

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



वसिष्ठो ज्ञानं प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

Katha Upan. 1 iii. 4.

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराञ्चिबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

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UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

ON BHAKTI-YOGA.

FIRST LESSON.

Bhakti Yoga is the path of systematised devotion for the attainment of union with the Absolute. It is the easiest and surest path to religion or realisation.

Love to God is the one essential to be perfect in this path.

There are five stages of love.

First, Man wants help and has a little fear.

Second, When God is seen as Father.

Third, When God is seen as Mother. Then all women are looked upon as reflections of the Mother God. With the idea of Mother-God real love begins.

Fourth, Love for love's sake. Love for love's sake transcends all qualities.

Fifth, Love in Divine-union. It leads to oneness or super-consciousness.

God is both Personal and Impersonal as we are personal and impersonal.

Prayer and praise are the first means of growth. Repeating the names of God has wonderful power.

Mantram is a special word or sacred text or name of God chosen by the Guru for repetition and reflection by the disciple. The disciple must concentrate on a Personality for prayer and praise, and that is his Ishtam.

These words (Mantrams) are not sounds of words but God Himself, and we have them within us. Think of Him, speak of Him. No desire for the world! Buddha's Sermon on the Mount was "As thou thinkest, so art thou."

After attaining super-consciousness the Bhakta descends again to love and worship.

SECOND LESSON.

Pure love has no motive. It has nothing to gain.

After prayer and praise comes meditation. Then comes reflection on the name and on the Ishtam of the individual.

Pray that that manifestation which is our Father, our Mother, may cut our bonds.

Pray, "Take us by the hand as a father takes his son, and leave us not."

Pray, "I do not want wealth or beauty, this

world or another, but Thee, O God! Lord! I have become weary. O! take me by the hand, Lord, I take shelter with Thee. Make me Thy servant. Be Thou my refuge."

Pray, "Thou our Father, our Mother, our dearest Friend! Thou who bearest this universe, help us to bear the little burden of

this our life. Leave us not. Let us never be separated from Thee. Let us always dwell in Thee."

When love to God is revealed and is all, this world appears like a drop.

Pass from non-existence to existence, from darkness to light.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

RO human standard will avail us, if we seek to measure that mighty force that came into our midst embodied in the miracle of Sri Ramakrishna's life, but have we even the insight to read aright the expression that it found for itself in the terms of modern thought and culture through the inspired life and activities of his chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda? The answer is in the negative.

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We judge human achievements and events by applying a set of values with which our peculiar culture or mode of thought supplies us. World-teachers like Swami Vivekananda come into this world to change the course of human thought and culture and thereby to set up new values in the place of old ones. Therefore so long as the desired change is not wrought into our thought-life by their enduring influence and inspiration, at least to the extent of replacing our old values by new ones, we necessarily fail to appreciate properly the marvelous work and worth of these world-teachers. So how shall we properly understand the significance of Swami Vivekananda's life and teachings in the light of those very modes of thought which he sought to reform and rectify?

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The impact of Western ideals on many existing, worn-out, blind habits of thought was responsible during the last century for the growth of a curious culture amongst us, hybrid

and inconsistent. This new culture—provided it is worth the name—bred up new values before our mind and generally speaking, they still linger there. This hybrid culture, for example, would look askance at monasticism and even it would not be difficult to find out in contemporary literature quite a ring of protest against it. When Swami Vivekananda as Norendra Nath Dutta renounced the world, he was regarded by many as having thrown away the sure chances of a brilliant career, useful to himself, to family and to society. When, again, he dedicated himself to his Master unreservedly unlike many a cultured religious enquirer who used to frequent the Dakshineswar Temple, his life was looked upon as having suffered a sad set-back in its promising course towards the redeeming influences of civilised thought and culture. Three decades have rolled by, but the values which prevailed then, still determine the judgments which the cultured people of today form in most cases. What wonder then that the true significance of the Swami's life and teachings would still elude the grasp of our thoughtful countrymen?

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Western culture has its own standard for measuring elevation of thought and sentiment. This standard is superficial, for it never cares to trace the impulse behind high flights of thought and sentiment to depths beyond the intellect. For example, a man who on the

strength of a highly trained imagination can habitually dwell on lofty abstruse thoughts and sentiments would command the unquestioning allegiance of multitudes in the world of Western culture, no matter whether the real man in him has actually risen to the level of that spiritual excellence which those lofty thoughts and sentiments imply. This artificiality or lack of genuineness in the impulse which works behind thought and sentiment constitutes one of the besetting sins in the world of Western culture. The impulse in Wordsworth was genuine, but scores of imitators have flourished who with their imagination trained by his poetry would spin out as lofty sentiments. Western culture does not require of thinkers and poets a strict genuineness in their impulse, and unfortunately the new hybrid culture of which we were speaking above follows suit in this matter. It will weigh without a blush in the same scale a Swami Vivekananda and any successful lecturer on Hinduism and Vedanta, for do they not rise to the same dizzy heights of thought and sentiment?

There is a world of difference between a man of realisation and a man of soaring thought and sentiment. In India, we never before stood in need of being reminded of this important difference, for through the inherited culture of ages, we would recognise it as a matter of course. We are fallen now upon evil days, and any man or woman with exceptionally brilliant intellectual gifts would lead amidst hurrahs and huzzas big social or religious movements. The result has been what the Yankees call a hurrah's nest, a state of utmost confusion, that is to say. But people now would resent such a characterisation of their movements, for has not our present-day culture set up new values and have they not to be applied? Against all this, what a relieving contrast is set off by that notable incident in Swami Vivekananda's

early life, when he was beating about from one circle of religious adherents to another for a teacher of men who would assure him in so many plain, unequivocal words that he had verily seen the God he preached. This unswerving quest for the man of realisation is one of our proudest national characteristics and in the palmy days of yore, it was the man of realisation who used to lead in all the higher concerns of life in India. But values have changed now and a morbid faith in the omnipotence of intellectual reason is dissipating all our energies and sterilising the very springs of powerful impulses. And who cares to study what Swami Vivekananda typified and taught, so long as there is a goodly array of intellectual hair-splitters and sentimental sky-scalers all round the country?

The Swami used to point out that the fundamental disease that eats into the vitals of our race is weakness,—weakness all along the line. In the sphere of religion, the highest concern of human life, we find this disease to be the more deep-seated, and religious morbidity like the malarial poison has become endemic throughout the country. This morbidity, again, has favoured the growth of peculiar values, and peculiar notions about spiritual excellence and progress are found to be in vogue. Affectation is an intimate ally of chronic weakness in spiritual health and when such weakness becomes endemic, sentimental affectation usurps the throne of reality and people lose the capacity for distinguishing one from the other. Wish is father to the thought and even a confirmed spiritual weakling smitten by a strong desire for some exalted state, would almost unconsciously affect what he cannot attain to. By virtue of such half-unconscious affectation and the unfoldment in some cases of a few psychic powers, saints and *avatars* have been cropping up of late like the prophet's gourd all over the country! A high premium has been put upon successful affectation. Spiritual fervour

is confounded with oddities in demeanour and dress and spiritual exaltation with easy neurotic unhingement. In such a corrupt atmosphere, all standards of spiritual excellence are bound to become perverted, and real, healthy, strength-giving spirituality stands no chance of being widely appreciated.

What, therefore, generally disqualifies us from rising to a proper appreciation of the spiritual greatness of Swami Vivekananda is the morbid growth of peculiar values amongst us as referred to above. Did the Swami appear to be always in a fluid state of mind and body owing to the overflowing effusion of sentiment? No, he evinced rather a strong commonsense and mental equilibrium that would never forsake him in his ordinary course of life and conduct. Alas then, how can we claim for him constant spiritual communion? Had he an air of ponderous gravity that would never stoop to playful humour or pleasantries? No, he would sometimes give himself up to these apparently without any restraint. Alas then, we cannot claim for him the holiness of a saint! Did he use to inflict upon himself all the privations that ascetics in India are supposed to undergo? No,—not at least during the latter period of his life. Then alas, we must look elsewhere for an embodiment of the spirit of renunciation! Such are the short-cuts to an estimate of spirituality which many people are found to mentally make and their judgments are vitiated evidently by wrong values growing out of a widespread morbidity in religious life.

So decidedly was the disciple dowered through life with the rarest capacity and the surest impulse for the highest Samadhi, that the Master implored his Divine Mother just to leave a thin film of Maya over Norendra's mind, for has he not got to do a lot of work for the world? What difference this transparent pellicle made in Norendra's case can

be best described in his own words quoted from one of his poems :

Be bold, and face

The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease;
Or, if you cannot, dream but nearing dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

During the days spent in blessed spiritual tutelage under his Master, the fire of a supreme longing for losing himself perfectly in the bliss of the highest Samadhi seized and consumed his whole being and in reply to a question from his Master he disclosed it, when how was he put out of countenance by being told that surely *he* should aim at a higher goal in life than that even! Again on that memorable day when his great longing for a while met with its fulfilment, the Master called him to himself and said that with himself would remain henceforth the key to his treasure-room of that highest experience, and he would have access thereto again when his work on earth would be finished. What meaning should we read into all these facts from the life of Swami Vivekananda? Time has not yet stolen them far away from our closest scrutiny; they are matters of contemporary history and their significance, as being private spiritual transactions between a disciple and his Guru of unimpeachable sincerity, can never be overlooked.

Swami Vivekananda represented a type of spiritual health and strength that is absolutely indispensable to the welfare and regeneration of our country. No affectation, no prudishness, no mystery-mongering, no namby-pamby, no fanaticism, no compromise with weaknesses that flesh is heir to, no twist of insincerity in thought, word or deed,—a type of character that is straightforward (**ऋजु**) to the very core of it,—in word, the heart in its integrity, undivided, pouring itself straight through the tongue,—in deed, all the energies flowing out without an oblique pull of motive towards self,—in feeling, the whole mind tending to lose itself in

its spontaneous rise and flow with no impulse left behind to turn these to some selfish account, and lastly in thought, the understanding making straight for Truth as if shot from a pistol, without any the slightest deflection in the interest of any tie or attachment. In such a type of character, the moral virtues, when deeply analysed, are found to imply one another, so that they make up a consistent whole and this again when followed up further towards its sources is discovered to be the self-projection on the plane of human conduct of a spirituality which simply consists in the fading away of manhood into divinity. In Swami Vivekananda this spirituality was typified, as *outwardly* embodied in a strong, healthy religious life moving through all the modern intricacies of thought and conduct, and as *inwardly* embodied in the constant absorption of the Human into the Divine, of the *Jiva* into the *Shiva*.

It has been alleged from some quarter that a disciple is prone to partiality when giving an account of his Master's life and in view of this, some allowance has to be made in accepting the interpretation of Swami Vivekananda's life as given by his Eastern and Western disciples. Granting that disciples are liable to the sort of weakness alleged—though that fact would reflect small credit on the intellectual training they receive from their Guru—what, we enquire, is the remedy? For our countrymen cannot afford to give up investigating fully into the Swami's life and his contributions to our age, for that would spell no small loss and calamity to our country. In these days when the spirit of research and enquiry into all our assets in the domain of thought and action seems to have been aroused on an extensive scale,—when even the obscurest versifier of the past has some chance of finding his contributions discussed and treasured by the present age,—does it behove our countrymen to forbear their own task in respect of such a great

leader of men and simply play the role of armchair critics when this task of making the fullest enquiry into the facts and factors of his life and career has been undertaken by a circle of his disciples?

