

Prabuddha Bharata

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IS VEDANTA PESSIMISTIC ?

(Concluded from page 100)

WE shall have to cover everything of the universe by the Lord himself. How can we do this? Not by superficial optimism, not by shutting our eyes against everything that is unpleasant and disagreeable to us, not by saying that we are destined to suffer from our birth, not by running away like a coward from the battlefield, not by saying like a pessimist that there is no way of getting out of it, nor by practising asceticism and self-mortification, but by seeing God in everything; by opening our eyes to the true nature of things, by going behind the veil of phenomenal appearances, by realizing that the Divine will is working in and through everything. Vedanta teaches that the world is neither all good nor all evil but it is a mixture of good and evil, which differ from each other not in kind but in degree. Again that which is good to one may be evil to another. That which appears as most painful under certain circumstances may appear as a source of great pleasure under different conditions. The same poison that kills a man, under different conditions will save the life of another who is going to die. A Chinaman who is in the habit

of eating a lump of opium everyday and finds extreme pleasure after eating it, will be most miserable if he does not get it in proper time. But the same opium which gives pleasure to the Chinaman, will perhaps make twenty persons (who have never tasted it) sick, diseased and miserable. Thus good and bad, misery and happiness, pain and pleasure, arise from the one and the same thing. Those who see good in everything and do not see evil at all are as mistaken as those who see evil in everything and do not see good at all. Optimism is one extreme and pessimism is another extreme, but the truth is neither optimism nor pessimism. Vedanta always takes the side of truth, therefore it is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. It teaches us how we can see things as they are, without being biased by either optimism or pessimism. According to Vedanta we do not come from error to truth but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth, by the process of evolution. Each of the innumerable stages of evolution cannot be called either good or bad. When we do not compare one stage with another it appears to be neither good nor bad. We

cannot find fault with any one of them. The individual soul gradually gains experience after experience by passing through these stages and marches onward towards perfection which is the end and aim of evolution. That perfection is attained when it knows itself, *i. e.* its real nature. That highest illumination comes when the true nature of the individual soul is unfolded through experience.

It is true that there is within us an innate longing. It is also true that that longing forces us to do this thing or that thing, to try this path or that; but we do not know what that longing is for. Let us suppose that the longing is for X; and the value of that X is unknown; then forced by that longing we begin to search and try one thing after another to see whether it is equal to that X. When after trying one object we find that it is not the thing we want, it is not the value of X, we try another, then we throw aside the first. In this way we throw aside one after another until we find the real value of X. If we look back on our own life we shall see how many things we have tried in our life, and how many times we have failed to attain to what we wanted. Here you have come to hear this philosophy. Why? Simply to try whether it can give you the value of that X. If you do not find it here, you will try somewhere else. That is what we are doing all our life. But, my friends, in trying to find the value of that X, or in other words, in trying to know what we really want, we gain all sorts of experience—pleasure or pain, happiness or misery, suffering or sorrow. Very few people can really under-

stand at the first instance or at the first sight (without experimenting) whether or not it is the thing they need. Because they do not know how to test those things. Those who know the test can find it quickly and save a lot of stumblings and blows which will surely come in this process of experimenting business. But those who are not so bright and have not got the knowledge of how to test things properly, will be knocked down from one place to another, will receive blow after blow until they learn by experience the nature of those things, and ultimately find the value of that X, *i. e.*, the thing they need. Some find it quickly, some after a long time. It is simply a question of time and experience. Here Vedanta comes like a disinterested friend and gives us the test by which we can know quickly whether it is that X or not, so that we can save our time and gain experience without going through all the tedious processes of experiment—and that is this :—

*Yam labdhá chápam lábham,
manyatè nádhikam tatah
Yasminsthito na dukkhena gurunápi
vichályatè.
Gita, VI. 22.*

Know that to be the value of X, or that is the ultimate thing for which we are longing, after acquiring which we cannot think of any other acquisition higher than that, where all longings cease for ever, and placed wherein we shall not be moved by the heaviest grief, misery, sorrow or misfortune.

Let us try to get that with all our might. Then and then alone we shall be able to cover everything by the

Lord himself. Then and then alone instead of seeing good or evil in the world we shall see divine will everywhere. Then the ocean of misfortune will be changed into the ocean of divine will. All our ideas of misfortune depend on the ideas of good fortune and vice versa. When one is gone, both disappear, and that which remains is nothing but reality, which is neither good nor bad. Electricity is neither good nor bad, but it can be applied to things under different conditions which will produce results good or bad. When it

gives light it is very good and when it kills a man it is bad. But the nature of the electric current is always the same. The appearances of good and bad depend on our mental conditions. The whole world, nay the whole universe is the expression of one absolute reality which is neither good nor evil; because they are relative, they depend upon each other. But the reality or God is independent, therefore free from good and evil, free from the ideas of an optimist as well as from those of a pessimist. As Vedanta teaches this how can we call it pessimistic?

ABHEDANANDA.

SANYASA

(Concluded from page 108)

THE life of those who need such experience may well be divided into four stages of Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vana-prastha and Sanyasa.

