

BOOK REVIEWS

STRAY REFLECTIONS⁴⁹

Dr. Iqbal once said, "A mathematician cannot but a poet can enclose infinity in a line". The book under review bears testimony to the dictum and reveals the marvels that the genius of a great poet can achieve even in the field of prose-writing.

Stray Reflections is a wonderful document brought to the world's eye by Dr. Javid Iqbal. This is a note-book of Iqbal and contains odd jottings based on his impressions of the books he read, his thoughts and feelings about the problems that beset him and the reminiscences his mind entreaured. Dr. Iqbal started writing this note-book on 27th April 1910 and continued to do so for a very brief period only. Perhaps after a few months he stopped writing. The note-book was ever since lying buried in his papers. Dr. Javid Iqbal has discovered the valuable treasure and has published it with a long Introduction.

Stray Reflections is unique in many respects. It reveals Iqbal's mind in its formative phase and thus we can find in this note-book the rudiments of his later philosophic development. It portrays Iqbal's reflections on a variety of topics such as art, philosophy, literature, science, politics, religion, culture, etc., and enables us to peep into the mind and the heart of the great sage of the East. The book is also a masterpiece of poetic prose. The beauty of its style steals into the heart of the reader and convinces him of the author's unique command over the English language and diction. It is only very rarely that one comes across such a marvel of expression. His ideas were expressed in short, witty and crisp sentences which epitomise great truths. Herein we find the poet encasing infinity in a line.

⁴⁹ *Stray Reflections*. A Note-book of Allama Iqbal. Edited by Dr. Javid Iqbal. Sh. Ghulam Ali & Sons, Lahore, 1961, pp. 161, Price Rs. 7.50

Let us quote a few of Dr. Iqbal's reflection to support the above points.

The rudiments of his theory of ideological nationalism are quite visible in these reflections. Discussing patriotism he says:

"Islam appeared as a protest against idolatry. And what is patriotism but a subtle form of idolatry; a deification of a material object. Islam cannot tolerate idolatry in any form. It's one eternal mission is to protest against idolatry in all its forms. What was to be demolished by Islam could not be made the very principle of its structure as a political community. The fact that the Prophet prospered and died in a place not his birth-place is perhaps a mystic hint to the same effect." (pp. 26-27).

A little later he further says:

"Our solidarity as a community rests on our hold on the religious principle. The moment this hold is loosened we are nowhere. Probably the fate of the Jews will befall us." (p. 28).

About the ends of education he is very instructive. He says, "What is the law of things? Continual struggle. What must, then, be the end of education? Evidently, preparation for the struggle." (p. 62). At another place he says, "Life, like the arts of poetry and painting, is wholly expression. Contemplation without action is death." (p. 82) And the students of Iqbal know that *struggle* and *contemplation with action* became the keynote of Iqbal's philosophy of education.

About women and their education he says, "Who is the principal depository of religion in a community? It is the woman. The Musalman woman ought to receive sound religious education for she is virtually the maker of the community. I do not believe in an absolute system of education. Education, like other things, is determined by the needs of a community. For our purposes religious- education is quite sufficient for the Muslim girl. All subjects which have a tendency to de-Muslimise must be

carefully excluded from her education. But our educationists are still groping in the dark; they have not yet been able to prescribe a course of study for our girls. They are perhaps too much dazzled by the glamour of western ideals to realize the difference between Islamism which constructs nationality out of a purely abstract idea, *i.e.*, religion and "westernism", the very life-blood of whose concept of nationality is a concrete thing, *i.e.*, country". (p. 29-31) Can't one clearly see in it the seeds of the ideas expressed in *Zarb-i-Kaleem* and *Payam-i-Mashriq*?