Therefore we earnestly invite the educated public to an impartial enquiry. Partiality is not the exclusive fault of a disciple who speaks or writes on his Guru; it may very well imply a leaning at various angles. Party spirit, jealousy, self-pride, prejudice, are some of the subtle forces that may develop somewhere else stronger partiality against a man than the fact of discipleship may do in his favour. So every enquirer has at the very outset to guard against this fault. All available facts about Swami Vivekananda's life and work lie close at hand and it requires no antiquarian skill and diligence to collect them. In the light of these facts when collected, it will not be difficult, we hope, to interpret to ourselves his life and character and many hasty notions and wrong impressions about him are bound to be rectified. What is it then, that hinders us from a thorough study of Swami Vivekananda, a study from which we are sure to derive lasting benefit and inspiration? Is it because we apprehend that the life and teachings of a Sannyasin may have no bearing on the Indian problems that haunt and torment us from day to day? On the contrary, the spectacle of our countrymen ignoring the ideals and methods that Swami Vivekananda preached and toiling hard, but with ill-success, for the betterment and uplifting of the people, recalls the case of a man who, with his face turned away from the crystal stream that flows close by, digs and digs in vain at the soil for water to quench his thirst. And it is because the well-being and regeneration of India lie clearly through our proper appreciation of the Swami's life and mission, that we strongly appeal to all for the most ardent efforts to study and understand the same.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE TO INDIA.

STUDENTS of what Swami Vivekananda has left us mainly in the form of his speeches may easily classify the same under two broad divisions, namely : his message to the world and his message to India. It is mainly again from the speeches delivered by him in India and published as "Lectures from Colombo to Almora" that his message to India stands out in bold relief.

It was in the fitness of things that in Swami Vivekananda a divine messenger was given to India in modern times. The Swami loved his country from his boyhood and it was a love such as only a heart like his, quite an ocean in its depth and sweep, was capable of. Such patriotism can never be the outcome of any training ; it is inborn. Such perfect identification of self with country can be accounted for only when we understand how in the birth of a Vivekananda, the very soul of his country finds itself bodied forth. In the episode of such a life, the achievement, the promise, the hope and the mission of a whole country become reflected and epitomised, and Swami Vivekananda may well be said to have carried and embodied within himself from his birth the collective Indian consciousness. So it was really through Norendra, when sitting at his feet, that his Master got hold of the whole of India and through India the whole of mankind.

In his Master again, Norendra found the India of his heart interpreting herself. All his college study in history, all his participation in public life, had never conjured up in his mind a vision of India so real, so brilliant, so glorious as that which shone forth through his Master. Oh ! here was India seated in all her glory, the Mother of religions. Here through this wonderful drama of his Master's life, she was recounting and generalising her

past experiences and achievements such as only and really counted with her through centuries and centuries of surface-waves on Time which we call history. Here India was recording in living, tangible, indelible characters her real history in the past and her destined role in the future. This vision smote Norendra's soul with the fire of prophecy and henceforth the consciousness grew in him that he had a message to bear to India and also to mankind on her behalf. And we all know how as the necessary outfit, the divine messenger obtained, along with his high commission, the highest and heartiest gift which Mother India makes to her son, the gift of the Vedic salvation.

The vision of India deepened in colour and expression before the mind of Swami Vivekananda through all the years of travel over his country and the impulse to serve and worship her deepened as well. During these travels as an itinerant monk, the sights of distress, misery and ignorance tapped the deepest springs in his heart of love and sympathy for the Indian masses and the realisation of God as manifested in his fellow-creatures came to him with a force that spurred on the mightiest impulses for service. Oh ! for a proper opening to be vouchsafed to him now that he might set to work for his beloved people. His whole soul was burning with anguish and impatience when he received the call to go over to the West. And in one of his speeches at Madras after his first return from the West, after defining in those ever-memorable words his own ideal of patriotism, he declared : "I did not go to America, as most of you know, for the Parliament of Religions, but this demon of a feeling was in me and within my soul. I travelled twelve years all over india, finding no

way to work for my countrymen, and that is why I went to America."

We have seen above that the very first step in this great preparation of one who was to be the truest messenger from on High to his country was a direct acquaintance with and acquisition of the spirituality and wisdom which India stands for in this world and which define and interpret her mission and life-history. The second step was a wonderful widening of the heart and quickening of the noblest impulses, and the third step would be a clear understanding and discrimination of the methods, the ways and means. This last step Swami Vivekananda was enabled to take through his direct experience of the world, its many nations and their peculiarities of thought and action.

So after all this thorough preparation, when on the 15th of January 1897, Swami Vivekananda landed in Colombo and stood before his countrymen, the hero of the Chicago Parliament and the greatest modern prophet from India to the world outside, the time was full when his message to his country was to be unburdened. And in speech after speech, informed with nothing short of divine inspiration and unparalleled in their depth and earnestness of thought and expression, the message went forth from that "orator by divine right," ringing clear and straight to the dormant hearts of his countrymen. Let us now briefly describe this message.

In his reply to the address given him in Calcutta, the Swami points out that the advent of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa into this world happened just in time to avert a great danger to his country, even the danger of annihilation. He said: "Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reforms, some through other lines. With us religion is the only ground along which we can move. The Englishman can understand religion even through politics. Perhaps the American

can understand religion even through social reforms. But the Hindu can understand even politics when it is given through religion; sociology must come through religion, everything must come through religion. For that is the theme, the rest are the variations in the national life-music. And that was in danger. It seemed that we were going to change this theme in our national life, that we were going to exchange the backbone of our existence, as it were, that we were trying to replace a spiritual by a political backbone. And if we could have succeeded, the result would have been annihilation. But it was not to be. So this power became manifest." This was the groundwork of faith on which the Swami's message took its stand. It was not a proposal or theory put forward for favour of his country's acceptance. It was verily a question of life and death for his country whether it should accept or not his message; and he knew in his heart that his message was bound to be accepted one day, for was that not a part of the same divine economy by which such a tremendous manifestation of power as we find in his Master was effected to grant his country a new lease of life?

The central idea in his message is that there is a fundamental difference between India and other countries and that this difference must have to be first understood and recognised in its fullest significance, before any Indian problem can be viewed by us in its true perspective. The Swamiji was never tired of pointing out this difference in a thousand and one different ways of expression and almost in every lecture it was re-iterated. To avoid multiplying quotations, let us try to explain this central idea as expressed in the passage we have cited from his reply to the Calcutta Address.

Here in this quotation, religion is called the backbone of our existence. The backbone is the main support in the bodily structure of every vertebrate, from which all other organs

and limbs are supported and energised. So in the Indian collective life, religion is the source and support of all the other human concerns and activities. Religion here means the practice of the Indian Spiritual Ideal, so all-inclusive and synthetic in its scope and so transcendental in its depth. It is the mission of India in this world to cultivate, preserve and diffuse this Spiritual Ideal. This is the supreme end of our collective existence, and all other ends in that life bear to this supreme end, as we have said before, the relation of limbs to the backbone in physical structure, that is to say, they grow out of it, are energised by it and are ultimately conducive to it. Let us illustrate this.

Take politics; and we have the statement of Swamiji that "the Hindu can understand even politics when it is given through religion." Can we accept politics to be a department of our collective life and activity? Yes, provided, in the first place, it grows out of our collective pursuit of the spiritual mission as defined above. In the earliest Vedic ages, this was exactly the case and the kingly or Kshatriya class grew out of the necessity of protecting the religious pursuits. The ancient lawgivers also attached this kind of significance to the political State. But with the inevitable increase of power, the Kshatriyas would tend to outdo their legitimate functions to the detriment of the spiritual economy of the Aryan society. As a result, we find in those ancient times that society had to tackle again and again the hard problem of curbing the Kshatriya power, till in the Kurukshetra a sad destruction of the ancient Kshatriya classes took place. After that mighty milestone in Indian history, amidst incessant political confusion everywhere, the tendency to make the collective life in the country as much independent of the functions of a political State as possible, began to grow, and as an outcome of this tendency, the wonderful economy of village communities became prevalent throughout

India. Since then, the ancient race has been silently pursuing the even tenour of their life and mission behind all the huge political events that shook the country from one end to the other. Big empires and kingdoms have heaved up their proud heads and then toppled down, conquering legions have thundered past by, but the Indian village-folks have noiselessly preserved on, although amidst a steady decline of their material prosperity, that spiritual scheme of life and civilisation which the makers of Vedic India transmitted to posterity. Centuries of such independent pursuit of their spiritual mission, have created in the race a wonderful capacity for self-reliance and self-adaptability.

But with the advent of the British rule and Western culture, a new order of things has been introducing itself. Village life all over India is being shattered to pieces and old ideals and methods of life are fast disappearing. The classes having cut themselves adrift from their ancient moorings in the village life, and the masses consequently being thrown back upon their own moral and intellectual resources and economic makeshifts, a terrible disorganisation in collective life has ensued. To this festering disorganisation are due many of those sufferings of our people which are generally put forward as our political grievances. Western culture again has set up amongst educated men an imitation of Western political pursuits, and a political outlook for collective life has been created before their mind's eye. Needless to say that these political pursuits and views are antagonistic to the Spiritual Ideal which we have got to realise through our collective life, for they are fruitlessly diverting our energies. As we have said before, politics to be such as we can accept as a department of our collective activity must have to grow out of the necessities of our collective spiritual pursuits. Our present-day political activities do not satisfy this condition. Why should we fret and fume and pine away for self-

government of this type or that? The spiritual mission of India on the basis of which we have got to rebuild our collective life does not involve as a *necessary* factor either the cherishing in our mind or fulfilling any such political ambition. Does it not quite suffice for all the essential purposes of the collective life we have got to build up, if the political State now established in the country so administers its affairs that the pursuit of our collective life and ideal is not hampered in any way? And does it not quite suffice for our purpose if the privilege of such political co-operation is not denied to us by the State as would render it possible for safeguards being put against such obstruction or hampering? Scarcely any political State established in our country during the foregoing centuries of political confusion pledged itself to a policy of religious neutrality in the way that the present one does, and this fact appears to be of the utmost value when we remember that in the present age we have to work out collectively a harmony of all the prevalent religions in the country on a practical workable basis. Besides this, the advent of a Western nation as political administrators in the country has been instrumental, within a short period and on a scale otherwise impossible, in opening our eyes to new scientific methods and facilities for organising a collective life,—the pressing task that lies before us, though a singular one in respect of its spiritual end and motive force.

* The place of politics in the collective life that we are called upon to organise in the present age has been dealt with at some length, because it is the pursuit of politics specially from which Swami Vivekananda sought to call away his countrymen. With him it was not certainly a case of calling the grapes sour; he knew fully well how the part that politics plays in the life of Western nations is of paramount importance. But

India is India; you cannot alter now the whole course of her life-history,—neither the trend of her thought and culture for centuries, nor the divine mission on which she hinged her social fabric thousands of years ago. So if we want to save our energies from utter waste, if we want to protect and deepen all our new-born enthusiasm for collective and organised activity, if we want in fact to avert ultimately the death that surely lies through our infatuated imitation of Western processes of collective life, we must at once cry halt in our frenzied march towards political aims and set seriously to work with the spiritual mission of India as our basis.

Like politics, social reform must also grow out of the necessities of our collective pursuit of the spiritual end. Reforms in a society to be useful and salutary must follow lines along which that society has evolved from the beginning. Setting aside the catchwords and prepossessions derived from Western sociology, if we study with patience and with an open mind the evolution of society in ancient India, we are sure to find social customs gradually evolving out of the demands and necessities of Vedic religious pursuits, and social distinctions set up and based on the comparative subserviency of individuals or classes to the collective spiritual end. If we want to make the same principle operative now, in order that progressive changes in society may be worked out, we must first set society in motion towards the collective spiritual end, in other words, we must collectively move towards this spiritual end. This is what Swamiji meant when he said that "Sociology must come through religion." In the same way, "Everything must come through religion"; for all the wheels in a factory have the chance of moving and doing their work, only if the prime mover is first set in motion. So if collective life in India begins to grow on the basis of her spiritual end and mission, social reform, industrial reform,

economic reform,—progress in every department that is to say—are bound to proceed on healthy lines and along their proper orbit.

But the growth of a collective life in India on the spiritual basis implies, first of all, a harmony worked out among the different religions, and such harmonisation or unification the Swamiji in his lecture on "The Future of India" calls "the first plank in the making of a future India." Mere intellectual recognition of unity in the different creeds would never supply the cementing force in this great initial step in the work of building up a collective life in India; we must have some supreme practical demonstration of this unity-in-difference held up before us to rally round and such a demonstration has been vouchsafed to us in the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. So if we accept Swami Vivekananda's message, we cannot avoid accepting his prophetic advice, couched with so much emphasis in the following words, which also we quote from his reply to the Calcutta Address and with which we conclude.

