

Prabuddha Bharata

Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

ATMA-JNANA

SEEING the lowly grass and the mighty tree on the rolling plain a man says, 'How big is the tree and how small is the grass!' But when he ascends the mountain and looks from its high peak on the plains below, the mighty tree and the lowly grass blend into one indistinct mass of green. So in the sight of worldly men there are differences of rank and position, but when the Divine sight is opened there remains no distinction of the high and the low.

THE snake is very venomous. It bites if one happens to come near it. But the man who has learnt snake-charming can not only catch a snake, but carry about several of them on his person like so many ornaments. Similarly, he who has acquired spiritual knowledge can never be polluted by lust and greed.

WHEN a man realises one of the following states he becomes perfect:—(1) All this am I; (2) All this art Thou; (3) Thou art the Master, and I am the servant.

THE soul enchanted is 'man', and free from charm it is 'Shiva' (God).

HE alone is the true man who is illumined with the light of true knowledge. Others are men in name only.

WHEN a nail pierces through the shell of a green cocoa-nut it enters the kernel of the nut too. But in the case of the dry nut, the kernel becomes separated from the shell, and so when the shell is pierced the kernel is not touched. Jesus was like the dry nut, i. e., his inner soul was separate from his exterior shell, and consequently the sufferings of the body did not affect him.

THERE are two egos—one mature and the other immature. "Nothing is mine; whatever I see, feel or hear, nay even this body, is not mine. I am always eternal, free, and all-knowing"—the ego that has this idea is the mature one, while the immature ego is that which thinks "This is my house, my child, my wife, my body, etc."

WHEN a storm blows it is impossible to distinguish between a pipul (Asvattha) tree and a banyan (Vata) tree; so when the storm of true knowledge (the knowledge of one universal existence) blows within a man, there can be no distinction of caste.

A jar kept in water is full of water inside and outside. Thus the soul immersed in God sees the all-pervading Spirit within and without.

OCCASIONAL NOTES

GOETHE has said of religion that it is "the deepest, nay, the one theme of the world's history to which all others are subordinate." When we think of the part played by the religious instinct in all stages of human existence, the magnitude of the phenomena caused by it, its manifold expressions, its irrepressibility and its profound influence in shaping the destiny of races and the moulding of civilizations, Goethe's statement does not seem exaggerated. In the modern age, the age of science, when scientific knowledge was developed enough to be applied to human conduct, the irrepressible appeared in a new garb. There arose a system of scientific ethics with its variations of Positivism, Utilitarian morality, Rational ethics and cognate bodies of thought. Religion was defined as "Morality touched with emotion." But under all this apparent revolution, the old heart of religion, namely, *sacrificing self for the gain of others*, remained intact. In fact all that was done was the finding of a new sanction, a seasonable explanation acceptable to a certain class of people, *for the identical conduct evolved by religion*.

As an auxiliary to religion, therefore, scientific ethics is welcome. It has a distinct sphere of usefulness inasmuch as it helps a large body of people to lead the truly religious life by providing them with the sanction for other-regarding conduct. But when it is claimed for this system that it can take the place of religion, nay, that its sanctions, being in this world, are verifiable, while those of religion are not, and therefore it is more efficient than religion, the examination of its credentials becomes necessary. In the first place let us try briefly to state its position.

The sphere of scientific ethics is strictly within the limits of the sensuous world. It is concerned with only the present life of a man. All interests therefore of a human being centre round his own sensuous existence. The only rational conduct on his part is so to adjust himself both internally and externally as he may obtain the greatest possible quantity of pleasurable sensations with the expenditure of the least amount of energy. His individual happiness is the supreme consideration of his life and the subordination to it of everything else its sole effort.

The opponents of this system, who condemn it as teaching the immoral principles of unregulated conduct, exploitation of others and the gaining of happiness at any cost, are not right, because if all the units of a society practised the above principles, the majority would have no happiness. They would thus be forced to adopt a conduct in which the majority at least would have an equal chance of obtaining happiness; and this could not happen if their conduct was unregulated and unduly encroached upon the happiness of others. Each unit would thus for its own end have to respect the interests of others, albeit as subsidiary to its own. There is then in this system sanction for a kind of other-regarding conduct as far as one's immediate environment and contemporaries are concerned.

But in vain one looks in it for sanction of any kind of conduct stretching beyond the limit of one's individual sensuous existence. Since with the death of the physical body there is an end to the man and necessarily to all his interests, it would be the height of

irrationality to apply any portion of his energy to any consideration of the future not subserving his self-interest. Thus, for instance, he should never deny self in the least to do anything which may last longer than himself, whether it be the building of a house, investment of money or rearing of children. There should be no sacrifice of individual interest to that social interest which is identified in the main with the interest of unborn generations. The contribution to the present welfare of society should only be such as is prompted by the dictates of an enlightened self-interest. All the forces of competition and the conditions that tend to make the individual life less happy should be abolished. And above all the future population, the upbringing of which entails so much sacrifice and pain, should be strictly regulated according to the conditions of existence for the time being.

Thus the conclusion is inevitable that ethics based on science with its easily verifiable sanctions leads straight to conduct in which the happiness of the individual is the supreme motive and sacrifice for the stability and future advancement of society or race has no place. It is not necessary to enter here into a consideration of the merits and demerits of this system of ethics. It is enough to point out that the conduct contemplated and taught by the founders of scientific ethics is quite different from that stated above. Whether we take Priestley's famous phrase summing up the object of Bentham's system—"the greatest happiness of the greatest number," or John Stuart Mill's conception of a perfected utilitarian morality: "Utility would enjoin that laws and social arrangements should place the happiness or (as speaking practically it may be called) the interests of every individual as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole" (*Utilitarianism*, p. 25), or again Herbert Spencer's hope

of a state of social evolution when a conciliation will take place "between the interests of each citizen and the interests of citizens at large; tending ever towards a state in which the two become merged in one, and in which the feelings answering to them respectively, fall into complete concord" (*Data of Ethics*, p. 243), we clearly understand that the object aimed at is conduct which is the expression of a completely harmonised state of the instincts of altruism and egoism—a state which we have seen is impossible to conceive from the point of view of science without doing violence to reason.

The materialists who seek to derive Intelligence from organism instead of recognising that it is the cause of all phenomenal manifestations of life are bound to fail, for, as Herbert Spencer, speaking after Professor Tyndall's death, said, 'Every physical inquiry, pursued to the end, brings us down to metaphysics and leaves us face to face with an insoluble problem, and Tyndall was much more conscious of this than physicists usually are.' Then speaking of himself, Spencer said:—

'I have had to rebut the charge of materialism times too numerous to remember, and I have now given the matter up. It is impossible to give more emphatic denial or assign more conclusive proof than I have repeatedly done.'

Huxley, in like manner, writing in the 'Fortnightly,' in November, 1886, said:—

'I repudiate as philosophical error the doctrine of Materialism. It seems to me pretty plain that there is another thing in the universe, to wit: Consciousness, which I cannot see to be matter or force, or any conceivable modification of either, however intimately the manifestation of the phenomena of consciousness may be connected with the phenomena known as matter and force.'—*Light*.

Life itself told me this secret—"See, I am that which must forever conquer itself."

—Zoroaster.

