow, death and liberty in a typically romantic style. The poem "Envoi" in this collection, which describes the poet hearing Saraswati and the Ganges beckoning him, gives the first inklings of the mystic strain which was to dominate Aurobindo's later poetry. The Short Poems: 1895-1908 written after Shri Aurobindo's return to India reveals mystic awareness in poems like "Invitation" and "Revelation". In Short Poems: 1902-1930 and 1930-1950, he attempts reflective and symbolic verse.

Among the longer poems of the early period are three complete narratives, "Urvane", "Love and Death", and "Baji Prabhou" and few fragments. Near about 1896 he began his first draft of his magnum opus, Savitri, the definitive edition of which appeared in 1954. His entire poetic career may be seen as a long and arduous preparation for the writing of this greatest epic in the Indian English literature. The sub-title of the poem, "A legend and a symbol", indicates the poet's main aim of the poem. The ancient legend of Savitri and prince Satyavan, taken from the Mahabharata, has been made here a vehicle of Sri Aurobindo's symbolic expression of his own philosophy of Man's realization of the 'Life Divine' on this earth. Since the poetry and creative writings of Rabindranath
Tagore appeared originally in Bengali, Sri Aurobindo is the greatest Indian English poet of the period.

Thus when Sarojini Naidu brought out her first collection of verses *The Golden Threshold* in 1905, Indian English poetry had established itself as a mature, respectable and internationally known branch of Indian literature. In fact she herself played a very significant role in enriching it by her rare genius and making it acquire a prominent place in Indian literature.

**Her Life:**

Sarojini Devi was born on February 13, 1879, at Hyderabad (Deccan) in a Bengali Brahmin family, which had migrated from Brahmanagar, a village in East Bengal (now Bangladesh). She was the eldest of the eight children of Aghorenath Chattopadhyay and Varada Sundari Devi. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya belonged to an illustrious ancient line of great Sanskrit scholars who were highly respected in Bengal. Describing her ancestors and father Sarojini wrote to Arthur Symons:

> My ancestors have been great dreamers, great scholars, great ascetics. My father is a dreamer himself, a great dreamer, a great man whose life has been a magnificent failure. I suppose in the whole of India there are few men whose learning is greater than his, and I don't think there are many more beloved. He has a great white
beard and the profile of Homer and a laugh that brings down the roof.¹

One of Aghorenath's pupils was very much impressed by his "magnetic eyes" when he met him at Lovelock Place at Ballygunge, Calcutta, where he had settled after his retirement from Hyderabad.

His magnetic eyes and his kindly ways captivated me. How often have I in later years compared Aghorenath's eyes to those of Balzac as his friend, the poet Gautier, describes them: "There was nothing like those eyes.... two black diamonds pierced by flashes of gold; eyes to see through walls and hearts, to subdue animals, the eyes of a leader, of a conqueror". And with eyes like these Aghorenath combined the heart, and, yes, also the faith and trust of a child. A simpler soul I have seldom seen.²

Aghorenath's poet son, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya described him as "a mystic of the highest order, one who saw and realized the universe as part of his own being; this world of change and colour, as a composite pattern of time and space still in a state of childhood and quest."³ He called his father "a walking encyclopaedia .... there was nothing he did not know literally."⁴

4. Ibid., p. 23.
Aghorenath evinced keen interest in science and literature. He was a master of Sanskrit and widely read in the literature of East and West. He was a scholar in English and Hebrew, French, German and Russian. His motto was to learn something new each day. In Calcutta he met Keshab Chandra Sen and soon after joined Sen's Naba Bidhan cult of Brahmoism. He was initiated into the Brahma faith on the same day with Sivanath Sastri and Anand Mohan Bose. When Aghorenath after completing his studies in India, sailed for England for scientific studies on a Gilchrist scholarship, in the same boat with Keshab Chandra Sen, he left his young wife Varada Sundari Devi at the "Bharat Ashram", founded by Sen. Inmates of this Ashram lived like a family and were dedicated to non possession and devoted to a life of piety and culture. Aghorenath took his degree in Physics at Edinburgh in 1877, winning in the process the Boxter Prize and the Hope Prize in Chemistry. He was the first Indian to obtain the degree of Doctor of Science, even before Jagdish Chandra Bose and Acharya Profulla Chandra Ray. From England he went to Bonn in Germany on the Vans Dunlop scholarship. Here he impressed scientists with the breadth of his mind and accuracy of research. Unfortunately on returning to India he did not fulfil his career in pure science otherwise he would have also earned fame like J.C. Bose and P.C. Ray as a pioneer Indian
scientist. It is because of this that Sarojini called her father a "magnificent failure" P.C. Ray also regretted that Aghorenath did not properly utilize his giant scientific talent.

In India Aghorenath devoted himself to the alchemy and education. His favourite subject was Chemistry, which led him to become an ardent alchemist striving with his friends to find a formula, sitting over cauldrons and working late into the night in an old gymnasium room in Hyderabad striving to turn the baser metals into gold. Sarojini wrote to Arthur Symons: "Oh, dear, night and day the experiments are going on, and everyman who brings a new prescription is welcome as a brother". ¹ Whether he succeeded in transmuting base metals into gold or not, remains a mystery. He, however, confessed to his pupil, Lama, that he did. Lama refers to this when he writes:

His (Aghorenath's) mind seemed to have strayed into a different region altogether; and he suddenly asked me if I knew that Paracelsus was right—baser metal could really be transmuted. I didn't know what to say, when he declared almost in a whisper, that he himself had done it; but he no longer possessed the formula; the secret was lost no sooner than he had found it.²

¹ Arthur Symons, p. 15.
² Oriental Illustrated Weekly, p. 6.
Later on 'Lama' learnt from Varada Sundari how years ago at Hyderabad he had been found unconscious in his laboratory after he had shut himself in for three days, and they brought him out in a delirious condition.

As an educationist Aghorenath came to be known as "Father of Education in Hyderabad". On returning to India he was invited to Hyderabad, Deccan in 1878 where he established a school with the English medium. He then founded the Hyderabad College and was appointed its Principal. This later became the Nizam's college. Soon with his wife's help, he began to take interest in women's education. With the cooperation of other women, the girl's college was inaugurated as a part of the Osmania University. He was a great champion of women's cause and founded the "Young Women's Improvement Trust" for its furtherance. He wanted women to be financially independent. He made a great effort to abolish child-marriage and encourage the marriage of widows. He was responsible for the introduction of the special Marriage Act of British India in Hyderabad. He was also against the caste system and threw aside the sacred Brahmanical thread at the age of fourteen. His services were much appreciated in Hyderabad for many years, but he became involved in politics and was suspended from service and deported from Hyderabad for a short time. A few years later, he was recalled as Principal, Nizam's
College. His dynamic policies and nationalistic views led him to seek premature retirement and shift for Calcutta, where he spent his last years. From 1885 he took an active part in the Indian National Congress from its very inception. In Calcutta Aghorenath, on the invitation of his old friend, Principal Maitra of City College, joined his teaching staff on a strictly honorary capacity. He was very much popular among his young Bengali students.

Sarojini's mother Varada Sundari Devi was an "ideal" Hindu woman, devoted to her husband, children and household duties. Her youngest son Harindranath Chattopadhyaya pointed out that her mother's eyes were always "brimful of mercy, kindness and contemplation". She was a poet and musician. In her young age she had composed some Bengali lyrics which she often sang in her melodious voice. She had won the Viceroy's gold medal for singing when she was a student of her village school in Bengal. She was very affectionate and large-hearted woman and accorded lavish hospitality to everyone who came to her house. Her dining table always stood ready with Hindu, Muslim and Western recipes and delicious sweets cooked by her. Her husband had his friends among Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Europeans and a generous welcome awaited one and all who

came to his house. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya describes his house in Hyderabad as "a museum of wisdom and culture, a zoo crowded with a medley of strange types - some even verging on the mystic, for our home was open to all alike."\(^1\) It was really a liberal home where Hindus and Muslims and Christians, Parsies and Sikhs, Brahmins and Sudras, and indeed, all living things had an honoured and equal place. It was a strange confluence of different races and cultures. Aghorenath's closest friend was Mulla Abdul Qayyum, Principal of the Hyderabad College. Paying a tribute to him later on, Sarojini wrote:

"How happy I am to add a flower of affection to the memorial garland woven by many hands in honour of my father's beloved friend, Mulla Abdul Qayyum Sahib, whose figure and fascinating personality are integral parts of my earliest recollections. Seldom have two persons divided by such divergent circumstances of birth, education, racial heritage and religious tradition achieved such perfect friendship as these two gifted and distinguished people".\(^2\)

She describes both of them as pioneers of the Indian Renaissance. Varada Sundari Devi and Aghorenath talked to everyone in his own language. The husband and the wife spoke to each other in Bengali, to their children in Hindustani, to their servants in Telgu and to their European friends in English.