This world is that great field for experience. When passing through its experiences, seldom can a man expect to go unscathed, unless he undergoes, in the beginning, some preliminary drill, which girds him on to be a hero in the strife. The period of undergoing such training is Brahmacharya. All the teachings like those few precepts Polonius asked his son to 'character in his memory,' all ethical injunctions, social or political laws are grouped under this head.

The child becomes the man. He plays his part in the common every-day life of the world. This is the second stage.

Then follows a heavy world-weariness. The voice of freedom within is heard at last. What home can hold that great heart, which

spreads to receive the full current of freedom, that now pushes forward? The old home, which bore an aspect of beauty and peace, now seems a veritable prison house, the old ties of affection press as hard iron locks, no possession of wealth or power, no promise of a future heaven can quench the fire that burns in the heart and cuts asunder its former knots and doubts; even the recognition of duties towards the weak and the dependent, sanctioned by divine or political law, seems to pass away. The natural impulsion draws the man out of the 'foul and pestilent vapours' of his narrow house and brings him to breathe the free and chaste air of the wide country abroad. The change is natural evolution; there is no "why" in it.

"Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor wallet nor bread nor money; neither have two coats. And in whatsoever

house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart." "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat ; not yet for your body, what ye shall put on." (S. Luke). "Neither desire life nor wish for death, but wait the time like the ordained servant for his master" (Manu, VI, 45).

This Vânaprasthin's life gives him an eye to read nature in her rustic and naked beauty, and, with none near to distract him in those solitary walks under the silent sky, takes him to begin earnest communings with his inborn freedom : the immense plains, their rolling rivers, the distant silence of uprising mountains, the deep solemnity of eternal forests, the brooding calm of the firmament, brushed with golden fire, by the sun, the moon and the stars, running a never-resting race, each resplendent in its young, unwedded glory, all appear to labour in unison to the same end—to fashion his restless heart after their own infinite image, to expand it into that fulness of freedom, which is theirs as well as his, and guide him into the haven where every one would be. Yes, Satyakâma Jâbâla learned truths from the bull of the herd that he was tending, from the fire that he had lighted and from a swan and a *Madgu* bird, which flew near him, when in the evening he had penned his cows and laid wood on the evening fire and sat behind it (Chândogya Upa. IV. 4.) The sublime scenery surrounding him turns his vision inward, where he meets the glory of his own soul, the infinite, the eternal,—that soul, which no weapons can pierce, which no heat can dry nor fire burn, no water melt, the infinite, the birthless, the deathless, without beginning and without end, beyond all domain of law, the eternally free, before whose magnitude the suns and the moons and all their systems appear like drops in the ocean, before whose glory space fades away into nothingness and time vanishes into

non-existence ! He is perfectly satisfied, no more bondage for him.

Here is completed the process of renunciation,—the "*neti, neti*" method,—through which, starting from a tremendous dissatisfaction with the present life of manifoldness and bondage, and giving it up, the man reaches and is convinced of his unique nature, the one without a second.

"—Of the knowers of Brahman, he is the greatest, who plays with his own self, who is satisfied in his own self, (but) who (at the same time) works (for others),—" this is the fulfilment of religion in love. This is that noble, highest goal—Sanyâsa.

Sanyâsa does not mean entire death to the concerns of the world, leading a life of idle vagrancy, avoiding work by all means possible and living, in that most undesirable manner, on alms from the public, without paying them anything in return. It means constant work of intense activity in bringing help unto others, backed up by intense self-realization of one's own natural freedom and therefore not disturbed by the slave's consciousness of his bondage, which must spoil a true work. To do true work, we must work in freedom. When the Vânaprasthin perceives the grandeur of his freedom, then all the perplexities of his heart are smoothed away, and this world, instead of being a prison house which it was before, becomes his playground. He traces back his footsteps,—the "*iti, iti*" method,—and welcomes the very things he renounced before.

He, as the Sanyâsin, returns to his former world. He has understood the great truth of the utter hollowness of clinging unto a little individuality ; his works are therefore the most unselfish of all. He has realized the freedom of his nature ; his are therefore not the compulsory duties of a bound slave

but the delightful acts of grace of a free master. As such, his works, one and all, lead to the greatest good unto the most.

From the time that the animal evolves into the man, the history of religion finds that he is looking up to some supernatural Being and seeking His merciful help in hours of difficulties and distress. Messengers are also not wanting, who have professed to have come to the needy mankind to bear His words of love and grace guided by which they can obtain their desired redemption. "Whenever there is a subsidence of spirituality and ascendancy of materialism, I produce myself," says the Lord in the *Gîtâ*. Christ and Mahomet distinctly admitted a Higher Power and enjoined prayers for His mercy. It was only Buddha, who, though admitting the Power, added, "It knows not wrath nor pardon. Pray not! the darkness will not brighten! Within yourselves, deliverance must be sought." Lately, Sri Râmakrishna Deva addressed It as his Divine Mother. Would it therefore be very wrong to assume, by a well-known law of Psychological Science, the existence of a Great Power, called forth into being by a strong desire in the collective mind of all humanity,—a Power that works constantly, for its good and in whom it can find its aspirations fulfilled?

