

THE PRABUDDHA BHARATA OR AWAKENED INDIA

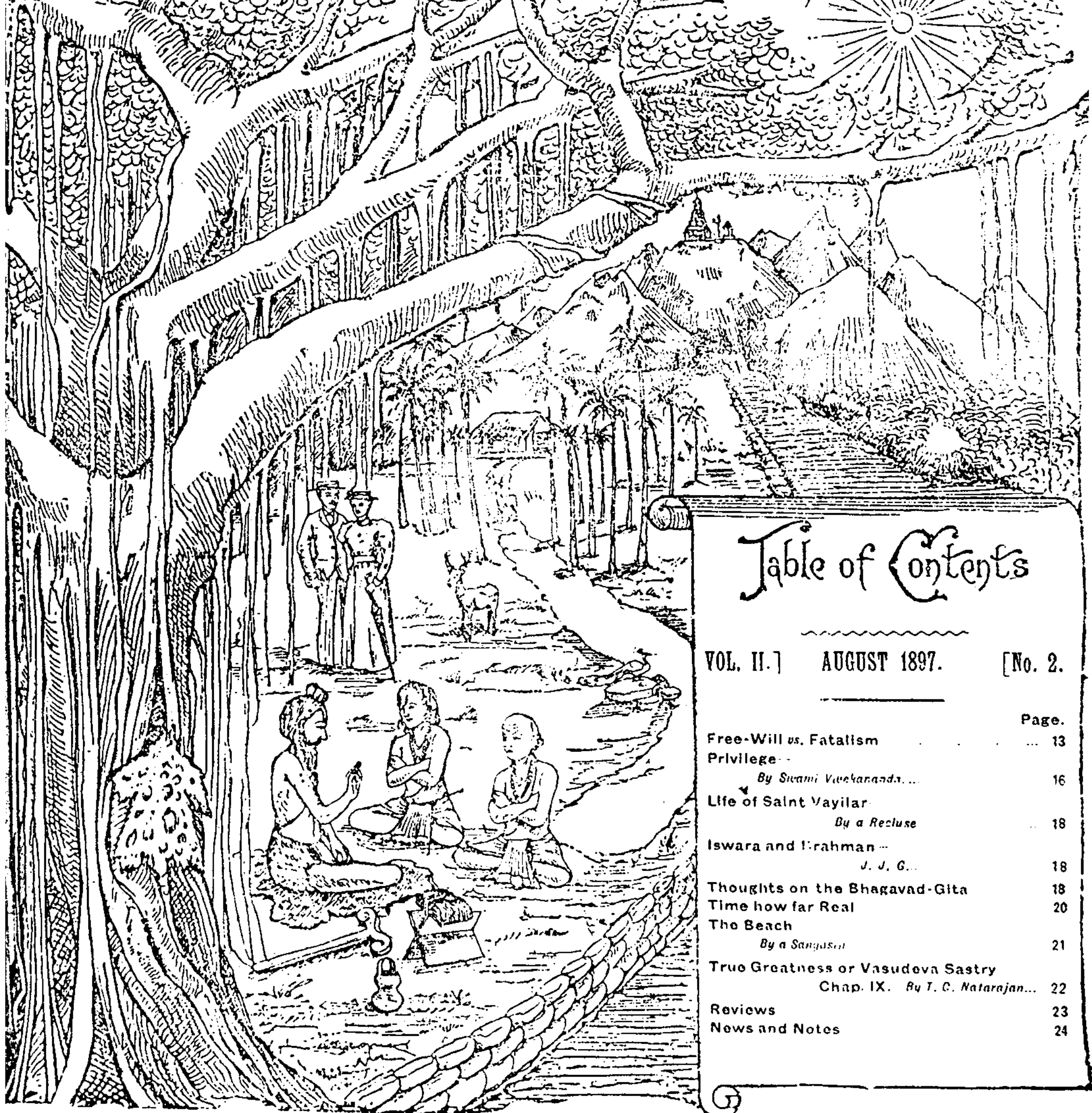


Table of Contents

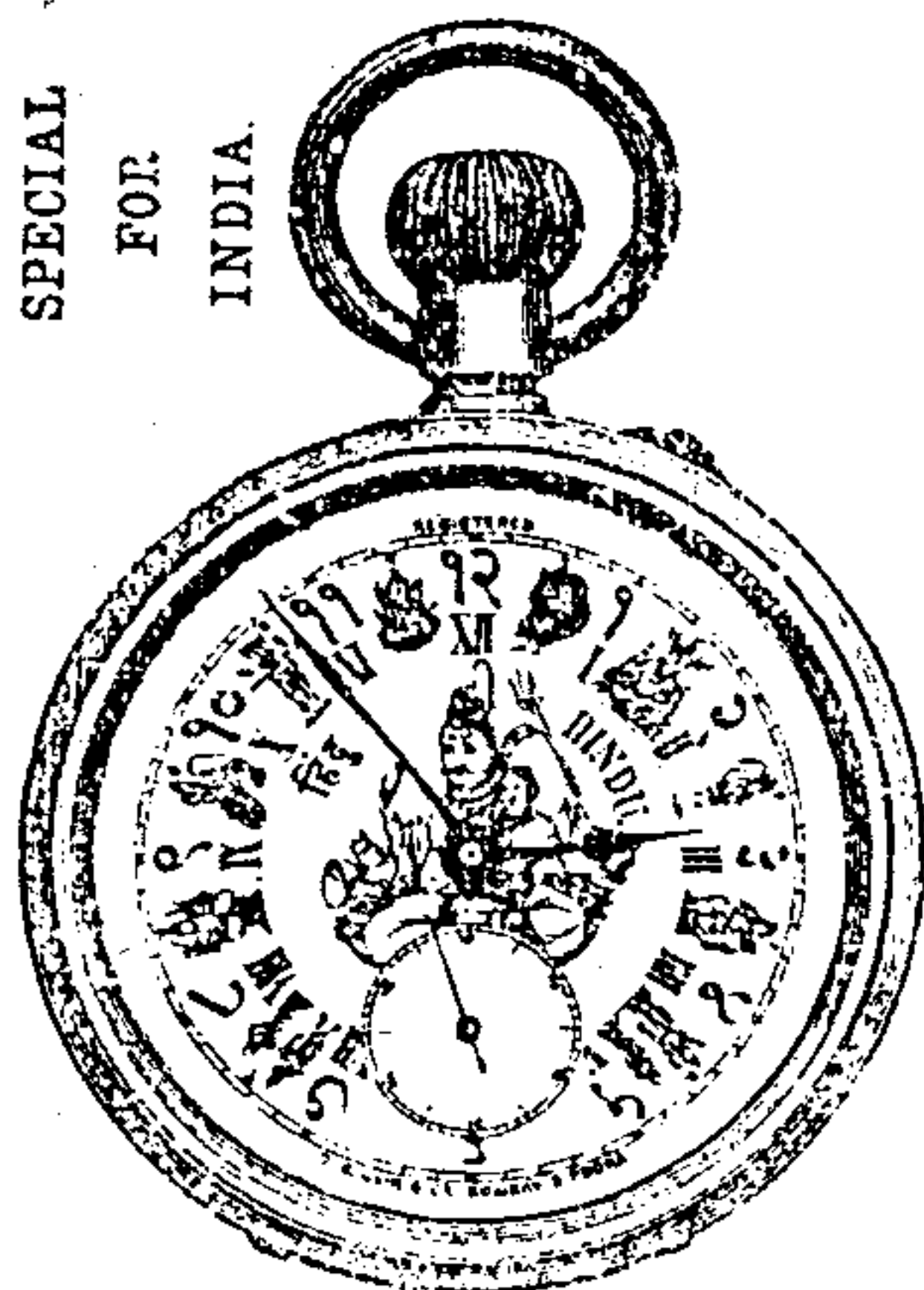
VOL. II.] AUGUST 1897. [No. 2.

	Page.
Free-Will vs. Fatalism	13
Privilege	
<i>By Swami Vivekananda...</i>	16
Life of Saint Vayilar	
<i>By a Recluse</i>	18
Iswara and Brahman	
<i>J. J. G...</i>	18
Thoughts on the Bhagavad-Gita	18
Time how far Real	20
The Beach	
<i>By a Sanyasi</i>	21
True Greatness or Vasudeva Sastry	
Chap. IX. <i>By T. C. Natarajan...</i>	22
Reviews	23
News and Notes	24

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Free-Will versus Fatalism.

A very interesting controversy has been going on in the western world for several centuries as to whether and how far man is the free agent of his actions. The question has been discussed from a variety of stand-points and by a host of competent writers, but is yet an open one and must ever remain so, unless studied in the light of the Vedanta as we now propose to do. The empire of the Vedanta is getting wider and wider day by day. The time has come not merely for the old religions of the world which are at present outside the pale of the Vedanta to reconsider their basis and adjust themselves to its high and inspired rationalism, but also for all philosophical questions to be opened afresh and discussed in the light of its conclusions. Such of the latter as seemed closed for ever, urgently call for a fresh discussion, while those which are still open, like the one which forms the subject of this article, invoke the help of the Vedanta for their solution. That there is no hard nut which the Vedanta cannot crack in the domain of religion or philosophy, may be judged from the solution it gives of the problem which we have now taken up.

