

AN UNFINISHED SONG

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An unfinished song by Srimati Svarna Kumari Devi

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SRIMATI SVARNA KUMARI DEVI

**AN UNFINISHED
SONG**



MRS. GHOSAL.
(Srimati Svarna Kumari Devi.)

AN UNFINISHED SONG

By
Mrs. GHOSAL
(Srimati Svarna
Kumari Devi)

Author of
"The Fatal Garland,"
etc.

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

NEW YORK HERALD.—Mrs. Ghosal has contrived in an absorbing narrative to convey to the Western reader a valuable insight into the Hindu nature.

WESTMINSTER GAZETTE.—Mrs. Ghosal, as one of the pioneers of the woman movement in Bengal, and fortunate in her own upbringing, is well qualified to give this picture of a Hindu maiden's development.

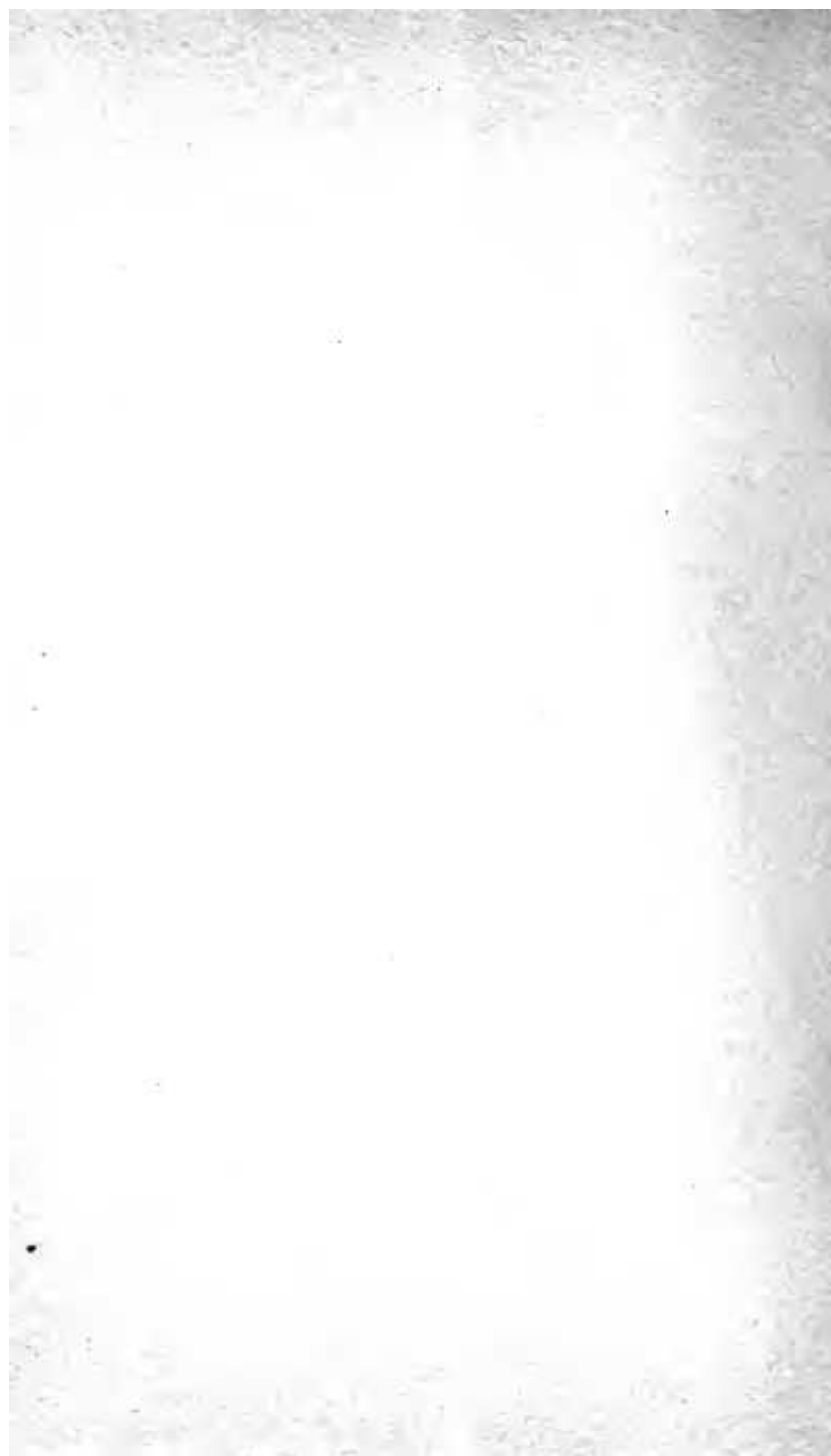
CLARION.—Remarkable for the pictures of Hindu life, the story is overshadowed by the personality of the authoress, one of the foremost Bengali writers of to-day.

