

SAROTINI NAIDU : AS A POET

(Sarotini Naidu made a more definite contribution to English Poetry. Her chief work is contained in the volumes called — "The Golden Threshold", "The Bird of Time", and "The Broken Wing". These volumes are full of poignant feeling and picturesque Indian imagery. When she was only eleven years old, she wrote her first poem. She entrusted her early poems to Edmund Gosse, who laid them down in despair. Gosse found in her poems "Revelation of the heart of India, native passion", which stirred the soul of the East. She presented the flowers, the fruits and the trees. She set out to be a genuine Indian poet of the Occident and not a clever machine made imitator of the English classics. In her dedication of "The Golden Threshold", she graciously acknowledged her debt to Edmund Gosse.

Mrs. Naidu's ardent literary temperament was fired by the poetic spirit of the orient. Her youth was passed during a time of great literary ferment. The poetry of the orient was breaking away from the Victorian traditions. For half a century, Tennyson had been adored as the literary God of England. A poetic convention of smooth flowing verse, pretty epithets and ornate poetic ornamentation was set up, and

A great deal of work full of wistful
sentimentality was produced. She has inherited
some of these characteristics. Her genius is
essentially lyrical and her poetry full of
music. But in trying to sing of Indian life,
she has succumbed to the temptation of
making it picturesque. By doing this, she
merely continues the tradition of Anglo-
Indian writers, who would make India
a land of romance and mystery. The
song of 'the palanquin-bearers', the flute
music of 'the snake-charmer', an old
beggar sitting in the street all these
surround with a halo of romance. Thus
Sarojini makes her beggar minstrel sing -
"What hopes shall we gather? what dreams shall
we sow.
Where the mind calls our wandering feet - steps
Again we have at times the introduction of
a note of mysticism, of the supernatural, as
in the village song -

"O mother mine, I cannot stay, the fairy frown
calling

There is a philosophical strain
also in some of the poems of Sarojini
Naidu. The best in the direction
are her flawless lyrics as "To a Buddha
seated on a lotus" and "The Flute Player
of Brindavan". Like her own "Bird of Time".
Sarojini has covered a wide range in her
poetry, although her special field is the

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delineation of the beauty of familiar things. Her power of drawing vivid pictures is worth noticing. She has the gift of ~~sketching~~ ^{sketching} a picture in a few ~~other~~ ^{other} lines.

"An ox-cart stumbles upon the rock
..... and a young Banjara driving her cattle,
Lifts up her voice as she glitters by".

Thus, we see that Sarojini Naidu succeeds in catching the typical Indian sights and sounds, ^{21/11/21} ~~anguish and~~ ^{aspirations}. She presents ~~rich and~~ ^{rich and} mortifications and this in poems of extreme felicity. But she is more intent on drawing and interesting picture of India than on representing India as it is. It is this which makes Sarojini's poems rather disappointing. It seems to us that Mrs Naidu has failed in becoming a true interpreter of India to the west. She is very partial to the use of metaphors and similes.

~~10/3/21~~ X Matthew Arnold said that Gray's poetic genius could not bloom due to the uncongenial surroundings. The same is the case with the Indian writers of English verse. ~~The~~ ^{but it is a fact that} greatest poetry can only be composed in a language in which a man thinks and dreams. Sarojini Naidu is no exception to this. Likewise, Madhusudan

Guttt attained real success in Bengali
Poetry; his English poem never rise above
mediocrity. ~~X~~ ^{Alward}