This Power admitted, to work for men it must work in human ways to have its workings intelligible to them. Its instrument for work must therefore be a *man*, who must not succumb under its mighty pressure of activity and who can devote every moment of his life to its work, without any the least neglect or deviation, caused by his own personal consideration. The Sanyasin is the fittest medium for its grand work, because he stands firm on the rock of his soul's freedom and complete self-abnegation. In every age, this Power has worked through Sanyasins,

who have been instrumental in bringing the greatest good to the world, by carrying the tidings of eternal life and freedom to every door, the cost being only a bit of bread or a rag of cloth.

The common people cannot understand their words or works. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, for others will mistake and mar their life. What they say or do are not theirs but of the Great Power, that acts through them. They lead a double life, so to speak, one in this Power and another in the remnant of their old little "me," which is now almost forgotten. Christianity has beautifully expressed it in such faithful language as "possession by the Holy Ghost." The workers themselves are conscious of the fact and have more than once declared it.

"The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works" (S. John XIV). "Be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak but the Holy Ghost" (S. Mark XIII). "Say: it is not for me to change it of mine own will. I follow only what is revealed to me." (Koran Chap. X).

In the Sanyasin, humanity has died and given place to divinity, which, in turn, has been sacrificed for the higher manifestation of the Great Power for the welfare of mankind. "It is on the bosom of dead Divinity that the Blissful Mother dances Her dance celestial." Man, approach him with the profoundest veneration, for may be you tread on forbidden ground.

M.

A man, be the heavens ever praised, is sufficient for himself; yet were ten men, united in love, capable of being and of doing what ten thousand singly would fail in. Infinite is the help man can yield to man.—*Carlyle*.

SOME NEEDS OF HINDUISM

(Concluded from page 110)

FOR achieving the above ends, I would like to propose for the consideration of my countrymen the following suggestions.

(1) The creation of a pamphleteering agency, corresponding to the Christian Tract Society for publishing pamphlets and tracts in easy style, both in English and in vernacular on all manner of subjects, social, economical and religious. These should set forth the salient features of Hinduism and the superiority it enjoys over other religions and should also deal with the many social and economical questions present in modern India from the standpoint of orthodox Hinduism, thereby showing that it is perfectly alive to their importance. Thus the function of the agency is two-fold, firstly to popularise our religion, thereby strengthening its hold on the people, and secondly to counteract the influence of proselytising bodies.

(2) The employment of lecturers and preachers for our religion on a systematic plan. It is a matter for great regret that there is no class of persons in India, corresponding to the clergymen of Europe and America. These latter are drawn from university men and many of them are men of great learning and piety and moving as they do in the closest touch with the people are eminently fitted, to guide the conscience of the nation. The great disadvantage of Hinduism when compared to other religions is the complete absence of any organization. It has made no provision either for defending itself from the attacks of alien faiths or advocating its own cause. The few institutions

and mutts which are supposed to look after the concerns of religion, whatever might have been their usefulness in the past are utterly unfit to cope with the conditions that obtain in modern India. The heads of mutts as well as those who may be termed Hindu theologians are least in touch with the people, and all their learning and knowledge are those of a past age and while highly versed in Logic and Philosophy are utterly ignorant of the rudiments of history and geography. How can they be expected to look ahead, grasp the great problems which confront our society and be entrusted with the delicate task of adjusting ancient institutions to suit modern exigencies? As it is, while they have much power for evil, they have little power for good. Consequently, the lecturers and preachers if they are to be really useful must be drawn from the educated portion of the community and from the élite of our colleges, conversant with modern science and thought. After undergoing some preliminary training in Hindu Religion and Philosophy, these should be sent to the various parts of the country, at least one to each district. The duty of these should be to travel throughout their respective districts and adopt such measures as will be necessary to ensure the preservation of our religion and the prevention of any conversion to other religions, by the giving of lectures and the dissemination of pamphlets and tracts. Local associations may be formed in the centres of Districts, corresponding to the Theosophical Societies found in many towns, to check and super-

vice the work of the lecturers and preachers ; nay, the Theosophical Societies themselves, composed as they are almost universally of Hindu members may be made to subserve the purpose of supervision. These will overcome to a great extent the disadvantages arising from the disorganized state of Hinduism and will be useful at all times : and much more so, at such times of national calamity as famine, etc., when the poverty-stricken people, without any means of being helped by their Hindu countrymen, have to throw themselves on the bounty of the better-organized Christian Missionaries and become converts to Christianity on a large scale. If there be any agency like what I suggest throughout India, much of the beneficial activity of the Ramakrishna Mission in some parts of Bengal during the late famine may be reproduced on a large scale with infinite credit and strength to Hinduism. And our religion will be doing its duty to its adherents, and conversions to Christianity on a large scale may be made almost impossible.

