

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. LIV

DECEMBER 1949

No. 19



“उत्तष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

BELURMATH, TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 1929

Mahapurushji was not keeping well today. Last Sunday, only two days ago, the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth anniversary had taken place. Nearly a lac and a half of visitors had come from outside. From morning till late into the night countless men and women saw Mahapurush Maharaj. His door was always open to the devotees. And he became so inspired by thoughts of the Master that he did not pay the least attention to his health. He felt animated, as it were, by divine strength and talked to all without rest about the Master and delighted the hearts of the devotees by giving them various kinds of spiritual instructions. Due to the excessive exertion of that day his health today was extra bad, though he remained ever cheerful and full of joy.

The *sannyasins* and *brahmacharins* of the *Math* were coming into his room in the morning, and he was making personal enquiries about each one of them. Seeing a *sannyasin* wearing a piece of torn cloth, he asked the attendant near him immediately to give the

former a new *dhoti* and said, 'Can you not enquire about the needs of the *sannyasins* a little?'

As soon as an elderly *sannyasin* came before him, he greeted him saying 'Om namah Sivaya, Victory to Mother!' Gradually the conversation turned to Dakshineswar. Today the newly initiated *sannyasins* and *brahmacharins* are all going to see the Mother Kali at Dakshineswar and pass the whole day there in meditation and other spiritual practices. The management of the Temple have arranged for the feeding of nearly thirty *sadhus*. Hearing all this, Mahapurushji became immensely pleased and said, 'Dakshineswar is to us the Heaven on earth, our Kailas, our Vaikuntha. Is it a trivial place? The Panchavati is a great sacred spot of the Supreme Realization. There the Master had so many spiritual experiences of the highest order. The Master practised so many methods of spiritual discipline for twelve years in Dakshineswar. He had so many divine visions and experiences there. All these have no parallels. We do

not find recorded in the life of any other Incarnation so difficult and so many types of spiritual disciplines and so varied and high spiritual experiences. The Master used to say, "The spiritual experiences had here, (The Master would rarely use the personal pronoun for himself. This was no affectation since he always felt conscious of an identity with the Divine Principle) have exceeded the *Veda* and *Vedanta*." That is why Swamiji has said referring to the Master "*avatāra varishthāya*" "to the greatest among Incarnations." The Master had sprinkled the dust of Brindavan at Panchavati. Every grain of dust of Dakshineswar is holy. Dakshineswar has become transformed into a great sacred place by the touch of the feet of God Himself. Dakshineswar is a great holy place to all, Advaitin or Dvaitin, Shakta or Vaishnava, Shaiva or Tantrik, because the Master practised all the different *sadhanas* there and attained Realization. This time the Divine manifestation is predominantly *sattvic*. The Divine Mother, the Primal Power of the universe, has played Her part through the body of the Master. All the different planes of existences like '*bhurbhuvahsvah*' will be benefited by the Master's *tapasya*. What a tremendous play of Power !' While saying this Mahapurushji's whole face glowed and he sat gravely with his head bent.

BELURMATH, 22 MARCH 1929

It was night. Mahapurushji was taking his night meal, which consisted of a little quantity of milk and a few dried fruits. Swami ... arrived just then. After saluting Mahapurushji he stood there. After sundry matters the talk drifted on to the work of the Master's Mission. Mahapurushji began to say: 'Now that you have all come, I feel very glad. The Master is rousing the power of the Organization by a shake-up and showing that His work cannot be carried on by any particular person. It will be done by the united body of monks. Then alone every thing will be in good order. And the more

blows and buffets, dangers and calamities come, the more will the power of the Master's Organization awaken. All great causes are attended with many obstacles. The more the obstacles and disasters, the more will devotion to the Master and reliance on Him increase among all. This Organization has been founded to inaugurate His *yugadharma* and He is working through every unit of the Organization. The work for inaugurating the new age will continue for several centuries without interruption. None will be able to stop its course. These are the words of Swamiji himself, who was an all-knowing *rishi*.

The sannyasin: Whatever Swamiji has said and what you also say are not going to be false. But Maharaj, when we look at the things around us it sometimes becomes very difficult to keep up that faith in the mind, and all enthusiasm for work evaporates altogether. Some kind of fear and disbelief come and seem to take entire possession of the mind.

Mahapurushji: All this is inevitable. Fear and disbelief will come many times, but all will again pass away. This is the very nature of work. What work is there in the world which can be accomplished without obstruction? The greater the work, the greater the obstacle to it, and it is through such opposition that the power of the Atman is aroused. That Power is nothing else but the Mother. All work is Hers and we also are Hers. One must go on working, keeping to the true path and holding on to this conviction firmly. The work is that of laying down the spiritual basis of the New Age. That is why She has dragged us also into it. Were it not so, could we not remain absorbed in spiritual practices? And in fact we had been doing so. But Swamiji started all this work under the Master's command and put us all into it. Consider, for example, how indefatigably Swamiji himself worked till the last moment of his life. His body broke down through over-work. And was it possible also for him to do all this work without opposition and trouble? Look at his journey to the West and sojourn there. How

many hundreds of obstacles and difficulties he had to go through to do the Lord's work. I sometimes think that I should no longer cultivate the personal aspect of the Master, but go into the impersonal state altogether and remain absorbed in *samadhi*, but the Master is not allowing me to do this. Of course He is everything. He is both a person and also beyond personality. All this universe is one quarter of His; the Unmanifest Immortal portion in Heaven is His three-quarters. We cannot do anything at all without His will. We have to remain in the state where he chooses to keep us for the time. But He is revealing to us through His mercy everything, he has opened to us the way to the abode of Immortality 'wherewith word turns back with thought, failing to grasp It.'

BELURMATH, 28 APRIL 1932

A *sannyasin* who had gone to Uttarkashi for *tapasya* had become seriously ill, and had written a letter complaining about many difficulties there. Mahapurush Maharaj dictated the following to be written to him in reply: 'Come away to this place quickly instead of suffering from disease there. There is no hard and fast rule that Liberation will be had only at Uttarkashi. If the Lord wills and be gracious, Liberation and *samadhi* can be had everywhere. You have had some experience of the place already. Now come away to these parts and do spiritual practices as you were doing before. The essential thing is to attain love and devotion for His lotus feet; that can be done by coming here too. Those places do not suit many *sadhus* who either die early, repeatedly suffering from disease, or become insane by trying to practise extreme asceticism. All, my son, depends on His will. Be resigned to Him. Call on Him without cessation, and pray. Gradually you will feel His grace in the heart. Knowledge of Truth cannot be had except through *samadhi*, and the attainment of such *samadhi* is further not possible without His grace. The aim of life is to realize God. That does not

depend on any particular spot. Consider the life of the Master Himself. He never went to Uttarkashi or roamed about in the Himalayas in order to practise *tapasya*. You have to proceed making His life your guide. Every action of His is a guide for this Age and is the best exemplar.'

A *brahmachari* had, in a fit of renunciation, gone straight to the Himalayas for *tapasya*. Mahapurushji said in that connection, 'My boy, it is not good to roam about so much. Nothing at all is gained; some gain, of course, is there. But that is only temporary; and its effect does not last long. The real fact is that if one wants to achieve something permanent, one will have to do spiritual practices remaining in the Monastery of the Master and Swamiji. That is why Swamiji has built up the *Math* with the blood of his heart. Where will you get so much holy company and such *sadhus*? It is extremely rare to find the association of such pure, holy, renouncing, learned and freedom-seeking *sadhus*. Besides, here is everything, *jnana*, *karma*, *bhakti* and *yoga*. There is no other place so favourable for spiritual practices. Can they who have true renunciation run about so much in search of a suitable place? They settle down quietly at a spot. There are at some places in the Himalayas very good *sadhus*, and austere ascetics of great renunciation. They stay in very secluded spots. The rest of the monks there mostly pass their days somehow. That is why Hari Maharaj (Swami Turiyananda) used to say "We are nothing but cheats. Can we remain absorbed in spiritual practices all the time? There is much waste of time. So it is much better to do a little service and along with it perform spiritual practices. We too have done not a little of roaming about and practising austerities. We have enough experiences of these in our life. Wherever we went, to the Himalayas or to other mountains and forests, we used to do a lot of meditation and *japa*. How long did the natural sceneries remain in the mind? Not for long. When the mind used to get merged

in the object of meditation all consciousness of the environment would be lost. When the sense of space and time is obliterated, all that remains is that One Bliss—the Substance of Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss. All is the same inside. What beauty is there outside? Nothing at all. The source of all beauty is within. All that has been manifested is limited, one can define and set limits to it. But the Unmanifest is without limit. The

more the mind goes into the inmost regions, the more will it get merged in Him. All this universe is a quarter of His, the rest three-fourths are His Unmanifest Immortal portion in Heaven. How vast is He! If the mind is once merged in Him, the problem is solved for ever! Then it never finds any joy in outside things. He is the source of all peace. Human life is in vain if He cannot be seen. All is vain without the realization of God.”

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## THE WESTERN QUESTION : THE SUMMING-UP (X)

BY THE EDITOR

We are bringing to a close in the present issue this somewhat lengthy serial entitled the *Western Question*. We indicated in the beginning its purpose and why it has been so named. Still, the title might have on occasions appeared rather odd to some and as not quite suited to what we were saying. But we believe the connection must have been obvious to all those who have followed the serial closely.

Since the present article is some sort of a recapitulation of the whole thing, we shall, before giving the substance of it, restate the reasons for its name more fully.

We have arrived at a turning-point of history. New forces have loosened the foundations of the old order. We are, with the rest of humanity, involved in a common fate. Yet the problems of India are not quite similar to those which confront the rest of mankind. An intelligent solution of ours will, however, benefit not only us but the world also.

The most serious challenge that India faces today is the ideological challenge of the West. This is true despite all talk of Indian culture so common today. It is the question of a philosophy of life, and not mere modernization of it with the help of technology. This problem, arising out of the impact of the West

upon us, is in essence the Western Question.

We have recently freed ourselves from the West's political and, to a large extent, its economic net. But we are persuaded that we have still to emancipate ourselves from its invisible ideological meshes. This is a matter of fundamental consequence to us, since no reconstruction is possible without an overall picture of our civilization and an understanding of the forces in action. What is going to be the basis of the new construction? For this we need a clear conception of the implications of our civilization, our eternal values and their relation to modern developments. We need an appropriate framework of thought for our material development.

There is still a wide tendency among us, derived from too close an acquaintance with the West and too little with India, to view and interpret India in terms of the West's ephemeral scheme of thought. This gives a wrong picture of Indian society and civilization and leads to a false evaluation of the past. In fact, as we have said earlier, a whole tradition of Indology has been built up upon a foundation of vast misunderstanding. This is because Indian civilization has been approached with certain assumptions, fashionable till lately, in the West. This approach

is far from obsolete, though correct ones are also noticeable. But the false approach has still the greater influence, especially on those who are more directly concerned with national planning. The entire history of India awaits to be redesigned in terms of a more adequate scheme of thought. Indian civilization has distinct aims and qualities and cannot be forced into the mould of ideas appropriate for the West.

We are all agreed upon the task of Indian reconstruction, but not all of us notice that there are two sides to it, spiritual and material. While the material side is obvious, the spiritual side is not, and many are apt to think what is not obvious does not exist or does not matter. Or perhaps they may think that the spiritual question can be neglected or left to take care of itself, for it is not a first priority. Implicit in such thinking are the presuppositions that a material solution of our problem is enough and that if we concentrate on it and emphasize only sociality, avoiding foggy questions of God and religion, all ideological sources of conflict and obstructions to happiness will automatically vanish. This is reminiscent of Marxism, according to which all ideology and values are a reflex of social conditions. Change society; ideas, truths and values will all automatically follow suit. This, carried beyond a point, is, of course, puerile thought. Two and two will make four, no matter whether the society is capitalistic or communistic.

Europe today is decadent and on the verge of ruin and anarchy, not because it lacks intelligence, material power, science or technology. What it lacks, and lacking which it is unable to make use of its intelligence and power to promote peace and happiness, is a sound Idea. Our problems are not the same as Europe's, but Europe has a lesson to teach, both in a negative and a positive way. Here we have to achieve social justice and a decent standard of living for all, for which we need science and the technical know-how of manufacture. But we need, besides these, some-

thing more, for it is clear technical progress achieved within a materialistic framework of thought becomes destructive of all the higher values of life. Further, our society remains still to be properly integrated. There are elements which have not yet been assimilated into the national body. To achieve this we need a broad conception of spirituality to which the whole-hearted loyalty of all can be given. What will happen if we neglect this, is that a false philosophy will take the place of the right one and drag the country into chaos, tyranny and barbarism.

The negative side of the Western lesson should be properly taken to heart. The people there are eagerly seeking for an inspiring way of life. They are not finding it in science nor in a parochial version of religion. Systems of truth and systems of value lie apart. The speculative philosophy gives no inspiration for a positive way of life. It can throw doubts on everything but is helpless to guide life. It is either silent or sentimental in regard to matters which are of the deepest import to life.

Whether explicit or not, certain metaphysical beliefs lie at the back of all our activities. In the final analysis, there are two conceptions of this kind, either of which dominates for a time any particular society. These conceptions may be termed sensate and idealistic. The former assumes reality to be confined to the sense-dimension or conceives it in terms of sensation; the latter has the notion of transcendence. A sensate civilization finds the universe neutral as regards values; it says there is no objective basis for our moral and aesthetic feelings or religious experiences. The idealistic civilization asserts that values do have an objective reference, though not in the popular sense. There is a substantial basis for our moral aspirations and religious cravings in a transcendental order, which is not inaccessible to us. The *Kathopanishad* puts the idea simply when it says that men are of two types, one which says that nothing exists beyond death, the other which

claims that death is not the end of existence. The former belief produces *asuric* (sensate) civilizations, which have, as history has repeatedly shown, only one end, namely, power and enjoyment (*arthakāma*), and one finale, namely, total collapse. Opposed to this is the *daivi* ideal, which makes Spirit the goal and guarantees life to the society which believes in it, since it represents the secret divine urge in history. India has always stood consistently for the latter idea. Because she has done so, she continues to live despite her failures in other fields and a thousand trials imposed from outside. She even now looks to the future with hope. Not only that, the world is also turning to her, instinctively as it were, in search of something it lacks but she alone possesses.

One can say that the prevalent Western attitude is one of fear and pessimism—a logical conclusion to the way of life which has no notion of the Next or Beyond.

There is a further reason for the title. The Western challenge of our times is just typical of others which India faced in the past and which she has in fact been facing since the dawn of her history. Though the present challenge is the most powerful, it is not peculiarly novel in character.

The impact of various cultures in our time has, however, an aspect which is peculiarly modern. The world has shrunk in size with the result that all its distinct civilizations have been brought into a most intimate contact with one another. We are witnessing an 'encounter' of civilizations. Each of these represents certain truths and styles, and there is no doubt that a new world civilization will be born of a synthesis of these. Much that is characteristic of each will disappear, but not in the same proportion. The values and truths which the civilizations represent are not of the same order, nor are all of them universally valid. Some are fundamental, others are not. The basis for a world civilization will be a universally valid spiritual truth, touching to the heart and persuasive to the

intellect. The civilization which will provide this basis will play the capital part in such a synthesis, and the real victory in the encounter will belong to it.