\(^1\) Life and Myself, p. 15.

\(^2\) Quoted by Tara Ali Baig, p.9.
A more devoted couple than Agorenath Chattopadhyaya and Varada Sundari Devi would be hard to find. The couple seemed to be in perpetual romance. The grand old man had set to tune in almost all the well known ragas a song dedicated to his "darling", the refrain of which was: "Varada amar pran", "Varada my life". He sang it often with great gusto and vigour, his voice reverberating through the big rooms of his house.

The eight children of Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya and Varada Sundari Devi were all very talented and exceptional ones. Younger to Sarojini who was the eldest son, was Virendranath, a well known revolutionary associated with Communist activities. He was born in 1880 and was later exiled from India. He died during the Stalinist era in 1942. He was intimately known to Lenin who admired him. Bhupendranath, the third child was born in 1882. He became the Assistant Accountant General in Hyderabad and died in Bombay in 1933. Mrinalini, affectionately called "Gunnu" by the family was born in 1883. She took her tripos in Modern Sciences at Cambridge and became a popular Principal of the Girl's College, Lahore. Younger to her was Sunalini Devi who was born in 1890 and became an artist and dancer. Ranendranath was born in 1895 and died of cancer in 1959. The youngest son Harindranath was born in 1898. He was a versatile genius and earned great fame as poet, artist, and dramatist. He married
the famous socialist leader, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya. Suhashini, the youngest child, was born in 1901. She too was a committed Communist like her eldest brother Virendranath.

Sarojini was very fortunate to have been born in such a gifted family and to such talented parents. She was very precocious child and revealed her rare intellectual qualities from the very beginning. She was a clever student in her school and always stood first in her class. She was, however, reluctant to learn English till she was of nine years. It was only after her father punished her by shutting her in a room alone that she started learning English seriously. In no time there after she acquired a rare proficiency in the language. As a girl she also learnt Urdu and Persian and later French.

Sarojini's father wanted her to be a great mathematician or a scientist, but the poetic instinct which she inherited from her parents, proved stronger. Describing how she made a debit in poetic career, she wrote to Arthur Symons:

One day, when I was eleven, I was sighing over a sum in algebra: it wouldn't come right; but indeed a whole poem came to me suddenly. I wrote it down. From that day my 'poetic career' began. At thirteen I wrote a long poem _a la_ 'Lady of the Lake' - 1300 lines in six days. At thirteen I wrote a drama of 2000 lines, a full-fledged passionate thing that I began on the spur of the moment without forethought, just to spite my
doctor who said that I was very ill and must not touch a book. My health broke down permanently about this time, and my regular studies being stopped I read voraciously. I suppose the greater part of my reading was done between fourteen and sixteen. I wrote a novel, I wrote fat volumes of journals; I took myself very seriously in those days."

After her early education in Hyderabad, Sarojini was sent to Madras for matriculation as there was no suitable school for girls in Hyderabad. She passed the matriculation examination in 1891 when she was only of twelve years, gaining a first class first in the Madras University which in those days covered the whole of the Southern Peninsula. It was a rare achievement for a girl of her age and her success caused surprise and fame throughout India. After passing the matriculation she returned to Hyderabad and stayed in her parental home from 1892 to 1895. These were among the happiest years of Sarojini's maturing life. She indulged in wide reading and exulted in the happy home life and the wide circle of friends of her parents. She wrote during this period from 1892 to 1895 i.e. between the age of 13 to 16 a number of verses published privately by her father under the title Songs (1896). These poems printed on rough paper bear the inscription on the cover: "Poems by S. Chattopadhyaya, dated 3rd Oct. 1896."

1. Arthur Symons, pp. 11-12.
It was during this period that Sarojini came in contact with Govindarajulu Naidu, a doctor in the service of the Nizam Government and one of the members of the wide circle of her family friends. He was the son of a military doctor and had been to England for his medical studies. Married at the age of eighteen to a very young girl who died in less than a year, he turned a widower, Sarojini and Dr. Naidu fell deeply in love with each other and aspired to be married. Aghorenath was not in favour of their marriage not because Dr. Naidu was of a lower caste, for the former being a Brahmo Samajist did not believe in the caste system. His main objection was that Sarojini was very young and Dr. Naidu was a widower and about ten years her senior. The scholarship comprising the passage to England and £300 a year, granted by the Nizam of Hyderabad to Sarojini to go to England for further studies, came as a welcome relief to Aghorenath who shipped Sarojini to England in September, 1895, accompanied by Annie Besant.

In England Sarojini, barely a girl of sixteen, took its literary world by storm. Literary celebrities like Edmund Gosse and Arthur Symons soon discerned her rare passion for poetry and praised her unreservedly. It was fortunate for her that in England she became the ward of Miss Manning who had done so much for Indian students in London and to whose modest rooms came some of the great literary figures of the day. It was here that Sarojini met Edmund Gosse, the man who put her
firmly on the path of becoming a poet. In these cultured circles the small Indian girl in her rich silks, with large shining eyes that struck everyone with their darkness, depth and intensity, was to blossom and grow.

Edmund Gosse wrote that when she was introduced to him she was "a child of sixteen, but as unlike the usual English maiden of that age as a lotus or a cactus is unlike a lily of the valley. She was already marvellous in mental maturity, amazingly well-read and far beyond a Western child in all her acquaintance with the world:"

He further pointed out:

By some accident now forgotten, but an accident most fortunate for us - Sarojini was introduced to our home at an early date after her arrival in London, and she soon became one of the most welcome and intimate of our guests. It was natural that one so impetuous and so sympathetic should not long conceal from her hosts that she was writing copiously in verse-in English verse.

Sarojini left equally deep impression on Arthur Symons, the famous poet and critic. He wrote about her:

To those who know her in England all the life of the Tiny figure seemed to concentrate itself in the eyes: they turned towards beauty as the sunflower turns towards the sun, opening wider and wider until one saw nothing but the eyes. She was dressed always in clinging dresses of Eastern silk, and she was so small and her


2. Edmund Gosse, p. 3.
large black hair hung straight down her back, you might have taken her for a child. She spoke little, and in a low voice, like gentle music, and she seemed, wherever she was, to be alone.¹

The encouragement which Sarojini got from these leading figures in English literature, inspired her to dedicate the next twenty years of her life to writing poetry in English and introducing the exotic oriental world to the English speaking people.

Sarojini first started her studies in London at King's College. Later she went to Girton, Cambridge, but she did not seem interested in getting any academic degree. In Cambridge she spent her time away from her lecture rooms in wandering about in the beautiful adjoining woods. The beautiful natural sights of the English country side led her to write poems about lovely country flowers and birds. Edmund Gosse who read these poems said: "The verses which Sarojini had entrusted to me were skilled in form, correct in grammar and blameless in sentiment; but they had the disadvantage of being totally without individuality. They were Western in feeling and in imagery, they were founded on reminiscences of Tennyson and Shelley."² He advised her not to write of English robins and skylarks and to abandon a "rechauffe of Anglo-Saxon sentiment |

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¹ Arthur Symons, p. 16.
² Edmund Gosse, p. 4.
in an Anglo-Saxon setting" and give some revelation of the heart of India, some sincere penetrating analysis of native passion of the principle of antique religion and of such mysterious intimations as stirred the soul of the East long before the West had begun to dream that it had soul.\(^1\) Sarojini realized her mistakes and ceased to be "Falsely English". Hence onwards she reflected the picturesque and variegated Indian ethos in her poetry.

Sarojini's over-emotional nature suffered a great strain at this time and she underwent a slight nervous break-down. She was sent to Switzerland and from there to Italy to recoup her health. She was enthralled by Italy and wrote to Symons from Florence: "This Italy is made of gold, the gold of dawn and daylight, the gold of stars, and, now dancing in weired enchanting rhythms through the magic month of May, the gold of fireflies in the perfumed darkness - 'aerial gold'.\(^2\)

Sarojini returned to India in September 1898 and soon after decided to marry the man she loved. Her parents who had hoped that her sojourn to England would cool off her adolescent love, realized their mistake and gave their consent for marriage, which took place in Madras on December 2, 1898. Mrs. Ram Mohan Roy, a Brahmo lady of culture and reinforcement, acted as the bridesmaid and added grace and

beauty to the solemnity of the occasion. The marriage broke away many obsolete traditions. It was intercaste and inter-provincial marriage, celebrated under the Special Marriage Act of 1872. Both the parties had to deny that they were of any religion.