His observations on lack of public amusements in the Muslim world are also very interesting. He says, "There are no amusements in Muslim countries—no theatres, no music-halls, no concerts, and better so. The desire for amusements once satisfied soon becomes insatiable. The experience of European countries clearly proves this deplorable fact. The absence of amusements in Muslim countries indicates neither poverty nor austerity nor bluntness of the sense for enjoyment; it reveals that the people of these countries find ample amusement and enjoyment in the quiet circles of their homes." (p. 77-78)

A few instances of the poetic prose may also be added to give the reader an idea of the literary pearls the genius of Iqbal has rolled over the Notebook:

*Art is a sacred lie. (p. 1)

*Human intellect is nature's attempt at self-criticism. (p. 3) *Hegel's philosophy is an epic poem in prose. (p. 11)

*Justice is an inestimable treasure; but we must guard it against the thief of *mercy*. (p. 20)

The memory of man is generally bad except for the offence: he receives from his fellow-men. (p. 52)

*Civilization is a thought of the powerful man, (p. 66)

*Give up waiting for the *Mehdi*—*the* personification of power. Go and *create* him. (p. 67)

*Self-control in individuals builds families; in communities, it builds empires. (p. 71)

*Suffering is a gift from God in order to make man see the whole of life. (p. 103)

*History is a sort of huge gramophone in which the voices of nations are preserved. (p. 107)

*Recognise your limitations, estimate your capacities and your success in life is assured. (p. 113)

*Nations are born in the hearts of poets; they prosper and die in the hands of politicians. (p. 125)

*A Prophet is only a practical poet. (p. 126)

*Philosophy is a set of abstractions shivering in the cold night of human reason. The poet comes and warms them up with objectivity. (p. 127)

*The psychologist swims, the poet dives. (p. 137)

*Philosophy ages, poetry rejuvenates. (p. 143)

The Note-book abounds in such gems and you cannot present them all in a review in the same way as you cannot encase moonlight. The only thing that we can easily do is to recommend the book to our readers.

K.A.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE THOUGHT OF IQBAL⁵⁰

Luce Claude Maitre is a French writer and was formerly a visiting Lecturer at the London University. She has written a brief but thoughtful book on Iqbal's life and Philosophy under the title *Introduction a la Pensee D'Iqbal*. The book under review is a translation of this French work.

The book is divided into seven lucidly-written chapters, *wiḡ*, Iqbal's life and works; His Philosophy of Personality; The Perfect Man and the Ideal Society; Metaphysics and Philosophy of Religion; Iqbal and Oriental Thought, Iqbal and Western Thought; The Poet; and The Ghazals.

The book starts with a biographical note on Iqbal and a general introduction to his major works. The next five chapters deal with different aspects of Iqbal's philosophy. The last two chapters are devoted to an appreciation of the poetic genius of Iqbal. A unique feature of the book is that it primarily deals with Iqbal's Message: his Philosophy of Self and his ideas of Man and Society. The book reveals the author's grasp of Iqbal's philosophy and it is most welcome that an English translation of this has been published. As such the book can now have a wider readership. Mr. Dar has done a wonderful job and deserves our congratulations on his beautiful translation. The get-up of the book is excellent.

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LAST TWO YEARS OF IQBAL⁵¹

Iqbal was a philosopher and a poet. But he was also a political thinker, a statesman and a social reformer. Dr. Batalavi has wielded his pen to discuss

⁵⁰ *An Introduction to the Thought of Iqbal*, by Luce Claude Maitre, translated by M.A.M. Dar, Iqbal Academy, Pakistan, Karachi, 1961, pp. 53. Price Rs. 2.50

⁵¹ *qbal Ke Aakhiri do Sal*, by Dr. Ashiq Husain Batalavi, Iqbal Academy, Pakistan, Karachi, 1961, pp. 679. Price Rs. 9.00

the political life of Iqbal. The last two years of Iqbal were very tumultuous in the political history of the sub-continent. And as the President of the Punjab Muslim League he played a very important part in shaping the political future of Muslim India. *The Last Two Years of Iqbal* is a unique work in so far as it makes a penetrating study of Muslim Politics from 1919 to 1938 and brings out into limelight the role played by Iqbal.

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IQBAL AND HYDERABAD (DECCAN)⁵²

The Book is an attempt to show the interest which Iqbal took in Hyderabad (Deccan), a centre of Islamic learning and culture, and the influence which his personality and his ideas and thoughts have made upon the people and the movements of that state. The book is divided in three parts: the first part deals with his influence on literature, the second with his impact on the political life and the last one is devoted to a study of his close relationship with the dignitaries of Hyderabad. The book comes from the pen of a leading poet Nazar Hyderabadadi.

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⁵² *Iqbal our Hyderabad*, by Nazar Hyderabadadi, Iqbal Academy, Pakistan, Karachi, pp. 222, Price Rs. 5.00.