We can form an idea of the future of civilization from an illustration drawn from the past. The Graeco-Roman civilization of antiquity was conquered by Christianity, which means just this: that Christian conceptions came to form the framework within which the European civilization of later times developed. It did not mean that the valuable Graeco-Roman attainments in fields other than spiritual were lost or discarded. What happened was that a new conception of man and his destiny prevailed in place of the old one.

The same phenomenon is going to be repeated in modern times on a global scale. Consider how the different civilizations are locked in combat and how the less vigorous ones are succumbing to the more powerful. There are at present, broadly speaking, four important living culture-systems, namely, the Western, Islam, Chinese and Hindu. There are differences in each of these fields, which are not of any consequence for our present purpose. In the West, for example, they are trying to draw a sharp distinction between what they respectively call the Western tradition and the Eastern tradition in the same field of European culture. The Western tradition is, according to some of these, a Christian tradition and is represented roughly by the nations which lie west of the Iron Curtain. This description is, however, disputed by others who find the modern West's distinctive marks in science and technology. We are inclined to believe this, for whatever their past, the present Western nations have no longer the same attitude towards Christianity. America, the far-West, is no exception to this. We do not minimize the great qualities of these nations, their love of liberty and other virtues, but we think they have broken out of the Christian mould, though the Christian moral momentum has not yet been entirely lost for them. There is a vague

spiritual awareness of recent date, arising out of an apprehension of disaster to which secularism is leading, but there can hardly be any doubt that the Western civilization is today dominated by the pursuit of power and material gain.

The Iron Curtain countries, led by Russia, are not radically different from the 'Western' nations. They have only drawn the extreme logical deductions from the working dogma of the West.

Most of the peoples of the world have, one after another, fallen victims to this secular ideology: Japan, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, China, and so on. They have been either completely westernized or are in process of being so transformed. The victims come from the two civilizations, Islam and Chinese. It is apparent the resources of the peoples so conquered are both materially and spiritually inferior to those of the West. They find no other way of national salvation except through imitation of the West. The Turks have a sinister significance for Islam. Unless Islam can respond to the Western challenge by broadening and deepening its religious tradition, it will not survive as a way of life. This is the deadliest challenge it faces all over the world. Much of Islamic politics in different lands can be explained in terms of this. Islam as a culture will not be saved by politics.

India also faces the same challenge of the West. It is a curious phenomenon this, that while the Western civilization is breaking down, the ideology responsible for this disintegration has still a fascination for many of us. This fascination for everything Western may create endless difficulties. There is much to learn from the West in many fields. But our spiritual conceptions are certainly superior to its. We have accepted science and technology from the West, as fire was adopted by one people from another in prehistoric days. But we need not accept their secular assumptions. They are neither scientific nor helpful. We shall achieve material and social progress within

the framework of Vedanta. And if we may venture to say so, if a world order and a world civilization are to become realities, Vedanta alone will supply their necessary spiritual basis. The Indian solution will be a pattern for the world solution. In the future civilization of mankind there will be a synthesis of two kinds of science and two types of technique, namely, the science of Man and the science of nature, and the technique for achieving self-mastery and the technique for gaining control of nature. India's contribution to this synthesis will be the first kind of science and the first type of technique. It will be of the more fundamental importance to human happiness and peace.

## II

We have analyzed before the Indian conception of man and progress and their secular counterparts, and have shown that the vedantic conception of these saves history from becoming a devastating futility. The secular conception of man and progress is self-refuting beyond a point. We may start with sentimental notions like humanism, equality of man, the rule of law and so on, but if we forget the substantial spiritual basis of these we shall end by negating them altogether. The French Revolutionary and Marxist movements started with such romantic conceptions but were driven by logic to suppress the individual

There is no antithesis between spiritual perfection and social improvement. Renunciation and service are the consistent national ideals of India. It is wrong to attribute the narrowness of religion in the West to Indian spirituality. In India religion is a way, a technique for achieving self-mastery and perfection. There are infinite such ways suitable to the understanding, need, and development of individuals. Outside India religious fanaticism prevailed where religion was a ruling conception of life; even now many find it difficult to believe that more than one religion can be true, more than one conception of the

Godhead can be right, and more than one code of morality can be just.

According to the Indian idea man is really divine and true progress means an attainment of the soul. The natural man is an apparent truth. The natural man, science will say, is an occurrence, an electrical phenomenon, a temporary event, a flotsam for a while on the eddying surface of time. Neither humanism nor science can discover any other man. But this is only a partial truth. Behind the natural man is the eternal Man, which is ever being confused with its shadow. As Sri Ramakrishna says, 'There is inside this man the jewel of a man.'

Society, according to this conception, is an arena for moral striving for attaining through service man's real status. Social progress means realization of this divine idea in depth and extension. Suitable material and other conditions are necessary to bring each man in society to the comprehension and realization of this truth. That is the ultimate justification of science, technology, politics and so on. Material progress is not real progress. There can be no final solution of the human problem on the material plane. Evil is not something outside of us; it is a correlate of Ignorance. The real fight between good and evil is waged in the intimate interior of our personalities. Outside conflicts are social reflections of this inner struggle. Man does not become good by a blind mechanical movement. History is never redemptive. There is no perfection waiting for humanity at a remote point of time. Knowledge of Self alone redeems. We are perfect at bottom; we have only to realize this through analysis, reflection, and meditation. Progress is the gradual liberation of consciousness from the bondage of matter and the limited personality. Perfection is even here and now and does not lie at a distant date, for all points of time are equidistant from Eternity.

This view of the nature of man and his destiny is derived from vedic sources. It is the vedic framework which holds our civiliza-

tion still. Attempts were made in the past to knock it down. All of them have failed because Truth alone prevails, and because Truth came to be lived by an unfailing line of saints and prophets through the length of Indian history. This consistent tradition of spirituality is without a parallel anywhere else in the world. It is this faith in the evolution of Spirit, this belief in a Divine Order behind the scenes and behind the ups and downs of history, this belief in the Real Man, which has maintained the continuity of our culture and has held together the different peoples of the vast subcontinent by a spiritual tie. Indian unity and greatness rest upon this.

This attitude towards life, paradoxical though it may appear, has assured the continuance of our civilization. The spiritual conception, instead of drying up our energies, has on the contrary given us unquenchable faith in our destiny. And it has been responsible when it became widely operative on the practical plane for the greatest amount of prosperity, peace, and progress we have ever had in the past. This is a fact of recorded history.

If we are asked to point out what constitutes the distinctive and outstanding contribution of India to civilization, we shall say it is the impersonal conception of Truth. This world, this universe, this variety are all the manifestation of Spirit, to which no limits can be set. The universe is a projection of Spirit. Truth is God, if we mean by the word God all that personality means and much more. Oftentimes we make the mistake of retaining the notion of our ephemeral personality while denying the personality of God. No human conception of Truth can contain it, since all conceptions are personal and therefore limited. Vedanta does not claim to express it but only gives a broad hint of it, mostly in a negative sort of way in order to avoid all notions of limitation. The impersonal character of Truth has been emphasized by calling the *Veda* impersonal (*apaurusheya*). The spiritual truths, which are the *Veda*, are grounded in an objective spiritual reality and are not the



subjective fancies of individuals. It is open to all, for the eternal dwells in every heart. There are no chosen men or peoples. This is the grandest thing man has ever discovered.

From this conception have followed catholicity, tolerance, and charity. This is the unity behind diversity, the substance of Consciousness (*vijnana-dhatu*) behind appearances.

The tremendous social achievement of India referred to before has been due to this conception. The social task has absorbed the greatest amount of India's energy. India has been like a sea into which have flowed from times immemorial races and tribes of all descriptions, losing in the end their separate identities, thanks to her spiritual chemistry. The modern tensions in our society need not frighten us if we live by this ancient light which no storm that may blow can ever put out. India has the capacity to assimilate everything in her own way. The greatest creators and leaders of our societies have been the prophets and saints who have periodically provided the basic dynamic impulse for fresh creations and advances. They have left permanent marks on the national life.

Indian ideas and values have travelled to all parts of the civilized world since the earliest periods of history, fertilizing new societies and producing new civilizations. Such connections between India and the ancient world are not very obvious but are gradually coming to light. India has always meant something big to the world.

No civilization is without trials or failures, since the very solutions of one period are converted by the time-process into the problems of another. But despite reaction and wrong emphasis India has stuck to the balanced conception of life and society represented by the *Gita*. There have been periodical breakdowns but we have been able always to recover from them by turning to the *Gita* ideal. Even from mundane historical facts it appears that the Divine is watching over us. Because of our faith in the divine purpose our very catastrophes have been in the past transformed

into springboards for grand creative achievements.

The Indian tradition is rational and not opposed to science. The antithesis between science and religion is unknown to our philosophy. In the West Christian apologists are even now seeking a sentimental basis for their religion. But we have a larger conception of science and religion. Both are searches after Truth on different planes. We do not, further, separate the field of value from that of truth. The highest Truth for us is also the highest value. It is not a conclusion of the human understanding but a fact of the ultimate experience. Fashionable western philosophy of our times is skeptical as regards metaphysical problems. It leaves out a large area of utmost importance to us, the area of values, as beyond the field of science. It says we cannot decide between the truth or falsity of values by an appeal to empirical facts. Philosophy has become mostly a matter of logical analysis of terms and sentences, and no longer inspires a way of life.

In India Truth (*satyam*) is also value (*ānandaṁ*). Rationality is a mark of true spirituality. Spiritual facts can be discovered by following certain procedures. Religion has a verifiable basis. The science of Self is as much a science as natural science, though the methods in the two cases differ. In matters of sense-experience scientific method is the only method of arriving at truths, in the realm of Spirit yoga is the method of attaining spiritual truths.

These demarcations of the fields of truth and approaches to it have been here made by men whose chief concern was with spirituality. Rational living demands premises of two sorts, premises of value and premises of facts. Facts of the senses are easily known, but the truth or falsity of a value cannot be *known*, though it is given, through feeling. To know it we have to take a metaphysical jump, to which strict rationalism points and of which the way has been shown by saints and prophets. We have in the beginning to take many things on

trust. The need for authority is a constant need of man, and this need is greater in matters of spirituality. But we have every right to check this authority.

The aim of life according to our philosophy is *Knowledge* or *jnana*. It should not be confused with what we ordinarily call knowledge, which is judgmental and largely a matter of belief, resting upon a distinction between subject and object. All ordinary knowledge starts with certain initial assumptions which it can never transcend. Two features more or less characterize all human knowledge, whether commonsense or scientific. One is that such knowledge can never entirely get rid of the subjective element, the other that it never achieves its aim of perfect unity, since the subject-object relation is fundamental to this process. We feel that we would be perfectly satisfied if we could reduce the Many to an One, matter and mind to a single formula. This, however, we shall always fail to do by the scientific method, to which dualism is fundamental. Monism, of the material or mental variety, however imposing it may seem, is neither satisfying from the standpoint of value, nor free from logical difficulties and erroneous assumptions. Besides it is not verifiable, it is simply a deduction. The unity so achieved is achieved at the cost of truth and value.

Vedanta says true knowledge is a knowledge of identity. It is the direct perception of the Self. What we call knowledge is a circular movement in ignorance, originating from a prior false assumption. The knowledge process becomes finalized when the subjective factor of personality is entirely eliminated and when the subject and the object are merged into perfect unity. There is a hint of this in ordinary knowledge but no fulfilment. Scientific knowledge is never truly objective; even physics cannot get rid of the notion of the observer who interprets the basic occurrences of the world in sense terms. The very observer of science is an occurrence and does not survive analysis. This makes of everything a fiction, so to say, in the philosophical sense.

It is only when we get rid of the bondage and limitation of personality, we realize Truth as It is and not as it appears. This may sound incomprehensible but is nevertheless a fact of experience. When realization comes, it will be seen that we have so long been mistaking the shadow for substance. Our ideas about the world will be completely reversed. . . .

We have tried in the course of the serial to present the basic conceptions of our culture and to show how we have, thanks to these, successfully met the repeated challenges from outside. In a word, we have tried to construct an adequate perspective of our history. This is not a question of theoretical interest but of great practical moment to us just now.

We wish we could go into the question of India's failures in the recent past in science and politics. There is no doubt that India has not always paid the same attention to the study of nature as she has done to the study of man. She has often been, despite the *Gita*, more absorbed by contemplation than action. Specially in the last two hundred years or so she was left behind by the West in science and political developments. There are without doubt good reasons for this. We cannot go into them now. But it is obvious this cannot be attributed to her philosophy. That phase is however past; we are on the march again. Though weighed down with poverty, hunger, and disease, India is full of hope and looks confidently into the future. What of the West?

One large conclusion which we can draw from Indian history is that our civilization continues to live and is expected to play a capital part in world history in the future because of the eternal values enshrined in it. But we have to go deeper than is usual to know what these values really are. We should avoid the two mistakes of the contemporary West, namely, the aberrations of technical progress and its secularism. First, we should not allow an undue concentration of power over the lives of vast masses of men, which technology makes possible, for such power

menaces freedom and individual development. Second, we should maintain the broad spiritual framework of our society and achieve material progress within it. Power must serve a superior end.

If we thus set the direction of our national

life by the distant star of God, we shall assure that all our other affections and purposes will be properly balanced and that the things which are merely means to ends will not be allowed to become absolute ends in themselves.

(Concluded)

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## A CALL TO YOUNG INDIA

BY SWAMI SAMBUDDHANANDA

A great responsibility rests on the youth of India today, for it has to realize the cherished dream of millions of Indians. It is only the young who can do this, since they alone can build up their character on a basis of ideas required for Indian reconstruction. The older generations are too tied up by old habits and ideologies.

The age we are living in is an age of anxiety and of troubles. Vast changes are due here and elsewhere. Political and economic freedom is absent from large areas of the world. In some parts of the world power threatens life and freedom, in others man has yet to achieve a decent standard of living. Yet, the world produces enough to assure the necessities of life to all its inhabitants. What then we need today to redress these glaring contradictions and troubles?

Let us have a look at India. Thousands are without employment, millions live on a bare subsistence level. Poverty, disease and illiteracy are rampant. Production is low and not enough to meet national requirements. Yet, even the available capital is idle, while labour is bent upon exploiting its organized strength for sectional ends. On top of all this, bribery and black-marketing seem to go on unchecked and increasing.

We fondly hoped that political freedom would quickly solve our problems. In fact, it has increased the tensions in our society. Social justice is far from achieved, while our

economy seems to have moved into a kind of dialectical jam.

Outside India the great powers are piling up arms in search of security, but insecurity is increasing with the growth of armaments. The different camps are thinking in terms of power-solution and are involved in a 'cold war'. True peace, therefore, is non-existent. All this makes it clear that political solution is superficial, of greater importance is the economic solution, for the political tensions have their roots in bad economy. To achieve a good and just economy we must first of all have an one-world idea. That is to say, we must have a common conception applicable to all.

Freedom in the truest sense of the term must be freedom from slavery in any shape or form. The feeling of freedom can never be complete unless it includes the sense of others' freedom. One who is, or wishes to be, free will long to make others free without any distinction; he will never want to subjugate others. The desire to subjugate or subordinate others is incompatible with the spirit of freedom. Those who talk of freedom and in the same breath work for the bondage and slavery of others, for the exploitation of other classes and races, are no better than impostors, their deeds belying their words. They are the greatest traitors on earth.

India, politically independent, has yet to achieve real freedom. What we have got is

just an opportunity to put our house in order. It is a freedom of action and nothing more.

