

# GLIMPSES OF BENGAL SELECTED FROM THE LETTERS OF SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE pdf

## 1: Full text of "Glimpses of Bengal: selected from the letters of Sir Rabindranath Tagore "

*Optimized for the MobiPocket Reader, this is a very special edition of Rabindranath Tagore's "Glimpses of Bengal (Selected from the Letters of Sir Rabindranath Tagore)." The text of the book is completely in English.*

The unsheltered sea heaves and heaves and blanches into foam. It sets me thinking of some tied-up monster straining at its bonds, in front of whose gaping jaws we build our homes on the shore and watch it lashing its tail. What immense strength, with waves swelling like the muscles of a giant! From the beginning of creation there has been this feud between land and water: Remember the sea was once sole monarch, utterly free. Land rose from its womb, usurped its throne, and ever since the maddened old creature, with hoary crest of foam, wails and laments continually, like King Lear exposed to the fury of the elements. This event keeps thrusting itself before my mind--nothing else seems to have happened of late. But to reach twenty-seven--is that a trifling thing? But, alas, where is the promise of fruit? As I shake my head, it still feels brimful of luscious frivolity, with not a trace of philosophy. Folk are beginning to complain: Are we to put up with immaturity for ever? It is high time for us to know what we shall gain from you. We want an estimate of the proportion of oil which the blindfold, mill-turning, unbiased critic can squeeze out of you. While I was under age they trustfully gave me credit; it is sad to disappoint them now that I am on the verge of thirty. But what am I to do? Words of wisdom will not come! I am utterly incompetent to provide things that may profit the multitude. Beyond a snatch of song, some tittle-tattle, a little merry fooling, I have been unable to advance. And as the result, those who held high hopes will turn their wrath on me; but did any one ever beg them to nurse these expectations? Our house-boat is moored to a sandbank on the farther side of the river. A vast expanse of sand stretches away out of sight on every side, with here and there a streak, as of water, running across, though sometimes what gleams like water is only sand. Not a village, not a human being, not a tree, not a blade of grass--the only breaks in the monotonous whiteness are gaping cracks which in places show the layer of moist, black clay underneath. Looking towards the East, there is endless blue above, endless white beneath. Sky empty, earth empty too--the emptiness below hard and barren, that overhead arched and ethereal--one could hardly find elsewhere such a picture of stark desolation. But on turning to the West, there is water, the currentless bend of the river, fringed with its high bank, up to which spread the village groves with cottages peeping through--all like an enchanting dream in the evening light. I say "the evening light," because in the evening we wander out, and so that aspect is impressed on my mind. The magistrate was sitting in the verandah of his tent dispensing justice to the crowd awaiting their turns under the shade of a tree. They set my palanquin down right under his nose, and the young Englishman received me courteously. He had very light hair, with darker patches here and there, and a moustache just beginning to show. One might have taken him for a white-haired old man but for his extremely youthful face. I asked him over to dinner, but he said he was due elsewhere to arrange for a pig-sticking party. As I returned home, great black clouds came up and there was a terrific storm with torrents of rain. I could not touch a book, it was impossible to write, so in the I-know-not-what mood I wandered about from room to room. The hollow in front of the house soon filled with water, and as I paced about, it suddenly struck me that I ought to offer the shelter of the house to the magistrate. I sent off an invitation; then after investigation I found the only spare room encumbered with a platform of planks hanging from the beams, piled with dirty old quilts and bolsters. The only piece of furniture was a rickety dressing-table with water stains, oil stains, milk stains, black, brown, and white stains, and all kinds of mixed stains. The mirror, detached from it, rested against another wall, and the drawers were receptacles for a miscellaneous assortment of articles from soiled napkins down to bottle wires and dust. For a moment I was overwhelmed with dismay; then it was a case of--send for the manager, send for the storekeeper, call up all the servants, get hold of extra men, fetch water, put up ladders, unfasten ropes, pull down planks, take away bedding, pick up broken glass bit by bit, wrench nails from the wall one by one. Presently comes the shout: I went through the shaking of hands and conversed with the magistrate outwardly serene; still, misgivings about his accommodation would