6. The first suggestion is comparatively easy to carry out ; but the second is full of difficulties, the foremost being the necessity for raising a large fund for the purpose. Money is not only the sinews of war, but also of peace and of religion. In these days no great object, whether Political, Social or Religious, can be accomplished without the outlay of a large sum of money. How to procure funds for the scheme? The mass of the people in India who are as charitable as any in the world, cannot conceive any other mode of dispensing charity than of building temples and chatrams, the feeding of Brahmins and the making of costly jewels for the Deity. And until culture and enlightenment spread among the people to a larger extent it will be hopeless to divert the large streams of charity in the land from the traditional channels to new ones. In the

meanwhile, it is only the young India, infinitesimal no doubt when compared to the totality of the population, but gifted to a larger extent than their vast but unenlightened countrymen, with the power to discern new conditions of life and to respond to great social needs, that should take the initiative and bear the burden.

7. The leaders of Hindu society should consider these suggestions and frame a working plan. An arrangement like what I suggest will not only conduce to the strengthening of our religion and its perennial usefulness, but will be productive of much good indirectly. It will open a new source of usefulness for the educated portion of the community. The large number of educated men who are year after year turned from our schools and colleges find it more and more difficult to gain their livelihood. The few learned professions and the Government posts are all full and can accommodate, if at all, a very small number. The rest almost always married and family men have to undergo very great hardships in getting the means of livelihood. All the civilized countries of the world have what may be called an ecclesiastical profession, containing in itself the élite of learning, scholarship and piety of the land. Why should not the Hindus have one? Such an institution while enabling a large portion of the educated community to gain a competence, will also give an amount of leisure for the improvement of the mind and the prosecution of original researches, which cannot be expected in any other calling. There has become prevalent a wide spread opinion of late, that English education as now in vogue starves the spiritual instincts of young men and the educated men display a marked indifference to religious matters. What more potent cause can there be for this state of things than the complete dissociation of the

educated men from all kinds of religious activity? And what more potent remedy for it could there be, than that of entrusting him with the responsible task of preserving Indian Spirituality and guiding the conscience of the nation? The poor clerkling, struggling for 15 or 20 rupees, the object successively of pathos and of ridicule, affording plenty of food for the gibes of unsympathetic Anglo-Indians, will be transformed into a tremendous moral force in the land.

8. Such are the advantages derived from a scheme like what I suggest. A small beginning once made will afford a rallying

point for Indian patriotism and will in the fulness of time develop into a mighty agency. Men like Swami Vivekananda than whom none is more practical and fit to lead the people on lines of rational progress, should hit upon some working plan to subserve the ends set forth in the above. His followers as well as those of theosophy which has already done and is still doing much for the welfare of our religion should abandon their petty differences, if any, and co-operate for the common good and make our religion, "rockfirm against all comers and four-square against the world."

R. ARAMUTHOO IYENGER

SWADHARMA

A STORY

ONE day a Brahman after bathing in the Ganges, remained in the water under a tree, where he performed *sandhya* or daily prayers, when, by chance, a leaf on which was a scorpion, fell from the tree above his head, into the river beneath. On seeing the poor little creature struggling in the water, he caught it in his hand wishing to rescue it from its imminent peril.

Directly the scorpion felt the flesh of the Brahman's hand, it instinctively stung him, upon which, its preserver unconsciously letting go his hold, the unfortunate animal again dropped into the river. Once more it was quickly rescued but the same thing occurred as before. Another try, and the Brahman re-captured him, succeeding this time in placing him in safety on the dry bank, and mercifully saving him from a watery grave.

A woman who had come down to the

river to fetch water, intently watched these proceedings, staring in amazement and contempt at this strange behaviour of the bather. At length she could restrain herself no longer, and burst out vehemently—

"You fool of a Brahman, why did you save that ungrateful little wretch of a scorpion, when it only met your kindly endeavours, by wounding you in the hand?"

The Brahman tenderly replied—"My good woman, this poor little creature was only fulfilling its own *dharma* by stinging me, and I, in the same manner fulfilled my *dharma*, by acting as a Brahman should, namely, being a friend to everybody and everything." On receiving this reply, the woman went away, overwhelmed with shame at her vehemence and rude speech, pondering on the goodness of the Brahman.

ADVAITIN.

SIKHISM AND ITS PRINCIPLES

(Concluded from page 88)

THE Sikhs in the time of the first five Gurus were naturally meek and humble like the ideal sheep of Christ. On the other hand the Mahomedans were religious tyrants. To destroy the kafirs was their greatest aim. They had recourse to sword and policy. To a great extent they did succeed, as is proved by the fact that the main portion of the Mahomedan population in India consists of Hindu converts.

The great Sikh Gurus were worshipped by the Hindus as Avatars. All went well during the reigns of Babar, Humayun and Akbar, perhaps on account of political disturbances of the first two reigns and the reconciliatory policy of Akbar. But on the accession of Emperor Jehangir to the throne the fifth Guru Arjun Dev, the compiler of the sacred Granth Adi, was tortured to death. The Sikhs were terrified at this horrible event. Their peaceful spirit was not the only thing wanted at that time; something more was needed.