India must be free in every sense of the term, politically, economically, and socially. This is a matter of life and death to us and also for the world. In spite of long political serfdom India has continued to live as a distinct civilization because she has something precious to contribute to humanity. The present is full of frustration. A new India must arise. That is the task which India has to accomplish. This task can best be performed by a new generation fired by a new idealism. The need of India today is that the sons of her soil, particularly the young men of India, irrespective of caste, creed and colour, should come forward, rise to the occasion and join hands to accomplish the great and glorious task—the task of reconstructing Indian society on a spiritual basis without sacrificing material progress.

To accomplish the task before her, what India needs today is a band of young men with 'muscles of iron and nerves of steel and a gigantic will which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the secrets and mysteries of the universe and accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it means going down to the bottom of the seas and meeting death face to face.'

What our country needs today is a band of young men who are determined to sacrifice their lives on the altar of the welfare of the whole world, not India alone, imbued with the spirit of renunciation and service. India needs today a batch of workers who have firm faith in the great and illustrious Swami Vivekananda and are ready to work out the marvellous motto of his life 'Be and Make'. 'First, let us be gods and then help others to be gods,' says Swami Vivekananda. Only a new generation of young men rooted in the true values of India's past can sweep away the impediments to her freedom and progress. They cannot do this by forgetting their past.

They should never forget that the ideal of their womanhood is Sita, Savitri, and

Damayanti; they should never forget that the God they have worshipped is the great of ascetics, all-renouncing Shankara, Lord of Uma; they should never forget that their marriage, their wealth, their life are not for self-enjoyment—individual and personal happiness. But they should remember that they are born as a sacrifice before the mother's altar. 'Forget not', says the great and illustrious Swami Vivekananda, 'that your social order is but the reflex of the Infinite, Universal Motherhood; forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian and proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice: The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God, India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age. Say, brother, the soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good, and repeat and pray day and night—O, Thou Lord of Gauri, O, Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O, Thou Mother of strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness and make me a Man!' It is the true type of men that alone can do away with all evils, social, political and religious and make the country and its people free in the real sense of the term. It is they who really can bring about the regeneration of India, upon which the regeneration of the whole world depends. 'The salvation of the world,' rightly observed Swami Vivekananda, 'depends on the salvation of India.' For the regeneration of India and her salvation, what the country needs at this hour is a band of young men inspired with the high ideas and ideals of our country that have been left to them by their predecessors—the saints and sages of the past—as a legacy.

A survey of the social and religious conditions of the modern world, ridden with hatred and lust for power, leads one to conclude that

the world we live in has become bankrupt of those qualities which one would expect its leaders to possess if they are to lead it onwards to a higher development and to a more civilized condition. What the world needs today is strength, not merely physical and intellectual, but moral and spiritual as well.

Arise, awake, therefore, O young men of India, and stop not till you reach the goal—till you succeed in building up the whole country as one nation sworn to the same pur-

pose, the same common cause—the cause of the welfare of the whole humanity at large.

In every walk of human life, social, political or religious, what we find wanting today is the true type of men. The greatest contribution that a man can make to the world is by making of himself a man, in the truest sense of the term. It is up to you all, O young men of India, to make or mar the future of India—your beloved motherland.

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## REMINISCENCES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY MISS JOSEPHINE MACLEOD

On the twentieth of January, 1895, I went with my sister to 54 West 33rd Street, New York, and heard the Swami Vivekananda in his own sitting room where were assembled fifteen or twenty ladies and two or three gentlemen. The room was crowded. All the arm chairs were taken so I sat on the floor in the front row. Swami stood in the corner. He said something, the particular words of which I do not remember, but instantly to me that was truth, and the second sentence he spoke was truth, and the third sentence was truth. And I listened to him for seven years and whatever he uttered was to me truth. From that moment life had a different import. It was as if he made you realize that you were in eternity. It never altered. It never grew. It was like the sun that you will never forget once you have seen.

I heard him all that winter, three days a week, mornings at eleven o'clock. I never spoke to him, but as we were so regular in coming, two front seats were always kept for us in this sitting room of the Swamiji. One day he turned and said: 'Are you sisters?' 'Yes', we answered. Then he said: 'Do you come very far?' We said: 'No, not very far—about thirty miles up the Hudson.' 'So far?

That is wonderful.' Those were the first words I ever spoke to him.

I always felt that after Vivekananda, Mrs Roethlisberger was the most spiritual person I ever met. It was she who took us to him. Swamiji had a great place for her also. One day she and I went to the Swami, and said: 'Swami, will you tell us how to meditate?' He said: 'Meditate on the word "OM" for a week and come again and tell me.' So after a week we went back and Mrs Roethlisberger said: 'I see a light.' He said: 'Good, keep on.' 'O no, it is more like a glow at the heart.' And he said to me: 'Good, keep on.' That is all he ever taught me. But we had been meditating before we ever met him and we knew the *Gita* by heart. I think that prepared us for recognition of this tremendous life force which he was. His power lay, perhaps, in the courage he gave others. He did not ever seem to be conscious of himself at all. It was the other man who interested him. 'When the book of life begins to open, then the fun begins,' he would say. He used to make us realize there was nothing secular in life; it was all holy. 'Always remember, you are incidentally an American, and a woman, but always a child of God. Tell yourself day and night who you

are. Never forget it.' That is what he used to tell us. His presence, you see, was dynamic. You cannot pass that power on unless you have it, just as you cannot give money away unless you have it. You may imagine it, but you cannot do it.

We never spoke to him, had nothing much to do with him, but during that Spring we were dining one night with Mr Francis H. Leggett, who later became my brother-in-law. 'Yes, we can dine with you but we cannot spend the evening with you,' we had told him. 'Very well,' he answered 'just dine with me.' When dinner was over he said: 'Where are you going this evening?' We told him we were going to a lecture and he asked: 'Mayn't I come?' We said: 'Yes.' He came. He listened and when it was over he went up to Swamiji, shook hands with him and said: 'Swami, when will you dine with me?' And it was he who introduced us to Swami socially.

Then Swami came to Ridgely Manor, Mr Leggett's place in the Catskill Mountains, and spent some days there. At the time some of the students said: 'But Swamiji, you can't go. The classes are going on.' Swami turned with great dignity and answered: 'Are they my classes? Yes, I will go.' And he did. While he was there he met my sister's children who were then twelve and fourteen years old, but when we came down to New York and the classes began again he did not seem to remember them, and they, very much surprised, said: 'Swami doesn't remember us.' We said to them: 'Wait until the class is over.' While he was lecturing he was always completely absorbed in what he was talking about. When he was through speaking he came up and said: 'Well children, how nice to see you again,' showing he did remember them. They were very happy.

Perhaps it was during this period; one day when he was our guest in New York City he came home very quiet and subdued. He did not speak for hours and finally we said to him: 'Swami! What did you do today?' And he said: 'I have seen a thing today that

only America can show. I was in the street car, Helen Gould sat on one side and a negro washer-woman, with her washing on her lap, on the other. No place but America can show that.'

In June of that year Swami went up to Camp Percy, Christine Lake, N. H. to be the guest of Mr Leggett at his fishing camp. We also went. There my sister's engagement to Mr Leggett was announced and Swami was invited to go abroad and be the witness at the wedding. While he was at the Camp, Swami would go out under those beautiful white birch trees and meditate for hours. Without telling us anything about it he made two beautiful birch bark books, written in Sanskrit and English, which he gave to my sister and me.

Then when my sister and I went to Paris to buy her trousseau, Swamiji went to Thousand Island Park and for six weeks gave those wonderful talks called 'Inspired Talks', which to me are the most beautiful words that were written because they were given to a group of intimate disciples. *They* were disciples, whereas I was never anything but a friend. But that quality that he gave them. Nothing I think revealed his heart as those days did.

He came over to Paris with Mr Leggett in August. There, my sister and I stayed at the Holland House and the Swami and Mr Leggett stayed at a different Hotel, but we saw them every day. At that time Mr Leggett had a courier who always called Swami '*Mon Prince!*' And Swami said to him: 'But I am not a prince. I am a Hindu monk.' The courier answered: 'You may call yourself that, but I am used to dealing with Princes and I know one when I see one.' His dignity impressed everyone. Yet, when someone once said to him: 'You are so dignified, Swami', he replied: 'It isn't me, it's my walk.'

On the ninth of September Mr and Mrs Leggett were married and the next day Swami left for London to be the guest of

Mr E. T. Sturdy, who had already met some of the Ramakrishna monks in India and who was a Sanskrit scholar. After Swami had been there some time he wrote: 'Come over and get up classes.' But by the time we went over he was already lecturing. He lectured very eloquently at Princes' Hall, and the next day the papers were full of the news that a great Indian Yogi had come to London. He was very much honoured there. Until the fifteenth of December we stayed in London. Then Swami again came to America to continue his work here. In April of the following year he went back to London when he established classes and began a real definite work. That was in 1896. He worked there all summer until July when he went to Switzerland with the Seviars.

Swamiji's knowledge was prodigious. Once when my niece, Alberta Sturges, later Lady Sandwich, was with him in Rome, showing him the sights, she was amazed at his knowledge of where the great monuments were. And when she went to St Peter's with him she was still more amazed to see him so reverential to the symbols of the Roman Church; to all the jewels, all the beautiful draperies, put upon the saints. She said: 'Swami, you don't believe in a personal God, why do you honour this so much?' He answered: 'But Alberta, if you do believe in a personal God, surely you give it your best.'

That autumn he went from Switzerland to India with Mr and Mrs Sevier and Mr J. J. Goodwin, where a great ovation awaited him by the entire nation. This can be read about in the discourses called *Lectures from Colombo to Almora*. Mr Goodwin was the stenographer who had been engaged at 54 West 33rd Street to take down the lectures of Swami Vivekananda. Mr Goodwin was a court-stenographer, which meant two hundred words a minute and he was very expensive; but as we did not want to lose any of Vivekananda's words we engaged him. After the first week Mr Goodwin refused any money and when they said to him: 'What do

you mean?' he said. 'If Vivekananda gives his life, the least I can do is to give my service.' He followed Swami around the world and we have seven volumes hot from his lips that Mr Goodwin took down.

I never wrote to Swami after he went to India, waiting to hear from him. Finally I had a letter 'Why don't you write?' Then I sent back: 'Shall I come to India?' And his answer was: 'Yes, come, if you want filth and degradation and poverty and many loin cloths talking religion. Don't come if you want anything else. We cannot bear one more criticism.' Naturally I went over by the first ship; I sailed on the twelfth of January with Mrs Ole Bull and Swami Saradananda. We stopped in London. Then on to Rome. We arrived in Bombay on the twelfth of February where Mr Alasinga met us, who wore the vertical red marks of the Vaishnavite sect. Later on, once when I was sitting with Swami on our way to Kashmir, I happened to make the remark: 'What a pity that Mr Alasinga wears those Vaishnavite marks on his forehead!' Instantly Swami turned and said with great sternness: 'Hands off! What have you ever done?' I did not know what I had done then. Of course I never answered. Tears came to my eyes and I waited. I learned later that Mr Alasinga Perumal was a young Brahmin teaching philosophy in a college in Madras earning 100 rupees a month, supporting his father, mother, wife and four children, and who had gone from door to door to beg the money to send Vivekananda to the West. Perhaps without him we never would have met Vivekananda. Then one understood the anger with which Swamiji met the slightest attack on Mr Alasinga.

When we arrived in Bombay they were very keen that we stay there but we took the first train to Calcutta, and at four o'clock on the second morning following Swamiji met us with a dozen disciples. There were a score of other distinguished Indians with purple and gold and crimson turbans, to whom

Mrs Ole Bull had offered hospitality when they were in America. They covered us with garlands. We were literally enwrapped with flowers. It is always frightening to me to have garlands put on. Mrs Ole Bull and I went to a hotel and Mr Mohini Chatterjee came and stayed there from five o'clock in the afternoon until ten at night. I happened to remark: 'I hope your wife will not be worried?' He answered: 'I will explain to mother when I get home.' I did not understand what that meant. After I knew Mr Chatterjee well enough, perhaps a year later, I said to him: 'What did you mean that first day when you said you would explain to mother?' He answered: 'O, I never go to my room for the night without first going to my mother's room and confiding to her everything that happened during the day.' 'But your wife?' I said, 'Don't you confide to her?' He answered: 'My wife? She gets that relation from her son.' Then I realized the fundamental difference between the Indian and our Western civilizations. The Indian civilization is based upon motherhood and our civilization is based upon wifhood, which makes a tremendous difference.

In a day or two we went up to see Swami at his temporary monastery at Belur, at Nilambar Mukerjee's garden-house. During the afternoon Swami said: 'I must take you to the new monastery that we are buying.' I said: 'O, but Swami, isn't this big enough?' It was a lovely little villa he had, with perhaps an acre or two of land, a small lake and many flowers. I thought it was big enough for anyone. But he evidently saw things in a different scale. So he took us across little gullies to the place where is now the present monastery. Mrs Ole Bull and I, finding this old river-side house empty, said: 'Swami, can't we use this house?' 'It isn't in order,' he answered. 'But we'll put it in order,' we told him. With that he gave us permission. So we had it all newly whitewashed and went down to the bazars, bought old mahogany furniture and made a drawing room half of which was

Indian style and half of which was Western style. We had an outside dining room, our bedroom with an extra room for Sister Nivedita who was our guest until we went to Kashmir. We stayed there quite two months. It was perhaps the most beautiful time we ever had with Swamiji. He came every morning for early tea which he used to take under the great mango tree. That tree is still in existence. We never allowed them to cut it down though they were keen to do it. He loved our living at that river-side cottage and he would bring all those who came to visit him, to see what a charming home we had made of this house he had thought uninhabitable. In the afternoons we used to give tea-parties in front of the house, in full view of the river, where always could be seen loads of boats going up-stream, we receiving as if we were in our own drawing rooms. Swamiji loved all that intimate use we made of things which they took as a matter of course. One night there came one of those deluges of rain, like sheets of water. He paced up and down our outside dining room verandah, talking of Krishna and the love of Krishna and the power that love was in the world. He had a curious quality that when he was a Bhakta, a lover, he brushed aside Karma and Raja and Jnana yogas as if they were of no consequence whatever. And when he was a Karma Yogi, then he made that the great theme. Or equally so, the Jnana. Sometimes, weeks, he would feel in one particular mood utterly disregarding of what he had been, just previous to that. He seemed to be filled with an amazing power of concentration; of opening up to the great Cosmic qualities that are all about us. It was probably that power of concentration that kept him so young and so fresh. He never seemed to repeat himself. There would be an incident of very little consequence which would illuminate a whole new passage for him. And he had such a place for us Westerners whom he called 'Living Vedantins'. He would say: 'When you believe a thing is true, you



do it, you do not dream about it. That is your power.'

It was one rainy night that Swami brought the Ceylonese Buddhist monk, Anagarika Dharmapala, to visit us. Mrs Ole Bull, Sister Nivedita and I were so happily housed in this cottage it gave Swami particular joy to show his guests how simply Western women could settle there and make a real home.

On the twelfth of May in 1898 we started en route to Kashmir. We stopped at Naini Tal, the summer residence of the U. P. Government, and there hundreds of Indians met Swami with a beautiful hill pony on which they put him. Then they scattered before him flowers and palms, exactly as they did before Christ when he went into Jerusalem. And I said at once; 'So, this is an oriental custom.'

He left us alone for three days. We did not see him at all. We stayed at a hotel. Finally he sent for us. We went into one of the little houses and there I saw him sitting on his bed wreathed in smiles, so happy was he to see us again. We had given him utter freedom. We never paid any attention to him. He never felt the weight of us. There was never any feeling of the necessity of entertainment.

