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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

THE MASTER SPEAKS

[FROM THE DIARY OF M.]

NIRGUNA OR ATTRIBUTELESS BRAHMAN
IS BEYOND MIND AND SPEECH—BEYOND
THE THREE ATTRIBUTES OF MATTER

Sri Ramakrishna : A doll of salt once went to fathom the ocean but did not return to give the news. Some hold that even Sukadeva and others only saw and touched (the ocean of Brahman) but could not take a plunge in It.

I told Vidyasagar : “Having come out of the mouth all things have been defiled ; but Brahman has not been so defiled. That is to say, none has yet been able to express in words what Brahman really is. That which comes in contact with the mouth gets defiled thereby.”⁴ Vidyasagar was a Pandit—he was very pleased at this.

⁴ The implied simile when explained means this : Edibles get defiled when they come in contact with any mouth, in the sense that they become unfit to be taken not only by others but by the same man on another occasion. And what applies to edibles only has been here extended, of course humor-

Beyond Kedar, it is said, there are mountains covered with snow. If you climb very high, you won't be able to return. Those who went to see what was there—how human beings fare—did not return to tell their tales.

His vision is so blissful, so entrancing, that all gets silenced.⁵ Who will carry news? Who will explain?

Beyond the seven courtyards lives the king. In the hall of each courtyard there sits an official holding a pompous court. The disciple asks in each courtyard, “Is this the king?” The master says, “No, not he, not he.” Reaching the innermost courtyard, he is astonished at what he sees. He is

ously, to all other things coming in contact with mouth. So Brahman, which is inexpressible, has been ingeniously said to have escaped defilement.

⁵ “Whence speech, returns with mind without getting It.” *Taittiriya Upanishad, Brahmananda-valli.*

beside himself with joy. There is no more need for asking, "Is he the king?" All doubts are gone at the very sight.⁶

The minister: Yes, sir, all these are there in Vedanta.

Sri Ramakrishna: When creating, sustaining and dissolving (the universe), He is called the Brahman with attributes, the Primordial Energy; and when He is beyond the three attributes of nature, He is called the Attributeless Brahman, the Para-Brahman—beyond speech and mind.

Caught up in His Maya, man forgets his own real nature. That he is the heir to the infinite glory and power of his Divine Father, he forgets. His Maya consists of what are called the three attributes. All the three attributes are, as it were, the three robbers of the parable. They rob us of everything—they make us forget our real nature. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the three attributes. Of these the attribute known as Sattva shows us the way to God, but cannot itself take us to Him.

A rich man was once crossing a forest when three robbers fell upon him and robbed him of whatever he had. When they had snatched away everything from him, one of them said, "What is the use of keeping the fellow alive? Let us dispatch him." The second robber said, "No, what's the use of killing him? Let us bind him tightly, on all sides, and leave him here. So he won't be able to inform the police." So saying, they bound him down and left the place.

The third robber, however, returned after a while and said, "Ah! poor fellow, you have suffered much, eh! Here, I am releasing you." Setting him free, the robber led him out of the

forest; and when they came to a public thoroughfare, he said, "Now take this road; you will reach home without any difficulty." The man said, "What do you mean, sir? You must come to my house. How grateful am I for this act of kindness of yours! How very pleased all of us should be, if you come to our house!" The robber said, "No, I cannot go there, the police will scent me." Saying this he showed the way and went away.

Now, the first robber represents the attribute of Tamas—the one who said, "What is the use of keeping him alive? Kill him." Tamas kills. The second robber represents the attribute of Rajas. Through this attribute of Rajas, man gets entangled in the worldly life and gathers round him a multitude of work. Rajas makes one forget God. It is Sattva alone which puts man on the road to God. Kindness, piety, devotion—all these come from Sattva. This Sattva is the last step, so to say, of the staircase; after that is the roof, the destination. Man's true abode is Para-Brahman. Unless one goes beyond the three attributes, one can never gain the knowledge of Brahman.

The minister: Fine talks, all these!

Sri Ramakrishna: (Smiling) Do you know what is the nature of devotees? It is this: they like to talk to and hear one another on religious topics. You are ministers, you teach so many persons. You are big liners, we are but fishing boats. (All laugh.)

III

SRI RAMAKRISHNA IN THE BLISS OF HEARING DEVOTIONAL MUSIC—SRI RAMAKRISHNA IN THE HARI-BHAKTI-PRADAYINI SOCIETY AND AT THE HOUSE OF RAMCHANDRA

Sri Ramakrishna has come to the Hari-Bhakti-Pradayini Society of Kan-

⁶ All doubts are cut asunder (solved) . . . seeing Him who is both transcendent and immanent."—*Mundaka Upanishad*.

saripara, Calcutta. Sunday, May 13, 1883. To-day is the annual celebration of the Society. Manohar Sain is singing of the incidents of Lord Sri Krishna's life.

He sings of Radha's wounded pride. Her friends are saying to Radha, "Why did you yield to pique? So it seems, you do not care for the happiness of Sri Krishna!" Radha says, "Not that. Why should he go to a place where he is not likely to get proper attention and care?"

Next Sunday the same devotional songs are being sung at the house of Ramchandra. The Master has come. To-day they are singing of the pangs of separation of the Gopis (Radha and her lady friends) when Sri Krishna went away to Mathura. In her pang of separation Radha speaks of many sweet reminiscences: "From my very infancy I loved and liked to see him. . . In the constant counting of the days of separation, my dear friends, the nails of my fingers have worn out. . . See, the wreath he presented to me has faded away, still I have not parted with it. . . My Krishna, the moon—on what sky has he appeared? . . . Alas! perhaps because of my pique he has gone away! Ah! when shall I see him again? Will it again come to pass—that we shall meet together? My dear, I have never been able to see you to my heart's content. There are but two eyes and at times of twinkling they cannot see, and, then, tears interfere. . . On his head shines the beautiful peacock feather like a stationary lightning. Captivated by that sight, peacocks danced in joy with spread-out tails. . . Dear friends, I shall not live, that is sure. But don't forget to keep my dead body on a Tamal tree (as it bears the hue of my Krishna) and write the name of Sri Krishna throughout my person."

Sri Ramakrishna says, He and His name are not separate; so Radha speaks in that strain. The saying goes, "Rama and His name are one and the same." Entranced, the Master drinks in the devotional songs. A professional singer sings all these songs. The next Sunday, he will sing again in the Dakshineswar Temple; and on the Sunday following that, at Adhar's house.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA IN THE COMPANY OF DISCIPLES IN THE DAKSHINESWAR TEMPLE

In his own room at Dakshineswar is standing Sri Ramakrishna. He is talking with his disciples. Sunday, May 27, 1883; 9 a.m. Devotees are coming one by one.

Sri Ramakrishna: (To M. and other disciples) Fanaticism is not good. The Sâktas, Vaishnavas, Vedantins—all quarrel. That's not good. Padmalochana was the Court Pandit of Burdwan. The Court was holding a discussion whether Siva or Brahmâ was greater. Padmalochana nicely replied: "I don't know; I have acquaintance neither with Siva nor with Brahmâ." (All laugh.)

If there is devotion, He can be attained through all paths. But one must stick to one's own path. This is known as Nishtha. It is also known by the name of 'unswerving devotion.' Like the palm it shoots up straight. Unsteady devotion is like a tree of many branches (which spreads but does not rise so high). So great was the Nishtha of the Gopis that they would not love even a Krishna differently dressed—they would love the pastoral Krishna with his beautiful peculiar crest and yellow cloth. They veiled their faces when they saw, in Mathura, Krishna in his royal dress with a turban on; and said, "Who is

he? Shall we lose our honour by talking with him?"

That is also an 'unswerving devotion' with which a wife serves her husband. She serves her brothers-in-law too—feeds them, looks after their comforts. But the relation with her husband is altogether different. Likewise, a man might have the same sort of devotion for his own religion; but that does not mean that he should hate other religions; on the contrary, he must be in the best of terms with them.

**THE WORSHIP OF THE MOTHER OF
THE UNIVERSE AND OF ONE'S OWN
SELF, ETC.**

After taking his bath in the Ganges, the Master has entered the Kali Temple. With him is M. The Master has seated himself on the seat of worship and is offering flowers at the feet of the Mother; sometimes he offers them to himself on the head and meditates.

After a long time he rises. He is beside himself with divine love; dances and utters, "Mother, Mother"; again, "O Mother, the Dispeller of calamities, the Dispeller of calamities."

The moment souls take up bodies, they are to suffer. Is the Master, therefore, teaching man to call on Mother as "the Dispeller of calamities?"

**REMINISCENCES—SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND
NAKUD BABAJI OF JHAMAPUKUR**

Now the Master has returned and taken his seat in the western verandah of his room. He is still under the influence of trance. Near him are seated Rakhal, M., Nakud—a Vaishnava and others. Nakud is known to the Master for the last 23 or 24 years. When the Master, coming to Calcutta for the first time, put up at Jhamapukur and did the work of a priest at

different houses, he used to come to Nakud's shop and pass some time in pleasant conversation. On the occasion of the annual celebration in memory of (the Vaishnava saint) Raghav Pandit at Panihati, Nakud would pay his wonted annual visit to the Master. Nakud was a Vaishnava devotee and used to treat devotees to feasts in his own house. Now he is a neighbour to M. When at Jhamapukur, the Master lived in Govinda Chatterji's house, Nakud showed that old house to M.

The Master goes on singing a number of songs half in trance. Now he speaks to the devotees: "Don't talk of sorrows before the householders. Talk of bliss. Those who generally suffer from want of provision may go without food for a day or two; but those who feel indisposed if they take their meal a little late—to talk of sorrows and miseries to them is not good.

Vaishnavcharan used to say, "What is this—to harp on sin? Enjoy bliss."

The Master had hardly taken a little rest after his meal when Manohar Sain Goswami arrived.

**SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE EMBODIMENT
OF ALL SPIRITUAL EMOTIONS, IS NOW
CAUGHT IN THOSE OF RADHA. IS
THE MASTER GAURANGA?**

Goswami is now singing of Sri Radha's first onrush of love. Hearing a little the Master is caught in the emotions of Radha.

First of all the singer is invoking the presence of Gauranga by singing a scene of his life. "His head resting on the palm of his hand—Gora (Gauranga) is brooding. Why is he so? Perhaps he is under the sway of Radha's emotion."

Goswami is singing again—this time of Radha, "She comes out of the room times out of number—yea, every moment she comes out and goes in.

How ruffled is her mind! She is heaving deep sighs every now and then and looks towards the Kadamba forest. Why, what's the matter with Radha?"

The moment the Master heard this line of the song, he was caught up in that highest spiritual emotion known as Mahabhava. He tore off the shirt he had on.

As the singer sings further, the Master shivers in Mahabhava, and looking at Kedar sings to the same tune, "My dear, the king of my heart,—Ah! friends, bring me my Krishna, this is indeed the work of friends—either bring *him* to me or take *me* to him; an eternal bond-slave I will be to you all, if you can do that."

The singer is charmed with the Master's Mahabhava state and prays with folded palms, "Please put an end to my worldly attachments."

Sri Ramakrishna: (Smiling) "You have got the Abode,"—as the saying goes. Such a lover of the Lord are you! Such sweetness comes out of you!

Goswami: Lord, I am like a beast of burden laden with sugar. I have not tasted sugar.

Songs go on. Goswami sings of the miserable condition of Radha, "The cuckoos are sounding their maddening notes." They are cooing, but Radha has mistaken them for the rumblings of clouds. So she takes the name of Jaimini. She says again, "Friends, I cannot bear the separation from Sri Krishna, I shall not live. (But don't cremate me;) Keep my body on the Tamal tree."

Singing about the union of Radha and Krishna, Goswami finished his songs for the day.

IN SEARCH OF LEADERS

BY THE EDITOR

I

The Hindu society is now in a chaotic condition. It is without any guide. There is no central authority. There is none whose voice will have some effective influence upon the general public and give them a lead. As a result, nobody listens to anyone. Everywhere there is only criticism and controversy, discussion and waste of words. When there is no strong leader in an army, a great confusion prevails; similar is the case with the present Hindu society. Formerly the word of the Hindu king was law with the people. If any reform was needed, it was done by the Government, helped by the experts in sociology or Smritikaras. Nowadays the Government is pledged to neutrality in

social and religious matters, and there are few persons who have intimate knowledge of the social problems or the far-sighted vision to suggest a solution. In consequence, there is much superficial criticism but little action, at least of the proper type.

Taking advantage of this situation aggressive religions in the country are making inroads upon the Hindu society and weakening it more and more. The number of converts, voluntary or forced, into other religions from Hinduism is great. The Hindu society is gradually dwindling in power, numerical strength and other respects. There is no strong body which can effectively safeguard its interests, organize its forces and give it a push towards pro-

gress. If the Hindu society is not as yet completely dead, it is because of its great vitality and adamant foundation. But even the strongest citadel is bound to fall, if proper care is not taken or timely repair is not done. The Hindu society, likewise, is heading towards destruction ; or if at all it will live, it will, if the present state of things continue, lead an emasculated life with its burden of woes and miseries. Now, what is the remedy? Who can save it from the present calamity and the impending destruction? These are the questions for which one does not easily find a solution, and this, in consequence, fills one with despair.

II

At present two different forces are working in the Hindu society. The educated people—rather men with English education—are trying to draw the society in one direction and the orthodox people—those who have not received modern education—in another direction. The English educated people have their outlook changed through their knowledge of the Western society and they criticize things in the Indian society from the standpoint of the Westerners. They want to engraft Western models into the Indian society, and as they cannot draw the masses with them they pour forth their venom upon the society and curse the people. When they criticize the Indian society, they behave in a way as if they did not belong to the society, as if they had no responsibility in the formation of the society. And naturally they are also treated as outsiders—as forming a class by themselves who have no say in the actual working of the society and whose vociferous criticisms deserve no attention.

Those who want to reform people, must have sympathy, love and under-

standing to identify themselves with them. In that case, they will hesitate to criticize the people. For, is not the burden of shame of the people theirs too—as they belong to the same society? How then, can they put themselves into the position of critics? A man does not criticize his own conduct. He only feels ashamed if there is any defect in his works. In the criticism of the educated people, one does not find the sense of sorrow; on the contrary, there is the sense of pride as if they were better people, as if they knew better about everything concerning the welfare of the society. As a result their words are treated with indifference, if not with contempt. They cannot touch the heart of the society.

Criticisms of the educated people are often sweeping and thoughtless. They judge everything from the standpoint of a Westerner, and want to introduce those things into our society whose evil effects are too clearly seen in the societies of the West. In their flush of enthusiasm, they do not see them. As their business is to criticize and not to take any responsibility, they can afford to be hasty in their judgment. Their personal conduct also is not regulated by the consideration of what will be its effect upon the society, or even upon their family; they resent and oppose those things which in any way stand in the way of their unbridled freedom.

When they break a social tradition, they do so not as a matter of principle, not from conscientious objections, but because it suits their convenience to do so. If a man does a thing to obey his conscience, even though apparently the work may be wrong, its evil effect will be neutralized by his sincerity. Or the man will soon find out his mistakes, and he will have the courage to correct them.

But how many men really follow their conscience? Conscience in the modern world is a convenient commodity, which may easily change its shape and colour according to times and circumstances. And how many people have any conscience at all? Socrates used to say that in the beginning conscience wants to help and guide every man, but because of his unwillingness to obey it, it gradually becomes dull till in the end it is completely dead. Yes, with many people conscience is completely dead. But still they constantly mention it in defence of their otherwise unjustifiable conduct. Naturally their insincerity is easily perceived, and their claim to any attention or respect is forfeited.

In the last century some of those who rebelled against social customs and traditions had exemplary characters; naturally their force of character greatly counterbalanced the wrongs, if any, they did to the society. But their followers imbibed from them their destructive methods only, without cultivating any of their positive virtues. Therefore their conduct had anything but good effect upon the society.

III

In the name of self-expression people want to do anything they like. They are ready to follow their instinct, desire—even passion—to any length, and in that any check from the consideration of their own welfare or that of the society, they resent as interfering with their personal liberty. As that spirit is rampant in the Western society—at least as it appears to the readers of novels and passing visitors—many of the Western customs are welcomed as perfect models for imitation by our people.

There is another danger in imitating foreign models. In every society, how-

ever bad it may appear from outside, there are certain safeguards against evil, which are noticeable in the best of its members. Now, when foreign models are engrafted into a society, the safeguards do not come with them—they are part and parcel of the particular society forming as it were the components of its individuality—and as such there is a double danger. In every society there will always be some whose tendency is to break social customs and traditions. The safeguards, in the form of public opinion or customary laws, are a check upon the conduct of rebellious spirits. Therefore when a society is reshuffled on a foreign model, there is greater chance of people going astray. It is actually found that when men migrate from one society to another and are not rooted in the new environment, they are liable to commit a greater number of wrongs. Similar is the case when an attempt is made to shape society after a new model which is not the result of evolution or growth from within.

Besides, every society has got its characteristic ideals and purposes and its own method of evolution. To suggest reform to a society, one must thoroughly know its inner spirit and culture. It is well known that many of our educated people are out of touch with Indian culture. Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore has thought much about the problem of Indian education. He is making some experiments in his institution to evolve a right system of education. But he said during his last visit to Ceylon that through the length and breadth of India there was not a single University where a foreign or an Indian student could be awakened to a realization of what was best in Indian culture, and that no student in it was able to become the best product of

Indian mind. Now, if our educated people are not acquainted with Indian culture, how can they expect to reform Indian society?