The western philosophers who have written upon the subject are divisible into two classes, one party chiefly consisting of moral and religious teachers, and the other, of men of science. The opinion of the latter, which may be denominated as the scientific view, is that the will of man is as much bound by the law of causality as the rest of the phenomena of the universe, and is therefore not free; while the other party holds that 'whatever may be the claims of determinism in the province of physical science, man's actions are not determined, for he is endowed with free will.' This opinion is generally

considered as the moral or religious view, and forms the backbone of Christian theology or rather mythology, according to which man's fall from Paradise was due to his own fault and not to the decree of God, due to the abuse of his own will which was free and not to 'the least impulse or shadow of fate.' God is made to say:

For man will hearken to his (Satan's) glozing lies
And easily transgress the sole command.
Sole pledge of his obedience; so will fall
He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of me
All he could have; I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood though free to fall."

The Biblical story of man's fall and redemption evidently concedes freedom of will to man. And indeed without this freedom, ethics would be impossible, and religion absurd. For unless a man be the free agent of his actions, how could he be made to account for them? There is no responsibility where there is no freedom; and neither reward nor punishment could with any justice be meted out to a man for having done a thing not of free choice but out of compulsion. If man were not free, not merely earthly justice but even divine justice would be unjust. Heaven, Hell and Judgment would all be vain mockery, virtue would be no virtue, and vice no vice; piety, love, mercy as well as power, strength, intellect would all lose their merit, and man being chained to a fate which he could not overpower, would be no better than a piece of wood or stone. Fatalism, if it were to be admitted wholesale, would evidently cut at the root of both ethics and religion.

But all this, it is said, does not establish the doctrine of free will. If fatalism be true, it must be accepted even at the cost of ethics and religion. If man be a puppet in the hands of a mysterious something, which we shall agree to call fate, let us freely say so and correct our ethics and religion to suit the truth, instead of

sacrificing the latter for their sake. At any rate, with what justice could we venture to claim immunity for man from the great law of causality which is as universal, as unbending and governs all the rest of the world? Indeed few truths have been established with greater certainty than that every effect must have a cause adequate to produce it, and this applies as much in the department of human activity as outside it. Therefore man's actions are the result of sufficient causes, such as education, temperament, ancestry, environment, and the like and being thus determined, they are not free. Materialists even go farther and regard the mind and its attributes, its higher qualities not excepted, as having emanated from matter and standing therefore in the relation of an effect to the outer or objective world. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that man, 'being a part of the great cosmic whole, has to conform to its laws and is shaped by its events. And having of necessity to conform, he is not free either by organism or by environment.'

The limitations set upon the freedom of the human will are, according to the fatalists, two-fold. The first is that which is generally called fate, and hampers the movements of man in the outer world; and the second is a constitutional limitation which determines his mental activity and very subtly intermingles, in the relation of a cause to its effect, with even the most imperceptible and minute workings of his will. Thus bound both inside and outside, man plays his part, or rather is made to play his part in the universe, which though vast is a compact organism instinct with energy, if not with purpose.

Now let us examine the nature of these limitations and the extent of their sway upon the will of man. In the first place, it is a fact of every day experience that the course of life does not run uniformly, that now we are thwarted with failures and mishaps, and then flattered with success, and that at every step in our journey on earth, we are attended by a mysterious something which either hampers us by its presence, or surprises us with its favors. Two men of equal talent and equal facilities engage in the same trade at the same time, but independently. In a few years' time, one occupies the front ranks of society while the other wanders perhaps, with an empty purse and a broken heart. Gold too often 'glitters on the forehead of the fool,' while the wise man has nothing but his wisdom to live upon. Again, one period of a man's life is not like another. Napoleon was at one time the terror of Europe and at another a prisoner in the hands of Hudson Lowe. These are events of daily occurrence, but not the less instructive on that score; and, when we look into them, we feel bound to admit the active play of an undefinable something which somehow intermingles with and moulds the fabric of experience. The existence of such a factor is distinctly

recognised by the unsophisticated throughout the world, and differently christened at different times as fate, luck, fortune, and so on, according to the part it plays. Ever since the world began, the complaint has been that merit and fortune do not go hand in hand, and the disparity between both has been a puzzle both to religion and philosophy. Mythology conveniently saddled the responsibility for such apparent injustice on Clotho and sisters of the abyss of Demogorgen who 'with unwearied fingers drew out the threads of life.' The advent of Christianity was fatal to the fates themselves; they have perished distaff, knife and all. But Fate remains, the terrible bugbear, and he has not yet been brought to book.

Meanwhile unscientific fatalism which pretends to bridge up the chasm between merit and fortune, is a sort of vulgar compromise, and evades the question instead of answering it. To name a thing is not to explain it; so to attribute the apparent injustice in the world to the operation of fate is no solution of the difficulty, for the question remains, 'How sprang this fate into existence? Who made it and what regulates it?' If it be replied that God is the author of fate, the position becomes worse, for what makes God partial, since the destiny of no two persons is alike? It is true that 'there is a power which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will;' but to identify that power with God lands us in a serious difficulty, and is utterly irreconcilable with our notions of a moral government of the universe. It might perhaps be asserted that fate is an expression of the Divine will and is simply another name for the play of Providence, inasmuch as our trials and successes prove, when observed closely, to be for our own good. The order in which they happen, the moral effects which they create, the lessons which they teach, the experience they bring, the wonderful fitness, that strikes the observer, of the event to the person, and the maternal care which seems to attend the happening of every event, making life with its variety of experiences a course of extremely judicious meditation, as it were, to the soul—all these distinctly point to a design and prove to a certainty that these trials and successes cannot be the work of blind caprice. We seem every moment to be advancing towards perfection, 'moving with a sure instinct towards God', and therefore fate which shapes our ends appears to be simply another name for the will of God. This may be so and the educative value of fate is readily admitted, but since very little of ethical progress is achieved in the course of a single life and as, if man were measured by the deeds performed in that short span of earthly existence the spirits of more than nine-tenths of the human race should be sought for in hell, fate loses its value and the purpose which we attributed to it is vain. Hence however valuable may be the philosophy of Parnell's *Hermit* as a source of consolation, it is hardly reconcilable with our experience of men, for man learns far too little in the

course of a single life and very few die as good men. A brief life of a few years which is all that Christianity gives man (and how many die in infancy,) is too short an educational course, and we confess our inability to appreciate the justice with which God according to the Christian faith, sends to hell beings to whom He did not give a sufficient opportunity to learn and become better. Nor could we understand the grand purpose which some ascribe to fate seeing that, according to their own admission, the service it renders is in most cases hardly worth naming.

Thus we see that the popular and religious, or as we might as well call it, the unscientific conception of fate is hardly satisfying; but scientific determinism too would not appear to be much better. We are ready to admit with science that fate cannot be an accident in a world which is throughout governed by the law of causation, and that its workings, however whimsical and unregulated they might appear, can be no infringements of natural law. Fate, we agree, simply represents a causal series lying outside man which interferes with man's actions and limits his freedom. But the question remains why one man's fate is different from that of others. It may be said that each personality attracts to itself conditions similar to its nature from the outer world which control it and constitute its fate. Well and good; but how to account for the play of fate before personality sprang into existence? The very conditions of one's birth are determined by fate, and it would be absurd to speak of one having attracted to himself the fate by which he was brought into life. It would be like saying, 'I was present during my father's marriage with my mother'. The attraction theory then does not apply in the case at least of ante-natal fate. Again how to account for the difference between what are known as good time and bad time in a man's life. It is within the experience of almost everyone that certain periods in life are particularly full of mishaps, failures and disappointments, but within a few years the wheel of fortune gets turned, the sky clears and life becomes unusually bright and enjoyable. The attracting personality is in both cases the same, but yet the workings of fate so widely differ. The theory of attraction therefore falls to the ground. It does not explain ante-natal fate, nor does it sufficiently account for the workings of later destiny. Scientific determinism is thus hardly more satisfactory than popular fatalism, so far as the first limitation set on the freedom of the human will is concerned. Though it gives us a theoretical proof that Dame Fortune cannot be blind as the poets wrongly assert, it has to confess its ignorance of her ways and the principle that guides her in the distribution of her favors and frowns.

The fact is, fate has not been understood in the west. There has been a desperate attempt to make it appear reasonable and bind it by some law, but the authors

of the attempt could hardly be congratulated on their success. The reason is, they confine their attention entirely to the present as it appears, and totally ignore both the past and the future which are hidden from view. To solve the riddles of the universe solely on the evidence of the senses is as impossible as crossing the Ganges on the back of a mud horse. We have to admit other proofs than Pratyaksha pramana or direct perception and materialistic science which mistaking the apparent to be the entire reality, refuses to look beyond into the hidden half of the universe, can never hope to become a philosophy, though it might excite our wonder now and then with its geological and astronomical feats. This has been understood in our country and the best or rather the only explanation of fate is furnished to us by the Vedanta which begins with mistrusting the apparent.