From there we started for Almora where he became the guest of Mr and Mrs Sevier. We took a bungalow of our own and there we stayed a month. Swamiji always meant Almora to be the Himalayan home of his Western disciples and expected the monastery to be founded there. But Mr Sevier, who took his vocation of founding a monastery very seriously, was so interrupted by people coming in to tea parties daily that he insisted on going forty miles farther into the Himalayas; so Mayavati Ashrama, when started, was eighty miles from a station—and there were no proper roads.

While we were there word came that Mr Goodwin had died at Ootacamund. When Swamiji learned that Mr Goodwin had died he looked a long long time out upon the

snow-capped Himalayas without speaking and presently he said: 'My last public utterance is over.' And he seldom spoke in public again.

We left Almora on the twentieth of June for Kashmir. By train to Rawalpindi, where we got *tongas* with three horses abreast to drive us the two hundred miles up into Kashmir. There were relays of horses every five miles so that we dashed through on top of this beautiful road, as perfect then as any road the Romans ever made. Then to Baramulla where we got four native house boats. These boats called *dungas* are about seventy feet long and broad enough to have two single beds in them and a corridor between, covered with a matting house; so wherever we wanted a window we only had to roll up the matting. The whole roof could be lifted in the day time and thus we lived in the open, yet knew there was always a roof over our heads. We had four of these *Dungas*, one for Mrs Ole Bull and me, one for Mrs Paterson and Sister Nivedita, and one for Swami and one of his monks. Then a dining room boat where we all met to have our meals. We stayed in Kashmir four months, the first three in these simple little boats until after September when it got so cold we took an ordinary house boat with fire places and there enjoyed the warmth of a real house. Sister Nivedita has written a good deal of the talks we had there. Swami would get up about half past five in the morning and seeing him smoking and talking with the boatmen, we would get up too. Then there would be those long walks for a couple of hours until the sun came up warm; Swami talking about India, what its purpose in life was, what Mohammedanism had done and what it had not done. He talked, immersed in the history of India and in the architecture and in the habits of the people, and we walked on through fields of forget-me-nots, bursting into pink and blue blossoms, way above our heads.

Baramulla is something like Venice. So many of the streets are canals. We had our

own little private boat in which we went to and from the main land. But the merchants would come in small crafts all about our boats. We did most of our shopping over the rails of the boat. Each of our boats cost thirty rupees a month, which included the boatmen who fed themselves. The boatmen consisted of father, mother, son and daughter and tiny children. They had their own little place at the end of the boat and many a time we begged them for a taste of their food, the aroma being so delicious. The manner of travelling in these boats is that the boat is punted up the river, or it is dragged, the boatmen walking along the shore, or it is rowed. There is nothing extra to pay regardless of how one is navigated. When we wanted to move up the Jhelum River to some of the lakes we would tell our servants the night before; they would get in supplies of food including ducks or chickens, vegetables, eggs, butter, fruits and milk. In the morning when we awakened we would feel the boat moving along, gliding so imperceptibly that we were scarcely conscious of the motion. Our servant who had walked ahead would then have a delicious meal waiting for us. This he made over a little trough long enough and narrow enough to hold three pans, one containing soup, one meat, and the other rice. The dexterity of these people was a wonder and something we never got over. As a chicken is not considered clean food by the orthodox Hindus we never told the people we intended to eat the chickens we bought. But when we went up the river the lower part of the boat held half a dozen clucking chickens. The pundits who would come to visit Swami would hear them and look around for them. Swami, who knew they were hidden underneath, had a twinkle in his eye but he would never give us away. Then the pundits would say: 'But Swami, why do you have to do with these ladies. They are *mlechchhas*. They are untouchables.' Then the Westerners would come to us and say: 'But don't you see? Swami is not treating you with respect. He meets you without his turban.' So we

had great fun laughing at the idiosyncrasies of each other's civilization.

Swamiji then sent for Swami Saradananda to come and travel with us, to show us the sights of India; Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Kurukshetra and so on, Swami going straight down to Calcutta. By the time we got down there he had already founded the monastery in our little cottage at Belur. As we could not go back there we took a small house about two miles up at Balley and stayed there until we left for the West.

Mrs Ole Bull had given several thousand dollars to found the monastery. I having very little, it took me some years to save eight hundred dollars. One day I said to Swamiji: 'Here is a little money you may be able to use.' He said: 'What? What?' I said: 'Yes.' 'How much' he asked. And I said: 'Eight hundred dollars.' Instantly he turned to Swami Trigunatita and said: 'There, go and buy your press.' He bought the press which started the *Udbodhan*, the Bengali magazine published by the Ramakrishna Mission.

In July 1899 Swami came to England again with Sister Nivedita, where Sister Christine and Mrs Funke met him. From there he came to America and he came to us at Ridgely Manor in September of that year where we gave him his own cottage with two of his monks, Turiyananda and Abhedananda. Sister Nivedita was also there, and Mrs Ole Bull. It was quite a community of people who loved and honoured the Swami. He used to call my sister, Mrs Leggett, 'Mother', and always sat beside her at table. He particularly liked chocolate ice cream, because, 'I too am chocolate and I like it,' he would say. One day we were having strawberries and someone said to him: 'Swami do you like strawberries?' He answered: 'I never tasted them.' 'You never tasted them, why you eat them every day!' He said: 'You have cream on them—pebbles with cream would be good.'

In the evening sitting around the great fire in the hall of Ridgely Manor he would talk and once after he came out with some of

his thoughts a lady said : 'Swami, I don't agree with you there.' 'No ? Then it is not for you,' he answered. Someone else said : 'O, but that is where I find you true.' 'Ah, then it was for you,' he said showing that utter respect for the other man's views. One evening he was so eloquent about a dozen people listening, his voice becoming so soft and seemingly far away, when the evening was over we all separated without even saying good-night to each other. Such a holy quality pervaded. My sister, Mrs Leggett, had occasion to go to one of the rooms afterward. There she found one of the guests, an agnostic, weeping. 'What do you mean !' my sister asked, and the lady said : 'That man has given me eternal life. I never wish to hear him again.'

It was while the Swami was at Ridgely Manor that a letter came from a lady unknown to us to say our only brother was very ill in Los Angeles and that she thought, he would die and we ought to know it. So my sister said to me : 'I think you must go.' And I said : 'Of course.' Within two hours I was packed, the horses were at the door, we had four miles to drive to a railway station, and as I went out Swami put up his hand and said some Sanskrit blessing and then he called out, 'Get up some classes and I will come.' I went straight to Los Angeles and in a small white cottage covered with roses, on the outskirts of the city, lay my brother, very ill. But over his bed was a life-size picture of Vivekananda. I had not seen my brother for ten years, so after I had an hour's talk with him and saw how very ill he was, I went out to see our hostess, Mrs Blodgett and said to her : 'My brother is very ill.' She said : 'Yes.' I said : 'I think he will die.' She said : 'Yes.' 'May he die here' I asked. She said : 'O yes.' Then I said : 'Who is that man whose portrait is over my brother's bed ?' She drew herself up with all the dignity of her seventy years and said : 'If ever there was a God on earth, that is the man.' I said : 'What do you know about him ?' She answered : 'I was at the Parliament of Religions

at Chicago in 1893 and when that young man got up and said, "Sisters and Brothers of America", seven thousand people rose to their feet as a tribute to something they knew not what and when it was over and I saw scores of women walking over the benches to get near him, I said to myself : 'Well, my lad, if you can resist that onslaught you are indeed a God.' Then I said to Mrs Blodgett 'I know him.' 'You know him ?' she asked. I said : 'Yes, I left him in the little village of Stone Ridge, of two hundred people, in the Catskill Mountains in New York.' She said : 'You know him ?' I said : 'Why don't you ask him here ?' She said : 'To my cottage ?' 'He will come', I told her. In three weeks my brother was dead and in six weeks Swamiji was there and began his classes on the Pacific coast, in 'Kalifornia.'

We were Mrs Blodgett's guests for months. This little cottage had three bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining room and a sitting room. Every morning we would hear Swami chanting his Sanskrit from the bath, which was just off the kitchen. He would come out with tousled hair and get ready for breakfast. Mrs Blodgett made delicious pancakes and these we would eat at the kitchen table, Swami sitting with us ; and such discourses he would have with Mrs Blodgett, such repartee and wit, she talking of the villainy of men and he talking of even the greater wickedness of women ! Mrs Blodgett seldom went to hear him lecture, saying her duty was to give us delicious meals when we got back. Swami lectured a great number of times at the Home of Truth and in various halls, but perhaps the most outstanding lecture I ever heard was his talk on 'Jesus of Nazareth', when he seemed to radiate a white light from head to foot, so lost was he in the wonder and the power of Christ. I was so impressed with this obvious halo that I did not speak to him on the way back for fear of interrupting, as I thought, the great thoughts that were still in his mind. Suddenly he said to me : 'I know how it is done.' I said : 'How what is done ?' 'How they make

mulligatawny soup! They put a bay leaf in it,' he told me. That utter lack of self-consciousness, of self-importance, was perhaps one of his outstanding characteristics. He seemed to see the strength and the glory and the power of the other man who felt that courage enter into him, until everyone who came near him went away refreshed and invigorated and sustained. So when people have said to me: 'What is your test of spirituality,' I have always said: 'It is the courage that is given by the presence of a holy man.' Swamiji used to say: 'The saviours should take on the sins and tribulations of their disciples and let the disciples go on their way rejoicing and free. There is the difference! The saviours should carry the burdens.'

Another thing he once said to my niece at Ridgely Manor is: 'Alberta, no fact in life will ever equal your imagination of it.'

One day Mrs Blodgett had three ladies come to call on the Swami. I left immediately so he could be alone with them and after half an hour he came to me and said: 'These ladies are three sisters and they want me to come and make them a visit at Pasadena.' I said: 'Go.' He said: 'Shall I-?' 'Yes, go,' I told him. They were Mrs Hansborough, Miss Meade and Mrs Wyckoff. Mrs Wyckoff's house is now the Vivekananda House in Hollywood and one of Swamiji's monks is there with her.

It was from Alameda, California, he wrote me on April eighteenth 1900, the most beautiful letter I think he ever wrote. This is the last letter in 'Inspired Talks'.

Later in 1900 my sister and Mr. Leggett took a house in Paris for the Exposition. We went over in June and Swami followed in August. He stayed some weeks with us until he went to stay with Mr Gerald Nobel, a bachelor. Afterwards he said of Mr Nobel: 'It is worth having been born to have made one friend as Mr Nobel.' So greatly he honoured this friend of ours. We enter-

tained largely during these six months, Swami coming nearly every day to luncheon.

One day at luncheon in Paris Madame Emma Calve, the singer, said she was going to Egypt for the winter. So as I suggested accompanying her she at once turned to Swamiji and said: 'Will you come to Egypt with us as my guest?' He accepted. We started out via Vienna for two days, Constantinople for nine days and four days in Athens, then to Egypt when after a few days Swami said: 'I want to go.' 'Go where?' I asked. 'Go back to India.' I said: 'Yes, go.' 'May I?' he asked. 'Certainly', I said. So I went to Madame Calve and said: 'Swami would like to go back to India.' She said: 'Certainly.' She bought him a first class ticket and sent him back. He arrived there in time to hear of the death of Mr Sevier and he wrote me at once of the serenity and beauty of the way in which Mrs Sevier had taken the death, she continuing the life at the Mayavati Ashrama as if her husband were there.

Going up the Nile and meeting some charming English people who begged me to go to Japan with them, I had occasion to pass again through India en route. Again I saw Swamiji and he said he would go to Japan if I wrote for him. In Japan I made the acquaintance of Okakura Kakazu who had founded the fine arts Bijitsuin school of painting in Tokyo. He was very anxious to have Swami come over and be his guest in Japan. But Swami refusing to come, Mr Okakura accompanied me to India to meet him. One of the happy moments of my life was when after a few days at Belur Mr Okakura said to me rather fiercely: 'Vivekananda is ours. He is an Oriental. He is not yours.' Then I knew there was a real understanding between them. A day or two after, Swami said to me: 'It seems as if a long lost brother has come.' Then I knew there was a real understanding between these two men. And when Swami said to him: 'Will you join us?', Mr Okakura said: 'No, I haven't finished with this world yet.' Which was a very wise thing.

That summer General Paterson, the American Consular General, allowed me to have the Consulate and there I had as guest Mr Oda, who had been my host at the Asakusa temple in Tokyo.

I saw Swami off and on all that year. One day in April he said: 'I have nothing in the world. I haven't a penny to myself. I have given away everything that has ever been given to me.' I said: 'Swami, I will give you fifty dollars a month as long as you live.' He thought a minute and then he said: 'Can I live on that?' 'Yes, O yes', I said, 'but perhaps you cannot have cream.' I gave him then two hundred dollars but before the four months were passed he had gone.

At Belur Math one day, while Sister Nivedita was distributing prizes for some athletics, I was standing in Swamiji's bedroom at the Math, at the window, watching, and he said to me: 'I shall never see forty.' I, knowing he was thirtynine, said to him: 'But Swami, Buddha did not do his great work until between forty and eighty.' But he said: 'I delivered my message and I must go.' I asked: 'Why go?' And he said: 'The shadow of a big tree will not let the smaller trees grow up. I must go to make room.'

Afterwards I went again to the Himalayas. I did not see Swami again. I went back to Europe for the King's Jubilee. As I said, I never was a disciple, only a friend, but I remember in my last letter to him in April 1902, as I was leaving India—I was never to see him again—I distinctly remember writing in this good-bye letter the one sentence: 'I swim or sink with you.' I read that over three times and said: 'Do I mean it?' And I did. And it went. And he received it though I never had an answer. He died July 4, 1902.

On the second of July Sister Nivedita saw him for the last time. She went to inquire whether she should teach a certain science in her school. Swami answered: 'Perhaps you are right, but my mind is given to other things. I am preparing for death.'

So she thought he was indifferent. Then he said: 'But you must have a meal'. Sister Nivedita always ate with her fingers, *a la* Hindu, and after she had eaten Swami poured water over her hands. She said, very much the disciple, 'I cannot bear you to do this.' He answered: 'Jesus Christ washed the feet of his disciples.' Sister Nivedita had it on the tip of her tongue to say: 'But that was the last time they ever met.' It was the last time she ever saw him. That last day he spoke to her of me and of many people, but when he spoke of me he said: 'She is pure as purity, loving as love itself.' So I always took that as Swamiji's last message to me. In two days he died having said: 'The spiritual impact that has come here to Belur will last fifteen hundred years—and this will be a great university. Do not think I imagine it, I see it.'

They cabled me on the fourth of July: 'Swami attained Nirvana.' For days I was stunned. I never answered it. And then the desolation that seemed to fill my life made me weep for years and it was only after I read Maeterlinck who said: 'If you have been greatly influenced by anyone prove it in your life, and not by your tears', I never wept again; but went back to America and tried to follow the traces of where he had lived. I went to Thousand Island Park and became the guest of Miss Dutcher to whom the cottage belonged, who gave me the same room that Swami had used.

Fourteen years elapsed before I returned to India. Then I went accompanying Professor and Mrs Geddes. I then found, instead of India being a place of desolation, all India was alive with Swamiji's ideas, with half a dozen monasteries, thousands of centres, hundreds of societies. Since that time I have been going frequently. They like to have me at the monastery guest house because I keep Vivekananda alive, as none of these young men have ever seen him. And I like to be in India, remembering once when I asked him, 'Swamiji, how can I best help

you?' his answer was, 'Love India!' So the upper floor of the guest house at the monastery is mine where I go and will probably go winters, until the end.