OUR GOAL

OUR life is nothing but a series of struggles after an ideal or ideals. We always meet with great difficulty in keeping to a fixed ideal in life. With the change of circumstances we are not unoften forced to modify it or choose a new one. It is certainly good to expand our ideal, but it is undoubtedly bad to change it with every turn of circumstances and thus make our life like a boat at the mercy of a storm. Though sturdy souls are seen to make compromises at times, history shows that the brave uncompromising souls alone are able to attain the highest ideal in life. So without lowering the ideal even in a crisis, let us rather sincerely admit our incapacity for the time being to reach it and exert our utmost to make ourselves worthy of the ideal and lay down our lives even, if necessary, in this noble attempt.

With the rapid advance of science new vistas of thought are opening before us everyday. Easy communication and cheap publications are bringing to us more vividly than ever the struggles and the ideals of the peoples of different parts of the world and rousing us to our own short-comings causing us thereby to gradually shake off our century-grounded lethargy. Moreover the direct contact with a people shining in the splendour of a materialistic civilization has dazzled us and we have begun to lose faith in the ideal evolved through centuries of discipline and hard practice, the expression of which we find in the Upanishads and other Scriptures,—the ideal we find practicalized in the lives of our great sages. Thus blinded by the glamour of a superficial civilization, many amongst us basely imitate the West in every way and unthinkingly take whatever it says or does to be true and great. Some of us are even ready to give up our glorious heritage,

our original research, the quest after the Spirit in which alone a man can find peace. And not a few of us are guided by Western opinion in our own religious matters accepting and rejecting ideals which are in turn favoured and disfavoured by them.

The occidentals have progressed wonderfully in mechanics and other material sciences. They have been able to discover various means of living comfortably and luxuriously. From this we have no right to infer that they have developed the highest possible civilization. They have yet to find the methods of going beyond the senses which is the only way to attain the Bliss eternal. They have not yet reached the state, 'attaining which no other attainment is regarded as higher,' nay, they have not yet as a people made this state the goal of their civilization. The Japanese have improved almost incredibly in their industries and manufactures. They have succeeded in securing a superior place in the history of nations. Should we then follow them in every way? Ought we then to model our society according to theirs? No, that can never be. India is India, and she must grow according to the tendencies of her own peculiar nature. India's ideal is the highest spiritual perfection or *Mukti*. Other things are secondary and auxiliary to the attainment of that Ideal. India has surely to learn many lessons from the different races of the world but only to use them as so many steps to reach her goal.

As with an individual, so with a nation, for a nation is nothing but an aggregate of individuals. Man progresses from the brute state of individuality to the tribal collectiveness, from which again he broadens into citizenship. The citizen develops into the cosmopolitan. But

the end is not yet. He must be universal and then find his true being in union with infinity. Then and then alone the supreme goal is reached, he becomes a *Mukta* or a freed soul, as he then goes beyond all the limitations which bind a being. This highest ideal, freedom or *Mukti* was conceived and realised in India. So our contribution to the world's civilization is this highest ideal of spiritual perfection notwithstanding our lack of material growth.

In India the different stages of human progress were discovered and classified under four heads :—Shudrahood, Vaishyahood, Kashatriyahood and Brahmanahood. Service, industry, patriotism and martial qualities are so many stages leading to the highest goal—Brahmanahood. Like individuals, a nation which cherishes the ambition of attaining Brahmanahood must pass through the first three stages. This ideal Brahmanahood is beautifully expressed in the following lines of the Vajrasoochikopanishad, "Whoever having directly and immediately realized, like an *Amalaka* fruit in the palm of one's hand, the Self without a second, devoid of species, quality and action, free from all defects such as the six *urnis* and the six *bhāvas*,* the reality, knowledge and bliss absolute, the infinite, the self-existent, void of variety, the abode of innumerable *Kalpas* (cycles of time), present as the internal controller of endless beings, interpenetrating in and out like the Akasha, the nature of which is ceaseless joy, the immeasurable, which can alone be known by being felt, manifest through immediate perception, and having thus accomplished (his) end lives freed from the evil of desire and attachment etc., possessing the control of external and internal senses, divested of affection, envy, thirst, hope, delusion etc., his mind untouched by vanity and pride.

"He alone who has the above-mentioned

qualities is Brahmana. This is the intention of Shrutis, Smritis, Puranas and Itihasas."

When India's goal is that Brahmanahood, she must shake her Shudrahood off, develop industries and commerce, attain the qualities of the Kshatriya, yet never forget that these are mere steps and not the goal.

Again the path of human progress can be said to lie through Tamoguna, Rajoguna, and Sattvaguna. Freedom is reached by becoming *Gunatita*, i. e., going beyond the three qualities. The characteristic of Tamoguna is ignorance and idleness, while that of Rajoguna is passionate zeal and activity. Tamoguna is conquered by developing Rajoguna. Rajoguna, on the other hand, is overcome by developing Sattvaguna, the characteristics of which are goodness and calmness. For a Tamoguni, freedom is a wild dream, as he is bound hand and foot by laziness and block-headedness. To get over this dangerous idleness tremendous activity has to be cultivated. By Rajoguna one thus destroys the bondage of Tamoguna, but one becomes bound by the passionate attachment for action. This constant whirl and hurry of Rajoguna disturbs the equanimity of the mind. Rajoguna is overcome by introspection, self-control and calmness which are the expressions of the Sattvaguna. But the Sattvaguna, too, binds a man by the thought that 'I am happy, I am calm and good, I have attained knowledge' etc. So freedom is not reached by the Sattvaguni even, though he is not very far from it. It is gained by him who develops the Sattvaguna and hence has a clear perception together with unfailing strength of renunciation. He can thus detect and shake off the binding effects of the Sattvaguna, by meditating on his real nature as, 'I am not the doer, there are no qualities in the Self, I am Sat-chit-ananda.' Thus all bondage falls off and the man lives in the freedom of the Self. This freedom of the soul is the highest goal of all. But it is necessary that one should rise from stage to stage.

* See Prabuddha Bharata Vol. IX, P. 187

Each therefore should start from his own station towards the supreme goal.

The external manifestation of Tamas and Sattva appear often to be alike. Calmness and idleness are not easily distinguished. It is not difficult to throw dust into people's eyes, but nature cannot be deceived. Reaction sets in sooner or later. Between these qualities there is the difference of poles. An example will illustrate it clearly. The expression of Tamoguna is like the movement of a carriage drawn by a lazy horse who gets tired soon and brings it to a standstill; while that of Sattvaguna is like the movement of a carriage drawn by a fiery horse who is kept still, his speed curbed by a master hand. Dispassion and concentration which are the characteristics of Sattvaguna require tremendous effort, but they might be sometimes mistaken for the inaction of Tamoguna. On the contrary, inaction and simple cessation from action through idleness might be mistaken for Vairagya.

The majority of the Indian people is Tamoguni; their brain is so weak that they cannot find out what is good and beneficial for them. This weakness of the brain is due to insufficiency of proper food and want of education. We must hold the highest ideal of freedom before them, but try to lead them gently from stage to stage. They should be given proper food for their body as well as mind. Thus nourished physically and mentally they would be able to understand and decide their ideal in life. It is for this reason that material prosperity is indispensably necessary in India at present, but at the same time we cannot lay too much stress on the need of our never losing sight of our spiritual ideals in the glamour of material prosperity. One great and important lesson we must learn from the Western nations,—the lesson of active habit. To shake off our deep-rooted lethargy we must carefully cultivate activity which should vibrate in our every muscle and nerve.