"The highest ideal in our scriptures is the Impersonal and would to God every one of us here were high enough to realise that Impersonal ideal; but, as that cannot be, it is absolutely necessary for the vast majority of human beings to have a personal ideal; and no nation can rise, can become great, can work at all, without enthusiastically coming under the banner of one of these great ideals in life. Political ideals, personages representing political ideals, even social ideals, commercial ideals, would have no power in India. We want spiritual ideals before us, we want enthusiastically to gather round grand spiritual names. Our heroes must be spiritual. Such a hero has been given to us in the person of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If this nation wants to rise, take my word for it, it will have to rally enthusiastically round this name."

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

XIII.

C/o George W. Hale,
541 Dearborn Avenue, Chicago,
26th June, 1894

Dear—

The great Hindi poet Tulsidas, in his benediction to the translation of the Ramayana says, "I bow down to both the wicked and holy, but alas! for me, they are both equally torturers—the wicked begin to torture me as soon as they come in contact with me—the good, alas! take my life away when they leave me."

I say amen to this. To me, for whom the only thing left in the world is to love the holy ones of God, it is a mortal torture to separate myself from them. But these things must come. Thou Music of my Beloved's flute, lead on, I am following. It is impossible to express my pain, my anguish at being separated from you, noble and sweet and generous and holy ones. Oh! how I wish I had succeeded in becoming a Stoic!

Hope you are enjoying the beautiful village scenery. "Where the world is awake, there the man of self-control is sleeping. Where the world sleeps, there he is waking."

May even the dust of the world never touch you, for after all the poets say, it is only a piece of carrion covered over with garlands. Touch it not—if you can. Come up, young ones of the bird* of Paradise, be-

* The Swami rather means here the "Hoomo" bird of Bengalee folklore, which is fabled to live exclusively in the atmosphere and whose eggs, laid high up in the air, are hatched during the steep fall towards the ground, so that the young ones, who fly upwards the very moment, have never to touch the earth. Sri Ramakrishna used to compare the Nitya-siddhas or the eternally liberated souls to

fore your feet touch the cess-pool of corruption, this world, and fly upwards.

"Oh thou that are awake, do not go to sleep again."

"Let the world love its many, we have but one Beloved—the Lord. We care not what they say; we are only afraid when they want to paint our Beloved and give Him all sorts of monstrous qualities. Let them do whatever they please—for us He is only the beloved—my love, my love, and nothing more."

"Who cares to know how much power, how much quality He has—even that of doing good. We will say once for all, we love not for the long purse, we never sell our love, we want not, we give."

"You, philosopher, come to tell us of His essence, His powers, His attributes,—fool! we are here dying for a kiss of His lips."

"Take your nonsense back to your own home and send me a kiss of my Love—can you?"

"Fool! whom thou art bending thy tottering knees before, in awe and fear? I took my necklace and put it round His neck, and tying a string to it as to a collar I am dragging Him along with me, for fear He may fly even a moment—that necklace was the collar of love, that string the ecstasy of love. Fool! you know not the secret—the Infinite One comes within my fist under the bondage of love. Knowest thou not that the Mover of the Universe used to dance to the music of the ringing bracelets of the shepherdesses of Brindaban?"

Excuse my mad scribbling, excuse my foolery in trying to express the inexpressible. It is to be felt only.

Ever with blessings, your brother,

Vivekananda.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA; THE MAN.

(BY ERIC HAMMOND.)

THE "Life of the Swami Vivekananda" is a revelation. Those among us in the West whose privilege it was to know him, to esteem and revere him, to cherish a warm personal affection for him, may have imagined themselves possessed of something akin to a complete comprehension of this wonderful Seer. His "Life" brings with it, however, even to these, so much that is as new as it is arresting that it widely illumines their conception of Noren the Beloved and Vivekananda the Adored. Perhaps the most outstanding feature in this, the latest, delineation, is his thorough humanity.

Underlying all his manifold attributes, the manhood which he held to and glorified, remains distinct and distinguished. At work, during recreation, even when asceticism claimed him, he "played the man." Assuredly, in this "Life," "the Man is seen in the making, inflexible with regard to himself in the search for reality." No half-measures satisfied him. He opposed to weakness a solid front of truest manliness. Independent in all things, he was especially so "in his ways of thinking." Reform, for him and for all, meant an awakening from within. National reform, that of Hindusthan itself, could only be interpreted and realised "from within, through an awakened public intelligence." The centre of the upward movement, the pivot about which its machinery must revolve, lies at the heart. The perception, the consciousness of one's capacity for divinity, rests, finally, upon one's belief in, and reverence for one's inner self. To quote Swamiji, "When the internal force makes the external one subservient, you will attain a state in which you can become a Perfect *Man*." We have a clear right, therefore, for our assumption that among all

these young birds, because they also soar high up away from Maya before its entanglements can touch them in their earthly life.

qualities, manliness, with him and for him, held high place. The chord of this idea is finely struck by the writer of Occasional Notes in Prabuddha Bharata for July of this year;—"As in meditation the whole mind is concentrated, so in work the whole *man* is concentrated, and the concentrated force expresses itself not only through his mind, but his very hands and feet and all the faculties of sense and heart." Manliness is again and again appealed to in these "Notes" which illustrate and accentuate our Swami's being and his purpose.

Personal development: those two words advance the *motif*, the prevalent determination, that actuates the diapason of the life of each soul that struggles towards knowledge and succeeds in attainment. Determination, knowledge, attainment, a trinity of *traits*, were characteristic of the Swami from first to last, from infancy to manhood. A mysticism which was eminently of a practical order suffused him. His disciples were exhorted to work. They were bidden to utilise each and every experience of life which they endured or enjoyed, and to dignify each experience by steeping it in that spiritual essence which ennobles and uplifts. To despise work is error of the greatest sort; a sin against the divinity in humanity. Here and there, some soul of resplendent spiritual force labours in constant concentration and, through him and from him, flow streams of inspiration and encouragement to myriads of others. These "others" must, for the most part, live their lives as life has to be lived as we know it,—householders, merchants, statesmen, servers of humanity in a thousand varying ways, each, on his own lines, testifying to the faith that is in him by unswerving integrity, loyalty and love. Work, rather than the reward of work, is his righteous aim. Whether he revolve an affective scheme for the amelioration of the lot of the suffering, or discover and put together some appliance

that shall lighten labour and lessen risk, or employ himself among the rank and file, all that he does must be done well, done at his very best. More; in all that he does, he must have supreme regard for the welfare of others.

In the might of its maturity, the mystic mind of Vivekananda manipulated the mechanism of untiring work; work for India and work for the world. Realisation, filling the soul with the quietude of perfect peace, yet impelling the spirit of work in every member, every pulsation, of the body that enshrines the soul: this is his ideal made manifest. How urgently the Swami wrought, we knew, or thought we knew, but the "Life" in its unfoldment astonishes us by a history of life that was labour and labour that was life. Literally, he "gave" himself, in overflowing work, for others; "seeking not his own." Existence exhibited in him a notable proof of the sacred text,—“He that performeth action as duty, independently of the fruit of action, he is a Sannyasi and he is a Yogi.”

We may take it as a rule that any profession of religion which disinclines the professor for work is worthless. He who disposes himself towards continuous concentration, because of a holy desire to attain to God, does not so dispose himself because of distaste for work; and, as we have noted, he becomes an agent for the motive power of work in many. On the other hand, that man who poses in meditation in order to escape from work, desecrates religion and stultifies manhood.

Greater unrighteousness may be present in that soul which expresses pride in spiritual inactivity than in another which declares itself too busy for spiritual things. The latter may be, and frequently is, unconsciously actuated by a "divine urge" of which he, for the moment, is unconscious. His work, even then, if performed with all the skill and

renunciation alone this immortality is to be reached. It is the power, the great power, that cares not even for the universe; then it is that **ब्रह्माण्डम् गोष्पदावत्**—"The whole universe becomes like a hollow made by a cow's foot." Renunciation, that is the flag, the banner of India, floating over the world, the one undying thought which India sends again and again as a warning to dying races, as a warning to all tyranny, as a warning to wickedness in the world. Aye, Hindus, let not your hold of that banner go. Hold it aloft. Even if you are weak, and cannot renounce the world, do not lower the ideal.

And his "Song of the Sannyasin"! What a vivid, loving, portraiture of himself! And this self he daily and hourly sacrificed for the sake of his work amongst us! It was a willing sacrifice no doubt, but the tension in the opposite direction grew upon him as years passed by, till one day the bonds of life burst asunder to give back to him his self, the Self of the Eternal Sannyasin.

Renunciation—that was his favourite watchword. But I strain my ears in vain to hear it echoed back from the present-day India. We harken of late to echoes from every side of so many of his ideas, that that of renunciation should likely have a chance of being taken up somewhere. But alas, rather the opposite we find to be the case. The ideal of renunciation seems to have been pushed into the shade and in its place, another idea sways people's life and thought. They say with some of their leaders in thought and sentiment that God is immanent everywhere, then why should we run away from life as we find it? Rather let us hold on to life in all its aspects and strive our best to realise Divine immanence *through* it. The idea is very plausible and its sophistry eludes our gaze. Does not man by his very nature hold on to life in all its aspects? To do that, does he wait for and require your preaching? But then, you conclude this useless preaching with a catching flourish of philosophy, namely: 'strive your best to realise Divine immanence through the life given to you to live.' This is what Sri Ramakrishna used to mimic by the statement, "a cow-shed full of horse!"

Life appears quite different in different grades of spiritual life. A sinful man does not quite find

life to be what a pious man finds it, and to be able to realise Divine immanence through life, one has to rise first to a very high level of spirituality. Of course, intellectual or poetical sentiment is no realisation. You can very well indulge in such sentiment of Divine immanence, when trained to that, even if all the while your real self is weltering in a quagmire of sensual attachments. I regret to notice that our present-day culture is apt to lose sight of this important difference between sentiment and realisation, and that is one reason why the value of renunciation is so generally overlooked. To realise Divine immanence in and through the life we have got to live in the world is a spiritual feat to which only a Sri Krishna, a Buddha, a Christ, a Chaitanya or a Ramakrishna Paramahansa is equal, and the last named Teacher used to say that such realisation or Vijnan comes to one only after Jnana or the Highest Illumination. So the preacher of the doctrine of holding on to life as we find it so that such realisation may come to us thereby, leaves the fundamental question quite unsolved, the question, namely, as to how to acquire the required amount of spirituality,—how to attain that Highest Illumination. And our ancient scriptures, the accumulated experiences of all ancient sages, declare in one voice that renunciation is the only way.

The thought of God's immanence in the golden web of life which desire weaves for us is quite enjoyable, and any poet or theoriser is quite welcome to such sentimental enjoyment. But when people deprecate the value of renunciation to run after such enjoyment, they simply succeed in saving their spiritual conscience and hush up the inmost cravings of the soul for a deliverance from the meshes of desire. It is all a sorry spectacle of the Satan in us putting his best foot foremost. We exalt and sing praises to the worldly ties from which we cannot extricate ourselves. We simply mount with sentimental gold the very chains that eternally bind us down to worldly life. To glorify this bondage by declaring how it may reveal to us the immanent God is to put a bold, smiling face over a calamity which we have no heart, no ability, to conquer.

From all this sickening foolish talk, therefore, let us come back to the sincere sanity of the ideal

of renunciation which Swami Vivekananda held up to us by his life and exhortations. The Aryan society of old had this goal of renunciation set up before it to gravitate towards and during those days of the fourfold Ashramas, the highest acquisitions in thought and sentiment were made; but with the onrush of alien races with alien ideals into this society, the ideal was gradually lowered and it slowly slid down towards disorganisation.