## GLIMPSES OF AMERICA FROM AFAR

BY CECILE DE BONARDI

The following lines represent some of my impressions of America and American life which I have formed from talks with American citizens I met in Europe.

I never went to the USA, but having conversed with many Americans since the end of the war I could free myself from numerous prejudices, which has altered my ideas about them—prejudices which a great many people, misled by commonplace remarks or by a too hasty and general appreciation, still harbour.

The mentality of the Americans, their organization of life, and their very optimistic way of answering its call, have made me long to go to the States as soon as I am able to, and I do hope that this sketch, however imperfect, will arouse the same feeling of curiosity and the same wish to visit the States amongst those who will read it.

I do not intend to write a panegyric of America, nor to compare her with Europe.

Neither nations nor individuals are perfect. The USA is no exception to this rule. Keeping this in mind, I would like to show what new contributions this recently uprisen country has already made to our intellectual and material inheritance.

The life of a nation can be likened to that of an individual. Every nation, like an individual, appears to go through childhood, youth, manhood and old age. The process seems to be identical in both cases.

I have often heard that the Americans are overgrown children. It is true, if you do not give this word the pejorative meaning it may imply. They are indeed in the stage of childhood; they are passing through its various

conditions and experiences. But though they have not yet their peculiarly own historical and cultural past, they have, in spite of that, behind them the blend of all the oldest civilizations. This is why their own civilization, as soon as it appeared, came to be based on a superior plan and to have an easier start than that of the preceding ones, which often set out from a very primitive beginning. The traditions that each immigrant brought with him from all points of the compass account for the fact that the American of today who has inherited them possesses, in spite of his youth, the maturity of a young man, compared with the individuals of the early periods of older civilizations.

The still childish side of his nature gives rise to the ingenuousness and positive tendency of his character, which makes him say spontaneously 'yes' at first sight to every one and to life. He has full trust in what is told and proposed to him and has not the negative and reticent attitude observed in a European, when the latter is not sufficiently well-informed about what he is being talked to.

But this is also the reason for the alarming number of gangsters and quacks who take unfair advantage of the honesty of the people.

A few years ago a curious thing happened which has since become famous amongst American stories. It is an instance of the wonderful credulity of the general people. One day a fanciful radio-speaker broadcast that a comet was drawing near the earth at a terrific speed and that its burning-hot tail had already caused much damage in many parts of the land. Every minute the whole country

was threatened with the worst ; the population was asked to remain cool and to follow the piece of advice given on the radio. It resulted in a general panic ; in many places firemen were called, the fire-alarms started roaring ; entire families, hoping to escape this plague fled into mountain caves, taking with them all they had had time to collect. A woman threw herself out of the window and another, turning on the gas-tap, tried to asphyxiate herself with her four children. Fortunately they could be saved at the last minute. These facts were related by all the papers, and I know Americans who still remember them.

Despite this, though it will sound like a paradox after this anecdote, the special and chief characteristics of the Americans, if we compare them with other people, are their judgment and common sense ! The fact mentioned above is uncommon and the puerile and credulous disposition of the yankee will stand out in such an exceptional occurrence ; he will go into jitters by the phantasmagoric element of such canards ; but the reverse of this peculiarity will be observed in everyday life, marked by its organization which tries to put the right man in the right place, and in individuals by a poise and a peacefulness which render easier and more simple the intercourse we may have with them.

Men, especially, speak little. Their thought is clear and concise, and we notice in many of them a natural wisdom which brings them to talk with us as naturally as possible about the serious problems of humanity or of after-life, as if they had spent their whole life pondering over them and accumulating tests on those problems. We discover in their talk an inner wealth of thought and a mental maturity which might be envied by many of our philosophers, and which are genuinely reflected in their everyday life without giving the impression that the men who possess such qualities think themselves superior beings.

A European hardly knows about these traits which characterize an American, and *Babbit* is the very model of an American to

all such who have never lived in the States or have only travelled briefly. *Babbits* do exist and it was his twin brother that one saw cruising along the Cote d'Azur or at the Lido of Venice, accompanied by the most beautiful women in the world, chosen purposely for 'exportation', and whose flashy adventures filled the world magazines of the day. I say 'his twin brother,' for the hero of Sinclair Lewis could not certainly, with his means of living, have afforded to reside in the most costly resorts of Europe. But, except for this difference, they had many likenesses, namely, a great importance given to money, the taste for boasting an entire lack of culture, and a mania for statistics. Most people considered these two types as one, which would have mattered little if they had not put the rest of the Americans on the same level.

Now the millionaires who shocked the provincial ideas that still slumber in all real Frenchmen, even the most up to date, are but a small number in their country, and they have to stand the disapproval of the Puritans of Massachusetts or of the 'charitable' ladies, members of numerous Clubs in the USA. They will perhaps form the future aristocracy, but for the present they are very much like the universal *nouveaux riches*.

We cannot judge the average American from these few specimens, but we must converse with the middle class man, or with the poor one, to realize the great moral wealth and the special characteristics he possesses.

In the heart of this modern tower of Babel, presented by the sight of the USA, an entirely new man was born, resulting from the mingling of races, a man who is not the product of any particular country and whose qualities and defects—common as they are to all mortals—differ from ours, because he is bred and developed in conditions and in an atmosphere which are not to be found in any other civilization.

A new people has arisen with wonderful vitality and capacity for growth ; this new born child of the modern world has helped

mankind to become better since it is in America where, for the first time in history, the notion of racial differences has nearly disappeared.

The father of a present citizen of the USA may have been Irish, his mother an Italian, and of his two grand-mothers, one Swedish and the other German. This man nevertheless will have the conviction that he is an American. He will speak English with the purest nasal accent and shall not remember a word of the language or the languages which his forbears still use.

Many people will doubtless object: 'But what about the problem of the coloured people?' I shall not omit it, nor that of the small groups. Its complexity derives from the fact that it is itself a paradox. The USA being, indeed, one of the most developed countries in the world, its inhabitants react instinctively against the penetration of coloured people who represent a backward element, which may hinder their progress. On the other hand the USA, being itself a melting-pot, is the only place on earth offering coloured people the chance to mingle with a more advanced civilization than theirs and to have a standard of living, both intellectual and material, that they will never get in Africa. They have anyway, in all lines, made wonderful progress lately, and they struggle daily to improve their social standing. After the war of Secession, the Americans tried to organize a State for coloured people in Liberia; the towns there had American names, and English was the official language, but one understands the reluctance of coloured people to accept this proposal, which would have meant taking a step backward. Many of them as well would not like nowadays to be confined in special districts and would like to be able to mix with the life of white people.

Though many Americans consider them a threat which may cause the nation to degenerate, others, on the contrary, moved by democratic principles, have stood up in their defence, and associations have been founded to defend them.

The immigration of coloured people being now stopped, I do not think that, in spite of their important number—about 13 million—they will really become a serious danger to the USA. I rather think they will be gradually absorbed by the rest of the country and that their race will have almost disappeared in a few generations.

Concerning Eastern peoples, the assimilation will take place still quicker because they are fewer. The first ones who settled in the country became American citizens in the second generation. As for the Mexicans who are considered similar to Indians and who live like them on the south-western coast, prejudices against them are now far less strong, and it seems that, being born on the same soil, their problem will be easier to settle than that of the other minorities.

The USA is at present the great centre where immigrants belonging to all nations can come for a shelter, and it is amusing to see how quickly most of them are absorbed by a country which cannot accept amongst its members tepid elements and which, thanks to its persuasion which acts by itself without any word or propaganda, turns a French man or a Hungarian into a genuine citizen of the USA after a few years' residence.

Another particular characteristic of the Americans is that their ideas about their Fatherland differ from ours. Except in a few Southern States, they are not interested in the customs and history of their country, which are both, as it were, non-existent. As they feel themselves one of the most powerful nations in the world, surrounded by sea on all sides and not threatened by any immediate neighbour, they do not entertain the thought that they must defend themselves—a fact which makes one understand why war is so unpopular with them. Putting aside the views of the governing men, Americans may be said to be the only nation which wages a war neither for expansion nor to maintain the supremacy of a race, but which sincerely fights for an idea and an ideal. They would support



those who bear the flag of democracy, that Americans would like to see spreading all over the world.

The fatherland is, before anything else, the House, the place where one will feel safe. America, just now, is the only part of the world which, thanks to its immensity and variety, can offer to all those who seek for hospitality, a spot where they will be able, in proportion to their personal value, to make their way and get a situation. Each man will find there—if he is worth it—support, financial help, and associations to protect him when he starts work, but on the one condition that he must prove efficient. People have greatly exaggerated the part played by the American 'bluff'.

As I have mentioned it before, an American is credulous by nature like a child, and not being used to tell lies, he immediately trusts you; but he will find out swiftly the man who tries to mislead him, for he is conscientious, hard-working; he hates any kind of waste and wants people as well as machines to yield the maximum.

Doing something half or unfair and which will be accepted owing to a recommendation or a clever trick is quite out of his way of acting, and this reminds me of an instance told by Jean Paul Sartre. I relate it from memory without having the text before me.

'The buildings of a city are fixed in such a way that their foundation offer a perfect geometrical base. The large avenues, cut at regular intervals by transverse streets, remind one of a chequered sheet of paper drawn conscientiously and methodically: nothing could be changed therein without spoiling this harmonious arrangement. But if one gets a bird's eye view from a plane, one can notice the wonderful variety of houses, the entire fancy of which resides in their height, which varies from the two-storied house to the highest skyscraper. It is the same for the inhabitants of the country who cannot escape the tyranny of certain conventional customs and rules, but who, having found their way and their right place become in their lines real giants,

as they will be much less hindered in their progress than in Europe, from the day they are admitted and accepted.'

The American is not jealous; he is optimistic; he is easily satisfied with his lot, provided he has enough money to live on. If he is ambitious, he will instinctively imitate rather than steal. Anyhow, if difficulties arise on his path, an American citizen will have the right and the means to defend himself and will feel protected by the Law.

In that country he is trusted as a matter of course, and the one who has a 'good credit' will be able to put off at his convenience the date of payment for his car, his clothes, and house, being thus able not to alter for the time being his income or his way of living.

This brings us to say a word about the standard of American life. A terrible poverty prevails in some of the districts of big cities and sometimes in the country, during periods of drought when farmers are compelled to emigrate by hundreds to other regions, as Steinbeck describes it so vividly in his books. But, as a rule, the average American who earns \$ 100 a month will have an easier life than a European who receives an equal salary.

Even in the farthest parts of the country, each one has his Ford or Chevrolet, a cosy house heated by electricity and running water, still unknown in most of our farms. A radio, a bath room, a frigidaire and a vacuum-cleaner are considered indispensable and not a luxury. This has enabled America to do away with servants, and if sometimes machinery may turn people into idiots and come to dominate life, it has the advantage to make our life easier and to allow us to live without servants whose hiring should nowadays be considered like slavery of the old days.

After having considered in this short study the chief traits of the Americans, a puerile disposition on the one hand counterbalanced on the other by an instinctive wisdom, which takes in them the place of 'culture', we shall consider the characteristics connected with

the former and most frequently observed in individuals.

Two of them are particularly striking and are found almost in every man: the love he has for his home and the importance of 'business', which—whatever it may be—will always prevail over any other obligation or occupation.

He will use his brain to save time. This accounts for the moderation in food and the swiftness of meals in America and for a great moderation in sentimental intercourses, since the attention and time of an American must be almost solely devoted to his business, if he does not want to run the risk of being immediately outdone by a rival.

Like children who cling to their parents who are for them 'a safe harbour', the Americans worship their home. It is there only they feel at ease and happy. Divorce is especially common amongst millionaires and movie stars, who divorce so often for reasons of publicity, but most of the others remain quite faithful to their wives and try to make their lives and that of their children as easy and pleasant as possible. They can hardly get used to live outside of their home and, when in the army, they will become the 'most homesick soldiers in the world'.

Work which is, next to their home, the most important item must not be slackened by any obstacle. The rhythm of life must be adapted to that of the office. That is why material life becomes plainer every day and why meals and the quality of food are considered a mere trifle.

In France, for wealthy people as well as for workers, lunch and dinner are sacred. There is no question of doing without the one or the other. To be late by a quarter of an hour for any of these in France, would be a real disaster. On a journey, if we cannot stop in the best restaurant, which often will bring us out of the way to relish one of its 'delicacies', we take with us baskets of victuals and we swallow in one day the provisions that explorers in the depth of a virgin forest or on the North

Pole would have taken three months to eat. In America, they eat because it is necessary, but greediness is almost unknown there. We shall understand it, if we compare the flavour of food in Europe and especially in France, famous for the most varied and best cooking in the world, with the food eaten beyond the Atlantic. Food is tasteless; that is why so many sauces are used to flavour it; as for desserts and the like, sweets, biscuits, chocolate, they all have without any exception, a back-taste of chewing-gum.

The flavour of food has, for Americans, no importance, whatever; they give much more attention to its nutritive value and to the number of vitamins and calories that it contains. With us, the quantity of food is considered most important, the Americans, on the contrary, try to eat in a minimum of time the smallest volume necessary to keep a good health.

It seems as though in our country we have ever been scared by the fear of hunger, and putting aside war years, we should, when life has become normal again, avoid over-feeding and follow the example of Americans concerning diet.

I have known boys who got up early, led a very active life, and ate very little in comparison with what a European would have taken in the conditions; they were nevertheless sturdy and well-built fellows.

If we make a wasteful use of food, there is in America too great a number of people who drink too much. Alcohol is a dreadful plague which may cause this healthy people to degenerate in a few hundred years. Numerous associations have been founded to fight this danger. Let us hope their efforts will be crowned with success and that they will be able to save their country from this peril.

And yet many Americans are noted for their temperance in all lines. Everything does not revolve round sex. This remark does not aim at lessening its part in life. The Americans consider the sentimental side of life more

important than the physiological. We must admit that they hardly ever boast of their 'good fortunes', and it will seem perfectly normal to them to have quite a few or even none at all.

I remember a boy who was telling us, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, that he married at twentyseven, having had but one love adventure which had lasted but three months. He remained a perfectly faithful husband and never approached any other woman though he had been two years in the army.

The majority of Americans may be different from this man but we can't help being struck by the number of such men as compared with the few of this type whom we might meet in Europe, especially in Latin countries, and who would be immediately looked upon by people around them as special cases, if not as abnormal people. We find amongst Americans the comradeship that exists between sexes in Anglo-Saxon or Northern countries. A woman may have a 'boy-friend' and go out with the same man during a whole season without anything happening, unless she shows some willingness about it. In the opposite case, they will remain good friends and the boy will not feel mortified or hurt in his feeling because he has been educated from his childhood with the idea that one must respect individual freedom and treat a woman like a companion and not like a creature who must obey all his fancies.

Educators indeed try in schools and organizations for young people not to bring sexual problems in the limelight, though they are talked about by educators who give advice and warnings on this subject.

With each one working and having a very busy life, boys and girls will have but a short time for their 'love affairs', and the people being above all artless, abhorring everything that is morbid or unwholesome, always avoiding all that is complicated, the love-affairs quickly end in marriage.

## II

Let us now have a glance at the art and the religious opinions beyond the Atlantic.