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now and then well up within. I am feeling listlessly comfortable and delightfully irresponsible. This is the prevailing mood all round here. There is a river but it has no current to speak of, and, lying snugly tucked up in its coverlet of floating weeds, seems to think--"Since it is possible to get on without getting along, why should I bestir myself to stir? Four or five large-sized boats are moored near by, alongside each other. On the upper deck of one the boatman is fast asleep, rolled up in a sheet from head to foot. On another, the boatman--also basking in the sun--leisurely twists some yarn into rope. On the lower deck in a third, an oldish-looking, bare-bodied fellow is leaning over an oar, staring vacantly at our boat. Along the bank there are various other people, but why they come or go, with the slowest of idle steps, or remain seated on their haunches embracing their knees, or keep on gazing at nothing in particular, no one can guess. The only signs of activity are to be seen amongst the ducks, who, quacking clamorously, thrust their heads under and bob up again to shake off the water with equal energy, as if they repeatedly tried to explore the mysteries below the surface, and every time, shaking their heads, had to report, "Nothing there! Yesterday, while I was giving audience to my tenants, five or six boys made their appearance and stood in a primly proper row before me. Before I could put any question their spokesman, in the choicest of high-flown language, started: Here and there he would get his lesson wrong, pause, look up at the sky, correct himself, and then go on again. I gathered that their school was short of benches and stools. I interrupted the young orator before he had done, promising to arrange for the necessary number of benches and stools. Nothing daunted, he allowed me to have my say, then took up his discourse where he had left it, finished it to the last word, saluted me profoundly, and marched off his contingent. He probably would not have minded had I refused to supply the seats, but after all his trouble in getting it by heart he would have resented bitterly being robbed of any part of his speech. So, though it kept more important business waiting, I had to hear him out. NEARING SHAZADPUR, We left the little river of Kaligram, sluggish as the circulation in a dying man, and dropped down the current of a briskly flowing stream which led to a region where land and water seemed to merge in each other, river and bank without distinction of garb, like brother and sister in infancy. Round about where we have moored, the bamboo poles of fishermen are planted. Kites hover ready to snatch up fish from the nets. All kinds of waterfowl abound. Patches of weeds float on the water. Here and there rice-fields, untilled, untended,[1] rise from the moist, clay soil. Mosquitoes swarm over the still waters On the rich river-side silt, rice seed is simply scattered and the harvest reaped when ripe; nothing else has to be done. To get our unwieldy house-boat through is indeed an adventure. The current hurries it along at lightning speed, keeping the crew busy using their oars as poles to prevent the boat being dashed against the banks. We thus come out again into the open river. The sky had been heavily clouded, a damp wind blowing, with occasional showers of rain. The crew were all shivering with cold. Such wet and gloomy days in the cold weather are eminently disagreeable, and I have spent a wretched lifeless morning. At two in the afternoon the sun came out, and since then it has been delightful. The banks are now high and covered with peaceful groves and the dwellings of men, secluded and full of beauty. This evening we have moored our boat in a lonely bend. The sky is clear. The moon is at its full. Not another boat is to be seen. The moonlight glimmers on the ripples. Solitude reigns on the banks. The distant village sleeps, nestling within a thick fringe of trees. The shrill, sustained chirp of the cicadas is the only sound. Just in front of my window, on the other side of the stream, a band of gypsies have ensconced themselves, putting up bamboo frameworks covered over with split-bamboo mats and pieces of cloth. There are only three of these little structures, so low that you cannot stand upright inside. Their life is lived in the open, and they only creep under these shelters at night, to sleep huddled together. I frequently watch the doings of the family nearest me. They are dark but good-looking, with fine, strongly-built bodies, like north-west country folk. Their women are handsome, and have tall, slim, well-knit figures; and with their free and easy movements, and natural independent airs, they look to me like swarthy Englishwomen. The man has just put the cooking-pot on the fire, and is now splitting bamboos and weaving baskets. The woman first holds up a little mirror to her face, then puts a deal of pains into wiping and rubbing it, over and over again, with a moist piece of cloth; and then, the folds of her upper garment adjusted and tidied, she goes, all spick and span,