The next Guru Hargovindji was a spiritual guide as well as a warrior. A Pir and a Mir. He was the first Guru who infused some of the military spirit into the Sikhs. But his successors were not warriors. The tyranny of the Mahomedans was at its zenith in the reign of Aurungzeb. All India shuddered at his name. The Hindus were in the greatest distress. Their lives and property were not safe. The ninth Guru was beheaded

in cold blood at Delhi, because he denied to give up his own religion. A change was at hand. Guru Govind Singh the last of the Sikh Gurus appeared at this critical period on the stage, a sword in hand to annihilate the tyrants, and rescue the oppressed.

With him came the long desired for change. The meek sheep were turned into bloody wolves, the sparrows (to quote the Guru's words) killed the falcons. The humble Sikhs became great warrior Singhs. The form, the dress, the dialect of the Sikhs were quite changed. A Sikh was reborn after being baptized in the new fashion. Shaving of the head and face was forbidden. A simple and most serviceable dress was introduced. Their language became a language of war and pomp. A single Singh was called an army of 125,000. Their salute became 'Sri Wah-i-Guruji kà Khalsa, Sri Wah-i-Guruji ki Fateh'; and their war cry 'Sat Sri Akal.' Insignificant things were given bombastic names in the khalsaized language.

The composition of the tenth Guru was of quite different material from that of the first Gurus. It was full of military spirit and vigour. Those very things which had been taught in a peaceful manner by the nine Gurus were preached in a warlike tone by the tenth. The difference becomes quite clear by looking at the first stanzas of 'Japji' of Guru Nanak, and 'Japji' of Guru Govind

Singhji.

The tenth Guru introduced a kind of baptism—*Pouhal*. This baptism was really a charm. As soon as the Sikhs,—the Kshetries, Jats, Banias and men of other timid classes, who trembled from head to foot at the sight of a Moghul soldier, were baptized, they became transformed into warriors. Grand were their enterprises and works. It is the effect of this *Pouhal*, that in the four quarters of the world the Sikh soldier is known.

This baptism is essential for a Singh. A baptized Sikh is ordered to carry five Ka's about his body, viz., (1) Kaish—hair, (2) Kanga—a comb, (3) Katch—a kind of breeches that do not cover the thighs, (4) Karpan—a kind of knife, (5) Karra—an iron bracelet. He is also required not to smoke or even touch

tobacco ; to behave like a true knight ; to be pure and moral ; not to be overpowered by worldly desires and pleasures, to defend the weak, etc. In this way a Sikh is the true type of a Kshatriya of yore. Universal fraternity is preached in Sikhism ; no distinction of caste, all one. Superstitions vanish here. All are free, no chains of any kind bind the Sikhs. They are free.

The leading star of a Sikh's life is that noble example, set by the Guru himself in sacrificing his property, his parents, his family, and ultimately himself for the sake of national good. Thus we see it is in Sikhism alone that the two extremes—spiritual and material ascendencies, meet.

BAWA BUDH SINGH.

LETTERS ABOUT INDIA

I

WE are rounding Cape Dondra. All day long we have been coasting the eastern side of Ceylon,—a land lovely with palm-forest and pasture, with rose-lit cliff and curving broken rock.

It is the Hour of Peace. Every day at this time, as sunlight dies, the sea begins to utter itself in a new tone. A kind of sorrowful sighing mingles with the sound of waves, and every night and all night long, goes this low moaning of the waters. But to-night it is as if the soft voice spoke to itself a name,—the

name of Sita ; and again, as a higher surge than common rises, and beats against the ship, "Jay Sita-Ram! Sita-Ram! Jay! Jay! Jay!" one hears dying away in the distance.

That snow-white ring of surfl against the shore has a significance all its own,—here, where it girdles the prison of the most perfect wife the world has ever seen.

Brynhild, the warrior princess of the northern story could be come at only through the Circle of Flame—but Sita—type and crown of Indian

womanhood—has for her magic guard the “wine-dark sea,” and the fair sea-foam that breaks among the rocks.

Oh lovely Lanka, and beautiful dreamy Indian sea, fraught with memories like this and the obedience of Hanuman, you under your forests of palm and your groves of cinnamon, are surely one of the jewels of the world!

Great days of the Heroes, come back to us, the weary children of a meaner age,—waken us from our slumber, redeem us from our weakness, and let us once more breast our own storms, and battle with our own needs, as in the times of old!

* * * *

But the Hour of Peace is gone, and we are turning to the West. Out there is Galle Point; to-morrow at seven we reach Colombo; only a few days more, and the beloved land will be a memory,—an ever-present and ever-beautiful memory truly, but no more an actuality. There is pain in all partings: in this, though it is only for a while, how much!

It was eighteen months ago that I, a stranger, passed this way before, and to-night, as a man sums up a situation, I have a fancy to make reckoning with my own soul as to the drift of the impressions that I have gathered, in the year and a half just gone.

