

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. III. 14.

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOL. XXXIII.

MAY 1928.

No. 5.

RAJA YOGA

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THIRD LESSON

REALIZE the soul not as matter, but as it is. We are thinking of the soul as body, but we must separate it from the senses and thought. Then alone can we KNOW we are immortal. Change implies the duality of cause and effect and all that change must be mortal. This proves that the body cannot be immortal, nor can the mind, because both are constantly changing. Only the unchangeable can be immortal, because there is nothing to act upon it.

We do not become it, we *are* it, but we have to clear away the veil of ignorance that hides the truth from us. Body is objectified thought. The "sun" and "moon" currents bring energy to all parts of the body. The surplus energy is stored at certain points along the spinal column (plexuses), commonly known as nervous centres.

These currents are not to be found in dead bodies and can only be traced in a healthy organism.

The Yogi has this advantage that he can not only feel them, but to actually see them. They are luminous in life and so are the great nerve centres.

There is conscious and unconscious action. The Yogis possess a third kind, the superconscious, which in all countries and in all ages has been the source of all religious knowledge. The superconscious state makes no mistake, but it is not realisable on the normal plane. It has been called inspiration, but the Yogi says that this faculty is in every human being, and eventually all will enjoy it.

We must give a new direction to the sun and moon currents and open for them a new passage through the spinal chord. When we succeed in bringing the currents through the *Sushumna* up to the pineal-gland, we are for the time being entirely separated from the body.

The nervous center at the base of the spine near the "sacrum" is most important. It is the seat of the generative substance, of the sexual energies, and is symbolized by the Yogi as a triangle containing a tiny serpent coiled up in it. This sleeping serpent is called *Kundalini*, and to raise this Kundalini is the whole object of Raja Yoga.

The great sexual forces, raised above animal action and sent upward to the great dynamo of the human system, the brain, and there stored up, become *ojas*, or spiritual force. All good thought, all prayer resolves a part of that animal energy into *ojas* and helps to give us spiritual power. This *ojas* is the real man and in human beings alone is it possible for this storage of *ojas* to be accomplished. One in whom the whole animal sex force has been transformed into *ojas* is a God. He speaks with power and his words regenerate the world.

The Yogi pictures this serpent as slowly rising from stage to stage until the highest, the pineal-gland, is reached. No man or woman can be really spiritual until the sexual energy, the highest power possessed by man, has been converted into *ojas*.

No force can be created; it can only be directed. Therefore, we must learn to control the grand powers that we already have and through will-power make them spiritual instead of merely animal. Thus chastity is the corner stone of all morality and of all religion. In Raja Yoga especially, ABSOLUTE CHASTITY in thought, word and deed is a *sine qua non*. The same laws apply to the married and the celibate. If one wastes the most potent forces of one's being, one cannot become spiritual.

All history teaches us that the great seers of all ages were either monks and ascetics or those who had given up married life ; only the pure in life can see God.

Just before practising pranayama endeavour to visualize the triangle. Close your eyes and picture it vividly in your imagination. See it surrounded by flames with the serpent coiled in the middle. When you clearly see the Kundalini, place it in imagination at the base of the spine, and while restraining the breath in Kumbhaka, throw the breath forcibly down on the head of the serpent to awaken it. The more powerful the imagination, the more quickly will the real result be attained and the Kundalini awake. Until the Kundalini awakes, imagine that it does ; try to feel the currents and try to force them through the Sushumna. This will hasten their action.

THE SITUATION IN BENGAL

BY THE EDITOR

To one visiting after an absence of years, Bengal evinces signs of some remarkable changes in its outlook. These changes in their basic form may not be so apparent to the habitual residents of Bengal. But the visitor has the advantage of a sense of vivid contrast between his last memory and the present actuality. Bengal is seeking to come out of its accustomed grooves, nay, has already partly come out, and is reaching towards new spaces of freedom and realisation. The outline of a new national being is emerging clearer and clearer with here a line, there a dot, all apparently unconnected. The casual observer often finds them crude and ugly and meaningless. To the dreamer of creative dreams, however, they seem full of purpose and significance.

Bengal is just now faced with at least three facts which it is finding hard to cordially accommodate: (1) the so-called youth movement culminating at the present time in the revolt of students, (2) the sex-obsession of a section of Bengali writers, and (3) the freedom of women. (We leave the political and economic struggles out of our review, because, they do not seem to evince any interesting features.) These three facts face many of our countrymen like ugly spectres. Others are unnaturally enthusiastic over them. Are these to continue and grow? If so, in what form? What about our accustomed thoughts and ideals? What relation have they with these? Whatever may be the right answer to these questions, it surely cannot be a gesture of denial and condemnation of the new features. That way lies stultification and conflict. We must

be patient with these new growths and have an understanding sympathy for them and carefully guide them towards greater fruition by our loving encouragement.

We may state our attitude at the very outset. For two reasons, we are not at all pessimistic about them. Not that we endorse all their details. But we surely do not entirely condemn them. First of all, it is our firmest conviction that Bengal, and of course, India, is sure to rise to the very summit of spiritual, mental and material prosperity, such as has not been witnessed before, and that this upward climb has already begun. This is a postulate of our thought and activity. It may be hard to prove it, but we are content to accept it as proved. We can therefore look at every new development with composed feelings. Secondly, with such an outlook, it becomes easier for us to discover signs of hope even in the darkest hours of despair. We know, mountain-climbing is not a continuous ascent: there are hills and valleys. Through rise and fall, we proceed and progress all the time. Life's progress, individual or collective, is like mountain-climbing. Over hills and dales we go. And all the time we create and realise broader and nobler visions. What if there are ugly excesses now and then? Do we not know that the power behind is a beneficent one and is sure to eliminate all evil features gradually from its actions and expression? So we can be patient and sympathetic.

But our very sympathy entitles us to be critical. If we knew we were destructive, we would leave things to Nature and God. But criticism, when it is meant to help, does not hurt. Besides all growth is impersonal; persons are but instrument. Just as the spring season has made all our hills burst into a riot of verdure, even so the new energy evoked from the Heart of Things is making men manifest themselves in variegated forms. Our study should therefore be of active forces, not of persons. It is ideas and ideals that count, not the persons who represent them.

Now, when we study an epoch of history and take a bird's eye view of its rise and fall, we notice certain fundamental ideas and ideals working themselves out through the centuries of the epoch. They appear to thread all the vicissitudes of the age and lend meaning and fruitfulness to the passing events. These ideas and ideals are sometimes found to be represented and preached, at least in their fundamental forms, by certain individuals, at the beginning of the historical epoch. Or they may be only the unrealised dreams of the whole race or nation. As the realisation progresses, we find individuals or organisa-

tions rising up claiming to be the mouthpiece of the Time spirit, wielding immense influence for a time, but finally yielding place to new claimants. Under these transient leaders, the work of new creation goes on. None of them are wholly right. Oftentimes, their emphasis is wrongly placed and their vision is from a wrong angle. But through all these twists and acute angles, we slowly reach the summit of achievement as along a zig-zag mountain pathway.

The three outstanding features of the current life in Bengal, which we have noted before, have to be understood, in our opinion, in the light of the above observations. They should not be considered to be final. They will undergo many changes, even perhaps beyond recognition. The present sponsors of the movements may claim finality. They may think they have found *the* thing and represent the ideal. But such egotism is a part of the plan of the Great Creatrix. This egotism makes us try our utmost to make the best contribution to the new creation. Without this, most of us will be despirited, unconvinced and unconvincing. Those of us who are hopeful may patiently wait for the next act to unfold manifesting fuller and greater understanding.

This fact does not, however, necessarily lead us to that specious philosophy of unlimited and planless progress, which is so much in vogue among a section of our people who ought to understand better, and which is now almost discredited in the West. There is no such thing as unlimited progress, nor can it be planless. There are periods of progress and then there is a dark age such as Count Keyserling is talking of as being again imminent in the West. Progress is bound by the limits of each age of prosperity; and each such age is actuated and dominated by certain prominent ideals.

It so happens that almost each such historical epoch in India had not only its representative ideals but also its representative men. This is perhaps a remarkable and unique feature of Indian history. He, the representative man, stands at the head of the evolving epoch and the succeeding centuries with all their various struggles and achievements seem to be the unfolding and amplification of the purpose of his life. Details may vary, but the fundamentals are the same. Expression may be different, but the essence is the same.

Do we have any such representative man at the start of this new epoch of our history? We say emphatically, Yes. And that is Sri Ramakrishna. Perhaps all will not agree with us. We shall only remind them of what Swami Vivekananda

said on this point in his reply to the address of welcome that the citizens of Calcutta gave him on his first return from the West. But it does not matter whether the name of Sri Ramakrishna is forgotten. Sri Ramakrishna is great because of the great ideal that was a reality in him. It is this great ideal that matters. It is to this ideal that we would draw the attention of our countrymen at this juncture of our history. Yet, why do we mention his name? Because this name indicates the point at which the ideal, now scarcely realised and very vaguely imagined by many of our people, has been made to condense and take luminous form accessible even to the common understanding.

The ideal that is Sri Ramakrishna is nothing else than the eternal ideal of India made suitable to the needs and tendencies of the present age. This ideal is the harmony and union of the static and dynamic aspects of God, of the Transcendental and the Immanent, of Brahman and Shakti. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda did not emphasise merely the transcendental aspect of spiritual life, but also its dynamic, immanent aspect. The Reality is not merely beyond the world of relative life, but also within it. All life, in whatever form, is Divine. No honest activity of man is to be spurned. No manifestation of Shakti is insignificant. All is suffused with the loving radiance of God. This outlook at once releases us into illimitable freedom and makes all activity a pilgrimage to the Holy of Holies. Under the impetus of this ideal, the nation will burst into tremendous activity and fearlessly court unwonted experience, but will also soar gradually into the radiant empyrean of Divine Realisation.

The validity of the present state of things may be thus judged by a reference to the ideal we want to reach. We must not be too strict in our judgment. For we do not yet know,—no man can be audacious enough to prescribe to the Creative Energy,—what forms the evolving spirit will take. Many unthought-of expressions there will be, especially when we are convinced that the new ideal ensures utmost freedom to people to work out their destiny. But certain basic facts must in all cases be acknowledged. In our opinion, these are: Consciousness of one's spiritual nature, faith in and practice of chastity as a necessary means to the realisation of one's spirituality, and confidence in oneself as being endowed with infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite joy. Those thoughts and actions which *fundamentally* militates against these basic facts can never be encouraged, and must in all cases

be shunned. Here again, we must be very cautious in our judgment. We must not forget that truths often work themselves out through their very contradiction. What sometimes may appear to militate against one fact may be a means to the realisation of another. Thus, to refer to the present conditions of Bengal, we are inclined to think that the excesses in certain spheres are really a crude expression of the sense of freedom gradually being acquired and tasted by the people. From the standpoint of the realisation of a higher freedom and greater responsibility, it is better there are such excesses *through freedom* than an artificial puritanism *through fear and compulsion*. Then again, we must remember that the higher ideals are realised through the negation of the lower ideals. That means that the lower ideals—the negation sometimes of the higher ideals—have to be realised first. There cannot be any *tyāga* (renunciation) without *bhoga* (enjoyment). So we must not condemn those who are busy realising the lower ideals.