India has been able to keep her national vitality through centuries of depression and difficulty. She has produced mighty spiritual giants who held aloft the highest ideal of spiritual perfection before humanity. Let us keep that ideal of spirituality always vivid before our view and live for that ideal. Let all our energies be directed to reach that. We may learn as long as we live. We should keep all our doors open to let in the light of knowledge from all quarters and turn it to our own advantage. Why should we nourish our body and mind? Only to make them fit instruments for realizing our ideal. Material prosperity would remove our physical wants and give us energy to apply to better purposes.

Imitation, we must remember, cannot be the way to progress. Assimilation is the real path leading to it. A tree grows according to its own nature, but it cannot do so unless it assimilates air, earth, water, etc. So let us progress towards the goal according to our own genius, assimilating other ideals which we get from other nations.

PRAKASHANANDA.

IF WE ONLY UNDERSTOOD

Could we but draw back the curtains
That surround each other's lives,
See the naked heart and spirit,
Know what spur the action gives,
Would the grim external roughness
Seem, I wonder, just the same?
Should we help where now we hinder?
Should we pity where we blame?
Oh! we judge each other harshly,
Knowing not life's hidden force,
Knowing not the fount of action
Is less turbid at its source;
Seeing not amid the evils
All the golden grains of good.
We should love each other better
If we only understood.

Ella W. Willcox.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Extracts

XVII

WASHINGTON,
27th October, 1894

Dear—,

I am doing exactly here what I do in India. Always depending on the Lord and having no plans ahead.***Moreover you must remember that I have to work incessantly in this country so that I have no time to put together my thoughts in the form of a book, so much so that this constant rush has worn my nerves and I am feeling it. I cannot express my obligation to you,—and all my friends in —,for the most unselfish and heroic work you did for me. I am not an organizer, my nature tends towards scholarship and meditation. I think I have worked enough, now I want rest and to teach a little to those that have come to me from my Gurudeva. You have known now what you can do, for it is really you young men of—that have done all; I am only the figurehead. I am a *tyagi*, I only want one thing. I do not believe in a religion or God which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth. However sublime be the theories, however well-spun may the philosophy be—I do not call it religion as long as it is confined to books and dogmas. The eye is on the forehead and not on the back, move onward and carry into practice that which you are very proud to call your religion and God bless you!

Look not on me, look to yourselves. I am happy to have been the occasion of rousing an enthusiasm. Take advantage of it, float along with it and everything will come to right. Love never fails my son, to-day or to-morrow or ages after truth will conquer. Love shall win the victory. Do you love your fellow-men? Where go to seek for God, are not all

the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods? Why not worship them first. Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganges? Believe in the omnipotent power of love. Who cares for these tinsel puffs of name? I never keep watch of what the newspapers are saying. Have you love? You are omnipotent. Are you perfectly unselfish? If so you are irresistible. It is character that pays everywhere. It is the Lord who protects His children in the depths of the sea. Your country requires heroes, be heroes.

Everybody wants me to come over to India. They think we will be able to do more if I come over. They are mistaken, my friend. The present enthusiasm is only a little patriotism, it means nothing. If it is true and genuine you will find within a short time hundreds of heroes coming forward and carrying on the work. Therefore know that you have really done all and go on. Look not for me. Here is a grand field. What have I to do with this ism or that ism? I am the servant of the Lord, and where on earth is there a better field than here for propagating all high ideas? Here, where if one man is against me, a hundred hands are ready to bless; here, where man feels for man, and women are goddesses! Even idiots may stand up to hear themselves praised and cowards assume the attitude of the brave when everything is sure to turn out well, but the true hero works in silence. How many Buddhas die before one finds expression! My son, I believe in God and I believe in man. I believe in helping the miserable, I believe in going even to hell to serve others. Talk of the Westerns, they have given me food, shelter, friendship, protection,—even the most orthodox Christians!

What do our people do when one of their priests go to India? You do not touch them even, they are MLECHHAS! No man, no nation, my son, can hate others and live. India's doom was sealed the very day they invented the word MLECHHA and stopped from communion with others. Take care how you foster that idea. It is good glibly to talk about the Vedanta, but how hard to carry out even its least precepts.

Ever yours with blessings,

VIVEKANANDA.

P. S. Take care of these two things, love of power and jealousy. Cultivate always faith in yourself.

V.

XVIII

CHICAGO

28th May. 1894

Dear—,

I do not know when I am going back to India. It is better to leave everything in the hands of Him who is at my back leading me. Try to work without me as if I never existed. Do not wait for anybody or anything. Do whatever you can. Build your hope on none.

I have had enough appreciation in my own country. Appreciation or no appreciation, sleep not, slacken not. You must remember that not a bit even of our plans has been as yet carried out. Act on the educated young men, bring them together and organise them. Great things can be done by great sacrifices only. No selfishness, no name, no fame, yours or mine or my master's even. Work, work the idea, the plan, my boys, my brave noble good souls—to the wheel, to the wheel put your shoulders. Stop not to look back for a name, or fame, or any such nonsense. Throw self overboard and work. Remember, 'the grass when made into a rope by being joined together can even chain a mad elephant'. Lord's blessings on you all! His power be in you all—as I believe it is *already*. "Wake up,

stop not until the goal is reached," say the Vedas. Up, up, the long night is passing, the day is approaching, the wave has risen, nothing will be able to resist its tidal fury. The spirit, my boys, the spirit; the love, my children, the love; the faith, the belief; and fear not, the greatest sin is fear.

India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made happy. The flood of spirituality has risen. I see it is rolling over the land resistless, boundless, all-absorbing. Every man to the fore, every good will be added to its forces, every hand will smoothen its way and glory be unto the Lord.

I do not require any help. Try to get up a fund, buy some magic-lanterns, maps, globes &c., and some chemicals. Get every evening a crowd of the poor and low, even the Pariahs and lecture to them about religion first and then teach them through the magic-lantern and other things, astronomy, geography, &c. Train up a band of fiery young men. Put your fire in them and gradually increase the organization letting it widen and widen its circle. Do the best you can, do not wait to cross the river when the water has all run down. Printing magazines, papers, etc., are good, no doubt, but actual work, my boys, even if infinitesimal is better than eternal scribbling and talking. Call a meeting at—, get a little money and buy those things I have just now stated, hire a hut and go to work. Magazines are *secondary*, but this is primary. Do not be afraid of a small beginning, great things come afterwards. Be courageous. Do not try to lead your brethren, but serve them. The brutal mania for leading has sunk many a great ship in the waters of life. Take care especially of that, i. e., be unselfish even unto death and work. I could not write all I was going to say but the Lord will give you all understanding, my brave boys. At it, my boys! Glory unto the Lord!

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN INDIA

सङ्गच्छध्वं संवदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।

Rigveda X. 191. ii.

“Unite, consult together, let your minds be of one accord.”