Swami Vivekananda sought to re-instate this intensely national ideal of renunciation combining it with the other ideal of service that the life and example of all the great sages and saints of India so clearly implied. He announced that "Renunciation and Service are the two national ideals of India; intensify her in those two channels and all the rest will take care of itself." Of these twin ideals, that of Service is steadily taking possession of the minds and activities of our countrymen, but they still seem to be fighting shy of the other. Owing to this guilty half-heartedness, our efforts are found always to lack a real sustaining force and they too soon prove to be spasmodic. It is renunciation that keeps the fire of selfless sincerity burning within all that we do. It is renunciation that alone can sustain and bear us up through obstacles and failures. It is renunciation that must form the plinth of every scheme and project that we conceive for our country's good, or else they are bound to crumble down. And monasticism is the surest and greatest human contrivance for keeping the *Homa*-fire of renunciation burning in a society.

Swamiji stood before us as a tower of that highest spiritual strength that expresses itself in renunciation. It is really a miracle that so great strength could be contained in human body and mind. It is only the display of this superhuman strength that held the world in his day in a sort of magnetic spell of admiration for him. Verily it was that strength of renunciation that reduces the universe to a hollow made by the cow's hoof—*ब्रह्माण्डम् गोष्पदायते*. Without a bit of this strength what will our young men do with the ideal of service that has so fortunately dawned upon them? So let them come forward and boldly set an example of renunciation, which alone, like a roaring fire, can burn away all the seething mass of weak-

ness that at present putrefy our ancient society.

But this great renunciation of Swamiji appeared as strength in one aspect and as love in another. In a letter, written in Sanskrit to a disciple, he discusses the contents of the highest renunciation. He argues that if the highest renunciation such as God-men like Buddha acquired is not something negative, what is its positive content? If it is something purely negative, then only worm-eaten brains would care to pursue it; if otherwise, then we have to define it as a drawing away of the mind from everything else and concentrating it on God or Atman. But God is to be conceived not as an individual but as the Universal, or the Sum-total of all beings; similarly the Atman is not the individual soul but the One Universal Soul pervading all existence, and the individual does not exist apart from the Universal, both being one in their essence. Therefore the conclusion is that devotion and concentration of mind on the Universal Aspect of Being and on Its individual aspect come to the same thing. When we feel for the individual as the individual, it is compassion, and when we feel for him as the Brahman in the individual aspect, it is love. But for Advaitins like us it is a bondage to regard the individual as an individual. Therefore, love, and not compassion, is what our way lies through.

To us the upshot of the above discussion is that it is evident that one expression of Swamiji's supreme renunciation was universal love, the other being his immense spiritual strength. It is impossible to attempt any description of that love which suffused and beamed forth from the whole man, for all description is hushed the moment we contemplate on it. We can never forget what was said of him by his Master: the inner man was all love, only the outer man being Jnana or knowledge.

What does all this love mean now to those whom he loved as his God made manifest? Well, it still beckons to them at the way of their progress and development and still endures as an everlasting presence in their daily march towards the same. For such love is undying, even as God's love is. Love, Renunciation, Wisdom are not manifold according to the manifoldness of individuals through which they are manifested. You

and I do not produce any increase in their quantity or mass, as it were, by developing them in ourselves. Love, Renunciation or Wisdom is eternally of God and God alone and we only participate in them when they are manifested through us. In fact, they are of the essence of both God and man and they cannot die. And as to Swamiji's personality, remember that the mould, type or model is never dissolved or destroyed, in the economy of both Divine and human creation, so long as it has its work to do. The Hindus, therefore, believe in the theory of cosmic involution which evolves each Kalpa or cycle and which explains the persistence of great Types of personality throughout a cycle.

The highest renunciation is the renunciation of Mukti, or the Supreme Bliss of Absolute Existence. This renunciation is inconceivable to human intellect and is possible only in the case of gigantic world-teachers, who live in the consciousness of oneness with God. Towards such renunciation, Sri Ramakrishna evidently precipitated the impetuous soul of his disciple when he rebuked him for pitching his aim no higher than a constant dip into supreme Samadhi. He used to illustrate this higher state by pointing out how an expert, in the game of *pasha* with dices, who can score what throw he chooses, carries to pass on his pieces to the last square on the board, while ordinary players would try their level best all the while to get their pieces into this final square.

Swami Vivekananda in the plenitude of his spiritual power lived amongst us a life of such transcendental renunciation, and on that renunciation let us all contemplate today.

MIND, ITS POWERS AND POSSIBILITIES.

[*An Unpublished Class-Lecture by the Swami Vivekananda.*]

THE idea of psychology in the West is very much degraded. Psychology is the science of sciences; but in the West it is placed upon the same plane as all other sciences; that is, it is judged by the same criterion—utility.

How much practical benefit will it do to humanity? How much will it add to our rapidly growing happiness? How much will it detract from our rapidly increasing pain? Such is the criterion by which every thing is judged in the West.

People seem to forget that about ninety per cent of all our knowledge cannot, in the very nature of things, be applied in a practical way to add to our material happiness or to lessen our misery. Only the smallest fraction of our scientific knowledge can have any such practical application to our daily lives. This is so because only an infinitely small percentage of our conscious mind is on the sensuous plane. We have just a little bit of sensuous consciousness and imagine that to be our entire mind and life; but, as a matter of fact, it is but a drop in the mighty ocean of subconscious mind. If all there is of us were a bundle of sense perceptions, all the knowledge we could gain could be utilised in the gratification of our sense pleasures. But fortunately such is not the case. As we get further and further away from the animal state, our sense pleasures become less and less, and our enjoyment, in a rapidly increasing consciousness, of scientific and psychological knowledge becomes more and more intense; and knowledge for the sake of knowledge, regardless of the amount of sense pleasures it may conduce to, becomes the supreme pleasure of the mind.

But even taking the Western idea of utility as a criterion by which to judge, psychology by such a standard even, is the science of sciences. Why? We are all slaves to our senses, slaves to our own minds, conscious and sub-conscious. The reason a criminal is a criminal is not because he desires to be one, but because he has not his mind under control and is therefore a slave to his own conscious and sub-conscious mind, and to the mind of every body else. He must follow the dominant trend of his own mind; he cannot help it; he is forced onward in spite of himself, in spite of his own better promptings, his own better nature; he is forced to obey the dominant mandate of his own mind. Poor man, he can not help himself. We see this in our own lives constantly. We are constantly doing things against the better side of our natures, and afterwards we upbraid

ourselves for so doing, and wonder what we could have been thinking of, how could we do such a thing! Yet again and again we do it, and again and again we suffer for it, and upbraid ourselves. At the time perhaps, we think we desire to do it, but we only desire it because we are forced to desire it. We are forced onward, we are helpless! We are all slaves to our own and to everybody else's mind; whether we are good or bad, that makes no difference. We are led here and there because we cannot help ourselves. We say we think, we do, etc. It is not so. We think because we have to think. We act because we have to. We are slaves to ourselves and to others. Deep down in our subconscious mind are stored up all the thoughts and acts of the past, not only of this life, but of all other lives we have lived. This great, boundless ocean of subjective mind is full of all the thoughts and actions of the past. Each one of these is striving to be recognised, pushing outward for expression, surging, wave after wave, out upon the objective mind, the conscious mind. These thoughts, this stored-up energy, we take for natural desires, talents etc. It is because we do not realise their true origin. We obey them blindly, unquestioningly, and slavery, the most helpless kind of slavery, is the result, and we call ourselves free. Free! We who cannot, for a moment, govern our own minds, nay cannot hold our minds on a subject, focus it on a point to the exclusion of everything else for a moment! Yet we call ourselves free. Think of it! We cannot do as we know we ought to do even for a very short space of time. Some sense desire will crop up, and immediately we obey it. Our conscience smites us for such weakness, but again and again we do it, we are always doing it. We cannot live up to a high standard of life, try as we will. The ghosts of past thoughts, past lives hold us down. All the misery of the world is caused by this slavery to the senses. Our inability to rise above the sense life,—the striving for physical pleasures, is the cause of all the horrors and miseries in the world.

It is the science of psychology that teaches us to hold in check the wild gyrations of the mind, place it under the control of the will, and thus free ourselves from its tyrannous mandates. Psychology is therefore the science of sciences,

without which all sciences, all other knowledge are worthless.

The mind uncontrolled and unguided, will drag us down, down, forever,—rend us, kill us; and the mind controlled and guided will save us, free us. So it must be controlled and psychology teaches us how to do it.

To study and analyse any material science, sufficient data are obtained. These facts are studied and analysed and a knowledge of the science is the result. In the study and analysis of the mind, there are no data, no facts acquired from without such as are equally at the command of all. The mind is analysed by itself. The greatest science is the science of the mind, the science of psychology.

In the West, the powers of the mind, especially unusual powers, are looked upon as bordering on witchcraft and mysticism. The study of higher psychology has been retarded by its being identified with mere alleged psychic phenomena, as is done by some mystery-mongering order of Hindu Fakirs.

Physicists obtain pretty much the same results the world over. They do not differ in their general facts, nor in the results which naturally follow from such facts. This is because the data of physical science are obtainable by all, and are universally recognised, and the results are logical conclusions based upon these universally recognised facts. In the realm of the mind, it is different. Here there are no data, no facts observable by the physical senses, and no universally recognised materials therefore from which to build a system of psychology after their being equally experimented upon by all who study the mind.

Deep, deep within, is the soul, the essential man, the Atman. Turn the mind inward and become united to that, and from that standpoint of stability, the gyrations of the mind can be watched and facts observed, which are to be found in all persons. Such facts, such data, are to be found by those who go deep enough, and only by such. Among that large class of self-styled mystics the world over, there is a great difference of opinion as to the mind, its nature, powers, etc. This is because such people do not go deep enough. They have noticed some little activity of their own and other's minds, and without knowing anything about the real character of such super-

facial manifestations, have published them as facts universal in their application; and every religious and mystical crank has facts, data etc., which, he claims, are reliable criteria for investigation, but which are in fact nothing more or less than his own imaginings.

If you intend to study the mind, you must have systematic training; you must practise to bring the mind under your control, to attain to that consciousness from which you will be able to study the mind and remain unmoved by any of its wild gyrations. Otherwise the facts observed will not be reliable; they will not apply to all people and therefore will not be truly facts or data at all.

Among that class who have gone deeply into the study of the mind, the facts observed have been the same, no matter in what part of the world such persons may be or what religious belief they may have. The results obtained by all who go deep enough into the mind are the same.

The mind operates by perception and impulsion. For instance, the rays of the light enter my eyes, are carried by the nerves to the brain and still I do not see the light. The brain then conveys the impulse to the mind, but yet I do not see the light; the mind then reacts and the light flashes across the mind. The mind's reaction is impulsion, and as a result the eye perceives the object.

To control the mind you must go deep down into the subconscious mind, classify and arrange in order all the different impressions, thoughts etc. stored up there, and control them. This is the first step. By the control of the subconscious mind you get control over the conscious.

Another thing to be remembered is that the cause becomes the effect. The cause is not one thing and the effect something else that exists as a result. The effect is always the cause worked out. Always, the cause becomes the effect. The popular idea is that the effect is the result of the operation of a cause which is something independent and aloof from the effect. This is not so. The effect is always the cause worked out into another condition.*

* Evidently these class-lectures could not be taken down and preserved in their entirety. A few of those who attended noted down some of the points, interesting or important to them, and through such notes, these class-

The universe is really homogeneous. Heterogeneity is only in appearance. There seem to be different substances, different powers etc. throughout nature. But take two different substances, say a piece of glass and a piece of wood, grind them up together fine enough, reduce them till there is nothing more to reduce, and the substance remaining appears homogeneous. All substances in the last analysis are one. Homogeneity is the substance, the reality; heterogeneity is the appearance of many things, as though they were many substances. The One is homogeneity; the appearance of the One as many is heterogeneity.

Hearing, seeing or tasting etc. is the mind in different states of action.

The atmosphere of a room may be hypnotised so that everybody who enters it will see all sorts of things—men and objects—flying through the air.

Everybody is hypnotised already. The work of attaining freedom, of realising one's real nature, consists in de-hypnotisation.

One thing to be remembered is that we are not gaining powers at all. We have them already. The whole process of growth is de-hypnotisation.