Sarojini led a very happy married life as she settled in Hyderabad. She had her first child, Jayasurya, in 1901. He was followed in next three years by Padmja, Ranadhira and Leilamani. Her home became famous for its lavish hospitality to friends from all parts of the world and here she lived for the first few years of her married life with the sound of children's laughter and abounding love enriching her life. Though wrapped in her domestic happiness and responsibilities, she continued composing poems in rapid succession. These poems were published in The Indian Ladies Magazine started by her friend Kamala Satthianadhan in 1901. Later they appeared in his first anthology of verses, The Golden Threshold, which was dedicated to Edmund Gosse and published by William Heinemann in 1905 with an Introduction by Arthur Symons. The book took England by storm and made her famous as the 'Nightingale of India' or 'Bharat Kokila', the name given to her by Mahatma Gandhi.

Sarojini did not confine herself only to her domesticity and production of verses, her restless soul was
inquisitive to learn about the mystery of life and reach out to common humanity in its service. In her symbolic prose poem, "Nilambija" (1902), she describes herself as a young girl with lovely soul, watching the stars "till she has caught from their inaccessible fires the soaring flame of her manifold enthusiasm, a myriad-hearted passion for humanity, for knowledge, for life, about all, for the eternal beauty of universe."\(^1\) Sarojini was conscious of the social and political upsurge through which her country was passing and was eager to play her role in shaping its destiny. One of her passions in life was to make her countrymen realize the significance of true brotherhood of men and rise about the prejudice of race, creed, caste or colour. She wanted them not to think of themselves as Hindus, or Muslims or Brahmins, or Bengalees or Madrassees but as Indians; and not even merely as Indians but as the citizens of the world. In her lecture delivered in 1903 at a public meeting held under the auspices of the Historical Society, Pachaiyappa's College, she remarked:

> If beg of you, my brothers, not to limit your love only to India, because it is better to aim at the sky, it is better that your ideals of patriotism should extend for the welfare of the world and not be limited to the prosperity of India and so to achieve that prosperity for your country; because, if the ideals be only for

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the prosperity of your country, it would end where it began, by being a profit to your own community and very probably to your own self.\(^1\)

While addressing the Theistic Conference held at Calcutta in 1906, she exhorted people to realize and develop the divine spark that lies within them and treat all men as their brothers:

You, son of India, whom I speak to to-day, and you, daughters, whom I am also addressing, know that you are responsible for the call upon you for ennobled lives, not merely for the glory and prosperity of your country, but for the higher patriotism that says the world is my country, and all men are my brothers.\(^2\)

Equally deeply Sarojini was devoted to the cause of the education and freedom of women in India. It was her great concern for the cause of Indian women which brought her into contact with one of the greatest national leaders of India in the early twentieth century and dragged her into politics and the struggle of the freedom of the country. Her eloquent speech emphasizing the great need for education of Indian women at the Indian Social Conference, Calcutta, 1906, concluded with the exhortation:

Does one man dare deprive another of his birthright to God's pure air which nourishes his body? How, then,

shall a man dare to deprive a human soul of its immemorial inheritance of liberty and life? And yet, my friends, man has so dared in the case of Indian women. That is why you men of India are to-day what you are: because your fathers, in depriving your mothers of that immemorial birthright, have robbed you, their sons, of your just inheritance. Therefore, I charge you, restore to your women their ancient rights, for, as I have said it is we, and not you, who are the real nation builders, and without our active cooperation at all points of progress all your congresses and conferences are in vain. Educate your women and the nation will take care of itself, for it is true to day as it was yesterday and will be to the end of human life that the hand that rocks the cradle is the power that rules the world.¹

At the end of her speech Sarojini received a written message from Gokhale complimenting her on her enthralling speech: "May I take the liberty to offer you my most respectful and enthusiastic congratulations? Your speech was more than an intellectual treat of the highest order ....We all felt for the moment to be lifted to a higher plane."² With this message commenced her intimate, relations with Gokhale, which lasted till the latter's death in 1915.

Between 1907 and 1911, Sarojini met Gokhale several times in Bombay, Madras, Poona and Delhi. After each meeting

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1. *Speeches and Writings*, p. 16.
2. "Reminiscences of Mr. Gokhale", *Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu*, p. 22.
as she herself remarks: "I would always carry away the memory of some fervent and stirring word of exhortation to yield my life to the service of India." Though deeply involved in national activities Gokhale found leisure to send her, now and then, a warm message of approval, of encouragement, when any of her poem or speech or action chanced to please him or the frequent rumours of her failing health caused him anxiety or alarm. It was, however, at the beginning of 1912 when Gokhale spent a few weeks in Calcutta with her father that real intimacy was established between them. She now began to comprehend the intrinsic and versatile greatness of the man, his precise, brilliant and subtle intellect, his unrivalled gifts of political analysis and synthesis, the vigour and veracity of his far-reaching statesmanship, the lofty simplicities and sacrifices of his daily life. In him she felt that both the practical, strenuous worker and the mystic dreamer of dreams were harmonized by the age-long discipline of his Brahminical ancestry nourished on the gospel of the Bhagvat Gita and wisdom in action of true yoga. As a sincere guide of Sarojini Naidu, Gokhale with his practical sagacity often moderated her excessive enthusiasm. In 1912 there had come out Sarojini's second book of verses, The Bird of Time, with an 'Introduction' by Edmund Gosse. The book had attracted

1. Ibid., p. 23.
great attention and unreserved applause. Gokhale, however, warned her not to be swept off her feet by adulation and success. Similarly though he impressed upon her the importance of working for Hindu-Muslim unity, he cautioned her against over-optimism in this matter. Once when she spoke in terms of achieving Hindu-Muslim unity within five years, he said prophetically: "Child, you are a poet and you hope too much. Unity will not come in my lifetime, nor in yours. But keep your faith and work if you can."

Gokhale's health had always been delicate. During his stay in England in 1913 and 1914, he had strong premonitions of early death. Sarojini was also in England at that time and sensed his inner thoughts: "Something of the autumnal sadness of fallen leaves and growing mists had passed into his mood." Once in the spring of 1914, he asked her: "Why should a song-bird like you have a broken wing?" and then told her that he had just received his own death-warrant at the hands of his doctors. At another occasion he said a little wistfully: "Do you know, I feel that an abiding sadness underlies all that unfailing brightness of yours? Is it because you have come so near death that its shadows still cling to you?" "No", Sarojini answered, "I have come so near

2. Ibid., p. 35.
life that its fires have burnt me". Gokhale's health during this period was deteriorating fast and he was forbidden to leave his room or to receive visitors. Sarojini whom he called 'the best of all his prescriptions', alone was allowed to see him. She was with him for the last time, two days before she sailed for India. Gokhale has begun to feel the foreshadowing of the wings of death very clearly by now. As he bade her farewell, he said: "I do not think we shall meet again. If you live, remember your life is dedicated to the service of the country. My work is done". Nearly four months after on 19th February, 1915, "The great saint and soldier of national righteousness" passed away. A month before Gokhale's death Sarojini lost her father. Though himself on his death bed, Gokhale wrote to her in grief: "I wish I had been anywhere near so that I could have gone to see you personally. I do hope your grief will break out into songs that will abide." In the death of Gokhale Sarojini lost her great guide and mentor.

1. "Reminiscences of Mr. Gokhale", p. 32.
2. Ibid., p. 33.
3. Ibid., p. 35
4. Ibid.
In 1913 when Sarojini Naidu was staying in London she met the young liberal Muslim leader Mr. M.A. Jinnah and developed a close friendship with him which lasted to the end though their joint dream of Hindu-Muslim unity crumbled and their paths separated irrevocably. Mr. Jinnah had founded that year the London Indian Association, a new student organization, with the active and eager support of Indian students in London. It aimed to provide a permanent centre to focus the scattered student life in London and to build up such staunch tradition of cooperation and fellowship that it might eventually grow into a perfect miniature and model of the federated India of the future, the India of their dreams. Sarojini helped Mr. Jinnah to get the blessings of Gokhale for this association and persuade him to deliver its inaugural address. Sarojini called Mr. Jinnah her "Comrade and leader", and hailed him as the "ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity". Reminiscing about Sarojini, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy wrote to Padmini Sen Gupta: "Sarojini was very intimately associated with Jinnah and his activities as an Indian political leader, and perhaps, next to Gandhiji the dominating influence on Sarojini's life was that of Jinnah, although she was superior to him intellectually and spiritually, the difference being

between genius and talent."¹ Padmini Sen Gupta also relates how great regard Sarojini had for Mr. Jinnah: "Once in 1946, I remember going to see Mrs. Naidu and telling her that I had written a book on "Some Great Leaders". She asked me if I had included Jinnah, and when I replied in the negative she was angry with me and immediately said: "But Jinnah is a great man. You should have included him in your book."² At the 1915 session of the Congress, she recited in Jinnah's honour her poem, "Awake".