From all these considerations it does not follow that we are to sit in idleness looking on the passing events in apathy. Nothing of the kind. For though we have the firmest faith in the approaching glory of our nation, we do not forget the fact the Nature does not grant anything except through the untiring activity of men. We have to be active. Nothing can happen of itself. *The best thing that we can do for the good of the nation is to try to live up to the highest ideals, without condemning those who are after lower ideals, showing, on the other hand, every sincere sympathy for their honest efforts.* There need not be mutual conflict or condemnation. This striving after the highest ideal has a tremendous significance even for those who are not so striving. We have observed before how through sectional movements the ultimate ideal is gradually realised. Even such gradual realisation depends a great deal on the presence of a body of men within the community, who are the actual and concrete presentation of the ideal. Their presence acts as a stimulant and a beacon; it energises and warns of dangers; it hastens the progress of the nation; it eliminates waste of time and power through haphazard experiments. Nothing is so important and valuable to a growing nation than the efforts of men who are seeking the highest. That is to say, we have to assert the positive ideal in every sphere without condemning the lower ideals. Always after the positive, and never the negative. To Bengal at the present time there is no duty more urgent than the silent realisation by a larger and larger number of people of the ideal

which is absolute freedom, which knows nothing but as the spirit, which looks upon all men as Divine personifications and which therefore considers their efforts as the very unfolding of the Divine purpose. This worshipful attitude towards others, combined with the radiant consciousness of the inherent Divine in oneself and everything else, has to be cultivated more and more. And this way lies the solution of all our problems, and not through condemnation.

Thus we do not see any use in uttering long and furious diatribes against young Bengali ladies dancing before the public. We do not say we support this practice. On the other hand we confess to a certain doubt about the correctness of it. But we refuse to take it at its face value. We feel at least the partial justification of the urge that a section of Bengali women are feeling to find wider and more joyful scope for their faculties. We also cannot ignore the fact that social life, to be made more cheerful, requires a much greater amount of aesthetic culture than at present. Besides, we must not forget that whether the practice is right or wrong, it will prevail more and more with the passing of days. So it would be futile to be furious against it. What we should do is to find a form in which the tendencies underlying the practice may have a nobler expression. Art when it is cultivated in the true spirit touches the footstool of God. Why cannot art in family and social life be so perfected that it will lose its vicious aspects and make life more joyful and shed over it the light of the Divine smile? We want those artists who can achieve this supreme task. *And they shall be not only artists but also saints with hearts filled with conscious presence of the Divine.* They alone can give the sure turn and touch to the growing aesthetics of the nation. No crypto-sensualists will do.

Take next the case of sex-obsession in the present Bengali literature. The fight that is going now over it appears sometimes amusing to us. The two parties seem to be arguing over a distinction without a difference. The fight is unreal. In essence both parties are guilty of the same offence which in one has taken a subtle form and in the other gross. But the attitude of both parties towards sexual life is well-nigh the same. We do not claim expert knowledge of literary art. But we can surely express our views as readers. The main tendencies of the present Bengali fictional literature have been, in our opinion, more or less against the cherished ideals of the people. Obscenity in Indian literature is not a new thing. The one great difference between the past and the present is that whereas

the ancient writers, while being frank, did not *idealise* sexual instincts, our present writers are building up a philosophy of life over them. And of this philosophising even the greatest of our writers are guilty. This philosophising is at the root of all the trouble. Men have sense-cravings. And it is nothing to be wondered at if these find occasional expression in art and literature. In fact it is often a question of convention. French and Italian literatures are more frank in these things than the English. It will be silly to argue from this that the French or the Italian mind is less refined or noble than the English. The north Indian literatures are similarly frank, not so the Dravidian languages. Yet who can deny that the joys of the senses and a discussion of them are gross and loathsome? So there must be a limit, we must not philosophise over and idealise the gross. Here again the need of a positive realisation of the higher ideals becomes urgent. We want a literature which will stimulate our higher faculties and record the realities of the superior world of art. Mutual bickerings will only lengthen the conflict. The growth of a superior literature will put a gradual end to the obnoxious undergrowths, or rather relegate them to their proper, dark, sphere where they will grow and flourish so long as men will have lower instincts.

Then again the question of the students' revolt. The immediate cause of the revolt of the students of some Bengal colleges need not be discussed here. We will content ourselves with indicating that the days are rapidly passing away when simply because there are certain rules, students should be made to obey them. The rules cannot be absolute. If the rules are found contrary to the growing ideal and are against the general well-being of the people, they *must* be changed. The question as to who will find out the nature of that ideal or that well-being is futile. Time will find out. We do not deny that students sometimes have gone to extremes. But for this, others than the students have also been responsible. We have not yet realised the wisdom of the constant emphasis on youth. Day after day, the youngmen of Bengal have been told that they are the only hope of the nation, that all greatness and all achievements of the nation depend on them. In short they have been made to feel that others than the young are of no worth and that it is they who will have to take up all responsibilities of the national work. Politicians also have found it necessary and advantageous to flatter the strength of the young. The ludicrous part of the procedure has been that often grey-

haired gentlemen have come forward as leaders of the youth movement, claiming that though their exterior may show signs of age, their heart is as green and young as any callow youth's. No doubt the underlying motive is all right. But the emphasis on youth has been too heavily laid. We consider it injurious to make any such distinction between youth and non-youth. Both are equally useful in the life of the nation. All that is required of the energy and enthusiasm of youth can be had without making this mischievous distinction. The consequence of this overstressed distinction is found in the regrettable happenings of the present day. But here again, we must remind ourselves that we must not judge the students' movement by its superficial aspects. The motive lies deeper. It is the tragedy of a transitional period that succeeding generations find little sympathy from their predecessors. The new ideal takes clearer and clearer form with the passing of generations. The preceding generations are always found poorer than their successors. This gives the youth an advantage. The older persons cannot provide the necessary inspiration to them. Therefore the actions of the young generation often appear as a revolt against the old. In this too, our only salvation lies in aspiring after and living the highest ideals. For by so doing, we will become objects of reverence even to the young who will find in us their dreams actualised, even though we were advanced in years. This is the only way to check the revolt of youth,—the practice of the highest ideals by a larger and larger number of people. We have already indicated the nature of that ideal.

In our opinion the danger to society or national life does not lie so much in the practice of the lower ideals as in the absence of higher ideals. When the lower ideals usurp the place of the higher, then there is real danger. There is no harm if women dance or youths become irreverent, or if some sensualists parade their low tastes in literature. But when people begin to think that they have reached the highest simply because they can dance and sing and write poems or sentimental stories, then the nation must beware. These may be good things ; but we must never forget that they are far short of true manhood. The way to the realisation of true manhood lies through manly struggle, through acquisition of mental and moral power, through achievements in all fields of life, and not through dance and song. No mere artists can ever lead a nation and stand in the van of the advancing people ; their place is behind the spiritual men and the men of noble action and

achievement. Is Bengal straying from the path of renunciation and the struggle for manhood? Let us then beware. But even then, the right procedure is not the condemnation of dance and song, but the making of manliness the leading virtue of the national life. That is to say, let manliness be cultivated more and more ; the so-called art will then automatically recede to its correct position and will be kept from developing ugly features.

As we study the conditions of our country and its many problems, we feel more and more strongly that the only sure and effective way of guiding the nation to its goal, minimising waste of energy and safeguarding the nation from a bankruptcy of ideals, is to assert the highest ideals of the nation in life and practice by a large number of people. They will create the atmosphere in which the ideal can flourish. In art, literature, society or religion, this *atmosphere* is a very potent thing. It is this that checks excesses and shames the unseemly to proper restraint. Devoid of that, a nation loses the saving sense of reverence. *Most of our sufferings are due to the lack of such ideal people.* Problems also rise out of this bankruptcy. Partly due to this bankruptcy and partly due to their own aggressiveness, the lesser ideals of the West have assumed tempting forms before our young people ; and they often rush after them in the levity of their newly realised freedom, bragging all the while of nationalism. From this aggressive "Occidentalism" also, the atmosphere created by a strong body of ideal people alone can save the rising generation.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

FROM THE DIARY OF A LADY DISCIPLE

(Continued from the March issue)

My work at school did not allow me leisure enough to visit Mother as often as I liked. When I went to her after some days on the *Radhastami* day which was a holiday for the school, I found her preparing to go for bath to the Ganges. I wanted to accompany her. But it was drizzling and I was not permitted.

Returning from the Ganges, Mother sat down on her cot and said to me: "Very well, I have also bathed in the Ganges," as if she had divined my unspoken desire to worship her sacred feet. I hastened to her with flowers, sandal paste

and other accessories of worship. Mother asked me not to offer *tulasi* leaves. . . .

After my worship was over, Mother sat down to partake of some refreshments. She made me sit down near her and gave me half of everything from her plate. As I partook of the *prasāda* from the *sāl* leaves, I was reminded of Nāg Mahāsaya* and told so to Mother. At that Mother said: "Oh how profound was his devotion! Can you ever conceive of any one eating these dry *sal* leaves? But he did, simply because *prasada* had been placed on them! How expressive of divine love were his eyes! They were ruddy and ever tearful, and the body was emaciated by rigorous *tapasyā*. When he would come to see me, he could scarcely climb the stairs, he would tremble so much under the stress of devotional emotions, and he could not control the movement of his legs. I have not yet seen the like of his devotion."

"I have read in the books," I said, "that when he gave up his medical profession and gave himself wholly to divine meditation, his father, being poor, was much annoyed, and remarked that Nag Mahasaya would henceforth have to go about nude and live on frogs. It so happened that a dead frog was then lying on the courtyard. Nag Mahasaya at once threw off his clothes and swallowed the frog. He then said to his father: 'I have done both your commands. Now please give up all thought of my maintenance and devote yourself to the thought of God.'"

Mother.—Ah, what devotion to his father! What same-sightedness to the pure and the impure!†

Myself.—Nag Mahasaya had once gone home from Calcutta on the occasion of a holy bathing festival in the Ganges, and was much rebuked for that by his father. As the auspicious hour arrived, a jet of water was seen to spring from a corner of his courtyard. Nag Mahasaya saluted the water as the Ganges and bathed in it, and many others of the village also came and bathed in the water.

Mother.—Yes, such miracles are quite possible to a devotion like his. I once presented him a cloth., He always kept it wrapped round his head. His wife is also very good and

* Durga Charan Nag, a prominent householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He came from a village near Dacca, E. Bengal.

† This same-sightedness, when sincere, is considered a sure sign of high spiritual illumination.

devout. She came to see me the other summer. She is still living. . . .

In the noon, several lady devotees came and among them an old lady (who had seen Sri Ramakrishna) and her daughter-in-law. The old lady said: "If we had followed the teachings of the Master, we would not have suffered so much. We are ever after our worldly affairs and always thinking if we have done all our household works or not." To which Mother replied: "One must always work. It is by incessant work that the bonds of Karma are severed. Then comes non-attachment. One must not be without work even for an hour."