Its doctrine of Karma clears all our present doubts. Fate according to it is no self-created tyrant, nor a blind old woman often crossing us in our path, but on the other hand, a result of our own deeds, a ruler whom we ourselves raised to the throne and honored with crown and sceptre. We bound ourselves by ourselves and, this self-created bondage is what is called fate. According to the Vedanta, we alone are responsible for our slavery, neither the high God nor the objective world. The essence of the doctrine of Karma is, 'that which we sow we reap;' and this sowing and reaping we do not merely in the present life but have been doing ever since the world began. We have passed through innumerable lives and this present life is but a day in eternity. Western science and western theology however antagonistic to each other in other respects are yet one in forgetting alike both yesterday and to-morrow in the toil and worry of to-day. Now, however, there is a slow awakening to the consciousness that the present could not have suddenly sprung into existence and that it should be bounded on one side by an infinite past and on the other by an infinite future. Reincarnation is a scientific truth and the doctrine of Karma which is based upon it is a great gain to philosophy.

According to this doctrine, every little act we do is a causal agency and generates results in proportion to its inherent energy, and there not being a single moment in our lives in which we do not act—action here means the activity of either body, mind or the senses—the Karmic results we generate in the course of a single life are incalculable. Of this vast hoard created in one life, man enjoys only a fraction in the course of that life; for it is impossible for him to enjoy the whole, as only few of his actions bear fruit before his death and as he is performing Karma (action) even in the last moments of his life. The unspent Karmic results are not lost; they get stored up, part in his soul in the form of character and tendencies and part in the outer

world, and present themselves in coming lives as fate. Karma (the result of actions—Karma is used in two senses, in some places for action, and in others for the result of actions) is of three kinds. That which gave birth to and determines the conditions of the present life is called Prarabdha. The store of past Karma yet unspent is called Sanchita, while the Karma generated by the actions of the present life which will become available in a future life is called Agami.

Here then is a most rational explanation of fate; it is nothing but unspent Karmic result, and our sudden disappointments and successes in life are thus not a result of blind chance, but of our own work in the past. There is a world's difference between the eastern and western conceptions of fate. In the west, it is looked upon as something outside man for whose workings he is not responsible; in the east, it is regarded as one's own making in the past. In the west, as arbitrary; in the east, as rational and regulated. In the west it has been the despair of both religion and philosophy; in the east it has been explained and accounted for.

Free will is a necessary corollary from the Vedantic explanation of fate. What man made he can unmake and the solemn assurance is

Ye are not bound! the Soul of Things is sweet,
The Heart of Being is celestial rest;
Stronger than woe is will; that which was Good,
Doth pass to Better—Best.

This is not however the last word of the Vedanta in the matter, and the more important part of the discussion has to be reserved, for want of space, for a future occasion. The second, limitation on the freedom of man's will, which is the stronghold of determinism will then be examined, and the final opinion of the Vedanta on this interesting controversy will be given as well as the authorities bearing out that opinion.

Privilege.

*A Lecture Delivered by Swami Vivekananda to the
Sesame Club, London, December 6th, 1896.*

Two forces seem to be working throughout nature, one of these is constantly differentiating, and the other, is as constantly unifying; the one making more and more for separate individuals, the other, as it were, bringing the individuals into a mass, bringing out sameness in the midst of all this differentiation. It seems that the action of these two forces enters into every department of nature and of human life. On the physical plane, we always find the two forces most distinctly at work, separating the individuals, making them more and more distinct from other individuals, and again making them into species and classes, and bringing out similarities of expression, and form, and so on, and the same holds good as regards the social life of man. Since the time when society began, to be, these two forces have been at work, differentiating and unifying. Their action appears in various forms, and is called by various names in different places and countries.

and at different times, but the essence is present in all, one making for differentiation, and the other making for sameness; the one making for caste, and the other breaking down caste, one making for classes and privileges, and the other breaking down classes and privileges.

The whole universe seems to be the battle-ground of these two forces. On the one hand it is urged that though this unifying process exists, we ought to resist it with all our might, because it leads towards death; that perfect unity is perfect annihilation, and that when the differentiating process that is at work in this universe ceases, the universe will become extinct. It is differentiation that causes forms and the phenomena that are before us; unification would reduce them all to a homogeneous and lifeless matter. Such a thing, of course, mankind wants to avoid. The same argument is applied to all the things and facts that we see around us. It is urged that even in the physical body and social classification, absolute sameness would produce natural death and social death. Absolute sameness of thought and feeling would produce mental decay and degeneration. Sameness therefore, is to be avoided. This has been the argument on the one side, and it has been urged in every country and in various times, with only a change of language. Practically it is the same argument which is urged by the Brahmins of India, when they want to uphold the divisions and castes, when they want to uphold the principles of a certain portion of the community against everybody else. The destruction of caste, they declare, would lead to destruction of society, and boldly they produce a big historical fact, that theirs has been the longest lived society. So they, with some show of force, appeal to this argument; with some show of authority they declare that that alone which makes the individual live the longest life, certainly must be better than that which produces shorter lives.

On the other hand, the idea of oneness has had its advocates throughout all times. Since the days of the Upanishads, the Buddha and Jesus, and all the great preachers of religion, in ancient and modern times, down to our present day, in the new political aspirations of portions of humanity in different parts of the world, and from the claims of the oppressed, and the down-trodden, the weary, and the heavy-laden, from all those who find themselves bereft of privileges,—comes out the one assertion of this unity and sameness. Human Nature comes in the middle. Those who have an advantage want to keep it, and if they find an argument, however one-sided and crude, they must cling to it. This applies to both sides.

Applied to metaphysics, this question also assumes another form. The Buddhist declares that we need not look for anything which has unity in the midst of these phenomena, we ought to be satisfied with this phenomenal world. This variety is the essence of life, however miserable and weak it may seem to be, we can have nothing more. The Vedantist declares that the unity is the only thing that exists; the variety is but phenomenal, ephemeral, for the time being, and apparent. "Avoid variations," says the Vedantist, "go back to the unity." "Avoid the unity; it is a delusion," says the Buddhist "go to the variety." The same differences of opinion in religion and metaphysics, have come down to our own day, for, in fact, the sum total of the principles of knowledge is very small, only a handful. Metaphysics and metaphysical knowledge, religion and religious knowledge, have been finished these 5000 years, and we are only reiterating the same truths in different languages, only sometimes enriching them, by the accession of fresh illustrations. So this is the fight, even to-day. One side

wants us to keep to the phenomenal, to all this variation, and points out, with great show of argument, that variation has to remain. ~~And~~ when that stops, everything is gone. What we mean by life has been caused by this variation. The other side has been at the same time, valiantly pointing ~~us~~ to that unity.

Coming to ethics, we find a tremendous departure. It is, perhaps, the only science which makes a bold departure from this fight. For ethics is ~~all~~ unity: its basis is love. It will not look at this variation; the one aim of ethics is this unity, this sameness. The highest ethical codes that mankind has discovered up to the present time, know no variation; they have no time to stop to look into them, their one end is to make for that sameness. The Indian mind, being more analytical—I mean the Vedantic mind—found this unity as the result of all its analysis, and wanted to base everything upon this one idea of unity; and, as we have seen, in the same country, other minds (the Buddhist), could not find that unity anywhere. ~~All~~ truth was a mass of variation, there was no connection between one thing and another.

I remember a story told by Prof. Max Müller in one of his books, an old Greek story, of how a Brahmin visited Socrates in Athens. ~~Asks the Brahmin~~ "What is the highest knowledge?" and answers Socrates: "To know man is the aim and end of all knowledge." "But how can you know man without knowing God?" replies the Brahmin. The one side, the Greek side, which is represented by modern Europe, insisted upon the knowledge of man; the Indian side, mostly represented by the old religions of the world, insisted upon the knowledge of God. The one sees God in nature, and the other sees nature in God. To us, at the present time, perhaps, has been given the privilege of standing aside from both these aspects, and taking an impartial view of the whole horizon. This is a fact, that variations exist, and that they must exist if life is to exist. This is ~~also~~ a fact, that in and through these variations that unity must be perceived. This is a fact that God is perceived in nature, ~~but~~ ~~is it a fact~~ that nature is ~~perceived~~ in God. ~~This is a fact that the knowledge of man is the highest knowledge, and that knowing man alone we can know God. This is also a fact that the knowledge of God is the highest knowledge, and knowing God alone we can know man.~~ Apparently contradictory though these statements may appear, they are the necessity of human nature. The whole universe is a play of Unity in Variety, and of Variety in Unity. The whole universe is a play of differentiation and oneness; the whole universe is a play of the finite in the infinite. We cannot take one without granting the other. We cannot take them both as facts of the same perception, as facts of the same experience; yet in this way it will always go on.