IV

And who genuinely feels for the welfare of the society, free from the prejudices of personal interest? Amongst the educated people those who are highly situated in life live in proud isolation, out of touch with the common people. They cannot think in terms of the woes and sufferings, hopes and aspirations of the masses. And the majority of the middle-class people, who are a connecting link between the richer section and the common people, are in the grip of a great poverty. They have no time and opportunity to think of anything beyond the bread and butter problems of life. Of all people in the present society, the middle-class people are in the worst condition. They have to keep up a show of respectability, but they have no means to meet the bare necessities of life. Though much could be expected of them, they are, under the present circumstances, in a great struggle between life and death; they do not know how to save themselves, how can they think of the welfare of the society? The foremost thought of their waking moments is how to meet the demands of hunger and thirst. Though many of them might have idealism in their younger days, they have completely lost that in the thick of the fight in the worldly life. And those who have no idealism, no vision, can hardly guide a society.

Much cannot be expected also from the orthodox people—those who have not come into contact with the condition of the modern world. Theirs is a stagnant life, they cannot move with the demands of the changing times. Where the flow of life is stopped, it is idle to

expect any progress. It is said that a truly cultured man must be acquainted with at least two cultures—his own and that of another people. For, thereby he can compare notes with another people and find out the strong and weak points of his own society. As the orthodox people do not know the condition of the present world, they are in a state of self-satisfaction, or should we say, of torpor?

The great value of the conservatism of the orthodox people lies in the fact that it does not allow the society to drift away from its own moorings, its own culture and it is a bulwark against the inroads of the evils of the foreign societies. But the progress of every human institution depends on the struggle between the conservative spirit and the reforming zeal. In every institution there will be some persons who are satisfied with the present condition and fear any change, while there are others who think ahead of their times and try to bring about a reform. This conflict is the sign of life and the source of progress. Many reformers who were criticized, vilified and persecuted in their lifetime, were admired, and even worshipped, by the succeeding generations. But the conservative spirit is a check against hasty reforms and the activities of many self-constituted leaders.

A society should, however, be flexible and capable of change from within. If the Hindu society be left to the care of the orthodox people, it will lead a life of inanition—constantly dwindling and unable to resist the attacks of other communities. Already the numerical strength of the society has alarmingly fallen, and the weakness of Hindus is constantly inviting many dangers.

In some exceptional cases the Government has broken its pledge of neutrality and enacted laws to effect reforms.

Though their result has not been bad—in some cases it has been good—such enactment of laws is a confession of the weakness of the society. The Hindu society ought to reform itself without seeking the help of others to effect a needed change. To take recourse to legal measures, under the present state of things, is like the case of a man inviting his neighbours to settle a family quarrel, and any respectable man will think it a matter of regret and shame. It is true that even during the Hindu rule, kings would effect social reforms with the help of law. But now things are different. Nowadays those who are responsible for legislation are not all Hindus—and among them even those who are Hindus may not be Hindu in outlook and views. Indeed there is need for legislation in extreme cases, but it would be better if the society could reform itself without taking recourse to such measures.

V

Some say that the Hindu society needs a Hitler or Mussolini to rouse it from its slumber. Indeed every society requires the appearance of a gigantic personality from time to time to break its torpor, to give it a lead and to ensure its progress. But in the Hindu society reforms have been made not by 'political Mussolinis and Hitlers' but by religious personalities—Avatars and prophets. Waves of change have come over the society, from time to time, in the wake of the appearance of great religious teachers.

Buddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Kabir, Chaitanya were as much social reformers as religious leaders. For, their teachings invariably brought about revolutionary social changes. There was not much fuss—theoretical discussions and debates with furious combatants on each side—about social reforms, but

silently they brought about changes even without people knowing it. What the present leaders are finding it difficult to do now in regard to the problem of untouchability, Chaitanya Dev did easily and unknowingly in course of the wave of religious enthusiasm which he brought to the country. In that great flood of religious revival, not only persons from the lower ranks of the Hindu society but even those outside it were made equal, and they all got admission into the same brotherhood. Some saints in India have come from the so-called lower community, and they have successfully bridged the gulf between the high and the low. In future also if successful reforms are to be achieved, they will be done through religious leaders.

Though they say that the prayers of devout hearts move God to incarnate Himself in human forms, we find that we cannot call to being any religious leader at will. What then can we do with regard to the present problems that insistently demand a solution and cannot be ignored with impunity? Should we sit idle mourning our lot? God demands from man as much self-exertion as a prayerful attitude. Nobody has achieved anything without great struggle. While all other people are marching with rapid strides, we cannot afford to remain quiet. Those who will even slightly seek a respite from struggle will be, as sure as anything, pushed aside in the battle of life to make way for others.

VI

We have seen that there is nowadays much cry about reform and reorganization of the Hindu society. In the absence of a gigantic and powerful personality any sudden change is impossible to effect. And too much discussion and no action makes confusion worse con-

founded and people are thrown into a greater state of despair. Those who really feel for the society and have the idealism to devote themselves to its welfare should therefore try to do something without entering into much controversy. Let them follow the line of least resistance. Let them be careful not to come into unnecessary conflict with others, who may be equally particular about the interests of the society but think differently. Let them build up their own life and regulate their own conduct. The silent influence of their character will bring much better result than gigantic schemes which are difficult to work out.

Let each individual think that on him rests the whole responsibility of guiding the society, and that the least amount of insincerity and disharmony between his act and profession will greatly react upon the society. In that case his conduct will be much more balanced. Let him not criticize others with superior airs. Let him take upon his devoted head the whole burden of shame if the society has got any defect. How can people expect to wield any influence if they detach themselves from the society and take no responsibility in the matter of social drawbacks? If they work this way, there will be numerous centres of influence which will give the

society a great push towards progress. These will in a way substitute the works of one gigantic personality.

When there is no one person who can command universal respect and obedience, the best thing is that lesser personalities should try to radiate their influence amongst their small groups, taking care that one group does not come into clash with another. This is the only thing possible under the present condition of the Hindu society. When the house is on fire, everybody should try to do his bit in his own way. And no work will be lost if it is done sincerely for the good of others—and not for any hidden selfish purpose.

Everybody should remember that he has duties not only to himself but also to his community and fellowmen. The ancient Hindus would talk of one's debt to ancestors, debt to Rishis and debt to gods. But there is one's debt also to the society one belongs to. They say, "For the good of a village, a man ought to give up his family. For the good of a country, he ought to give up his village. For the good of humanity, he should give up his country, and for the good of the world everything." But charity begins at home. Let everybody think out what lies in his power to do for the society to which he owes his all, and act accordingly.

WHAT AN AMERICAN WOMAN IS DOING IN INDIA

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

For five years, more or less, I had counted as my home our little house—still ours—with its two courtyards, in the Hindu quarter of Calcutta. For five years I had despairfully contemplated the problem of the Modern Education of the Hindu Women, without

being able to do much more towards it than lay in the maintenance of a Kindergarten and Preparatory School for little girls.

With the coming of Sister Christine, however, all this was changed. Sister Christine is an American woman, of that

type which mingles interior strength and firmness with outward delicacy and poise. The willowy movements, to which the draped Sari of the Hindu women adapts itself so gracefully, are symbols of a certain spiritual balance and adaptability. "She is cool!" say the ladies who throng around her, delighting in her gentleness and tact; and in these words they pay her the highest compliments, on the lips of those born to a tropical climate.

But of these few, surely Sister Christine is one. Not for her were the slights and restrictions of caste devised. Coming into a movement whose tradition it was to accept and submit to surrounding customs, she was quick, nevertheless, to demand and receive a certain personal consideration, a certain attitude implying that though, even in her case, the law must be applied, yet this was done regretfully with a full sense of her merit of exemption. Thus



Sister Christine Sister Nivedita

It is well for my sister and honoured colleague that her grace of gesture and charm of personality make her so dear to the hearts of the cloistered womanhood, amidst which she lives and works. For never was there a soul more dauntless and independent! Very few Americans, it often seems to me, can be held truly representative of Ameri-

she tells the tale of how when she was keeping house alone, for a few weeks in the beginning of our joint career, and happened to be without a cook, a kind neighbour undertook to send food to her twice a day. We are all, alas, familiar with the fact that the sweetness of a mistress is not always carried out in the graciousness of servants!

We can answer for ourselves, but not always for them. As a case in point, the first evening arrived, and our friends' servant-maid marched in with a brass tray, loaded with ready-made viands. But the woman appeared as if hospitality and pleasantness were beyond her province. She flung the tray at Sister Christine's feet, then stood looking at her, with arms akimbo, without a smile. Trust an American woman for command of the language that needs no word! In the frail-looking gentlewoman before her, this scowling servitor had met her match. Sister Christine no way daunted, lifted the tray, bestowed the food carefully in the pantry, then washed it, and turned in triumph to throw it, in her turn, at the feet of the servant, and then stand, as she had done with arms akimbo frowning at her. The little comedy acted like magic. The woman understood and smiled. Then she lifted her salver and went away, always afterwards to give burden into the hands of its recipient.

By dint of her own great sweetness and sympathy, aided now and then by such little battles, my sister has won her way to a recognized place in the civic community of our Hindu quarter. One day she came into our common study with an air of great determination. "I am going," she said, "to make the people of this lane understand that I am as good an Aryan as any of them!" A storm of mirth was of course the only answer, followed by inquiries as to what could possibly have happened last. But early and late she must have carried out her intention, with no one knows what effect on the gentle minds about her; for the first time her absence gave an opportunity, we were asked by a timid little woman whether or not Sister Christine was "an American Brahmin."

question of our standing amongst the

When she came to us in 1903, the women was more or less untested. Once a week or once a fortnight, indeed, we had been in the habit of holding an epic recital from the national literature, to which the ladies of the neighbourhood were brought in carriages. On these occasions a heavy tent-canopy covered our courtyard overhead, cotton carpets and yellow matting converted its stone floor and red brick steps into seats for men and boys. Behind dark green curtains made of bamboo splinters, hung across every arch and doorway that gave access to the court, sat white-veiled women, like an unseen choir, listening and enjoying but unperceived. And on the fourth side of the enclosure, on a little platform, made gay with flowers and coloured drapery and plants, a single bright lamp burning beside the reading desk that held an ancient book, sat the *Kothuk*, or the preacher, clad, for the occasion, in the salmon pink cotton of the monk. I call him the preacher, advisedly, though he is nominally only reader, or story-teller; for his discourse only began by reading from the books, and then proceeded to comment, exposition and even the singing of an occasional hymn, then again renewed reading and so on. Thus it was a mixture of literature, sermon, and concert-singing, holding the congregation spell-bound for two or three hours at a stretch.

One may enter any door, within which one hears the *Kothuk*, as one passes along the Indian roads. The men of the neighbourhood as a duty and children and boys crowd in unbidden. But the gentle women behind the screens confer immense honour by their presence, for the social decorum of aristocracies is carried to great lengths in India, even amongst people seemingly simple, and a woman is ex-

ceedingly careful as to the house she visits. This honour had been done the house in the recognized way, of coming to the reading of the epics. But would woman visit us to learn secular things from us? It was the consciousness of the difference between these things that made us so nervous as we prepared for Sister Christine's great experiment in Education. An auspicious day had been chosen and two horses and two carriages had been provided. She had hired the duennas who were to go in each carriage, and bring the ladies to the house. Abundance of co-operation had been promised moreover. A learned friend of the Brahma-Somaj—Lavonya Dee, by name—had promised to give a reading from the great Indian scripture, the Bhagavad Gita, in Sanskrit and in Bengali. And Jogin-Ma, an influential widow from our neighbourhood, had undertaken to be present, in order to give "tone" and pious direction to the conversation.

Yet, strong as was all this backing, there was always the doubt whether anyone would come! Ganges water was provided, in metal goblets, in case of thirst. Fresh rugs and cushions were placed on the yellow matting as individual seats. The rose-tinted walls had been newly colour-washed. Men, it goes without saying, would be banished outside a circle of fifty yards. Everything had been done, in short, that could be thought of, to suggest purity and propriety. Still would the carriage return empty? We trembled at the thought of this mortification. If only six should appear, we were determined to put a good face on the matter; if ten or twelve, we should feel ourselves triumphant. The importance of my sister's efforts made itself duly appreciated, however, when sixty or seventy ladies came to us that first day, and

showed extreme reluctance to admit that afternoon need ever end.

Old women came, accompanied by their daughters-in-law. Mothers brought their married daughters, who happened to be at home on a visit. Widows of twenty-five and thirty were glad to come alone. And wedded wives were only too apt to be there, accompanied by a baby and a couple of children! Sister Christine's place and success were assured.

How proud we felt, as we looked on our gathering of guests! The gentle faces were full of delicate gaiety. The low hum of conversation pervaded all the room. We were amazed to see the ease with which pleasant relations were mutually established, and the quiet happiness and intelligence that asserted themselves on every hand. The course of instruction, in these early days, consisted mainly of the sewing and cutting out of garments. My poor Sister's tastes had always, in the past, been predominantly bookish, but for the sake of the women, she took lessons from her Indian sewing man, and bent herself for twenty-four hours preceding these class days to the toil of preparation. She is now extremely expert at the measuring and cutting out of garments. Such mysteries as the placing of pockets and gores, the buttoning of fine Muslins along flat bands, without interruption of contour, and so on, having nothing in them to baffle her! But at a great cost was this freedom bought. The two days in the week of the women's school, meant thrice as many hours spent by her, in preparation, over labour that she found both wearisome and distasteful.

We had two maps—one of India and one of the world—and each sewing day saw its attempt, in Bengali somewhat broken perhaps, to expound with their aid the nature and distribution of de-

serts, islands, seas and mountains. Each day heard also some dip into the history of India and other countries. The land of the Nile, the Land of Mahomet were fascinating subjects. Nor could the age of Buddha, or the places of the great pilgrimage, be wholly forgotten, with regard to our hearers of his own country.

It goes without saying that an outlook so radically new as this which Sister Christine's work initiated, could not be opened up without stirring a good deal of criticism and discussion, in the quiet depths of the Hindu society about us. The school was little more, so far, than a sewing bee, but it was a new institution, and women's steps in progress are ever taken in a fierce light. Hence it was not surprising to learn that on all the bathing stairs along the Ganges side, the new departure was the subject of argument. But it was extremely touching to hear at the same time that its steady friends and supporters were found in the young men—who longed for enlarged opportunity for their wives, and the old women—who understood deeply the essentials of their sons' happiness.

For many months, in spite of her own growing impatience, my Sister continued the work in the form in which she had begun it. Downstairs, day after day, the little girls assembled for regular lessons; upstairs, two afternoons in the week, was held the sewing school for the grown-ups—a sewing school still in the main, though some little margin of more intellectual pursuits was added when possible. Our friend Dr. Kathleen Vaughan, the head of the Dufferin Hospital at that time, came, for instance, on many hot days, and gave talks on midwifery, which we much appreciated. And a few of the more enterprising young people were contriving to prosecute their study

of reading and writing, as well as sewing, in the course of the afternoon.

At last, however, the American woman who carried the burden of the work felt impatience which she could no longer conceal. "This is not Education!" she cried, when alone with me, "I opened the school in order to give Education, but this only teaching women to make and mend!" I think perhaps my Sister deprecated the value of her own great services, in speaking thus. I think resourcefulness and means of self-help had been given by her, over and above the knowledge of how to seam and stitch. In any case, however, it seemed to be time for a new move onwards, and so much had clearly been gained, by all the months of patience that were behind us, that there was now a body of opinion to call upon, in any step it might be desired to take. Sister Christine, therefore, asked the advice of two of the oldest women in whose judgment and good feeling she had special confidence. They listened gravely to her statements, showing no surprise at her attitude of dissatisfaction, and no disapproval whatever of her estimate of education. The only thing that could be done, they thought, was to make the same statement to the whole class that had just been made to them, and see how many, when the choice was given, would enlist under a more scholastic discipline. It was worthy of remark that neither of these elderly women—though one had a daughter, and the other a daughter-in-law, in the room—dreamt of using their authority in the choice to be made, on behalf of her own family. They assumed instinctively that in the higher pursuits of the mind freedom was essential.

Sister Christine went back from this council into the school room, and put the choice before the students, in the form advised, only promising in addi-

tion, by the way of further inducement, that any one who chose learning, should be allowed to take her needlework home, there to make up for the hours lost by study. To my Sister's intense relief and joy, her little proclamation was followed by the rise of everyone in the class below the age of twenty, and some fifteen or sixteen young daughters-in-law filed out of the room to submit themselves to serious intellectual training. How little had she suspected the existence of such ambition, when the months when she herself was fretting herself against the barriers that seemed so hopeless!

Nor was this, due merely to a stirring appeal, backed by strong matriarchal influence, the volunteer movement of a moment of excitement—to fade out once more, when the drudgery of learning had to be met and faced. So far was this from becoming the case, that ever since that day my poor Sister's difficulty has been to secure even Saturday as a day of leisure. For the daughters-in-law soon made it apparent that the two days in the week were not enough for them. They would enter into secret conspiracies with the school-duenna and pile themselves into the carriage that was bringing the ten-year-olds to morning school. Or they would bribe the coachman, perhaps, to take it on one more round. Exactly how it was done, we could never be quite sure, but by hook or crook, day after day, Sister Christine was faced with their radiant presence, as an accomplished fact, while once at school, it went without saying, as they well knew work must be organized for their benefit.

And truly, how radiant they are! Nowhere in the world, in my opinion, could a bevy of girls be found more beautiful than these, our daughters-in-law. Their bright, laughing faces, and gold ornaments, tell the tale of idolized

young wife. The touch of vermillion at the dainty parting of the hair, speaks of loving prayer for the absent husband. The border of the Sari and the veil drawn over the young head give a touch of marital dignity. One cannot enter the school room without feeling that one has strayed into a garden of human flowers. Amongst them is one dear lady about thirty years of age who is a widow. Her manners are perhaps the sweetest of all. She has a low-voiced dignity, and swaying charm of bearing that reminds one of some great European *prima donna*. But fortunately for us, this particular lady, while well-to-do and personally most honourable, is not of a caste high enough to prevent her coming on foot, without a carriage, and continuing to wear the gold ornaments of the wife, even in her widowhood. I say fortunately, because the horse and carriage have more than they can do, and we are continually faced by the necessity of refusing our help, in the name of the limitation of our means.