In the first place, I remember gratefully privileges accorded to few of my race. Received by the Mother-land as one of her own children, I have been permitted to see her, as it were, without her veil. I have been allowed to share in the life of the people. Kindness has been showered upon me. Neither

poverty nor worship has been hidden from my eyes.

And the outstanding impression that I have gathered from such experience is that this is a people with a curious habit of producing great men unexpectedly. Whatever may be thought of the average development of character in the race, I am convinced that moral genius is commoner here than elsewhere. For by “greatness” I do not particularly wish to imply any kind of intellectual or physical expertness,—these I regard as mere accessories: I refer rather to a certain largeness of feeling which lifts a man out of all that is individual and makes him stand to humanity as the interpreter of another life. Sometimes that life surrounds him almost as a light upon the face; sometimes we realise it in the growing sweetness with which years of self-sacrifice are borne; in India I have seen it lift even scientific research into sainthood. However it manifests itself, we all know that in some men’s veins runs the blood of the gods, and of such men India has more than her due share numerically.

And I can trace this effect to three probable causes. The first two I find in the tremendous emotion and concentration of the Hindu temperament. Hindu feeling is something that makes the merely Western feel himself a dwarf before a giant. That jealous privacy which marks the inner life of Oriental nations causes this feature to be little suspected by Europeans. They are more or less deceived by the mask of indifference that is worn with such success. To a certain extent, indeed, the indifference is real. Strong forces

are rarely evoked by a slight stimulus. But when the secret note is sounded in this case, sleeping energies of joy or suffering are apt to be aroused, beside which life itself seems a very very little thing.

Another reason why Europeans as a rule are so completely unaware of the real nature of those with whom they deal is that these energies commonly express themselves in a language outside their ken. The Japanese have applied the same thing to the patriotic, instead of the religious, idea, and the West has understood at once. As to Indian concentration, one comes to India to learn that the secret of holiness is here, and having learnt, silence seems the only reverence. When all selfishness, all littleness, all greed, has burnt itself away, and the man has become only the voice of the Chosen Idea of his life, then we learn what Renunciation is, what Devotion is, and again India stands supreme.

But these gifts of temperament would scarcely have been enough without the subtle and immense ideals which are the possession of the people of this country. It is not the Vedas so much as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata that are to-day its Bible, and these epics are known to all. There is indeed a terrible reverse to the medal, for a lofty conception of duty always paralyzes some in proportion as it inspires others, but one inevitable result of the constant companionship of Hanuman and Bhima, of Rama and Yudhisthira, is sublime attainment on the part of many.

And so I lay one flower of love and worship at the feet of the Mother-land. May she receive many of her alien-born children as she has received me! May she bestow on them even some little of that undeserved Mother-hood and bounty that she has bestowed on me!

NIVEDITA.

Off Ceylon, June 27th 1899.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TEGHARAH KRISHIVIDYALAYA

This paper has been communicated to us by Surendra Nath Tagore Esq, of Baliganj, Calcutta. Mr. Tagore feels that in the existence of such an effort as that which it describes, India gives promise of a wonderful life now and in the future, but that only by such efforts being carried forward into the higher branches of Technical education can real progress be achieved. We agree with Mr. Tagore and heartily wish success to the demand herein made.—Ed.

TEGHARAH in the Barasat sub-division, Dt. 24 Perghs., is a very small village with scarcely fifty families. This and the neighbouring villages contain a purely rural population, all of whom excepting three families live by the labour of their hands and the great majority of them live from hand to mouth. The people have grown up and died in complete

ignorance and the standard of morality among them has been very low. Though very poor, they are given to toddy-drinking and other low pleasures such as remind one of Ban-de-la-roche before the ministry of Jean Frederic Oberlin, or of rural Wales before the labours of Thomas Charles of Bala to reclaim it. Though the failure of a single paddy harvest finds many of

them without the means of livelihood and their crops and cattle are sold by the money-lenders, they cannot keep themselves from these vices of which they have been slaves through long standing habits. When malarious fever or cholera, too often the fruit of their ignorance of the rules of health and indolent habits, break out in an epidemic form, the people are quite friendless. Narrow-mindedness and self-seeking stand in the way of their helping one another. Education they consider quite useless and beyond their province.

However in the year 1876, one boy in these villages was picking up an education for himself from a high school about three miles off, and teaching six pupils at home during his spare moments. Later on, a friend sojourned in the village. The boy and he put their heads together, and about the year 1879, an elementary school was set up under a banyan tree with some 8 or 10 boys, and every effort was put forth to make it instrumental in reclaiming these villages. A teacher was procured, but was of very unpromising stuff, as he did not even know the elements of indigenous Arithmetic or the rudiments of Grammar. The poor boy had to labour hard for the boys as well as the teacher. But he is thankful for the valuable aid he received from his friend in these matters.

Then there was a still greater difficulty to overcome. Many of the poor peasants expressly said, "Education is as useless to us as giving grass and water to a dead cow," and so the boy had for several years to search for pupils from door to door. In cold winter nights, and through mud and water which rendered many of the village roads almost impassable during the rains, he had to go from village to village and persuade the guardians to send their boys to school, till his efforts were attended with some success.