Therefore, coming to our more particular purpose, its relation to religion, rather than to the ethical side of the question, such a state of things where all variation has died down, and a uniform, dead, homogeneity has become a fact, is impossible, so long as life lasts. Neither is it desirable. At the same time, there is the other part of the fact, ~~viz.~~ that ~~this~~ unity already exists. That is the peculiar claim, not that this unity has to be reached but that it already exists, and that you could not perceive the variety at all without it. God is not to be attained, but He already exists. This has been the claim of all religions. Whenever one has perceived the finite, he has also perceived the Infinite. Some have laid stress on ~~one~~ side, the finite side, they have declared that they have perceived the finite without; others laid stress on the

Infinite side, they declared they perceived the universal only. But we know that it is a logical necessity that we cannot perceive the one without the other. So the claim, is that this sameness, this unity, this perfection—as we may call it—is not to be attained, it already exists, and is here. We have only to ~~reach~~ it, to understand it. Whether we know it or not, whether we can express it in clear language or not, whether this perception assumes the force and clearness of a sense perception or not, it is ~~there~~. For we are bound by the logical necessity of our minds to confess that it is ~~there~~, else, the perception of the finite would not be. I am not speaking of the old theory of substance and qualities, but of this oneness: that in the midst of all this mass of phenomena, the very fact of consciousness that ~~brings to us the idea~~ that you and I are different, (at the same moment brings to us the ~~knowledge~~ that you and I are not different. Knowledge would be impossible without that unity. Without the idea of sameness there would be neither perception nor knowledge. So both run side by side.

Therefore the absolute sameness of conditions, if that be the aim of ethics, appears to be impossible. That all men should be the same, could never be, however we might try. Men will be born differentiated; some will have more power than others; some will have natural capacities, others not; some will have perfect bodies, others not. We can never stop that. At the same time ring in our ears, the wonderful words of morality, from various teachers—"Thus, seeing the same God equally present in all, the sage does not injure Self by the Self, and thus reaches the highest goal. Even in this life they have conquered heaven whose minds are firmly fixed on this sameness; for God is pure, and God is the same to all. Therefore such are said to be living in God." We cannot deny that this is the real idea; and at the same time comes the difficulty that the sameness as regards external forms and positions can never be attained.

But what can be attained, is elimination of privilege. That is really the work before the whole world. In all social lives, there has been that one fight in every race, and in every country. The difficulty is not that a body of men are naturally more intelligent than other masses of humanity, but whether this body of men, because they have the advantage of intelligence, should take away even physical enjoyment from those who do not possess that advantage. The fight is ~~then~~ to destroy that privilege. That some will be stronger physically than others, and will thus naturally be able to subdue or defeat the weak, is a self-evident fact, but that, because of this strength they should gather unto themselves all the attainable happiness of this life, ~~this privilege is not in the law~~, and the fight has been against this. That some people, through natural aptitude, should be able to accumulate more wealth than others, is natural; but that on account of this power to acquire wealth they should tyrannise over and stand on the bodies of those who cannot acquire so much wealth, is not a part of the law, and this is privilege, and the fight has been against that. (That some people on account of possessing a grosser sort of body, are able to undergo more physical work is a self-evident fact, but on account of that that they should band together and tyrannise over everybody who, happily or unhappily, does not possess that gross physical form, is not in the law.) This is a privilege, and throughout ages the course of morality has been ~~here~~, the destruction of privilege. This is the road which tends towards that sameness, towards unity, without destroying variety.

Let all these variations remain, eternally; it is

essence of life. We shall all play in this way, eternally. You will be wealthy, and I shall be poor; you will be strong, and I shall be weak; you will be ~~more~~ learned than I, and I ~~more~~ ignorant than you; you will be ~~a hundred times more~~ spiritual than I, and I less so. But what of that? We shall remain so, but because you are physically stronger, you must not have more privilege than I, and because you have more wealth, is no reason why you should be considered greater than I, for that sameness is here, in spite of ~~that~~, and because you have more learning, will be no reason why you should possess more privilege; ~~neither because you are very much more spiritual than I should you have that privilege.~~

The work of ethics has been ~~that~~, and will be in the future, not the destruction of variation, and the establishment of sameness in the external world, which is impossible, and would be death and annihilation; but recognising the unity in spite of all these variations, recognising the God within, in spite of everything that frightens us, recognising that infinite strength as the property of everyone, in spite of the apparent weakness, recognising the eternal, infinite, essential purity of the soul in spite of everything that appears on the surface. This we have to recognise. Taking either side alone is dangerous, one-half only of the position, and liable to lead to quarrels. We must take the whole thing as it is, stand on it as our basis and work it out in every part of our lives, as individuals and as unit members of society.

Life of Saint Vayilar.

Religions have their seasons as well as years have, and as in the spring time when the whole vegetable world rejoices, flowers shoot forth, not merely from trees and plants but even from the shrubs on the way side and fences in the garden, so in the great Sivite revival of Southern India in the days of the last of the Pandians, there arose saints in multitudes from every nook and corner of the Tamil land and not merely the high and cultured classes of the community, but even the lowest castes succeeded in bringing forth Bhaktas like Nanda, whose names a grateful posterity remembers with reverence and love. Saint Vayilar, whose life is our present theme, was one of the children of this great revival, and though he was not of the lower castes, he was not of the first three. He belonged to an agricultural class, known as the Velala, and was born in Mylapore, the native place of this journal. His life was eventless, except for the one occupation which, though it might appear dull to some, engaged him both day and night. It was the worship of God.

His way of worshipping was, however, peculiar. He did not find much pleasure in going to the local temple for the worship there did not come up to his ideal; therefore he built a very grand temple of his own, the grandest perhaps ever known, with numberless towers, all of gold, high and spacious halls provided with walls of silver and pillars of gold and decorated with the costliest diamonds and rubies. The whole temple was built on a beautiful plan with five square walls, one after another, made of different metals, the outermost being of iron and the innermost of gold. It was lit up not with ordinary lamps but with big diamonds as bright as the sun and of the size of mangoes. Numberless mirrors disposed in an artistic fashion set forth the beauty of the temple in tenfold richness. In the centre of the temple

was the *sanctum sanctorum* which rivalled the Kailas (abode of Siva) in grandeur, and contained a beautiful Lingam the image of God, adorned with the costliest jewels and the most fragrant flowers. On each side of the image stood a Kalpa tree whose flowers spread their divine fragrance all through the temple. It was a very grand temple, and my tongue does poor justice to its unrivalled beauty and splendour.

Here it may be asked, "How did he afford the money for building so magnificent a temple, and where did he build it?" The answer is, he did not build it with money but with his lively imagination which, of course, cost him nothing except the rarest of things, *viz.*, love to God and the splendid temple was all in his mind. He would constantly live with the God of that temple, make Puja to it day and night, and forget even meals and sleep in that occupation. He would seldom talk to anybody, for he was too busy, and he would go on making his Puja without caring whether it rained or thundered, whether it was night or day till he forgot even the temple and God, and himself alone remained. In course of time, the image also disappeared, and his own soul became God. Says his biographer: "His mind was his temple, wisdom the lamp that shone in it, bliss the water which he poured over his God and love the offering he made to that Deity." Tradition adds that the glory of his silent worship gradually became known to the world, and when he died he was canonised on earth, and in Heaven he became one with God.

Such is the glory of mental worship. Ah, how cheap is Heaven and yet how dear?

A RECLUSE.

Isvara and Brahman.

In reply to a question as to the exact position of Isvara in Vedantic Philosophy, the Swami Vivekananda, while in Europe, gave the following definition—"Isvara is the sum-total of individuals, yet he is an individual, as the human body is a unit, of which each cell is an individual. Samashti, or collected, equals God; Vyashti, analysed, equals the Jiva. The existence of Isvara, therefore, depends on that of Jiva, as the body on the cell, and *vice versa*. Thus, Jiva and Isvara are co-existent beings; when one exists, the other must. Also, because, except on our earth, in all the higher spheres, the amount of good being vastly in excess of the amount of bad, the sum-total (Isvara) may be said to be all-good. Omnipotence and Omniscience are obvious qualities, and need no argument to prove, from the very fact of totality. Brahman is beyond both these, and is not a state; it is the only Unit not composed of many units; the principle which runs through all, from a cell to God, without which nothing can exist, and whatever is real is that principle, or Brahman. When I think I am Brahman I alone exist; so when you think so etc. Therefore, each one is the whole of that principle."

J. J. G.

Thoughts on the Bhagavad Gita.

(Continued from page 11).