But the great feature of the daughters-in-law, that more than any other marks their girlish *joie de vivre*, is their ambition. How they work! How they race through their tasks! Their Bengali accomplished, how they plead for promotion to the study of English, and we who know that their husbands' lives are largely spent in environment of the English language, perceive in their last desire the deeper need of the wife to fulfil the highest ideals of the man. As to the progress made, it is enough when we go away for the holidays to watch the letters of Sister Christine. "Here is an English postcard from little So-and-So," she will say and proceed to read aloud the quaint and broken phrases of someone who six weeks ago could not have written her own name in our Frankish

script. "I am sorry to say my father is unhealthy now," runs one of these effusions; "Our school is quite fulfilled," another. But the quaint errors serve only to throw a stronger light on the progress that has been made in so short a time.

It was well that in its early stages the work had to proceed slowly. To-day when only want of means stands between Sister Christine and the education of thousands of orthodox Hindu women, she feels that she would not, if she could, have made a school that should have been other than a daily resort for its pupils. In this way, a maximum of help is given as she thinks, with a minimum of social disturbance to those served. No one is taken into her home to live, and thus no self-reliance, no independence is undermined by the foreign touch. She has organized no market for the little products of the needle, that would disappear, with the ending of personal activity. Her only specific merit is, that in a spirit of intense respect for the Hindu home, she is striving to organize a method of education that long after she

is dead,* can be maintained by Hindus themselves as an integral part of the civic activity of the Hindu community. She teaches no religion, holding that this is the function of home and parent. But throughout the school the religious symbols and ideas that are familiar to the people are referred to with perfect freedom and respect. The heroic literature is taught and this means that the social ideals of the Indian people are held up to a growing, not a lessening, sanctity and reverence.

The prayer of this American teacher is that her students may be—not bad copies of the American woman, but still nobler examples of that Indian womanhood towards which their mothers strove, with a greatness and beauty that those mothers themselves may recognize and enjoy. And as I contemplate this effort, I think that wisdom is shown as much in what it does not, as in what it does attempt, and for my own part I regard my American Sister, striving to solve the educational problem of a foreign people as standing in the ranks of the great Educators of the world.

*She passed away in the year 1930.—*Ed.*

THE HINDU CONCEPTION OF DEVA AND ASURA

BY PROF. AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJER, M.A.

(Continued from the last issue)

SIGNIFICANCE OF DEVA-WORSHIP THROUGH YAJNA

The *Devas* are thus regarded as the *Cosmic Spiritual Powers*, whose functions are to contribute to the good of the universe—to manifest themselves in phenomena beneficial to men and creatures and harmonious with the ideal immanent in the world system; while

the *Asuras* are those *Cosmic Spiritual Powers*, that are the originators of the various kinds of evils in the universe, that manifest themselves in phenomena injurious to men and other creatures and tending to obstruct the harmonious development of their system. The *Devas* are the cosmic counterparts of the good wills in the individuals and of the

good individuals in the society; while the *Asuras* are the cosmic counterparts of the evil tendencies in the individuals and of the bad characters in the society. The worship of the *Devas* inwardly signifies the bringing about of a conscious harmony of the individual selves and their activities with the good cosmic selves and the modes of their self-expression. The *Devas* have got no individual interests of their own. They are eternally engaged in giving themselves up in the creation of forces and phenomena for the good of the whole universe, and this serves as the ideal to be pursued by their worshippers. Inspired by this ideal, the worshippers of the *Devas* accept it as the principle of their duty to *sacrifice* their individual interests as far as practicable in the particular stages of their self-development and offer the resources at their disposal for the good of the universe. This is the principle underlying *Yajna* or sacrifice, in the form of which the *Devas* are worshipped by Hindus. *Yajna* has assumed different forms according to the capacities of the worshippers as well as according to the various occasions which are availed of for rendering sacrifices. It is through *Yajna* or sacrifice that the individuals gradually learn to universalize themselves and identify themselves with the *Devas*. It is through the highest form of *Yajna*, in which all the actual and possible objects of desire of the individual are absolutely sacrificed, that the individual self becomes perfectly identified with the infinite Self of the universe, the *Deva of all Devas*, and it reaches the glorious end of its worldly career. This, however, is not subject matter for elaborate discussion in this paper. Here we only *point* to the inner intention behind the system of *Deva-worship through Yajna* that was intro-

duced into the Hindu society by the early Hindu thinkers.

INEVITABLE TRIUMPH OF DEVAS OVER ASURAS—OF GOOD OVER EVIL

A deep insight into the moral constitution of the universe, based partly upon a thorough reflective study of the courses of events in the phenomenal world and chiefly upon an ever-growing faith in the ultimate triumph of what was morally good in their own nature, led the early Hindus to an unshakable conviction that in the cosmic warfare between the *Devas* and the *Asuras* the final victory must go to the former—that in the moral conflict between *good* and *evil* in the universe, good was sure to prevail in the long run. With the development of our moral consciousness, we progressively realize that it is upon the triumph of good over evil—the victory of the *Devas* over the *Asuras*—that the preservation and development of creatures, the progress and happiness of men and animals, the order and harmony of the phenomenal world, depend. The more we acquire faith in the goodness and gloriousness of the final destiny of our souls, and the more we become confident that we are destined to attain the ultimate truth, the perfect beauty, the complete goodness and the absolute bliss as the inevitable goal of our spiritual life, the more deeply are we convinced that the very constitution of the universe must be such as to furnish us with whatever is essentially necessary for the realization of this supreme ideal. This again inspires us with the confidence that the Powers, whose actions and reactions, conflicts and co-operations, determine the character of the world process, must be essentially so related that those which are favourable to the progressive realization of the Ideal must be higher and stronger than those that are hostile

to it, and that the final triumph of the former over the latter is absolutely certain. As there may be temporary set-backs in the moral and spiritual life of a man, so there may be temporary apparent victories of evil over good, untruth over truth, deformity over beauty, vice over virtue, misery over happiness, disharmony over harmony, *i.e.* the triumphs of the *Asuras* over the *Devas*. But the very constitution of the world consists in the progressive self-revelation of Truth, Beauty, Goodness, Bliss and Harmony through the conquest and destruction of the forces of Untruth, Ugliness, Evil, Misery and Disharmony. At a very early period of the history of the human race, Hindus had acquired this glorious moral conviction and preached the inevitable conquest and destruction of the *Asuras* by the *Devas*.

Ought AS THE ESSENCE OF *Is*—DEVA
AS REAL AND ASURA AS UNREAL

The development of this outlook gradually led the Hindu mind to conceive of '*ought*' as the essence of '*is*,'—Goodness, Beauty and Bliss as the proper categories for indicating the essential character of Truth and Reality. What is good, beautiful and blissful is truly real, and what is inherently evil, ugly and painful, though appearing as undeniably real to our sense-ridden consciousness, is from the higher point of view unreal or false appearance. That which has no moral justification for existence cannot truly have any real existence in this moral system of the universe. The Supreme Good, which is in its essential character absolutely beautiful and blissful, is the ultimate Reality, eternal Truth. It is not only superior to, more powerful than and ultimately triumphant over the evil, the ugly, the painful and the vicious; but the latter is not *real* in the

sense in which the former is real. When this point of view got hold of the Hindu mind, it looked upon the *Devas* as not only Spiritual Agencies of a higher order than the *Asuras* and as not only destined to establish the reign of peace and harmony, goodness and beauty, love and happiness in the universe by the conquest and destruction of the *Asuras*; but it regarded the *Devas* as essentially real, and their apparent rivals as essentially unreal. It came to the conclusion that the *Asuras* had no permanent or essential place in the real universe, that they were not real in the sense in which the *Devas* were real, that they had only apparent existence in this world of phenomenal experience. Here we find a conception of Reality, the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. To appreciate the beauty and grandeur of this conception, our reason has to rise to a much higher plane of thought than that in which it habitually dwells. At this stage the Hindu mind recognized the identity of the demand of Reason and the demand of Moral and Aesthetic consciousness, and discovered that Truth or Reality sought after by Reason is identical with Good and Beauty, which are the ideals of our Moral and Aesthetic consciousness.

Thus the *Devas* or the Good and Beautiful Spirits must be the essential realities underlying the forces and the phenomena of Nature; all the forces and the phenomena of the world of experience must ultimately be the self-expressions or self-transformations of the thoughts and wills of the *Devas*; the *Devas*, and not the *Asuras*, must be the real grounds at the foundation of the world system. The world system is thus conceived as a good, beautiful and harmonious process, designed for and adapted to the realization of the highest spiritual Ideal, and it owes its origin, order and progress to the self-

determined activities of the *Devas*, who are not only Spiritual Beings with free rational wills, but also Moral Beings with good and beautiful characters, and all whose self-expressions are directed towards the achievement of the Supreme Ideal of Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Bliss. This is the conception of the universe, which can be found out even by the analysis of the various mythological descriptions of the relations of the *Devas* and the *Asuras* in the Puranic Texts.

The world of the *Devas* is described as *Swarga* or Heaven. This world is above and beyond the world of phenomena; it is not a material region limited in space and changing in time like this sensible world; it is a higher spiritual world, being the abode of real Spiritual Substances and Powers, which are the grounds and causes of this world of sensuous experience. The *Devas* or the essentially good spirits are the real substances and their wills are the real Powers, and we can come in direct touch with them when we rise from the sensuous plane to the moral and spiritual planes of experience. We then realize that this world of sense-experience is a partial expression of Heaven—the world of moral and spiritual experience which sustains its existence and determines the course of its affairs. The more we can transcend this physical and sensuous plane of experience and move habitually in the moral and spiritual planes, the more do we become worthy of residing in Heaven, the world of the *Devas*, and participating in their character and enjoyment. It is *Dharma* or systematic moral and spiritual discipline which develops and refines our rational nature, emancipates it from the bondages and limitations of grossly sensuous earthly existence, and leads us up to Heaven.

ASURAS AS THE COUNTER-EGOS OF DEVAS

One question remains, so far as the present paper is concerned. How could the Hindu thinkers, consistently with this moral conception of Reality, explain the apparent existence and the apparently powerful influence of the *Asuras*, the Evil Spirits? The problem of evil is one of the baffling problems of Philosophy and Theology. The prevalence of what we ordinarily regard as evil in the inorganic, the organic, the sentient and the human worlds has led many philosophers to conceive of evil as more real than good and sometimes even to think of evil as constituting the very nature of Existence. But the advanced Hindu thinkers have gone so far as to deny altogether the real existence of evil in the universe. To them Evil has no reality in the spiritual world, which is the basis of this world.

According to the advanced moral conception of Reality, the *Devas* are the only real grounds of all phenomenal or apparent existences. The *Asuras*, who are conceived as the grounds of the recognized evils in the phenomenal world, have accordingly no real existence by themselves. The *Devas* must be the sources of the *Asuras* as well, though the latter are apparently hostile to the former. The Hindu mind solves this problem by holding that the *Asuras* represent the *limitations* of the *Devas*. The powers and potentialities of the *Devas* are not perfectly realized in this sensuous phenomenal world limited in space and time. The phenomenal world is always in the process of creation and development. This means that in all the departments of this world, the manifestations of the power, goodness, beauty and wisdom of the *Devas* are partial and imperfect, and the history of the world process is a history of

constant endeavours to remove these imperfections and to make the manifestations more and more complete. The ideals immanent in the activities of the *Devas* are revealed in the phenomenal world under various forms of limitations. These limitations are conceived to be the *counter-egos* of the *Devas*, which condition and obstruct, as it were, the self-manifestations of the *Devas*, in the phenomenal world, and by overcoming which the *Devas* must realize the ideals inherent in their character. These *counter-egos* of the *Devas* are the *Asuras*.

It is in the very constitution of the world of finite phenomenal beings, that the Ideals of Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Bliss should at every particular stage be realized in limited degrees and partial aspects, and this implies that there should appear by their side Untruth, Ugliness, Evil and Misery. These latter, though not real by themselves and though inconceivable except by reference to the former, are the measurements of the limitations of the former. The higher, the brighter, the more perfect the realization of the Ideals, the more do the limitations disappear and prove to be false appearances. In the absence of these limitations there would be no world process, for the Ideals would be eternally realized in perfection. These limitations when considered from the spiritual plane of thought, are traced to the *Asuras*, the spiritual *counter-egos* of the *Devas*. They are neither real in the sense in which the *Devas* are real, nor unreal in the sense of absolute non-existence. They may therefore be said to have *apparent reality* or *negative reality*. When the powers of the *Devas* are fully manifested, when the ideals which they seek to realize by the exercise of their powers are perfectly realized, the *Asuras* would be found at that ideal stage of the world

process to be non-existent. Thus the development of the world process consists in the progressive destruction of the *Asuras*, the shadowy evil spirits, the limitations of the *Devas*. The *Devas* are really fighting against their own *shadows*, and it is by destroying these shadows that they seek to fulfil themselves in the products of their wills. When the *Asuras* are completely destroyed, their unreality is fully established, the reign of the *Devas* is perfectly realized, then the Kingdom of Heaven is manifested in all its brilliance in this phenomenal world. This is of course an ideal which is never to become actual in the plane of sensuous experience. In the highest spiritual planes, however, this ideal is experienced as eternally realized and the whole world appears to be radiant with Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Bliss, with no real element of Untruth, Evil, Ugliness and Misery. Those who view the world from that plane actually see that *what ought to be really is*, and the existence of *what ought not to be* is only apparent.

I should now finish the article with a word of caution. We find, in many popular treatises passing by the name of religious books, various mythological stories about the *Devas* and the *Asuras* which do not always faithfully represent the conceptions of the higher Hindu minds. These stories are sometimes the products of the sense-dominated imagination of the poets of the lower planes of experience, who received the ideas of the *Devas* and *Asuras* from the teachings of the *Rishis* and the *Acharyas* of the higher planes, but could not always keep true to their inner significance in their popular representations of them. Sometimes the Hindu teachers of the higher planes of experience also attempted to popularize their higher philo-

sophical and religious ideas and ideals by means of allegorical descriptions and illustrative stories, which have subsequently been amplified in form, but degraded in meaning, in many cases.

Last of all, I should mention that in this article I have only attempted to point out the rational significance of the wars between the *Devas* and the *Asuras* and the inevitable destruction of the

latter. The conception of the plurality of *Devas* and their apparent enemies furnishes by no means the final explanation of the world system. The Hindu thought arrived at the definite conception of one Absolute Spirit, of whom the Gods are partial self-manifestations. The conception of many gods ultimately led to the conception of one God of gods.

IN QUEST OF THE GREAT UNKNOWN

BY BHIKKHU SUVRATA

“No man became a Saint in his sleep.”

Many are indifferent about God, because they do not come into contact with persons who have direct perception of God and can give first-hand information about Him. If all that has been said about the bliss that follows the realization of God be true, all are sure to make it the first object of their life to realize God. Even in worldly life, in business, people are eager to follow that line which will bring them the maximum profit. Now, why is it that people are not eager to realize God, though every scripture of every religion says that on attaining God one attains all things that are covetable in heaven or on earth? The Bible says that if one simply seek the kingdom of God “all these things” shall be added unto him; if a devotee makes the slightest sacrifice for God, he will be compensated hundredfold. The Gita says that when one realizes God, one will consider no other thing in the world covetable.

The Taittiriya Upanishad makes a more definite attempt to give a concrete idea of the bliss of the realization of Brahman. It says that the greatest amount of happiness in the human world

falls to the lot of a youth, noble, learned, strong, resolute, full of optimism and having at his command all the wealth that the world can give. But the happiness of this youth is but one-hundredth part of the happiness of a ‘Gandharva.’ Hundredfold the happiness of a Gandharva is the joy of those who live in heaven and so on. In this way, the Upanishad describes the happiness of one who has realized Brahman as ten hundred times the happiness of the youth described first. The same Upanishad describes Brahman as Bliss; for from Bliss the world comes, by Bliss it exists and into Bliss it again enters.

There is no denying the fact that all the hard struggles of a man are for the conquest of happiness. Now, if on realizing Brahman all the fever of human life vanishes, why does not a man go that way? The answer is simple. One finds every day in the world persons who have made fortunes, attained name and fame, and wield power—covetable position no doubt; so one tries to be like them. But one rarely meets with a person who has realized God or whose life is a living example of all that is

told in the scriptures about the happy state of a God-man. On the contrary, one always comes across persons who have no scruple to deceive others in the name of religion, in order to serve some selfish ends. Cases are not rare that persons whom people have considered to be saintly, afterwards have turned to be cheats or charlatans. So people get double remorse—remorse for being cheated and remorse for perceiving that genuine religion is so very rare, if it has got any existence at all outside the imagination of emotional persons. This is the reason why many do not *dare* seek God, though they would not think that the quest of God is altogether a bad investment for their struggles and exertions.

But the unfortunate part of it is that man cannot long remain forgetting and ignoring God entirely. As he starts in life and gets experience after experience—blow after blow—he realizes the transitoriness of all earthly things and gasps for something which is changeless and eternal. Man finds that he cannot be sure of anything in the world. His friends betray, relations die, the fruits of his life-long labours come to naught at one moment. The husband loves the wife, or the mother is dottingly fond of her child—but at any moment they may die and make the life of the husband and the mother miserable. These blows of nature cannot be borne simply in a spirit of stoicism. Stoicism is a good theory to many who have not to face such dreary situations actually. Many persons who talk big and give patronizing advice that life should be considered as an adventure and the buffets of misfortune should be taken as inevitable, actually have to tremble when they are face to face with calamities.

There are some sufferings and difficulties which, it *seems*, can be over-

come through sufficient knowledge, and intelligence, precaution and care, labour and perseverance, but there are things against which man is absolutely helpless. Of them death is one. One may not care for one's death, but how many can bear the death of their nearest friends without writhing in agony and heart-breaking grief, except if they are unfeeling? Even hardened criminals have often soft corners for some one—it may be their child or any other relation—whose death will shake their whole being and change their entire outlook on life.