After mid-day meal, Mother lay down on her bed. All went away. Only myself and a widow, a contemporary of the Master, remained. I asked the widow: "Did you ever see the Master?" "Certainly I did," she told me. "He used to come to our house. Mother then used to live like a bride." "Please tell me about him," I said. "Not I," she replied, "ask Mother to tell you." But Mother was then lying with her eyes closed, and I did not dare to disturb her. But presently she said of herself: "Whoever will pray to him eagerly and sincerely, will have his vision. Only the other day, one of the boys* passed away. How good he was! Master used to visit their house. One day while returning in a tram car, he lost Rs. 200 from his pocket. This money had been deposited with him by a friend. He discovered the loss on returning home. He went to the bank of the Ganges and began to cry and pray to the Master. He was a poor man and had not wherewith to repay the money. As he sat crying and praying, he suddenly saw the Master standing before him and saying: 'Why are you crying? See over there under the brick near the Ganges.' He hurried to the place and actually found a bundle of notes under the brick. He came to Sarat (Swami Saradananda) and told him everything." . . .

(To be continued)

* Tej Chandra Mitra, an intimate householder disciple of the Master.

THE ARYANS AND THEIR GIFTS*

BY PROF. JADUNATH SARKAR, M.A., C.I.E.

Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University

We usually study the history of India as divided into water-tight compartments or periods. One great defect of this method of study is that we thereby lose sight of the life of the nation as a whole, we fail to realise that India has been the home of a living growing people, with a continuity running through all the ages,—each generation using, expanding or modifying what its long line of predecessors had left to it.

No careful student of our history can help being struck by one supreme characteristic of the Indian people. It is their vitality as a distinct type, with a distinct civilisation of their own and a mind as active after centuries of foreign rule as ever in the past. The Indian people to-day are no doubt a composite ethnical product; but whatever their different constituent elements may have been in origin, they have all acquired a common Indian stamp, and have all been contributing to a common culture and building up a common type of traditions, thought and literature. Even Sir Herbert Risley, who is so sceptical about the Indians' claim to be considered as one people, has been forced to admit that "Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion, which strikes the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain 'underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin.' There is in fact an Indian character, a general Indian personality, which we cannot resolve into its component elements." (People of India, 2nd Ed., p. 299).

This common Indian type has stood the test of time, it has outlived the shock of dynastic revolutions, foreign invasions, religious conflicts, and widespread natural disasters. Its best right to live is the vital power displayed by it through many thousand years of cataclysmic change in our land.

When we deeply ponder over the philosophy of Indian history, instead of confining our gaze to the usual text-book narratives of political change, when we survey the course of

* The first of a series of six lectures on "India through the Ages," delivered under the auspices of the Madras University.

India's growth through the ages as a whole, we are bound to realise a wonderful rhythm running through all these epochs. We feel that we are to-day what our past has made us, and we see how that past has made us what we are. Each race or creed that has chosen India for its home, each dynasty that has enjoyed settled rule among us for some time, each school of thought that has dominated the human mind even in a single province of India,—has left its gifts which have worked in all the provinces and through many centuries, till they have lost their identity by being transformed and assimilated into the common store of India's legacy from the forgotten past,—just as millions and millions of small coral insects through countless ages have given up their bodies in building up the reefs on which many of the Pacific islands now stand secure from the rage of the fiercest tempest.

It is the duty of the historian not to let the past be forgotten. He must trace these gifts back to their sources, give them their due places in the time scheme, and show how they influenced or prepared the succeeding ages, and what portion of present-day Indian life and thought is the distinctive contribution of each race or creed that has lived in this land.

Such an analysis, in the present state of our knowledge, cannot be expected to be mathematically accurate or documented in every detail. It requires the highest historical imagination to reconstruct our past in this light, and, where imagination is the motive force, individual differences of opinion must occur. We cannot altogether eliminate the personal factor in such cases. But the attempt has to be made, if we are ever to rise above the level of our school text-books of Indian history. And, in spite of the risks attending a first attempt in a new field and the limited time at my disposal, I propose, in the present series of lectures, to treat of India's inner life and outer growth from the standpoint of evolutionary development through the ages.

In India, as in every other country of the world, the geographical factor has profoundly influenced history. India is a continent, rather than one country, in respect of the diversity of the physical conditions of its different provinces. Leaving the Himalayan slopes and secluded valleys out of our account, we have Hindustan proper or North India, forming one boundless plain with assured water-supply, which permits cavalry hordes to sweep from one end of it to the other in the dry season that begins in October. Hence, North India has been the seat of vast empires, each of which has, in its day, ruled

over many provinces, maintained rich and learned Courts, and added to the common culture of all India. The Madras coast or the Eastern Karnatak has the same features, though in a narrower area. But the Deccan proper, or the tableland of the south, is cut up by nature into small isolated districts, where racial and linguistic differences have been preserved through ages with very little change. And, hence, the history of the Deccan proper has been the rise of numberless petty kingdoms, their eternal contest with their neighbours, and downfall one after another. Unlike Hindustan, this region of the South has failed to exert any influence on the other parts of India, but has succumbed to Hindustan or the Karnatak whenever its geographical isolation has been broken by the aggression of some great empire of those parts.

IMMIGRATIONS INTO INDIA

The main stream of immigration into India has come through the the north-western passes. It is true that at the other extreme or the north-eastern frontier, we have some routes leading into India from Upper Burma and from Aracan. But the heavy rainfall of this region, exceeding a hundred inches in the year concentrated into four months, soon washes away the roads and promotes a dense growth of trees and underwood which closes the routes altogether in a few years. Moreover, Central Asia, the cradle land of mankind for many ages, is near our N. W. passes, while China,—another home of a teeming and overflowing population,—is cut off from the N. E. corner of Assam by almost insuperable natural obstacles. The few foreign strains that are known to have entered India through the north-eastern passes were small in numerical strength. They were: (i) a Tibetan dynasty that established a short-lived kingship in North Bengal in the 10th century;* (ii) the Ahoms who crossed the Patkoi range into the valley of the Brahmaputra early in the 13th century and fell completely under Hindu influence three centuries later; and (iii) the Burmese who invaded Assam in 1816, to be expelled by the English at the end of nine years. The Mongolian settlement in Eastern Bengal is now an entirely lost chapter of Indian history, but it must have been spread over several centuries and seems to have adopted the land and sea routes alike.

Not only have the north-western passes poured forth teeming thousands into India ever since the dawn of history, but

* Baṅgarh (Dinajpur) pillar inscription, 966 A. D.,—“*Kambojan-vayena gaudapatina.*”

our western sea-board has been equally hospitable to immigrants. Phœnicians of the Biblical times, then Arabs, then Greeks and Alexandrian Romans, Persians, Abyssinians and other foreigners have traded† with the western ports of India and made settlements on this coast. We know that Greek mercenary soldiers were engaged by some Hindu Kings in historic times, as French adventurers were employed by Sindhia and the Nizam in the eighteenth century.

At the end of the middle ages, our undefended western sea-board was penetrated by the Portuguese, and later by the Dutch, the English, and the French; but the foreign settlements on our west coast were of an even earlier origin, as the Portuguese on their arrival (1498) found the Arabs already settled at the ports of Malabar.

We know that the first body of Parsis migrated to the Bombay coast about 735 A.D. The Chitpavan and Nagar Brahmans are two other immigrant foreign clans, if their traditions and inscriptions can be relied upon to lift the veil from their racial origins. An analysis of the population of Gujrat shows many foreign races settled there but now completely Indianized. The Navaiyat Arabs and the Ben-i-Israel of Konkan are two other examples of this class, besides the Abyssinians of Janjira and the Nestorian Christians of Malabar.

COLONISATION BY INDIANS

But, on our East Coast, the ancient Indians were more enterprising and more skilled in navigation; they were colonisers, traders, givers of civilisation to foreign lands and not borrowers. In historic times the Chola fleet dominated the Bay of Bengal and Rajendra Chola I (*circa* 1026 A.D.) captured the capital of Pegu (Lower Burma) and annexed the Andaman and Nicobar islands. Indian emigrants—mostly from the Pallava country, with several also from the Gangetic valley in the north,—colonised Sumatra, Java, Bali, Borneo, Cambodia and Siam and gave a new religion, civilisation and art to the natives, though they did not establish political dominion there. The Indian mariners of the East Coast,—whether from Tamluk in Bengal or

† This trade pursued the route round Cape Comorin and up the East Coast to the mouths of the Kaveri and the Krishna. Huge hoards of gold coins of the early Roman Empire have been dug out at the old mouths of the rivers in this part of the Madras Presidency. (See *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, a Greek work written about 78 A.D.) The Arab settlement on our Malabar coast is described in the Arabic work, Zain-ud-din's *Tuhfat-ul-Muja-hiddin*, which has been translated into English (18 (?)) by Rowlandson and into Portuguese by Prof. David Lopes (*A Historia dos Portugueses no Malabar por Zinddim.*)

Masulipatam in Madras,—disputed the monopoly of the trade in the Bay of Bengal and the eastern seas with the Chinese sailors, as readers of *Travels* know.

INTERNAL UNIFYING INFLUENCES

Within the limits of India itself, province was isolated from province by differences of Government, language, climate and manners, by high hills, dense forests and deep rivers, and by the absence of roads and of easy means of conveyance. But from early Hindu times, this internal isolation was often broken and an All-Indian community of ideas, customs and culture was created by certain agencies. These were: (i) the pilgrim student, (ii) the soldier of fortune, (iii) the imperial conqueror, and (iv) the son-in-law imported from the centres of blue blood (such as Kanauj or Prayag for Brahmans and Mewar and Marwar in the case of Rajputs) for the purpose of hypergamy or raising the social status of a rich man settled among lower castes in a far-off province.

The great holy cities of the different provinces were regarded as sources of sanctity by all Indians alike. They were, besides, seats of the highest Sanskrit learning, or Universities of the type of the mediaeval University of Paris. Such were Benares and Nalanda, Mathura and Taxila, Ujjain and Prayag, Kanchi and Madura, and to a lesser extent Navadwip in Bengal. The sacred streams and temples of the north were looked up to with veneration and a life-long yearning to visit them, by the men of the south, and in the same way, Puri and Kanchi, Setubandh and Sringeri, Dwarka and Nasik were eagerly visited by devoted pilgrims from the north of India, in spite of the immense distances to be crossed. Furthermore, for the benefit of those who could not travel, some local rivers and cities of the south were named after those of the north and regarded as equally sanctifying. Thus, Madura is the southern Mathura, and the Godavari is the southern Ganges. Great Sanskrit scholars and saints, like Sankaracharya and Chaitanya, have passed from one end of Hindu India to another, conquering their rivals in disputation, as Samudragupta and other kings bent on *dig-vijay* did in arms. This presupposed cultural uniformity.

The Hindu pilgrims and wandering Brahmin students and saints formed a connecting link between the different provinces of India and they tended to leaven the mass of their stay-at-home countrymen with some amount of community of life and thought—though that amount was not comparable to the wholesale standardisation that is going on throughout India in these days

of the railway, the newspaper, the telegraph, all-India conferences for every imaginable and unimaginable purpose, and a common administrative system and cultural language.