It is often erroneously supposed that Karma or action forms a distinct Yoga sufficient by itself to procure liberation, and when performed with non-attachment is as efficient as Gnana. That this is impossible has been again and again shown in the pages of this journal both by argument and scriptural authority. All that Nish-

kâmya Karma can do to the individual is to bring about Chittasuddhi or purity of mind and qualify him for the attainment of wisdom, which alone forms the Sakshat-Sadana, i.e., the direct cause for liberation from the bonds of conditioned existence. This has been repeatedly stated in the Gîtâ also, as for instance in the verse already quoted (IV. 38,) which says, "In this world there is nothing so purifying as Gnana; but the Karma-Yogi realises for himself that Gnana in course of time."

There can be no doubt however that the great author of the Gita gives a very high place to Karma-Yoga. Not merely does he prefer it to abstinence from work (*vide* verses 4 to 7 of Chap. III. and 2 to 5 of Chap. XVIII) but he often goes so far as to say that ignorant men, and not those that are wise, speak of the Sankhya and the Yoga, i.e., Gnana-Yoga and Karma-Yoga as different (V. 4). In the next verse he adds "that place which is gained by the followers of Sankhya Yoga is also attained by the Karma Yogis. He who sees that the Sankhya and Yoga are one, sees indeed." But all that is meant by such verses, which would appear to contradict the one above quoted (IV. 38) is that the difference between the two Yogas is one of degree; the latter is placed on the same footing with the former, only to emphasize the certainty of its securing the desired end, viz., Moksha. But, since even the Gnani is urged to work for the benefit of others and since action is declared indispensable in the case of all others, a doubt may arise whether Gnana alone by itself can lead to salvation, or whether it requires the help of Karma also to accomplish that end. It is admitted that the doing of Karma is better than abstaining from it and that action is a necessity of one's nature so long as he is bound by Avidya (ignorance) and is not master of himself, but it is asked whether Gnana cannot make for liberation without the help of Karma.

The Gita has indeed misled many, and, misunderstanding certain passages in it, there have not been wanting men to uphold the theory that Gnana by itself cannot secure emancipation and that it requires the help of Karma also. This view is endorsed by Bhartruhari, one of the early commentators on the Brahma-Sutras; Gnana and Karma are regarded by these people as co-ordinate causes for Moksha and they are compared to the two wings of a bird, and it is said that, just as the latter cannot fly by the help of one wing alone, so man cannot attain liberation by the help of Gnana or Karma separately. It is also asserted not only that Karma should go hand in hand with Gnana, but that Gnana itself would get destroyed like an unwatered plant but for the nourishing support of Karma.

In answer to these erroneous views Sankara says in his commentary on the Gita, "Gnana kills out all sense of duality and confers liberation. Karma, on the other hand, depends upon the sense of differentiation of its requisites, action, causes (material and efficient) and its result. The ideas of 'I,' 'mine,' 'I am agent,' 'I am enjoyer,' 'I am a Brahmin,' 'I am a householder,' and the like have been superimposed upon the Atman from eternity through Avidya or ignorance. The knowledge, 'I am without Maya,' 'I am not agent,' 'I am actionless,' 'there is no result which has to be obtained by me,' 'there is naught outside me,' destroys the sense of differentiation, without which Karma is impossible, and Avidya, which is the prime source of that sense. Mere Karma cannot remove this sense of differentiation and Avidya, just as darkness cannot remove darkness. Gnana, on the other hand, kills out both, therefore Gnana and Karma cannot co-exist (and much less can be co-ordinate causes for Moksha.) Hence only Gnana can bring about

salvation" (*vide* his comment on XVIII. 66). In another place, he observes, "Moksha which consists in self-realization is promised only to the Gnani, there is no other road to it except Gnana. To go by any other road will be useless like going towards the East with a view to reach the Western ocean (*vide* commentary on XVIII—55). Says the author of the Vedanta Sara, "Those learned men who wrote the comments on the Vedanta before the time of Sankaracharya, taught that in seeking emancipation, it was improper to renounce religious ceremonies, but that the desire of reward ought to be forsaken, that works should be performed to obtain divine wisdom, which, being acquired, would lead to emancipation; that works were not to be rejected, but practised without being considered as a bargain, for the performance of which a person should obtain such and such benefits; that therefore works, and the undivided desire of emancipation, were to be attended to; which is illustrated in the following comparison: Two persons being on a journey, one of them loses his horse and the other his carriage; the first is in the greatest perplexity and the other, though he can accomplish the journey on horseback, contemplates the fatigue with dissatisfaction. After remaining for some time in great suspense, they at length agree to unite what is left to each, and thus with ease accomplish their journey. The first is he who depends on works; and the latter, he who depends on wisdom. From hence it will be manifest that, to obtain emancipation, works and divine wisdom must be united. Formerly this was the doctrine of the Vedanta, but Sankaracharya in a comment on the Bhagavad-Gita has by many proofs shewn that this is an error; that works are wholly excluded, and that knowledge alone, realizing everything as Brahma, procures liberation." This point may now be considered as fairly settled and indeed, the Gita itself when rightly read gives little room for doubt in that matter for, besides the verses which explicitly give preference to Gnana, the very arrangement of the work shows that Karma is simply a means for attaining wisdom and forms a lower rung in the ladder which leads to Mukti or release. At the end of almost every one of the first six chapters Gnana is glorified, and self-realization is distinctly pointed out as the end to which Karma Yoga is one of the means.

At the same time, it cannot be denied that Krishna lays special stress upon the fact that Gnana, instead of unfitting a man for the world, as it is vulgarly supposed to do, brings about the best adjustment to its ways. A Gnani need not be a recluse, he need not fly away from the haunts of men and live in lonely forests and mountain-caves and be dead to the world, but he is to live in the world and yet be out of it. He should perform actions though not for himself, yet, for the sake of others, for the world follows whatever example the wise men set. 'And they should not,' adds Sri Krishna, 'allow a difference of opinion to spring up in the ignorant who are desirous of performing Karma. On the other hand, they should themselves perform actions in the regular way and make others also do the same' (III.—26.)

This is the essence of Krishna's teaching in the first few chapters; and this, he says, he first taught to Sûrya—the sun-god, Sûrya taught in his turn to Manu, Manu taught to Ikshvâku and then it descended traditionally to kings and sages. Here Arjuna properly asks, "Thou wert born recently and Sûrya was born long ago, how shall I comprehend this which thou sayest, 'I was the first to declare it.' " Krishna's answer involves an important philosophical doctrine which we shall next proceed to consider.

(To be continued.)

Time how far Real.

(A STORY FROM THE YOGA-VASISHTA.)

Once upon a time, there ruled over the country of Uttara-Pândava, a king called Lavana, one of the descendants of the famous Harischandra. He was renowned all over India for his immense wealth and unrivalled prowess in war. One day while he was holding Court in his Darbar hall seated on a high throne bedecked with the most precious gems, there appeared before him a man who was well versed in magic and legerdemain and after duly paying his respects to him, announced his profession and entreated him to witness his feats. So saying and without waiting for the king's permission, he waved a big bunch of peacock's feathers to and fro, which the king no sooner saw than lo! before his mental vision he saw the following events enacted. A messenger despatched by the king of Sindhu entered upon the scene leading a high mettled charger and offered it to him as a present from his master. Whereupon the Siddha asked the king to mount upon that horse. In obedience to the words of this great personage, the king stared like a statue intently in the direction of the horse and lay entranced for 4 or 5 hours to the immense surprise and fear of his courtiers like a Yogi in Samadhi. Then suddenly the king's body relaxed its rigidity and began to fall down from the throne when those hard by propped it up.

Then the king gradually recovered consciousness and the obedient ministers asked him what the matter was with him. "Thank God," replied the king, "I am king Lavana and not a poor Pariah. Ah! what a terrible dream! I hope this is my court, you are all my ministers, this country is Uttara-Pândava and I am king Lavana. Is it not so my ministers? Am I not right?" The ministers repeatedly assured him that everything was as he had said and requested to know the cause of his doubt. The king replied, "When this wonderful Siddha before us waved his peacock feathers, I got giddy and noticed a horse which I mounted and journeyed a long distance for purposes of hunting. After travelling some time, I entered a desolate waste where the heat scorched all things and even the senses. It was a boundless waste which, as my horse and myself were extremely fatigued, we were not able to traverse before night-fall. With great difficulty, however, I crossed the waste soon after sunset and reached a delicious forest teeming with many kinds of trees. While I was riding through it, a creeper high upon a tree tightly twined round my neck and immediately the speedy horse bolted out of my sight like a swimmer from a bather in the Ganges, leaving me dangling to and fro aloft in the air, with the creeper encircling my neck. Soon it became pitch-dark, chill winds blew over my body which consequently got stiffened and my mind became paralysed. I was at the mercy of the winds all night and my teeth kept chattering on account of the extreme cold.