The purer the mind the easier it is to control. Purity of the mind must be insisted upon, if you would control it. Do not think covetously about mere mental powers. Let them go. One who seeks the powers of the mind succumbs to them. Almost all who desire powers become ensnared by them.

Perfect morality is the all in all of a complete control over mind. The man who is perfectly moral has nothing more to do; he is free. The man who is perfectly moral cannot possibly hurt anything or anybody. Non-injuring has to be attained by him who would be free. No one is more powerful than he who has attained perfect non-injuring. No one could fight, no one could quarrel, in his presence. Yes, his very presence, and nothing else, means peace, means love wherever he may be. Nobody could be angry or fight in his presence. Even the animals, ferocious animals, would be peaceful before him.

I once knew a Yogi, a very old man, who lived in a hole in the ground all by himself. All he

lectures have now reached down to us. But they make profitable study in spite of these drawbacks.—Ed., P. B.

had was a pan or two to cook his meals in. He ate very little, and wore scarcely anything, and spent most of his time meditating.

With him all people were alike. He had attained to non-injuring. What he saw in everything, in every person, in every animal, was the Soul, the Lord of the Universe. With him, every person and every animal was "my Lord". He never addressed any person or animal in any other way. Well, one day a thief came his way and stole one of his pans. He saw him and ran after him. The chase was a long one. At last the thief from exhaustion had to stop, and the Yogi, running up to him, fell on his knees before him and said, "My Lord, you do me a great honour to come my way. Do me the honour to accept the other pan. It is also yours." This old man is dead now. He was full of love for every thing in the world. He would have died for an ant. Wild animals instinctively knew this old man to be their friend. Snakes and ferocious animals would go into his hole and sleep with him. They all loved him and never fought in his presence.

Never talk about the faults of others, no matter how bad they may be. Nothing is ever gained by that. You never help one by talking about his faults; you do him an injury, and injure yourself as well.

All regulations in eating, practising etc. are all right so long as they are complementary to a spiritual aspiration; but they are not ends in themselves; they are only helps.

Never quarrel about religion. All quarrels and disputations concerning religion simply show that spirituality is not present. Religious quarrels are always in the husks. When purity, when spirituality goes leaving the soul dry, quarrels begin, and not before.

In practising breathing, the first thing to consider is Asana, or posture. Any posture in which a person can sit easily, is his proper position. The spine should be kept free, and the weight of the body should be supported by the hips. Do not try by contrivances to control the mind, simple breathing is all that is necessary in that line. All austerities to gain concentration of the mind are a mistake. Do not practise them.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE OF THE VEDANTA.

IN point of world-wide significance, one achievement of Swami Vivekananda towers above all others. It is the crowning achievement of his public career as the messenger of God,—his marvelous presentation of the religion he was born in and professed.

He it was who first called this religion by its proper name. We have witnessed of late how difficult it is to define the term 'Hindu'. The Swami foresaw this difficulty and solved it thus: "This word 'Hindu' was the name that the ancient Persians used to apply to the river Sindhu. * * Now this word 'Hindu' as applied to the inhabitants of the other side of the Indus, whatever might have been its meaning in ancient times, has lost all its force in modern times; for all the people that live on this side of the Indus no longer belong to one religion. * * It is very hard, therefore, to find any common name for our Religion, seeing that this Religion is a collection, so to speak, of various religions, of various ideas, of various ceremonials and forms, gathered together almost without a name, and without a church, and without an organisation. The only point where, perhaps, all our sects agree is, that we all believe in the Scriptures—the Vedas. This perhaps is certain, that no man can have a right to be called a Hindu who does not admit the supreme authority of the Vedas. All these Vedas, as you are aware, are divided into two portions—the Karma Kanda and the Jnana Kanda. The Karma Kanda includes various sacrifices and ceremonials of which the larger part has become disused in the present age. The Jnana Kanda, as embodying the spiritual teachings of the Vedas, known as the Upanishads and the Vedanta, has always been cited as the highest authority by all our teachers, philosophers and writers, whether Dualist, or Qualified Monist, or Monist. Whatever be his philosophy or sect, everyone in India has to find his authority in the Upanishads. If he cannot, his sect would be heterodox. Therefore perhaps the one name in modern times which would designate every Hindu

throughout the land would be 'Vedantist or 'Vaidik' as you may put it; and in that sense I always use the words "Vedantism" and "Vedantâ." *

To avoid misconception, therefore, it is necessary to understand first what the Swami used to mean by the word Vedanta. The latter-day traditions of our culture are apt to confound this term with the philosophy of Sankaracharya, for this divine philosopher, more than any other commentator on the Vedanta, succeeded in securing the strongest hold on the popular mind. But now with the dawn of a more critical understanding of our own culture, we should return to the more natural and proper meaning of the term Vedanta, namely those spiritual truths and teachings that are collected at the end of the Vedic *mantras* and rituals. These spiritual truths and teachings of the Vedanta form the most enduring monument of that ancient age and culture which determined for India the key-note of her life-history and her mission in the world. Time cannot dim their lustre, and, as Swami Vivekananda said, "This Vedanta, the philosophy of the Upanishads, I would make bold to state, has been the first as well as the final thought on the spiritual plane that has ever been vouchsafed to man." And as to how its influence permeates and interpenetrates the life of a Hindu, the testimony of the Swami is: "Whether we are conscious of it or not, we think the Vedanta, we live in the Vedanta, we breathe the Vedanta and we die in the Vedanta, aye, every Hindu does that." †

Now during the *Sutra* (aphorism) period of our ancient culture, when the Indian mind and intellect all over the land was bent upon digesting and assimilating the truths and teachings of the Vedas into the very substance of its being, we find the Upanishads were being studied in a way as never afterwards they have been studied in India. In this period, the recluses from their forest home used to express and preserve the results of their study and practice of the Vedanta in short aphor-

isms or *Sutras*, which would then pass along the line of preceptors and disciples in every sect. It has now been ascertained that aphorisms on the Vedanta multiplied in this way to a wonderful extent, but they have all become lost to us except those of Bâdarâyana Vyâsa, which form now the *Uttara-mimânsâ* in the six systems of Indian philosophy. By these aphorisms, the fact is clearly demonstrated to us that these lofty spiritual experiences of the ancient sages as embodied in the Upanishads, however much they appear conflicting here and there, go to form in fact one complete system of spiritual wisdom.

But the question is as to what is that high standpoint that we should take in order to harmonise in one complete system of thought all the truths and teachings of the Upanishads. Out of the quest for this peculiar standpoint have been developed all the different schools of Vedanta philosophy,—that of monism, dualism, qualified monism and so on. The aphorisms of Vyasa, which clearly imply this standpoint without presenting it in the bold relief of philosophical reasoning, have formed the starting-point in the speculations of all these different schools, and these speculations therefore have had to be cast into the form of commentaries on these aphorisms.

In the vast, though charming, wilderness of these philosophical commentaries, a modern student is apt to lose his way; for every school manipulates the Vedanta texts and the Vyasa *Sutras* so skillfully and puts forward such closely logical reasonings, that at times it would evidently appear to a trained and unbiassed mind that truth must lie more or less with each of the commentators. But philosophically considered, the position of a monist, for example, is so different from that of a dualist, that one must have to choose between them and identify oneself either with the one or with the other. Thus the different schools of Vedanta philosophy have by their very difference and disparity in conclusions defeated the primary object with which speculation started in the beginning, namely the object of discovering that one standpoint from which all the Vedantic truths and experiences can be harmonised. Besides this, every commentator—not excluding even the glorious Shankar—is more or less guilty of text-

* Quoted from "Vedanta in Its Application to Indian Life", a lecture delivered in Madras by the Swami. Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, the Mayavati Memorial Edition, page 616.

† Complete Works, page 666.

torturing, and every instance of such recourse to text-torturing naturally raises this presumption in our mind that no one school of philosophy can be competent enough to comprehend within its scope the whole mass of Vedanta and *Sutra* texts. So through centuries, this quest after the harmonising stand-point, the synthesising principle, remained unfulfilled, and how inspiring is the thought that to our own age it was left to bring this long quest to a successful end.

Swami Vivekananda, by the blessings of his Master no doubt, has become the most successful exponent of the Vedanta in modern times and the very corner-stone of his exposition is the reconciliation he has brought about among the different schools of philosophy taking different views of the Vedantic teaching. In the same lecture from which we have quoted last, the Swami says: "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 *Tattvamasi*, is reached." Elsewhere, in a letter written in 1894 from America, the Swami refers to the theory of *Avasthá* or stages on the basis of which the existence of the dualistic, non-dualistic and quasi-dualistic texts in the same Upanishads can be explained: "The life of Sri

Ramakrishna was an extraordinary searchlight under whose illumination one is able to really understand the whole scope of the Hindu religion. He was the object-lesson of all the theoretical knowledge given in the Shastras. He showed by his life what the Rishis and Avatars really wanted to teach. The books were theories, he was the realisation. This man had in fifty-four years lived the five thousand years of national spiritual life, and so raised himself to be an object-lesson for future generations. The Vedas can only be explained and the Shástras reconciled by his theory of *Avasthá* or stages."

This theory of *Avasthá* implies that the human mind, in different stages of spiritual development in the case of ordinary men, contemplates naturally different degrees of relationship with God, and in the case of great saints living in constant communion with God, experiences different degrees of union with Him, in its different moods. This natural variation in hard and fast stages of the human mind or in easily interchangeable moods is wonderfully reflected from the texts of the Upanishads, which therefore, on the one side minister to the varying needs of the human soul in the varying grades of progress and, on the other hand, respond in sweet symphony to the varying experiences of the greatest saints in their varying moods of realisation. "It was given to me," the Swami says again, "to live with a man who was as ardent a Dualist, as ardent an Advaitist, as ardent a Bhakta, as a Jnani. And living with this man first put it into my head to understand the Upanishads and the texts of the Scriptures from an independent and better basis than by blindly following the commentators; and in my opinion, and in my researches, I came to the conclusion, that these texts are not all contradictory. So we need have no fear of text-torturing at all! The texts are beautiful, aye, they are most wonderful, and they are not contradictory, but wonderfully harmonious, one idea leading up to the other. But the one fact I found is, that in all the Upanishads, they begin with Dualistic ideas, with worship and all that, and end with a grand flourish of Advaitic ideas."

It is this message of the Vedanta in its wonderful harmony, enjoining worship of God from all

the different view-points of Dualism, Non-Dualism, and Quasi-Dualism, that Swami Vivekananda preached to the world. It was a message for all men to whatever church or creed they might belong, for the truths and teachings of the Vedanta do not themselves constitute a special creed, but a science forming the underlying basis of all the religious phenomena and experiences of all ages and countries. The Swami's message therefore was not a message of conversion into this religion or that, it was a message for the elevation and enlightenment of all irrespective of their tradition, ritualism, theology or ethnology. And how the Swami found the Vedanta to admit of such universal application, is tersely explained by him in one of his letters written from America: "All of religion is contained in the Vedanta philosophy,—*Dvaita*, *Visishtadvaita* and *Advaita*; one comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is necessary. This is the essential of Religion. The Vedanta applied to the various ethnic customs and creeds of India, is Hinduism; the first stage, *Dvaita*, applied to the ideas of the ethnic groups of Europe, is Christianity, as applied to the Semitic groups, Mahomedanism. The *Advaita* as applied in its Yoga perception form, is Buddhism, etc. Now by religion is meant the Vedanta; the applications must vary according to the different needs, surroundings and other circumstances of different nations."

In its practical aspect, this universal religion of the Vedanta used to be interpreted by the Swami as providing for man the fourfold paths of Yoga, each leading step by step towards higher and higher degrees of Divine communion, and each, severally and in combinations, affording suitable spiritual discipline to men of different temperaments and aptitudes. His masterly exposition of the fourfold Yogas—the *Jnana-yoga*, the *Bhakti-yoga*, the *Raja-yoga* and the *Karma-yoga*—has supplied a scientific basis to all the useful religious practices and symbolisms obtaining all over the world, and has revealed to men the latent spiritual possibilities of their life even as they have got to live it in the present age.