Sarojini's another great Muslim friend was Umar Sobhani, a prominent businessman of Bombay. He was one of the first supporters of Gandhiji in whose cause he sacrificed his fortune and later his life. His death on July 6, 1926, inspired one of Sarojini's most poignant poems included in The Feather of the Dawn.

Though Sarojini had deep love and loyalty for her friends, her devotion to Mahatma Gandhi, once she came under his sway, was complete and final. Gokhale who was in South Africa in 1913 and watched Gandhiji's successful satyagraha struggle against the persecution of Indians by the White Government there, had advised him to transfer his activities

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in India. Gokhale grasped the significance of his ideas and
spoke to Sarojini about the role "the little, frail, brown
man" was destined to play in India's struggle for
independence. He had asked Sarojini to meet him when he
arrived in England.

Gandhiji arrived in England on August 6, 1914 from
South Africa, two days after the commencement of the First
World War. He was warmly welcomed by the Indian community in
London. A few days after a reception was held at the Cecil
hotel in honour of Gandhiji, in which Sarojini Naidu, Mohammad
Ali Jinnah, Ananda Coomaraswamy and some other prominent
Indians paid tributes to his success in South Africa. Gandhiji
was in favour of offering support to the British Government
during the war. He did not want to embarrass the British at
the time of their hardship by asking for freedom. At a meeting
of Indian students in London he insisted that "England's
difficulty should not be turned into our opportunity, and that
it was more becoming and far-sighted not to press our demands
while the war lasted."1 Gandhiji wanted to start an Indian
Voluntary Ambulance Corps, just as he had helped the sick and
wounded in South Africa during the Boer and Zulu wars. A joint
letter signed by Mahatma Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu and other

Indians was sent to British authorities offering their help. Sarojini and Gandhiji were therefore drawn together to work for the same cause. Sarojini was a member of the Lyceum, a well known ladies club, whose members undertook the sewing of garments for the Indian Voluntary Corps.

Sarojini saw as much of the Mahatma as she could before she left for India on October 10, 1914. She wrote later: "It thrilled me that men of all nations - Eastern and Western - gathered in his home, proof that true greatness speaks in a universal language and compels universal admiration."¹ She was also attracted to the wifely devotion of Kasturba: "A kind, gentle lady, with the indomitable spirit of the martyrs .... busy with a hundred small housewifely tasks, like any other woman and not the heroine of martyrdom."²

Mahatma Gandhi fell ill in London and was ordered complete rest. When he returned to India in 1915, he was asked by Gokhale to take rest for a year before he started any work. Gandhiji soon established his Sabarmati Ashram near Ahmedabad and following the advice of Gokhale studied Indian situation without taking any active part in politics. Sarojini who had returned to India earlier, soon found herself in mourning

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¹ Tara Ali Baig, p. 52.
² Ibid.
because her father died on January 28, 1915. Within less than a month she suffered another shock when her mentor Gokhale passed away on February 19, 1915. On recovering from her grief she renewed her lecture tours awakening people to the need for Hindu-Muslim and supreme sacrifices for the freedom of the motherland. She devoted the years 1915 to 1917 entirely to touring and lecturing along with Annie Besant, an equally dynamic orator, and C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. She was the most wanted and popular speaker because of her eloquence and silvery poetic speeches. In 1917 came out her third collection of verses, The Broken Wing, which was dedicated to "The Dream of Today and the Hope of Tomorrow." This was the last collection of her verses to be published in her lifetime because she was soon involved heart and soul in the cause of patriotism. Her poetic talent now found its expression through her eloquent speeches. Some stray poems which she wrote later on were published posthumously under the title, The Feather of the Dawn, in 1961.

By 1916 Sarojini Naidu had emerged as a leading Congress leader. In the Indian National Congress session held in Bombay in 1915, she had recited her poem, "Awake", in which she conveyed the idea that Mother India could be awakened from

1. Tara Ali Baig, p. 52
slumber only through the united efforts of all the communities. The poem was dedicated to Mohammad Ali Jinnah. In the next session of the Congress held in Lucknow in 1916, she gained wide recognition both as a speaker and national leader of the first rank when she was entrusted the task of supporting the resolution on self-government for India. In her enthralling speech she declared:

I am merely a spectator from the watch-tower of dreams; and I watched the swift and troubled, sometimes chequered, but nevertheless indomitable Time-spirit marching on in a pageant of triumph to the desired goal. We stand united but united with such strength that nothing from outside, not even the tyranny of colonial domination, shall withhold from us our rights and privileges, withhold from us the liberties that are due, which we claim by our united voice.... Centuries have gone by, old divisions are healed, old wounds have got cured. To each of us has come that living consciousness, that is in united service for the motherland that constitutes the upper most hope of tomorrow. There is no one so mean so weak, so selfish as not to think that in the service to the motherland lies the joy greater than all personal joys; in suffering for her comes the supermost consolation in our personal sorrow; and in her worship is the absolution of sin; to live for her is the most victorious triumph of life; to die for her is to achieve the priceless crown of immortality.¹

¹ Tara Ali Baig, p. 55.
The resolution on Self Government was moved by the great leader Surendranath Banerjee, and seconded by Annie Besant.

Sarojini's close association with the national movement can be said to have begun at the eighteenth session of the Indian National Congress which was held at Bombay in December 1904. She was already familiar with the history and ideals of the Congress through the work done by her father. Aghorenath had, in collaboration with Abdul Qayum, established a branch of the Congress at Hyderabad. He had taken the initiative in getting the writings of Lokamanya Tilak and Bepin Chandra Pal printed and distributed in Hyderabad State. Sarojini had childhood memories of these activities. Now, at the Bombay Session of the Congress, she had opportunities of meeting some of the well-known nationalist leaders—Pherozshah Mehta, C.Y. Chintamani and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Sarojini was invited to recite her poem, "Ode to India". The poem was heard with deep appreciation and the young poetess became immensely popular among the delegates.

It was at this time in 1904 that Sarojini met Ramahai Ramade, one of the pioneers of the women's emancipation movement in India. From now, on the cause of India's freedom, Hindu-Muslim unity and the need to improve the status of Indian women claimed more and more of her attention and became the dominant factors in her life. Her popularity as a speaker kept pace with her fame as a poet. Many educational, cultural
and social institutions in different parts of India invited her to give lectures under their auspices. She was also elected to important offices in Literary and social organisations. The period between 1904 to 1916 was for her a time of learning and, to some extent, also a period of 'rehearsal' of her future work in the social, political and literary spheres.

The year 1916 was very significant in the history of India. There took place a reapproachment between the extremists and the moderates and the extremists who had earlier left the Congress under the leadership of Tilak came in its fold again. Tilak (Annie Besant's Home Rule league was founded a year earlier) started his Home Rule League in this very year. Annie Besant's Home Rule League was founded a year earlier. The prospects of Hindu-Muslim unity appeared brighter in 1916 than ever before. Both the Congress and the Muslim league held their annual session at Lucknow and came very close to each other. Sarojini had the rare privilege to address the historic Muslim league session in March 1912 also when it adopted a new constitution embodying cooperation with Hindus in all matters of national welfare and progress. She had then created a great impression on young members of the Muslim league by her impassioned speech. It was also in the year 1916 that Jawaharlal Nehru met Mahatma Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu at the Congress Session for the first time. To
Sarojini he was instantly "a brother" and she a "comrade" and his family became her family.

Though Mahatma Gandhi did not take any active part in the Congress session of 1916, he under the persuasion of the peasant leader, Raj Kumar Shukla, started satyagraha movement in Champaran for the redress of the lot of indigo planting labour. The success of Gandhiji's direct action which resulted in the passing of the Champaran Agrarian Act, showed to Indians the efficacy of satyagraha principles based on moral courage against human exploitation. Gandhiji's new revolutionary technique into the fight for freedom found a ready response in Sarojini. Hence onwards she became a complete and blind disciple of Mahatma Gandhi.

The year 1917 and 1918 were very busy ones for Sarojini from the point of view of her speaking engagements. In January 1917, she delivered a lecture on "The Vision of Patriotism" under the presidency of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru at the Leader Building, Allahabad. Later that year she addressed the Madras Students' Convention at a meeting in the Gokhale Hall, held under the presidency of Mrs. Annie Besant. This was followed by a lecture on "The Ideals of Islam" arranged by the young Men's Muslim Association of Madras, and a talk on education at the Teachers' College with James Cousins in chair. In December 1917, Sarojini joined a deputation which
waited on the Secretary of State, Edwin Montagu, to demand equal rights for women. In March 1918, she was at Jullunder in the Punjab, opening a woman's school and lecturing on the emancipation of Indian women. In April she lectured at Lahore on national education. In May she was back at Madras and played an important part at the provincial conference held at Kanchipuram. In July she again visited Madras for the opening ceremony of National School for Girls. In September she attended the Congress session at Bombay and moved the resolution demanding equal qualifications for men and women. In December that year she addressed the provincial conference at Bijapur and spoke on women's franchise.