"After a long and miserable night, the day broke and I managed with great difficulty to cut off the creeper round my neck, and coming down looked about for some living person, but in vain. After an hour and a half had elapsed, I met with a Pariah girl who had some eatables in her hand. Though she was black like darkness and ugly like a toad, I entreated her on account of my hunger, saying 'O swan-like one! O thou of deer's eyes! please give me what thou hast, for I am dying with hunger.' The lot of a beggar however is never enviable and it was

specially so in my case for the girl instead of vouchsafing to give it to me took to her heels without even deigning to say a word in reply to my request. I did not however leave her but hunted her throughout the forest and at last got at her and piteously complained of my extreme hunger to her. The dark-skinned girl replied, 'I am an outcaste and it is not meet that thou shouldst taste the food I have, but if thou deignest to do so, thou must first promise to wed me in my own place before my parents and live with me there. If so I will give thee this very instant what I have in my hand.' A very nice bargain that! but such was the enormity of my hunger that I had to consent and no sooner did I do so, than she handed to me all that she had. I ate that and my hunger was appeased. Then she took hold of my hand, saying I was a jolly young-fellow and all sorts of fine things and making love to me without restraining me on to her parents like the subtle body of a person seduced to hell.

"To make a long story short, our marriage was celebrated with great pomp in the Pariah hamlet bespattered with blood and bones; numberless horses, monkeys, fowls, crows and pigs were killed in honour of the occasion. The old hunch-backed grandmother of the house surveyed through her large fleshy eyes her son-in-law and was greatly pleased with the choice. Drums were mercilessly beaten and toddy and meat were freely distributed on the occasion, a galaxy of Pariah girls crept about me making all sorts of fantastic jokes, and the marriage lasted seven days.

"Within eight months of my marriage, my lady brought forth a child of the color of burnt brand. Another three years more and she bore me a son blacker still. Then another child was born. With wife and children in the Pariah hamlet I had to work all day to earn my bread, my body became old and emaciated on account of poverty and family cares. And when I was thus enfeebled by dotage, there came a severe famine, the whole air was filled with volutes of dust, raised through heat, then my new relatives began to perish one by one and a few that were alive fled to foreign dominions. In order to escape death by hunger I and my wife left the country, myself bearing two of my children on my shoulders and a third on my head.

"Having crossed the country in the scorching heat I saw a big palmyra tree under the shade of which I dismounted my children and rested myself along with my wife for some time. To my great misfortune, my wife suddenly expired in the very embrace of her children owing to the fatigue of a long travel under a tropical sun. One of my younger children mounted on my lap and weeping incessantly demanded of me flesh to eat as he was unable to endure hunger. I could find no means to appease the hunger of the poor child. My heart broke with grief and I was afraid he and the other children would soon die like their mother; therefore I resolved to put an end to my life and for this purpose rearing a great forest fire, I approached the flames and rose up to fall into it, when I tumbled down from the throne here and woke up to see you courtiers uplifting me and pronouncing the words, Jaya (victory to thee) Jaya. Thus fortunately have I woke to find myself a king and not a Pariah."

In introducing the story, Vasishtha says the expansion of the mind's thoughts is bondage while the abandoning of the same is emancipation. Through the play of the mind in objects, proximity appears a great distance and vice versa. Through the course of the mind a Kalpa is reckoned by it as a moment and vice versa. What was

only four or five hours to the courtiers was to the king a large number of years.

Kant rightly says in his 'Critique of Pure Reason,' "I maintain that the properties of space and time in conformity to which I set both, as the condition of their existence, *abide in my mode of intuition and not in the objects in themselves.*" Space and time are, according to him, mere forms of thought. Rosalind in 'As You Like It' speaks real philosophy when she jokes with her lover saying, "Time travels in diverse paces with diverse persons, I'll tell you who time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal, and who he stands still withal, ... Marry, he trots hard with a young maid, between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized: if the interim be but a se'n night, Time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven years, &c...."

The Beach.

The cuckoo on the Margosa tree just by my room sweetly announced to Sleep, the softest and the most soothing nurse of all living beings, that her Mistress, Night, is to take her departure very soon, as she has to visit other parched-up and hot places that want her cooling presence very much and that it was time for her also to be ready to follow in her train. At this warning she gradually and imperceptibly left me in my bed, who finding myself thus left alone rolled hither and thither upon it, for a while, in search of her, but found her not and so unwillingly rose up from it at last. By this time other busy-bodies, such as cocks, crows, rooks and some sweet-singing birds too with various sounds served to shake off my drowsiness, and immediately after I too caught their freshness, hilarity and joy. Anon I jumped out of my bed, and after washing my hands and face dressed myself to take a walk on the beach.

The beach of Madras! What a splendid place it is! The abode of cool and refreshing sea-breeze, commanding a prospect of vast illimitable ocean on the one side and the best and the most picturesque row of buildings which Madras can boast of on the other side together with as picturesque a part called Marina, the beach serves at once to fill a man with ecstasy who is fortunate enough to take a walk in the morning over it. For a time the mind forgets all worldly concerns and the thoughtlessness of childhood is again there with buoyancy of spirit. Man feels for a time that the world is a place of enjoyment, and almost disbelieves those sages who decry all sorts of the pleasures of the world.

I was in such a mood of mind when suddenly I saw before me one of my Iyengar friends, accompanied by another of his own class whom I did not know. We there joined together and my friend introduced me to his companion. We began to talk at random. In the course of our conversation the new friend gave out his opinion that he could not believe all what men say about God. "For my part," he said, "God is unknown and unknowable. So we should give up the matter altogether. What is the use of troubling ourselves about what we can know nothing of?" Then turning to me he said, "Sir, do you believe in God?"

"Why? Yes" was my reply. "Then what is God?" asked he.

"God is what resists your desire and leads you as well as the whole universe, without being resisted."

"A very curious definition indeed!"

"May be. If there was nothing to resist you in any way, I would have called you God. God is free to do anything. There is nothing to resist God, and so we call that Power Almighty. But since that is not the case with you, since at every step you get resistance from all sides, you are fully under the control of all things other than yourself, i. e., your environments; and the combination of all those other things we call God." At this he said,

"Now suppose I am blind and have a strong desire to go to Mylapore to see a certain dear friend of mine, and I am poor and helpless. Here blindness, poverty, helplessness resist my desire and prevent its fulfilment. Therefore according to you the combination of blindness, poverty and helplessness is God." To this I replied

"If I say x is equal $a + b + c + d + e + \text{etc.}$, *ad infinitum*, would it be proper for me to say x is equal to a or b or c taken separately? It reminds me of the story of the blind men and the elephant. Some blind men wanted to see an elephant. So one after another they were admitted into the place where the elephant was. The first man touched the trunk of the elephant, and feeling it all through was satisfied with his knowledge of the elephant, by concluding it to be like a thick club. The second touched similarly the ear of the elephant and feeling it all through, concluded that the animal was like a big winnowing basket. The third touched the belly and concluded it to be like a big basin of water. The fourth touched one of the legs and concluded it to be like a pillar. Now as each one was imparting his knowledge of the elephant to the other three, a quarrel ensued amongst them, for they could not agree with one another, till a man came in, who was not blind and convinced them of their error. It is as absurd to describe God as the combination of blindness, poverty and helplessness as it is absurd to describe an elephant as a thick club. Because your parents and superiors resist your desire in many instances, they are therefore not the whole of God, because society and Government resist you similarly, therefore they are not God in themselves, because another man more powerful, more intelligent, more learned resists you, he is not God on that account. God is the whole resisting Power taken in its entirety."

"But," rejoined the other, "when we look at an elephant we do not always look upon the whole of its body. We sometimes look at its trunk, sometimes look at its ears and compare them with other things of a similar nature; do we not? Similarly we have full right to look at the different phases of this God of yours and pass our judgments on those phases. This being granted, when we see a widow is deprived of her only child and cast helplessly into the world to perish in the extreme agony of bereavement, is that not very cruel of that power which you call God? And should we serve such a cruel Master?"

"Will or nil you are bound to serve inasmuch as you are completely under its control, for you cannot deny the resistance which you get from all sides. But this Power appears to you to be cruel when you look upon only one side of it forgetting its other sides of which this side is a connecting link. As when you simply look upon a portion of the ear of the elephant, it appears to be very ugly, but seen with the whole body, there is no such ugliness. Parents sometimes whip their children. Whipping itself is very ugly, but when we consider the motive of the parents we cannot but praise it. Government hangs a culprit. Now hanging is very nasty and cruel. But the fellow hanged has lately butchered his wife and children. When you know this, does his hanging appear to you to be nasty and cruel at all? So you

see what appears to be apparently cruel, may really be not so if you dive deep into the matter."

"But in the cases you have cited," answered my friend, "the children are wicked and the man is a culprit. As for the widow I am speaking of, she is generally reputed to be a very pious woman. Is the sorrow for the loss of her child the fruit of her piety?"