Thus it is no exaggeration to say that the glorious exposition of the Vedanta by Swami

Vivekananda is the greatest gift which humanity has received from God in modern times through the medium of human genius, talent or ability.

ON FAITH AND SRADDHA.

ON the 25th of January last, at Benares, His Holiness Swami Premananda gave a beautiful discourse on "Faith" to the audience who had gathered at the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama to take part in the celebration of the Swami Vivekananda anniversary. H. H. Swami Premananda, as the readers of *Prabuddha Bharata* may know, was one of that apostolic group of youngmen whom Sri Ramakrishnadeva called away for good from the world to himself. He rose when the other speakers had finished and began by telling the audience that he would give them a story which his Master used to recite to them in his memorable style. The story runs thus:

Long long ago when Mother Ganges came down from heaven to this earth, Gouri the divine consort of Shiva, while one day both were reposing at their blessed abode high up on the Mount of Kailash, asked her Lord a very pertinent question. "What do you mean, Oh Lord," she enquired, "by sending Ganges down amongst men? Would you have all men saved by her waters from the cycle of birth and death and thus bring this creation to an end?" Such doubt in our Mother's mind as to her Lord's motive was by no means misplaced, for Shiva is always so very liberal in granting favours to all!

"Don't think so, my Goddess," said the Lord; "I shall just shew you how matters stand, even though the waters of Ganges have become so easy of access to mankind and salvation, you say, is within the reach of all. Just come with me and do what I say."

So saying the Lord took her with himself to a town by the Ganges, both assuming human forms meanwhile. On the road-side very close to the sacred river, Gouri sat on the dust, a beautiful lady though poor, stricken down with grief and crying most bitterly, while Shiva with his head on her lap lay stretched, a cold unmoving corpse!

It was early morning and in file after file people of all sorts, old and young, and of both sexes, were slowly wending their way to the bathing ghat, when what a piercing piteous lamentation reaches them from the riverside, and a few steps on, behold! what a heart-rending sight meets the eye!

A thick crowd overflowing with keen compassion gathers round the weeping beauty, who in the most plaintive tone sobs out her prayer again and again that if there is some one quite sinless among the crowd, he would kindly come and touch her husband, for that, she knows, is sure to bring him back to life. Unable to respond to this strange request, from one side the crowd slowly drops away, while from the other it swells by fresh accession. In this way, the day was far advanced towards noon, when a queer drunkard naturally so late in coming there for his bath and reeling on from this side of the road to the other, held up his head and listened to the wailings. The crowd, much thinned away by this time, made way to this man and he thus accosted the lady; "Mother! what is the matter, what may I do for you? Say, I am ready." In a clear scream was the cry coming forth at the time, "Oh! for some one sinless to come to my rescue, for by a touch he brings him back to me." The drunkard was apparently all attention and quite sane; he heard it all and in a trembling voice, bawled out, "Ah me, I am sinful;—but yes, wait a minute; I just take a dip over there into Mother Ganges and give him life with my touch,—Oh! do wait a minute." He was gone—the reeling man now with steady running steps; for he was sure, he would cast off all his sins by one plunge into the river and come back a sinless man to restore to the lady her husband by his touch.

When the drunkard hurried back to the spot with water dripping from his hair and cloth, to his utter astonishment he found nobody there, for the Divine Couple had vanished.

Thus it was very conclusively proved by the Lord Shiva how men fail to obtain salvation even though they have got within their reach the sure means to it. Out of so many people who crowded the bathing ghat to have their morning ablutions, only the queer drunkard in the story

could avail himself of the saving virtue of the sacred waters. Him only the Ganges could really save, because he had in him real faith and *Sraddhā* (or, firm, undoubting assurance of mind). These are the greatest requisites in our religious life and of all things that Swami Vivekananda taught, upon these great stress used to be put by him.

Swami Premananda's speech, we have summarised above and he has given us much to ponder over. Year after year we celebrate the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. From platform and in print we discuss throughout the year the greatness of his life and example. We know how he has been sent into our midst to solve for us the toughest problems of our individual and collective life. But what does it all avail us? The sacred waters of the Ganges may come down from heaven to flow by the haunts and dwellings of men, people may discourse eloquently on their saving virtue and take therein their daily bath, but what does it all avail them without real faith?

The life and example of Swami Vivekananda shine forth before us like the shining waters of the flowing Ganges. Many things about them we believe, but we have no faith. Their hold on our life and thought is superficial. They elicit from us fine rhetoric and beautifully worded praises, but do not inspire us with noble lasting impulses. In this way, all the good that is to be derived from them is left untapped by us and we become no whit the better for having such a great man to teach and lead us.

The remedy, however, is faith,—faith in what we believe about the Swami. It is one thing to believe something and another to have faith in it. Millions do believe that God is good, but very, very few have faith in that fact. Belief affects only the intellectual judgment, while faith affects the whole man. If you merely believe in the greatness of Swami Vivekananda, the matter ends with an yea or nay of intellect—that he was such and not otherwise,—but if you have faith in his greatness, then his greatness dwells within you as a power, an inspiration, that shapes your whole life and future. In the case of the sacred waters of the Ganges as in the story told above, or in that of the life and example of a Swami Vivekananda, it is faith that really enables us to fully utilise

what God provides for our welfare and regeneration, while mere belief makes of us nodding wiseacres.

Now the question is as to how our belief can be made to ripen into faith, how shall we be able to make the most of our beliefs. Mere belief, we have seen, is the judging activity of the intellect and it fails to develop into faith, simply because we do not back it up with will and feeling. We lead a life which is divided against itself,—the life of intellect dissociated from the life of will and feeling. While our intellect has to take cognizance of such facts as are presented to it and has to go on forming its judgments, our inner nature has its definite attachments and enjoyments and our will and feeling are retained to serve these latter. Thus we cannot bring our will and feeling to work behind the believing activity of our intellect. The difficulty is solved if we can give integrity to our internal life,—make it whole and undivided, by bringing will and feeling and intellect to work always in the same sphere. Let us always will and feel in favour of that only which the intellect has judged to be good for us, and in a short time we shall find matters of our belief developing into matters of faith. It is wholeness which constitutes the wholesomeness or healthiness of our internal life. When this life becomes unhealthy, we lose all power of faith. Belief becomes faith in those who have got a healthy internal life. They are full of *Sraddhā* and they easily attain their objects of pursuit in life.

We fail to derive any real benefit from the life and example of a great man like Swami Vivekananda, simply because while believing in his greatness, we allow our will and feeling to attach themselves to pursuits and interests which lie in an opposite and remote direction from the noble lessons of his life and example. This unsoundness in our internal life must be remedied and the remedy lies in constant determined efforts to mould our life according to the ideals the Swami has set forth before us. To gain strength, we have to exert strength; there is no other way.

THE YUVARAJA OF MYSORE AT THE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION.

[*A speech delivered on the 25th Jan. at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore.*]

Swamijis, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It was with much pleasure I accepted the kind invitation of the Swamijis to be present here to witness the Birthday Anniversary of the great modern patriot-saint of India, the Swami Vivekananda. I had similar invitations in the previous years, but owing to some engagement or other, I was not able to avail myself of their kindness till now, and need I say how genuinely happy I feel in being able to associate myself in the Birthday Anniversary rejoicings of a great personality like Swami Vivekananda, for whom I may say we have an almost inherited attachment and reverence. Perhaps many of you may be aware that my father of revered memory was personally acquainted with the Swamiji and always entertained a high regard for him and was of some use to him when the Swami went to America. And it was thereafter that the world recognised the Swamiji's wonderful grasp of the religion and philosophy of the Vedas. It is needless for me to recount to you, specially after the two lectures you have just now listened to, the life-history or the work of the Swami. His utterances and life have been published in various languages and command universal love. His disciples are multiplying and so are the institutions to teach and preach his ideas. The day may not be far distant when the reformation he set in motion will gather more volume and strength and be an important factor in the renovation of India. We are living in an age of reason when we can no longer fall back on mere blind faith. To be believed, to be made the basis of human action, everything has to be proved. Awakening India subjects her religion to this critical test and desires the eternal truths propounded in the Vedas to be given to her in their pristine purity. In her movement of reform and in her onward march of progress, she wants a form of religion, rationalistic with an all-welding force to help her along rather than hamper her at every step with superstitions and blind faiths. Such

an establishment of Dharma, based upon the eternal truths of the Vedas has been given to us by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. We have but to hear of his life to see what a comprehensive grasp of the eternal truths of religions he held, which made him realise God, the Kingdom of Heaven, in each religion, thus proving the psychological basis (of religion) irrespective of caste, creed or sect. If Sri Ramakrishna did this for the world, what has Swami Vivekananda done for it? Well, he was the great apostle of this teaching to the world. He has done us special services for which we cannot be too grateful. The Swami advocated a practical Vedanta, a Vedanta making for a new National Spirit, a spirit of public service, wherein the subjective vision of the One should be transformed into the objective service for the many. He knew that the modern transition in India could not come to full fruition if the people were not taken into account. Therefore while in the West one finds him uttering the philosophy of the Vedanta, urging the Western world to meditation, in the East one finds him urging the people to action, to cultivate the spirit of public service, the spirit of a religious national life, the spirit of social unity and the spirit of social reform whose method is to be a growth from within. He said our social fabric raised ages ago required a readjustment. Our religion properly understood and practised was sound and unassailable and most conducive to human progress. He gave the greatest impetus for the raising of the depressed classes calling them Children of God and preached the Vedas to them holding that their Atma was as good as that of the Brahmana. So did Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva the great Acharyas of Southern India, but their present-day disciples appear to scout the notion. The Swami stood out for sea voyage, calling his Madras friends boobies for their opposition to foreign travel. He laughed to scorn their "don't-touchism." He insisted on equal education and equal opportunities for women as for men in India. He abhorred the imbecile practice of child marriage and the multiplication of babies by babies, reducing the race to lifeless pigmies. Like Sri Krishna of old in the Bhagavadgita, he preached every kind of service to men, as of the very essence of religion, apart from retirement into solitude. He held that an all-merciful power has vouchsafed to us the British

connection, to give us the inestimable blessings of peace, good Government and equal laws in addition to all the treasures of Western wisdom and modern civilisation. He tried to fuse the Hindu and the Moslem into a common love for the motherland, to whose glorious past they had contributed with equal valour and heroism. He saw like Akbar, the Great Moghul Emperor, no difficulty in Christians, Mussalmans and Hindus alike following their Ishtam according to their traditions, historical growth and inherited inclinations, worshipping the same God though under different names as Allah, Brahma, God, etc., and living side by side striving for righteousness, purity and noble living under the influence of high ideals and creating a united new India. And inside the Hindu fold, he removed every barrier separating race and caste by proclaiming the common unity of the Vedic ideals underlying the apparently divergent practices obtaining from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. He proved like his great master Sri Ramakrishna that even the tough-fought doctrines of Advaita, Dvaita and Visishtadvaita were but different visions of the same truth seen from different points of view and that they all prescribed almost the same rules of discipline and righteous living for the attainment of Mukti, eternal life and supreme bliss.

Every nerve-fibre of his brain tingled with sympathy for the poor and down-trodden; and the large-hearted soul overflowed with an all-consuming love for India, a renovated and rejuvenated India which will purge itself of all its long-standing ills and stand out like a lion among the nations of the world, giving culture and religion to all lands, proclaiming humanity, fraternity and peace all round, and voicing forth the powers of divinity in humanity.

May his great life and work be an inspiration to us all! May we all profit by his invaluable teachings!

One word more and I conclude. In Europe in modern times, whenever a great thinker arises, like a Goethe or a Darwin, a Carlyle or a Kant, he enshrines his best thoughts in a book and leaves it to posterity as his heritage. We in India feel that this is not enough. We found an order to perpetuate the teaching. And for this, the highest

knowledge, the Para Vidya of the Vedas, the fittest Apostles have from times immemorial been the most cultured and disciplined young men of the land living a life of selfless purity and poverty and giving their wholehearted devotion to the highest ideals of love and service of humanity.