The year 1919 saw India deeply involved in the nationwide passive resistance movement started by Gandhiji to protest against the Rowlatt Act described as the "Black Act". Sarojini delivered speeches at Madras and Ahmedabad calling upon her compatriots to resist "this hideous nightmare" of repressive laws. The stern suppression of the movement by the alien government resulted in the brutal massacre of peaceful protesters at Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar. The barbarous atrocities of the British government and the tragedy of Jallianwalla Bagh shocked the whole world. To protest against the bloody act of the government, Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood and Sarojini returned her Kaiser-e-Hind medal awarded by the government in recognition
of her work in the Ambulance Corps during the war. At this time Indian Muslims were also indignated against the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, and the abolition of the Caliphate by the British. Mahatma Gandhi supported the Khilafat Movement of Muslims and united Hindus and Muslims in a common struggle against the foreign rulers till the wrongs of the Punjab and Turkey were set right.

Sarojini went to England in July 1919 as a member of the deputation sent by the Home Rule League to submit a memorandum to the British Government regarding the situation in India. During her stay in London she through public lectures and private conversations, presented the correct picture to India's friends about the Khilafat movement and the magnitude of the Jallianwalla Bagh tragedy. In one of her lectures, "The Agony and Shame of the Punjab", delivered on 3rd June, 1920 at Kingsway Hall, she made a bitter attack on the hypocrisy of British justice. Referring to the atrocities committed by General Dyer's men on the women of Amritsar, she said: "You deserve no Empire. You have today lost your soul."¹

Sarojini returned to India in July 1920. On the first of August, Mahatma Gandhi formally started the non-cooperation

movement; which received tremendous response throughout India. Students came out of schools and colleges to work for the national cause. Distinguished lawyers like C.R. Dass and Motilal Nehru gave up their practice. People abstained from buying foreign goods and burnt British clothes publicly. In July 1921, the All India Khilafat Conference was convened with full support of the Congress. Sarojini was in the thick of the fray. She guided an organization of volunteers to help maintain discipline among the passive resisters. On 4 October 1921, she signed a manifesto issued by Mahatma Gandhi giving an outline of the methods and aims of the non-violent movement addressing students Sarojini said: "It is a battle of self-purification, self-sacrifice and self-devotion. Come, march with me to the temple of liberty."¹

In its session of December, 1921, held at Ahmedabad, the Congress expressed its determination to continue the movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The leaders of Khilafat Movement also joined hands with him. Thus by the beginning of 1922 started Non-violent Non-Cooperation and Civil Disobedience Movement called Satyagraha to overthrow the British Government. There was unprecedented unity among Hindus and Muslims and people throughout India were full of great enthusiasm and excitement. Unfortunately incensed by the acts

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¹ Naravane, p. 38.
of violence of the passive resisters at Chauri Chaura village in Gorakhpur District of U.P., Mahatma Gandhi suspended the movement soon after to the great dismay and disappointment of people. Both Hindu and Muslim leaders criticized Gandhiji for this abrupt suspension when the movement was at its climax. Gandhiji, however, justified his action on the basis that the nation was not yet prepared for non-violent movement.

A few months later Mahatma Gandhi was arrested and tried for sedition. Sarojini was in court when the great trial of the Mahatma Gandhi began in Ahmedabad on March 18, 1922. writing for The Bombay Chronicle, she compared the trial with that of Jesus Christ by Pontius Pilate: "I realized now that the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, cradled in a manger, furnished the only parallel in history to the invincible apostle of Indian liberty, who loved humanity with unsurpassed compassion, and to use his own beautiful phrase, "approached the poor with the mind of the poor." \(^1\) Gandhiji was sentenced to six years' imprisonment. Taking leave of Sarojini, Gandhiji said, "I entrust the destiny of India in your hands."\(^2\)

1. Tara Ali Baig, p. 79.
2. Ibid.
In October 1922, Sarojini travelled to Ceylon and lectured at Colombo, Jafna, Galle and some other places. She spoke on "The Renaissance in India" and "The New World of Islam." Returning to India, she lectured at Trivandrum, Tiruchirapalli and Madras. She then went to Gaya, where the Congress session was held in December. The nationalist movement now faced a serious new obstacle. The unity between Hindus and Muslims achieved during the Khilafat agitation was cracking up. In spite of Sarojini’s great efforts the Gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League went on widening with no hope of their coming closer again.

In January 1924, Sarojini went to Africa as a delegate of the Indian National Congress to attend a convention of the Kenya India Congress. She received a rousing reception when she presided at the East African Indian Congress at Mombasa. She then went to Durban where she addressed the Indian Women's Association. A touching farewell function was held for her on 22 May 1924 before she left for India. Gandhiji was by this time released by the Government because of illness. He was elected the President of the Indian National Congress at its Belgaum session in 1924. Sarojini succeeded Mahatma Gandhi as the President of the Indian National Congress in December 1925 at its Kanpur session. In her brief speech she covered a long range of subjects - Non-violence, non-cooperation,
village reconstruction, education, national militia, South Africa, and Hindu-Muslim unity. Her address was an expression of courage and hope: "In the battle for liberty fear is the one unforgivable treachery, and despair the one unforgivable sin."\(^1\) Sarojini's elevation to the office of Congress President was welcomed as "an honour to Indian womanhood." It received a good deal of publicity even outside India. The *New York Times* referred to her as "The John of Arc who rose to inspire India."\(^2\) Aldous Huxley who attended the Kanpur session wrote eulogistically about her in *The Jesting Pilate*.

In 1926 Sarojini spent a good deal of time in Bengal and U.P. In 1928 she went to America as Mahatma Gandhi's unofficial ambassador. Her journey through U.S.A. and Canada was an unqualified success. She received a warm welcome wherever she went and the press made highly favourable comments on her lectures which covered wide range of subjects related to interpretation of Indian womanhood, aspects of the modern Indian Renaissance and analysis of the spiritual ideals of India. Her speeches projected the real image of India, which an American author, Katherine Mayo, has tried to tarnish through her vicious book, *Mother India*, published in 1928. On returning to India in July 1929, Sarojini was taken on the Working Committee of the Congress and thus became a member of

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1. Naravane, p. 42.
what came to be known as the Congress High Command. The same year in November, she went to Kenya to preside over the East African Indian Congress for the second time, but returned soon after to attend the Congress Session of December 1929 presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru. She was present when the Congress took Independence pledge and celebrated Independence Day on 26 January, 1930.

Sarojini joined Mahatma Gandhi when he began his Salt Satyagraha movement by marching to Dandi on 12 March, 1930, to break the Salt Law. As the Mahatma picked up prepared salt, Sarojini applauded: "Hail deliverer"! After the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi on 5 May, 1930, she continued to lead the movement till she, too, was arrested. Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders, including Sarojini, were released in January 1931. They went soon after to Allahabad to see Motilal Nehru whose health had broken down in jail. Pt. Motilal Nehru passed away on 6 February, 1931, casting a gloom all over the country. In March 1931 there took place an agreement between Gandhiji and the Viceroy, known as Gandhi - Irwin Pact as a result of which Gandhiji called off Civil Disobedience Movement and went to England to participate in the Second Round Table Conference. Sarojini accompanied Mahatma Gandhi as her close adviser. After the conference, she along with Srinivasa Sastri went to Cape Town but soon returned to India as Mahatma Gandhi had
launched freedom struggle more powerfully after the failure of talks in London. Large number of Congress volunteers and leaders including Gandhiji and Sarojini were imprisoned in 1932 in the wake of cruel repression of the movement by the Government.