Art is still in its beginnings and we must confess it is, on the whole, one of the most puerile expressions of the American nation.

This is due to the fact that critics belonging to the best intellectual classes, such as we have in Europe, do not exist over there. The great mass take it upon themselves to judge art works. Art is not yet considered seriously by the public. This state of things, which is to be regretted, is not likely to be modified before long, and we have to wait till the mind of the majority has matured sufficiently to appreciate a master-piece as in the wonderful time of the Medicis in Florence, when people stopped in the streets to discuss about the works of the Masters who had exposed them there, or what seems less utopian, we must wait till a few artists who have not yet appeared till now in America lead the crowd, becoming thus the pioneers of art as in all other civilizations.

Art is too much handled on a mercantile basis. The book that is considered the best is the one that will sell most in the year—'the best seller'. People who have a library with classical works, some of which may be by the best known European authors, will probably never open them if they happen to have them. They have them because one day a publisher's commercial traveller passed that way and persuaded them that it was necessary and fashionable to have such works in one's home.

When an 'amateur' wants to buy a picture, a catalogue of copies is sent to him and he can, without going up to the town, choose the work of his favourite painter, which will be forwarded to him and paid when delivered.

Art is also a rest, a game, and outside the artist, very few people of his surroundings will consider his activity as thorough work, especially if his works do not sell well. And the admiration of the crowd will be reserved—before it is granted to the painter or to the literary man—for the movie star who will turn

out most films and earn \$ 100,000 a year.

The cinematograph is the only artistic expression which Americans can claim as their own and which has not been altered by foreign influence. The success of the cinema can be accounted for by the fact that the Americans, like children, have a great predilection for pictures and movement, or by the fact that swift uninterrupted action and the technical qualities of photography are just the indispensable qualities of good films. If one adds to these the enormous material and financial means Americans have at their disposal, this shows why their cinematographic production is seldom excelled by other nations. The cinema is the perfect image of the average American mind and we meet therein its two chief characteristic features, namely, puerility on the one hand and on the other a wisdom which sometimes attains beauty by the simplicity with which it is expressed and which we could not expect to meet with in this kind of production.

The American is, above all, a specialist, and rounded cultured people are the exception. We feel it when reading their literary works; each of them gives a glimpse of American life but on a small scale, which is often more like a picture than like a description.

To find the only Masters of American literature, we must go back to Poe and Whitman, who anyway have but few admirers. The latter is really the poetic 'Genius' of his country. He is also a precursor (herald) as in *Leaves of Grass*, which makes him a worthy rival of Claudel by the rhythm of his sentence and the inspiration of his thoughts, remaining deeply American by his patriotic feeling. He was not the writer who sang of one part of his country only, but all of them:

*Americanos ...*

*Chants of the Prairies,*

*Chants of the long-running Mississippi, and  
down to the Mexican Sea,*

*Chants of Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Illinois,  
Wisconsin and Minnesota,*

*Chants ...*

*Take my leaves America, take them South  
and take them North ...*

After Poe and Whitman, literature seems to have gone into a slumber and it has not yet awakened from it. No abstract work is found there. A Valery, a Max Jacob or a Cocteau would not be understood or appreciated there by anybody. Poetry and theatre are nonexistent, and modern authors confine themselves to one kind of work, the novel. Their stories are mostly fragments of life and they show a great lack of fancy and imagination.

These may be divided into two classes. In the first one, we have those of northern or English inspiration, among whom are Cronin, Sinclair Lewis, Mazo de la Roche, who give us again the confused poetry that characterizes the books of Siegfried Undset, Charles Morgan, or Margaret Mitchell in her chain novel of *Gone With the Wind*. In the second group, we have the works in which we feel a certain German influence such as those of Faulkner, Steinebeck, and Caldwell. The two first writers, in particular, of this class repeat and torture their sentences to the point of rendering them heavy and hard to read, reminding us of the late German novels. But like the latter these American novels, in spite of this, are very powerful, and some portions attain a real beauty. Faulkner and especially Caldwell are the only morbid and unhealthy representatives in the present American literature. The latter in *Un Pauvre Type* blends together a realism, which is sometimes like a nightmare, and a simple style which is quite American; this renders error almost natural in his book, and makes it doubtless attractive to the reader.

As for painting, there is not really a school worth speaking of and the artists are mostly in a period of imitation. Let us however make an exception for George Bellows, who died in 1925. He never left his country and does not belong to any school. His vitality and his skill for drawing and colouring

make him the best representative of American painting.

Max Weber is looked upon as the leader of the young school of painting; he does not lack vigour, his colouring reminds us of that of Rouault.

As a rule the French school seems to have in America a predominant influence; there are many reproductions of Renoir. He was the most spirited amongst our painters of the last century; this may be the cause of his success in America. Our impressionists were soon copied by the group of 'C.O.', headed by Childe Hassam.

Unfortunately, most painters are still terribly academic or what is worse, they work for magazines given to advertizing, using a special method and satisfied with an easy success.

In 1908 appeared the '8', who tried to give the painting of their country an individual touch and to get rid of all exterior influences. But in spite of the resounding names they took. 'The Ash Can School' or 'The Revolutionary Blackgany' they seem to have failed in their ambitious plans. Robert Henri, who was their leader, has himself followed, during a long time, lessons at the Academie Julien and at the Beaux Arts school, and though he tried later on to show more individualism, we find constantly in his works the beginner's track. John Sloan, who also belongs to the School of the '8', is a near disciple of Manet as well as of George Luks. The 'Surrealism' which had a big influence in Europe between the two wars seems to have affected the Americans but little. Salvador Dali, whom Edgar Poe would have enjoyed so much, is admired above all, because he brings something new and strange. He is a sort of spoilt child, but remains an exception in his adoptive country and will have no follower. A few artists copy him but only get at what they see: they reproduce conscientiously horses, landscapes, clouds, but none of them has understood the very spirit of his works, and their morbid and

'Freudian' tendency will not even be noticed by Americans.

The artists who, in our days, give the best idea of what the American painting may become, when they will have developed sufficiently are, in the first place, the local painters. They are but few, such as Thomas Beuton, John Steward, Curry, Grand Wood and the Mexican School which, with the impulse of Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente, has already given very interesting works: fresco and other paintings.

Then come the 'Modern Primitives' who are much like our artless painters and hold our attention by their purity and their will to ignore other Schools. One of the most well-known is the coloured man Horace Pipin, some of whose pictures have all the beauty of spiritual songs.

Music is represented by conductors, and for the most part foreigners like Stokowsky, and with the exception of George Genshin, the author of 'Rhapsody in Blue' and of 'An American in Paris,' no composer has up to this day reached international fame.

Up to fifty years ago, popular music was inspired by Elizabethan music; it is still so in the religious Southern songs and in the Western Ballads of Cowboys. Vienna has also some influence but a great change happened when there appeared the music of Negroes, Mexicans, Cubans, Brazilians, who altered completely the rhythm and melody.

The jazz seems to be the only musical expression in the USA, though coloured people were the first to display it. But America has swiftly assimilated it and has helped this surging noise of the Modern world to spread in a fantastic way. Let us add to this the numerous melodies and songs mostly taken out of films, and hummed in all countries, forming thus for the first time a sort of universal folklore.

The respect for creeds and their variety are great in America, where you meet the puritan Protestant, and the pioneers of Western esoteric doctrines such as the 'Roses

Croix', who have their centre in California. We must mention the disciples of Vedanta, the members of Christian Science, the rites and songs of the Negroes and what is left of the worship of Incas.

In Europe, when you hit on a religious question among lay people you feel immediately a sort of constraint and uneasiness, which makes you give it up. In the lower classes, mockery and silly jokes pour on the one who does not try to conceal his creed. Spiritual problems do not seem to absorb very much the thought of most Americans, but they have no back thought about those questions, and if they are talked about equitably the former generally treat them quite impartially.

I have been surprised to see that one of the books most appreciated by the American army was *The Robe*, a story about the robe of Christ after his death at the Golgotha. Immediately after the end of the war, I was sitting on the train near a soldier who was giving a sketch of this book and asking his comrades if they had read it. I can hardly imagine the members of any European Army discussing about such a topic in a public place.

Americans often accept in their everyday life what is supernatural with the childish simplicity which characterizes them. This is the case with *Our Town*, which in the theatre as well as on the screen was quite a success in America. The play recalls the existence of a small provincial town. In a scene which takes place after death, a young woman who has just died meets with the members of her family who preceded her; she sees again the scenes of her last existence and speaks about preparing her new life. Not one American finds this ridiculous, and if he is not moved, he at least considers it as perfectly natural and possible.

Except perhaps in some small central or eastern districts where life is always difficult for Jews and Catholics, the notions about dogma and a foregone conclusion pretending that one's own Church is the only good one seem to have given place to broader ideas.

I shall quote as an instance of this a few extracts from a speech delivered by John D. Rockefeller Junior before the Protestant Assembly of New York City.

Has Christianity been a failure? he asks himself, after enumerating the disasters which plague the world at the present time. After a discussion, too long to be reproduced, he concludes that Christianity is not a failure.

'The various churches have lost the game but Christianity has never been more rooted in men than today. The church of Christ must have a new birth and become the church of the living God.

'We must leave aside every emphatic denomination; I see cooperation instead of competition, and the Church, through its members, moulding the thought of men and leading their actions; it will then be, in the true sense of the word, the establishment for God's Kingdom on earth.

'What we must come to is the blending of all good wills against destruction and evil. If Christ came back now on earth, can we imagine that he would consider the keeping or the non-keeping of various rites as sufficiently important to justify theological disputes among its adepts and their division into competing sects? Creeds, rites, and biblical or theological interpretations must be considered like means for each believer belonging to a church to draw nearer the One who must remain the final object, but God forbids that they should ever be looked upon as a possible substitution in the relations between the soul and its God, who is the very principle of all Religion, or that they should become fences in the church of the living God. What mankind needs, nowadays, is the essence of Religion, while the churches insist too much on its outward appearance.'

John D. Rockefeller ends by speaking of those chaplains, one a Catholic, the other a Jew, the third a Protestant who, during this war, were sunk on a torpedo boat. After having given their life-belts to passengers they were seen, according to the report of those

who survived, standing and praying hand in hand up to the last minute.

When shall we hear, in Europe, such a declaration in the mouth of a member of one of our Churches? On this American continent, anchored between the Orient and the Occident, a sharp-sighted eye may see dawning the beginnings of this universal Religion, which all men of good will long, more or less knowingly.

Each new race has a mission to fulfil in the world. I fancy that that of America, committed to democratic principles, will be to serve as the exemplar of a better understanding between nations and men, and to bring, by a complete control of material forces, not the slavery of individuals led by machinery but a greater freedom of the mind that will not be totally immersed in the solution of secondary problems but will be able to go beyond them to the study of spiritual or intellectual questions.

It is certain that in this last century Americans have undergone a considerable evolution. The anthropologist Henry Shapiro has observed that during the last hundred years they have become taller and heavier, their shoulders are broader, their hips thinner than those of their grand parents. Shapiro supposes there must be something special in the climate

of the country to cause, so quickly, such important changes.

Indeed, the average American is now much taller than the average inhabitant of any European country from where his ancestors came. If Americans do not degenerate owing to drinking, they will, no doubt, be one day at the head of human evolution.

For many people in America, aristocracy resides in money. However, we can trace, amongst her foremost citizens, a nobility not founded on accounts at the Bank or hereditary rights but represented by the individual who, bodily and morally, offers the aspect of a new type of man. This aristocracy will be formed by select men who have gained by their work and efforts a personal worth not depending on money or the family in which they are born. It will be the nobility of a man, who, born from the melting of races, without any historical past, not imbued with any philosophical doctrine and having avoided political and religious sectarianism, will never relent on the path of life but will find in himself and by himself the wisdom, the uprightness, and the strength that will make of him a free being, a real citizen of the world, carrying the light of reason to all the other peoples who are willing to follow him.

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## IMPORTANCE OF SANSKRIT LEARNING

BY TURIYACHAITANYA

The importance of Sanskrit can be approached from two standpoints, one linguistic, the other cultural. The first is one that generally interests scholars, but the second is not so well realized. Sanskrit is still the vehicle of a living culture, which cannot be said either of Greek or Latin. Even in the purely linguistic sphere Sanskrit will remain supreme. But that is not its central impor-

tance. The central importance lies in its being the matrix of our perennial culture. It is a positive factor in building up and maintaining the social and cultural unity of India. This task can be performed only by the spiritual values enshrined in Sanskrit.

'When I speak to you about the place of Sanskrit in the composite culture of India, my thesis is that Sanskrit lives today, lives by

itself, and lives through other languages. It has a life, independently of its own, and a life which is amalgamated with the various languages of this country,' said Lt. Col Shri S. V. Chari, Editor of the *Daily Post*, Bangalore, speaking on *The Place of Sanskrit in the Composite Culture of India* at the Indian Institute of Culture, Bangalore. Propounding his thesis with facts and figures he remarked further, 'There is a feeling that Indian culture can do without Sanskrit. There are some leaders in this country who think that they can stand aloof from and independent of Sanskrit inspiration.' And then in conclusion: 'I tell you, as you look through the vista of years, you will find, in spite of the thousands of years that have gone by—wars, invasions, hatred and slavery—in spite of these, you find today that India's culture is like a song, a symphony which has been heard, undying through the ages, and in that symphony Sanskrit has played the leading role. It has been the conductor of this grand orchestra. And that is the greatness of Sanskrit, and her place in India is assured. If we forget it we forget our very existence and our future.' (*Aryan Path*, June 1949). These are timely words stating the barest truth.

Of late there have been numerous speeches and articles pleading the case of Sanskrit. It is an irony that it should need so much of effort to convince people in India that Sanskrit is their very life-blood. It is ridiculous that a proposition so self-evident, like the need of the child for its mother, should require any pleading at all. Even foreign nations have realized the importance of Sanskrit studies and some of their best talents have been applied to the research in Sanskrit literature involving huge expenditure. The cause of Sanskrit has been served by them with life-long devotion and patient and untiring energy. To a great extent they have been instrumental in giving back to modern India in a critical and fresh form the rich heritage of Sanskrit, when most of our own

countrymen had neglected it. Some of the great names in the revival of Sanskrit learning have been those of foreigners who deserve to be remembered with reverence. But the blinding influence of the materialistic civilization upon most of our modern educated people is still so strong that it has become a necessity to teach them the greatness of their own culture and of Sanskrit literature which enshrines it. A peculiar atmosphere has been created in this country on account of which those who look to the past great achievements of our own country for inspiration are looked at askance and with suspicion and are dubbed narrow-minded or communal and so on; and those who look outside for inspiration are extolled as liberal and broad-minded. To associate oneself with, or feel proud of the country's language, religion or culture is a sign of narrowness. People are foreigners in their own country. This sort of atmosphere has to be changed. Though one has to allow the breeze from various countries to blow about oneself, one should not allow oneself to be blown off one's own feet.

A language has a definite influence on the character of a people. It is not a mere collection of words and sentences. It is the medium for the expression of the thoughts and ideals of a people. After long usage that language becomes associated with a certain way of life, a certain way of looking at life and its problems, and, in its turn, the language shapes the ideas and ideals and life of a people. The very sound of the language has something to do in this process. Those who come under the influence of that language participate in that culture. Thus we find that the cultivation of Sanskrit all over India from ages past, and its deep influence upon the various vernaculars of India, have given a common culture to its people from the Himalayas to the Kanyakumari and from Assam to Sindh. Such a great cohesive element can only be neglected at the cost of the unity of India and the degeneration of its culture, which is an object of admiration for the whole



world—a culture which has given the highest conceptions of spirituality and has given humanity an eternal objective of all individual and social effort.