AS a necessary outcome of the British Empire in India, the National Idea has been forming in the minds of the people of this vast continent, and were it not for the partition of Bengal, it would probably not have made its appearance so soon in the world. That wicked measure of dividing and disuniting a people bound together by the genius of a common race and by common ties of emotion and sentiment, has not unnaturally furnished the occasion of its first expression in Bengal.

As one current of electricity induces another of the opposite nature, so has this blow of separation called forth in resistance the feeling of national unity in all India. That the National Idea has found its first voice in Bengal, is simply due to the fact, that since the inception of the sentiment in India, the greatest assault to the national mind has been delivered for the first time *there*, in that province. There is no doubt that the same strain would have produced the same result in any other part of the country.

And what is the cry with which the Infant saw the light? *SWADESHA, my own country!* Could any other cry be more natural? The interest of my own country! the food of my own people! —for that is what *Swadeshism* means. With what truer and diviner impulse could the National Idea come into being and in what more familiar language of the heart could it speak to the whole country? No, the *Swadeshi* movement is as natural a result of the birth of the National Idea, as the rosy

morn is of the rising sun. May the Mother Divine, the indwelling Soul of all things, who is the *shakti* or potency of all things, vouchsafe health and strength to this Babe, and make it worthy of Her India, the ancient and holy land of the brave and the wise!

The well-known saying of the Bengali mother, “As earnestly do I pray for the long life of my son, so do I pray for his education,” is peculiarly applicable to the present situation in India. If the *Swadeshi* movement is the life of the National Idea, a system of national education is our next requisite. With the same fervour that we wish the life and growth of the forces building a united Indian nation, we should also wish for the education of the nation. This need has been felt everywhere, for it is the next natural step in the development of the national movement. And we feel, to Bengal should belong the honour of organising and founding the first National Indian University. Not a *Hindu, Mahomedan* or *Christian* University, which by isolating class and creed cultivates fanaticism, religious hatred and sectarianism and serve to accentuate and widen the differences already in existence, but an *Indian National* University, which will bring all classes and creeds together under the same educational influence and teach them through mutual association and understanding the highest lessons of the religious and social consciousness, namely, that the same divine spirit is in all men irrespective of creeds and dogmas and that the sons of the same motherland are brothers by a relation and tie more inviolable even than those of common parentage.

Bengal is deservedly reputed as the richest province in India not only in money but in education. Among her sons can be counted

millionaires by the hundred and educationists by the score. Bombay and the Panjab have reared educational institutions which are monuments of the selfless patriotism of some of the best of their sons. We know Bengal is just as much blessed with able, devoted and true-hearted sons as any other of her sister provinces. We feel this is the time for her to rise to her highest, and among other deeds, raise such a monument to Divine Saraswati, with the loving devotion and sacrifice of self of the worthiest of her sons, as would shed undying lustre on the whole of the Motherland—a National University for the education of the people and the shaping of the highest national ends.

We learn a national fund is being collected in Calcutta with great zeal. The movement will by this time have extended to other parts of the province. So far as we know no definite object has been put forward for the utilisation of this collection. Why cannot the fund be devoted to starting a National University?

समानी व आकृतिः समाना हृदयानि वः ।
समानमस्तु वो मनो यथा वः सुसहासति ॥

Rigveda X. 191. iv.

“Let your purpose be the same, your hearts (feelings) and minds (thoughts) the same, and let you be in complete agreement on all points.”

SANANDA

SELECTION FROM SANSKRIT

KUNTI'S PRAYER TO KRISHNA

[This month we select from the Srimad Bhagabatam (Bk. I, Ch. 8) the touching words of Kuntī, the mother of Yudhishthira, Bhīma and Arjuna, which she addressed to Krishna on the eve of His departure from Hastinapura at the close of the great Mahabharata war.—Ed.]

नमस्ये पुरुषं त्वाद्यमीश्वरं प्रकृतेः परम् ।
अलक्ष्यं सर्वभूतानामन्तर्बहिरवस्थितम् ॥
मायाजवनिकाच्छत्रमजाधोक्षजमव्ययम् ।
न लक्ष्यसे मूढदृशा नदो नाव्यधरो यथा ॥
तथा परमहंसानां मुनीनाममलात्मनाम् ।
भक्तियोगविधानार्थं कथं पश्येमहि स्त्रियः ॥

यथा हृषीकेश खलेम देवकी कसेन रुद्रातिथिरं शुचार्पिता ।
निमोचिताहं च सहात्मजा निभो त्वयैव नाथेन मुहुर्विपद्गणात् ॥

विषान्महाग्रेः पुरुषाददर्शनादसत्सभाया वनवासकृच्छ्रतः ।
शृधे शृधेऽनेकमहारथास्त्रतो द्वौयस्त्रतश्चास्म हरेऽभिरक्षिताः ॥

विपदः सन्तु नः शश्वत्तत्र तत्र जगद्गुरो ।
भवतो दर्शनं यत्स्यादपुनर्भवदर्शनम् ॥

जन्मैश्वर्यश्रुतिश्रीभिरेधमानमदः पुमात् ।
नैवार्हत्यभिधातुं वै त्वामकिञ्चनगोचरम् ॥

TRANSLATION

I salute the primordial Being, the Lord, beyond Prakriti, indefinable, residing in and out of all beings, covered by the curtain of Maya, the unborn, transcending sense-knowledge, the unchangeable; like an actor on the stage Thou art not known by the deluded. How could we women comprehend the meaning of the Bhaktiyoga (loving devotion) taught by the great-souled and pure-minded sages?

O Hrishikesha (Lord of the senses), O all-pervading Lord, I, with my sons have always been saved by Thee from many dangers, as (you rescued your mother) Devaki, who was long confined and plunged into sorrow by the villain Kamsa.

I have been protected by Thee, O Hari, from being poisoned and burnt in the great fire of (Jatugriba), from demons, an intriguing court, the privations of the forest life and on the battlefield from the weapons of many great warriors as well as the deadly arrow of the son of Drona.

O Enlightener of the world, let calamities always overtake us, because then we would have with us Thee, the sight of Whom prevents reincarnation.

The man whose pride is swelled by birth, power, learning and fortune is not worthy of calling upon Thee—the one objective of those who own nothing.

नमोऽकिञ्चनवित्ताय निवृत्तगुणवृत्तये ।
आत्मारामाय शान्ताय कैवल्यपतये ममः ॥

नन्ये त्वां कालमीशानमनादिनिधमं विभुम् ।
समं चरन्तं सर्वत्र भूतानां यस्मिन् कलिः ॥

न वेद कश्चिद्भगवंश्चिकीर्षितं तवेहमानस्य नृणां विडम्बनम् ।
न यस्य कश्चिद्विदितोऽस्ति कर्हिचिद्वेष्यश्च यस्मिन्निषमा मतिर्नृणाम् ॥

जन्म कर्म च विश्वात्मन्नजस्याकर्तुरात्मनः ।
तिर्थङ्गुषु यादःसु तदत्यन्तविडम्बनम् ॥

शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति गृणन्त्यभीक्ष्णशः स्मरन्ति नन्दन्ति तवेहितं
जनाः ।

त एव पश्यन्त्यचिरेण तावकं भवप्रदाहोपरमं पदाब्जुजम् ॥
अथ विश्वेश विश्वात्मन्निश्वमूर्ते स्तकेषु मे ।
स्नेहपाशमिनं छिन्धि दृढं पाण्डुषु वृष्णिषु ॥
त्यायि नेऽनन्यविषया मतिर्नधुषतेऽसकृत् ।
रतिमुद्ग्रहतादद्वा गङ्गे वैचमुद्वनति ॥

Salutation to the Treasure of the possession-less, in Whom all attributes of matter have ceased to function, the self-reposed, the serene, the Lord of freedom.

