

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

Vol. XIX, No. 219, OCTOBER, 1914.

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उच्छिद्यत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

Vol. XIX]

OCTOBER 1914

[No. 219

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
(*In Madras 1892—1893.—III.*)

The opposite extremes always meet and resemble each other. The greatest self-forgotten devotee whose mind is absorbed in the contemplation of the infinite Brahman and the most debased, drunken maniac present the same externals. At times we are surprised with the analogical transition from one to the other.

Extremely nervous men* succeed as religious men. They become fervent over whatever they take into their head.

All are mad in this world; some are mad after gold, others after women and some are

* "In the psychopathic temperament we have the emotionality which is the *sine qua non* of moral perception; we have the intensity and tendency to emphasis which are the essence of practical moral vigor; we have the love of metaphysics and mysticism which carry one's interest beyond the surface of the sensible world. * * * * If there is such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite perceptivity." For further discussion, see the same Chapter on Religion and Neurology in Prof. James's "Varieties of Religious Experience."

after God; if drowning is to be the fate of man, it is better to be drowned in an ocean of milk than in a pool of dung—a devotee replied who was charged with madness.

The God of Infinite Love and the object of Love sublime and infinite is painted blue. Krishna is painted blue, so also Solomon's† God of Love. It is a natural law that anything sublime and infinite is associated with blue colour. Take a handful of water, it is as white as anything; but look at the deep wide ocean it is as blue as anything. Examine the space near you, it is colourless; but look at the infinite expanse of the sky, it is blue.

That the Hindus absorbed in the ideal lacked in realistic observation is evident from this. Take painting and sculpture. What do you see in the Hindu paintings? all sorts of grotesque and unnatural figures. What do you see in a Hindu temple? a *Chaturbhanga Nârâyana* or some such thing. But take into consideration any Italian picture or Grecian

† See Old Testament, The Song of Solomon, Chapters 1. 5., 5. 14.

statue—what a study of nature you find in them. A gentleman for 20 years sat burning a candle in his hand, in order to paint a lady carrying a candle in her hand.

The Hindus progressed in the subjective sciences.

There are as many different conducts taught in the Vedas as there are differences in human nature. What is taught to an adult cannot be taught to a child.

A Guru should be a doctor of men. He should understand the nature of his disciple and teach him the method which suits him best.

There are infinite ways of practising Yoga. Certain methods have produced successful result with certain men. But two are of general importance with all. (1) Reaching the reality

by negating every known experience. (2) Thinking that you are everything, the whole universe. The second method though it leads to the goal sooner than the first is not the safest one. It is generally attended with great dangers which may lead a man astray and deter him from obtaining his aim.

There is this difference between the Love taught by Christianity and that taught by Hinduism. Christianity teaches us to love our neighbours as we should wish them to love us. Hinduism asks us to love them as ourselves, in fact to see ourselves in them.

A mongoose is generally kept in a glass-case with a long chain attached to it, so that it may go about freely. When it scents danger as it wanders about, with one jump it goes into the glass-case. So is a Yogi in this world.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

ŚWAMI Vivekananda used to say that the gist of the whole Gita is contained in the third verse of the second chapter: **क्लृब्धं मास्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्स्वय्युपपद्यते** etc.—“Do not become unnerved, (unsexed, literally) Oh Pārtha! That does not befit *you*. Giving up petty weakness of heart, rise Oh, the terror of foes!” This is the pivot on which turns the whole discourse in the Gita, for all the chapters go to prove how it is only a petty weakness of heart in which Arjuna has been indulging in refusing to fight. When this long discourse is finished, Arjuna admits that all his doubts and his obsession have vanished and he is ready to do Sri Krishna's bidding. So to understand the real purport of the Gita, we have to keep in mind this third verse of the second chapter.

Now what makes Sri Krishna dilate on all the different paths of Yoga which lead to the

supreme goal of human life? Not that he wants to extol one of them at the expense of the others; it would be too much to assume that he would go beyond his purpose to embark on a huge controversy while standing between arrayed armies about to close in fierce combat. His clear intention is to show that in view of the supreme end of human life the path of Karma-yoga which dictates to the Kshatriya his duty to fight is as important and beneficial as any other path of Yoga. Into the perplexed mind of Arjuna, he wants to drive home this point, and that is why he has to dwell on the nature and import of the fourfold paths of Yoga. It is not his object to *compare* their merits, but to set them forth side by side so as to prove the claims of Karma-yoga to be regarded as one of them.

But commentators, ancient and modern, have been all along trying to read into Sri

Krishna's discourse an issue over which they themselves fight with one another, namely, the comparative merits of the fourfold Yogas. If such comparison had ever been the object in Sri Krishna's mind, then surely he would not have left every commentator free to quote texts declaring the path of Yoga he himself upholds as the superior path. Rather he would have given his own verdict in clear unambiguous terms and would have adhered to it throughout the chapters. But every student of the Gita knows that such a well-sustained consistent verdict as to the superiority of one Yoga over the others is never pronounced by the Divine Charioteer, and that is because he never chose to join issue with our philosophical commentators.

Even when, we find, in the first verse of the third chapter Arjuna urges the necessity of deciding the superiority of one Yoga over another,—even when the best opportunity offers itself to Sri Krishna for pronouncing a verdict of superiority, he clearly avoids such a verdict and places Karma and Jñāna on the same footing as forming two alternative paths of discipline—*लोकेस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्टा* etc. Later on in the third verse of the fifth chapter he declares that these two paths are not essentially different seeing that a man following either of them reaps the result of following both. It is impossible for a preacher of such views about the Yoga paths to be striking the balance between them in order to establish the superiority of one over the others. Sri Krishna was pre-eminently a prophet of harmony and he harmonised the fourfold Yogas not by subordinating any or some of them but by co-ordinating all together as equally efficient ways of attaining Moksha.

Every impartial student will admit that the Gita preaches Karma-yoga with a special emphasis such as the special circumstances under which it was preached evidently de-

manded. But it is one thing to preach Karma-yoga with such emphasis, and quite another to preach its superiority. Even if it be shown by chapter and verse that the Karma-yoga, preached in Gita is able to utilise the other Yogas as feeder disciplines, as necessary elements in its own success, it would not prove that the Gita preaches the superiority of Karma-yoga; for the same kind of utility belongs to any three Yogas for a man practising the fourth. So we must always bear in mind while studying the Gita the important fact that the Gita does not seek to uphold the intrinsic superiority of any of the Yogas over the others, however much it may be shewn to indicate the greater fitness of Karma-yoga to dictate to Arjuna, stationed as he is in life, his own duty to fight. The Karma-yoga of the Gita is a doctrine broad-based on a real harmony of all the fourfold Yogas,—a harmony which precludes the question of the superiority of any of them over another. It is this non-sectarian and synthetic character of the Gita which fully justifies the traditional description of it as the faithful epitome of the Upanishads,—as the milk of salvation which the cow of the Upanishads yielded for mankind through the Divine Cowherd.

But it was customary for the ancient commentators to ply their intellect to its utmost for deriving scriptural authority for their special doctrines from the threefold Prasthānas, viz. the Vedantic Sruti such as the Upanishads, the Vedantic Smṛiti such as the Brahma-sutras and the Vedantic Purana such as the the Gita. The real ultimate object underlying this custom was not merely to excel in the soundness of one's theories but to establish the practice of one's doctrines on the basis of what was considered the strongest proof, *Sābda-pramāna*. But from a healthy emulation in seeking scriptural authority, this custom degenerated in the philosophical ages almost into a noisy wrangle for monopolising and exploiting the scriptures in the exclusive

interests of particular doctrines. But we of the modern age ought to outlive these useless controversies,—useless, of course, in so far as they seek to fit all manner of scriptural texts into some particular doctrines, but useful no doubt in enabling us to trace the scriptural sources of all the spiritual disciplines and doctrines in vogue amongst us. It is incumbent therefore on every modern exponent of our scriptures to remember that he will not advance in any measure the cause of scriptural interpretation in India if he overlooks the harmony that underlies our scriptures or the three Prasthānas in order that a particular doctrine or a particular Yoga may be shewn to monopolise all their texts. Such monopoly of scriptural authority might have been the dream of antiquated exegetics, but ours is an age of harmony and reconciliation.