It is out of such situations—when man finds himself helpless—that man develops a tendency to seek God. And there is no man who does not realize his helplessness at one time or another. Everyone has got the chance of being disillusionized if he thinks that this creation is without a creator whose will dominates all.

Man talks of personal liberty, freedom of conscience and other high-sounding things; but he will find, if he thinks a little deeply, that he is always a slave—a galley-slave to his senses. He has no conscience or rather he rarely follows it; in life more often than not he is led by his instinct, his passions, his senses. Some time he may inly rejoice at his own uprightness and other virtues, but at any moment he runs the risk of being led to do things which will not be atoned for even by lifelong remorse. If he succeeds in controlling his senses at one time, he succumbs to it a hundred times. From the unknowing public a man may receive approbation for his character, but there is hardly a man who can say that he has full control over himself, or is free from the qualms of conscience. Why does a man commit wrong against his own will? Now, this tyranny of senses seems to some to be the worst form of tyranny in the world. To be

proved a coward to themselves? a slave to their senses?—some can hardly tolerate that idea! They want to be masters of themselves. But as they are baffled in their attempts to do so, they want to know the mystery of their being, and, therefore, seek God and religion.

Will the world call them sensitive? Well, those who have no idea of the real freedom, will compromise with their state of slavery. They want to console themselves with the thought that their life of slavery is the normal condition of life. But those who are daring, those who are bold and courageous, will never like to cover a festering sore with flowers; but will always launch into a perilous adventure to achieve the seemingly impossible. They will not listen to the siren voice of the world; they will stand apart from the rest of their fellow-beings, they will stand by themselves. They are at war with themselves, and just as all revolutionaries count against all hosts they are also daring in their ambition. They think they will succeed where the whole world has failed—they hope they will conquer themselves, they will break the mystery of the world and realize the unknown.

The woes and sufferings of these persons are all the more great, because they hardly find anyone who can sympathize with their hopes and aspirations, who can understand their thoughts and feelings. The world is against them, because they have alienated its sympathy by going against its general current. They stand alone to fight out their battle of life, against enemies outside and inside. Such is the condition of those who think they will realize God in life.

Now, who will help them? They turn to the scriptures for guidance. But the scriptures are so much at variance with one another, that hardly they can

give them any definite idea as to the condition of the path they will have to tread or the trials and tribulations they will have to meet, in the journey they have undertaken. Many of the advice given in the scriptures seem to be theoretical or in the absence of persons in whom the teachings of the scriptures have become living, they find it difficult to hold their faith in them—especially when difficulties come in numbers and success seems to be far off. They are led to think that the scriptures have got interest only for the philosophers or those who want to find intellectual pleasure in them,—but as a guidance of life they are no good. They therefore think it a waste of time to plod over them. No doubt they get inspiration from here and there while reading them, but that does not become lasting. That inspiration is like a thin web of spider which a puff of wind blows off or the dew drops of the night which cannot stand the glare of even the morning sun.

One's faith in the scriptures depends on the faith in those whose teachings and revelations they are. But as many of the Prophets and Teachers lived only in the past and many legends centring round them have made the actual facts of their life very often obscure, it becomes very difficult for one to keep one's unquestioning belief in them. Simply by glorifying the past or honouring a traditional belief one cannot stand the trial of life. One's faith in the scriptures becomes strong when one finds some tangible result by following them. To the spiritually advanced the scriptures bring ever-new messages, but what is the case of those who are still only seeking the way? They are tossed up and down in the sea of doubt, despair and fear.

Fortunate are those who have met with persons who are genuinely religious or whose life is a burning example of the teachings of the scriptures and, therefore, a source of great inspiration to others. But even these people are not free from trials. Perhaps through familiarity they will fail to continue their faith in those whose life once drew out their love and admiration. When the charm of newness wears off, they begin to doubt, judge, and test the words of the saints in whom they had once unbounded faith. They begin to see their small frailties—real or fancied—in magnified colours and lose sight of their virtues, which are taken as matters of course in religious life. A saint only can properly evaluate a saintly life, so what doubt is there that a seeker, a novice, will fail to understand a teacher even though the latter be of sterling merit?

Here comes the conflict between reason and faith. Undoubtedly reason should be one's guide in all affairs until reason is transcended by a direct perception of Truth. But reason also sometimes betrays. Reason is sometimes coloured by our infirmities. Reason tries to justify what one emotionally feels a liking for; or it often goes out of the way to support one's personal prejudices. Very rarely man wants to see with open eyes. A man can no more be free from his prejudices, which he has developed through his upbringing or from his environment, than he can go out of himself. Therefore one's faith may often be wrongly tried by reason. The scope of reason is up to the limit of human affairs. But a seeker after Truth wants to go beyond human limitations. So reason cannot talk authoritatively on matters which are a mystery to human intelligence.

But faith also occasionally fares worse. Examples are not rare that

persons giving preference to faith rather than to reason have been deceived. And man cannot have sustained faith in the words of teachers or the sayings of the scriptures until he has realized the final Truth. Till then he will always have a conflict between reason and faith. He will have either to stifle the whispers of reason or dismiss the promptings of faith. So a seeker can hardly expect immunity from struggles.

The Sadhaka in great perplexity takes to prayer as the only remedy for all his sufferings. He appeals directly to God. He thinks that if he be sincere and earnest, God will hear his earnest prayer and appease his hunger and take him to a region beyond all human limitations. Indeed, if one be sincere and earnest, God responds to one's prayer. That is the verdict of all saints belonging to all religions. But who can say that he is really sincere in his thirst for God? At one moment he seems to want nothing but God, but the next moment he finds that the world and its enjoyments have got stronger attraction for him. If they cannot entice him in gross forms, they come in subtle forms and wear manifold wily appearances. And it becomes difficult for him to distinguish between right and wrong. If he sits for prayer, his mind is crowded with all sorts of thoughts except that of God; because he is then outwardly quiet, they all find an entrance into his mind and make him bewildered. Sometimes things from the subsoil of mind make their appearance on the surface, and he is horrified to look at them. He doubts his sincerity, doubts whether his love of God is genuine. He feels a void in his heart. He calls it a spiritual void. But could he be mistaken in his judgment? Does he want something which he does not fully know?

But he fully knows what he does not want. He is fully convinced of the

vanity of the world and its transitoriness. He knows that the world is like a quicksand which engulfs an unwary traveller. That he cannot realize the presence of God is no reason that he should compromise with the world. Though he has not got the vision of God, he knows what the world is. According to him, only the weak-minded people make compromise with the world. How can the world and truth remain together side by side? If you want the one, that shows you do not want the other. The man who has found joy and satisfaction in the worldly pleasures, cannot feel any want for God. Or rather those who cannot give up the attachment for worldly enjoyment—though it brings nothing but pain in the end—will never seek God. Whether renunciation of the world is good or bad, is not the question; this cannot be decided by intellectual discussions. But it is a simple logic that darkness and light cannot go together. Many say, see the world as the manifestation of God. But, the aspirant thinks, how can one realize that the world is a manifestation of God if one does not know God? And why should he remain satisfied with the *manifestation* if it is possible for him to see the Master-Creator Himself?

He cannot persuade himself to believe that it will be altogether impossible for him to realize God. Have not thousands of persons, belonging to different times and climes, realized God. Why should he not then be able to do the same? It might be that they were a better type of people, and he is worse. But what does it matter if one be a degree better or worse? Are not all equal in the eye of God? If God cannot ignore the weakness of a man, forgive the sins of a sinner, He is no God at all. The world judges a man by his merits and demerits, but are not all entitled to the

equal love and sympathy of God? Even the world sympathizes with a sincerely penitent man, will not God do the same? Besides, life means limitations and he is eager to be free from human limitations. He is praying for freedom from exactly those things which stand in the way of one's realizing God. Will not God rescue him from this great dilemma? He cannot believe that God will not.

Had not even those persons who are known as Sons of God or Incarnations, been infinite in their love and sympathy for one and all. Many of them metamorphosed the life of worst sinners by a single touch or a single glance. Is not God infinitely more powerful? Has not God infinitely greater love and sympathy? He cannot believe that he is entitled to less sympathy and love from God, because, according to the judgment of the world, he is inferior to this man or that. He feels that one window of his heart is wide open to God; but his only difficulty is that he cannot annihilate the distance between God and himself.

In this predicament an aspirant may have consolation from the fact that the history of religion shows no man who has achieved anything without struggles—heart-breaking struggles. In the worldly life one may gain wealth or any other material thing through cleverness or some other method of easy success, but in matters religious, there is no short cut. Here one must pay the price—to the last farthing—for what one wants to get. How much struggle had Buddha, Christ and a host of others to pass through? Buddha's struggle against the assault of Mar, Christ's temptation by Satan—what do they indicate? Their followers and disciples may try to obscure their stages of struggle with poetic imageries (for fear lest they go against the greatness of those God-men),

but one who has got critical eyes can easily understand that even the Prophets had, at one period of their life, to pass through the valley of despair—that even they had their “dark night of the soul.”

The fact is, so long as one has got ego-consciousness, one must have to struggle. God is near, very near—but He is kept at a distance by one’s ego-sense. Through constant struggle this ego-sense is broken down, and the Sadhaka finds that he was so long fighting with shadows: God was very near to him enjoying his discomfiture. Then he loses his own will in the will of God. He is then like a piece of burnt rope, which has got the appearance of a rope but, as a matter of fact, is nothing but ashes. He is, to all outward appearances, just like any other man, but he has no will—no desire for anything. He is self-satisfied. But to attain that state one must have to pass through a hell of struggle, wade through a desert of doubt and despair unrelieved by any hope of success.

And what does it matter if one does not attain success in one’s struggle for noble aim? Is there no joy in the consciousness that one is sincerely trying to improve oneself? In this respect there is greater joy in the struggle than in the success. Some say that the creation is a Lila—a sport—of God. He manifests Himself as different beings, in order that He may enjoy their

struggles and activities of life. Some courageous devotees talk of ‘Ahetuki Bhakti,’ *i.e.* they say they will love God without caring whether or no their love is reciprocated by God. They think that by their earnest devotion and burning sincerity they will put God to shame because of His failure to return their love. They may or may not realize God, but they are determined to keep their vision of life always directed towards God.

There is a belief that there is a kind of birds that will die of thirst but will not drink any water except what falls from heavens. Heart-breaking failures may come on the way, difficulties may seem to be insurmountable, but heroic devotees never get daunted; they have got their vision always fixed on God. The slogan of their life is :

“Let eyes grow dim and heart grow
faint

* * *

Let Fate its hundred horrors send
And clotted darkness block the way—

“All nature wear one angry frown
To crush you out—still know, my soul,
You are Divine.—March on and on,
Nor right nor left but to the goal!”

Is there no joy in such fight? And they say one who has such attitude of life has not to fight long. The victory is to the STRONG.

ART AND MODERN INDIA

BY NANALAL C. MEHTA, I.C.S.

MODERN INDIA

Three-quarters of a century is not a long period in the history of a country like Hindustan, and yet until very re-

cently even the memories of a fine and sensitive culture—I am principally referring to the glorious period of the Pahari paintings towards the middle of

the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century—were forgotten. It is difficult at this distance of time to realize the urbanity of culture which delighted in such extraordinarily beautiful and tender master-piece, primarily narrative in their subject-matter and emotional in their outlook, dealing with legend, myth, Puranic history, episodes from the epics and above all with the everyday life of the people including their song and dance. I have come across such ordinary articles as fans, which have been exquisitely painted on either side. Little stools, ordinary chairs, beds, tables, handkerchiefs, pieces of cloth used for playing the game of *Chausar*, playing-cards, chess-boards, household utensils—almost everything appears to have been permeated with a sense of beauty and rhythm peculiarly Indian. It is not merely distance in time that is responsible for this enchantment. To visualize the past from the remnants in pictures, cloth, utensils, furniture, is almost like creating a new world of singular charm and beauty in comparison with and contrast to the general atmosphere of costly vulgarity and tawdriness that prevails in the pretentious homes of our princes and the new urban aristocracy of lawyers, share-brokers, enterprising speculators, traders, businessmen and money-lenders.

I have sometimes asked myself as to the whereabouts of art in modern India. I have tried in vain to locate it in the palaces of the ruling chiefs or the mansions of the rich bourgeoisie. So far as the poor are concerned, the struggle for existence would hardly seem to leave any time whatever for contemplation of anything so unpractical and so irrelevant as matters æsthetic. The amazing thing about modern India, despite the artistic awakening which has now been proceeding for over 20 years or more, is the extraordinary apathy of

the educated Indian and his singular incapacity to understand or to respond to artistic stimuli. In fact the atmosphere for a real, instructive and sympathetic understanding of art is altogether missing in this country. It is in fact easier to interest a cultured foreigner in the artistic productions of India, past or present, than an educated Indian, who is found to be almost temperamentally unresponsive to artistic stimuli. Modern India seems to be content with either third-rate productions of European art or no art at all. There is hardly any place for painting, sculpture, or music in a modern Indian home. The artistic perception is so dim and the response so feeble that I have sometimes felt something like despair at the utter absence of taste in the decorations of the numerous public buildings which have been rising up from year to year during the last twenty-five years.

PLACE OF ART IN MODERN INDIA

Our public buildings have hardly been affected by artistic considerations. Both the public and the Government seem to be of opinion that there is no room for sculpture or painting in the edifices constructed for public purposes—such as universities, townhalls, libraries, museums, school and college buildings, hotels, clubs, hospitals, theatres or Dharamsalas. Picture-galleries and museums are few and far between. While the public is keenly interested in the multiplication of schools and colleges, art is apparently considered useless or an extravagant waste of money and it is therefore unnecessary to make any provision for the study of Indian art—whether it be architecture, sculpture, painting or music. There is no room for artistic training in the curricula prescribed by the faculties of arts or sciences.

The result is what could have been easily foreseen. From the humble

village school to the expensive auditoria and lecture-halls of our modern universities, the prevailing atmosphere is the same—one of unredeemed gloom and dreary monotony. Rhythm, colour and harmony are qualities foreign as it were to our centres of education and enlightenment. Go where you will, a home redolent with beauty and colour is a sight altogether exceptional and uncommon in this country, especially among the classes which style themselves progressive, up-to-date and educated and are reasonably prosperous particularly in these days of economic distress when the gaunt spectre of poverty stalks throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan. In a country where people are never tired of vaunting their so-called spirituality, one comes across amazing unconcern and lack of interest in things of abstract beauty. It is as if the very capacity of a normal human being to feel the joy and warmth of beautiful creations had somehow or other diminished in the process of his unnatural evolution in the uncongenial atmosphere of our educational establishments.

There is no doubt that whatever may be the other shortcomings of our educational system, it is certainly responsible for enfeebling the natural instinct of a normal individual for artistic appreciation and judgment, and perverting it into something singularly crude and uninviting. The famous Jaina scholar Hemachandra—the ornament of the court of Kumarapal and practically the last of the great encyclopædic scholars of the medieval period—compares the capacity for æsthetic perception, which he considers to be a natural gift, as something akin to the experience of realizing the great Reality—*Brahmananda*. There is no doubt whatever that there has been a tremendous and progressive decline during the last

hundred years in this ability to discriminate between what is merely pretty, ephemeral and of no artistic consequence and something beautiful, dynamic and abiding, that is responsible for a new experience altogether. People travelling in China and Japan have always marvelled at the instinctive sense of the people for things beautiful, whether they be the creations of Nature or of human hands. It is as if the individual had felt in his inmost soul and grasped the all-pervasive rhythm and harmony of the great universe. Our case is somewhat different and perhaps partly pathological. Luckily we have developed a new and unlimited capacity for debiting all our failings, shortcomings and misfortunes to the account of an alien and unsympathetic government, but for whose partial interest in our artistic monuments a good many of our surviving monuments of the past would have altogether disappeared and been long forgotten. Unfortunately, however, we cannot explain away the perversion of taste or the absence of discrimination in matters artistic by the want of education—a new mythical phantasm which is the peculiar creation of modern India for exorcizing all the ills that the country suffers from, for it is precisely the so-called educated and sophisticated classes who are least sensible to æsthetic reactions.

ART AND NATIONALISM

The tidal sweep of modern nationalism has strangely enough not invaded the regions of artistic perception, where it might have done unmixed good and created a new *milieu* for the growth and development of a tradition really indigenous and attuned it to the real surge of the people; where it could have brought a touch of colour, added a note of harmony to relieve the depressing monotony and lifted the pall of vulgarity

from our urban homes, palaces and public buildings. It may be mentioned that just as the extension of *Swadesism* by insisting on the use of our languages as the vehicles of our higher education has hitherto encountered the opposition of our own countrymen, so our artists and artistic handicrafts are being starved also by the apathy and want of support of our own intelligentsia. Or, is cheapness at any price the slogan of the new age, that makes no exceptions and has no local bias? What is however surprising is that the vitality of Indian art should have persisted and survived even in the present depressing environment and that new shoots should have sprung forth from the age-old trunk of great æsthetic traditions.

LOSS OF ARTISTIC SENSIBILITY

What is true of sculpture and painting is equally true of music. Barring the indomitable endeavours of a few workers here and there, millions of our middle classes, educated and uneducated, are completely uninterested in and indifferent to matters of artistic moment. What is strange is not the want of their encouragement or the absence of their support, but the utter loss of artistic sensibility. It seems as if within the last hundred years a new race has come into being, different from the people who delighted in lovely little lyrics of pictorial art, in sensuous rhythms of beautiful sculptures depicting the gods and goddesses of their pantheon.