Sarojini was released on May 8, 1933. During 1934-1937, she extensively toured the country addressing young men and women and awakening national consciousness in them. The Congress swept the polls in the general election held in 1937 under the Government of India Act 1935 and formed Ministries in seven out of eleven provinces besides having coalition government in two other provinces. These ministries, however, resigned in the end of 1939 as a protest against the British government dragging India in the Second World War without consulting the Indian legislature. In 1940, Sarojini offered individual Satyagraha along with other Congress workers. As the World War escalated and the advancing Japanese forces in the South East Asia posed serious threat to India, the Congress was led to pass on August 8, 1942, the famous "Quit India" resolution demanding the withdrawal of the British power from India, and sanctioning a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale under the leadership of Gandhiji. The mass arrest of national leaders plunged the whole country in a state of political turmoil. Sarojini was jailed with Mahatma Gandhi, Kasturba, Sushila
Nayyar, Mahadev Desai, Pyarelal, Mira Behn in the Aga Khan Palace. Her radiant and dauntless presence saved the fellow prisoners from languishing in sorrow and melancholy when Mahadev Desai died and Mahatmaji went on a twenty-one day fast at the age of seventy three. Mira Behn says: "None of us, not even Bapu, had realized up to this time of incarceration together in the Aga Khan's palace the full richness of Sarojini Devi's nature. She sparked with and showered her love on all with her motherly nature."\(^1\) Sarojini was released from the palace - prison on March 21, 1943 when she fell seriously ill of malaria. Almost a year later in February 1944 Kasturba, still in prison, passed away. The same year on May 6, Gandhiji was released on grounds of health.

When the World War ended and Labour Party came into power in Britain, the new government made an earnest bid to end the political deadlock in India. After the protracted negotiations, first through the Cabinet Mission and then through the Viceroy and Governor General Lord Mountbatten, a new basis of political settlement was reached by which India was partitioned and the dominions of India and Pakistan were established. The agreement came into force on 15 August, 1947 when India emerged as an independent nation.

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1. Padmini Sen Gupta, p. 64.
The Asian Relations Conference, held at Delhi in March, 1947 was the last important event before independence with which Sarojini was closely associated. She presided over the Conference. Her Presidential address "was one of the most brilliant pieces of flaming rhetoric she had uttered during her life."\(^1\) Sarojini was made governor of U.P. when India became independent. At the swearing in ceremony, she stressed the role of free India in her lyrical prose:

"Oh, world of free nations, on this day of our freedom we pray for your freedom in the future. Ours has been an epic struggle, covering many years and costing many lives. It has been a struggle, a dramatic struggle. It has been struggle of heroes chiefly anonymous in their millions. It has been a struggle of women transformed into strength they worship. It has been a struggle of youth suddenly transformed into power itself and sacrifice and ideals. It has been a struggle of young men and old men, of rich and poor, the literate and the illiterate, the stricken and the outcast, the leper and the saint.

"We are reborn today out of the crucible of your sufferings. Nations of the world, I greet you in the name of India, my mother. My mother whose home has a roof of snow, whose walls are of living seas, whose doors are always open to you. Do you seek shelter or succour, do you seek love and understanding, come to us. Come to us in faith, come to us in hope, come to us

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1. Padmini Sen Gupta, p. 68.
believing that all gifts are ours to give,
I give for the whole world the freedom of this India,
that has never died in the past, that will be
indestructible in the future, and shall lead the world
to ultimate peace."\(^1\)

In January, 1948 when Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated,
Sarojini arrived shocked, bewildered and heart-broken at
Delhi. But when she saw her friends shedding tears, she said
in her own brave manner: "What is all this snivelling about?
Should he rather die of decrepit old age or indigestion? This
was the only death great enough for him."\(^2\) In her memorable
broadcast speech she said in her poetic manner: "Do not rest
in peace, my leader. Do not rest in peace, my father, but
continue to give us strength to fulfil your promises."
Concluding her speech, she cried: "The time is over for
private sorrow. The time is over for beating of breasts and
tearing of hair. The time is here and now to stand up and say,
"We take up the challenge with those who defied Mahatma
Gandhi."\(^3\)

Sarojini Naidu herself was not keeping well. The strain
and grief of Mahatmaji's passing away and her own arduous duties
told greatly on her always precarious health. She reached the

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2. Ibid., p. 70.
3. Ibid.
age of 70 on February 13, 1949 and the next day she fell ill. On the night of March 1, 1949 she asked her nurse to sing to her and uttering her last words: "I don't want anyone to talk to me," she fell asleep listening to the song. She passed away at 3.30 A.M. on March 2, 1949. Thus ended the epic saga of a dauntless woman, a great poet, a great patriot and a great politician. Paying a heart felt homage to her in India's Parliament, Jawaharlal Nehru said: "Mrs. Naidu was a combination of various currents of culture in India, as also various currents of culture of the East and the West. She was a national figure as also a mighty international figure."¹ Brailford remembered her as a great human being and remarked: "I think she ranks not only among the greatest Indian women of her day but very high, indeed, from a world-wide standpoint. I cannot think of any other woman who shone by her grace, humour, by her artistic power and courage in quite the same way as Mrs. Naidu."²

Her Personality:

Sarojini Naidu's was a many-splendoured genius and personality. Diverse currents of traditions and influences mingled in her to create her unique personality. She was the

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daughter of a father who was a scientist and philosopher and a mother who had something of a poet in her. Though a Bengali Hindu, she was born and bred up in a Muslim state of Hyderabad, in the Muslim environment of which she felt quite at home. A Brahmin by caste, she married a non-Brahmin South Indian for love. A born poet weaving exquisite and delicate verses, she turned a politician braving hardships of her country's struggle for freedom. She used her pen with felicity with which she used her tongue, being a lyricist of haunting melodies and an eloquent orator of persuasive power. Though a great patriot and nationalist, she embraced peoples and cultures other than her own and belonged to the whole world. A cosmopolitton to the backbone, she loved all religions as her own. Though old and mature in wisdom she was young in spirit and by nature. She embodied diverse qualities of dignity and mirth, gravity and gaiety, which made her popular both among the old and the young. It is therefore not surprising that she was acclaimed widely as the greatest woman of her time.

Notwithstanding her precarious health, Sarojini looked graceful and charming when she visited England as a mere girl of sixteen. She was polite and dressed herself in "clinging silks" and wore her hair loose straight down her back. One could catch in her eyes the sweet quality of her mother's which were always full of mercy, kindness and compassion. Her
brother Harindranath Chattopadhyaya described her eyes as "deep pools of forest water."\(^1\) In his homage to her after her death Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel particularly recalled "those expressive eyes and those meaningful gestures which added such emotional appeal to her words."\(^2\) Arthur Symons makes a special mention of the fascination of her eyes: "All the life of the tiny figure seemed to concentrate itself in the eyes: they turned towards beauty as the sun-flower turns towards the sun, opening wider and wider until one saw nothing but the eyes."\(^3\)

Though quite sociable, Sarojini listened and contemplated more than she spoke. According to Arthur Symons "She spoke little and in a low voice, like gentle music; and she seemed, wherever she was, to be alone."\(^4\) Though she was over-emotional as a girl, yet she "possessed a passionate tranquility of mind, before which every thing mean and trivial and temporary caught fire and burnt away in smoke."\(^5\) Both Arthur Symons and Edmund Gosse praise Sarojini for her nature,


\(2\) Ibid.

\(3\) Arthur Symons, p. 15.

\(4\) Ibid., p. 16.

\(5\) Ibid.
wisdom even at the early age of seventeen. Arthur Symons remarks: "I have never known anyone who seemed to exist on such 'large draughts of intellectual day' as this child of seventeen, to whom one could tell all one's troubles and agitations, as to a wise old woman .... And along with this wisdom, as of age or of the age of race, there was what I can hardly call less an agony of sensation."¹ According to Edmund Gosse though a child of sixteen years when Sarojini made her appearance in London, "She was already marvellous in mental maturity, amazingly well read, and far beyond a Western child in all her acquaintance with the world."²

What made Sarojini popular in the English literary circle was her inborn talent as a poet. She was in reality eminently endowed with the temperament and nature of a true artist. Except for Keats there are very few poets who had such an overpowering passion for poetry as she. To her it was poetry that charged her every moment, to which she directed her best efforts in and which she burned. This keen poetic sensibility did not desert her even after she had stopped writing verses and entered politics. It expressed itself through her conversations, letters and particularly speeches.

¹. Arthur Symons, pp. 16-17.
². Edmund Gosse, p. 3.
As an eloquent speaker, she was dear to millions of her people who fondly called her their nightingale. The magic and music of her words always thrilled them. Words danced out of her lips in perfect rhythm, and sentences after sentences she would pour out without pause or hesitation, investing the theme she would speak on with sanctity and nobility breathing intense patriotism." The symmetry thereof, the verve, the fire, the passion and sensitiveness of her utterances, her histrionic art, vivid imagery, her modulations, her silvery voice sometimes waxing warm and becoming piercing, sometimes mellowed, would keep the audience all the time in a state of animation."¹ Praising her as a great orator, K.K. Bhattacharya remarks: "There was the verve of Surendra Nath, the cadence of Srinivasa Shastri, the vitality of Annie Besant in her speeches, yet she towered alone them all because of the magnetism she imparted to her speeches."²

Sarojini Naidu's poetic sensibility was reflected in her profound passion for delight in beauty. In this respect too she came very close to Keats who prefixed to the first volume of his poems the motto from Spenser:

What more felicity can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty?