In this select order of Sannyasis, etc., founded by the Swami Vivekananda we are indeed fortunate in having in Bangalore three worthy representatives, with the Swami Nirmalananda at their head and I associate myself with you all in offering them our best thanks and grateful appreciation for their noble work.

Let me finally express the hope that the young men of Bangalore will come more increasingly under the influence of their teaching and help themselves to become better and happier as individuals, worthier as ornaments of the Society and more patriotic and valuable as citizens of the State.

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Prof. Shyamacharan Dey's Speech at Benares.*)

DEAR BROTHERS !

WE have assembled here this afternoon to celebrate the fifty-second birthday anniversary of the great world-teacher, the Swami Vivekananda. Till 1893, the year in which he addressed the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, the Swami had been little known in India. He had been living as an itinerant monk for some years before he left India for the New World. The news of his unparalleled success in America fell like a thunder-clap on India and opened the eyes of his countrymen, who now recognised the merit of the orange-robed Sannyasin who had volunteered to unfold the mysteries of Vedantism to the Chicago Assembly representing the best brains of all nations. Gentlemen! you will kindly forgive me if I say that we Indians are a curious people. We possess eyes, but we see through the eyes of Europeans and failing that, of Americans. We possess, I suppose, some amount of what physiologists call the brain, but we exercise that particular organ in the groove approved of in England or America.

When we came to learn that an orange-robed Sannyasin had been honoured as no Indian had been honoured before in the Western Hemisphere we got impatient to ascertain who this till-then-unknown giant could be and at last when we succeeded in unearthing him, we busied ourselves in arranging meetings to pass vote of thanks to our unknown representative and later on in forming reception committees for his reception on his return home and engaging special trains for his travel, for we could not bear that it should be said that the prophet had not been honoured in his own country. Again, is it not true that most of us who have received a University education had refused to believe that there was anything very valuable in our religion or in our sacred books? It is only when the Hindu religion as expounded by Swamiji had created a sensation in America that we have turned round to examine if our religion, after all, is not utterly barren. Now that the Swami Vivekananda has been applauded by the savants of the West in Chicago and befriended by Max Muller and the Swamiji's feet have been worshipped by his Western disciples, we feel that our road is clear. We are now prepared to study this prince among men and profit by his teachings.

Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta in a Kayastha family in January, 1863. His father was an attorney-at-law of the Calcutta High Court. The Swamiji's family name was Norendra Nath Dutt. Young Noren went through the usual school and college courses and obtained his B. A. degree in 1884. By that time he had made considerable progress in Sanskrit, philosophy, history and astronomy. The Rev. Mr. Hastie, who was his professor of philosophy in the G. A. Institution, Calcutta, once remarked of him—"Norendra is an excellent philosophical student. In all the German and English Universities there is not one student so brilliant as he." Noren was endowed with an exceptionally sweet and musical voice which he turned to advantage by receiving lessons from an up-country expert (*ostad*). He was naturally of a meditative turn of mind, but at the same time was marked by a childlike simplicity. "In fun a boy, in song an artist, in intellectual pursuits a scholar, and in his outlook of life a philosopher—he appeared before his friends as unique amongst the young men of his time." He was a great favour-

ite with the college students of his day, but not one of them could really discover what a tremendous power was hidden within their friend who would regale them of evenings for hours and hours together with his charming religious songs sung at the banks of the College Square or Cornwallis Square tanks. Such was young Noren in 1884.

Ten years later, in 1893, we find him in Boston anxious to explain the mysteries of the Vedanta to the Chicago Parliament but without any credentials from any religious community in India, which was the "open sesame" to that assembly. We find him closeted with Professor Wright of the Harvard University, the professor of Greek, declaring "To ask you, Swami, for your credentials is like asking the sun to state its right to shine." He offered the Swamiji a letter of introduction to the chairman of the committee for selecting delegates, in which he stated, "Here is a man who is more learned than all our learned professors put together." Let us now see what Noren had been doing these ten years of silent and unconscious preparation.

All the while he was going through his college course, Noren had an irrepressible yearning for religious truths. His Western studies had well-nigh turned him into an agnostic, but he was not satisfied at heart with that position. He began to frequent the Brahmo Samaj founded by Keshab Chandra Sen and its off-shoot, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. He used to visit Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore (father of the famous poet Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore) and one day pointedly asked him if he had seen God. The Maharshi did not make any reply to assure him that he did,—but remarked "Boy! you have the eyes of a Yogi." He visited many Sannyasis and put to them the same question but not one could assure him that he had seen God. It was about this time that he was brought in contact with Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva who was destined to be his spiritual preceptor, guide, philosopher and friend. The latter was then living in flesh and blood in the Kali Temple of Dakshineswar, a few miles north of Calcutta. Noren had already heard of him from his professor of English in the General Assembly's Institution who had referred to Sri

Ramakrishna Deva's condition in explaining the word 'ecstasy.' The actual meeting of Noren with his future master came about in this way: Norendra's cousin, Rama Chandra Dutt, who was teacher of Chemistry in the Campbell Medical School in Calcutta, had been for sometime regularly visiting Sri Ramakrishna Deva and had realised who the so-called Paramahansa Deva was. Rama Chandra Dutt had gauged the depth of Norendra's spiritual yearnings and what he recommended to him was to visit Sri Ramakrishna Deva, assuring him that all his doubts would then be set at rest. Noren followed his cousin's advice and we find him entering the beautiful retreat of Sri Ramakrishna Deva. From a personal point of view the meeting of Noren with his future master was extraordinary. To Sri Ramakrishna Deva himself the meeting was a lightning flash of memory and recognition. He treated Noren as if he had always known and loved him. In some strange way unknown to himself and inexplicable, Noren felt drawn towards him. He did not know what to make of the matter. He could not understand the master's sudden joy at seeing him. He was asked to sing and he sang a religious song with his inimitable charm. The song acted like magic upon Sri Ramakrishna Deva. He cried out with tears in his eyes and with overwhelming joy upon his face—"My boy! my boy! I have been anxiously waiting for you for years! At last you have come!" And then he passed into Samadhi or super-conscious state. When he emerged from that state he said, "My boy! I was waiting for you all the time. Why did you make such delay in coming? My lips are burnt by talking with worldly-minded people. Now, however, I shall soothe them by talking with you." Referring to this meeting the Swami Vivekananda would afterwards speak of his impressions at the time: "What a mad man is this! Is it a madman to whom my cousin has brought me after all! Reason tells me that he is mad, but the heart is attracted towards him. Wonderful is this mad man! Wonderful is his attraction! Wonderful is his love!" As he was leaving, he gave his promise to Sri Ramakrishna Deva that he would come to Dakshineswar frequently. The master entreated him to come. So, on a later day, he went in company of some of his Brahmo friends. Again

Sri Ramakrishna Deva begged Noren to sing. He did so, and while the song was in progress, Sri Ramakrishna Deva exclaimed, "Behold! how the light of Saraswati beams out from him." "Do you see a great light before falling asleep?" next enquired Sri Ramakrishna Deva. Noren related what he experienced almost every night from his childhood, how the light came and how he would enter into it and then fall fast asleep. The master said eagerly "Ah! it is true. This one is Dhyana-Siddha. His sleep is as the meditation of God." It was at this interview that Noren ventured to put the same question to Sri Ramakrishna that he had put so often to many Sadhus. "Sire! sire! have you seen God"? The immediate reply was, "Yes, my son! I have seen God. I do see Him just as I see you before me. Only I see the Lord in a much more intense sense; and I can show him to you. He will converse with you just as I am conversing with you now." And Noren felt satisfied.

At the third meeting when Noren had finished his singing, a great seriousness came over the face of the master. The master was looking fixedly at Noren. He arose; and then taking him quite apart into the most distant retreats of the Temple gardens, he confided to him a momentous truth. He said, 'Behold! in you is Shiva and in me is Shakti! and these two are one.' Noren smiled. Certainly this was downright madness, if ever there was madness. The master, too, had his own thoughts. He was thinking that time had already come to modify the great scepticism of his long-expected disciple and he decided on a certain course. The same evening Sri Ramakrishna Deva threw himself into the condition of ecstasy. In that state he came down from his seat, walked to Noren, placed his own right hand upon Noren's heart and then drawing himself up, put his foot upon Noren's shoulder. At the touch of the master Noren felt himself sinking as if in a deep faint; his consciousness was dissolving. The room, the veranda, the temple, the garden of Dakshineswar, the faces and forms of those present and of the master seemed all of a sudden to fade out. He cried out in dismay, "O! what are you going to do to me! I have a father and a mother at home." And having uttered these words he fell into unconsciousness. Thus he remained for a short time until the master again touched his heart and then slowly he came

back to consciousness. When he was himself again, he felt a certain freshness of the body and a certain invigoration of the mind, as if he had awakened from deep slumber; the master had given his disciple just an inkling of Samadhi and shown that he was a spiritual power. From this moment Sri Ramakrishna owned and possessed his beloved disciple and Noren felt himself a tool in the master's hand.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva ceased to live in flesh and blood in 1886, so that Noren had about five year's spiritual training from the master. His training was often-times a matter of infinite patience and long suffering on the part of the master because of the disciple's often openly rebelling against him. On every point there was discussion, the master always loving, the disciple always gloriously militant. Sometimes Noren would find himself uttering the word "Kali! Kali!" with all his heart. Then the mind would suddenly start, "What is this? Who is Kali? Rubbish!" But a moment later it would be "Jai ma Kali, Jai ma Kali" again. The doubting Noren was really passing away. The devotional Noren—the spiritual Noren—Noren the Hindu—was being born. Sri Ramakrishna injected his own consciousness, his own personal realisation of the Divine Mother and of Hinduism into the soul of Noren, till at last he was obliged to confess, "the Mother has made me her slave."

The relationship between the master and the chief disciple was extraordinarily sweet. So close, so deep, so divinely mutual was their love and regard, one for the other, that the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and those of the Swami Vivekananda always think of these two souls in one and the same moment of thought as Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Sri Ramakrishna's love for Noren was such that if Noren failed to come for some days to visit him, he would become inconsolable. He would sit weeping alone. Once Noren had said to him, "Why do you think of me so much at all times? You will become like me, if you constantly think of me. The Raja Bharat, thinking of his pet deer, forgot his ascetic practices and in his next life he was born a deer." Sri Ramakrishna's reply was, "From the day when I shall no longer see Narayana in you I shall not look upon your

face." Indeed Sri Ramakrishna's regard for Noren was so great that he would never allow Noren to offer a single act of personal service to him. The other disciples were free to do such services. In these days many devotees of Sri Ramakrishna used to offer him fruits and sweet-meats. Sri Ramakrishna would not partake of them save when he was sure as to the character and motive of the giver. He would not, in such a case, give them to his other disciples. But Noren could take them. Nothing could affect him. He was the roaring fire of purity. No stain could come upon him, so the master thought. Sri Ramakrishna had constantly before his mind the innate greatness of his chief disciple. He was wont to say of him—"so many devotees come to me, but there is none like unto him. I find that one is like a lotus with ten petals, another with sixteen petals, another with hundred petals at the most. But amongst lotuses Noren is the thousand-petalled."

Early in 1886, Sri Ramakrishna Deva was lying seriously ill in the garden-house at Cossipur. Intense renunciation came to Noren at the time. Under Sri Ramakrishna Deva's instruction he went through various Sadhanas or ascetic spiritual practices. One day he went to the master and said, "Sire! Do give me the Nirvikalpa Samadhi (perfect meditation)." Sri Ramakrishna Deva replied, "When I am well, I shall give you everything you ask of me." Noren insisted "But if you pass away what can I get?" Then the Master said quietly, "Well my boy, what do you want?" Noren replied, "Sire I wish to remain in Samadhi like Sukadeva for five or six days at a time and then to return to the sense-plane for a short while, if only to maintain the body, and then revert to that state of blessedness." Sri Ramakrishna Deva grew impatient and said, "Fie! you are such a big receptacle! Does it befit you to speak like that? I thought that you were like a huge Banyan tree and would give shelter to thousands of weary souls. Instead of that you are seeking for your own salvation. Don't think of such small things my boy!" At this reprimand of the master, Noren burst into tears. He now understood that the master intended that he was to go forth into the world and teach the Gospel.