I have sometimes asked myself the question whether Indian art, if it is not to be found in the homes of the rich, can be discovered in the abodes of the poor. At first sight the query seems to be meaningless, almost amounting to mockery, when one thinks of the tumble-down hovels and the collection of mud-houses which are called villages in this

country, and which seem to proclaim the despair and misery of their poverty from the house-tops. And yet curiously enough, I have found myself an admiring witness of beautiful costumes gracefully worn by the village maids; I have seen simple and ordinary articles of daily use satisfying in their artistic completeness. I have often admired beautiful spots of colour on the walls of some village houses, depicting as of old, scenes either from the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*. I have occasionally seen pictures depicting scenes from the urban life of India—sometimes the habits and the manners of the Europeans in this country. In a far off village at Kalakankar in the district of Partabgarh on the banks of the Ganges, I was amazed to see entire walls and ceilings having been painted, only half a century ago, with the scenes from the lives of the Europeans and from the life of the common people. These pictures are an essential part of our old-fashioned architecture. As music is an indispensable adjunct of all our festivities, so are coloured pictures considered indispensable for the houses of the well-to-do in rural areas. The old tradition still persists in areas where people are not so sophisticated and Europeanized as the educated Indian in the cities. The artists—generally fresco-painters—are the poor village craftsmen who continue to work according to ancient conventions and transmit their knowledge from generation to generation. The apathy and ignorance of the educated Indian has almost killed the arts of music and dancing in this country. The old-fashioned Ustad—the musician, the actor, the dancer and not the least, the old-fashioned master-builder—architect, sculptor and painter—the repository of the ancient *Silpa Sastras* is now considered a superfluous relic of the past and cannot make a living. He has al-

most disappeared and it is doubtful whether any amount of the so-called revival will bring back his massive knowledge, his extraordinary technique and wonderful tradition of the old master.

So far as sculpture is concerned, the obsequies were performed several centuries ago. Occasionally hereditary craftsmen have been able to put up—especially in the South—some magnificent examples of temple sculpture. The future, however, is uncertain and far from hopeful.

THE NEW REVIVAL

In the realm of pictorial art we have been more fortunate. With the rising consciousness of the people has developed a new impulse for artistic expressions. What was in its inception an eclectic movement has now become a school of organized expression. A band of workers conscious, gifted, confident and eager to revive the lost glories of their artistic heritage has spread all over the country making experiments, evolving individual techniques, assimilating the past, all the time endeavouring to say something definite and distinctive, which will not be merely a vain echo of the past, nor a lifeless copy of something which is not their own. Considering the atmosphere in which these young men have been working with little encouragement and less public support, it is surprising that they should have been able to achieve so much. The time for polemics and provincial jealousies or mutual recriminations is not yet. The pictorial revival is still the interest of the limited few. The great public is still unconcerned. It still sleeps. It has to be interested in what appears to them to be merely a hobby of a few rich collectors or the occupation of a small number of unpractical enthusiasts.

Personally I have not been able to understand or sympathize with the controversy regarding the relative merits and the distinctive outlooks of the Bombay and Calcutta schools. To me the differentiation in what are called the Bengal and Bombay schools is a matter of but little import. India is vast enough to permit of several provincial dialects living as equal members of the federation of graphic and plastic arts, each one eager and untrammelled to maintain and enhance its reputation and to develop its work in its own distinctive way. Whatever may be the opinion of the professional workers, to an outsider what really matters in the long run is the expression of an emotion or an idea, and not the manner or the method by which it is expressed; for after all the æsthetic criterion is something which transcends and is independent of the use or otherwise of the latest scientific methods as applied to the art of painting or casting. Bombay and Calcutta both swear by Ajanta. So far it is all to the good. If any of them chooses to experiment in the European fashion, it is its own business. Besides, experimenting is not confined only to Bombay. Gaganendranath Tagore experimented years ago in the latest modes of cubism and some of the finest work of modern India is altogether foreign to the traditions of the old schools of Indian paintings. Recently the poet Rabindranath has struck out a path of his own. There is room enough for every kind of school in this continent. What is necessary for all the exponents of these schools is to achieve something of importance, and to interest the public in their artistic aspirations and accomplishments.

ART AND MODERN EDUCATION

It is a strange world that we are living in at present. Practical men who have

been at the helm of affairs now find that all their elaborate edifice of educational enlightenment has been somewhat in the nature of a sham, that the education imparted in the ambitious lecture-halls of our universities has failed to transfigure the man into a nobler or more powerful creature. Our so-called Art Schools have been the Cinderella of the educational system. They are said to be vocational schools only fit for the children of the poor or those that have not the necessary capacity or the resources for reaping the benefit of the ordinary educational institutions. When economic depression begins to tell, it is curious that the attention of these practical men immediately turns towards the extravagance of the attenuated budgets of these Schools of Arts and Crafts. What these eminent men sometimes forget is that the acquisition of power to understand the universal language as expressed by line, colour, rhythm, gesture and song is often more important from the point of view of a normal human being than the mere capacity to read and write in a restricted medium of a provincial vernacular. The orthodox educationist still thinks in terms literary and has still to understand that there is one language the currency of which is unhampered either by geographical barriers or by differences of language, script, custom or manners. This is the language of Art and the capacity to understand it means the power to distil the fullest enjoyment out of the gorgeous and colourful life of trees, flowers, water, sunshine and unlimited spaces.

PERSONAL CONFESSION

In conclusion I may be permitted to make a personal confession. I have known something of what are called Natural Sciences, for I am an old Tripos man of Cambridge; I have been a life-

long student of Economics; I have been a devotee of Sanskrit, and temperamentally addicted to literary and historical studies. For 18 years I have been doing the varied work of administration which falls to an Officer in the Indian Civil Service. Art has been a late intrusion in life, hardly more than 15 years old. But as age creeps in, as the amount of available leisure becomes less and the futility of keeping up-to-date even within the sectional limits of a subject becomes evident and the vanity of reading piles of books and becoming learned is realized, when printed matter begins sometimes to pall and the sheer output of it becomes a veritable nightmare, what solace it is to turn to the silent creations of art! It may be a mere fragment of an old-time sculpture, a worm-eaten reminiscent of the pictorial art of a by-gone age, a delicious drawing or a silhouette or a miniature painting of a modern artist. They are like the strains of music of which one is never tired, which soak, as it were, into the inmost recesses of consciousness and become an integral part of it.

The language of Art is the language of humanity. It needs nothing beyond a certain amount of sensibility and life to react to æsthetic beauty. No learned comments are required, for artistic creations are complete in themselves. They bring light and radiance, joy and happiness to all those who have the capacity to grasp them and to understand them. A long acquaintance with artistic creations brings a new understanding and reveals unexpected worlds of beauty even in regions where the ordinary eye finds nothing to arrest it or to impart a tinge of wistfulness. Æsthetic joy is like a mother's love, something indefinite but infinite, deep, silent and strong, disinterested and utterly selfless. It can be

found and experienced even in the least promising circumstances. Its abode is not always to be sought in the palaces of the rich, for it can be found in the humblest home of our poverty-stricken countryside. It is something in the nature of an elementary urge which requires development and opportunities to come in contact with the immortal creations of the past and the monumental creations of the present.

An organized endeavour is needed to train up a whole people to rise to its native sense of æsthetic enjoyment. Art cannot be ignored or banished from the life of a nation without doing irreparable damage to its soul. It must

have a place in the homes as well as in the class-rooms, in the temple as well as in the hospital, in places of amusement as well as in places of worship; for it is a thing of the spirit and no nation has yet arisen without the exaltation of the spirit. When the futility of mere literary training—of book learning—has been found to be more than a mere waste of time and opportunities, is it not time for the country to turn to something the results of which cannot for a moment be doubted? The past splendour of India lay not in her mythical wealth, but in the imperishable monuments of her artistic and creative mood.

HOW I FIRST MET SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY SWAMI BODHANANDA

In 1890 when I was a student in the Ripon College, Calcutta, I had the greatest blessing of my life to know of Sri Ramakrishna. With some of my class-mates and friends I attended the anniversary of the dedication of the Temple at Kakurgachhi in the month of August of that year. There we first heard of Sri Ramakrishna from one of his greatest devotees, the late Ramachandra Dutt. His devotion to Sri Ramakrishna is indescribable. Only those who knew him personally can appreciate it. We often chant the sacred verse "Thou art our Mother; Thou art our Father; Thou art our Friend; Thou art our Companion; Thou art our Wisdom; Thou art our Wealth; Thou art our All in All," but Rama Babu was one of those who realized its true meaning. To him Sri Ramakrishna was really his "All in All." He worshipped no other God than Sri Ramakrishna; never visited

any other Temple than the one at Kakurgachhi in which Sri Ramakrishna's ashes were interred; never read or preached any other religious doctrines or discourses than those he had heard from Sri Ramakrishna.

Master Mahasaya (Babu Mahendra Nath Gupta) was our Professor. We heard that he was also a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. One day we approached him and introduced ourselves to him. We had a little talk on Sri Ramakrishna. He recommended us to visit the Math at Baranagore where Sri Ramakrishna's Sannyasi disciples were then living. He was naturally a very reserved man, but was most cordial to us and candid in his opinion about a devotee who lives in his family and a disciple who has renounced the world to devote his whole life to the practice of religion. He used this simile: The former is like a sour mango, but quite ripe and the latter (a Sannyasin) is like a mango of the

highest grade (*Fazli* or *Langra*), but not yet ripe. Master Mahasaya's illustrations were very much to the point. He further said if we wished to see the living examples of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna we must go to the Math.

Shortly afterwards, we visited the Math. Our first visit was on a week day, as we went directly from the College. It was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon when we reached there. We first met Sasi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda). He was delighted to see us and enquired about us. When he learned that we were students he asked us some questions and advised us not to neglect our studies. We stayed until 5 or 6 o'clock. He took us to the Chapel (Thakur Ghar) after the doors were opened at 4 o'clock, gave us some flowers from the altar and *prasada* (dedicated fruits and sweets) which we valued most. We prostrated before the picture of Sri Ramakrishna on the bed and the wooden receptacle (*Kouta*) on the altar in which his sacred remains were preserved. There were four or five other Swamis. We saluted them all, one after the other, and they also very kindly spoke to us and blessed us with their well-wishes. When we parted they invited us to come again. We walked back home and all the time we talked of the wonderful visit—the renunciation of the Swamis and the peaceful atmosphere of the Math.

Master Mahasaya then lived in Kambuliatolah. On our way home, we stopped at his house and told him of the visit to the Math. He congratulated us and urged us to go there often and render personal services to the Swamis, such as shampooing their feet, preparing tobacco for their smoking, etc. To see them and serve them, to him, was like seeing and serving Sri Ramakrishna himself.

Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) had just left the Math for a pilgrimage in the North-Western Provinces of India. This time he wanted to live so exclusively that he very seldom wrote letters to the brothers at the Math. In fact, for a year or two nobody knew where he was.

Sasi Maharaj, Baburam Maharaj, Mahapurushji, Yogen Maharaj, Kali Maharaj and Niranjan Maharaj were at the Math then. They all told us about Swamiji and Sri Ramakrishna's love for him and his love to Sri Ramakrishna. Some of them even then assured us that Swamiji would be pleased to initiate us to Sannyasa when he returned to the Math.

Strangely enough several years before that time (most probably in 1887) when I was a student in the Metropolitan School, Bowbazar Branch, I saw Swamiji, who was then Headmaster of that School for a few weeks. I belonged to a lower grade and did not have the privilege and pleasure of hearing him teach our class. But I used to watch him from our class-room window almost every day as he entered the School compound. I still vividly remember the scene. He was clothed in trousers and Alpaka Chapkan with a white scarf (*Chadar*) about six feet long around his shoulders. In one hand he carried an umbrella and in the other a book, most probably the text-book of the Entrance Class. With sparkling eyes and smiling face he looked so indrawn that some would be attracted to him for his charming personality and some would not dare approach him for his extreme gravity and solemnity. It was not however until I came to the Baranagore Math that I knew that the great Headmaster who impressed me so much was Swamiji himself.

He returned to India in December, 1896, from his mission in America and

Europe. He landed in Colombo and arrived in Calcutta in January, 1897. I was then a teacher in a High School in a village near my home about twenty miles west of Calcutta. The Anniversary of the Birth of Sri Ramakrishna then used to be celebrated in the compound of the Temple gardens at Dakshineswar. The Swamis then lived in the Math at Alambazar about two miles from the Dakshineswar Temple gardens. That year the Anniversary took place as usual either in the last week of February or in the first week of March. The day before I came to the Math. That was a Saturday as the public celebration was held then as it is now on Sunday following the actual Birthday (Tithipuja).

Swamiji was then temporarily living in a house on the bank of the Ganges about three miles from the Math. Early in the morning on Sunday I saw him there. It was about six o'clock—still dark—when I arrived at the house. Swamiji was an early riser. He first saw me from the window of his room and came downstairs to open the door. I saluted him and he received me very kindly as if he had known me long before. He talked to me in a familiar way and asked me to fetch him a glass of water. He was then washing his mouth. When he learned that I was preparing for an examination he was pleased and gave me his blessing. Mahapurushji was there too. He told Swamiji that I was one of the group of young men who had been coming to the Math for several years and that I was planning to join the Order. On hearing this Swamiji said he would initiate me to Sannyasa in the near

future. Those words made the hope of the realization of my dream brighter.

A few days before the public anniversary—most probably on the actual Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna—Swamiji initiated four Brahmacharins to Sannyasa and on that day gave Mantra-initiation (Diksha) to one or two devotees. At about 8 o'clock he arrived at the Math. I came with him, by his permission, in the same carriage. Shortly after arrival he took his bath and went into the Chapel for meditation. We followed him. It was a most inspiring occasion.

At about 11 o'clock he went to the Dakshineswar Temple gardens where the public festival was being held. There was a vast concourse of people at the gardens and Swamiji's presence was another reason for that great crowd. Many requested him to deliver a lecture near the Panchavati (the cluster of five sacred trees). But the crowd was so enthusiastic and noisy in their expression of joy at his sight that he found it impossible to make a speech. At about 1 o'clock he returned to the Math for a rest. I was with him all that day and had the privilege of rendering him a little personal service as an attendant. That was a most glorious day of my life. Its impression is indelible in my memory. As I think of it now I still seem to feel the thrill of the joy I felt then.

The next day I had to return to my School duties with great reluctance. The sense of gratitude and exaltation of this unique occasion remained in me several days afterwards. I longed to see Swamiji again and sit at his feet for his further grace and guidance.

THE POET SAINT TULSIDAS

BY UPENDRA CHANDRA DUTTA, M.A., L.T.

From time immemorial two currents of different types of culture have been running in the land of Bharata—sometimes parallel, sometimes crossing and sometimes fusing in one broad stream. One of them is Aryan, Vedic and Monistic, the other is non-Aryan, Tantric and Dualistic. Both of them have found their utterances in the Upanishads and attempts have been made from time to time to synthesize these elements by philosophers, prophets and saints. The Monistic torch was carried by the Rishis of Old, Buddha, Mahavira, Goudapada, Sankara and others, while the Dualistic current was pushed by the Pancharatrias and Bhagavatas, Ramanuja, Ramanand, Kavir, Chaitanya, Mira, Tulsidas and other numerous devotees. As thought and feeling grow in an individual, organically in the same manner knowledge and devotion grow in the mind of every saint; but their difference is based on different philosophical standpoints and the emphasis laid on knowledge or devotion as the practical method. Everyone of them tried to reconcile in some form or other the opposing philosophical doctrines of the Upanishads in a manner peculiar to himself, till a grand reconciliation was reached in the lives and teachings of the double personality—Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.

There are saints and saints in India, but she is particularly lucky in having a number of poet saints, of whom the most well-known are Jaidev, Vidyapati, Chandidas, Ramprasad, Kavir, Surdas and Tulsidas. Tulsidas is decidedly the most popular among the Hindi-speaking people. His *Ram Charita Manas* is a

wonderful book; it is the book of books, reflecting the spirit of Indian culture and civilization. He was a man of great vision endowed with the rare faculty of epic imagination and lyric execution. Above all he was a true saint; so he could represent the soul of India. And this is why what is the Bible to Christians and the Koran to Muhammadans, the Ramayana of Tulsidas is to the Hindi-knowing Hindus. Of course, the Bhagavat Gita is more comprehensive, for it lays equal stress on Jnana, Bhakti and Karma, but as it is more deeply concerned with abstruse and abstract doctrines and written in Sanskrit, it is not meant for the masses. The popular demand has been met by the Ramayana of Tulsidas. It has given a section of Hindus law, religion and culture and has held a large number of people at a pretty high level of morality.

The life story of Sri Ramchandra has occupied a very large space in Indian life. Sri Ram has set forth in His life all the ideals that a man should try to realize. He is called *Maryada Purushottama*—an ideal incarnation. So, there are many Ramayanas: The Valmiki Ramayana, the Adhyatma Ramayana, the Yoga Vasishtha Ramayana, the Ramayanas of Kasidas, of Kesavdas and of Tulsidas. Even the Buddhists and Jains have their Ramayanas. But no Ramayana other than that of Tulsidas satisfies a scholar as much as a day-labourer. It is a book of reference and a balm of repose. It is cited by people in moments of joy as well as of sorrow. It is a sacrilege to question its authority. It has captured

the head and heart of Hindusthan. Go to any up-country village, you will find people sitting in groups in the evening after the day's hard toil, and devoutly listening to the Ramayana of Tulsidas. Dr. Grierson, a well-known Hindi scholar, expressed in *J.R.A. Society* in July, 1908, thus :

“Over the whole of the Gangetic valley his great work (the Ramayana) is better known than the Bible is in England.”

Apart from *Ram Charita Manas* Tulsidas is supposed to have written 24 books, of which the most well-known is *Vinay Patrika*. These books contain poems mostly lyrical in form and devotional in spirit centering round the personalities of Ramchandra, Krishna, Janaki, Parvati, Hanuman and others. Some critics consider *Vinay Patrika* to be his masterpiece. It contains hymns and prayers to different deities asking for devotion to Ramji in a spirit of extreme humility (*Vinay*).