Deep interest has been awakened all over India by the announcement that that learned scholar and antiquarian, Pundit Bal Gangadhar Tilak is going to publish a new interpretation of the teachings of the Gita. It is well-known how the Gita has been called the Bible of modern India, exercising supreme hold on the minds of our countrymen today, and if the author of "The Arctic Home in the Vedas" comes forward to interpret the Gita, we would consider the event to be a befitting tribute to the importance of the scripture as also to the talent of the Pundit. His recent sermons on the Gita delivered during the Ganapati Festival at Poona come too meagrely reported to us to convey any clear idea as to the trend of his new interpretations,—as to whether they recognise a real harmony of the Yogas, or constitute a brief for the supremacy of one over the others. Still we suppose some new occasional importance has been lent to the whole subject to justify our taking it up for short suggestive notes on it. Let us all remember that a new era of synthesis has dawned upon our ancient culture, and while the greatest liberty is allowed to

everybody to choose his own path of spiritual discipline and to fortify his faith by authority derived from the Vedic scriptures, no man should ignore in his study of the scriptures or the three Prasthānas the fundamental axiom that they form the fountainhead of a synthetic spiritual culture, combining in themselves the sources of the Advaita, Qualified Advaita and Dvaita on the one hand and of Karma-yoga, Jnana-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Raja-yoga on the other. A harmony of all these doctrines and disciplines is the most fundamental lesson of the scriptures and he misses their real import and beauty who omits to learn this lesson first.

And so Swami Vivekananda says in one of his lectures: "Many times the great sages of yore themselves could not understand the underlying harmony of the Upanishads. Many times, even sages quarrelled, and so much so that at times it became a proverb, that there are no sages who do not differ. But the time requires that a better interpretation should be given to this underlying harmony of the Upanishadic texts; whether they are dualistic, or non-dualistic, quasi-dualistic, or so forth, it has to be shown before the world at large; and this work is required as much in India as outside of India, and I, through the grace of God, had the great fortune to sit at the feet of one, whose whole life was such an interpretation, whose life, a thousandfold more than whose teaching, was a living commentary on the texts of the Upanishads, was, in fact, the spirit of the Upanishads living in human form. Perhaps I have got a little of that harmony; I do not know whether I shall be able to express it or not. But this is my attempt, my mission in life, to show that the Vedantic schools are not contradictory, that they all necessitate each other, all fulfil each other, and one, as it were, a stepping-stone to the other, until the goal, the Advaita, the Tattvamasī, is reached."

IS WAR AN EVIL?

CERTAINLY it is, but then it is one of those evils which the world, constituted as it is, can never perfectly shake off. The world will be the world always, and its evils, as Swami Vivekananda used to put it, will like gout be driven off from one place to re-appear somewhere else. The kingdom of Heaven is within man; without, it will always be the world.

The world, Indian philosophy says, is the diversified play and process of the three *Gunas*. None of them you can eliminate fully from this world, and the second, namely *Rajas*, which makes for the assertion of self or individuality always in the narrow sense, is bound to produce strife in the collective or individual life. The problem is to keep this aggressive principle under the control of the first *Guna*, *Sattva*, the relating principle revealing a wider self or individuality. But this problem will exist so long as the world exists and the chances of its meeting with its solution are often found to be fewer than those of its missing it. So strife between man and man, race and race or nation and nation is an evil which the world must accept as a necessary contingency.

War is the larger expression of this unsolved strife. You cannot abolish it altogether; you can only try to minimise its chances, and that is, they say, one of the aims of modern statecraft. But alas! that aim must remain unfulfilled so long as political nationalism remains the foundation of European statecraft. So long as grabbing for power continues, so long as the compass of national life points towards wealth, so long as civilisation does not essentially mean plain living and high thinking, diplomacy will serve only to postpone war, but never to obviate in any measure its necessity. History proves that modern diplomacy delays war only to make it more

furious. Statecraft, then, is like that exorcist's mustard into which the very devil to be cast out by its means has entered.

Western civilisation therefore cannot out-grow the vandalism of war, and even if we credit it with an honest aim of minimising its chances, we find in that respect too it is a failure.

But nothing that happens in our world is an unmixed good or an unmixed evil. Count Moltke said: "Without war the world would stagnate and lose itself in materialism." There is relative truth in this bold dictum of militarism. European history specially, we find, corroborates this doctrine. War always implies a high pitch of strenuous collective exertion and thereby proves to be a mighty set-off against the stagnation and disintegration of selfish and idle luxury. In history therefore we would sometimes find people making war for the sake of war itself. A modern body politic often rushes into war outside to heal up sores that fester within. But all these cases prove the usefulness of war in the life of such nations only as have to grow by self-seeking. They have chosen from the outset a line of growth which lies through increasing self-assertiveness in constant conflicts of material interest with others. When progress lies through such power of self-assertion, its chances would be very often jeopardised by peace. German history illustrates this fact very clearly. Industrialism could never have raised England to power, had it not been itself preconditioned by success in war. Whole Europe is constitutionally committed to a policy of grab-and-fight. So Moltke's justification of war applies only in the case of countries which adopt the European type of national life and endeavour. Mighty upheavals other than that of war may also call forth the most strenuous self-exertion

of society, specially when that society has evolved with a collective aim other than the political.

Ruskin tells us that war is the foundation of all arts, of all high virtues and faculties of man. Ruskin may be giving utterance only to the testimony of European history. The most ancient folklore of European countries, we find, seeks to educate the human mind through its sentiments of the terrible and the brave. Ancient art in Europe loved to tarry and spend itself on forms of strength and bravery. On the anvil of war was forged the type of manhood Europe adores today. It is war which makes self-sacrifice among common people a passion such as Christianity failed to make. Moltke's theory of war as a preventive of stagnation points out the negative aspect of the same beneficence of war in Europe that Ruskin upholds as forming in its positive aspect the foundation of art and manhood.

Selfishness is utter selfishness when centred in the individual's own self, but centred in his family, it blooms into unselfish family virtues on his part. This is growth of manhood no doubt, but with a serious reservation. So the growth of manhood through European nationalism is an exaltation of virtue along with vice, and it may be that in war this mixture is all aglow as in the heat of chemical combination.

Art has to do with what in Sanskrit are called the nine *rasas* or abstract æsthetic sentiments. Of these the *Vira* and the *Vibhatsa*, the brave and the terrible, bear special affinity to war as also to some other types of human experience. War may thus be considered as a factor in their development and through them in the development of art. But it is overdoing the point to say that war is the foundation of all arts and of all high virtues. The virtue of bravery, that is fearlessness, may be of the very essence of real manhood, and in war we may be forced to display something of this fearlessness. Besides

there is a subtle joy in every self-forgetful self-exertion, and war forces on us a taste of this. So on the battlefield, the breath of Death itself touches the human soul to lift it up to some strange ennobling experiences no doubt. But the value of such experiences is doubtful, for the stimulation of reckless bravery comes to a soldier like the stimulation of an intoxicant or fever, and what sustains him through such repeated paroxysms are the issues of the battles he fights. So in reality what counts ethically and æsthetically in war is the initial readiness of the mind to stake life and all its comforts in the undertaking. It is there that the attitude of fearlessness is of real permanent value, and even the terrible becomes something inviting in this mental attitude. The bravery displayed under the maddening din and clash of battle is more a nervous stimulation than a free exercise of will-power. But the perfect readiness to forego life and everything in a cause with which one is identified is an achievement of human will possible not only in war but in other walks and undertakings of life as well.