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up to her man and sits beside him, helping him now and then in his work. These are truly children of the soil, born on it somewhere, bred by the wayside, here, there, and everywhere, dying anywhere. Night and day under the open sky, in the open air, on the bare ground, they lead a unique kind of life; and yet work, love, children, and household duties--everything is there. They are not idle for a moment, but always doing something. Her own particular task over, one woman plumps herself down behind another, unties the knot of her hair and cleans and arranges it for her; and whether at the same time they fall to talking over the domestic affairs of the three little mat-covered households I cannot say for certain from this distance, but shrewdly suspect it. This morning a great disturbance invaded the peaceful gypsy settlement. It was about half-past eight or nine. They were spreading out over the mat roofs tattered quilts and sundry other rags, which serve them for beds, in order to sun and air them. The pigs with their litters, lying in a hollow all of a heap and looking like a dab of mud, had been routed out by the two canine members of the family, who fell upon them and sent them roaming in search of their breakfasts, squealing their annoyance at being interrupted in enjoyment of the sun after the cold night. I was writing my letter and absently looking out now and then when the hubbub suddenly commenced.

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2: German addresses are blocked - [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)

*By using a running thesaurus at the bottom of each page, this edition of Glimpses of Bengal (Selected from the Letters of Sir Rabindranath Tagore) by Rabindranath Tagore was edited for students who are actively building their vocabularies in anticipation of taking PSAT<sup>®</sup>, SAT<sup>®</sup>, AP<sup>®</sup> (Advanced Placement<sup>®</sup>), GRE<sup>®</sup>, LSAT<sup>®</sup>, GMAT<sup>®</sup> or similar.*

Early life of Rabindranath Tagore The youngest of thirteen surviving children, Tagore nicknamed "Rabi" was born on 7 May in the Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta to Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi They hosted the publication of literary magazines; theatre and recitals of Bengali and Western classical music featured there regularly. Another brother, Satyendranath, was the first Indian appointed to the elite and formerly all-European Indian Civil Service. Yet another brother, Jyotirindranath, was a musician, composer, and playwright. Her abrupt suicide in, soon after he married, left him profoundly distraught for years. He learned drawing, anatomy, geography and history, literature, mathematics, Sanskrit, and English his least favourite subject. Years later he held that proper teaching does not explain things; proper teaching stokes curiosity: He mentions about this in his My Reminiscences The golden temple of Amritsar comes back to me like a dream. Many a morning have I accompanied my father to this Gurudarbar of the Sikhs in the middle of the lake. There the sacred chanting resounds continually. My father, seated amidst the throng of worshippers, would sometimes add his voice to the hymn of praise, and finding a stranger joining in their devotions they would wax enthusiastically cordial, and we would return loaded with the sanctified offerings of sugar crystals and other sweets. Lively English, Irish, and Scottish folk tunes impressed Tagore, whose own tradition of Nidhubabu -authored kirtans and tappas and Brahma hymnody was subdued. These had a profound impact within Bengal itself but received little national attention. They had five children, two of whom died in childhood. In Tagore began managing his vast ancestral estates in Shelaidaha today a region of Bangladesh; he was joined there by his wife and children in Tagore released his Manasi poems, among his best-known work. He collected mostly token rents and blessed villagers who in turn honoured him with banquets occasionally of dried rice and sour milk. His father died in The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation, and I for my part wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of my country men. He lectured against these, he penned Dalit heroes for his poems and his dramas, and he campaigned successfully to open Guruvayoor Temple to Dalits. It affirmed his opinion that human divisions were shallow. During a May visit to a Bedouin encampment in the Iraqi desert, the tribal chief told him that "Our prophet has said that a true Muslim is he by whose words and deeds not the least of his brother-men may ever come to any harm That year, an earthquake hit Bihar and killed thousands. Gandhi hailed it as seismic karma, as divine retribution avenging the oppression of Dalits. Tagore rebuked him for his seemingly ignominious implications. Experimentation continued in his prose-songs and dance-dramas Chitra, Shyama, and Chandaliika and in his novels Dui Bon, Malancha, and Char Adhyay His respect for scientific laws and his exploration of biology, physics, and astronomy informed his poetry, which exhibited extensive naturalism and verisimilitude. His last five years were marked by chronic pain and two long periods of illness. These began when Tagore lost consciousness in late; he remained comatose and near death for a time. This was followed in late by a similar spell, from which he never recovered. Poetry from these valetudinary years is among his finest. Sen, brother of the first chief election commissioner, received dictation from Tagore on 30 July, a day prior to a scheduled operation: Today my sack is empty. I have given completely whatever I had to give. In return if I receive anything some love, some forgiveness then I will take it with me when I step on the boat that crosses to the festival of the wordless end. Travels Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore Our passions and desires are unruly, but our character subdues these elements into a harmonious whole. Does something similar to this happen in the physical world? Are the elements rebellious, dynamic with individual impulse? And is there a