Tulsidas is one of the nine makers of Hindi literature. In chronological order he comes fourth, but from literary point of view his position is unquestionably first. Here it will be very interesting to note that three widely known saint poets—Kavirdas, Surdas and Tulsidas—appeared at about the same time. Mira Bai, a unique devotional figure of India, is another contemporary of Tulsidas. When the divine love of Chaitanya was flooding the land, these bards of paradise were harping their divine tune in Aryavarta and turning the hard earth to a veritable heaven. This Vaishnava movement is rightly called the mediæval revival of India. It is characterized by subtlety of thought and intensity of feeling, breaking of barriers and breadth of spirit. This goes to show that great men, like constellations, have a tendency to grow together. They grow and

help others to grow, they along with others live the life eternal.

Like other historical personages the time of Tulsidas was preceded by conflict of ideals and confusion of ideas. Monotheism of the Vedic India was greatly disturbed by the teachings of the Puranas and their effect on ordinary people. The three aspects of Brahman—Existence, Knowledge and Bliss became Brahmâ, Vishnu and Mahesa. These personalities were differentiated and different schools were founded. In course of time the fundamental principle of unity was forgotten and different sects began to fight with one another. The divine energy was personified as *Sakti* and a new cult was made. Numerous deities cropped up. Each attribute of the great God was personified and became a God or Goddess. This sort of mass polytheism received a rude shock when it came in contact with the strict monotheism of Islam. Many became shaken, doubting and questioning began and as a matter of reaction Nanak and Kavir had to make their appearance to guide these tendencies in the direction of a new synthesis. These masters rendered great service to the cause of religion by separating much of husk from grain. The sects of Nanak and Kavir remind one of two other modern sects known as Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj founded by Raja Rammohan and Swami Dayananda by way of reaction against Christianity and Islam.

Ramananda belonging to the sect of Ramanuja was the first to break away from the rigidly orthodox school of the South. He is the first Ramanujist who made non-Brahmins his disciples, of whom one is Kavir, a weaver, and the other is Ruidas, a pariah. Kavir rose to a great spiritual height. He preached against idolatry and maintained the doctrine of God with quality and with-

out quality, and emphasized the latter. His ideas were mostly based on Vedantism and Sufism. Though Kavir had a large following and his followers were both Hindus and Muslims, the masses could not rise to his height. His attempts to reconcile Hindus and Muslims failed just after his passing away. His contemporary, Surdas, known to some as Bilwamangal, preached love for Krishna in his masterly work *Sursagar* and other writings but his thoughts were too deep and language too stiff for the people. So he could not touch them in spite of his genuine qualities. Now comes Tulsidas, wiser with the lessons taken from the lives of his illustrious predecessors Kavir and Surdas. He did not try to reconcile Hindus and Muhammadans. He wanted to bring different sects within the Hindu fold in harmony with one another, and gave such a popular form to the abstract scriptural truths that they found a ready response.

The life-story of Tulsidas is still in obscurity. There is not a single fact or incident which is not questioned or contradicted. However, after much discussion the following facts are almost accepted at present.

Goswami Tulsidas was born on the bank of the Jumna at Rajpur, Tahsil Man, Dt. Banda in the year 1530. His father was Atma Ram Dube and Mother Hushi, and his first name was Rambola. On renouncing the world he became known as Tulsidas. It is said that he was much devoted to his wife. He could not stand her separation at all. Once she left for her father's place without his knowledge. Tulsidas followed her track impatiently; and when they met, his wife said, "O if you had so much love for God, what would follow!" This remark became an eye-opener to him. The stream of his love was turned from man to God, the centre

of his attraction was changed and the man became a god.

Leaving his home behind at the age of 25, Tulsidas became the disciple of saint Narahari Das, belonging to the Ramananda sect. Then he travelled from one holy place to another making pilgrimage. He visited Muttra, Vrindavan, Kurukshetra, Prayag, Chitrakote, Puri, Soron, etc., but he spent much of his time at Ayodhya and Benares.

There are internal evidences that his parents left him in his childhood, and he had to go a begging from door to door. Probably his parents died, and he had nothing to fall back upon. He like the great poet Homer must have 'begged from seven nations.'

Mirabai, Queen of Mewar, was so much filled with the divine love for Krishna that she could not mind worldly things. Her husband and relatives tried all possible means to turn her mind, but to no purpose. Then devices were made to put an end to her life. As they too failed; persecution began. When things passed all limits of forbearance she wrote to Tulsidas thus: "O lord, I bow down to you. I wish to pass my days in the company of saints and in devotion to God, but my own people stand in the way. From childhood I have made friends with Giridhar Gopal (Sri Krishna). This relation does not cease, as the moment of our first union happened to be auspicious. Now please write to me what to do." Tulsidas wrote her back, "A great friend averse to Seeta Ram should be given up like a deadly enemy. A saint does not scruple to leave father, mother, brother, son and husband, who are the greatest benefactors on earth, like a straw, if they go against God. Prahlad had to leave his father, Vibhishan his brother, Bharat his mother, Bali his Guru and Gopis their husbands. The lovers of Ram are the only friends. *Anjan* (a

soothing balm to eye) is of no use to the sightless. In my opinion you should do whatever contributes to the friendship with Ramchandra, who is dearer than life." On reading this letter Mira left her home and moved from place to place making pilgrimage.

The goal of life is God. Those who help God-realization are friends, and those who oppose are enemies. All the relations in the world should be judged by this standard.

Some supernatural incidents are current about Tulsidas. His writings reveal nothing of the sort. It is said that while Tulsidas was doing *tapasya* at a suburb of Benares, his holy contact freed an evil spirit, which on its turn wanted to do him some good. Tulsidas longed to see Ramchandra and nothing else. The evil spirit said, "Hanuman, the devotee of Ram, is the only person who can help you in this. Go to such and such a place where the Ramayana is read, there Hanuman sits behind all in the guise of a leper. Go and seek shelter under him." Tulsidas met Hanuman and under his guidance went to Chitrakote to pass his days in thoughts of Ram. There he had the vision of Ram and Lakshman going a hunting on horseback. He was blessed with the vision of Ram. Then at the suggestion of Hanuman Tulsidas undertook to write the Ramayana. On his pilgrimage to Vrindavan, when he saw the image of Madanmohan, Krishna, it took the form of Ram. On reviving a Brahmin who died, his reputation as a Yogi spread far and wide. At this the Emperor of Delhi, probably Jahangir, asked him to show some miracle. Tulsidas said that he knew nothing but the name of Ram. At this he was put in prison where he recalled Hanuman and he was miraculously set free. It is said that certain thieves made several attempts to get into the Asrama of Tulsidas, but they

were prevented by a person with a bow and arrows. On hearing this the repentant saint gave away all he had to the poor, and the thieves became his disciples.

Even if the supernatural elements be not true, the greatness of Tulsidas does not suffer in the least. As a poet, as a preacher of religion and a man of realization, he will be looked upon as a towering personality commanding respect and admiration from people of every age and clime.

Goswami Tulsidas was a Smarta Vaishnava. Smartas never oppose any sect or doctrine; they have equal regard for every deity, though generally they profess to be Saivas. They lay more stress on devotion. Tulsidas has spoken very highly of Siva who is the Guru of the universe. In fact Siva, the knowledge aspect of God, does the work of a Guru by kindling spiritual light in aspirants. Knowledge leads to bliss, and in its highest form it is bliss that is represented by Ram (from the Sanskrit root *Ram* meaning to enjoy). Tulsidas has given proper place to knowledge and devotion, though he considers the latter to be superior. He holds the views of God with form and without form, with attributes and without attributes. But his *Ishta* or the Chosen Deity is Ramchandra. According to Tulsidas God must be realized through devotion mixed with knowledge. 'Devotional practices without knowledge (discrimination and reasoning) are futile like the attempt to kill a snake by striking the mound of earth in which it lives, or to kill a bird by cutting a tree in which it dwells.' Again, knowledge without devotion is risky. Unmixed knowledge is compared to 'a light that may be blown out by a sudden blast.' A man may be blessed with many worldly gifts, but 'without devotion he is useless like a

cloud without water.' Devotion or love is the essence of spiritual life.

Quite consistent with the qualified monism of Ramanuja, Tulsidas believes Brahman to be the ultimate Reality of which the individual soul and the world are mere parts or expressions. The appearance of the world is deceptive and illusory. 'As an oyster is taken for silver or the sun's rays in a desert look like water,' Reality appears as the world through the force of Maya. Maya can be controlled by one taking shelter in the Lord of Maya—God. *Iswara* and *Jiva* are different in nature, the latter is subject to ignorance, pleasure, pain and egotism, while the former is ever free and luminous by nature. An Incarnation is that special manifestation of God who like God is 'self-conscious' and free from ignorance throughout. He is a centre of mighty spiritual forces intended to restore equilibrium that is lost. These traditional Hindu ideas have been nicely and forcibly expressed by Tulsidas in his immortal poems. He was the spokesman of his age and in certain respects anticipated the great movements in future.

The problem of God with attributes (Saguna) and God without attributes (Nirguna) has given rise to long discus-

sions from the theologians of every country. Tulsidas says, "There is no difference between Saguna and Nirguna. That which has neither form nor quality becomes Saguna out of love for devotees." "How is it that Nirguna becomes Saguna?—Just as water becomes ice." Both of them are the same, but appear to be different. In fact God has the infinite power of assuming infinite forms and attributes and at the same time of having none. He is much more than what we can think of; otherwise He would have been one of us. It is purely a temperamental difference that distinguishes a *Jnani* from a *Bhakta*. Tulsidas himself was a *Saguna Upasaka* (worshipper of God with attributes) and has made the path of devotion supreme. The poet saint says, "Know the whole of creation to be filled with Ram and Seeta and bow down to every one with folded hands." This reminds one of the teachings of Kapila to his mother Devahuti in the *Bhagavata*. This method can bring *Samadarsana* (equal sight). It is a means and it too is the end. Sri Ramakrishna says that a perfect man is he who after realizing unity in Brahman sees that Brahman has become everything. Blessed is the poet who has preached this truth and thrice blessed is the saint who has realized it.

JAPAN'S DEBT TO INDIA

BY A JAPANESE

The present-day Japan is the product of systematic culture for the last fifteen centuries. One who studies the laws and tendencies of the world is well acquainted with the Law of Causation. The progressive Japan, the dawn of the new era, the restoration and renovation have evolved not out of nothing but

through a natural, gradual process, the root of which is buried in the past.

To understand Japan properly, her religious history must be studied. Religion is the criterion to judge the civilization of a nation. In other words, religion is the manifestation of civilization, the study of which will make very clear

the habits and customs, the cult and culture of a nation. Now I lay stress upon it as there alone we can trace the makings of the present-day Japan.

It is interesting indeed to study the factors which have greatly helped the rise of the nation. The physical feature has no doubt played a prominent part in shaping and moulding the destinies of the people. The enchanted island of Japan, with its music and poetry in air and environment and its bewitching scenery, has greatly made the people imaginative. That is one of the reasons why the ceremonials of the Buddhist prayers, which were markedly absent in the Shinto form of worship, captured the imagination of the people and they with tolerance and zeal initiated themselves into the imported religion.

The credit primarily lies with the people who in all ages have shown great courage and courtesy to embrace the continental ways and habits and have shown enough power of assimilation and adaptation. Japan may have borrowed her culture from the other Asiatic neighbours in the past, but have nationalized everything just in keeping with the national spirit.

However, prior to the advent of the Buddhist missionaries the people were steeped in darkness and could not even read or write. They lived in clans, practised a form of ancestral worship and often fell out with one another as they had very little understanding. But their form of worship was most unostentatious and their chief deity was the Sun-god. The greatest boon that Buddhism has conferred upon the people is that they have been taught to read and write, their morals have been elevated and their minds have been trained in idealistic philosophy inculcated by Buddhism.

Probably in 538 A.D. a deputation of Buddhist monks was sent from Korea

to Japan to the court of Yamato, and along with it the arts and culture of the Continent were introduced. The receptive mind of the natives of the soil and their accommodating nature favoured a cordial reception. A great landmark of the religious and political history of Japan is the accession of the Prince Regent Shotoku to the throne. He was the founder of the Japanese civilization, united the Japanese people and was the pioneer of the philosophical thinkers of Japan.

This prince made Buddhism the State religion and established monasteries for circulation of the teachings of Lord Buddha. His famous constitution is a revelation of his ardour in the faith of Buddhism. In short, he breathed into the administration the law of piety. He was a great devotee himself, and his enthusiasm and sagacity made his efforts a success. The universality in the doctrine of Buddhism inspired the people who so long fought with one another under the clan system. The Buddhistic teachings of love and compassion and the Law of Karma at once won the admiration of the people, and they with unflinching devotion now became ardent admirers of the new religion.

Thus Buddhism penetrated into the social, moral and political spheres. It thoroughly remodelled the people of the State and greatly determined the character of the future generation.

Side by side with the religious and moral elevation artistic tastes of the people were awakened and thus culture and civilization made a rapid headway. The union of religious ideas and national life thus proclaimed, expounded and carried out by the Prince, became once for all the aim of the greatest Buddhists and the aspiration of the statesmen in Japan.

The religion thus introduced towards the first half of the sixth century made

rapid progress up till the end of the eighth century. Buddhism fostered the idea of equality and thereby the spirit of nationality. As a result tribal factions were put an end to. Much to the credit of venerable Gyojo and Dosho, the Buddhist priests, the nation as a whole was inspired by the teachings of Buddhism and became transfigured. The period of Nara saw the zenith of Buddhist culture. During this time there was a great religious upheaval, and a remarkable progress was made also in the domain of artistic taste and culture. The first half of the eighth century is known as the era of Tempyo, when the mission of Buddhism was consummated. The ruling King Shomu practised the virtue of renunciation and changed the royal garments for the monastic robes. A galaxy of Buddhist philosophers flourished in this period, most prominent among them being Bodhishena, a Brahmin of the Bharadwaja clan, Kanjin, a Chinese monk, and Giyen, a native of the soil. The central cathedral known as Todaiji was erected in Nara and dedicated to Buddha.

Buddhist art flourished and ritual with musical accompaniment was performed in temples decorated with mural paintings. In short, the charming influence of Buddhism caused Japan to emerge out from the primitive stage of its existence.

By the period of the next four centuries altogether six different types of Buddhism were introduced. And as each type had its own peculiarities, the exponents of one type ultimately clashed with the exponents of other types of Buddhism. Therefore the progress was hindered for a time and a temporary lull came over this brotherhood. Buddhism became stagnant for a time. But the State and the Church sought for co-ordination and tried to strengthen the authority of the king.

The next one and a half century is known as the Kamakura period when militaristic rule set in. This period favoured the unification of the three religions of the land, *viz.*, Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism. Confucian morality taught the warriors fidelity to the chief of the clan, as Shinto, the national religion, also advocated this theory, while Buddhism taught the people self-control and fortitude. Buddhism was now divorced from ceremonials and mysticism and became a religion of piety. This new form of religion exhibited many democratic features. Three forms of Buddhism were practised in this age. They are Honen's Amita Buddhism, Dogen's Intuitionism and Nichiren's Hokke Buddhism. Even in the dark period of the social life of the fourteenth century and after, the Zen Buddhism refined the artistic taste and gave the people opportunity to develop individuality. As a result the idea of democracy was fostered.

Thus from the date of its introduction into the island of Japan, Buddhism has ruled various aspects of social and political life and has definitely shaped the destinies of the people. The glorious work done by Buddhism can never be effaced from memory. The present generation owes its ideas and inspirations particularly to Buddhism. It is their noble heritage, and they glorify in the name of Lord Buddha. India is especially fortunate because she gave birth to Buddha who by his truth and piety has left behind a vast spiritual empire throughout the East which is daily expanding in dimension. It is a good fortune for Japan also to hold the taper of light still now, and she thinks it to be her mission to diffuse the light of truth in all lands of darkness.

Buddhist India and Buddhist Japan do not differ fundamentally, the same spirit of faith pervades the Japanese and

the Indian people. Regarding their view of life, conception of soul, belief in existence beyond death, and all other moral and political thoughts, there are marked resemblances between the Indians and the Japanese.

In short, we Japanese owe to Buddhism, and thereby to India, our civilization and culture. The progressive Japan will ever remember the teachings of Lord Buddha in all her actions and activities of social and political life.

VAKYA-SUDHA

मनोऽहंकृत्युपादानं लिंगमेकं जडात्मकम् ।

अवस्थात्रयमन्वेति जायते म्रियते तथा ॥ १२ ॥

12. The subtle body¹ is composed of the mind and egoism,² is one, and is material in its nature. It inheres in all the three states ; it is born and dies.

¹ *Mind and egoism*—Only two out of the seventeen constituents of the subtle body are mentioned here.

² *Is born and dies*—It springs from ignorance and is dissolved at the dawning of knowledge.

शक्तिद्वयं हि मायाया विश्लेषावृतिरूपकम् ।

विश्लेषशक्तिर्लिङ्गादि ब्रह्मांडान्तं जगत् सृजेत् ॥ १३ ॥

13. Maya¹ has two Powers,² viz. the Projecting Power and the Veiling Power. The Projecting Power projects the entire creation beginning with the Subtle Body and ending in the gross visible world.

¹ *Maya*—It is said to be other than both existence and non-existence and therefore something inexpressible. It is neither material in the sense clay is material, nor spiritual in the sense Atman is spiritual. Collectively viewed, it has neither beginning nor end ; individually viewed, its beginning is inconceivable though it comes to an end when true knowledge dawns. We know its works and much of its workings—everything that we sense, think, feel or will being its effects. But what it is illudes comprehension.

² First a thing is veiled (the Veiling Power of Maya), next it is projected as something else (the Projecting Power of Maya). This is nothing but the statement of the psychological process involved in all acts of delusion. Nothing can appear as something else unless its real nature is veiled. But veiling alone would result in the disappearance of the thing and would not account for its appearing otherwise ; hence the necessity of admitting the second power of Maya, the Projecting Power, by virtue of which we see a thing as something else. It is for this reason that the entire creation has been attributed here to this power of Maya.