So if art is to have war for its foundation, it is the worse for it. Such art may easily degenerate into a brutalising factor in civilisation. To say that such is the art of Europe is to ignore the tremendous debt which European art owes to Christianity. European nationalism has rather spoilt the warmth and the depth of that art-life which Christianity has been fostering. The brave and the terrible in human sentiment are conducive to real civilisation, only when they have their setting and fulfilment in the sublime. In India, for example, all the *rasas* or æsthetic sentiments are made to play an ancillary role to that of the sublime or the religious sentiment. The brave and the terrible are spiritualised in the cult of Bhawani or Kali the Mother, and thus sublimated they find their highest scope and consummation. The utmost terribleness of war becomes a sublime sacrament of religion

and a religious mood is realised where the creation and destruction of all the worlds are put on the same scale as it were. And here it is religion and not war that supplies the foundation of art.

In spite of such justifications of war by European writers, Europe has unmistakably raised in recent times its voice of protest against it. She has actually experienced that the abundance of woe and misery war brings in its train far outweighs all its so-called benefits. Anxiety has increased *pari passu* with armaments and every nation inwardly groans under that tyranny of the war-demon which they are powerless to throw off. There is no question now that war is an evil which even modern statecraft is unequal to cope with. Mr. S. H. Swiny, that thoughtful English editor, says that "the root of the evil" is "the want in the modern world of any recognised standard of international righteousness." He admits that "such a standard once existed, when the Catholic Faith as interpreted by the Catholic Church was universally accepted in the West. But not only had that standard the defects of the narrow and obscurantist creed on which it rested, but it of necessity grew weaker continually with the decay of Catholic institutions and Catholic doctrine. It was in public life that the effects of that decay were first felt; and as a result for many centuries international relations were given over to the naked rule of force."

The remedy indicated above has to be properly understood. The reaction against the Catholic Faith which pulled down its wonderful hegemony has gradually served to de-humanise Europe, subjecting national and international fortunes and relations more to the arbitrament of brute force than to anything else. Is it possible now for Europe to go back and place herself again under the hegemony of religion,—religion, of course, in its truest and widest sense—the unity which underlies and supports the diversity of creeds? Will each nation care to remodel itself and its institu-

tions on lines which this religious aim in collective life would indicate? For unless a new nationalism arises in every country under the leading of religion, international relations can never be reconstructed on a religious basis. We find now-a-days the diplomacy of kings punctuated as it were by the name of the very God whom their nationalism has deposed. The idea or the mere shadow is there, though the reality has fled long ago. Is it possible to bring the nations back under the wardenship of religion,—to alter the course and the aim of their life? Let Europe when emerging from the inferno of the present war answer this question.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

XIX.

7th May 1895, New York.

54. W. 33.

Dear Mrs. B—

* * * I had a newspaper from India with a publication in it of Dr. Barrow's short reply to the thanks sent over from India. Miss T— will send it to you. Yesterday I received another letter from India from the president of the Madras Meeting to thank the Americans and to send me an address..... This gentleman is the chief citizen of Madras and a Judge of the Supreme Court, a very high position in India.

I am going to have two public lectures more in New York in the upper hall of the Mott's Memorial Building. The first one will be on Monday next, on the Science of Religion. The next, on the Rationale of Yoga. * *

Ever gratefully your son,

Vivekananda

XX,

Percy, New Hampshire,
June 7th, 1895.

I am here at last with Mr. L—. This is one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen. Imagine a lake surrounded with hills covered with a huge forest, with nobody but ourselves. So lovely, so quiet, so restful and you may imagine how glad I am to be here after the bustle of cities.

It gives me a new lease of life to be here. I go into the forest alone and read my Gita and am quite happy. I will leave this place in about ten days and go to Thousand Islands Park. I will meditate by the hour there and be all alone to myself. The very idea is ennobling.

—

XXI.

54 West 33rd Street, New York.
June 1895.

I have just arrived home. The trip did me good and I enjoyed the country and the hills, and especially Mr. L—'s country-house in New York. * *

May the Lord bless L— wherever he goes. He is one of the few sincere souls I had the privilege in this life to come across.

All is for good. All conjunctions are for subsequent disjunction. I hope I will be perfectly able to work alone. The less help from men the more from the Lord! Just now I received a letter from an English gentleman in London who had lived in India in the Himalayas with two of my brethren. He asks me to come to London.

Since writing to you my pupils have come round me with help and classes will go on nicely now, no doubt. I am so glad of it, because teaching has become a part of my life, as necessary of my life as eating or breathing.

Yours affly.

Vivekananda.

P. S.—* * How easily this world can be deluded by humbugs! What a mass of fraud has gathered over the devoted head of poor humanity since the dawn of civilisation!

—

XXII.

Thousand Islands Park,
August, 1895.

* * Now here is another letter from Mr. Sturdy. I send it over to you. See how things are being prepared ahead. Don't you think this coupled with Mr. L—'s invitation as a Divine call? I think so and am following it. I am going by the end of August with Mr. L— to Paris and then I go to London.

What little can be done for my brethren and my work is all the help I want from you now. I have done my duty by my people fairly well. Now for the world that gave me this body—the country that gave me the ideas, the humanity which allows me to be one of them!

The older I grow the more I see behind the idea of the Hindus that *man* is the greatest of all beings. So say the Mahomedans too. The angels were asked by Allah to bow down to Adam. Iblis did not and therefore he became Satan. This earth is higher than all heavens; this is the greatest school in the universe; and the Mars or Jupiter people cannot be higher than us, because they cannot communicate with us. The only so-called higher beings are the departed, and these are nothing but men who have taken another body. This is finer, it is true, but still a *man-body*, with hands and feet, and so on. And they live on this earth in another *ākāsha*, without being absolutely invisible. They also think, and have consciousness, and everything else like us. So they also are men, so are the Devas, the angels. But man alone becomes *God*, and they all have to become men again in order to become God. * *

IN THE HOLY LAND.

(Continued from page 172.)

ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM.

The sun shone benignly and little whiffs of cloud, light and transparent, deepened the intense blue of the sky, as we set out from Jerusalem for the birthplace of One who has so vitally affected the spiritual history of the world. Through the Jaffa Gate we went and along the white road that leads to Bethlehem. Over this ground the boy Jesus probably journeyed with His parents when they went up to Jerusalem. We drove across a wide plain and shortly afterwards ascended a hill passing near a wayside well, known as the Well of the Magi. Tradition asserts that the three Wise Men halted here to rest, when weary and dispirited from the fruitless search for the King of the Jews. Stopping to draw some water to drink, they saw clearly reflected in the still surface, the Star which had led them to Jerusalem. They lifted their eyes heavenwards, and "Lo, the star which they had seen in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was."

In the course of our drive we came to the Convent of *Mar Elias*, occupying a prominent position on the crest of a hill, and a little later reached a point where we obtained our first view of Bethlehem standing on a terraced hill-side, and before us were the landmarks recording the proximity of that city. Turning sharply to the right and descending the road, the Tomb of Rachael is approached, a small building with a white dome, close to the roadside. This spot is revered by Jews, Christians and Moslems as the scene of the touching story of Rachael's death. "And Rachael died and was buried in the way of Ephrath, which is Bethlehem." The very ground is pulsating with a thousand memories of the old pastoral life of primitive Israel in

the patriarchal times, and in the air itself there seems throbbing the sound of many voices long since hushed. Innumerable sheep and goats are seen on the hills around and one can imagine he hears the bleating of Abraham's flocks and the tinkling of the bells of Rebekah's camels! It was in the neighbouring fields of Boaz that Ruth gleaned after the reapers; it was here that the afflicted Naomi lifted up her voice and wept: it was upon the surrounding hills that David, in his shepherd-boyhood, watched his father's flocks; and when he played his harp, the air resounded with the beautiful and spiritual psalms which have echoed down the centuries.