Similarly, military adventures, especially of the Rajput stock, penetrated into the more backward and obscure provinces in search of a career which was denied to younger brothers in their overcrowded homeland. For example, Shivaji's ancestors are said to have migrated from Chitor; Yachappa Nair (the chieftain of Satgarh, 26 miles west of Vellore, who was killed in 1694), claimed descent from the Rathors of Kanauj; the State of Vizianagram was founded in the 16th century by a Rajput general of the Muslim Sultan of Golkonda.

The result of all these forces was that, in spite of political disunion, differences of language, tradition and custom, a uniform Sanskrit stamp was printed upon the literature and thought of all the provinces of this vast country. There was unity of religion, philosophy, literary ideas and convention, and outlook upon life, through Hindu India. If we take a broad and sweeping view, without being too particular, we may even go so far as to say that there has been achieved something of an approximation also in physical type and mode of life among the various races that have lived long enough in India, and fed on the same crops, drank of the same streams, basked under the same sun. Even the immigrant Indian Muslims have, in the course of centuries, received the imprint of this country and come to differ in many essential points from their brethren living in other parts of Asia.

FOUR GREAT LANDMARKS

When we make a broad survey of India's evolution through the last four thousand years, we cannot miss the four great landmarks that stand out prominent and clear in this expanse of time. Four distinct races or creeds have, each in its own age, determined this country's destiny. The Vedic Aryans, the Buddhists, the Mussalmans, and the British have each introduced a new element into India, each of them have conferred gifts which have worked through the succeeding ages and modified our life and thought, no less than our political history.

We start with the Aryans, not only because they were the first in point of time among the races whose records have been preserved, but chiefly because they have succeeded in impressing upon the other races of India the stamp of their religion, philosophy, vocabulary, literary form and tradition, administrative system,—in short, their ideas and culture. Tribes that cannot

truly claim to have a drop of Aryan blood in their veins have accepted the Aryan influence and tried desperately to give their ancestors an Aryan pedigree. Aryan culture, with the addition of some elements borrowed from the Dravidians, but transformed in its own way,—rules all India and gives to it an inner unity, in spite of the diversity created by our geography, ethnology and political history.

THE GIFTS OF THE ARYANS

What, then, are the elements with which the Aryans have enriched Indian life? The gifts of the Aryans are six, namely : (i) a lofty spirituality which has sublimated even the non-Aryan elements borrowed in the grand synthesis which is called Hinduism ; (ii) the spirit of systematising, or the methodical arrangement of every branch of thought ; (iii) ordered imagination in literary or artistic creation, as distinguished from extravagance, grotesqueness, or emotional abandon ; (iv) the grading of the people into mutually exclusive castes, based upon differences of function and of supposed ancestry ; (v) honour to woman, while rejecting feminist institutions like matriarchy and polyandry, which prevailed in the north and south of the Aryan wedge driven into “the middle kingdom” ; (vi) the institution of hermitages, which were distinct alike from the city universities and celibate monasteries of Christian Europe.

ARYAN PENETRATION INTO N. W. INDIA

Let us try to visualise what followed the Aryan penetration into north-western India. It did not lead to an utter extermination of the original inhabitants of the country (as in Australia), nor to their wholesale confinement in isolated reservations (as in North America). It is now admitted by historians that the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England was not followed by a wholesale massacre or enslavement of the native Britons, but large numbers of the latter remained on their lands, though in a politically subordinate condition, and a quick and complete fusion of the two races took place, the composite product being dominated by the language and institutions of the conquering minority. This has also been the case with the European colonisation of Latin America. Similarly, the Vedic Aryans who conquered the Punjab formed an even smaller ratio to the non-Aryans already in possession of the soil than the Angles and Saxons did to the Britons. Most of the Aryan newcomers had to take non-Aryan wives, if they were to have any wives at all.

A grand compromise with the non-Aryan religions and customs was forced on the conquerors by the circumstances. Some non-Aryan gods and religious rites were accepted by them, but made purer and more philosophical. The old Vedic religion which was entirely ritualistic and the special possession of a particular race, now gave place to that all-embracing but undefinable system of toleration or synthesis which we call Hinduism, and which shelters within its catholic bosom every form of belief and practice that will agree to its few general conventions. The absorption of alien races and creeds into Hindu society has gone on in historic times and has failed only in the case of rigidly exclusive creeds like Islam and Christianity, as will be explained later in the course of these lectures.

The cult of the snake, once universal throughout India and now surviving among the aborigines and in the Dravidian south and the adoration of rude stones as manifestations of the deity,—either as the Shiva Linga or as the Shalagrama,—are clearly aboriginal faiths which the Aryans adopted with necessary modifications and made parts of the new common creed of the two races. The southern non-Aryan God Shiva,—the patron of the Ceylonese King Ravan—was declared to be another name of the Vedic Rudra, though the functions and attributes of the latter were quite different from Shiva's. But the coarser elements of the original Shiva worship were purged away from the composite faith. The Nagas took a subordinate place in the Hindu pantheon, as attendants on the gods or goodkings. The round pebble picked up from the bed of the Gandak river and adored by local tribes, now became an emblem of Vishnu the Preserver. The old popular creeds were thus spiritualised and the rude aboriginal gods were, by the invention of new legends and allegorical interpretations, invested with the halo of a loftier philosophy.

In the domain of thought, the Aryans created a far-reaching revolution by introducing system or methodical arrangement into everything that they handled. The Sutra literature is the best example of orderly arrangement in the various branches of human knowledge then in the possession of the Aryans. They wrote systematic treatises on medicine, philosophy, polity, grammar, law, domestic ritual and geometry. Panini's grammar is the most scientific treatment of the subject ever known.

In art, the Indo-Aryans had not the fertility of invention and exuberant imagination of the Dravidians ; but what imagination they displayed was restrained and refined, though they did not approach the perfect order of form and chaste elegance

of beauty for which the Aryans of Greece still stand unrivalled among mankind. This point will become clear when we contrast the latest Vedic literature and the Sutras with the heterogeneous medley of fact and fiction created much later under local and preponderantly non-Aryan influence and designated as the Puranas in which we find imagination running riot.

THE HERMITAGES

But the most powerful and most beneficent factor of Aryan influence consisted in the hermitages of the Rishis, which grew up in what is popularly called the epic age, i.e., after the Aryans had advanced to the fertile Gangetic valley and established large and rich kingdoms, with crowded cities and magnificent courts, and peace and leisure for the population.

The hermits or *rishis* who lived in these forest homes (*tapovans*) were not lonely recluses or celibate anchorites cut off from the society of women and the family. They formed family groups, living with their wives and children, but not pursuing wealth or fame or material advancement like ordinary householders. All their attention was devoted to the practice of virtue and the cultivation of knowledge. Thus they lived in the world, but were not of it. They had frequent touch with the cities and the royal court by means of respectful invitations to the domestic ceremonies of the Kings and rich men, and the visits made by the latter to these hermitages in the spirit of pilgrimage. Their pupils included their own children and also boys from the busy world, who lived with the hermits, shared their toils, studied under them, and served them like their own sons. Then, when their education was completed, they would bow down to their guru, pay their thankoffering (*dakshina*), and come to the busy world to take their places among the men of action.

Thus, the ancient Hindu University, without being rigidly isolated, was kept at a safe distance from the noisy luxurious capitals and gave the purest form of physical, intellectual and moral culture possible in any age, if we leave out natural science and mechanics. Learning was developed by the rishis, who were maintained in learned leisure partly by their pupils' foraging in the ownerless woods and fields of that age and partly by the gifts of Kings and rich householders.

These hermitages were as effectual for the promotion of knowledge and the growth of serious literature as the cathedrals of mediaeval Europe, but without the unnatural monasticism of the latter.

Lecky remarks about the celibate clergy of the Catholic world: "The effect of the mortification of the domestic affections upon the general character was probably very pernicious. In protestant countries, where the marriage of the clergy is fully recognised, it has, indeed, been productive of the greatest and most unequivocal benefits. Nowhere does Christianity assume a more beneficial or a more winning form than in those gentle clerical households which stud our land, constituting, as Coleridge said, 'the one idyl of modern life,' the most perfect type of domestic peace, the centre of civilisation in the remotest village. . . . Among the Catholic priesthood, on the other hand, where the vow of celibacy is faithfully observed, a character of a different type is formed, which with very grave and deadly faults combines some of the noblest excellences to which humanity can attain." (History of European Morals, cabinet ed., ii. 137, 334-335). This evil was avoided in ancient India.

The Brahmins of old enjoyed popular veneration and social supremacy, but they used their influence and prestige solely for the promotion of learning and religion and not for enriching themselves or gratifying their passions. The nation as a whole benefited by this arrangement. But it was possible only in a purely Hindu State, without a dense population and with science and technical arts in a simple undeveloped condition.

In the calm of these sylvan retreats were developed our systems of philosophy, ethics, theology and even several branches of literature proper. Witness the vivid scene of the discussion of political science and morality in the Naimish forest as described in the Mahabharat.

Herein lay the true spring-head of the ancient civilisation of the Hindus, and this we owe entirely to the Indo-Aryans of the earliest or Brahmanic age.

A LETTER OF ROMAIN ROLLAND

[Translated from the original French]

[In reply to his last letter (published last month), I wrote to M. Rolland partly as follows :

"I read with great interest your observations on the growth of the Vedantic ideas in the West. I bow to the beauty of your thesis. You will find that I also expressed a similar opinion in that letter. I mentioned therein '*Independent* growth of Vedantic ideas owing to historical reasons' as one of the causes of their propagation in the

West. I further said: 'I think, in the first stage, the industrial, social and cultural changes, especially the progress of science, drove the West to these ideas* and was *helped* therein by Indian culture as disseminated by Western Orientalists.' Far be it from me to maintain that the truths of the Spirit cannot reveal themselves independently and that they are in the custody of particular men or race of men. But you will, I dare say, agree with me that that does not prevent one race from helping another spiritually. If a people has cultured them specially, much more than other peoples, then, opportunity occurring, that people may certainly help the others. The West has specially cultivated the arts of Government, industrial development, etc. India or other Asian countries are behind it in these. And surely to-day we are being greatly influenced by Western ideas in these respects. I do not mean that we are not being influenced by the West in other respects also. I only mention the most outstanding of its influences. Similarly I think Indian spiritual ideas have *helped* the West. What was indistinct has been made distinct. Indigenous spiritual ideas of the West have been more *systematised* and clarified by the knowledge of Indian philosophy and religion. And in so far as this has been done, I maintain that our Mission has a share in it. I claim nothing more.