Then another difficulty of the gravest character presented itself. Solely occupied with

mental labour and imbued with false notions of high life, most of the boys were found averse to manual toil and the crafts by which their forefathers earned their livelihood. In a word, the school turned out many discontented, lazy young men, as other schools have been doing. To obviate this difficulty, the originator has been labouring for some years past to introduce a technical element into the course of the studies, and has only partially succeeded in his object. The school was grandly named "Tegharah Krishividyalaya" (*i. e.* Tegharah Agricultural Institution) some years ago; but nothing could be done practically beyond teaching the boys one or two agriculturists' primers. It was a very ambitious project, though not utopian, that the poor boy had formed. Poor in purse as well as in health, he could not at first find means even to erect a school house. When going to make the floor of the first school house he had attempted to set up, he was closely catechised in the following way by a Christian Missionary, no other than the Rev. J. A. Macdonald of the Wesleyan Mission who has so earnestly laboured among the poor people of the 24 Perghs.

"What are you going about, Sasi?" "I am trying to make a floor for my school house; and as none will help me, I will help myself."

"But you are a Brahman, and it is beneath the dignity of a Brahman to dig or plough?"

"But this should be done for the good of the people."

"Then, I will help you, Sasi."

So saying, Mr. Macdonald, with his face beaming with love, came up, threw aside his coat and began to dig and carry earth with him. It was a memorable day for the poor boy who was then some 15 years old. That help, little as it was, was encouraging to a degree.

A few years later, the school was removed to a central position where some ground was secured free of charge,

for its site. But it was full of jungle and deep holes and was used for depositing carcasses of cows &c. The jungle had to be cleared and the open ground levelled and raised preparatory to its being laid out. Now this ground has been divided into some plots and is worked by the boys themselves with the help of their teachers, with the result that a taste for agriculture is early created in the boys. To provide further manual instruction and that each boy might follow his individual bent as far as is possible under the circumstances, a carpenter's class and a tailor's class have been opened. Many ex-pupils of the day-school and some pupils of the night-school are now earning a decent livelihood by lock making which they have been encouraged to learn. Some have reared cows and have gained a reputation as honest milk suppliers in the metropolis.

But these are but small beginnings. The project means large funds, and requires much patient labour for years to be a success. Nevertheless, the originator will be satisfied with as much as is feasible under the present unfavorable circumstances.

The school was at first opened with some 8 or 10 boys. Now the number has risen to some eighty, the day and night school included. Besides, some 18 girls have been admitted. In these most backward villages where a boys' school has had to be kept after fighting against immense odds, a girls' school is next to impossible. However, the nucleus of a girls' school has been formed, and efforts are being made to make it a success after the manner of the boys' school.

In every country, the introduction of a new thing has been looked upon with suspicion and distrust, and it is only natural that our villagers too should follow the general rule. They at first strenuously objected to putting their boys to school at all. But they are now sending them in large numbers and have not found

education as useless "as giving grass and water to a dead cow." When the jungle was cleared and the virgin ground broken, many of them said that the originator would die for it. When the school was set up, one of them went so far as to say that the school house will be a refuge for shepherds and their flocks, and moreover a place where dances will be held for the amusement of the villagers. But it has been a refuge for ignorant boys who would have gone to the dogs but for this protection. And now that manual labour has been introduced, almost all of them have raised their voice against it. They want the three R's only to make gentlemen of their sons. The education of girls they consider not only useless, but positively pernicious. But we look forward to the day when they will know better.

The school at present is a very poor thatched house with scarcely sufficient room for all the boys, and in the winter, it is quite unsuitable for the night school. The school has a library consisting of some 300 useful books attached to it. There are moreover six maps, some pictures and other things for the instruction and amusement of the children. But owing to the unprotected condition of the school-house, all these as well as the few carpenter's tools and implements of husbandry it has at present, have to be kept in the house of the Secretary, causing a great deal of inconvenience to the teachers as well as the taught. The eight benches which the school has, being quite insufficient, many pupils have to squat on the floor. The school has no clock to regulate the duties of the day.

Unsectarian moral training is systematically given by the teachers as well as by good men invited for the purpose. The reading of lives of great and good men and oral instructions are supplemented by the examples of kind and devoted friends who live among the boys from time to time. The sight of a graduate digging

the ground with them or nursing the sick for days together, has produced a very salutary effect on many of the boys and even on some of the older people. Excursions, refreshments, plays and other innocent amusements are often resorted to, to make the school really attractive as well as a place of instruction. A newspaper is now and then read and instructions given to as many of the old people as can be got together after their day's work. Prizes are annually given away to the pupils for proficiency in the three R's, as well as for good conduct, industry and manual skill.