Not far from the gate of Bethlehem is the well where David quenched his thirst, and in later years exclaimed, when in the cave of Adullam, "Oh! that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!" In Palestine, wells serve as links with the historic past. They were the resting-places of caravans and wayfaring folk; the places of meeting with the women who came to fill their water-jars. They are sacred too, to a certain extent, and it is almost as much sacrilege to destroy a well as to defile a mosque or injure a tomb.

BETHLEHEM.

Bethlehem, the pride of Jerusalem, the place of sacred song and story, is, with the exception of the Holy Sepulchre, without a rival in point of romance and mystery. As we enter the town of white, flat-roofed houses, we look upon a scene that, for its setting, hardly has varied in 1900 years. Thoughts of the eager Shepherds kneeling before the manger: the dramatic appearance of the three Wise Men of the Gospel narrative, as they approached with gold and frankincense and myrrh to worship the new-born Babe, are present with me as I walk up the main street. We at length reach an archway, through which we emerge into a broad open square, at the further end of which is

THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY.

An enormous pile of buildings, with a grim and formidable exterior stands over the spot where the little Christ-child was supposed to have been born. They consist of the Church of the Nativity, with the three convents, Latin, Greek and Armenian. A portion of the church was erected by the Empress Helena, the Mother of the Emperor Constantine, in the early part of the 4th century. It is therefore one of the oldest monuments of Christian architecture in the world, and from the days of its first consecration has continued an uninterrupted career of Christian worship. The northern transept belongs to the Armenians and has in it two altars. The stately-looking nave with long double lines of Corinthian pillars, some of the stones of which are said to have once formed a part of the Temple of Jerusalem, belongs to the Greeks, who have set up in the central portion a highly decorated *Eikonostasis*, or screen. From the church, we descend to the subterranean vault over which the whole structure was built, and at the entrance of a long winding passage we come to the

GROTTO OF THE NATIVITY.

Ecclesiastical tradition has placed the actual scene of the Nativity here, and we find ourselves in an irregular chapel dimly lighted by costly hanging lamps. A marble slab marks the spot, in which is imbedded a silver star bearing on it the Latin inscription, "*Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est,*" of which the translation is, "Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary." In an adjoining recess was discovered a wooden manger, now deposited in the Basilica of St. Maria Maggiore at Rome. There are other chapels, one containing an altar with a picture representing the dream of Joseph ordering the flight into Egypt, and another beyond known as the Chapel of the Innocents.

In these scenes, the haunt of all nations, where the infinite drama, so old but perenn-

ially and mysteriously new, took place, linger many Russian pilgrims. What wonder that they are fired by a large enthusiasm, an untellable joy, and are almost overwhelmed with the idea that before them is the very place they had been taught to revere above all others! The thought of that Babe of poor parents, lying in a manger, may be, has to them a vivid pathos, more heart-expanding, more penetrating than any other incident in the life of Christ: the simple appeal of the Child is so touching! Many prayers were murmured and blessings invoked. Each pilgrim pursued his own devotion, immersed in a strange interior solitude, into which surely entered an unseen ray of sacred light.

CHRISTMASTIDE.

All Jerusalem gathers in Bethlehem to take part in the great festival which is held on Christmas Eve: the town is filled to overflowing with pilgrims and peasants, many of whom have travelled long distances from the hamlets among the hills. At 10 p. m. a service is held at the church which is thronged by a vast congregation. When the organ peals forth the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the choir sings with marvellous effect, and a grand procession of which the Patriarch is the central and most distinguished figure, enters the great Basilicá. He is preceded by a cross-bearer and monks carrying lighted candles, followed by a numerous retinue of important people. In his arms he bears a waxen effigy of the Infant Jesus resting on a cushion laid on a bed of straw. To the accompaniment of this inspiring music the procession advances slowly through the densely crowded building to the Grotto of the Nativity, where the image is handed to a deacon, while the Patriarch intones the verses from the Gospel of St. Luke, "The days were accomplished that she should be delivered;" he then takes the image, places it on the silver star, and continues, "And here she brought forth her first-born son." Then, enfolding the image in a

lace garment, recites, "And *here* wrapped Him in swaddling clothes." He now carries it to the adjoining chapel of the Manger and says, "And *here* laid Him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn."

As the procession returns to the church, an indescribable emotion grows, and the whole congregation rich and poor, women and men rise to their feet, striving to catch a glimpse of the image of the child. The *Te Deum* is then sung by the choir, augmented by famous voices from other churches, and the imposing ceremonial is at an end. It is an amazing sight, this multitude gathered to watch the procession of the image, and one begins to realise how these outward symbols have had power to hold the faith of the people.

With the break of day on Christmas morning, the pilgrims are astir and visit all the sacred places, and thence pass to "the Shepherd's Fields," returning later to Bethlehem to enjoy the simple festivities and friendly company of the inhabitants.

ST. JEROME.

There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of this site, for we have the testimony of St. Jerome, who lived and died in a rough chamber hewn out of the rock, within its precincts, not many years after the erection of the church, in A. D. 420. He tells us that there were old villagers of Bethlehem, living in his day, who well remembered the ruined *Khan*, or inn, upon the spot on which Constantine had built the church. St. Jerome was the most illustrious of all the pilgrims attracted to the Cave of Bethlehem. Here, for more than thirty years, Jerome fasted, prayed and studied: here, many devoted disciples centred round him, who formed the beginnings of monastic life in Palestine. Here, was composed the famous translation of the Scriptures which is still the "*Biblia Vulgata*" of the Latin Church; and here "took place that pathetic scene, his last communion and death, at which all the world has

been permitted to be present in the wonderful picture of Domenichino, (in Rome), which has represented in colours never to be surpassed, the attenuated frame of the weak and sinking flesh, the resignation and devotion of the spirit ready for immediate departure."

FIELD OF THE SHEPHERDS.

Early tradition places the Field of the Shepherds, where the "herald angels" sang, at *Beit Sahun*, about one mile from Bethlehem. Tourists who incline to pedestrianism will find explorations of the traditional sites and grottoes in the adjoining districts, pleasurable and interesting, and farther afield is the Monastery of *Mar Saba*, which is literally clinging to the side of a desolate and awful ravine. Here dwell monks who have been sent thither from various parts of the domains of the Greek Orthodox Church, by way of punishment or penance for offence, moral or doctrinal.

(To be concluded).

C. E. S.

"I RENOUNCE"

BY ERIC HAMMOND.

RENUNCIATION is, in accordance with the recognised rites of the Christian churches, a rule of life. Prior to his first communion the aspirant to church membership declares his adherence to everything signified by the word renunciation. When, as is the custom, for instance, in the established church of England, an infant is baptised and "received into the congregation of Christ's church," the sponsors, god-fathers and god-mothers, have this direct question put to them by the priest:—"Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that he will not follow nor be led by them?" Their answer is as direct as the question put to them. It is positive, determinate:—"I renounce them all." The form of service for the baptism of such persons as are of riper years, that

is to say of those who are capable of comprehending the importance of the position and are equally capable of answering for themselves, comprises the same question and the same reply. In this case the reply is definitely uttered by the person about to be baptised:—"I renounce them all."