'I should mention, however, that the existence of Vedantic ideas in the West has been variously explained. There is a school of thought, which maintains that these ideas originally must have come out of India. This opinion still lacks *complete* historical proof. But some proofs there surely are. You say you find the Vedantic ideas existing in Christian mysticism, in Hellenic culture e.g., in Pythagoras and Plato, in Spinoza, etc. Christianity in its origin owed certainly much to Buddhism; and Buddhism is nothing but the Vedantic thoughts made popular. Pythagoras, it is generally admitted, has been to India and his teachings evidently owed much to Indian thought. Only the other year an English Professor of Sociology, Prof. Urwick, wrote a book, 'The Message of Plato,' in which he maintained the thesis that Plato borrowed his principal ideas from Vedanta. Dwijendranath Tagore, elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore, contributed some years ago a series of illuminating articles to the Bengali monthly, 'Prabasi', edited by Ramananda Chatterjee, pointing out the indebtedness of some of the early European thinkers to Indian philosophy. Spinoza, it is well-known, was well-versed in his ancestral teachings. And who knows how much of the mystical teachings of the Zohar was owing to Indian influence? It is recognised that Brahmans used to visit Athens. It is also historical that Alexandria became a centre of the mingling of Indian and Mediterranean cultures, and the Gnostic philosophy owed much to the Indian contribution. The fact is that in those ancient days when commerce was carried on mainly along land routes, the countries from China and India to Greece and Egypt were in much closer communication than we imagine now. The change of the commercial routes from land to sea meant not only great industrial, political

* That is to say, the West was compelled to evolve them.

and cultural revolutions in Asia and Europe, but also a death blow to the close relationship between Asia and Eastern and Southern Europe.

"My own position is that there must be more or less independent growth of Vedantic ideas among all cultured peoples. But I hold further that some peoples have, for many reasons, given more serious thought to their development and understanding than other peoples; and they have, whenever opportunity has come, inundated those other peoples with their developed spiritual thoughts. India is such a people.

"The above I have written only to clarify my position. As I read your letter between the lines I find that you also substantially agree with my conclusion. For you have said: 'The Eternal has sown himself with full hands over the whole field of humanity. The earth is not everywhere so fertile that the seeds may germinate. In some places it grows and produces fruits, in other places it sleeps.'

"Your remarks about music are quite true. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda also held the opinion that music is one of the ways to God-realisation. Both of them were good singers."

I also asked for M. Rolland's permission to publish his letters in our organs.

M. Rolland sent the following kind reply.—*Swami Ashokananda.*]

14th December, 1927.

Dear Swami Ashokananda,

I thank you for your kind letter of the 13th Nov. and for your generous gift of the volumes of the Swami Vivekananda's works which I have safely received.

If you think that the readers of your reviews and papers in India would have any interest in the letters which I have addressed to you as well as to Swami Shivananda and in general all the letters which I may send to any of the members of the Ramakrishna Mission on the subject of the great cause of which they are representatives, I give you permission (to publish them) most willingly. Your public is naturally religious and I should be happy to be put in touch with it through your publication.

I have read with great interest your reply to my former letter. We are in agreement about the fundamentals. The only difference between us (if it can be called one), is that you call that form of thought Vedantic which I think to have been in all times and in all countries, but which has found its most perfect realisation in Vedantic India. The full development is one thing, the origin is another thing. I do not think that in India or in any other country there has ever been the origin of a divine revelation. I give the honour for it to God which is in every living being. He alone is the source and that source

is in each of those living beings who have been, who are and who will be. All do not hear it sounding. But it is there in each one. And we do not know whether those of them who are silent themselves or make themselves silent, are not filled with His marvellous music. For God is in the silence, just as much as in the most forceful expression. In face of the Eternal there can be no question of priority ; there is no commencement and there is no end. But I do not hesitate to recognise in India the most powerful, perfect and complete monument of the Divine Thought,—the Cathedral of Unity and of Identity—the Himalaya of Being.

I think that my intended work will be delayed a little longer than I wished ; at first because of the quantity of the materials which have not yet been classified (your volumes have yet to be added to them) ; afterwards because I am not yet altogether free from other works which I am finishing at this time. It is necessary for me also very often to reply to the appeals against iniquities and crimes which do not cease happening in one place or another in this world devoured by violent passions ; and I cannot strip myself of this duty which most thinking men, wrapped up in their work, close their ears to, so as not to be disturbed.

Please accept my brotherly greetings.

Yours devotedly,
ROMAIN ROLLAND.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION—II

BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA

(Continued from the last issue)

OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Uplift of the masses is surely the principal object. We have noted already that this object can be attained only if the classes feel their duty and responsibility towards the masses and come down to serve them. Thousands of workers are required for the task ; therefore, the first thing necessary is to raise workers and equip them properly for the task. This is why Swamiji, in one of his Madras lectures, emphasised the necessity of starting teacher-training institutions which would turn out teachers for carrying the right type of education to the masses.

In view of the immensity of the task Sister Nivedita suggested that we should organise an army of education ; just as in most Western countries every young man after completing his education has to give at least three years to military service, so in this country the youths should be required after their education is over, to serve at least for three years for mass education. This suggestion points out clearly the immensity of the task before us and also shows how instead of wasting our energy in stray efforts for mass education we should first of all try to inspire and equip the enlightened youths of this country for the service of the people and thus proceed to make an organised and determined effort for raising the masses.

Surely this has to be done and this should receive our primary attention ; we need steady work for sometime to come to fire the imagination of our educated youths, make them conscious of their duty to poor and ignorant villagers and to rouse their enthusiasm for putting in their quota for the sacred task of mass education.

Even this work is not an easy affair. Our enlightened youths cannot be easily led to feel and work for the people. The very education they receive in schools and colleges makes them grow for a considerable period of their lives in educational hot-houses, entirely cut off from the rest of the society.

Sir Brajendra Nath Seal pointed at this defect of the present system of education in course of his address before the Bombay University and suggested that some sort of practical work for the amelioration of the wretched conditions of neighbouring slums should be incorporated in the University curricula of our country. This is undoubtedly a wise suggestion, but this is far less than what is required for improving this heartless system in order to prepare the individual for the uplift of his country.

The glaring omissions in the present system of education noted in the previous article show clearly how our young men are becoming unfit not only for improving their environment, but even for any effective life-work on productive lines. Their standard of life is raised, ambition is pitched high, but, for most of them efficiency of earning is not proportionately developed. Struggles for their own lives naturally become very keen and they cannot possibly spare any attention for other people. Moreover, lack of systematic culture of the heart makes it impossible for most of them even to feel any inclination for serving the masses. What is more dangerous,

they become affected by a snobbishness that makes village-life and association with poor people repulsive to their taste.

The present system therefore needs thorough overhauling ; at least the important omissions mentioned in the previous article have to be made up ; due attention has to be paid to physical culture, practical aptitude, economic efficiency, cultural integrity and training of the will and emotions before one may dream of raising an army of mass education as suggested by Sister Nivedita.

Let us therefore consider how much we may possibly contribute towards improving the present system of education. With our present resources we cannot start and conduct independent Universities for introducing any healthier system of education. Neither are we in a position to make any direct effort towards reforming the present system by convincing the educational authorities of the necessity of such reform. We can however profitably utilise our strength and resources at the present moment by rearing up *different types of educational institutions* which by turning out a healthier stuff may be expected to act as a moral corrective on the educational authorities of the land and also to serve as models, like our Sevashramas and relief-operations, to various social service organisations. These institutions may moreover hope to turn out at least some men who will not mind retiring to villages with unostentatious vocations of teaching in High Schools or farming or running home-industries. These men can be expected to be of immense help for the spread of education among the masses. They may with the help of local boys and youths conduct during leisure hours night-schools, gymnasiums and libraries, deliver lantern lectures, set up museums and demonstration farms and organise exhibitions and healthy competitions. One such man can moreover guide, control and inspire the teachers of a number of elementary schools in the locality. Their activities for mass education will also serve as examples and inspire others to work on the line in neighbouring villages.

So we see that our educational institutions, if properly reared up, will serve three useful objects, namely—

- (1) They will exert a moral influence on the existing stereotyped institutions ;
- (2) They will serve as models to be copied and improved by different social service organisations in the land ;

- (3) They will turn out at least some men who may start and carry on model educational works for the masses.

In addition to all these they may also aspire to turn out at least a few who will gladly throw self-overboard and devote themselves wholeheartedly to the sacred task of uplifting the masses and thus they may serve the purpose of teacher-training institutions as conceived by Swamiji.

We are glad that by the grace of God already a number of different types of educational institutions have started growing under the auspices of our Mission. *Our obvious duty at present is to see that each of them grows into a model of its type and advances steadily towards fulfilling the objects stated above.* Every one of them must aim primarily at making up the deficiencies of the present system mentioned in the first article. We should not on any account waste our energy after maintaining even a single institution run on stereotyped lines. If we spend our energy after any institution we should leave no stone unturned to make it essentially man-making.

While building up model types for improving the education of the classes we should remember that our first business is to supplement the glaring omissions. It is obvious that for imparting physical, practical, cultural and even economic education to a certain extent, separate schools or colleges are not absolutely necessary. A supplementary education provided by the following two types of institutions can go a long way to correct the evils of the present system.

Institutions for

- (1) Leisure-hour training (of the Y. M. C. A. type).
- (2) Home training—in hostel for college youths or boarding-house for school boys (Students' Home type).

TYPE NO. I.—LEISURE HOUR TRAINING

The feature of the first of these types is that it requires an irreducible minimum of men and resources, yet it may contribute a good deal towards making up for the deficiencies of the present system. Boys and youths residing in their own homes and getting academic education from local schools and colleges may resort during leisure-hours and holidays to a neighbouring Ashram where specific arrangements are made for physical and cultural training. Such an Ashram needs set up a gymnasium, organise from time to time sports and

athletic feat competitions, and make provisions for regular drill for the development of physical efficiency of the pupil-members. It should also have a library and arrange regular discourses and do all that is possible for the training of the will and emotions as mentioned in the previous article.

Such an institution may also utilise the advantages of the Boy-Scout movement by getting up an affiliated corps with its pupil-members. Boys and youths have a gang-spirit and this spirit may be utilised fully by directing it into useful channels through the Scout-system for the development of their physical efficiency as well as character-building. This system will surely prove a splendid agency for making the members strong, energetic, resourceful, enterprising, willing, efficient and thoroughly disciplined servants of society. Several attractive devices in the shape of uniforms, badges, signs, whistles, signals, games and excursions make the training immensely interesting. The whole thing has been converted into a highly amusing sport and thus the training based on the principle of self-activity is bound to be effective to a degree. Introduction of national games and discourses on Indian culture as well as association with the monks at the Ashram will more than compensate any denationalising influence that is ascribed by some to Scout-training. All considerations against affiliation are outweighed moreover by certain facilities (for imposing this semi-military discipline) afforded by a formal connection with the Boy-Scout Organisation.

Our Patna Ashram has been developing this type of educational institution for leisure-hour training ; our Sarisha Ashram is also doing some work on the line and it is interesting to note that the latter has obtained very good results by introducing the Scout-method.

This kind of educational work may be undertaken by all our existing Maths and Ashrams, specially in cities, towns and big villages with high schools, wherever of course men and money required for the purpose may be spared. This will cost much less than a school and will certainly prove more useful than an ordinary school.

In this connection we mention that according to the capacity of each Ashram the programme for leisure-hour training may be limited to one or two items. An Ashram providing simply a gymnasium and encouraging physical culture of the neighbouring youths and boys will be doing no mean service to society. An Ashram concentrating solely on providing facilities for study of scriptures during leisure-hours, will

certainly exert a cultural influence and thus have an educational value of a high order; our Gadadhar Ashram (Bhowanipore, Calcutta) is an instance to the point in so far as it is trying to perfect this particular type by making arrangements for a thoroughly academic study of our scriptures through a Veda-Vidyalyaya organised under its auspices.