The school resembles all ordinary primary schools so far as the study of the prescribed text books are concerned ; but it adds to these the following aims :—Building up of character by precepts but more by examples set by good men invited to live among the boys ; Manual training in all classes ; Attempts to develop the faculties of understanding and observation by excursions, stories, tales, pictures and readings from books other than the prescribed text-books ; Periodical amusements and refreshments.

The school fees derived from the boys scarcely come up to five or six rupees a month. All the girls and many of the boys study free of charge and have to be provided with books, slates, &c. Those that are paying students allow their ar-

rears to stand till the teacher is glad to remit three-fourths or more of the dues. This, too, he has to collect from door to door, which costs him about an hour daily. The day, night and girls' school together, receive on an average of about eight rupees a month from the District Board. And friends aid to the extent of nine rupees a month.

The appointment of at least one additional teacher ; acquisition of some more land for cultivation ; the digging of a well for irrigation and drinking purposes ; a workshop ; wood and some tools for carpentering, some implements of husbandry as well as better accommodation for the pupils, are the crying wants of the school.

The meeting of the above wants means money. As the people for whom the school has been set up, are far too poor and ignorant to go to this expense and the thirty or forty small land-owners whose tenants these people are, are either themselves poor or indifferent to the interests of the ryots, and the originator who had to maintain the school for 12 years at considerable personal expense has been broken down in health and fallen deeply in debt, he has no other resource than to appeal to the generosity of the public. He confidently hopes that the stewards of God's wealth as well as the heirs to His kingdom will not be slow to respond to the demand.

NANA KATHĀ

It seems as if the rhythm of the passing away of the great is amongst us. In the last issue we recorded the deaths of Swami Vishuddhananda and Goswami Vijay Krishna. It is our painful duty to inform our readers now that Swami Bhaskarananda and Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter are no more in this world. A *tyagi* and a *pandit* combined in one, Bhaskara-

nanda was a model Sannyâsin of the old school, with this difference, that he liked visitors calling upon him, especially foreigners. He was one of the Indian sights for tourists from all parts of the world.

In the death of Sir Romesh Chunder, Hindu society loses one of the strongest links between its progressive and conser-

vative sections. Few among us possess the cool, clear and expansive head, the sterling sincerity, sturdiness and independence of character, and the broad, gracious and kindly heart of a Romesh Chunder, which extorted absolute trust and repose from both the narrow, hide-bound, ignorant pandit and the go-ahead, ultra-radical, anglicised social reformer. Nothing, as we see it, will suffer so much at his loss, as the cause of the all-round, healthy development of Bengal society.

May both the saints find peace and joy in the Light to which their hearts were equally consecrated—maybe in different walks of life !

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A correspondent writes to the *Madras Hindu*. "On Sunday morning the pier was crowded with an eager throng of spectators anxious to see Swami Vivekananda, who was on his way to England by the *S. S. Golconda*. But to their great disappointment they were told that the vessel having arrived from Calcutta, an infected port, was under quarantine, and that the Swami would not be allowed to land. The numerous people who had gathered together, of all ranks and ages, had therefore to go away considerably vexed.

Some there were who were determined to have a glimpse at least of the Swami, and with that view they went in boats alongside the vessel, from whose deck the Swami was accorded a distant but cheerful welcome by his friends and admirers. Some days ago, a public meeting was held at Castle Kernan under the presidency of the Hon'ble Mr. P. Ananda Charlu, when it was resolved to address Government praying that Swami Vivekananda be permitted to land at Madras and stop there for a few hours before embarking again. Message after message was despatched to the Blue Heights, but the Swami's friends and admirers got some vague replies, but no sanction was wired to the Port Health Officer and the result was that the Health Officer would not allow him to land. * * *

* * It is said, however, that the Captain of the vessel was permitted to come ashore, and that he was seen in several parts of the city. If this is true, I would like to know if the Captain had undergone any singular process of immunization from infecting other people. It is hoped Government would call for a report from the Port Surgeon as to why the Captain was allowed to go about the town and under whose authority."

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Swami Vivekananda for whose reception grand preparations were made at Madras, could not leave his steamer, without suffering a quarantine of 24 hours. He is accompanied by Miss Noble (Sister Nivedita as she is called) and Swami Turiyananda. We are glad Swami Turiyananda has left for England. He is a highly cultured spiritually developed Sannyasi and a man of extensive experience of India, having walked over almost the whole of Upper India. A man well versed in Vedanta philosophy, possessing keen sense of observation, a good speaker and writer, he will make his own mark, if not on the platform, at least in creating a large number of disciples to gather round him. In 1896 Swami Turiyananda was for some months in Lucknow; those who were brought in contact with him were struck with his intelligence and keen sense of observation. He will prove a tower of strength to his brother in faith, the Swami Vivekananda. —*Advocate*.

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THE following lines are culled from a private letter :—"In spite of silly Plague Regulations the permit to land which was refused Swamiji at Madras, was granted at Colombo, and much hospitality was shewn by many kind friends. In the evening there was quite a demonstration in one house, and the adjoining street, and the shout of praise to Shiva nearly deafened one. In spite of European clothes he was their Avatâr and you could see by their dear dear faces that they knew it."