This intention of renunciation is thus embodied in the profession of belief. Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Orthodox, all these are supported in this sense by other congregations of various denominations. Renunciation is therefore a cardinal acceptance and a public pronouncement agreed to individually and collectively. To renunciation each person and, by implication and in fact, the whole church, the entire Christian world, is solemnly dedicated. Renunciation should be in effect an "act of faith," not only accepted but applied by every man and woman who claims adhesion to this form of worship or to that. It is emphatically part and parcel of the Christian attitude. It is, as emphatically, one of those "works" without which "faith" becomes obscure and at least apparently lifeless. Rearranging our focus, turning our gaze Eastward, we are again confronted by the profession of renunciation. We may take for example an extract from a conversation with the Swami Vivekananda whose authority, for the readers of this periodical, has extraordinary weight and value:—"The essential thing is renunciation; without renunciation none can pour out his whole heart in working for others. The man of renunciation sees all with an equal eye and devotes himself to the service of all." Here, in one pregnant, striking sentence, Swamiji lays down the law and its fulfilment. To say "I renounce" is of no avail unless, heart moving with head, sayer and doer are utterly at one. Religion and philosophy alike demand renunciation. The sublimity of renunciation was splendidly exemplified when a Supreme Life was willingly yielded upon the Cross of Calvary. It was illustrated for the wide world to see and hear when Love Incarnate.

"Fell to the earth in deadly swoon, all spent,
Even as one slain, who hath no longer breath
Nor any stir of blood; so wan he was,
So motionless."

It was illustrated, perfected, triumphant, at the moment of renunciation realised.

"Lo! the Dawn

Sprang with Buddha's Victory! lo! in the East
Flamed the first fires of beauteous day!"

* * * * *

"Yea! and so holy was the influence
Of that high Dawn which came with victory
That, far and near, in homes of men there spread
An unknown peace. The slayer hid his knife;
The robber laid his plunder back; * *
all evil hearts

Grew gentle, kind hearts gentler, as the balm
Of that divinest Daybreak lightened earth. * *

The Spirit of our Lord

Lay potent upon man and bird and beast,
Even while he mused beneath that Bodhi-tree,
Glorified with the Conquest gained for all
And lightened by a light greater than Day's."

We see, we recognise, that the essence of renunciation lies in service; in an utterly unselfish existence devoted to a divine compassion for, and practical sympathy with mankind.

The Christ, under the name and personality of Jesus of Nazareth, exemplified this position throughout His life and at the moment of His world-waking death.

His precept and His practice were inseparable, His teaching was lucid and all-embracing. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these ye have done it unto me!"

"It," in that striking sentence, signifies much. Food for the hungry, clothes for the naked; drink for those athirst; house-room for the roof-less; help, in a word, for the distressed and the disinherited. "It" means service, divine service, toward humanity; toward, above all, any humanity in any form of distress which may come within our cognisance; service to the utmost of our power and our means.

Therein, assuredly, lies the inner secret of the true renunciation.

Possess—lightly. Bestow—freely. Maintain the soul in freedom from all desire of possession, even while possessing.

The utterances of the Lord Buddha were as unequivocal as those of the Lord Christ, "Lo! all earth is mine. Mine by chief service." We may again quote the Swami Vivekananda, because, of a certainty, he knew, and followed, the Way

of Renunciation. "He who righteously renounces devotes himself to universal service."

One is thus impelled to observe that each and all who make profession of renunciation, must attune themselves to the fact that readiness to *give* is the one sign, the one manifestation, of the believer.

THE PARABLES

OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

VII.

THE PARABLE OF THE BRAHMAN AND THE COW.

A cow once strayed into a garden fine
Of plants and fruit-trees fair,
Which day and night a Brahman priest laid out
With fondest watch and care.

Of browse such plenty meeting right and left,
The cow commenced her feast,
When past awhile the Brahman came and saw
What havoc made the beast.

A mango sapling fair, his favourite,
He found, ah! browsed away;
His anger knew no bounds—he beat the cow
Till killed so soon she lay!

The scandalising news soon also spread
And clamoured gossip high;
On him who kills the sacred animal
What bitter curses lie!

A so-called Vedantist the Brahman was,
He tried to shirk his guilt,
Explaining that on Indra's head did lie
The blood by him though spilt.

"For my hand has for its presiding god
Great Indra to be sure;*
Whatever Indra made it do it did,
My self was witness pure!"

The learned Brahman's gloss worked pretty well,
He triumphed in unconcern;
To bear its fruit in full his Karma then
On Indra did return.

* Vedic psychology assigned to each organ of sense-perception and activity its presiding deity, as also to Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahankara.

A scrape for Indra nice indeed! He stirr'd
Out of his heaven high,
And changed into a Brahman old he went
A Brahman to outvie.

They met within the garden, host and guest,
The latter wond'ring asked:
"Whose garden, friend, is this?" Replied he 'mine,'
In self-conceit unmasked.

"How fine that gardener yours be, I see,
To lay this garden nice!"
"Ah! friend," he said, "it's all my skill,
It's all my own device."

"Indeed! how clever of you, friend,"—came forth
The stranger's glib remark—
"And who this pathway made so beautiful?"
"Why, that's my handiwork."

Enough,—the stranger turned towards his host,
Took joined palms out between,
And said with humour twinkling in his eye
In humble happy mien:

"For everything your hand does well, yourself
The fullest credit claim,
For Indra poor it's hard lines then to take
Of killing cows the blame!"

The stranger gone, the Brahman's better sense
Returned and taught him thus:
Responsible we are for what we do
As long self lurks in us.

—P. S. I.

THE VAIRAGYA-SATAKAM

OR THE HUNDRED VERSES ON RENUNCIATION BY BHARTRIHARI.

(Continued from page 134).

वैराग्यशतकम् ।

तृषा शुष्यत्यास्ये पिवति सलिलं शीतमधुरं
क्षुधार्तः शाल्यन्नं कवलयति मांसादिकलितम् ।
प्रदीप्ते कामाग्नौ सुहृदतरमालिङ्गति वधूं
प्रतीकारं व्याधेः सुखमिति विपर्यस्यति जनः ॥१६॥

19. When the mouth is parched with thirst, man takes some cold refreshing (or sweetened) drink; when suffering from hunger he swallows boiled rice made delicious with meat and the like; when set on fire by lust, he fast embraces his wife; so happiness is but the remedying of these diseases (of hunger, thirst and lust);—and behold, how man (i. e. his sense) is upset in its quest!

प्रतीकारं व्याधेः सुखमिति—The main point to be understood is this, namely that worldly happiness is but the temporary remedy we constantly seek from all the diseases with which worldly life is beset. When this relative and fugitive nature of happiness becomes apparent to us, we naturally give up running after it to seek permanent peace in renunciation.

तुङ्गं वेश्म सुताः सतामभिमताः संख्यातिगाः
संपदः

कल्याणी दयिता वयश्च नवमित्यज्ञानमूढो जनः।

मत्वा विश्वमनश्वरं निविशते संसारकारागृहे

संदश्य क्षणभङ्गुरं तदाखिलं धन्यस्तु संन्यस्यति॥ २०

20. Possessed of tall mansions, of sons esteemed by the learned, of untold wealth, of a beloved wife full of beneficence, and of youthful age, and thinking this world to be permanent, men deluded by ignorance run into this prison-house of worldliness; whereas, he is blessed indeed who considering the transiency of the same world renounces it.

दीना दीनमुखैः सदैव शिशुकैराकृष्टजीर्णाम्बरा

क्रोशद्भिः क्षुधितैर्निरन्नविधुरा दृश्या न चेद्देहिनी

याच्ञामङ्गभयेन गद्गदगललुट्यद्विखीनाक्षरं

को देहीति वदेत्स्वदग्धजठरस्यार्थे मनस्वी

पुमान् ॥ २१॥

21. If one had no occasion to see one's wife "suffering without food and sore aggrieved at the constant sight of hungry crying children with piteous looks pulling at her worn-out clothes, what self-respecting man would for the mere sake of his own petty stomach utter "give me" (i. e. become a supplicant for favour) in a voice faltering and

sticking at the throat for fear of his prayer being refused?