An Ashram, which cannot make any permanent arrangement for even one item of the leisure-hour training programme, may however do some appreciable work on the line simply if it encourages physical, cultural and even economic training of neighbouring boys and youths by organising competitions and awarding prizes.

These Ashrams should of course strive to provide more and more for an all-round supplementary leisure-hour training.

The less is the cost of maintaining an institution, the greater is its chance for spreading over the country under the patronage of different social service institutions and the more therefore is its possibility in increasing the magnitude of our educational influence over the present system. Judged from this point of view this simple type of leisure-hour institution has a considerable utility and it should be given as much attention as is possible for us.

TYPE NO. 2.—HOSTELS FOR YOUTHS

The next type, namely, *hostel for youths*, costs a little more of energy and resources than the previous one, but it can provide for a more improved quality of supplementary training. Run on the lines of Brahmacharya Ashram under the care and guidance of our monks, it should have congenial environment, which is undoubtedly the first thing necessary for a healthy growth of the pupils. Here provision should be made to make up for all the glaring omissions of the present system mentioned in the first article by a systematic home-training, leaving academic education to the care of existing colleges.

This type, if properly worked, is cheap and yet highly effective, so far as rounding off the defective education received from schools and colleges and turning out a considerably healthier stuff from our student population, is concerned. For youths going up for higher education this type of institution can be expected to do all that is necessary for their physical culture, moral and cultural development and even for economic equipment by providing training in farming and home-industries, banking and commerce.

We should observe that the Y. M. C. A. and other Christian Missionary Organisations have considered it an effective device for spreading their culture among the youths of this country. Undoubtedly the youths are the future hopes of the country ; and it is during their college life that they receive the greatest amount of thought-influence that goes to mould their future career. Their education as we have observed, does not help them to develop their physique, expand their heart, train their will and equip themselves properly for the hard struggles of life as well as for the uplift of the environment. Moreover it is precisely during this period that the environment of colleges and hostels and the exigencies of city or town life subject them most to the pernicious influence of modern civilisation based on selfishness and sense-enjoyment. If in the course of the four or six years they spend for college-education they can come in touch with 'life-giving and character-building' influence and adjust their lives accordingly, the problem of regeneration of this country will surely become easy for solution. There is no denying that on the youths the whole future of the country depends and so the greatest service to the country at the present moment is to equip the youths properly for discharging their duties to the motherland. For this, they have to be tended very carefully, the cultural poison they have to swallow during this period and the negative education they receive have to be counteracted by a decidedly healthy environmental influence and a well-balanced supplementary training. For serving this purpose the Students' Home type of institution is an excellent device.

**TYPE 2A.—HOSTEL FOR YOUTHS WITH LEISURE HOUR TRAINING
ARRANGEMENTS FOR OUTSIDERS**

The combination of such a Home with arrangements for leisure hour training (Type I.) for outsiders may prove a highly useful educational agency specially in district and sub-divisional towns. A full-fledged institution of this type, costing as it does, much less men, money and worry than a college or even a school has every chance of being copied by others wherever there is a population of college-going youths. Thus this type of institution has immense possibilities for extending our educational influence over the present system. It is interesting to note that a Home for college students has already been started at Rajshahi and another at Bankura by enthusiastic groups of local people in co-operation with monks belonging

to other orders, and that efforts are being made at some other places to bring institutions of this type into existence.

TYPE 2B.—BOARDING HOUSE FOR BOYS

Hostels run on similar lines for school-boys will no doubt be more effective than mere leisure-hour training under the first type of educational institution. But they cannot be expected to have as much educational value as hostels for youths. Adults have a power of resistance, physical as well as mental, more developed than boys. This is why they may be exposed to uncongenial environments and allowed to fight with them ; all that they require are inspiration and proper guidance which may be had from a hostel run on the lines of type 2A., whereas childhood and even adolescence require much more attention. Like tender plants they have to be hedged in as it were and protected from uncongenial surroundings both physical and mental. This is the period when the body grows very rapidly, so they have to be given special facilities in the shape of proper food, air and physical exercise. A congested city like Calcutta, for instance, with its polluted air, adulterated food and little scope for outdoor exercise, is not at all a fit place for accommodating such a vast school-going population. A hostel here for school-boys will not obviously help them much, at least so far as their physical growth is concerned. Then the heavy syllabus, unnatural method of teaching without any reference to their psychological requirements and the coercive discipline that our boys have to encounter in most of the ordinary schools, together with the contaminating influence of led-astray fellow-pupils are surely too much for young minds to be counteracted merely by a supplementary training in hostels. The pressure of the present system of school-education tends to stunt their intellectual as well as moral growth, and these little ones have not the strength to withstand it even if they receive inspiration and guidance through the hostel. Of course boys during the period of adolescence may be benefitted to a certain extent by such hostels because their resisting power is more developed than that of little children. *So we may conduct hostels for school-boys above twelve and find them, of course, more effective than mere leisure-hour training, but we cannot expect very much from these institutions.*

(To be continued)

THE WORK OF SWAMI TRIGUNATITA IN THE WEST

[Personal Reminiscences]

BY HIS WESTERN DISCIPLES

THE "VOICE OF FREEDOM" MAGAZINE

One of the members of the monastery, Joseph Horvath, a Hungarian by birth, was a practical printer and this gave Swami Trigunatita the idea of starting a printing office in the Temple basement. A complete printing outfit was secured and Mr. Horvath gave up his regular outside position to take charge of the printing shop, giving his time as a freewill offering.

The Society used quite a little printing at this time for various forms and for advertising the lectures. With this as a foundation, Swami Trigunatita made plans for the publishing of a number of the Sunday lectures and other books. At the same time it was decided to issue a monthly magazine as a channel through which to reach many souls who either did not attend the lectures or who were too far away to come to them. A number of names were suggested for the magazine, but the one finally adopted was the "Voice of Freedom." The first number was issued in April, 1909, and the last number was that of March, 1916.

The magazine ever and always held constant to the high ideals of the truths of the Vedanta philosophy and the high standards and variety of material published soon attracted a wide circle of readers. After three years the "Voice of Freedom" was an established success with a growing list of interested friends and subscribers. By special arrangement with M., the author of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Swami published an American edition of the *Gospel* in the printing shop and had under way the publication of a number of other works when Mr. Horvath left in 1914 to visit his parents in Hungary and no one could be found with the necessary experience to take his place. A member of the Vedanta Society, Mr. C. H. French, already had a printing plant of his own, so Swami disposed of the Temple plant to him on the condition that he would print the "Voice of Freedom" magazine as payment, which he continued to do faithfully until the magazine was discontinued in March, 1916.

THE TEMPLE NUNNERY

A number of the women disciples were very desirous of entering into the seclusion and discipline of a separate community under the personal spiritual instruction of Swami, and at their request he consented to establish a nunnery. A house was rented a short distance from the temple, the rooms of which were plainly furnished by the women inmates. Swami drew up a set of rules similar to those of the monastery, pertaining to eating, hours of rising and general spiritual conduct.

The women disciples were full of earnest zeal and lived the life most sincerely, under the inspiration of Swami's teaching and guidance. They did all their own cooking and household work in the spirit of worship and service to humanity and faithfully adhered to the rules laid down. These women were all self-supporting, working in the daytime and then doing their duties in the nunnery early and late. Yet they rejoiced and were happy in their life, in that they were working out their salvation to the ultimate goal of realization and freedom. Swami's hope was that the nunnery might be the seed of an awakening spiritual life among the women of America and that great results might accrue from its apparently small beginning. Due to a number of causes, however, the nunnery came to an end in 1912.

THE SHANTI ASHRAMA

While Swami Vivekananda was in America and holding classes and delivering lectures, one of his disciples, Miss Minnie C. Boock, offered as a gift for the work a tract of land of 160 acres lying in the San Antone Valley, eighteen miles south-east of Mt. Hamilton, California, the site of the world-famed Lick Observatory. Swamiji accepted the offer in the name of the Ramakrishna Mission of Belur Math, the property to be held in trust as a peace retreat where souls seeking rest from the clamor of the world, could go for spiritual rejuvenation, thus blessing the gracious donor to all eternity.

Situated at the head of the picturesque San Antone Valley, sparsely wooded with oaks and chapparal, with ranges of bushcovered hills on either side and the perpetually snowy high Sierra Nevada Mountains in the far distance, removed from crowds and cities, the "Shanti Ashrama," as named by Swami Turiyananda, was an ideal spot for spiritual culture on

the one hand and its pure bracing air a tonic for health, on the other.

Swamiji left America for India in 1900 and was never able to visit the Ashrama in person, but in his acceptance of the land he opened the way for the development of its spiritual mission.

Swami Turiyananda who arrived in San Francisco, July 26, 1900, was the founder of the Shanti Ashrama and as stated above gave it its name. On the 3rd of August 1900, Swami Turiyananda left for the Ashrama accompanied by twelve or more students, who took with them tents and other necessaries for living in the open. Established in the tents as a base, the men of the party started to build some shelter of a more permanent character. Getting materials for building was a task of great difficulty, as the way there was through pioneer country, with wagon trails for roads, and the nearest source of supply was San Jose, California, 40 miles away over the mountains. But their heart was in the work and they persevered until they had erected a kitchen and screened dining room, a log cabin, several outhouses, three canvas-walled cabins and also a small meditation chapel which stands to this day. One of the springs on the ground was deepened, rock-lined with cement and the water carried in empty kerosene cans to the house as needed.

Swami Turiyananda virtually made the Ashrama his headquarters and spent months at a time there holding classes and dealing out salvation to those souls who came to renew their spiritual life in the blessing of his presence. Always chanting the name of the Mother, he filled the whole Ashrama with spiritual vibrations, until every leaf, every rock, every blade of grass became saturated with the spirit of holiness emanating from his divine consciousness.

After the departure of Swami Turiyananda for India, in June, 1902, one of his devoted disciples named Gurudas, was left in charge of the Ashrama. This was a happy choice, for Gurudas who is now the Swami Atulananda, was beloved by all for his gentleness of spirit and his steadfast devotion to the truth.

On January 2, 1903, one year after Swami Turiyananda's final farewell to America, Swami Trigunatita arrived in San Francisco and at once recognized the important part the Shanti Ashrama would play in the work. In the following November a group of students were gathered together by Swami and after the necessary arrangements for food and

other supplies were completed, the little party left for the Shanti Ashrama by way of San Jose. The party stopped over in San Jose that night and the next morning departed early in two large wagons belonging to Mr. Paul Gerber, a neighbor five miles distant from the Ashrama, who had carried the students there previously. Mr. Gerber and his family had learned to love Swami Turiyananda as they later did Swami Trigunatita and had many friends among the students. They constantly performed many little acts of kindness for the students and the Ashrama.

The road led for 22 miles from the city of San Jose to the top of Mt. Hamilton, where the Lick Observatory commands a view for many miles around. As the road wound upward, there unfolded before the travelers the vista of the beautiful Santa Clara Valley with its wonderful orchards and vineyards, while on the far side of the valley the Coast Range lifted itself into the air, standing as a guardian to protect the fruits and crops from the strong ocean breezes. Two miles from the summit they halted for the midday meal, after which they continued their journey until the Observatory reservation was reached. The Observatory proper contains the Lick telescope, known as one of the largest telescopes in the world, and grouped about it are a number of buildings for scientific purposes, together with the homes of the various workers in the different departments, many of whom later became Swami Trigunatita's personal friends.