² Ibid.
She believed in "a poet's craving for beauty, the eternal beauty" as in a letter to Arthur Symons she wrote: "What in my father is the genius of curiosity - the very essence of all scientific genius - in me is the desire for beauty. Do you remember Pater's phrase about Leonardo da Vinci, curiosity and the desire of beauty." ¹ Elaborating her remark Arthur Symons wrote: "It was the desire of beauty that made her a poet; her 'nerves of delight' were always guivering at the contact of beauty."² Her love for beauty manifested itself in her private life also. She was irreproachable in her tastes and would never give up the aristocracy of the temperament. She dressed herself in the richest of silken stuff. Her house in Hyderabad, aptly called the 'Golden Threshold', was an example of decency and decoration and provided unbounded hospitality. She had always a zest for the nice things of life.

Equally important aspect of her personality was the joviality of her nature and bountifulness of spirit. Her presence anywhere - whether at the dining table, at home or literary gathering or a Congress High Comand meeting - would scatter sunshine. Even on the most solemn occasions she would laugh and make others laugh. "Of all things that life or


2. Ibid.
perhaps my temperament has given me, I prize the gift of laughter as beyond price,"¹ she once had said. No wonder the Chairman at the Colombo Conference introduced her as "the Naughty Gal of India," and George Slecombe described her as "the licensed jester of the Mahatma's little court."² She was the one person in the world who could take liberties with the Mahatma. In a jocular mood she would use for him the epithets "the little brown man," "our Mickey Mouse." "the small droll man." On becoming the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, she said: I am going to be a governess to these children." By "these children" she meant the people of the state.

Sarojini possessed a remarkable gift of warm and deep humanity. No physical inconvenience deterred her from doing a generous thing to anyone who came in contact with her. She had the knack of making lasting and loving friendships. Her steadfastness, loyalty and sincerity in her friendships point to one of the most lovable aspects of her character. Sometimes she would undertake inconvenient and long journeys to share the happiness or distress of friends. Some of her greatest contemporaries were bound to her with ties of friendship, prominent among them being Pherozeshsh Mehta, B.G. Tilak, Srinivasa Sastri, Mrs. Annie Besant, Sardar Patel.

¹. Padmini Sen Gupta, p. 18.
C. Rajagopalachari, M.A. Jinnah, Rabindranath Tagore and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Her intimacy with three of the makers of India—Gokhale, Gandhi and Nehru—knew no bounds. She was very friendly with Mountbattens and when Prof. Amarnath Jha of Allahabad University was about to leave for England, Sarojini gave him introductions to Bernard Shaw, Walter de la Mare, Humbert Wolfe, Mrs. Munro and Lawrence Binyon. Sarojini’s relations with Tagore can be gauged from the letters they exchanged in the year 1933 when she arranged a Tagore Week in Bombay. Tagore wrote to her: "You are great .... you have helped me as none else could have done but what is more important to me is that I have come close to you and known you. You have amazing gifts that would have made me envious but I have loved you and that has saved me. I am afraid my language sounds absurdly sentimental but I do not care. I express myself to your delightful laughter for I know it cannot be unkind to me." In her answers she addressed him as "Dear Master of many enchantments", and wrote: "One of the most enchanting things you have created is your gracious and tender letter to me, which moved me to both the 'delightful laughter' of which you speak and to tears of delight."\(^1\)

Influences on Sarojini Naidu as a Poet:

There is an old Latin maxium, *Poet a noscitur, non fit*, meaning "A poet is born, not made." Ben Jonson modified it by saying "a good poet's made as well as born." It is true that the inborn talent of a poet develops and gets a direction through his contact with literary artists just as his vision of life evolves through his experiences of life and contact with fellow men. Sarojini Naidu also had powerful affiliations with literary men and thinkers who shaped her art and mind to a great extent.

Sarojini's father Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya, who was a great scholar, scientist, social reformer, educationist and nationalist broadened her outlook on life and her mother Varada Devi Sundari, a woman of refined tastes and gifted with poetical and musical talents helped develop her aesthetic sensibilities. In the free and joyful atmosphere of her house, she as a girl breathed the air of catholic and liberal temper which made her a woman of rare genial and humane spirits. To her home in Hyderabad, which was "a museum of wisdom and culture" came people of different castes, creeds, races and diverse talents, some even verging on the mystic. Their presence aroused in her hatred for everything that was petty, narrow-minded and shameful. Through her contact with them she grew mature intellectually and emotionally quite early in her age and acquired
cosmopolitan and international world view. No wonder when she went to England in 1896 for her studies, she impressed those who came in her contact by her wisdom and poetic talents.

Edmund Gosse was the most powerful literary influence on Sarojini Naidu during her stay in England. The celebrated English critic recognized her genuine poetic talent and skill in form but reacted sharply against her falsely English vein, reminiscent of Shelley and Tennyson. He advised her to choose Indian subjects and sentiments and start afresh with some sincere, penetrating analysis of native passion, of the principles of antique religion, and of the soul-stirring mysterious intimations of the East. He thus gave a direction to her poetic genius and helped her to emerge as a great Indian English poet. She discarded writing about "robins and skylarks" and began to write about Indian fruits, flowers, trees and birds. Her writings thereafter tended to be typically Indian in the choice of themes and sentiments.

Even when Sarojini was writing verses in India and had not met Edmund Gosse she was attracted by his name and had an ardent desire to come under his powerful influence. When she was about fourteen or fifteen she had penned a letter for him but burned it the next day. Her life's ambition was, however, fulfilled when she got an opportunity
to meet his literary idol in England. She confessed to him in a long letter written in 1896: "I do not dare to trust myself to thank you for what you said on Sunday. You cannot know what these words meant to me .... Poetry is the one thing I love so passionately, so intensely, so absolutely that it is my very life of life - and now you have told me that I am a poet - I am a poet. I keep repeating it to myself to try to realise it." She wrote to him how happy and proud she felt when she was praised by her friends and relations for her verses, but she always felt the want of some genuine criticism of her poetic creations: "I was really on the way to have my head turned with all that flood of sincere but remarkably blind and judicious praise and flattery. About this time, I don't know how or why, the name of Edmund Gosse began to be a sort of magical legend to me. Legends were more real than realities then, and in a dim, vague kind of way I began to feel somehow the magical name was to be one of the strongest and most inevitable influence on my life." At that time England meant to her only Shelley, Keats, Edmund Gosse, Westminster Abbey and Thames. Then she went to England and got an opportunity to meet Gosse:

"Well, in January I first saw you - the magical legend had become a reality. I was not disappointed. Indeed, I shall never forget that day because with one great bound I seemed to wake into a new large
life I had always longed for and so long in vain. From that day I seemed to have put off childish things and put on garments of new and beautiful hope and ambition, and I have gone on growing and growing - I feel it - seeing more clearly, feeling more intensely, thinking more deeply, and loving more passionately, more unselfishly, that beautiful spirit of art that has now become dearer than my life's blood to me - and all this I owe to you."

Sarojini looked upon Edmund Gosse as her mentor and was always open to him for corrections. In the same letter she also wrote:

"As you have been for so long so good an influence in my life I wanted you to go on for ever: I will send you everything I write and you must tell me what you think. I want you to be more severe and exacting than ever, the better I do, because I do not want to outlast the years but the centuries. That is very conceited of me but is it not worthwhile to aim at the stars though one never gets beyond the mountain top? I don't think I am going to ask you to excuse me for taking up so much of your time, because I cannot go on being grateful to you in silence without your knowing how much cause I have to be grateful to you for. Ever believe me."

Sarojini dedicated her first volume of poetry, The Golden Threshold, to Edmund Gosse. Gosse wrote an admirable

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"Introduction" to the second volume of Sarojini's verses, entitled, *The Bird of Time*, in which he remarked that Sarojini was already known to the literary world as the "most accomplished living poet of India", and that she needed no introduction at all.

Arthur Symons who wrote the Preface for the first volume of Sarojini's verses, *The Golden Threshold*, was the second important literary influence on her during her visit to England. Arthur Symons came very close to her and with his keenly discerning poetical sensibility gauged Sarojini's passionate love for beauty and her noble, mature qualities as a person. In his preface he remarked about her: "In the East, maturity comes early; and the child had already lived through all a woman's life. But there was something hardly personal, something which belonged to a consciousness older than the Christian, which I realized, wondered at, and admired, in her passionate tranquility of mind, before which everything mean and trivial and temporary caught fire and burnt away in smoke. Her body was never without suffering, or her heart without conflict, but neither the body's weakness nor the heart's violence could disturb that fixed contemplation, as of Buddha on his lotus throne." Symons

1. Arthur Symons, pp. 16-17.
also perceived the extreme sensitiveness of Sarojini to all physical sensations which made her akin to Keats. It was Symons who inspired her to get her poems published in England.