India is looked upon with great love and respect because of her culture, which from its ancient beginnings lost in 'pre-historic' ages has flowed in an ever-widening stream making the whole of India fertile and fruitful, the products of which have been a source of sustenance to the whole world from time immemorial. Her culture has gone to the succour of various nations in times of crisis, evidences for which are coming to light more and more with the passage of time. The story of this cultural influence of India on other nations is yet to be told completely. And again today, when the world is in turmoil rent by the forces and ideologies of a materialistic civilization, when the problems facing humanity have become vastly complicated and almost insoluble, threatening its very existence, the eyes of the world are turned to India for a solution of these distempers. That is because India possesses a balanced culture based on spirituality. The world looks to India not for material prosperity. Nations have drunk deep of materialism and have found it poison. It is because of the spiritual heritage of India that the world looks to her in spite of her appalling poverty. "The political systems that we are struggling for in India have been in Europe for ages, have been tried for centuries and have been found wanting. One after another the institutions, systems, and everything connected with political governments have been condemned as useless and Europe is restless, does not know where to turn.... Europe, the centre of the manifestation of material energy, will crumble into dust within fifty years, if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground and make spirituality the basis of her life."<sup>1</sup> (These words were uttered

by Swami Vivekananda fifty years ago when the West was at the height of material prosperity and India was blindly imitating her in every respect. Now we are realizing the truth of this statement.) If India gives up her spirituality, she will fare no better than other countries. Devoid of her spirituality India means little to the world even though she may roll in riches. Then the interest in India will be material, of the kind, perhaps, that bandits and exploiters have but not spiritual, of those whose souls are athirst for things higher. The spiritual basis of the people must ever be kept intact and the need for this can never be over-emphasized. For 'Religion and religion alone is the life of India, and when that goes India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children.'<sup>2</sup> The consequence of this is unthinkable. 'Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct; all moral perfection will be extinct; all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct; all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest; fraud, force and competition its ceremonies; and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be.'<sup>3</sup>

While it is true—and the problem is a pressing one—that India's material condition is to be improved first and she is to be lifted out of the dire poverty and starvation she is facing, all this should not be done by repudiating or neglecting the course of her life. Her life-blood must be maintained pure. 'When the life-blood is strong and pure no disease germ can live in the body. Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong, pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social, any other material defect, even the poverty of the land, will be all

<sup>1</sup> Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. III, Pp. 158-59. These words were spoken in 1897.

<sup>2</sup> *Idid*, Vol. III, P. 146.

<sup>3</sup> *Idid*, Vol. IV, P. 294—Reply to the Madras Address.

cured if that blood is pure.<sup>4</sup> These are the words of a seer.

And this spiritual culture of India is pre-eminently preserved and represented by Sanskrit. Her secular achievements, too, which are no less great—for India's ideal has always been a complete one of *Abhyudaya* and *Nihshreyasa*—are largely embodied in and transmitted to us through Sanskrit. With the development of thousands of years behind it there is not a single important subject known to humanity that has not been touched upon in its literature in a lesser or greater degree. India can ill afford to lose the fruits of the tireless efforts of millions of ages. We can neglect Sanskrit only at the cost of India's downfall.

And what a language! Even the driest of subjects are made poetical. Mathematics, medicine, architecture, philosophy—everything in poetry. Such beautiful diction and grace of language are nowhere to be found in the world. Sanskrit has given a poetic temperament to the people. The whole universe is a poem and the Lord is the *kavi*, the Poet! Everything has been beautified and sanctified, lifting life to a higher level. Let no one hasten to point out the abuses and defects of the language. They are common to all. But on striking a balance the good side will be found to be infinitely greater.

People may talk of retaining Indian culture without Sanskrit. It is as good as saying that we can retain a tree alive after cutting out its roots. In the first place it is impossible to translate all the Sanskrit works, products of three hundred million people over five thousand years into the vernaculars. Every year brings to light fresh manuscripts on all types of subjects bringing the total discovered to several lacs. The cataloguing of these manuscripts is very far from complete. Secondly, even if the task of translating these works into about eight or ten vernaculars, or as least into the national language, is accom-

plished, it is impossible for the life and spirit of the root to flow into the shoot when isolated.

Another objection levelled against Sanskrit is that it is difficult to learn. No doubt Sanskrit is a difficult language to master thoroughly. 'Therefore the ideas must be taught in the language of the people; at the same time, Sanskrit education must go on along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race. The attempts of the great Ramanuja and of Chaitanya and of Kabir to raise the lower classes of India, show that marvellous results were attained during the lifetime of those great prophets; yet the later failures have to be explained, and cause shown why the effect of their teachings stopped almost within a century of the passing away of these great Masters. The secret is here. They raised the lower classes; they had all the wish that these should come up, but they did not apply their energies to the spreading of the Sanskrit language among the masses. Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results, and translated and preached in the language of the day, Pali. That was grand, he spoke in the language of the people and the people understood him. That was great; it spread the ideas quickly and made them reach far and wide, but along with that, Sanskrit ought to have spread. Knowledge came but the prestige was not there, culture was not there. It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge. . . . Teach the masses in the vernaculars, give them ideas; they will get information but something more is necessary; give them culture. Until you give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses.'<sup>5</sup> Surely if we must reap the fruit we have to labour hard. It is a noteworthy fact that though

<sup>4</sup> *Idid*, Vol. III, P. 288.

<sup>5</sup> *Idid*, Vol. III, Pp. 260-91.

the Buddhists and the Jains were at first hostile to Sanskrit, some thinkers among them realized later on the importance of Sanskrit and took to it with so much earnestness that many of the latter-day important works of the Buddhists and Jains are in Sanskrit.

We must learn a lesson from all this history. Instead of trying to push back the Ganga of Sanskrit to its icy abode in the Himalayas—which, of course, is an impossible task—or putting all sorts of obstacles in its course, if we but utilize the resources of this celestial river the whole country can be vivified with its life-giving waters. 'The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths, confined in our *Upanishads*, in our Scriptures, in our *Puranas*—must be brought out from the books, and scattered broadcast all over the land. Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas first deluge the land with spiritual ideas<sup>6</sup>. . . . No amount of force, or government, or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of race, but it is the spiritual culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better.'<sup>7</sup> And one of the chief means for this is the spread of Sanskrit.

The Bengal Government is taking steps to encourage the *tol* system for the spread of Sanskrit. Similar efforts should be made all over the country, and in schools and colleges Sanskrit should become a compulsory subject. The spread of Sanskrit will ensure the development of the regional languages also.

Another important work that faces the country is the collection and publishing of the manuscripts. They are scattered here and there in private houses, temples, etc. and in various remote places and ruins, in India as well as abroad—in many cases uncared for. Several Research Institutes in India have done excellent work in this direction but it is nothing compared to the vastness and difficulty

of the task. They need to be assisted financially and a central Government organization for this purpose is essential with able men and sufficient finances at its command. An account of some of the work done in India for the development of Sanskrit is given in *Sanskrit in South India* by Sri P. S. Subbarama Pattar in the *Hindu* of July 24, 1949, wherein he concludes, 'Sanskrit literature, the accumulated thought of several centuries, and the proud heritage of India makes an invaluable contribution of its own to the cultural wealth of humanity which the world cannot afford to lose or ignore,' and by Sri N. A. Gore in *Recent Developments in Sanskrit in Aryan Path* for February and May 1949. The May issue gives some of the problems facing the development of Sanskrit: 'Five projects are mentioned as requiring the immediate attention of the (All India Oriental) Conference, viz. the preservation of Sanskrit MSS., the promotion of the study of archaeology, the founding of academies in important Indian cities to advance the study of Sanskrit language and literature, the starting of a series on the model of the now defunct *Kavyamālā* for publishing important Sanskrit works, and the preparation of an Annual Bibliography of Oriental Studies and a Bulletin dealing with the current problems in Oriental literature. So far the Conference has not undertaken any work requiring continued day-to-day attention. It would be advisable for it to concentrate on one project, preferably the last, instead of launching them all simultaneously, only to arrive at no tangible results. It would be a far greater achievement if the Conference could inaugurate a Bureau of Indic Information and a Reference Service for individuals and institutions in India and abroad, for all matters connected with Oriental Studies. This would involve maintaining huge card indexes with analytical entries of Sanskrit works and journals, establishing contacts between scholars, giving general guidance in research work and preparing a directory of research workers and institutions and such

<sup>6</sup> *Idid*, Vol. III, P. 221.

<sup>7</sup> *Idid*, Vol. III, P. 182.

other research tools as bibliographies and indexes, besides keeping an up-to-date record of research work in Indology throughout the world.' It is clear from the above that it requires a huge organization with men and resources to tackle successfully these and many other connected problems for the development and study of Sanskrit which the Government alone can initiate. We think the machinery which will be set in motion for the ensuing census can easily be utilized to gather additional information regarding the existence of old Sanskrit manuscripts in private

collections all over the country without additional expense and trouble.

An account of the indological work done in other countries is given in the *Prabuddha Bharata*; under *France and India* by Prof. Louis Renou in the February and March issues, *Soviet Indology* by A. P. Barannikov in July issue, and that of *Germany and India* by Helmuth von Glasenapp in the October issue.

We hope these will prove an eye-opener and stimulate interest in Sanskrit studies in this country.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Last month when we announced to our readers the sad news of the passing away of Miss Josephine MacLeod or Tantine, we promised to publish in the present issue her *Reminiscences of Swamiji*. These, given this month, were received here more than a dozen years ago from America. The narrator's intention was that they should not be published while she lived, and so they remained till now. The document, now printed, is, both as regards style and substance, unusually vivid and striking; it is invigorating like a fresh breeze from the Himalayas and has the inspiring effect of a deep meditation upon you. This is so because it reflects Truth which was Swamiji, and which is ever strengthening to the soul. It gives fresh glimpses of the depth and breadth of that profound and versatile personality, Vivekananda, whose tremendous power and charm are so uncommon as to be beyond the imagination of men like us accustomed to seeing the men we see. It tells in words which move her first meeting with Swamiji, his relations with her since then, and other interesting facts. In her last letter to Swamiji she wrote, 'I sink or swim with you.' After writing this she read it over and

over again three times to see if she meant what she had written. Then she sent it unaltered. She received no reply to this letter, because though Swamiji had received it, he passed away shortly after. But that sentence, plain and bare, has a meaning which no deep soul can ever miss. We feel glad to present to all lovers of Vivekananda such a moving and dramatic account of a spiritual hero so rare in history. . . .

Cecile de Bonardi, an inmate of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of France, headed by Swami Siddheswarananda, is a Frenchman of culture, observation and understanding. Though he has never been to the United States of America, he gives in his *Glimpses of America from Afar* some impressions of the distinctive qualities and achievements of the people of that country which he has been able to form from his readings about her and from his talks with American citizens he met in Europe, especially during the last World War. We have been told by competent persons who have read the article in manuscript that this long-range view of the USA is an intelligent and faithful general picture of the people over there. Though written from the standpoint of a west European, the account will neverthe-

less be of great interest to Indians also. The 'Western' viewpoint will be of further interest to us here since it brings out some of the broad differences between the 'old' West and the 'new' West. For a variety of reasons America is of particular importance to India today. Efficiency is represented at its best in the modern world by America, while India can still claim the deepest wisdom about matters which are of utmost consequence to life. A healthy combination of these two are needed for a future order of society.

The article, we think, will help many to form a correct notion of that great and mighty country. ...

From January 1950 Swami Vandanananda will be the Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

#### THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

In September last *The New York Herald Tribune*, one of the most important dailies in the whole of the United States, completed the twentyfifth year of its weekly Book Review section. To commemorate the occasion several outstanding literary men of the country were invited to name three memorable books of the past twentyfive years. Thomas Sugrue, a distinguished literary figure and critic, mentioned in this connection

*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, translated by Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, as the foremost philosophical publication of the last quarter century, the other two outstanding works in fiction and history being, respectively, *Ulysses* by James Joyce, and *A Study of History* by Arnold J. Toynbee.

Sugrue says of the book (*The New York Herald Tribune*, Book Review Section, Sept. 25, 1949) as follows :

'The West prefers to call Ramakrishna a saint ; his followers consider him an Avatar, an incarnation of God ; East and West agree that he was the most radiant religious personality of the nineteenth century. The record of his life and teachings is a mine of inspiration, wisdom, theology, and metaphysics. It is also a tremendous adventure story, the odyssey of a man who set out on the mystical way and journeyed to its end. The English version is a triumph of creative translation.'

If we may venture an honest conviction of ours, firmly planted in us by whatever little understanding we have of the spiritual situation of modern humanity, the *Gospel* will become in time the authoritative basis of a broad conception of Religion demanded by the present age.

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#### REVIEWS AND NOTICES

MIMAMSA PARIBHASA OF KRṢNA YAJVAN  
TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY SWAMI MADHAVANANDA. Published by The Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Pitha, Belur Math, Dt. Howrah. Pp. viii+96 ; price Rs. 2/-

Swami Madhavananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, whose classic translations of some of the famous upanishadic and philosophic texts have justly won for him reputation and regard as an exact scholar, has laid the philosophy-reading public under a fresh debt of gratitude by his faithful translation of the text of the *Mimamsa Paribhasha*, which is widely used, at least in the *tols* of Bengal, as an introduction to the Mimamsa philosophy. Its conciseness, clarity, and compressed summary of Mimamsa philosophy have given the manual

a deserved popularity. Of all the orthodox philosophies, Mimamsa is the least read because it concerns itself with the ritualistic practices of the Hindus, which have fallen, or are fast falling, into disuse ; but seeing that the whole structure of Hindu religion is based upon the authority and interpretation of the *Vedas*, a knowledge of the main principles of Mimamsa philosophy is essential for a correct understanding of brahmanical rituals based on the *Vedas*.

A clear understanding of the text depends upon a knowledge of the various vedic sacrifices as also of other rites which gradually grew on the basis of vedic and post-vedic prescriptions. Krishna Yajvan's book, though small, incidentally refers to most of the sacrifices and makes large quotations of prescriptions connected there-

with. The learned translator, by tracing the references and adding comments, has enabled his readers to get a clear understanding of the meaning of the text. The reviewer would have liked very much that in an appendix or a glossary the translator had given a slightly more elaborate account of the various vedic sacrifices referred to in the text; that would certainly have enhanced the value of the book, for unconnected explanatory notes which he has given are less able to bring out the types and interrelations of the various sacrifices. But that is his personal opinion for, as it is, the reader will have enough information from the notes to have a tolerable understanding of the sacrificial system of the ancient Hindus.

The translation is an excellent model of the handling of a recondite matter. It is faithful and almost literal. The anxiety to avoid the introduction of materials not in the text has in fact been responsible for the use of a few words which, detached from the context, would not be easily understood, e.g. expressions like objective urge, initial unique result, etc. But clarity is the distinguishing feature of the translation as a whole and those whose knowledge of Sanskrit is not adequate will materially benefit from a perusal of the translation and would in fact be enabled to pass on to more comprehensive books on the subject. The author has collated the text by means of a number of different versions and the reading suggested by him is eminently reasonable.