सृष्टिर्नाम ब्रह्मरूपे सच्चिदानंदवस्तुनि ।

अब्धौ फेनादिवत् सर्वनामरूपप्रसारणा ॥ १४ ॥

14. Creation is the manifestation of names and forms¹ on Brahman, which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (Absolute), like froth, bubbles, etc. on the ocean.

¹ *Names and forms*—The manifestation of names and forms is the work of the Projecting Power of Maya. There is only one reality, viz. Brahman, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. But if that is infinite, where do we get other things,—Maya and these names and forms which play and interplay on Brahman? In fact, there are no names and forms ; but so long as the relative consciousness lasts we cannot help seeing them and admitting their relative existence. The sky has no colour, it is not blue ; but so long as there are eyes, they must continue to see it blue, and maybe admire its beauty, in spite of the testimony of sciences to the contrary.

अंतर्द्गृश्ययोर्भेदं बहिश्च ब्रह्मसर्गयोः ।

आवृणोत्यपरा शक्तिः सा संसारस्य कारणम् ॥ १५ ॥

15. The other Power veils the distinction between the subject (Atman) and the object (the internal organ) inside and between Brahman and the creation outside. It is the cause of the cycle of transmigration.¹

¹ *Cause of the cycle of transmigration*—Atman, the immutable Witness, being the same as Brahman, does not transmigrate—all changes being of the mind, the organs and the body. But the obliteration of the distinction between Atman and these, due to the Veiling Power of Maya, makes the immutable Atman appear to be undergoing transmigration.

साक्षिणः पुरतो भान्तं लिंगं देहेन संयुतम् ।

चित्तिच्छायासमावेशाज्जीवः स्याद्व्यावहारिकः ॥ १६ ॥

16. The subtle body¹ connected with the gross body exists in front of the Witness.² This, coming in contact with the 'reflection of consciousness,' becomes the 'empirical' self.³

¹ *The subtle body*—It comprises the ten organs of perception and action, the five vital powers, the mind and the intellect.

² *In front of the Witness*—i.e. ready to be illumined as its object and to be identified with It.

³ *Coming in . . . self*—So the individual soul is the totality of the 'reflection,' the subtle body and the gross body.

अस्य जीवत्वमारोपात् साक्षिण्यप्यवभासते ।

आवृतौ तु चिन्मयां भेदे भातेऽप्याति तत् ॥ १७ ॥

17. This individuality having been superimposed even on the Witness, it too appears to be individual. But when the Veiling Power is destroyed the distinction (re-) appears and it (i.e. the individuality) goes.

तथा सर्गब्रह्मणोश्च भेदमावृत्य तिष्ठति ।

या शक्तिस्तद्ब्रह्म विकृतत्वेन भासते ॥ १८ ॥

18. Similarly it is due to that power which exists veiling the distinction between Brahman¹ and creation that Brahman appears to have been changed.

¹ *Brahman*—Truly speaking, Brahman is one without any division whatsoever either within or without.

अत्राप्यावृत्तिनाशेन विभाति ब्रह्मसर्गयोः ।

भेदस्तयोर्विकारः स्यात् सर्गे न ब्रह्मणि क्वचित् ॥ १६ ॥

19. Here too, at the destruction of the Veiling Power, the distinction between Brahman and creation is revealed. During creation there is change of both.¹ (In reality) Brahman never changes.

¹ *Change of both*—The forms of earth, viz. clay, earthen wares, etc. change. But those who identify earth with its forms or who hold that earth can never exist without being clothed in some form, say that there is change of earth. It is from this point of view that change has been attributed to Brahman. The truth however has been stated in the next sentence.

अस्ति भाति प्रियं रूपं नाम चेत्यंशपंचकम् ।

आद्यत्रयं ब्रह्मरूपं जगद्रूपं ततो द्वयम् ॥ २० ॥

20. Being, revealing, pleasing, name and form¹—these are the five parts; the first three pertain to Brahman, the last two to the world.

¹ *Being, revealing . . . form*—Intuitively and through reason and experience we have a knowledge of something abiding and something changing. The highest generalization of all that change is name-and-form—all that have a name and a form change; and this is the nature of the world. And in, through and beyond all these changes there abides something which makes all these changes possible. Without existence and consciousness there will be nothing to persist through changes, to give rise to further changes and thereby keep the world going. Hence it is pleasing or blissful too. So the nature of Brahman, the abiding thing, is existence, consciousness and bliss. Being, revealing and pleasing stand for existence, consciousness and bliss respectively.

खवायुग्निजलोर्वाषु देवतिर्यङ्मनरादिषु ।

अभिन्नाः सच्चिदानंदा भिद्येते रूपनामनी ॥ २१ ॥

21. In (the five elements) ether, air, fire, water and earth as well as (in the sentient creation such as) gods, men and other lower animals inheres the same Existence-Knowledge-Bliss,¹ difference being (only) in name and form.

¹ *Inheres the . . . Bliss*—Existence, Knowledge and Bliss are not three factors of Being but are identical with It, appearing different because looked at from different angles of vision. And all created things (including the insentient) live, move and have their beings in this Being. According to the monists, be it noted, Being which is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss is both the efficient and the material cause of the universe.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

The present instalment of *The Master Speaks* corresponds to the fifth chapter of *Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita, Part IV. . . .* The great defect of the acti-

vities of modern India is that there is hardly any co-ordinated action. *In Search of Leaders* is a suggestion as to how that drawback can be remedied . . . *What an American Woman is*

doing in India has been found among the unpublished papers of Sister Nivedita. It was written for the American public. The article shows how deep was the affection of this 'American Woman' for her Indian sisters. The development of the educational activities mentioned in the article will be found in the report of the Sister Nivedita Girls' School published under the *News and Reports* section. . . . Bhikkhu Suvrata appears for the first time in *Prabuddha Bharata* *Art and Modern Education* is complementary to 'TRADITION IN INDIAN ART' published last month. Swami Bodhananda is a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. At present he is head of the Vedanta Society, New York Upendra Chandra Dutta belongs to the U. P. Educational Service. The author of *Japan's Debt to India* was, some time back, an important Japanese official in India.

HOW HISTORY IS WRITTEN

Even when a man makes an attempt to describe a thing truthfully, the description is greatly coloured by his personal bias. And when there is an underlying purpose to give a distorted version with a show of honesty on the exterior, the description becomes thoroughly unreliable. To judge from this standpoint how unreliable is history! Firstly it becomes very difficult for a historian to get correct and sufficient information, if the Government in any country make it a point to withhold that from the public. Even in the present age when every civilized Government has to face the criticism of the world, if it suppresses facts needed for historians, very few people can find out truths from falsehoods that are spread by interested parties. If the history of the present time is found to

be so unreliable, how much more so will be the past history of the world, as it has come recorded to us!

According to Mr. H. G. Wells, author of the *History of the World*, propaganda greatly vitiates historical information. He says: "Generally rulers and militant religions and political organizations have kept a tight hold upon the supply of historical information to the people under their sway. Propaganda seems inseparable from history, and it is only when all sides get a hearing that its influence can be neutralized. When they have not, then history for popular use has been *bunk*. . . . Most history is bunk, bunk with a purpose."

In this respect Indian history has suffered from greater disadvantages. Many books on Indian history have been written by persons who were not brought up in Indian culture and tradition or were not quite in sympathy with them. Naturally truth has greatly suffered. It is necessary that our scholars should devote their attention to collect materials from every available source to rewrite Indian history.

THE TRAGEDY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN THE ORIENT

If Christianity is losing ground amongst the cultured sections in the East and if it is the subject of general criticism, it is due to the fact that those who came to preach Christianity did not very often adopt 'Christian' methods. The activities of the Christian missionaries have almost always been marked by the vilification of other faiths and a tendency to make easy converts by material inducements. But religion is the last thing which can thrive on falsehood, insincerity and hypocrisy; it is therefore that a reaction against Christianity—as preached by the Miss-

ionaries—has come all over the Eastern countries.

Mr. Manilal C. Parekh—himself a devout Christian—gives in the *Modern Review* the story of the 'scandal' that Christianity became in India. According to him, "Christianity in India has been made a wrong use of in a way like which it is doubtful if anything in the history of entire Christendom has been made known." He says that the great tragedy of Christian missions in the Orient lies in the fact that "we are face to face with Missionary Imperialism, which is a compound of five kinds of imperialism, viz. religious, racial, cultural, political and economic, and Jesus Christ has been made into what may be called the Kaiser of Christendom, a figure as different from the meek and crucified Jesus as could be."

India has nothing to fear from Christianity as a religious force; even if Hindus by adopting the Christian faith live better lives, none should quarrel. But the pity is that the Christianity as preached and practised in India has a baneful influence upon the national solidarity. This is pointed out by Mr. Parekh when he poignantly says: "The creation of the so-called National Church, which really is a community with a special non-Hindu legal and social status and with almost an anti-Hindu cultural and religious bias, is a powerful disintegrating factor in the life of India."

Recent developments show that the Christian missionaries are thinking of reforming their methods. Let us hope that the reform will be really for the better.

FOR A MERE SHADOW

There is a saying that a man without a head cannot complain of headache. But such a tragedy is daily enacted in

every human life. No man knows what he really is—very few even think about that—yet all are very sensitive about themselves. A man gets irritated and upset if he meets with harsh criticism or any rebuke; he gets elated when praised; he always thinks and speaks in terms of "I" and "mine"; but does he ever consider what constitutes that "I," for which he labours and fights his whole life? No, he does not. This question does not arise in him at all. This is Maya. In this respect man is said to have little difference from a lower animal. A dog wags its tail in joy at the sight of food and flies away when anybody runs at it with a cudgel in hand. A man also does the same—he finds pleasure in sense-enjoyment and gets terror-stricken when he is face to face with a formidable foe. Thus every man offers worship in a temple where there is no deity. For, if he analyses what he thinks to be "I," he will find that it is an airy something having no real existence. And the real existence behind what he considers as "I," is deathless, formless, immutable, beyond praise or blame. If one realizes that, one will cross the limit of earthly joys and sufferings, both of which are meaningless. And those also will find ineffable peace who try to regulate their life in the light of the above truth.

A BOLD STATEMENT

As time rolls on, the world becomes richer in wisdom and man discovers more means of meeting his wants and ensuring his happiness. But what is the reason that in spite of all the resources at its command, the present world is in a hopelessly miserable condition?

Mr. Henry A. Wallace, United States Secretary of Agriculture, analyses the situation very nicely in a thoughtful article in the *Forum*. According to him, for the last two centuries, we have

been considering ourselves as "economic men," or as isolated individuals whose main object in life should be relentlessly to follow a "dog-eat-dog" philosophy, and not as spiritual entities. Thus the "mainspring inside of us" is broken and any external repair cannot put the machinery in order. If man knew that he is a spiritual being, he would consider his fellow man as his brother and, therefore, hesitate to throw millions of people into the verge of starvation by a cunning manipulation of the monetary system or sleight-of-hand performances in the Stock Exchange. Nowadays the world is more closely knit because of the improved means of transport and communication; but at no time were different nations so widely separated as to-day, by reason of tariff walls, perverted spirit of nationalism, and the like. Therefore Mr. Wallace says that unless there is spiritual co-operation between man and man, nation and nation, state and state, there is no hope for the world.

He thinks that religion—meaning the force which governs the attitude of men in their inmost hearts toward God and toward their fellow men—will play a great part in determining the future destiny of the world. He clearly says, "Socialists, evolutionists, and *laissez*

faire capitalists may . . . for a time rob religion of its significance. I am convinced, however, that mankind, in spite of its momentary digressions into the dry hardness of a mechanical, financial world will, of necessity, inevitably return to a world where spiritual and artistic values dominate."

This is indeed a bold statement, when politicians, almost all the world over, consider religion as a burdensome superfluity and think that the sooner it is got rid of, the better it is for humanity. This also indicates that however dark the future may look, light may come from unexpected quarters.

THE SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL

Attention of the readers is invited to the report of the Sister Nivedita Girls' School published in this issue. The School is passing through a great financial crisis. The memory of Sister Nivedita undoubtedly commands great respect in the country. Her services in the cause of India are too well known. It will be a pity if the Institution started by her and associated with her name, suffers for want of sufficient funds. We hope that the appeal of the Secretary will find a ready response from the public.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ON LIFE AND ESSAYS ON RELIGION.
By Leo Tolstoy. Translated by Aylmer Maude (*The World's Classics*. First Edition, 1934). Oxford University Press, Post Box 31, Bombay. xvi+412 pp. Price 2s.

Though in his youth Tolstoy lived a dissipated life, in later years he was seized with a consuming eagerness to better his life. During that period he was as if 'striving unto death' for what he thought to be right. In that great struggle reason and conscience were his only guide and to obey them, no

sacrifice was too great for him. He had burning sincerity and that gave him clear light where others labouring under prejudices and inherited beliefs saw, as their actions indicated, nothing but confusion. Tolstoy trusted his inner voice and depended on his inward light more than anything else, and that has made his words a great source of inspiration to all excepting those who will not willingly free themselves from dogmatism and the snares of credal religions. Thus Tolstoy is looked upon as a saint by many,

though the orthodox Church of Russia considered him as a vile heretic, and he ran the risk of even physical violence.

Sincere to the very core as he was in his personal life, Tolstoy was up against all sham and hypocrisy in society. And so shockingly did he expose them in some of his books that their publication was prohibited by the Tzarist Government though they had no political significance. The books which he wrote during the last period of his life, he wrote not to have the reputation of being an author—for he had already established his name as a writer—but in them he was only thinking aloud and as such they are the expression of his inner life. These books relate to the problems of moral and religious life, and are of great help to those who want to better their life but cannot believe in any Church dogma.

The Oxford University Press has earned the gratitude of the reading public by bringing out the religious essays of Tolstoy in a handy volume at a very cheap price. Some of the essays inserted in this volume are found in *Essays and Letters* of the 'World's Classics Series,' but there are some which are entirely new. The first Essay—*On Life*, for instance, which was published in Russian in 1887 and prohibited by the Government, has been put for the first time in the present volume of the 'World's Classics' in the translation of Mr. Maude. About the quality of the translation we need not say much. Tolstoy himself was of opinion that better translations of his works than those done by Mr. and Mrs. Maude, could not be invented. The book may be placed along with religious classics.

RELIGIOUS

OUTLINES OF BUDDHISM. By Mrs. Rhys Davids, D.Litt., M.A. *Methuen & Co. Ltd.* 36 Essex Street W.C. London. 117pp. Price 5s. net.

The learned authoress has tried to give in this little book her mature opinion about Buddhism as taught by Gotama. This she has been doing through various publications for the last few years. To her, original Buddhism was the natural fulfilment of Hinduism or Brahmanism, which preached that the Man, *i.e.* the self of man is God, meaning thereby God-in-potency, but did not show, at least adequately, the way to become God-in-actuality. Buddhism in its pristine glory pointed out to one and all

how man by his own free choice, by his "effort, energy, endeavour, initiative," by his own "will" can become this God-in-actuality. She has shown that according to this Buddhism man by his 'wayfaring' not only in this world but in many other worlds becomes a more and yet a more ending at last in the most, that he, being and becoming God, never dies but survives eternally. She is dead against the monks, their ideals and interpretations of the scriptures. She holds the monks responsible for the elements of pessimism and Nihilism in Gotama's religion which was in reality a religion of hope and joy, of helping and "warding."

Mrs. Rhys Davids is bold, original and scholarly. But her assertions, many of them, are so revolutionizing that without further data of more convincing nature no judgment can possibly be passed on them. Her main thesis of "becoming," of the reality of Atman in early Buddhism and its survival, there is no difficulty in accepting—perhaps the data are sufficient. Her words about the origin of the Mahayana School throw a flood of light on the topic, which should be taken up as the clue to further investigations. There are some remarks on Buddhism as it has been handed down to us, as also on Hinduism which are difficult to accept. This is perhaps due to laying undue emphasis on the root-meanings of certain words which is not a very safe guide in philosophical matters.

THE MODERN ENCYCLOPEDIA. Edited by Sir J. A. Hammerton. *The Standard Literature Co. Ltd.*, 13/1, Old Court House Street, Calcutta. 1024 pp. Price Rs. 10.

Like all other books imported or published by the Standard Literature Co. this beautifully got-up and neatly printed volume is, it must be admitted, a great success. It is a condensed version of the *Universal Encyclopedia* under the guidance of the same editor and brought up to date in matters of information. Such a variety of subjects dealt with in so small a compass, without omitting anything essential, and expressing them all in a language that requires no re-reading for understanding even in busiest moments—these are features which tell of a very strong common sense and a wonderful sense of proportion. It is likely to be very popular. A better companion for the desk is difficult to conceive. It has, moreover, some 1100 illustrations and maps and diagrams illustrative of natural history, botany,

architecture and other technical objects that can be better elucidated that way.

BENGALI

BRAHMASUTRAM.—By Khirode Chandra Chattopadhyaya. *Published by the author from 5, Wood Street, Calcutta. 412 pp. Price Rs. 2.*

The book is a handy Bengali edition of the Brahma Sutras. In explaining the Sutras the author has generally followed Sankara though he has deferred from him in many places. The Bengali commentary of the author is at any rate Advaitic. He has made a comparative study of the Sutras in the light of the ancient commentaries of note as well as of modern science and philosophy of the West; and as such the book has a value of its own, which justifies its publication. The introduction, though it flags at the end, is informative in the beginning. Many of the footnotes are very valuable. The interpolation theory, however, has not been properly developed,—both data and reasons are inadequate. Some of the suggestions of the author seem right, *e.g.* the one that Sutras 3.2.37-41 (or rather 3.2.38-41) should have gone with 2.3.41 & 42; but others are unjustified and positively wrong, *e.g.* the interpretation of Sutras 3.3.14, 3.3.42; while others again are funny, *e.g.* the one in 274-5 pp. that Brahman has been described as a bull because a bull is the speaker—which psychological fact (?) however does not apply to other speakers in the same connection. Another defect of the book, which is a source of much confusion, is the author's omission of the topical divisions (Adhikaranas), which, we hope, will be added in the next edition.