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principle in the physical world which dominates them and puts them into an orderly organization? He travelled to Mexico. He left for home in January. He planted a tree and a bust statue was placed there in a gift from the Indian government, the work of Rasithan Kashar, replaced by a newly gifted statue in and the lakeside promenade still bears his name since. The resultant travelogues compose *Jatri*. Upon returning to Britain—and as his paintings were exhibited in Paris and London—he lodged at a Birmingham Quaker settlement. Wells, and Romain Rolland. Hamid Ansari has said that Rabindranath Tagore heralded the cultural rapprochement between communities, societies and nations much before it became the liberal norm of conduct. Tagore was a man ahead of his time. He wrote in , while on a visit to Iran, that "each country of Asia will solve its own historical problems according to its strength, nature and needs, but the lamp they will each carry on their path to progress will converge to illuminate the common ray of knowledge. Works of Rabindranath Tagore Known mostly for his poetry, Tagore wrote novels, essays, short stories, travelogues, dramas, and thousands of songs. His works are frequently noted for their rhythmic, optimistic, and lyrical nature. Such stories mostly borrow from the lives of common people. His brief chat with Einstein, "Note on the Nature of Reality", is included as an appendix to the latter. This includes all versions of each work and fills about eighty volumes. Tagore stated that his works sought to articulate "the play of feeling and not of action". In he wrote *Visarjan* an adaptation of his novella *Rajarshi*, which has been regarded as his finest drama. In the original Bengali language, such works included intricate subplots and extended monologues. Short stories Cover of the *Sabuj Patra* magazine, edited by Pramatha Chaudhuri Tagore began his career in short stories in —when he was only sixteen—with "Bhikharini" "The Beggar Woman". Ignorant of his foreign origins, he chastises Hindu religious backsliders out of love for the indigenous Indians and solidarity with them against his hegemon-compatriots. He falls for a Brahmo girl, compelling his worried foster father to reveal his lost past and cease his nativist zeal. She had risen in an observant and sheltered traditional home, as had all her female relations. *Shesher Kobita*—translated twice as *Last Poem* and *Farewell Song*—is his most lyrical novel, with poems and rhythmic passages written by a poet protagonist. It contains elements of satire and postmodernism and has stock characters who gleefully attack the reputation of an old, outmoded, oppressively renowned poet who, incidentally, goes by a familiar name: Though his novels remain among the least-appreciated of his works, they have been given renewed attention via film adaptations by Ray and others: *Chokher Bali* and *Ghare Baire* are exemplary. In the first, Tagore inscribes Bengali society via its heroine: He pillories the custom of perpetual mourning on the part of widows, who were not allowed to remarry, who were consigned to seclusion and loneliness. Tagore wrote of it: Part of a poem written by Tagore in Hungary, He was influenced by the atavistic mysticism of Vyasa and other rishi-authors of the Upanishads, the Bhakti - Sufi mystic Kabir, and Ramprasad Sen. Examples of this include *Africa* and *Camalia*, which are among the better known of his latter poems. Songs Rabindra Sangeet Tagore was a prolific composer with around 2, songs to his credit. Influenced by the thumri style of Hindustani music, they ran the entire gamut of human emotion, ranging from his early dirge-like Brahmo devotional hymns to quasi-erotic compositions. It was written —ironically— to protest the Partition of Bengal along communal lines: Tagore saw the partition as a cunning plan to stop the independence movement, and he aimed to rekindle Bengali unity and tar communalism. *Jana Gana Mana* was written in *shadhu-bhasha*, a Sanskritised form of Bengali, and is the first of five stanzas of the Brahmo hymn *Bharot Bhagyo Bidhata* that Tagore composed. It was first sung in at a Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress [] and was adopted in by the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of India as its national anthem. Even illiterate villagers sing his songs".

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The letters translated in this book span the most productive period of my literary life, when, owing to great good fortune,

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*I was young and less known.*

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