अभिमतमहामानग्रन्थिप्रभेदपटीयसी

गुरुतरगुणाग्रामाम्भोजस्फुटोज्ज्वलचन्द्रिका।

विपुलविलसल्लजावलीवितानकुठारिका

जठरपिठरी दुष्पूरेयं करोति विडम्बनम् ॥२२॥

22. The pit of our stomach so hard to fill is the root indeed of no small undoing: it is ingenious in severing the vital knots, as it were, of our fond self-respect; it is like the bright moonlight shining on the lotus (that species which blooms only in the sun) of highly estimable virtues; it is the hatchet that hews down the luxuriant creepers of our great modesty.

FROM THE PSALMS OF TAYUMANA
SWAMI.—VIII.

O SEA OF BLISS!

(Concluded from page 176.)

VII.

O Virgin Gold! O Gem! O Thou my Love!

O Thou my Light of Love! A Flood of Bliss

That thence doth spring! Thus too I sang and

danced

And panting still and longing, I called Thee,

Then raved and cried and then with thrilling frame,

And joined palms, my eyes in torrents poured

Just like the rain descending from on high

And I then sank depressed. A cheat am I

With heart as hard as steel: Whate'er it be,

Have I still ever yet forgotten Thee?

So long Thou art as long am I Thy slave.

Is't right for Thee to leave me thus alone

A dolt worth only straw, O Rule me Thine!

O Thou the Pure Impers'nal Being Supreme!

O Thou Transcendant Light! O Sea of Bliss!

VIII.

Thou didst reveal the Truth of Space supreme

That comprehends the earth and all the spheres;

Thou didst reveal the whirling mind's expanse

As well this wretch that wallows too therein;

Thou didst unfold the Peace to rest in ease

Besides the life of constant self-commune.

When wilt Thou give Transcendant Life of Bliss!

O Cloud that spreads with wind and lightning flash

And encompassing all the Space supreme
Beckons all servants Thine with gracious roar
To flood them with unceasing showers of Bliss
Just as the clouds in countless multitude
Gather and pour in torrents from on high.
O Thou the Pure Impers'nal Being Supreme!
O Thou Transcendant Light! O Sea of Bliss!

IX.

The warring faiths set forth divergent creeds,
The silent anchorites renouncing all
Speak not, in thoughtless ecstasy absorbed:
The Three-eyed Lord the Teacher mine Supreme
Taught but in silence with his symbols mute:
Who's there O Lord to teach by word of mouth
The way to deathlessness and ceaseless joy!
The Yogis too from selfishness do grudge
Their secret lore and so when I retire
To calm myself alone and self-subdued
Anon Thou setst on me Illusion dire
To test me too: How can this slave find Bliss?
O Thou the Pure Impers'nal Being Supreme!
O Thou Transcendant Light! O Sea of Bliss!

X.

Here on this globe or else in distant orbs
Or in the centre of the Solar Sphere
In Fire or in the moon's immortal realm,
In idols that Thy worshippers adore
With melting heart and flowers in plenty strewn,
In space, the end of space or Space supreme,
In Primal Force or in the Primal Word,
In the Vedanta or Siddhanta's Goal
Or in the manifold of sense perceived
Or in the Void well known beyond the known,
In time or in the womb of time and space
Or else within the heart of servants Thine
That have their mind and senses all subdued,
Where dost Thou bide? O tell this slave the truth,
O Thou the Pure Impers'nal Being Supreme!
O Thou Transcendant Light! O Sea of Bliss!

XI.

When shall Thy Grace descend on me as mine!
Such anguish racks my soul! What shall I say!
What wisdom free of doubt have I yet got!
To pine away with palpitating heart
Like wax upon the fire or oft to faint
With pain, doth either make the Bliss Supreme?
Thou knowest too my heart; Thou art my Lord
Thou Light within my soul who else but Thee!
This frame doth pass: Can then a broken ship

Traverse the boist'rous main? Is it then meet
Since Thou hast ruled me Thine, Thou dost leave me
To roil in grief, as if Thou dost not know?
O Thou the Pure Impers'nal Being Supreme!
O Thou Transcendant Light! O Sea of Bliss!

XII.

"Prana! my friend, myself as well as Thou
Are we not e'er together in this frame?
But yet some one in times gone by arranged
And called us matter and Thyself Spirit
And ever since Thou wert aware of this
Thou art unjustly always curbing us
And tyrannising us: yet after all,
What glories hast Thou won before our eyes?"
Thus doth the foolish mind upbraid my soul,
Is it then just that I am scorched like this?
However much I rave Thy Grace comes not.
Indeed! O! Say how then shall bliss be mine?
O Thou the Pure Impers'nal Being Supreme!
O Thou Transcendant Light! O Sea of Bliss!

—A. K.

THE SISTER NIVEDITA GIRLS' SCHOOL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1913.

The public has been informed of the valuable educational work carried on in the school started by the late Sister Nivedita, at 17, Bose Para Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta, in our last report. We proceed, now to lay before our kind patrons a concise account of the school's work during the year 1913.

The work of the school in both its departments has gone on as usual during the year under review. The children's department had an average attendance of 95 daily, while the Purdah ladies' department, of 18. No change has been introduced in the curriculum during the year, and lessons on tailoring, fine needle-work and Kindergarten methods went on as before, along with the course of study.

The school has supplied poor girls with all educational accessories e. g. paper, pencils, books etc. free of charge, and has granted free boarding and lodging to three honorary lady teachers to secure their whole-time service, for the interest of the work. The authorities have been pressed of late from many quarters to attach a sort of dormitory to the school, where guardians, who live

away from Calcutta, could send their girls to live with competent teachers by paying their own boarding expenses and receive the benefit of a healthy surrounding during the years of training. Hence also the starting of the above-mentioned nucleus of a home for teachers, as an experiment, to which might be added later, the boarding for the pupils, if funds and encouragement be forthcoming from the generous public.

The school has given ample evidence of its utility during the past nine years of its existence. Nay, as far as we know, it is the only one of its kind, which has tackled successfully with the delicate problem of carrying education to the home of the Purdah ladies of the middle class in society; and great sacrifices have been made to secure that end. And if its sphere is confined at present, simply to a locality in Calcutta, it is no fault of its own. A glorious future is awaiting it and a vast field of work, if the generous public will only come forward with the proper measure of help that it so well deserves, to strengthen and support its endeavours. And will there be no response to this our call? Will it be like crying in the wilderness when we come to tell the public that to give the work a secure footing, the building of a home for the school and its teachers is one of pressing necessity? Reader, pause and think awhile of the object for which the school stands, think of national interests of great significance that are involved in the proper education of our women, and then decide whether it is your duty or not to support this noble institution, for which the Sister laid down her life. We quote here a few lines from the Sister's own pen to show you the line along which the school has been working since its inception.

"It is clear that as the object of the old education of Indian women lay in character, the new cannot aim lower. The distinctive element, therefore, in their future training cannot be reading and writing—though these will undoubtedly grow more common—but the power to grasp clearly and with enthusiasm the ideas of nationality, national interests, and the responsibility of the individual to race and country."

"When the women see themselves in their true place, as related to the soil on which they live, as related to the past out of which they have sprung; when they become aware of the needs of their own

people, * * * then shall a worthy education be realised; * * *"

"Such a change, however, is only possible as a direct growth out of old conceptions. The national idea cannot be imposed from without—it must develop from within. And this will be in full congruity with the national religions."

"There is no question here of educating an intellect hitherto left in barbarous ignorance. Only those can do vital service to Indian women who, in a spirit of entire respect for her existing conventions and her past, recognise that they are but offering new modes of expression to qualities already developed and expressed in other ways under the old training."

("The Web of Indian Life," pages, 91, 92 & 98.)

We conclude this brief report by giving an account of the income and expenses of the School during the year under review, as well as an account of the collections of the Sister Nivedita Memorial Fund, kindly entrusted to our hands by the Nivedita Memorial Committee of Calcutta for the benefit of the school.

INCOME AND EXPENSES OF THE SCHOOL FOR
THE YEAR 1913.

