

MESSAGE OF THE GREAT LITTERATEUR SRI. HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAY

This Museum

This is no museum - as it is said -

For, as you know, a museum is dead.

And this which millions shall come to see

Is all alive with immortality.

Here, like a panorama, wide-unfurled

Before us lie the treasures of the world:

Ivory statuettes, great jars of gold,

Mirrors and boxes with bright jewels inlaid,

Persian carpets, woolly carpets - and

Carpets of multi-colours from our land

With sail that's multi-coloured... Chandeliers

Of choicest crystal, tiers on glittering tiers

Rising in curved chains without a flick

These chandeliers are abroad (check,

Perhaps, from Prague) - suddenly swim to view

Miraculous China vases tinged a blue

That is the soul of blue, not blue alone,

A blue that almost makes blue heavens atone

For their pale-blueness... China through whose art

You see the throbbing of an ancient heart

Laden with majesty subtly drawn

Out of the secrets of man's earliest dawn;

Egypt is here, and Russia and Japan,

All history of time and place and man

Flaunts us from room to room and never

ceases

To take our breath away with

its great masterpieces

Varieties of clocks from different countries
Marking one time, though wrought at different

^{times}
By different master craftsmen, all beautiful
who, with eternal art, have challenged time.
Look at this rare collection, walking sticks
standing ~~you~~ united... could we all but

^{mix}
With such intimacy and ~~comfy~~ comradeship
As they do... Lo! what master-pawns of
On chequered chessboards - strange begonia

^{all guess}
Is their variety and loveliness!

I could, of course, keep adding to the list
But then, my ink should be of amethyst
and lapis lazuli, ~~and~~ ruby and pearl
Emerald and diamond set in a whirl
Of such intoxication through my pen
If I should ~~write~~ ^{try} and picture unto men
This world which is a thousand worlds
in one -

But let me talk awhile, before I've
^{done}

At one or two such masterpieces here
I have in me evoked an atmosphere
of immortality: Veiled Rachel - the
Intermediary of immortality,

Under a veil immortally she stands
Benzo's secret love held in her hands
Under soft waves of veils that never
Beneath marble-wrought - ^{shift} and ~~none~~ no one
Dare uplift!

And then that masterpiece of craft and hood,
Mephistopheles deftly wrought in wood,
On this side, he, the hard ~~and~~ unplaceable
Behind him, ^{one,} peace-embodiment, a nun
Percathing of purity and innocence -
These statues capture us and make
Drowse into trance - ^{the sense} well then, it now
That I could go on ^{appears} writing thus for
years -
But I must stop... but ere I stop,
I bend
My head in all humility to my friend
Whose genius, in every piece, reflected,
Is deathless now in all ~~that~~ he
has collected -
A prince among collectors, he outshines
The centuries beyond a doubt -
and gives

Our land a greater status, greater height
In history ... why, even while I write
I sense his spirit moving through the
halls,

Between the Chinese vase, Cashmere shawls,
You, everywhere, in every nook - and see
His genius in every thing - and we
Whisper that presence, bow our heads
and sing:

"Dear Prince of collectors! you have come to
stay -
You are immortal and shall never pass
away!"

This Museum is the finest liberal University
in the country -

Harindranath Chatterjee, Secy,
5th March 1953 - Written at Lal Bahadur Shastri