As they left the Observatory the travellers found plenty of thrills in places where the mountain sides sloped sheer down from the road along the top of the ridge and in the indescribable panoramas of wooded hills, rugged canyons, and the far off snowy Sierra Nevada mountains, which unfolded before their delighted vision at every turn of the road as they wound their way down the seven mile grade to the Ysavel Valley through which the road led to the Shanti Ashrama. The road for a greater part of the way was rough, as it followed the bed of a wide creek in the bottom of the valley, but improved as it climbed into the foothills.

As the wagons descended the last range of hills into the San Antone Valley, only five miles away from the Ashrama, the thrill of expectation among those who were to see the holy spot for the first time became intense. It was toward evening when those in the first wagon reached the gate at the edge of the Ashrama property and saw in the distance through the trees the tents and huts in which they were to dwell for

the month to come. In a few minutes more the little party had arrived at the main building where Gurudas (Swami Atulananda) was waiting to welcome them. As they were shown to their quarters they were surprised and grateful, after their forty mile ride, to find the tents and cabins in perfect order, water for drinking and washing and places neatly contrived where they could arrange their belongings. Later they gathered in the dining room to partake of a hot and bountiful meal prepared by Gurudas.

The second day was given up to rest and general arrangements. Swami's orderly mind had long recognized that in classes organized for the study of Yoga practices, the average students would progress more rapidly and the work of the class be advanced by regularity of activities and a certain amount of discipline. On the third day therefore, he promulgated the following schedule.

3-45 A.M. Students were awakened by the melodious sound of chanting by Gurudas who went from cabin to cabin chanting "Om .

4-5 A.M. Students were to rise and meditate on bed.

5-8 A.M. Personal preparations and participation in the duties of the day. The work incidental to the presence of the class in the Ashrama was divided according to the individual capacity. The women were assigned the cooking and the men carried the water from the well, chopped the wood for fuel and did various other works for the upkeep of the place.

8-9 A.M. Breakfast.

9-10 A.M. Personal time and rest.

10-11 A.M. Meditation of entire class in the meditation chapel or cabin as it was called.

11-12 A.M. Morning class conducted by Swami with reading from *Yoga Vasistha*.

12-2 P.M. Recess.

2-3 P.M. Meditation class.

3-4 P.M. Recess.

4-5 P.M. Dinner at which Swami read from the *Gita* with comments.

5-7 P.M. Various works and recess.

7-8 P.M. Meditation in meditation chapel.

8-9 P.M. Evening class conducted by Swami with reading from *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* or commentary on the *Song of the Sannyasin*.

10 P.M. Lights out.

Beginning with the fourth day Swami went into three days' retirement during which time he fasted, meditated and counted his beads. Although his lionlike figure could be seen now and then amongst the trees as he paced about the Ashrama, none of the students were permitted to approach or address him. He did not allow his retirement however to interfere with the conduct of the classes or the lessons at the table.

Every meal was a feast of spiritual instruction always beginning with the Sanscrit chant "Om Brahmârpanam" etc. and closing with other Sanscrit chants, for, as Swami said, eating should be done spiritually and mentally as well as physically, and for that reason he always regarded it as one of the most important functions of the spiritual life. On one occasion, after the evening meal had been served and before the exposition of the Bhagavad Gita had begun, the hum of conversation rose above all other sounds. Swami waited a few minutes but the conversation did not subside, so he asked for attention and said: "The animals eat in gratitude for the satisfaction of their hunger, but we are not even eating on the level of the animals. Repeat the name of the Lord while you eat so that He, the source of all good, may not be forgotten." To help them practice this principle, Swami devoted the meal times to chanting, instruction and spiritual reading and ate his own meals apart from the class.

One day was set apart as a day of individual solitude and fasting, as a voluntary asceticism. All who participated retired to their cabins where they could spend the entire twenty-four hours in meditation or other spiritual practices. They were not to sleep or lie down but to spend the entire time as desired by Swami, who always tempered all things to the physical and mental capacity of the individual. To some, in that holy place, there came revelations and experiences in the twenty-four hours, which silenced doubts, satisfied anxious longings and gave new impetus to their spiritual aspirations.

Swami always provided plenty of relaxation. Wednesday and Saturday afternoons were declared holidays and a stream of genuine fun and merriment relieved any strain that might have resulted from a too steady serious diet. Swami was the leader in the fun. He also was constantly solicitous about the physical and mental well-being of all. No one during all the years the classes visited the Ashrama under Swami, was allowed to indulge in any extremes of asceticism without his knowledge or consent.

On the night of the full moon, Swami held a Dhuni (fire)

ceremony and all who were able to do so sat around the fire, meditating and listening to Swami's discourses and chanting. Filled with instruction and experiences the month passed quickly away and notwithstanding the cold weather prevailing, for many of the students, this month at the Ashrama was one of spiritual blessing and benefit and they reluctantly departed for their homes and work.

ETIQUETTE, EASTERN AND WESTERN

BY SISTER NIVEDITA

I

When a people are about to group themselves into large and complex units, instead of small and simple, it is as necessary to them to have a well-defined etiquette of mutual intercourse, as to have a *lingua franca*. In Hindu India, where the civic life is to-day emerging from the more rudimentary organisation of the family and the caste, the civic ideal of mutual courtesy and of personal bearing has also to supersede the domestic. For instance, there may be good private reasons for going unbathed and in soiled raiment, till ten o'clock in the morning, but the moment we recognise those outside our own four walls, with a feeling of high-bred respect, we shall feel the necessity also, of remaining hidden from them, until all our personal appointments have been perfectly made. This consideration will eventually eliminate the period of unkemptness, which may be regarded as a public advertisement of the fact that we are not mixing with people whom we honour, or in society that we consider good. This is really what it means, though perhaps, when the habit is tracked down to its source and stated in words, it bears a very ugly look. A man who does not belong to good society, is a man whom others will not care to know. Yet whose fault is it if we infer this, when he himself announces it by his personal appearance as his own opinion? Instinctively, we try to look well, in entering a presence that we honour. Afterwards a time may come, when we consider an air of cleanliness and refinement as *due to ourselves*. When this feeling arrives, we take pains with our own grooming, out of sheer self-respect—*noblesse oblige*. But this is at bottom, a reflection from an exalted and ennobled social consciousness. We see ourselves as honourable persons because we move in a society of the honourable. Under all the complexities of etiquette, there

lies this fact, our estimate of the greatness and importance of those about us. And exactly as we hold ourselves to them, shall we see ourselves mirrored in their consciousness. There is no such thing socially as a Gulliver amongst Lilliputians. The man who feels himself that, very quickly becomes degraded and belittled, in his exalted solitude. There is nothing so vulgar as social exultation, or snobbishness. It is the man who has infinite belief in the nobility of his fellows who feels himself also to be most truly noble. Petty vanity of birth or family may impress our fellow-villagers, but the more we dwell on it, the less fit are we for any larger society. In the great world, it is assumed that every man, would he speak of it, has an equal treasure to display. He who troubled to open that pack to public admiration would be shunned henceforth, as a rustic and a bore. Even the greatest of personages, as the badges of rank go, must sedulously avoid all 'swagger' about his own importance, or he will be laughed at, behind his back. We respect those about us, and we respect ourselves, as members of so fine a company. This is the attitude of which high courtesy is born.

The Mohammedans, owing to their fundamental inter-tribal organisation, are very rich in the conceptions characteristic of this kind of social decorum. The patriarch—or father-king—never forgets that the stranger, stopping a moment to chat at his tent-door, may, in his own home, be another patriarch, and he offers him the attentions due to that rank. But it is amongst the Mongolian races that etiquette has been developed to its highest intensity. Every Bhutia boy about Darjeeling receives a more or less laboured initiation into this culture of his race. And it is this factor, more than any other, that makes the Mongolian nations pre-eminent in Asia, in their power to deal with foreign nations. The rules of etiquette are like lines laid down for the wheels of intercourse to run along. By guarding both parties against trivial friction, they enable social relationships to be developed to a height and stability otherwise impossible. Anyone who has lived much with foreigners, knows, whoever he be, that it is small differences about eating, about bathing, about greetings and the common exchange of consideration, that make such combinations difficult, far more than the weightier matters of character and personality. And it will generally happen—supposing the social rank to be fairly equal—that the man of one race or nation will be defective, in comparison with the other. Peoples are by no means on a level, in their recognition of this form of sensitiveness. Where there

is a substantial equality of mutual consideration, mere differences of form will rarely be torturing and it is pretty certain that in proportion to the development of etiquette will be the national capacity for international activity.

There are really two elements in good manners. One is personal refinement, as seen in habits, and in the intimacies of the home-circle. And the other is formality as regards those whom we meet. The exquisite refinement and delicacy which result from good Hindu breeding are undoubtedly the factor that tends to compensate for deficiencies in life's little formalities, and make these less noticeable than they would otherwise be. This same refinement probably also creates a sensitiveness that makes the conduct of others a matter of keen pain and criticism, instead of serene indifference. As regards self-development, doubtless the Hindu emphasis is most desirable ; as regards civic and national possibilities, the cultivation of the social attitude is slightly more important. Individuals of genius, however, are apt to sing true, so to speak, in these things, even without any special training, because their emotions are so fine, and their intuitions so exquisite, that they leap spontaneously on every occasion, to the expression of some feeling that those looking on recognise as beautiful and adequate, however unexpected. A Ram Mohun Roy, or a Vivekananda, creates systems of etiquette for himself. Even if they did not, moreover, the world might well overlook the fact, and strive to hold communication with spirits so rare, through any barrier, however thick. But the case is very different with us ordinary folk. And most of us are quite ordinary. A whole nation cannot expect to be composed of men of genius. If we are to have the opportunity of giving and taking as much as is possible, in modern intercourse, we must first give serious consideration to the toll that the world demands of us, in the recognition of what is due to others. The more weight and power our personality carries with it, the more necessary this is, for the more pain we can inflict, in default of pleasure.

Nothing is so despicable as an imitator of foreign manners. No one dislikes these more than the foreigner whose individuality is stolen from him ! To speak the international language of a common etiquette, is not the same thing as to walk about in borrowed clothes, with a borrowed bearing, and a carefully-calculated way of telling a story, correct even to the giving of a slight laugh at the end of it. Self-consciousness is writ more plainly on every word and act of some, than on any player even seen upon the stage. Indeed the actor ought to apprehend his

part and forget himself in its interpretation, but here we have an actor whose one care is himself! The result cannot but be a vulgarism, as irritating as it is pitiful.

No, the international language of good manners implies a consciousness of certain common ideals of courtesy, and a clear intention, in one way or another, to give expression to this good feeling. The language itself matters very little. Who cares whether a man folds his own hands, or clasps yours, in friendly greeting, so long as salutations are exchanged? Who minds whether a friend's sympathy is shown by words or by silence, so long as, in one way or the other, it is conveyed? The slipping into, or away from, a social circle, without demonstration, may be felt by the host as a positive expression of respect to some matter that is under discussion, or some person who is being entertained. And yet a careless entrance, and bursting into talk without formal greeting, might appear as an offence in itself. Vastly more important is the feeling indicated, than the method of expression. But the necessity of doing reverence, silently or otherwise, to the circle one is entering or leaving, is probably recognised explicitly by every civilisation in the world.