Cr.	Rs.	As.	P.
Contributions of E. G. Thorp, Esq., of Boston, Mass. U. S. A. ...	2400	0	0
Small donations by various persons ...	219	0	0
By sale of books of the late Sister Nivedita by the Udbodhan Office	700	0	0
Total	3319	0	0
Dr.	Rs.	As.	P.
By carriage expenses—			
by hire of a stable horse at Rs. 50 per month ...	600	0	0
by coachman's wages at Rs. 11 per month ...	132	0	0
by greasing and license at Rs. 2 per month ...	24	0	0
by petty repairs of the carriage at Rs. 5 per month ...	60	0	0
by cost of a carriage ...	660	0	0
„ house rent at Rs. 42 per month ...	504	0	0
„ tax at Rs. 7 per quarter ...	28	0	0
„ repairs of the School house for 1913	50	0	0
„ other expenses for running the School	1212	0	0
Total	3270	0	0
Balance in hand in January 1914	49	0	0
Total	3319	0	0

THE SISTER NIVEDITA MEMORIAL FUND

Cr.	Rs.	As.	P.
Cash balance shewn in our last Re- port (1912) ...	784	7	9
By Dr. Rash Vihari Ghose ...	1000	0	0
„ B. N. Bose Esq. ...	250	0	0
„ C. C. Ghose Esq. ...	100	0	0
„ Mrs. J. C. Bose ...	500	0	0
„ The S. D. O. Khondmals, Phulbeni, Orissa ...	24	12	0
Total	2659	3	9

ON THE CONNING TOWER.

ONE of the happiest customs in vogue during this Puja season is the exchange of Bijoya greetings, and these we offer to all our readers before proceeding to usual business. Of all the provinces, Bengal has been pre-eminently the seat of the Tantrik development in Vedic culture, and the worship of the Ten-handed Mother imparts to the Puja season in Bengal a festive joyousness such as we hardly find anywhere else. All India, however, has its happy engrossment in Ramalila and Dussera festivities, and it is of considerable national importance for us all to see that these festivities do not lose in importance, in spiritual usefulness and their wonderful joy-inspiring efficacy.

The Puja number of the *Udbodhana*, the vernacular organ of the Ramkrishna Mission in Bengal, strikes a very happy note indeed amidst all the rejoicings in Bengal, during this season of the Mother's worship, that send up their distant echoes to us. In an inspiring article it reminds us all that "Though the Goddess is brought to manifestation in artificial images through the invocation of mantras, She never becomes propitious and bountiful of favours unless respected and worshipped properly through the recognition of Her perpetual presence in the living images of women. It is because we have forgotten this truth that our autumnal Pujas mostly fall short of perfect celebration and the Goddess of Bengal and of India do not like former times bestow on them in Her bounteous mood the fourfold boons of Dharma, wealth, success and salvation." And it is not the want of proper opportunities that prevent us to-day from celebrating this truer national Puja of the Mother in Her human manifestations, for the

movement, says the *Udbodhan*, which the late Sister Nivedita inaugurated for the service of Indian womankind in this noble spirit still invites us all to this type of a national Puja of the Mother.

Indeed the institution which the Sister Nivedita founded at 17, Bosepara Lane, Baghbar, Calcutta, as a nucleus of her noble movement on behalf of Indian women, and of which a brief report for 1913 has been published in our columns deserves the heartiest co-operation of all our countrymen. Sister Nivedita's name is no doubt a guarantee for a true appreciation of Indian womanhood and what adds immeasurably to our faith in her devotion to that ideal is the fact that she ungrudgingly made of her precious life a noble sacrifice on the altar of its service. Has not the women's institution then, that she founded with her very life-blood, the clearest claims on the attention and interest of every sincere man in India who ever gave one anxious thought on the weighty problem of Indian women? This problem is exercising at present the minds of worthy people in high official circles and we are grateful to the Amrita Bazar Patrika for having tried to draw their attention in its editorial of the 26th Sept. to this struggling institution founded by Sister Nivedita.

The ideals which this institution seeks to instil into the minds of its students along with all the useful instructions they receive are such as are bound to enable them to occupy in life their rightful place and vocation in the making of that future India towards which we all have to struggle. None had a truer vision of this India than Swami Vivekananda and none can therefore indicate more correctly the lines on which education has to be imparted to Indian women. For want of space in this number we intend to discuss in our "Occasional Notes" next month how the Swami's idea has to be developed and carried out by us. Meanwhile, we earnestly appeal to all our countrymen who feel interested in the cause of Indian women to come forward and rally round this noble movement started under the auspices and inspiration of Swami Vivekananda. The institution which forms its nucleus has passed the stage of experiment and if sufficient funds be forthcoming to give it proper scope and stability, it is sure to prove an object-

lesson to us all for solving the problem of education for Indian women in the best way conducive to the peace and progress of our home life and society. Subscriptions for the school sent to us will be duly forwarded to its authorities and acknowledged in our columns.

"ARYA": A REVIEW.

ARYA: A Monthly Philosophical Review: Editors, Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Paul and Mirra Richard from 7, Rue Dupliex, Pondichery. Annual subscription, Inland Rs. 6, Foreign Ten Shillings.

This new undertaking is a notable event indeed in the world of religious literature. It even claims to inaugurate quite a new movement for working out a practical and theoretical synthesis of the world-culture in religion, the intellectual side of the movement being represented by the two editions, English and French, of the journal.

The first number of the *Arya*, we have received, gives some clear glimpses of the thought-basis of the whole movement. Science is sought to be wedded to religion, by divesting it of its dogmatism and narrowness. "The attempt to deny or stifle a truth," says the *Arya*, "because it is yet obscure in its outward workings and too often represented by obscurantist superstition or a crude faith is itself a kind of obscurantism." And again, "We speak of the evolution of Life in Matter, the evolution of Mind in Matter; but evolution is a word which merely states the phenomenon without explaining it. For there seems to be no reason why Life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living form, unless we accept the Vedantic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life because in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, Life a form of veiled Consciousness." Such sentiments clearly shew that the *Arya* in interpreting religion takes fully into account the scientific culture of the modern age and seeks to restate it in the light of that higher culture which grew out of the Vedic and Vedantic illumination. In this respect, the *Arya* may be said to be following in the footsteps of Swami Vivekananda, the apologist and apostle to the modern world of the ancient Vedantic culture.

In fact, the most pervading note in the columns of the *Arya*, is the vindication of a higher experience which alone gives man the key to all those problems and mysteries which ordinary experience is beset with. Naturally this vindication derives its support mostly from the armoury of Vedic culture and the journal as its name indicates seeks to lay the foundation of its synthetic thought in a reconstructive interpretation of Vedic spiritual ideals.

In this connection, the series of articles entitled "The Secret of the Veda" is of special interest. The writer contends that the Vedic *mantras*, ever since they were revealed, always bore an esoteric meaning to the initiate which no class of commentators, ancient and modern, has been able to decipher, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads carrying in them only scattered fragments of that meaning. The modern scholars misled by their supposition that the Vedas are the simple outpourings of the uncultured primitive soul drawing its inspiration from the simple surroundings of primitive life have struggled hard to read into these archaic compositions a meaning which turns out to be rather a fabrication than an interpretation in any true sense; and Sayana's commentary gives us only that superficial sense which the Vedic *mantras* traditionally bear in ordinary ceremonials performed for the sake of some gain in this life or hereafter. Consequently the real secret of the Vedas,—that true meaning of the *mantras* as forming the starting-point of those lofty speculations preserved in the later Upanishads—always remained sealed to all ordinary students of the Vedas, and this secret of the Vedas the gifted writer undertakes to unfold in this important series of articles and translations.