Symons introduced her to the Rhymers' Club of which he was himself an important member. The club was founded in the 1980's by William Butler Yeats, the famous Irish Nobel Laureate, and Earnest Rhys, the Welsh writer and original editor of Everyman's library. The club had among its members almost all the well-known English poets of the 1890's, Arthur Symons, William Watson, John Davidson, Earnest Dowson, Oscar Wilde, George Moore, Lionel Johnson, Henley and others. They belonged to the Aesthetic Movement of the nineties and attached great importance to "The verbal and technical accomplishment" and "the mastery of phrase and rhythm." Sarojini learnt from these poets significance of verbal felicity, metrical discipline and musical texture and used them in her own verses.

In fact Sarojini found in the pictorial images and musical felicity of the verses of these poets echoes of her own great favourites of the Romantic Movement, Shelley and Keats. Like most of the Indian poets of different regional languages in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century, Sarojini was also
deeply influenced by the English Romantic poets, particularly Shelley and Keats. They were her early poetic idols and their influence lasted on her till the end of her career as a poet, as is evident from intense lyrical effusions and vivid, sensuous and pictorical images found in her verses. The New Indian English poets who discern her great poetic sensibility complain that she could not have proper poetic development because she was writing in wrong times. Nissim Ezekiel for instance remarks: "It was Sarojini's ill luck that she wrote at a time when English poetry had touched rock-bottom of sentimentality and technical poverty. By the time it recovered its health she had entered politics abandoning the possibility of poetic development and maturity." Looking to the nature of poetic sensibility and lofty sense of beauty Sarojini had, one can assert that her poetic talents would not have burgeoned and found full expression had she been born and written in any other age. Sarojini herself did not have any favourable opinion about the Eliotesque type of modern fashion in poetry. She told Taca Ali Baig in 1946 that "modern poetry had no future and the trend would inevitably return to the disciplines and beauty of the metrical form of lyrics." 

2. Tara Ali Baig, p. 28.
Her Poetical Works:

_Songs_, the earliest collection of Sarojini's verses written from the age of thirteen to fifteen, was published privately by her father in 1895. Its copy printed on rough paper, and with the inscription on the cover: "Poems by S. Chattopadhyaya, dated 3rd Oct., 1896", is preserved in the archives of the National Library, Calcutta. Its verses reveal precocious mind of Sarojini and hold promise for bright, mature verses in future. Her attachment to her motherland finds expression in "Traveller's Song" written in May 1892.

O'er Italia's sunny plains
All aglow with rosy flowers,
I wander now mid fallen fanes,
And now a mid of the myrtle bowers-
But, wheresoever I may roam
I long for thee, my dear dear home!

Even as a girl of thirteen Sarojini shunned all petty joys of life and aimed at higher ideals of noble life. In the poem, "On My Birthday", written on her fourteenth birthday on February 13, 1893, she says:

My joys were not what joys to childhood seem!
Not on unthinking sports my soul was fed,
But nursed it was on many a brighter theme,
And lofty high ideas formed my radiant dreams.
There are some beautiful poems on love theme. In "Love's Vision", written in November 1894, she imagines love to be a rare, lovely experience in life:

Fair as the flowers of the rich spring time,  
Sweet as the music in the summer prime,  
Pure as the stars are in their distant climes  
Lovely as are a poet's tender rhymes  
Art thou to me!

In the poem "Love", written on November 28, 1894, she expresses her intense feelings of love for her lover, Dr. Naidu:

I love thee with a love whose faith  
Is changeless as the stars of night.  
My love is stronger far than death,  
My love is pure as morning light.  
I ask not if thou lovest me,  
It is enough to me thou art  
The noblest, dearest, best - to thee  
I yield the treasure of my heart.

These poems are full of intense romantic feelings and highly suggestive images drawn from nature.

The first collection of Sarojini's mature verses, The Golden Threshold, was published by William Heinemann of London in 1905. It has 'Preface' by Arthur Symons and is dedicated to Sir Edmund Gosse, who as the poet says showed her the way to the "Golden Threshold" of poetry. The forty poems included in the collection are divided into three
sections.\(^1\): (1) Folk Songs, (2) Songs for Music, and (3) Poems. The first section consists of twelve poems, the second one of six poems and the third one of twenty two poems. The title of the book is taken from the name of Sarojini's own house after marriage in Hyderabad.

The Golden Threshold, soon after its publication, took the English Literary scene by storm. It was widely praised by the British press. The *London Times* remarked: "Chiefly remarkable, considering her nationality, is her passionate delight in the beauty of the sounds and the words of our tongue and the lilt of our measures. She reveals in the swing of her verse. Her poetry seems to sing itself, as if her swift thoughts and strong emotions sprang into lyrics of themselves." The *Manchester Guardian* went into raptures: "It is a considerable delight to come across such genuine poetry as is contained in The Golden Threshold by Sarojini Naidu. Its simplicity suggests Blake, it is always musical, its Eastern colour is fresh and its firm touch is quick and delicate." The *Review of Reviews* of October 1905 wrote: "Not for many months has there been so rich a harvest of poetry as that garnered during the last month. In the forefront I must place Sarojini Naidu's exquisitely musical collection

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1. The anthologist of *The Sceptred Flute* has not arranged the poems in a chronological order but has created his own classifications of different sections.
of Oriental lyrics and poems. This little volume should silence forever the scoffer who declares that women cannot write poetry..... It seems remarkable that the writer of these remarkable fine verses is only 26 years of age."

T.P.'s Weekly commented: "A book of verse of undeniable beauty and distinction.... Sarojini Naidu's work is remarkable, opening a window through which the West may see the East if it will." The Morning Post said: "The book is not merely of accomplishment, but beautiful verse, it is the expression of a temperament." The Academy praised it as a book" full of beauty ...... What is as delightful as surprising is its individuality: perfection of its own that owes little to anyone .... not for very long time have we seen a volume of poetry so full of promise and real achievement."¹

Another collection of her verses, The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death and Spring, was published in England (Heinemann, London) in 1912 with an "Introduction" by Edmund Gosse. She dedicated it to her parents. The book takes its title from a verse of Omar Khayyam.

The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly - and lo; the bird is on the wing.

¹. All these extracts from the British Press appear in Men and Women of India, May 1906 and have been quoted by Padmini Sen Gupta, pp. 27-28.
It contains 46 short poems divided into four sections: (1) Songs of Love and Death, (2) Songs of the Springtime, (3) Indian Folk Songs, and (4) Songs of Life. When the book appeared, the English critic and poet Edward Thomas remarked: "Her poems achieve an uncommon outwards gorgeousness and inward glory." Another critic said: "She scatters memorable phrases over a page like stars and yet knows how to reserve beauty for the close of a poem." Press reviews were equally laudatory. The Bookman wrote: "She possesses her qualities in heaped measure"; and Yorkshire Post said: "Mrs. Naidu has not only enriched our language but has enabled us to grow into intimate relation with the spirit, the emotions, the mysticism and glamour of the East."¹

The Broken Wing is the last of Sarojini's work to appear during her life time. It was published in 1917 by Heinemann, London. Sarojini was of thirty eight years and by then deeply involved in freedom struggle. The title is derived from the opening poem, "The Broken Wing."

Behold! I rise to meet the destined spring And scale the stars upon my broken wing!

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It comprises 61 short poems and is divided into four sections: (1) Songs of Life and Death, (2) The Flowering Year, (3) The Peacock Lute, and (4) The Temple.

The poems contained in these three volumes were collected in one volume under the title, "The Sceptured Flute", first published in America by Dodd, Mead and Co. Inc., and later by Kitabistan, Allahabad in 1943.

After Sarojini's death, her daughter, Padmja Naidu, edited and collected in a volume all of her mother's unpublished poems written in 1927, i.e. during a period of great political activity. It was entitled The Feather of the Dawn which is derived from a dance by the Denishawn Dancers based on the Hopi Indian legend that a feather blown into the air at dawn, if caught by a breeze and carried out to sight, marks the opening of an auspicious day. It is a slender volume of thirty poems. It consists of two sections, the first one has twenty-seven miscellaneous poems, whereas the second one, "Poems of Krishna," has only three which are all about Lord Krishna. There is, however, no specific mention of two separate sections in the volume because all the poems are grouped together.

1. If the four poems of "The Festival of the Sea" and "Three poems of "Songs of Radha" are treated separately, the volume will then be said to be containing thirty seven poems.