I regard Thee as the all-controlling, all-pervading, beginning-and-endless time ; Thou residest equally in all, yet from Thee is the mutual dissension of all beings.

None knows the purpose of Thy actions, O Lord, in the guise of a human being. Thou hast neither any favourite nor any foe, so that men should feel unequally towards Thee.

O Self of the universe, the birth and actions of Thee, Who is the birthless and the actionless Self, as low animals in land and water, and as men and Rishis, is a great mockery.

Those who hear, sing, speak, think of and take pleasure in Thy deeds, and before long Thy lotus feet which turn away the waters of birth and death. Therefore, O Lord and Self of the universe, O universe-formed, cut asunder my strong chain of affection to the Pandus (her family) and the Vrishnis (Krishna's family) so that, O Lord of Mathura, my undivided mind would constantly direct its devotion to Thee like the flowing Ganges, her stream to the ocean !

THE DIET QUESTION

(Continued from page 195)

IN our previous paper we mentioned the substances required for the growth of the animal body, and to replenish the loss that takes place in it. We shall now state whence we obtain those substances and how the animal body grows.

We know that the vegetable kingdom is the life-giver. It is therefore presumed that a few facts about plant-life will not be out of place here.

Plants may be divided into two groups, Cryptogams and Phanerogams ; the former flowerless and the latter flowering. Cryptogams are subdivided into Thallophytes, Bryophytes and Pteridophytes. Thallophytes are plants which have neither roots nor stems nor leaves. Bryophytes have no true roots but

have stems and leaves. Pteridophytes have roots, stems and leaves.

The single-celled plants increase by subdivision independently, repeating the process of division as the protoplasms grow in our bodies. A cell is a round and nearly flat body ; it first becomes oblong and then narrows down in the middle until it looks like the figure 8, when it separates in the middle and thus one becomes divided into two. In others the union of the contents of the two cells, namely sperm (or male) cell and germ (or female) cell is essential to the production of the embryo or the seed. Without this union each of them by itself is incapable of procreation. Thus multiplication takes place by division and then by union. The multiplication of varie-

ties takes place, by budding, by grafting the severed parts, &c. Therefore differentiation of the plants and animals depend more upon functions than upon their mineral constituents. Says Bently in his Botany, "No absolute definition of a plant can however be given in the present state of our knowledge of the organic world, neither is it probable that, as our knowledge increases such will ever be the case." We find that plants hold an intermediate position between minerals and animals, and derive their nourishment from earth, air and water by which they are surrounded, and that they alone have the power of converting inorganic or mineral matter into organic. Plants produce organic matter and animals consume it. Cells can only be formed by the thickened fluid called 'protoplasm,' hence cells can in no case be formed without the influence of living organisms. Doubtless during the whole time that the cells are growing, the protoplasm is in a constant state of motion, although in many cases too slow to be observed.

We are told by the geologists that there is no line of demarkation between minerals and plants.

From the foregoing we have to understand that there is no mineral or vegetable under the sun without the life principle, whether latent or patent. From this standpoint the application of the word 'inorganic' to any object is a misnomer ; for without minerals no life,—plant or animal—can exist.

There are eighty elements known to the chemists, of which thirteen to twenty are found to compose the plants and animals, and sixtyseven to form the chemical basis of the human body ; and no less than seventeen combine in larger or smaller quantities. "The substances which contribute the largest share are the non-metallic elements oxygen, carbon, hydrogen,—oxygen and carbon making up altogether about 85 per cent. of the whole. The most abundant of the metallic elements

are calcium, sodium and potassium," (Kirke's Physiology, page 827, 12th edn.) Therefore we can guess the starting point of physical development belongs to the mineral world, as is well said by Emerson, "The gases gather to the solid firmament ; the chemic lamp arrives at the plant and grows ; arrives at the quadruped and walks ; arrives at the man and thinks."

Clodd in his book 'The Story of Creation' says that, "The existence of nebulous or cloud-like objects in space, which the telescope, aided by the analysis of the spectroscope, proves to be immense masses of glowing gas, goes far to justify the assumption of a yet more discrete state of the atoms which formed the material universe at the outset. But, although we are familiar with matter in an invisible state, e. g., in the element oxygen, which in a combined state, forms nearly half the solid frame work of the globe, we can form no conception of the extreme rarefaction of the primitive atoms. Upon this Helmholtz remarks that 'if we calculate the density of the mass of our planetary system at the time when it was a nebulous sphere which reached to the path of the outermost planet we should find that it would require several millions of cubic miles of such matter to weigh a single grain.' Given, however the play of force and energy upon this diffused matter, the mechanics of the process which resulted in the visible universe are not difficult of explanation."

All the scientists in the world agree in saying that the sun is the source of manifestation, reproduction and differentiation. Without its light no life can find its existence on this earth. The green leaves of the plants give out their oxygen for the sustenance of life, and diffuse carbonic acid from their carbon in the atmosphere. The plants retain the solid carbon combining it with the fluid they draw from the soil by means of their roots and thereby add to their bulk by appro-

priating the required substances from the solution of the soil. To keep up this action a certain amount of solar energy is wanted. The energy imparted by sunshine that is absorbed by the plants, becomes fixed in the carbon and in a more concentrated form in the grains, fruits, &c., and therefore the leaves, stems &c., burn and decay after giving out their oxygen and diffusing carbonic acid, and again commence to thrive and thus the round recommences.

Plants for their sustenance, not only require carbon, water and salts, but nitrogen also, which they receive from the air and assimilate by their green colouring matter called chlorophyl. Save the atmosphere, there is no other source of supply of nitrogen for plants. The

soil has none of it. The protozoa of the lowest form of plants are fitted to directly assimilate from the air, to some extent, both carbon and nitrogen; but not the higher orders, in which these functions are separated.

To recapitulate. The reduction of carbon in the atmosphere, retaining of solar energy, absorbing the solution of fluid from the soil, restoring warmth to the animal body, reduction of the solar heat for the convenience of the animal body, absorbing carbonic acid emitted by the animals and converting them to their food and giving out oxygen in return, are some of the functions of the vegetable kingdom which cannot be performed by any other known agency. (*To be continued*)

T. C. RAJAM IYENGAR.

REVIEWS

HINDUISM: ANCIENT AND MODERN.
By Rai Bahadur Lala *Baij Nath* B. A., Meerut 1905, 8½ × 5, Pp. 340. *

This excellent work first appeared in December 1899, and was at once favourably received at home and abroad. It was time that another edition of it was published, and the author is to be congratulated on the issue of the revised and greatly enlarged edition of the book before us. Lala Baij Nath has not only rewritten many parts of it but has added much new and interesting matter to it, thus increasing the importance of his work as a historical study of the religious, philosophical and social principles and customs of the Hindus. It is enriched by an introduction from the pen of Swami Rama Tirtha, who among other matters writes admirably on the rule of the past in this country and discourses on 'Practical Vedanta' in prose and poetry.