The noble effort is welcome, no doubt. We have already found the Vedas admitting of too many lines of possible interpretation to grudge the learned writer his claim to strike out a new one, specially when we have to admit that his esoteric interpretation, if successful, may serve to restore to the *mantras* much of that direct value they possessed in the old ages of purely Vedic ritualism. Theories have been of late put forward pretending to explain Vedic *mantras* on the basis of astronomical facts or that of historical and geographical facts. The *mantras* again have been made to yield by the magic of verbal analysis the latest findings and

truths of modern science. To set any bounds, in view of all this, to the marvels of Vedic interpretation, would perhaps be foolhardiness! And as regards greater consistency in the meaning proposed, it all depends, it seems, on the philological energy and skill which any school of interpretation is able to put forth in the work. The upshot of the whole exegetic melee is the obvious truth that the Vedic *mantras* that have been handed down to us very often admit of various interpretations, of which let everybody accept the one that he finds most conducive to his welfare.

But the learned author of "The Secret of the Veda" adduces one strong argument in favour of his own view which deserves special consideration. He says that the Vedic *mantras* cannot but carry in themselves an ultra-ritualistic meaning seeing that the Upanishadic lore was the direct outcome of these earlier compositions. The abstruse metaphysics of the Upanishads can never be said to be the direct development of these *mantras*, unless these latter are shewn to lend themselves to a psycho-ethical interpretation other than the traditional ritualistic one.

The above argument is evidently based on a wrong assumption which modern scholars have made chiefly on the plausible ground of the Upanishads being compiled at the end of the Vedas. The wisdom of the Upanishads, they say unani- mously, is a much later development of the Vedas. It is of course admitted by us as also by Indian tradition that the Upanishads in the form in which they appear in the compilation of Vyasa are compositions of which the date must be later than that of the Sanhitas. But this does not necessarily prejudice the position which Indian tradition has always taken, namely that the wisdom of the Upanishads was revealed in the earliest epochs of Vedic history. Indian tradition as well as that prince of Vedic scholars Sankaracharya maintains that from the very beginning of creation both the *Sakāma* and *Nishkāma mārgas*, the paths of self-interest and of renunciation in religion, were revealed. They then flowed down the ages like two parallel currents, each replenished again and again by repeated impulses from the other,—the Way of Wisdom receiving feeder roads from the Way of Work and the latter receiving its correct spirit and

direction from the former.* Text after text can be quoted from the Sanhitas and the Upanishads to prove that this was the real fact in Vedic history, and it is only the prepossessions of Western scholarship that predisposes a modern student of the Vedas to draw a hard and fast chronological line between what he calls the absolute ritualism of the Vedas and the higher spirituality of the Upanishads as constituting a reaction against the former.

The Upanishads in fact stand in no need of tracing their ultimate source in the Sanhita *mantras*. Their wisdom has again and again manipulated and philosophised upon the *mantras* no doubt to keep itself in necessary touch with the Sakāma religion of the householders, but far from being itself a later development from the Sanhitas, this wisdom is the ultimate thought, the final setting on which the Sanhitas and Tantras from age to age have to be founded and in the light of which the Brahmanas and Upanishads from age to age have to be worked out. The Vedic *mantras* themselves bear repeated testimony to the fact that a higher wisdom always stands behind their own ritualism. The Rigveda is never tired of speaking of the Paramapada, the highest essence of the Devas it worships; it gives repeated hints of a superior spiritual discipline or Yajna in which all material adjuncts are dispensed with; even it bursts out into the enthusiastic declaration that there is a Supreme Seat for all the Devas to dwell in and him who knows That not, what will all these *Richas* or *mantras* avail? And all such outbursts of a higher mood of the Rishis even while invoking the gods by *mantras* for the sake of some worldly benefit do not occur only in Suktas alleged to be composed much later but are scattered throughout the Rigveda.

The argument therefore that the Vedic *mantras* must of a necessity be interpreted in an ultra-ritualistic sense to bring them in a line with the

* The Upanishads are the teachings of higher wisdom that from the earliest Vedic ages passed down from mouth to mouth, mostly liable, unlike the Sanhitas, to variation both in their verbal expression and number even after their first great compilation by Vyasa. Their line of evolution was synchronous with that of the Sanhitas, till at least the latter ceased to receive additions after the composition of the Sukla-Yajurveda. It is to the Upanishads and not the Sanhitas that tradition always turned for the remains of the esoteric teachings of the Vedic Rishis.

wisdom of the Upanishads which was built upon their foundation does not at all appeal to our understanding. The Upanishads themselves testify how their wisdom was originally revealed (e. g. Chhand. I. 4.) and they themselves always accept the Vedic *mantras* in their ritualistic sense (e. g. Mund. I. 21.). And this they do, not in a spirit of revolt from them but with the object of leading a devotee to a higher path of renunciation, always seeking to idealise the Vedic ritualism so necessary in the first stages of spiritual life. Thus when the Upanishads themselves do not recognise any necessity of upsetting the accepted ritualistic trend of the *mantras* for the sake of establishing their own pedigree and status, why should we be in a hurry to divest these *mantras* of their accepted ritualistic sense in order to invent for the Upanishads a source of inspiration they would never care to own?

But even though this overdrawn argument in favour of a non-ritualistic interpretation of the *mantras* falls to the ground, "The Secret of the Veda" will continue to have for us, none the less, a really profound interest. The ritualistic meaning of the *mantras* was originally most acceptable because the purpose which they originally served was purely ritualistic, but since those ancient rituals are not in vogue now except in scattered instances, a non-ritualistic interpretation of the Vedas with no pretensions to upset ancient traditions of spiritual culture is bound to be of great benefit, and it is impossible to admire too highly that scholarship and talent which have addressed themselves to this Herculean task.

The other contents of this number such as "The Synthesis of Yoga," "The Eternal Wisdom" etc. serve to impart to the journal as a whole most interesting and instructive features which promise to win for it before long a very high place in the periodical literature of philosophy and religion.

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT.

The venerable writer of the most authentic account of Sri Ramakrishna's life,—the Bengali Volumes of श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णलीलाप्रसङ्ग,—His Holiness Swami Saradananda, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, has undertaken to write for the English-knowing public in India and abroad a biography of the Divine Saint of Dakshineswar.

The Prabuddha Bharata is going to publish in its columns, most likely from the next month, monthly instalments of this valuable production directly as they come from the writer's pen. This announcement, we believe, will be received with great interest and pleasure by all our readers and constituents.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

SWAMI Purnananda of the Ramakrishna Mission has taken over the charge of newly established Ramakrishna Sevashrama at Midnapore. On his arrival there, he was received at the Railway Station by the members of the Managing Committee and some respectable gentlemen of the town. We trust the Sevashrama has a prosperous future of service to suffering humanity assured for it under the guidance of the Swami Purnananda who has had himself a good medical education and who in connection with the Mission work of medical relief in several parts of the country had discharged his duties with great credit.

THE report of the Ramakrishna Home of Service Benares for the months of July and August 1914, shows that 128 new indoor patients were treated but 22 patients had to be refused admission for want of accommodation. The total number of outdoor patients amounted to 7114 i. e. an average attendance of 118 daily. Some general relief work was also done. For the growing needs of the Sevashrama, extension work has been undertaken on the newly acquired land, on which two or three separate infectious wards are intended to be erected. Besides a number of other wards, provision will also be made for a block for invalids, workers' quarters, and resident medical officer's quarters.

SRI Ramakrishna Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Teppakulam, Trichinopoly celebrated the Sri Krishna Jayanti and the Navaratri festivals by holding series of public lectures on religious topics.

Dr. Sri Ram of Ram Ashrama Dispensary, Kaithal, Karnal, has sent us a report of dispensary work. The total number of patients treated during Sept. 1913 to Sept. 1914 are 11315 of which 60 p. c. of the patients were treated free, and besides, 200 sweepers and chamars were relieved at their homes. The expenses were met by Dr. Sri Ram.