H. D. Bhattacharyya

**WOMEN, FAMILY AND SOCIALISM.** BY D. Y. DESHPANDE. *Published by Hind Kitabs Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 65, Price Rs. 1/8.*

This is a booklet which, despite many of its interesting arguments, is marred by a basically wrong approach. No one will object to giving just freedom to all, but all such questions have to be looked at from a spiritual angle. Without this, life becomes a random movement and finally degenerates into mere worship of sense pleasures.

### BENGALI

**MAHESH-CHANDRA-CHARIT-KATHA** BY SRISH CHANDRA TALAPATRA, WITH AN INTRODUCTION FROM SRI KSHITIMOHAN SEN. *Published by Economic Press, 25 Rai Bagan St., Calcutta. Pp. V+153. Price Rs. 2/8.*

It is a great pleasure to introduce to the readers of the *Prabuddha Bharata* the short but excellent life-sketch of the late Mahesh Chandra Bhattacharya, which will, I am sure, be a perennial source of inspiration to those who want to grow and serve by the sheer force of character.

It has nowadays become a fashion to make light of moral and religious values. There can be no denying the fact that for the common man matter is three-fourths of life. But this does not and cannot possibly mean that he can afford to ignore the higher values of life without

degrading himself to the level of a brute. If we have erred in the past in ignoring the role of matter in our daily life, we are committing a Himalayan blunder in ignoring the importance of spirit in the ideal order of the future which is our common objective. It is my view that an acquaintance with the life of a person of sterling character like Mahesh Chandra will act as an antidote to this suicidal tendency.

Even where moral and spiritual greatness is valued, it is supposed to be beyond the reach of the average man. The life of a plain moral man like Mahesh Chandra who not only rose to eminence but also contributed considerably to the well-being of the society around, will therefore inspire confidence in many who struggle for a better life and a better world.

In fact, there was nothing romantic about him, as his biographer points out, except his unwearied zeal for doing things in conformity with certain moral principles which he held in high esteem. For him, there was hardly any room for compromise in this matter. To adopt a phrase of Immanuel Kant, practical and not pure reason was his great guide in day to day affairs.

Deep concentration in what he considered his duties was, according to him, the secret of his success, and our age, given so much to distraction and strife, will be immensely benefited by his method.

But his *tapasya* was not directed to achieve a purely personal end. As an ideal householder, he tried to chalk out a middle path between self-interest and philanthropy from which he never consciously deviated. Strictly following this aim he lived an austere life and was always on the look-out for a noble cause to give away what in his honest judgment was his excess income.

But, above all, unlike the present-day philanthropists so fond of propaganda and press publicity, he was an advocate of what has come to be known as biblical charity. He used to feel deeply pained sometimes when, due to inadvertence, his charities were given publicity, and he even went at times to the length of asserting in all sincerity that such disclosures tempted him to commit suicide.

Like other great men in different walks of life, he had, in spite of his apparently unimpressive features, a keen sense of humour. I cannot resist the temptation of citing one instance. According to orthodox Hindu traditions, being a Brahmin by caste, it was his duty to devote himself exclusively to spiritual and scholarly matters and not to commercial profession. Inspired with this ideal, while bidding farewell to a present-day Hindu scientist belonging to a commercial community, he is reported to have said with significant humour: 'Is it not fair that in view of our present positions we should exchange our family titles?'

Literally, in the words of Carlyle, he was, by virtue of his character, through and through an original man. He thought, rightly or wrongly, that he was an ill-tem-

pered man, and though not at all concerned about his looks, he kept a big looking-glass in front of his seat in his drawing-room so that the reflections of his angry look in the mirror might work as a check against an outburst of passion. His practical suggestions are many. One is that in addressing letters to persons living in big cities, the address should be written first and then the name of the addressee, since this would be more convenient. In fact, the life-sketch under review will be found replete with relevant practical information. In fine, he was in the truest sense an original man in his dress, in his approach to problems and in his method of work.

Mr. Srish Chandra Talapatra, a close associate of Mahesh Chandra since the days of his early struggles, has, in a lucid and expressive style and also within a short compass, drawn a vivid pen-picture of the character of that great man for which the Bengalee readers cannot be too grateful to him. An English version of the book

will be greatly welcome, for in that case it will reach and benefit wider circle of readers.

Gobinda Chandra Deb.

#### SANSKRIT

ISIIWARADARSHANAM ATHAVA SRI TAPOVANACHARITAM—DVITIYAKHANDAH. BY SWAMI TAPOVANAM. *Published by Pt. Vallabharam Sharma, Uttarkashi, Garhwal. Pp. XVIII. 362. Price Rs. 5/-.*

The first part of the autobiography of Swami Tapovanamji which appeared a few years back created much interest in those who read it. And here we have now the second part completing the story. The Swamiji has spent years in the Himalayas, leading a pure and austere life. He combines erudition with saintliness, which are evident throughout to the intelligent and sensitive reader. Written in beautiful, clear and easy Sanskrit, it is, moreover, a welcome addition to contemporary Sanskrit literature.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

#### REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1948

The Fortieth Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at the Belur Math premises on the 6th November 1949. The following is a brief report of the work done by the Mission during the year 1948.

*Centres:* There were altogether 66 Mission centres and 12 sub-centres, which served all without distinction of caste, creed, or colour and preached non-sectarian religious principles.

*Relief Work:* The Riot Relief started in October 1946 in Noakhali and Tippera districts was closed in December 1948. A sum of Rs. 54,876-3-6 was spent during the year. The total receipts since October, 1949 were Rs. 3,32,108-15-11 and the total expenditure Rs. 2,35,402-6-4, leaving a balance of Rs. 96,706-9-7. About half of the balance has been reserved for the maintenance of 77 riot affected students (52 boys and 25 girls), mostly orphans, for 1949-50 as also for 18 helpless families requiring pecuniary help for some time. And the remaining half of the balance is being utilised for establishing a colony for the riot-affected refugees near Agartala (Tripura State).

At the request of the West Bengal Government the Mission conducted relief work from two centres, viz. Belur and Rahara, for East Bengal refugees from the 17th May 1948 to the 16th March 1949. A sum of Rs. 8,59,285-4-9 was distributed among the refugees, the maximum number of weekly recipients being 10,386. Besides 12,895 Saris and Dhotis, 12,328 garments and 6,044 blankets were given to 30,219 persons. 4,200 mds. 15 srs. of rice and Atta, 979 mds. 23 srs. Dal, and 265 lbs. of milk and 25 lbs. of barley were also distributed.

The Malda, Tamruk, Shillong, and Sonargaon centres

conducted relief works on a small scale.

*Medical Work:* The Mission conducted 5 general and one maternity Hospitals with a total of 515 beds, which treated in all 11,321 cases. Altogether 16,46,979 patients were treated during the year by the 49 outdoor Dispensaries including the T.B. Clinic at Delhi which treated 12,203 patients.

*Help to the Poor:* Under this head about 250 mds. of foodstuffs and 750 blankets, Dhotis, etc. were distributed among the poor and deserving people. Besides, a sum of Rs. 29,378-5-4 was spent for regular and occasional help to 1,121 individuals and families, more than 100 of whom were students.

*Educational Work:* Work under this head included two colleges, 14 High Schools including 2 residential Schools, and 7 Orphanages with a total of 4,948 boys and 1,941 girls; 68 Primary Schools with 5,400 boys and 3,668 girls; 13 Night Schools with 518 students; 2 Industrial Schools with 180 students. The Mission had 43 Students' Homes, which accommodated 2,414 students.

*Work for Women:* The Mission conducted under this head the Women's Department of the Banaras Home of Service, the Maternity Hospital with its training section in Calcutta, the Domiciliary Maternity Clinic at Jalpaiguri, the Invalid Women's Home at Banaras, the Sarada Vidyalaya at Madras, the Sister Nivedita Girls' School at Calcutta, etc.

*Work outside India:* In Mauritius, Singapore, Burma and Ceylon the Mission carried on its educational and cultural activities.

Belur Math (Howrah)  
14 November 1949.

SWAMI VIRESWARANANDA  
General Secretary,  
Ramakrishna Mission

## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1948

Started in 1922 in a small rented house the Ashrama was removed to its present site at Langertoly in 1930. From humble beginnings it has developed into a very useful centre of manifold humanitarian activities. The following is the brief report of its activities during 1948 :

1. *Medical Service*: The Bhubaneswar Charitable Homœopathic Dispensary which was started in 1938 has been of immense help and benefit to the poor suffering people of the locality. The number of patients treated during the year was 31,458.

2. *Educational Activities*:

(a) *Swami Adbhutananda Upper Primary Pathashala* has been imparting free education to a very large number of indigent boys belonging mostly to backward and Harijan communities. There were 122 boys on the rolls in 1948. But the strength of the school has considerably increased from the commencement of 1949 and the Management were compelled to refuse admission to a very large number of boys for want of accommodation.

(b) *The Nursery School* of the Ashrama teaching up to the Lower Primary Standard had 11 children on its rolls in 1948. But it had to be discontinued from the commencement of 1949 for want of funds and accomodation.

(c) *Students' Home*: The Home was started in July 1927. It has been playing a great part in moulding the life and character of the young generation under the direct supervision of monastic members of the Ashrama and imparts a religious training essential for the development of a well-balanced character. In 1948 there were in the Home 14 students belonging to the B. N. College Science College, Patna College, and the Engineering College. Of these, four boys enjoyed substantial concessions in boarding charges.

(d) *Turiyananda Library and Reading Room* of the Ashrama is open to all. There were altogether 525 books on different subjects, six monthly magazines and 1 English Daily in the Library and the Reading Room.

3. *Religious and Cultural Activities*: Regular scriptural classes and religious discourses were held in and outside the Ashrama premises throughout the year. Lectures were also delivered on cultural and religious subjects in the city as also in the different parts of the province such as Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Jamalpur, Gaya, Hazaribagh, Chapra, and Khagaul.

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Birthday Anniversary was celebrated publicly with speeches etc. About 1500 Daridra-Narayanans were sumptuously fed on this occasion. Birthdays of other great saints and prophets were duly

observed, with discourses on spiritual subjects. During the Foundation Day Celebrations held in April 1948 H.E. Sri M. S. Aney, Governor of Bihar, spoke about Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and about the manifold humanitarian activities of the Ramakrishna Mission in glowing terms.

*Thanks*: The Ashrama offers its heart-felt thanks to all its donors and subscribers and to the numerous friends, sympathizers and well-wishers for their unstinted help and co-operation in its humanitarian services.

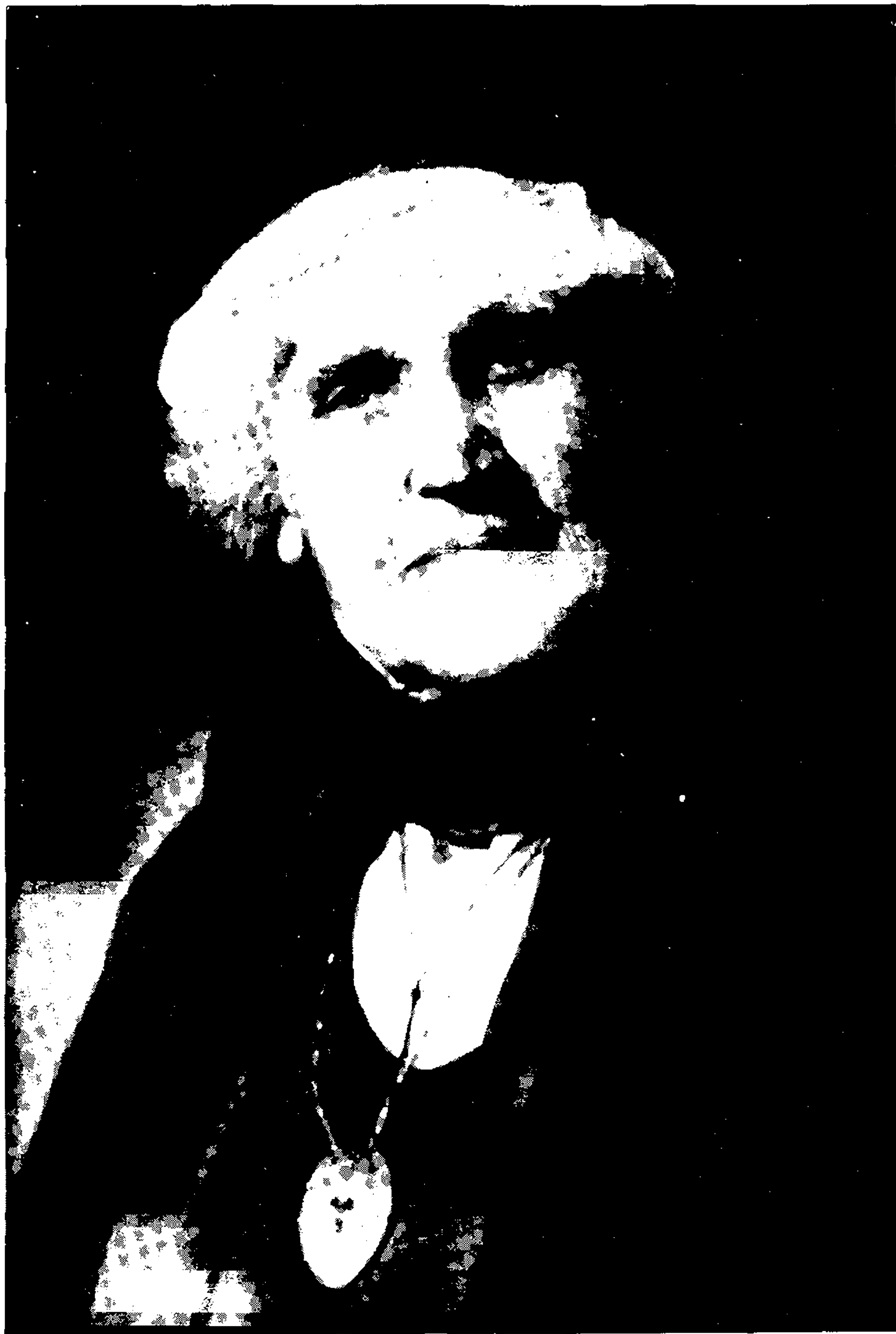
*The Needs of the Ashrama*: The Ashrama needs funds:—

	Rs. A. P.
1. For adding an Allopathic section to the existing Homœopathic department for minor surgical operations and giving first aid to a very large number of poor and helpless people in the locality, especially of the depressed classes who have not the means to pay for any kind of medical assistance .. .. .	6,000 0 0
2. For the extension of the Upper Primary School Building and for furniture, equipments for vocational training, sports goods and other accessories, etc. .. .. .	7,200 0 0
3. To erect a separate structure for the Library and Reading Room and to increase the number of books to at least 4,000 .. .. .	5,000 0 0
4. To construct a separate block of its own for the Students' Home to accommodate at least 25 boys .. .. .	20,000 0 0
5. For repayment of a debt incurred to meet the expenses involved in carrying on its various humanitarian activities .. .. .	6,317 0 0
6. For a thorough repair of the old residential quarters of the monastic workers, for arrangement of the supply of drinking water, for improvement of the approach to the Ashrama and for building some kind of protective wall to prevent the Municipal drain water from entering into the Ashrama ground in the rainy season, etc. .. .. .	40,000 0 0

The Ashrama hopes the large-hearted public would extend their generous help for any of these purposes and enable it to carry on its manifold works more efficiently and satisfactorily.

Any contribution, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, P.O. Bankipore, Patna.





MISS JOSEPHINE MACLEOD  
(TANTINE)