DHAMMAPADA with the Palitext, Sanskrit paraphrase and Bengali translation (all in Bengali character). Edited and published by Mr. *Charu Chandra Basu*. Calcutta 1905, 7¼ × 4¾, Pp. 245. †

We had the pleasure of noticing the first edition of this book in September 1904. It is gratifying to find that a second edition of it has been called for within a year. The work is enhanced in value by a thorough revision and additions of interesting material. We shall be glad to see this beautiful book of moral and spiritual teachings of the Prince of Kapilavastu introduced to every Bengali home.

ARYABHATA OR THE NEWTON OF INDIAN ASTRONOMY. By Mr. *T. Ramalingam Pillai*, B. A. Madras 1905, 4½ × 3½, Pp. 56. ‡

† To be had at 28 Kali Prosad Dutt's Street, Calcutta. Price Rs 1-8.

‡ Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co. Esplanade, Madras. Price As 4.

*Price Rs 3. See Advertisement

"This essay might be viewed as a translation of the Malayalam lecture on 'Aryabhata' delivered by my father, M. R. Ry. S. Sthanu Pillai Avergal," writes our author in his 'Foreword'. The paper was originally contributed to the pages of the *Indian Review* of which the present pamphlet is a reprint. Of the subjects treated in the *Aryashtottara Shata* which is the name of the second part of the *Aryabhatia*, the chief work of Aryabhata, the following have been dealt with by Mr. Pillai :

1. The shape of the Earth.
2. The position of the Earth in space.
3. The attraction of the Earth.
4. The daily rotation of the Earth.
5. The annual revolution of the Earth.
6. The ellipticity of the orbits of the Earth and the other planets.
7. The nature of the revolution of Mercury and Venus.
8. The area of the surface of the Earth.
9. The astronomical notion of the sea.
10. The height of the Earth's atmosphere.
11. The distance of the moon from the Earth in comparison with the other planets.

12. The effect of atmospheric refraction of the rising and setting of the heavenly bodies.
13. The *Ayanachalana* or the precession of the equinoxes.

The pamphlet is exceedingly interesting, if only as showing how the ancient Hindu astronomers were acquainted with the cardinal facts of astronomy by dint of an observation which was altogether unaided by any instruments which can be called scientific in the modern sense. We congratulate Mr. Pillai on his good work and trust he will in conjunction with his worthy father continue to give to the world treasures from out of the store house of Hindu astronomy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SRI BRAHMA DHARA. By the Mahatma Sri Aganya Guru Paramahansa. Luzac & Co., London 1905, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, Pp. 87. Price 3s. 6d.

THE YOGAMRITATARANGINI. By Sri Nilkantha Tirtha (In Sanskrit) Nirnaya-Sagar Press, Bombay 1904, $7\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$, Pp. 25.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE (Atma-jnana). By Swami Abhedananda. Vedanta Society, New York 1905, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$. Price \$ 1.

'DOES THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA LIE THROUGH CALUMNY?'

OUR bright contemporary of the *Wednesday Review* in a late issue, draws attention to certain passages of the Annual Report for 1904-5, of the S. P. G. Mission, Trichinopoly. While we believe neither in the helpless passive attitude of Hinduism towards its aggressors, nor in its criminal neglect towards its less favoured and depressed children, and therefore are not at all surprised that it should be subject to unending calumnies, we admire our contemporary's remarks on the missionary vituperation. They furnish a characteristic contrast. Says the *Wednesday* :—

The Superintending Missionary deplures

that "neither we nor the other religious communities make any progress" and gives out the reasons for it in the following passage—a specimen of choice vocabulary!

"In Hinduism devotion and morality are divorced. Hence the sense of sin—lying, cheating, caste, committing adultery, &c.,—is not keenly felt, though many Hindus are better than their religion. And where there is no sense of sin, no need for a Saviour is felt. The Hindu religion has paralysed the Hindu conscience and so deadened all sensations in the great mass. A Hindu may be most devout and sincere in his religious convictions,

and yet most immoral. We cannot, however, accept converts to Christianity on such terms. Yet, although we are strict in our principles, the Hindus are acute enough to see quite plainly that too many Christians are not strict in theirs, but lead very wicked lives. Nor are they slow to cast these inconsistencies in our teeth. Once when I was expounding the Ten Commandments, the people listened quite quietly till I had finished, and then one man asked, 'Why do the Christians in your village (where my tent was pitched) come at night and steal our sheep?' It is true that these so-called Christians did not belong to our congregation, but the Hindus cannot well discriminate between us, and so, of course, I was rendered speechless. At the same time there is an immense amount of worldliness. The people are very poor as a whole, and will do anything for a few rupees. Plenty of them come to us and say they wish to embrace Christianity, on the condition that we will help them in their poverty, but we have no other course but to reject them. The Roman Catholics, especially in the past, have given people so much assistance, that the latter have come to think that so many rupees for saying so many *Mantras* is only a fair bargain."

There is very little use in arguing with one who is so sweeping in his condemnation and we may content ourselves with the reflection (with apologies to a writer in the *Saturday Review*) that,

'If he call rogue and rascal from a garret
He means you no more mischief than a parrot.'

But the pity of it is that such calumnies are apt to be mistaken for truth by pious and credulous Christians abroad who are naturally in earnest about the spread of Christianity and do not mind parting with large sums of money to send out agents for converting the 'heathen.' However, there is one thing which must be said to the credit of our friend. He is quite impartial in his aspersions, though alarmingly so. "The Brahmin officials are the

bitterest opponents of religion"; "the mingling of the heathens and the Roman Catholics is a great stumbling block"; "next there are the Lutherans who have received so many of our people from caste reasons and who call their religion 'the Pure Gospel'"; "after them come the Weslyans who boast that their religion is not one of forms but that they are more spiritually minded than all other Christians," and so on *ad nauseum*. Of Native Christians in a particular pastorate he has not one kind word to say and he votes them a hopeless lot, just and sure victims to brimstone and blue-fire. As a heroic remedy for such unrelieved wickedness he exclaims in pious accents, "would that all such sinners might be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh and for the saving of their spirit in the day of the Lord." So Satan has his own use and may well congratulate himself on this fact being made known to the world by a minister of God. To be serious, does the reverend gentleman who wrote the report really believe that he would advance the cause of Christianity by such vituperation? Righteous indignation must speak with a less venomous tongue and the language, specimens of which we have extracted, only argues the puerile anger of disappointment.

RENUNCIATION

[Lines suggested on reading Swami Vivekananda's beautiful poem "Let Shyama Dance There."]

I'll make my heart a burning-ground,
Where ev'ryday I'll light some fires:
And feed their flames with those desires,
That, in their thirst, my soul confound!

I'll make my heart a burial-vault,
Where ev'ryday I'll lay to rest
Some aching want, some gnawing pest,
Some fiendish friend of pampered fault!

I'll make my heart a battle-field,
Where ev'ryday I'll meet my foes:
And slay those grim, unnerving woes,
That, in their grip, my passions wield!