In spite of these defects the book is unique of its kind and the readers will have much to learn from and appreciate in it. We

would wish for a better get-up of a book like this.

PATRAMALA (UTTARAMSA). By Swami Saradananda. *Published by Swami Parmeswarananda, Matri-mandir, Jayrambati, Desra P.O., Bankura. 92 pp. Price eight annas.*

The book will be a great boon to the souls aspiring after God-realization, so many practical hints and suggestions to Sadhana does it contain. We must thank the compiler for his wisdom in leaving out portions of letters, and printing only those things which will be of value to the reading public. Compilers of epistles are more often than not guided by sentimentality, and this repels the sober sections of people. The compiler has not made that mistake.

NIETZSCHER BANI (The message of Nietzsche). By Nalinikanta Gupta. *Rameswar & Co., Chandarnagore. 47 pp. The price not mentioned.*

The book, as the name implies, contains some teachings of Nietzsche. The West is a believer in the theory of the survival of the fittest and Nietzsche's worship of strength. But the worship of strength when misdirected and perverted is sure to work havoc. Modern Europe is a glaring instance to the point. The brochure will give an easy opportunity to the Bengali-reading public to know some ideas of Nietzsche and 'by indirections' to find directions out.

NARA-NARAYAN. By Sivadas. *M. C. Sarkar & Sons Ltd., 15, College Square, Calcutta. 52 pp. Price 6 as.*

A little drama meant for being staged by little children, the book will give joy to them. The subject matter will, no doubt, appeal to the young hearts and will rouse aspiration in them for a noble life like that of the hero, who is a boy like them.

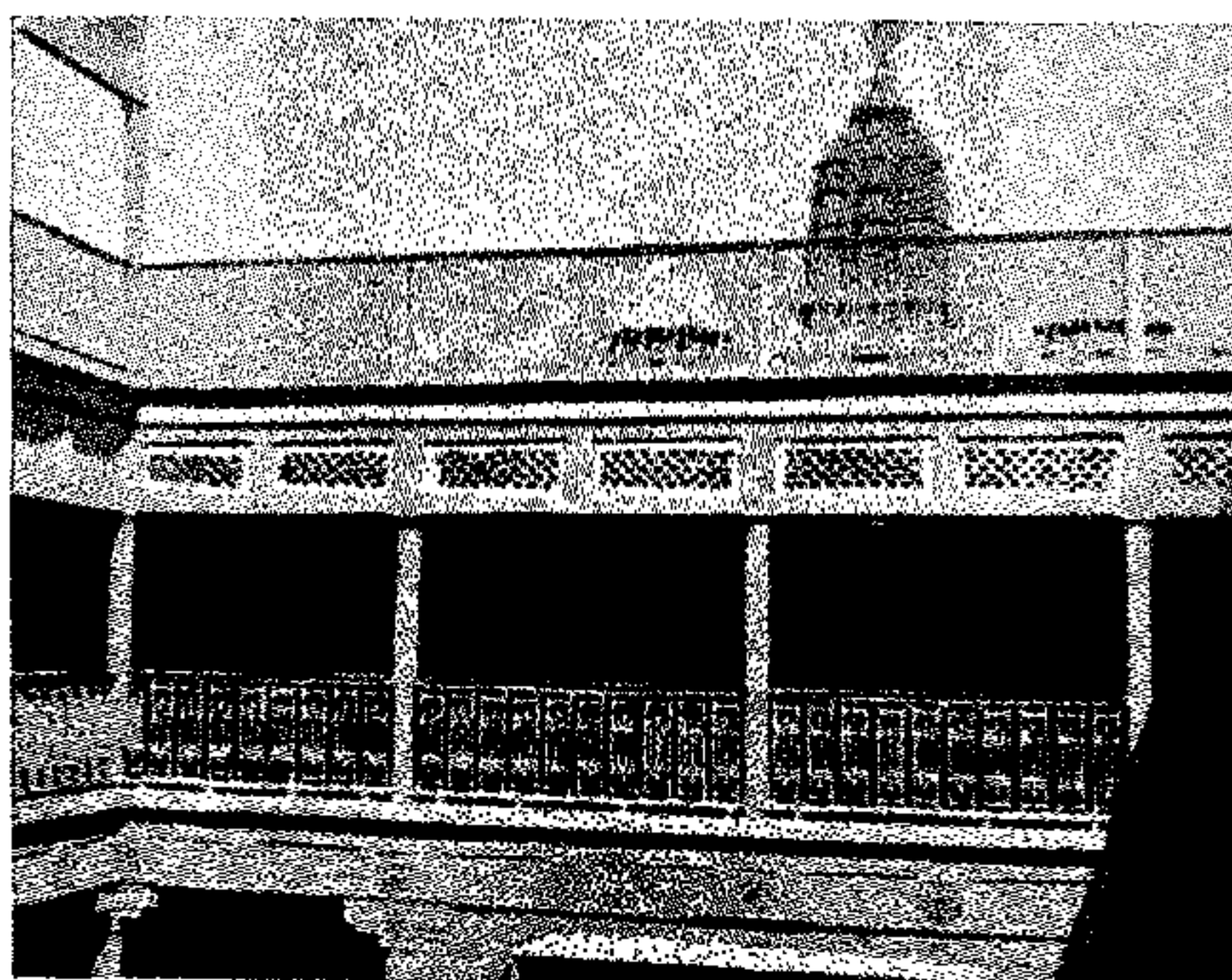
A correction

A correspondent writes: In page 466 of the September issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar says that Raja Jagat Kishore Acharya Chowdhury of Muktagacha has established a Technical School at Mymensingh. The information of the said professor is not correct. Late Raja Jogendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury of Ramgopalpur established the Technical School at Mymensingh. The Institution is known to the public by the name of Kashi Kishore Technical School.

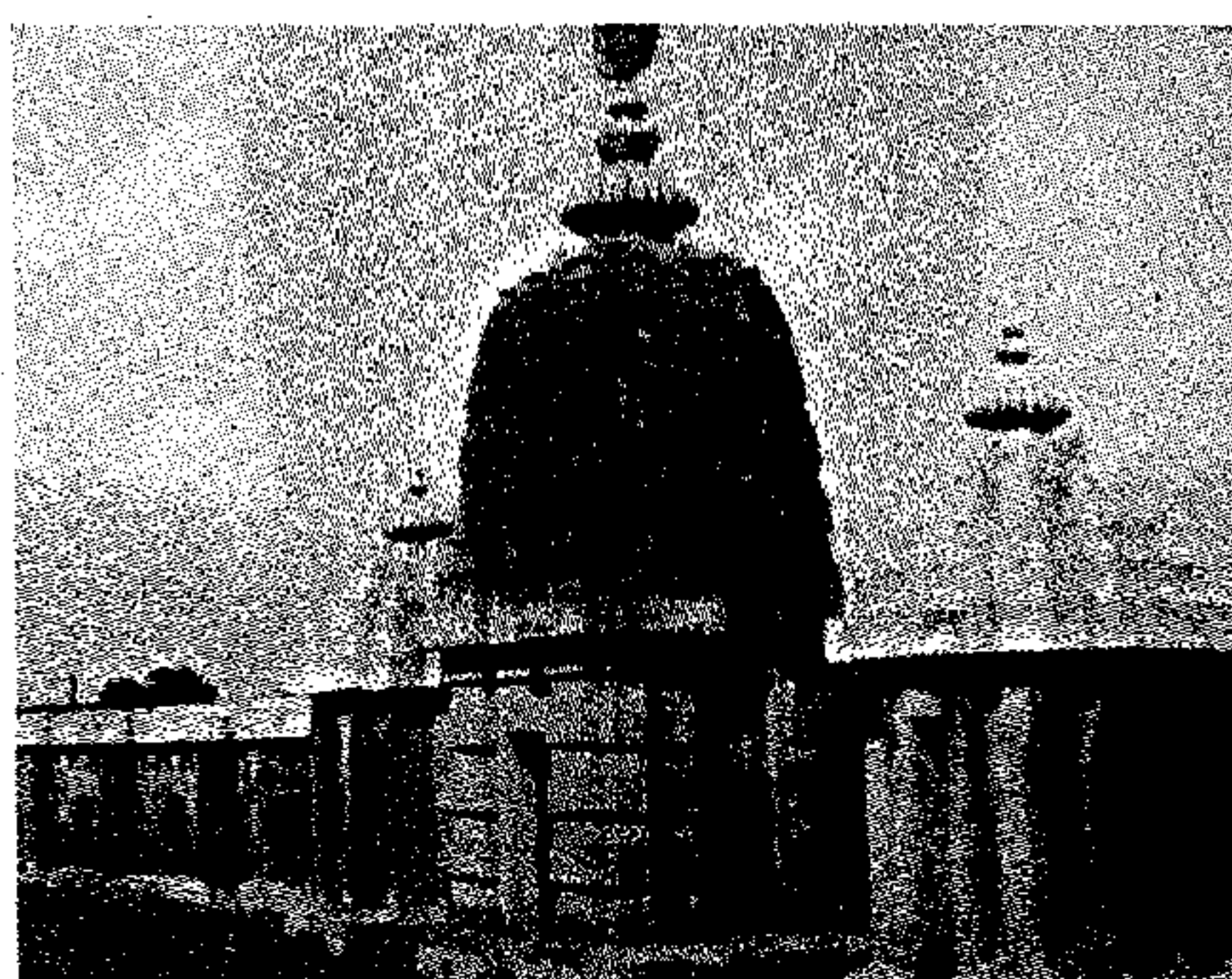
NEWS AND REPORTS

SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL, CALCUTTA

A SHORT REPORT FROM APRIL, 1933, TO MARCH, 1934



Top view of the School



Miniature temples on the terrace

History and Object

The Sister Nivedita Girls' School steps into the 36th year of its existence in 1934. The institution was started by the late Sister Nivedita in 1898 with the object of educating the women of our country in the essentials of modern learning upon a background of traditional life and culture, so that instead of cutting our womanhood away from the cultural moorings of the past and uprooting the virtues of tenderness, humility, simplicity and the spirit of selfless service associated with the women of this country, it will make them vital and vigorous units in society, able to solve problems of their own and their class. The late Sister Christine, another disciple of Swami Vivekananda, took up and organized the work of the School in 1903, which progressed steadily under her fostering care. In 1914 Miss Sudhira Bose took charge of the Institution and founded the Matri Mandir (now called the Sarada Mandir) for the purpose of providing residence for those who would dedicate their lives entirely to the cause of spreading education among the women of the Motherland. A portion of it was also meant to be used as a home by those girls who had their homes too far away from the School to attend it daily. The work of the School is at present being conducted by some co-workers and students of the late

Sudhira Devi, who have devoted their lives to the service of their Indian sisters.

The School has a number of classes of which the lowest class corresponds to the lowest class of a primary school and the highest to the 2nd class of a Matriculation School of the Calcutta University. Along with Bengali, Sanskrit, English, Mathematics, History and Geography are taught Drawing, Music, Needlework, Rules of Hygiene and Housekeeping. The section for teaching Oriental painting has to be stopped for want of funds. It is needless to point out that religious training occupies the chief place in the curriculum of the School.

Progress of work

In 1911, when Sister Nivedita died, the School had only 50 pupils on its rolls. The present strength is 484. It has a special tailoring class for Purdah women and widows with 13 students on its rolls. During the year under review the Teaching Staff counted 18 lady members, of whom 6 were Brahmacharinis who had dedicated their lives to the service of the Institution. The inmates of the Sarada Mandir numbered 39 persons, of whom 6 were honorary lady workers and 33 resident students. Of the resident students 7 received their board and lodging free and 3 half free.

Management

The Institution is a branch of the Ramkrishna Mission, the Governing Body of which exercises over it the power of control. It has entrusted the management of its work to a Board of which Swami Atmabodhananda, a member of the Governing Body of the Ramkrishna Mission, is its Secretary. The internal management is in the hands of Sreemati Mira Devi and her assistant Sreemati Bani.

Finance

The present sources of the income of the School are :

1. Interest from the Endowment Funds which amounts to about Rs. 5,000 annually.
2. Annual contribution of Rs. 1,200 from the Family Charity Trust Fund of Miss H. Rubel of U. S. A.

3. Monthly contribution of Rs. 10 from Mr. M. N. Venkatesa Iyenger.

4. Miscellaneous small contributions not exceeding Rs. 200 annually.

5. Annual grant, from the Corporation of Calcutta, of Rs. 3,000 (This grant has been suspended this year for reasons of technical difficulties).

As the School does not charge any tuition fee from its students, it has to depend entirely upon the above-mentioned income, which is insufficient to meet the present expenses. Moreover the suspension of the grant from the Corporation of Calcutta has made the financial position of the School still more helpless.

A short statement of its income and expenditure for the year 1933-34 is given below :—

Receipts

	Rs.	A.	P.
Opening Balance ...	4,068	1	6
From the Family Charity Trust Fund of Miss H. Rubel of U. S. A. ...	1,200	0	0
M. N. Venkatesa Iyenger and N. S. Iyenger ...	120	0	0
A. R. Kumaraguru ...	6	0	0
Harakchand Motichand ...	5	0	0
Interest on Endowment Fund	4,981	14	0
Prize Distribution Fund ...	69	8	0
Music Fund ...	4	0	0
Loan ...	616	5	6
Total Rs. ...	11,065	13	0

Expenditure

	Rs.	A.	P.
Salary of teachers and servants ...	5,368	1	9
Expenses of Honorary Workers and Free Boarders	1,076	11	6
Furniture and Equipment ...	267	12	3
Travelling and conveyance ...	37	4	0
Stationery, Printing, etc. ...	75	15	0
Books for poor girls ...	16	15	0
Purchase and maintenance of a Motor Bus ...	3,745	6	0
Grant to Bally Branch School	123	8	0
Repairs ...	283	12	0
Miscellaneous expenses ...	70	7	6
Total Rs. ...	11,065	13	0
Balance Nil.			

Appeal

The Statement of Accounts given above reveals the acute financial condition of the School. Unless funds be forthcoming, the activities of the School are in imminent danger of being curtailed to a considerable extent, which means that a good many poor girls who are receiving free education will be deprived of it for the rest of their lives. We fervently appeal to the generous and philanthropic public to come forward and help this useful Institution to tide over the present crisis. Any contributions, however small, will be thankfully received by the undersigned.

SWAMI ATMABODHANANDA,

Secretary, R. K. Mission,

Nivedita Girls' School,

1, Mukherji Lane,

Baghbazar, Calcutta.

29th Aug., 1934.

THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION,
SINGAPORE

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT (1933)

The activities of this centre of the Mission are limited to missionary and educational ones. A good number of lectures were delivered in the year under review by Swamis Adyananda, Bhaswarananda and Paramananda under the auspices of many important local organizations. Weekly religious classes on the Gita and Vedanta were conducted as usual.

The centre conducts two schools one of which is a night school with which has been incorporated the night school of the Indian Association. At the close of the year, there were 65 students on the rolls, of whom 52 were given free tuition. The day school (The Vivekananda School) contained at the end of the year 44 boys and 45 girls, of whom 19 were free. The work of the children improved greatly and evoked praise from the visiting inspector of schools. Moral and religious instructions formed an essential part of the school training and were imparted through daily prayers, telling of parables, devotional music, Pooja and religious festivals.

Through the kindness of the Municipality, an adjacent plot of land has been secured for the recreation of the children. The accommodation for the children, however, is far from being satisfactory and the enlargement of the school building by the addition of the next story has become a necessity. Donations towards this and for the school library will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the President of the institution.

RAMKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORK
IN ASSAM AND BEHAR

The flood relief work in Assam is being conducted by us from six different centres in the districts of Sylhet and Nowgong. In Sylhet we had so long three centres at Jhingabari, Bilajur and Bangsikunda. A fourth centre has recently been opened there at Sultanpur to carry on the relief operations in eleven more villages. From 8th August to 11th September the Sylhet centres distributed 223 mds. 7 srs. 8 ch. of rice to 2,737 distressed people of 73 villages.

Besides, 418 pieces of new cloths and some old ones too were given to the destitute. Moreover, three Rajvanshi families were supplied with materials for weaving net by Bilajur centre, and Sultanpur centre distributed Rs. 103-8 for paddy seed in seven villages.

In the district of Nowgong, 775 mds. and 7 srs. of rice were doled out to 4,077 inhabitants of 76 villages from the Phulaguri and Dharamtul centres, which also distributed 1,590 pieces of new cloths to deserving people. The centre at Phulaguri has discontinued the distribution of rice, after having given the last weekly dole on the 7th August. Now it is occupied only with the hut-building work. Dharamtul centre will also shortly adopt the same course.

In Behar the earthquake relief work is still going on at Motihari and Monghyr. Over and above foodstuff worth about Rs. 2,000 has been distributed among 1,500 flood-stricken people of Monghyr, since the beginning of September. The Behar relief work is going to be closed soon.

In response to an appeal for help we sent some money for the flood relief work at Habiganj in the district of Sylhet. Two centres were opened there and 36 mds. of rice were distributed in 42 villages in course of two weeks. The recipients numbered 716. The Habiganj centre has applied for further help.

The relief work in Sylhet is to be continued till the middle of November.

As the funds we had secured for the purpose are very nearly exhausted, we appeal again to the generous public for kind contributions, which will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following addresses:—

- (1) President, Ramkrishna Mission,
Belur Math, Howrah.
- (2) Manager, Advaita Ashrama,
4, Wellington Lane, Calcutta.
- (3) Manager, Udbodhan Office,
1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

SD. VIRAJANANDA,
Secretary, R. K. Mission.

22nd September, 1934.