"No, certainly not. That is the fruit of her ignorance, and want of piety. If her devotion and love towards her God were greater than that towards her child, then she could not feel the bereavement at all, but on the contrary she would be rather grateful to her Lord for removing her bondage and impediment. But as that Almighty Power does not like that the pious woman should be in darkness of ignorance, It has taken away the child which virtuously belongs to It, for through Its influence alone the child came into existence, to its own sire. It is through mistake we call our own what really is not our own. So in order to dispel that mistake It has taken away the child from the widow. She may weep for a few days, but after that period she will find consolation in herself, knowing it for certain that the child was not hers but God's, and that there is nothing else permanent save God, and so if she places her love in God there is no fear of further bereavement, whereas if it be placed in things other than God, there is every chance of separation."

At this the other cried out, "What! children are impediments in the path of virtue! Those sweet innocent cherubs that make this otherwise miserable world an abode of happiness and joy to all men,—are they to be considered as barriers on our way? They rather serve to give us joy and vigor in our tedious journeys through the world."

A SANYASI.

(To be continued.)

True Greatness of Vasudeva Sastry.

By T. C. NATARAJAN.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

When Seethalakshmi heard that Vasudeva Sastry and Annammal had returned from Dindigul, herself and Rukmani went to them to condole with them for the untimely death of their son-in-law. Annammal the moment she saw them began an eloquent tirade on the Vedanta, which more than anything else was the cause in her opinion of her bereavement. With this preface she commenced weeping in stentorian strains to the great dread not merely of neighbours but also of people furlongs off. Everywhere in the neighbouring streets men and women rushed out of the houses to know what the cause of such a sudden outburst could be. It is said that on that occasion even the temple elephants shook with surprise, but of this I am not quite sure. Whether it was true or not, this much is certain that Annammal's performance was very much admired by the women whom Nature, being herself a female and therefore partial to her sex, has specially favored with big throats and shrill voices.

When the Niagara-falls-roar which they had occasioned was going on, Seethalakshmi and her daughter turned to Vasudeva Sastry to condole with him. That gentleman was all the while looking at Annammal with eyes expres-

sive of wonder, for that day's performance of hers was novel even to him as he had never before seen anything like it. The first thing he said to Seethalakshmi was, "Surely this wife of mine is an Avatar (incarnation) for Krishna has said, 'Wherever there is power or glory in an extraordinary degree, know that I am there.'"

After the usual enquiries were over, he described in some detail the circumstances of Krishna's death and the state of his daughter's mind and wound up with saying, "Everything happens for good and this calamity would not have happened to Lakshmi had it been unnecessary. It is by trials that we attain to perfection and this great trial might perhaps take Lakshmi a step nearer God. But who knows? Everything in the world has its own law." Then Rukmani began the topic of the Siddha Purusha and the miracles he had worked and asked him if he believed that he was a true Siddha. Vasudeva meditated for about a quarter of an hour and then said, "In a day or two you will yourself find your question answered. In the meanwhile please your husband in all possible ways and see that you do not leave him alone after ten in the night. Always keep pretty near him."

Seethalakshmi was about to ask him why, when there rushed into the house no less a person than Narayana Iyer, Dewan Bahadur, shouting "Vasudeva, Vasudeva." As he came in, the whole company rose to do him honor and seeing his wife and daughter there he said, "O you are here, talking Vedanta I suppose! Vasudeva, what a great Siddha Purusha has blessed our house with his presence! By the way, you have lost your son-in-law, a good fellow he was. Don't you come to see the Mahatma in my house? It is a fortunate thing that you have come. He wanted to go yesterday; but I begged him to stay here for a week or ten days more and he has consented. What wisdom he speaks! You might learn much from him, more than we can, for you know something already. Come come, we shall go." Vasudeva Sastry did not care to go, but Narayana Iyer dragged him by the arm without allowing him to say a word, and so he went.

In the meanwhile Sreenivasan, who, having at the very first appearance of the mysterious stranger mentally appointed him as his Guru, waited for an opportunity to see him alone, was by the grace of God, as he thought it, himself called by the latter into the room where he had performed his last miracle. The room was now empty, there were there neither silver vessels nor golden images now. The Yogi took his seat on a chair, and Sreenivasan as soon as he entered the room fell at his feet three times and said with tears in his eyes "O Lord, I have been waiting for an opportunity to see you alone. You know by your Yogic power all my thoughts, free me, Lord, from the ills of Samsara and give me wisdom. I want nothing else, O Lord: not even Siddhis attract me." The Yogi replied, "Though young how ripe you are for divine wisdom! That is why I called you in, my child. By a touch of my hand numberless men have acquired wonderful power and wisdom. But are you sure you want wisdom and nothing else?" "Yes, my Lord, I want nothing else. Nothing else pleases me." "Do you dare to be a disciple of mine? Will you leave father, mother, wife and relations, and follow me? Remember these will not save you from death, nor follow you beyond the grave, but the wisdom I shall teach you will make you immortal." "Truly my master," said Sreenivasan, "I will follow you wherever you go, cross mountains and forests with you and go even beyond the seas." "That is good, that is what is wanted," ejaculated the Yogi.

Then the self-elected Guru and the would-be chela both came out of the room, and, as wherever Rama was, was

Ayodhya, a large gathering assembled in a few minutes' time in the presence of the supposed Siddha. And now another miracle happened which was even more wonderful than the preceding ones.

The mysterious Yogi suddenly called over Sreenivasan to him, and, in the presence of a large gathering, besmeared his face with sacred ashes and put a small quantity of the same in his mouth, when lo! Sreenivasan cried at the top of his voice, "I am Akhanda Satchidananda (boundless Existence, Knowledge Bliss) an ocean of bliss. I am the omnipresent God himself. I am Param Jyotis (the Supreme Light), I am Iswara, I am Brahma, I am Vishnu, I am the great Para Brahman," and laughed so convulsively that the people around were filled with wonder, and feared for the safety of his ribs; for more than fifteen minutes, the fit of laughter lasted, and it would have continued longer, had not the mysterious Yogi shifted him, by gently touching him on his shoulder, from the plane of Para Brahman to that of an ordinary mortal. Sreenivasan hardly recovered his every day consciousness, when he began to praise his Guru Maharaj in no measured language. All the verses in our books in praise of the Guru were instantly on his lips and the great miracle-worker himself, not only heartily enjoyed the garland of praises which Sreenivasan was honoring him with, but was jubilant over the conquest he had made of the young man's heart, and the wonder and awe which he had created in the mind of all around him. Indeed his joy was so great that he could not contain himself, and he cried out, "Ye ignorant men, do ye now see what a Siddha is capable of?" And the ready response on all sides was, "O Lord Siddha Purusha, what is there that is impossible for you who fly in the heavens and subsist on air." At this reply, he looked around majestically and smiled an approving smile.

Just at that very moment, there entered Narayana Iyer dragging Vasudeva Sastry along with him and, making so low an obeisance as if he were before a despotic Sultan in whose hands his life lay. Such courtier-like obeisance was however lost upon the miracle-working Yogi, for the latter, the moment he saw Vasudeva Sastry, started with fear, colored very perceptibly and got too much beside himself to notice the deference which the Dewan Bahadur honored him with. Indeed it took him one or two minutes to regain his self-possession, and when he came to himself, he was filled with shame and sorrow at having betrayed his emotion. The result was, he hung down his head, was moody and did not dare even to talk to Narayana Iyer in reply to his salutation. Such a sudden change in his manner was noticed by nearly all present, including Narayana Iyer himself, and every one began to form his own conjecture as to what might be the relation between the mysterious Yogi and the Vedantin Vasudeva Sastry. Narayana Iyer could not come at a happy guess, and not having the patience to form one, he bluntly asked his guest if he knew the Sastry, at which perfectly unexpected question, he started and with great confusion replied, "Yes, no, not exactly. I have seen him, I remember. Rather he looks very much like an intimate friend of mine in my Pūrva Āśrama (former state) i.e., before I became a Siddha." All this he uttered in a thoroughly un-Siddha-like fashion, but, to cover up the awkwardness of the reply, he at once began to play with his serpent, exciting it and thrusting his fingers into its mouth to the terror of the spectators. This served to divert the attention of the company from Vasudeva Sastry, and the stranger, noticing the advantage he had gained, began to tell the audience how the serpent he had was no natural serpent, but a great Rishi whom he himself changed to a serpent for having spoken ill of

him and how, though unable to speak, it could understand all that was said in its presence in Sanskrit which was the language the Rishi knew. To prove the truth of his assertion, he said to it in Sanskrit, "Go up to my shoulder." At once it went up to his shoulder, and when he said, "Come down," it descended. Then he said, "Bite me" which accordingly it did, but he did not to the great astonishment of all feel the slightest injury and seemed to be poison-proof. Then he said, "Leave me and play," which it at once did. By these wonderful performances, he regained the respect and awe of the multitude and his Siddha-ship was re-established on a secure footing.