M. G. V.

ASTRONOMICAL NOTES

SUPPOSE that (with the exception of our sun) every star in the universe were to be blotted out of existence to-day, we should not know of it for several years. We should continue to receive the light which is already on the way, and the stars would still appear to twinkle as they have always done. In a little over four years the nearest star would suddenly go out of sight. But no one would miss it except the astronomer. After another four years the mysterious disappearance of Sirius would attract more general attention. In a century a few more would be missed, but the majority would remain visible for thousands of years. Some of the stars seen in the most powerful telescopes may be so far off that the light we now see left them when Great Britain was part of the mainland of Europe and the Britons were fighting the hippopotamus, the hyena, and the sabre-toothed tiger.

*

The stars, then, are our links with an infinite past, and the astronomer must for ever look at the more distant of them with the uncanny feeling that he is questioning a ghost. Again, what can the mind make of the statement that there are about 300,000,000 stars which leave their record on the telescopic camera, the great majority of them centres of planetary systems like our own sun; and that between and among these is a perhaps even larger number of dead and dark stars, whose presence we can infer with certainty from the behaviour of their bright neighbours? Professor Alfred Russel Wallace has endeavoured to prove that the universe is limited and the earth the centre. There is no refuting this thesis, but the first proposition rests merely on the fact that there appear to be certain

dark spaces on the outer rim of the space to which our telescopes penetrate, from which it is inferred that the stars grow less frequent as we see farther from the supposed centre and that we are actually looking out through these gaps into the untenanted void. There are, however, two other suppositions equally tenable, either or both of which may contribute to this appearance: (1) that there is a limit to the carrying power of the luminiferous ether so called, and (2) that the bright stars beyond are obscured by the innumerable dark bodies that are present in space. Supposing these arguments are disposed of, there would be nothing to bar the further speculation that there might be many universes and not one universe.

*

The study of the visible Universe shows that it is composed of ascending series of similar systems. For example: (1) *atoms* appear to be spheroidal "star-clusters" of still smaller particles in motion; (2) *suns* and *worlds* are rotating spheroids built up of these atoms; (3) *stellar systems* are rotating spheroids built up of suns and worlds; (4) the visible *Universe* appears to be a rotating spheroid built up of a Milky Way of stellar systems.

It is possible that this largest spheroid, which we call the Universe, may be only one out of innumerable similar spheroids rotating at practically infinite distances from each other and forming a still vaster rotating spheroid.

These speculations could be extended *ad infinitum* at both ends of the series. It would, however, be a waste of time to consider them seriously; they only serve to show how little we know of the great "Riddle of the Universe."

*

It is an amazing thought that any lump of

matter we take into our hands may be a tiny replica of the universe, not dark, silent, and solid, as we have hitherto imagined, but composed of an infinite number of atomic star-clusters revolving in a space which, relatively to their size, is as immense as the heavens, and deploying the whole pageant of sun-lit skies or star-lit nights, to beings with faculties on the same scale, if haply they existed to receive the impression. Thus what the astronomer is doing in his observatory may be an analogous task to that which the chemist or physicist is pursuing in his laboratory, when he investigates the nature of the atom and its electrified corpuscles; and the immeasurable spheroid of the universe as it seems to us may to another being constructed on a different scale be no bigger than a pebble that we pick from the seashore. But at this point it is as well to remind ourselves that the atom and the corpuscles are, like the spheroid itself, hypothetical substances postulated by a theory which may or may not survive the future development of physical science.

*

Ever since the presence of canals or channels (*canali*) on the surface of the planet Mars was first described by the Italian astronomer, G. V. Schiaparelli, in 1877, the question of their character and even of their real existence has been keenly debated.

Within the last few months fresh light has been thrown on the question by a piece of work carried out at the Lowell Observatory at Flagstaff, Arizona. The observers there have always been among the most successful in seeing and drawing the canals; and they resolved to supplement their visual observations by an attempt to photograph them. To secure the required definition of detail it was usually thought necessary at Flagstaff to use only the central portion of the 24in. object glass of the telescope, which accordingly was reduced by a diaphragm to an effective diameter of 12in.; a colour screen was employed

that allowed only the yellow and orange rays to pass; and the extremely sensitive plates which had to be used permitted exposures of only from six to ten seconds, though during that time the utmost care had to be exercised to ensure that the telescope followed the planet smoothly and exactly.

The result was that Mr. Lampland, Professor Lowell's assistant at Flagstaff, succeeded in obtaining in May and June a number of photographs of the planet at different stages of rotation, which show canals quite distinctly and even present indications of the doubling which has been regarded as still more doubtful than the existence of the canals themselves. The defining power of the eye, however, is so much superior to that of the photographic plate that, although some 400 canals and 175 oases have been made out by Professor Lowell himself, the photographs have so far revealed only about 40 canals and four or five oases. If it be admitted that the photographic plate cannot lie and can yield representations only of things that have a real objective existence, the conclusion would seem to be that the canals, whatever be their nature and origin, cannot be mere subjective illusions on the part of certain observers, but have an actual existence as material formations on the surface of Mars.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES

(GLEANED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES)

THE Director-General of Archæology and Dr. Bloch propose to undertake excavations at Rajgir, in the Patna district, during January and February next. In the report for last year of the Bengal Circle of the Archæological Survey, Dr. Bloch remarks that Mr. Marshall considers Rajgir a very promising site.

HIS Highness the Maharaja Saheb of Alwar has contributed Rs. 500 to the Ramakrishna

Sevashrama, Kankhal, for which the Ashrama offers its best thanks to him. The excellent work done by the Sevashrama will no doubt be recognized in time by all our people, prince and peasant, and receive the public support which it richly deserves.

MR. Edison states that his storage battery, which he has now perfected, will drive a two-ton truck at the rate of thirty-three miles an hour, at a cost of 58 per cent. of the sum necessary to maintain a horse. The battery will enable an automobile, under favourable conditions, to run 150 miles on one charge. Mr. Edison is building an immense factory wherein to manufacture the batteries.

A rather startling scientific discovery, which, if accurate, will be of vital interest to agriculture, has just come to hand. The idea has been conceived of applying the Darwinian theory of selection to grain in the belief that a wheat could be developed which would survive droughts in the arid regions. Selecting the best grains of experimental crops, success has been arrived at sufficient for scientific experts to become interested in the work. One of these has committed himself to the belief that the time is near when all the semi-arid regions will be under cultivation.

FOR eighteen years, writes Mr. John Burns in the *Pall Mall*, London has been without a proper Municipal Hall. Like Cinderella, the County Council works and lives in the basement dwellings of Spring Gardens, while the City Corporation and the Borough Councils have fine Town Halls or Municipal Buildings. The larger and purer environment, he thinks, will cause idleness, overlapping, red tape and jobbery to disappear. He attributes much of the mazy conduct of the War Office to the rabbit-warren habitation of that department, for "basement tenements are notoriously responsible for low health and lower morals"

IT has lately been reported that, on the principle of the old adage, "take a hair of the dog that bit you," an almost certain cure for snake bite is the injection of a small portion of the bile of the reptile which has attacked any one ; and which,—the snake being generally killed on the spot,—is naturally at hand. The gall-bladder is extracted, its content filtered, and the fluid injected under the skin. The experiments made have given the best results, those recovering from the poisonous bite of a South American snake coming off with nothing worse than an abscess at the point of penetration of the serpent's tooth.