II

The Greeks dreaded any tampering with their native styles of music, for it had been noticed, they said, that no nation had ever changed its musical system, without presently losing its whole political integrity and independence. Similarly it often seems as if a point of etiquette carried so much with it that it must be embedded in the national character, like garnets in lava, not to be changed without destruction. For instance, it appears a simple matter on the face of it, whether we sit on the floor, or at a table, while we eat. The glistening floor, the freshly-washed leaves, the piled rice, and the gentle mother, with all her tender forethought as to the likes and dislikes of this one and that, moving from place to place, giving food with her own hands—what a picture! How holy to every Hindu heart! And in the West, similarly, the common board, with its loaf, its butter, and its milk; the mother at one end, the father at the other, and the children seated between them, in a bright, hungry circle, right and left. "God bless the master of this house," sing the carollers at Christmas, "God bless the mistress too; and all the little children, that round the table go." In the East, the dining-floor, and in the West, the table; each in its own place, forms the symbol of family love and unity. Each

brings to mind the common life in which we were knit together as one.

And yet the difference is not nearly so simple as it seems. The Eastern child *receives* its food—the Western *takes*. The Eastern has a training, from the first, in submission, in cheerful acceptance and resignation. The Western is equally set to learn how to *choose*. In the East, the mother alone bears the burden of the common need. In the West, each one is more or less responsible for all the rest. One must offer food to others, first, and only when they are provided, take for oneself. Yet one must not exaggerate this attention, teasing those to right and left by inopportune cares on their behalf ; but must wait for suitable moments, when conversation flags, or a need is felt. For it is real consideration for others, and not merely the formalities of a seeming considerateness, in which the child is to be trained.

It is a similar feeling for the comfort of those about one that determines Western rigidity about the manner of eating, itself. The man who opens his mouth during mastication, or makes a noise that can be heard, or drinks, while the mouth is full, causes unspeakable distress to those who sit at the same board. This was not felt, when the group took the form of an open semi-circle. But the instant it is unified and concentrated by the table, each man's physical habits become the concern of all his fellows. The mouth must never open, while there is food in it. And yet a man must not eat mincingly either, like some prim school-girl ! This would be effeminate. There must not be a sound heard, that could be avoided. The munching of toast or the crunching of apples, if not perfectly soundless, should at least be kept as imperceptible as possible, and should never be revolting. And any sound of drinking, or the sight of one taking water into the mouth while it is full, should be rigorously tabooed. All this is to avoid revolting the senses of those about us.

Infinitely less imperative are the rules about the management of knives and forks, fish-bones, fruit-stones, and so on. By one mode or another, to avoid causing annoyance to others, is the one aim in all these matters. One tries to make and keep all connected with the meal, in as great order as may be. Even the plate should be left neat, and food should not be conspicuously wasted. But the fact that in one country a knife and fork are held in one way, and elsewhere in another, is not difficult for anyone to realise, nor could it possibly be fatal as might these other points, to a good understanding.

Another point that is of importance, in the Western etiquette of the table, is the bearing of those who sit at it. Here there is probably little difference between East and West, at heart! We show respect to our elders by an upright demeanour before them, disrespect and low breeding by lounging or slouching. This is the case at all times; but a hundredfold more so, in sitting at the table. Here, it is an offence to put hands or elbows forward. One must hold oneself straight on one's chair. Ease must be sacrificed to propriety. Respect for others forbids any thought of personal comfort. And this respect must culminate in one's attitude to the hostess, the mother of the family, or the lady of the house.

In the West, just as in the East, the mother puts herself last. She gives food to all others first, and only when each has been served, she helps herself, and begins to eat. Quietly and unobtrusively, she thinks of the comfort and happiness of every guest, and, as if she did it for her own enjoyment, devotes herself to the least attractive, who is apt to be neglected. But there is this difference between East and West. In the West, there is a part laid out for the hostess to fill, in which the guest has the reciprocal duty of putting her first. It is with her first, and only afterwards or in a secondary sense with one's fellow-guests, that one shakes hands, on entering and departing. Persons of high breeding always single out their hostess for these attentions first and foremost. She stands aside, in a doorway, for the guest to pass before her, and the guest's highest duty is immediate obedience. She lends her attention to such conversation as she can forward, whether she is really enjoying it or not. Or she uses her authority to secure private opportunities for such visitors as have something of importance to discuss *tête-à-tête*. She is the universal confidante, the kindly providence. It is true that in going in to dinner she reserves to herself the most important of the men-guests, while her husband takes in the principal woman. But this is an exercise of responsibility, the conferring of an honour. It is not to be understood as taking the best for herself. Infinite tact, unfailing sweetness, and a silent and hidden unselfishness are demanded of the hostess in Europe or America, as surely as of the mother, in India.

On the other hand, when she stands, no man must remain seated. Even when, at the end of dinner, with a look at the chief woman-guest, she rises and leads the way to the drawing-room, for the cosy moments of chat together, even then, all the men stand, and one or other goes to the door to open it, while

she stands there, and waits for her guests to pass through it. Only when the women have left the room, may the men fall into attitudes of ease, over their dessert. In all this, we see the expression, in a different form, of ideas and feelings that are common to India and to France. The etiquette of Europe may be more stately, but that of India demands to the full as much refinement of the heart. On the other hand, it is probably necessary that our boys should learn always, in Western society, to treat woman as queen, rather than as mother, while it is for her, the queen, to treat them, if she will, as if they were her sons.

In the West, the civic ideal dominates even the home. The words "She is my Mother! Why should I be polite?" are incomprehensible to the European mind. What? it replies. Do you desire to be *rude* to your mother? On the other hand, there is a sweetness in the East, and a closeness of intimacy, to which the West never attains. To this sweetness and closeness, words of formality seem a rupture. They hurt the souls that are at one as if they made a distance between them. Between ideals so different, and both so true, who could be wise enough to choose? Perhaps our highest opportunity lies in apprehending both, and in passing from one to the other, without consciousness or thought.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Swami Vireswarananda's Tour

In course of his South Indian tour, an account of which we published last March, Swami Vireswarananda, President of the Mayavati Advaita Ashrama, reached Mangalore by the second week of March, after visiting the city of Madras and several other towns of the Tamil districts on his way. His programme at Mangalore was a busy one. He stayed there a fortnight during which he delivered three lectures at the local Dramatic Society and Canara High School on "What is Religion," "Art and Religion" and "Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda." He also unveiled the portraits of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda in the Hall of the Kanara High School. His speeches and conversations were highly appreciated by the people.

From Mangalore, the Swami went to Mercara towards the end of March, being invited to attend the celebration of the anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. There also he held religious discourses and gave two lectures on "The Necessity of Religion" and "The Religion of the Gita," to the great joy and edification of the audience.

The Swami returned to Calcutta after visiting several other places on his way. His tour has been eminently successful and has spread the teachings of Vedanta broadcast in many places of the South.

Vedanta Work in America

We reproduce extracts from a letter written to one of our Swamis from America and we hope these will interest our readers. The correspondent writes :

Of all the greetings and gifts we received during the holiday season your letter was one of the most precious to us. It brought so keenly to our minds again some of the blessed times we spent in your presence. Particularly do we remember your talk on Shiva, which made us love Him, and we think that perhaps in some ways we specially belong to Him, as He loves so much those people who are often misunderstood by the world. And Divine Mother, too, we learned to love through you and the Vedanta books we have read. But above all our greatest devotion is awakened by the idea of the Supreme Parabrahman. We are grateful to you for making these abstract ideas so real to us, but more than all we thank you for something you conveyed and inspired in us which cannot be expressed in words.

Your account of the worship of Divine Mother in Benares interested us very much. Had we been there we feel we could have entered into the spirit of it with you. You see, dear Swami, you have led us to love the Divine Mother through your enchanting talks about Her.

Regarding the work here, probably you know Swami Bodhananda has two Swamis assisting him, Swami Gnaneshwarananda, direct from India, and Swami Akhilananda, from Boston or Los Angeles. The latter recently visited Boston for a short time and since his return Swami Bodhananda has gone there for about ten days. He is expected back this week. There are now three services on Sunday, morning, afternoon and evening, and in addition to Tuesday and Thursday meetings a Sanskrit class is held on Friday evenings. We are unable to attend all the classes, as after we return from business we find it necessary to remain home some evenings for rest, but almost every evening we read Vedanta before retiring.

There are in America at present quite a number of teachers from the Orient, some calling themselves Super-Yogis or something of that nature. No doubt they are doing some good, but we do not feel they present the loftiest message of Vedanta.

So far as we know, the work in Philadelphia has not yet been reopened. Some months ago Swami Bodhananda spoke of opening a class in Brooklyn, but apparently it has not been possible as yet. We wish it would materialize as it would be more convenient for the Brooklyn members and we possibly could bring people who do not care to go over to New York in the evening after a hard business day.

Out West Swami Paramananda is making great headway. In addition to the Ashrama at La Crescenta they now have a reading room at Pasadena and Los Angeles, where classes are also held. Another centre

has been established in St. Louis by the Swami at Portland and a new Swami from India has been sent for to assist him.

We repeat our heartfelt thanks for all the help you have given us, and we pray that much blessing may come to you in your beloved India. It must be wonderful to be in Sri Ramakrishna's land, and we rejoice that you "meet almost daily" and "have long talks" with "one who knew him intimately."

R. K. Mission Sevashram, Kankhal

The report for the year 1926 shows that altogether 19,685 persons were treated in the Sevashram of whom 668 were indoor patients. Besides this medical work there is also a night school and a library in the Ashram for the benefit of the local depressed classes children and of the general public respectively. The Sevashram purchased a new plot of land during the year, on which it hopes to build Workers' Quarters, Rest House, Guest House, Night School, etc. It requires at least Rs. 25,000 for the above purposes. The Indoor Hospital accommodates 66 patients. A permanent fund of Rs. 1,98,000 is required for its upkeep. A further fund of Rs. 40,000 is required for the upkeep of the Ayurvedic Department. Besides these, other funds also are urgently needed for the general maintenance of the Sevashram, Library, Allopathic Department, etc. We earnestly hope the public will respond to these urgent needs. Contributions may be sent to *Swami Kalyanananda, Hony. Secy., R. K. Mission Sevashram, Kankhal P.O., Saharanpur Dt., U. P.*

The late Swami Purnananda

It is with a heavy heart that we have to announce the passing away of Swami Purnananda at the Udbodhan office, Calcutta on the 13th April last.

The Swami was connected with the Prabuddha Bharata for several years and afterwards served the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in various capacities. For sometime he was president of the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta. He was a charming conversationalist and his conversations always derived an added interest from his sparkling, good humour.

Lately he lived a retired life and his quiet nature was extremely striking. For the last few years he could be seen days in days out seated in a cell-like room in the Udbodhan office, with all interests of the outer world as if lost to him. For sometime past he was suffering from dropsy to which he succumbed. His *titiksha* in this illness evoked admiration even from medical men. May his soul find its consummation.