The night had by this time far advanced, and the Siddha Purusha saying, "You may all go home now and come again to-morrow morning," retired into his apartment after duly receiving the farewell salutations of all except Vasudeva Sastry, who left rather abruptly, taking leave only of Narayana Iyer. All the company broke up, and Narayana Iyer himself went to sleep, but Sreenivasan, alone stayed after all had gone. Seeing him thus waiting, the Siddha Purusha beckoned to him and said, "Be hasty and yet not hasty. Run away and yet be sleeping. Leave all and follow me," words which he could hardly make out. But before he ventured to ask of their meaning his Guru had retired into the room and shut the door.

At about three o'clock in the morning Narayana Iyer was disturbed by a bad dream in which he saw his home pillaged, and woke up. He did not feel easy in mind, and wanted to see if everything was right in his house. He first went to see if his cash-chest was safe downstairs, but what was his surprise when he found the door of his gate left ajar! He at once flew to see if the chest was safe in its place, but that was not to be found. At once something induced him to go and look for the supposed Siddha in his room, which he did, but he was thunder-struck to find it empty.

Reviews.

The Siddhanta-Deepika or Light of Truth:—(A monthly journal in English devoted to religion, philosophy, science etc. Annual subscription, advance rate Rs. 4, arrear rate Rs. 6. Editorial Office, Thondamandalum School, Mint Street, Madras). The journal was started on the Queen's Diamond Jubilee day, 21st June 1897, and its aim is stated to be 'no less than to transplant in Indian soil some of those activities in the field of Indian religion and literature and history which are carried on in far-off countries by western savants.' It will 'devote itself to bring out translations of rare works in Sanskrit and Tamil both literary and philosophical and religious' and to render into Tamil all that is best and noblest in the literature and philosophy of the west and supply its deficiency in the field of history and science, in short, to revive the interest which is fast dying in the Tamil language and literature. The translation is commenced of four of the best books in Tamil, and the leading article on 'Flower and fragrance' is very interesting. Some of the choicest Tamil verses on the subject are quoted and their meaning is given in English. The journal has been a desideratum for long and we heartily wish it every success. No lover of Tamil literature should be without it and we are very glad that it is in contemplation to bring out a Tamil Edition of the Magazine. The Tamil language has a peculiar charm of its own and works like those of Thayumanavar, Manikkavachagar, the Alvars, the three Nayanars and Thirumular are unsurpassed for their literary finish and loftiness of sentiment. We heartily welcome any movement which aims at familiarising these works to the non-Tamilian world.

The story of Colbert:—We owe its author and publisher, Mr. C. V. Swaminatha Iyer an apology for not having reviewed this interesting book earlier. It forms No. 4 of that excellent

series in Tamil, known as the Vivekachintamani series and originally appeared in a serial form in the Tamil journal of that name.

The life is presented in a story form and reads like a little novel. The style is simple and chaste and we are sure, the work will be much appreciated by those for whom it is intended. (Cloth 5 annas. Metely stitched 2as. 6p.)

An exposition of the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita :— This work has not yet been printed. Judging from the specimen, we are sure the work deserves publication. The author seems thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Advaitism and his philosophical explanations of Kurukshetra, Pandu, Duryodana &c., are original and interesting.

The Behar Commercial Circular :— A monthly trade advertiser in English. Annual subscription Re. 1. Besides being an excellent medium for advertisement for all kinds of trades and journals it gives much of useful information on all current topics. It has a very wide circulation throughout India and is perhaps the best organ of trade in English in our country.

We beg to acknowledge with thanks 'A scientific basis of belief in a future life' and half a dozen other interesting pamphlets from their author Mr. J. P. Hopps, Oak-tree House, South Norwood Hill, London, besides a journal 'The coming day' edited by the same. Mr. Hopps is a well known English spiritualist writer. It has been rightly said of him that his thoughts are spiritual nuggets and gems. The pamphlets are all very suggestive and will repay perusal.

News and Notes.

The Sanscrit Pastakonnati Sabha :— An association of the above name has been formed at Etawah, N.W.P., India at the instance of Sri Swami Brahma-Nath Siddhasram with the object of making a comprehensive catalogue of all available Sanscrit manuscripts and collecting rare ones newly. The association, has for its object 'the research, selection, collection, preservation, diffusion and revival of Sanscrit literature' to such an extent as may lie in its power, and its work is (a) to secure the patronage of persons of high and respectable position both in and out of India who may be willing to take interest in the revival of Sanscrit literature, (b) to create sympathy among the public for that literature, (c) to secure the co-operation of all important associations and libraries throughout the world, and (d) to make a comprehensive catalogue of Sanscrit manuscripts. Mrs. Besant has taken the external charge of the scheme and those who desire to become patrons, members, or sympathisers of the society have to communicate with the Secretary, Etawah N. W. P. The association has been started with a very laudable object and is apparently well constituted and we on its behalf invite the hearty co-operation of the literary societies and Pandits in the south in so important a movement. Any assistance in the way of collecting rare manuscripts or furnishing details as to their authorship, contents, &c., will be thankfully acknowledged by the Secretary.

The Young Men's Hindu Association Madras :— Since the commencement of this session, two lectures have been given on behalf of this association. The first was by Swami Ramakrishnananda a co-disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who, as we have already announced, came to Madras with the object of carrying out the Swami's plans. The subject of his lecture was Bhakti Yoga. The second lecture was by Mr. J. J. Goodwin, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda on the subject of Karma.

In an article entitled 'Schopenhauer and Shankara' in the Madras Mail, Mr. Charles Johnston writes :—

Kant, as we saw, did not set out to investigate the nature of matter; he rather proposed to himself the problem, as to what things were in themselves, and what we added to them by looking at them. And he came to the curious conclusion that we can never know things as they really are in themselves,

because of the action of our own intellects. So that, instead of being an instrument for the discovery of truth,—since reality must be the synonym of truth,—it appears that the intellect is the very opposite; that it is an instrument for the creation of falsehood, the root of illusion, the fruitful source of all misapprehensions, and the necessary cause of their continuance in perpetuity. Things as they really are are forever hidden from us by the action of our own intellects, which build up mask after mask, veil after veil, between us and the objects, if such there be, which we are trying to behold in the white light of truth. Kant took great pains to give names to three of these veils, and found that they are what we know as Time, Space, and as the idea of cause and effect, or Causal Law. So that, to know anything as it is,—the thing-in-itself, as Kant called it,—we must take it out of time, out of space, and away from the idea of causation; and what is left, if anything is left, is the thing in itself. Kant supposed that the thing left after this triple unveiling, would be what we call Force; though what Force is, is one of those things nobody knows. The wise are wise because they know that they do not know it; and so we come back again to the heathen Socrates. Now it is quite clear that we cannot conceive of Force, which is outside space, above time, and not subject to causation; and it is further quite clear that we should not be in the slightest degree benefited, even if we could conceive it. Here, we may note, one comes clearly to see why such problems as the raging of the heathen, the descent of man, the number of the physical elements, and other questions that vex the Anglo-Saxon mind, lose their hold on the philosophic spirit; for, if we are so far from knowing what man is now, are we likely to be wiser as to what man was, when he was not yet man?

Then comes the vital contribution of Schopenhauer to our mental riches. We cannot conceive force, or the thing-in-itself, he says; but that does not greatly matter; for we are that Force, that thing-in-itself; and so, even if we are intellectually lazy and indifferent, there is no fear of the thing-in-itself escaping us, since we cannot run away from ourselves. The Will in us is the thing-in-itself, the reality, the Force behind phenomena and it is the passage of the Will through the triple prison of the intellect, with its three sides—Time, Space, Causality—that give rise to the many-coloured world.

Now here comes in the moral of the tale. It is axiomatic—at least with the modern Europeans,—that modern Europeans are the most important and admirable persons in the world; that their achievements are to the achievements of other folk as wine is to water, as sunlight to moonlight. It is instructive, therefore, for us to learn that the last and highest achievement of the best intellect of modern Europe, and the only achievement which is the outcome of pure reason and serious thought, brings us exactly to where we were in the old Indian days, when silver-tongued Shankara taught the final lessons of the Vedanta Philosophy. Every conclusion, even the very phrases of our best modern thought, have their counterparts in that great teacher's work, and we are constrained to say, the Indian expression of the ultimate truth has a far finer quality of style than the modern, for Shankara says the last reality is, not the reverted Will-toward-life or some hypothetical Force, but our own inmost and eternal selves; and we can easily see how much higher an expression, from the point of view of power and beauty, Shankara's is than Kant's or Schopenhauer's.

Treating of these thoughts, we can come to see how it was that Sir William Jones, Sir Charles Wilkins and Thomas Colebrooke so unaccountably missed the most vital matter that India had to offer them,—a treasure the work of which it will take us generations yet to realise. These Anglo-Saxon minds, with all their fine and admirable qualities, had not even heard whether there be any thing-in-itself; and would have felt that any tampering with Time, any scepticism as to Space, was a sheer piece of heathenish impiety, almost as bad as speaking evil of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, or the Balance of Trade; in other words, the Anglo-Saxon mind is only accessible in a faint degree to questions of pure intelligence.