WHEN the sponge is brought up alive out of the sea, it in no way resembles the sponge with which we make daily intimate acquaintance, for it is then surrounded by an outer skin or membrane, in which substance, seemingly at the animal's will, pores appear and disappear. Its cavities are filled by a sticky, glutinous fluid of a greyish-brown colour of the consistency of treacle, known to the fishermen as the "milk of the sponge," but the scientific appellation of which is "sarcode." "Sarcode" is, in fact, the only living portion of the animal, and this, when cleared away, leaves the flexible, inorganic skeleton with which we are so familiar.

TO him who believes in immortality, death is a jar—a break—a deep, mysterious change, but not the end of life. See how free it makes him. How it breaks his tyrannies. He can undertake works of self-culture or the development of truth, far, far too vast for the earthly life of any Methuselah to finish, and yet smile calmly and work on when men tell him he will die before his work is done. Die! Shall not the sculptor sleep a hundred times before the statue he begins to-day is finished, and wake a hundred times more ready for his work, bringing to it with a hundred new mornings the strength and visions that have come to him in slumber?—*Phillips Brooks*.

MR. Crowley, head of the late Kanchanjungha expedition, is in Calcutta. He will shortly proceed to Europe. He proposes to organise another climbing party with which he will return to the attack next year. Mr. Crowley describes the formation of Kanchanjungha as follows:—"Imagine a tea cup broken in half; take one of the broken halves, stand it upright, and clap a handful of snow against the hollow. That will give you an idea of the mountain with the glacier which rests upon it." The rocks above the glacier leading to the summit are climbable if it were necessary to attempt a direct ascent, but Mr. Crowley considers that it will not be necessary as there is a much easier way.

THE Bengal Landholders' Association has circulated an appeal for reviving the weaving industry in Bengal. It suggests three methods, *viz.*, (1) to start weaving mills in Bengal; (2) to introduce improved European or Japanese hand-loom; and (3) to supply weavers with simple and inexpensive looms like the fly-shuttle loom, and supply them with cheap yarn. Six mills will be required to cope with a portion of the demand. As the Association is doubtful of attracting capital for the purpose at present, it proposes to have one good mill of 2,000 looms as an experiment, the cost of establishing which will be Rs. 7½ lakhs. At first it will start a small factory of twenty looms, which will cost Rs. 10,000.

ARTIFICIAL cotton has been manufactured recently from pure wood at a cost which compares favourably with that of the natural article. In the experiments which have been conducted in Bavaria the wood is cut into thin sticks one-sixteenth of an inch in diameter. These are subjected to the action of steam until the wood fiber has become thoroughly disintegrated. It is then treated with sodium sulphite for forty hours; next it is washed and crushed, and washed again, and the fibres are

further bleached by chloride of lime. The resultant matter, which is pure cellulose, is heated under pressure with a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids and chloride of zinc, and to the paste which is formed a small proportion of gelatine and castor-oil is added. A spinning-machine forms the cellulose into fine threads, which are washed in soda and dried, and afterwards woven into what is said to be a very good fabric. When the process is placed on a commercial basis, the results will be watched with considerable interest.

WE have been asked by the Secretary of the Managing committee of the Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Hindu National Girls' School, Peddu Naick's Pettah, to publish the following:—

The Girls' School opened under the auspices of the Aryan Young Men's Association, of which Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunatha Row is the President, has grown in its importance, and the public having found its usefulness as a unique institution to impart female education on Hindu national lines are patronising it by sending their children in good numbers. The present premises, No. 5, Muthukrishnan Street, which has been placed at the disposal of the committee by its generous proprietor, being insufficient to accommodate the children who are daily increasing in numbers, the committee is obliged to look for more spacious quarters. Under the circumstances, the committee begs to appeal to the generous public for subscriptions towards the building and maintenance fund of the institution. Considering the importance of imparting education to our girls on reformed national lines, the committee hopes that this appeal in such a sacred cause will not be made in vain and our generous countrymen and foreign sympathisers will readily respond to our prayer.

Subscriptions will be thankfully received by the President of the Managing committee of

the School, No. 5, Muthukrishnan Street, Mint Buildings, Madras.

I was reading the other day, in a strange book, of the influence of magic upon the spirit, the vague dreams of the deeper mind that could be awakened by the contemplation of symbol. It seemed to me to be unreal and fantastic, a manufacturing of secrets, a playing of whimsical tricks with the mind; and yet I ought not to say that, because it was evidently written in good faith. But I have since reflected that it is true in a sense of all those who are sensitive to the influences of the spirit. Nature has a magic for many of us—that is to say, a secret power that strikes across our lives at intervals, with a message from an unknown region. And this message is aroused too by symbols; a tree, a flash of light on lonely clouds, a flower, a stream—simple things that we have seen a thousand times—have sometimes the power to cast a spell over our spirit, and to bring something that is great and incommunicable near us. This must be called magic, for it is not a thing which can be explained by ordinary laws, or defined in precise terms; but the spell is there, real, insistent, undeniable; it seems to make a bridge for the spirit to pass into a far-off, dimly apprehended region; it gives us a sense of great issues and remote visions; it leaves us with a longing which has no mortal fulfilment. —“Cornhill Magazine” (October):
“From a College Window.”

A Request

Those who possess letters written by Swami Vivekananda or know facts and incidents of his life would greatly oblige the Editor of this paper by furnishing copies of the former and communicating the latter to him.

The Arena

(ALBERT BRANDT: TRENTON, N. J.)

CONTENTS FOR OCTOBER

Portrait of John Moody.
The Conservation of Monopoly, John Moody.
Proportional Representation in Switzerland, Robert Tyson.
The Woman's Club Movement: its origin, significance, and present results, Alma A. Rogers.
“Mart,” F. Edwin Elwell.
Uses and Abuses of Italian Travel, Carl S. Vrooman.
The American Doctrine of Shipping-Rights, William W. Bates.
Portrait of William W. Bates.
Floyd Campbell: A Knight of Municipal Honor, B O Flower.
Portrait of Floyd Campbell.
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A Pastoral of the Hills: A story, Antoinette McKim.
Politics, the People and the Trusts as seen by Cartoonists: (with Fifteen Illustrations).
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Humanity is one—the White Plague at “Bargain” Rates: A Cartoon, Ryan Walker.
In the Mirror of the Present, Editorial Comment.
A History of the Master-trust, A Book Study.
Books of the Day, Reviews of New Works.
Notes and Comments, Editorial Chat.

The Indian Review.

CONTENTS FOR OCTOBER

The Re-organisation of Russia. By Sir H. H. Johnston, K. C. B.
India and English Party Politics. Sir William Wedderburn, Bart, Mr. Eardley Norton, Barrister-at-law, Mr. H. Beveridge, I. C. S., Mr. Francis H. Skrine, I. C. S. (Retired), Sir William Brampton Gurdon, K. C. M. G., M. P.
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The Brahmans and Kayasthas of Bengal. By Babu Girindranath Dutt, B. A., M. R. A. S.
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Current Events. By Rajduari.
World of Books, Utterances of the Day, Etc.