1st Edition, December, 1913

2nd Edition, October, 1914

PREFACE

THIS is a story of life among the Reformed Party of Bengal, the members of which have to some extent adopted western customs. It shows the change that touch with Europe has brought upon the people of India, but in their inner nature the Hindus are still quite different from western races. The ideals and traits of character that it has taken thousands of years to form are not affected by a mere external change. This story, it is true, touches on one side of Indian life only, for in a small book it is difficult to depict many of the numerous phases of our Society; still I trust it will give the western reader some insight into the Hindu nature.



INTRODUCTION

THE author of this book, a high caste Indian lady, is one of the pioneers of the Woman movement in Bengal, indeed the wealthy Tagore family to which she belongs has done more to raise the standard of the Bengali than any other Indian family. Although brought up strictly on Zenana lines, educated behind the purdah, and married at a very youthful age, Mrs. Ghosal was encouraged both by her father and her husband to develop her unusual powers of mind and character. Her father, Devendra Nath Tagore, was the great religious reformer and founder of the Brahmo Somaj, a society which devotes itself to fostering and preserving all that is high and noble in the Vedic religion. From her father Mrs. Ghosal inherits her passionate love and admiration for her native land, her ardent desire to rouse it from its lethargy, to inspire it to progress, and to help it cast off the yoke of its debasing traditions.

One of her brothers, Rabindra Nath Tagore, is the foremost Indian poet of to-day, adored by his countrymen, and eulogised both in England and America, where his poems have been issued in translated form. Another brother, Dwijendra Nath, founded what is now one of the chief Bengali magazines, which he dedicated to Bharoti, the goddess of Learning; while her third brother, Satyendra Nath, after visiting

England, set himself to tear down the purdah, to remove from Indian women the many and tremendous disabilities under which they labour; he has been warmly supported by Mrs. Ghosal, who was one of the first Bengali ladies to mix freely in Society.

At a very early age Mrs. Ghosal, or, to call her by her beautiful Indian name, Srimati Svarna Kumari, which signifies the Maiden of Gold, showed unusual ability and force of character; before she was twenty she had published an anonymous novel which became an immediate success, and the revelation of its authorship caused a great sensation, as it was the first time an Indian woman had attempted such a feat. Soon after she took over from her brother the editorship of the magazine "Bharoti," thus becoming the first woman editor in India, and, except for a short interval when her two daughters took it in hand, she has conducted it ever since—a period of twenty-five years. Besides her editorial work she has produced novels and short stories, poems, dramas, farces, and popular scientific text books for use in schools. Several of her novels have been dramatised and her plays have been performed before enthusiastic audiences all over India.

Besides her literary and editorial work she interests herself in every movement that is set on foot to educate and raise her countrywomen, and has herself founded a Home for Indian widows, for the purpose of providing a refuge for those unfortunates whose relatives, now that old customs are losing ground, no longer feel bound to maintain them; this Home is directed by one of Mrs. Ghosal's daughters, while her other daughter founded and directs the "All