But, even as Noren had asked, even so was he to have the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It came one

evening unexpectedly when he was meditating in a lying posture. Suddenly he felt that there was a great light at the back of his head and cried out, "Where is my body? Where is my body?" and became unconscious; his breath stopped and his fellow disciples got alarmed. They reported the matter to Sri Ramakrishna Deva, who smiled and said, "Let him be, let him be! He has teased me long to reach that state." At 9 o'clock at night Noren's consciousness returned and he entered the room of the master. Sri Ramakrishna Deva said, "Now, then, the Divine Mother has shown you everything. Just as treasure is locked up in a box, so will this realisation be kept under lock and the key remains with me. Now you have work to do. When you have finished my work, the treasure box will be again unlocked." As a matter of fact the Swami Vivekananda passed away in Maha-Samadhi in July 1902 at the early age of 40 having nobly carried out his master's mission.

After the Maha-Samadhi of Sri Ramakrishna Deva his disciples determined to renounce the world and form themselves into a holy order under the leadership of Noren. The youth who sat at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna Deva became the chief apostle of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and a teacher of the highest Vedic wisdom to the modern world. Noren, after having spent some years as a wandering monk became the Swami Vivekananda. His travels extended from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and when he was in Madras some cultured men thought that it would be good if Swamiji was sent to America to represent Hinduism in the great Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago. Accordingly they raised subscriptions, provided him with funds and sent him to America via Japan.

We have the following description of the Chicago Parliament from the pen of the Swamiji himself. "Imagine a hall below and a huge gallery above, packed with six or seven thousand men and women representing the best culture of the country, and on the platform learned men from all nations on the earth. And I who never spoke in public in my life—was to address this august assemblage. It was opened in great form with music and ceremony and speeches; then the delegates were introduced one by one; and they stepped up and

spoke. Of course, my heart was fluttering and my tongue nearly dried up; I was so nervous that I could not venture to speak in the morning. Pratap Chandra Mozumdar made a nice speech, Jnanendra Nath Chakravarty, a nicer one; and they were much applauded. They were all prepared and came with ready-made speeches. I was a fool and had none, but bowed down to Devi Sarasvati and stepped up; Dr. Barrows introduced me. I made a short speech and when it was finished I sat down almost exhausted with emotion."

The Swami Vivekananda began his address with "Sisters and brothers of America," and with that, before he had uttered another word, the whole Parliament was as if taken by a great storm of enthusiasm. Hundreds upon hundreds rose to their feet and sent up deafening notes of applause over and over again. The Parliament had gone mad; every one was cheering, cheering, cheering; the Swamiji was bewildered. What did this mean! Then he knew that the Divine Mother was behind him. When silence was restored, the Swamiji began his address by thanking the youngest of nations in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of Santnyasins, and introducing Hinduism as "the mother of religions," a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance; and he quoted two beautiful illustrative passages in this relation taken from the Hindu Scriptures. "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord! the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee." And the other, "Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me." When the Swamiji sat down "exhausted with emotion" as he himself puts it, the Parliament gave him a grand ovation which was a mark of their significant approval of his right as a preacher. Henceforth the Swami Vivekananda became the central figure in that august assembly. On the 19th September 1863 he read before it his celebrated paper on Hinduism. I do not propose to tire your patience by presenting to you his exposition of the Vedanta for that would be superfluous in this stronghold of Hinduism. I shall content my-

self by simply quoting one of the concluding paragraphs of his paper as an illustration of the Swamiji's superb eloquence:—"He who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura Muzda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the Jews, the Father in Heaven of the Christians—give strength to you to carry out your noble idea. The star arose in the East; it travelled steadily towards the West, sometimes dimmed and sometimes effulgent, till it made a circuit of the world, and now it is again rising on the very horizon of the East, the borders of the Sampo, a thousandfold more effulgent than it ever was before."

The direct result of the Swamiji's exposition of Hinduism in America has been that Vedantism has taken firm root on the American soil. From seeds sown by him little plants have already sprung up and Sri Ramakrishna temples are now adorning some of the principal cities of the United States. Five Indian monks of the order of Sri Ramakrishna are at this moment at work in the States and the country is clamouring for more. Indirectly the Swamiji's success in America has a special significance for India. The Western people and especially the Americans now understand that we Hindus who have been receiving lessons in Western science and Western arts during the last two hundred years, have in our turn something infinitely more valuable to give away. All India shall feel grateful to the Swamiji for this, for its moral effect on the Europeans and the Americans is simply incalculable.

In December 1896, the Swamiji returned to India. He landed at Colombo and from Colombo to Almora his tour was one grand triumphal procession. The Swamiji now turned his attention to teach his countrymen their duties to their motherland.

His mind though highly philosophical was by no means visionary. He was eminently practical in his views and teachings. He knew his countrymen and his keen intellect made a correct diagnosis of their mental disorganisation. He knew that there were many among them who were born and bred in lifelong laziness and who wanted to throw the veil of renunciation over their unfitness for work. He was careful to impress on his audience

that this mental attitude was not an indication of Sattva quality (i. e. absolute purity), but was quite the reverse of it. It had its origin in the Tamas or ignorance.

We even find him exhorting his disciples to throw aside meditation, to throw aside personal salvation. "What will you do with individual salvation?" asks the patriot-saint. That is sheer selfishness. He therefore exhorts his disciples to pour their heart and soul in selfless work that their poor and ignorant brothers may be uplifted. He pointed out to his disciples the teaching of the Gita—that meditation is not the only path to salvation. The same path can be reached by selfless work also. "While the world-preacher was uttering constantly the philosophy of the highest Vedanta in the West, and urging the Western world to meditation, here in India the patriot was preaching the doctrine of disinterested public service and infusing the spirit of social reform which he insisted must come from within through an awakened public intelligence without any denunciation of traditional beliefs and customs."

The Swamiji was a great Vedantist. But he insisted that the teachings of the Vedanta should be carried into practice in our daily life, and herein lies his real greatness as a Vedantist, and this is what distinguishes him most from the other great Vedantists who had preceded him. Unlike the ascetics of old whose sole concern was their personal salvation and whose sole bliss was to be immersed in deep meditation, Swami Vivekananda advocated a practical Vedanta—a Vedanta making for a spirit of selfless public service. Suppose we have realised the oneness of the Universe; suppose we have realised that we are that one infinite Being. What good will it do to the world? Pertinently questions the patriot-saint and answers the question himself: "For then alone a man loves, when he finds that the object of his love is not any low, little, mortal thing. Then alone a man loves when he finds that the object of his love is not a clod of earth, but is the veritable God Himself. The wife will love the husband the more when she thinks that the husband is the God himself. The husband will love the wife the more when he knows that the wife is God himself. The mother will love her

children more who thinks that the children are God himself. That man will love his greatest enemy who knows that the very enemy is God himself. A man becomes a world-mover when his little self is dead and God stands in its place. He alone has the right to stand up and say, 'How beautiful is this world.'" Once Vedantism has been reduced into practice, the indecent and brutal hurry which forces us to go ahead of every one else will vanish from the world. The aspect of the whole world will be changed and in place of fighting and quarrelling there will be a reign of peace. All hate, all jealousy will vanish away from the world and this earth will become a veritable heaven.

The Swamiji felt very keenly the harsh and unnatural treatment with which certain classes are treated in India. He was sorely pained by what he saw in Malabar country. He says, "The poor Pariah is not allowed to pass through the same street as the high caste man; but if he changes his name to a hodge-podge English name or to a Mahomedan name, it is all right. Shame upon the Malabarists that such wicked and diabolical customs are allowed. The lower classes must be raised to the level of the higher."

Even in distant America the Swamiji was constantly thinking of his poor countrymen and urging his Gurubhais and his Indian supporters to exert themselves to uplift the masses of India.

Gentlemen! if you ask me what was the most prominent trait in the Swamiji's character, I can unhesitatingly say,—his unbounded love for the poor and the lowly in India. His heart really bled for them. How could it be otherwise! Was he not a true Vedantist? Does not our Vedanta teach us to see all with an equal eye? Is not a poor beggar Narayan himself, albeit the exterior may appear repulsive to a fine gentleman?

But did the Swamiji content himself simply by preaching the Vedanta in its practical aspect? Or did he himself attempt to carry out his preachings into practice? Has he left any solid work behind him? Most certainly—yes! Gentlemen! your presence here to-day sufficiently shows that you take an interest in the philanthropic work which is being done by the Sri Ramakrishna Mission. The noble and unselfish work of the Mission was started by the Swamiji and it is his spirit that is still animating that body. The Seva or service of the poor

Narayans has always been placed by the Mission in the very forefront of its programme of work. To alleviate the sufferings of the poor, Sevashrams and Homes of Service have been established in several towns of India under the auspices of the Mission. An Orphanage and an Industrial School with an experimental farm attached to it have been established at Bhabda in the district of Murshidabad. Thousands of relief societies working independently of the Mission have sprung up in Bengal and other parts of India. A new spirit, that of self-effacement, self-denial and disinterested service is permeating and leavening young India. The Ramakrishna Mission has done yeoman's service in combating pestilence, famine and disasters wrought by earthquakes and floods. Its work has secured to it the approbation of Government and the admiration and confidence of the public. The philanthropic work of the Mission has been increasing year after year, and he would be a bold man who could set a limit to its sphere of usefulness. It makes one's heart bound with joy to see the selfless work which is being done by our educated young men, hardly out of their teens and coming from respectable families. They are the true Karma-Yogis of the Gita. They know not fear. They are not even afraid of the plague, for the spirit of Swami Vivekananda is within them. They know that they are in the arms of the Mother Divine in this world, and will be taken into Her bosom in the next.

Om ! Shantih ! Shantih ! Shantih !

ON THE CONNING TOWER.

AS there was no issue of the Prabuddha Bharata in February, quite a month has elapsed after the public celebrations of what is generally spoken of as the Vivekananda Anniversary till the time of our going to press, and by the time we reach our constituents the Sri Ramakrishna Anniversary also will have been celebrated. Our next number in April, therefore, will be a special one to commemorate this second anniversary.

From the comments of a Bombay contemporary, it would appear that a good deal of confusion exists in the minds of some people as to the way the dates for these anniversaries are fixed. Swami Vivekananda was born on the seventh day of the dark half of the lunar *Pous* and his Master on the second day of the bright half of lunar *Falgun*. Those of us who formally observe their birthday anniversaries, ascertain accordingly the exact dates every year from the Hindu calendar, but public celebrations for obvious reasons are arranged on Sundays following the birthday weeks.

Of all the birthday anniversary speeches made on the 25th of January and reported to us from different places, that of the Yuvaraj of Mysore at Bangalore is evidently the most successful. It is indeed a masterpiece in anniversary discourse, nicely bringing together within a small compass almost all the important features of the Swami's work and message, and combining dignity and sobriety of language with profound appreciation and sentiment. As is evident from reports published elsewhere, there were two celebrations at Bombay. The celebration held at the Hira Baug was the first of its kind in that city, the programme consisting, pure and simple, of a public meeting composed of Marathi and Gujrai Hindus. We heartily welcome this new development, and our sincere compliments are due to those who brought it about, for it bespeaks no small amount of enthusiasm on the part of these citizens of Bombay. We should have not a word of comment on the speeches that were made, however much ill-informed some of them might read as reported,—yes, not a word of criticism even on the funny sentiments expressed by one speaker who, on the strength of a fancied intimacy with Swami Vivekananda's life and career, was bold to rush in where the chairman modestly feared to tread; for is it not a matter of congratulation enough that thoughtful people, energetic, otherwise, in the country's cause, would shake off their stolid indifference with regard to the Swami's work and message and come forward to discuss them in public meetings? We warmly invite such discussion if conducted not in the spirit of a prating charlatan, but in that of an unbiased painstaking student.

The most welcome feature of the 'Modern Review' of February is the strong plea, made out in several well-written articles, for a reconstruction of village life in India, or in other words, for a definite practical move towards improving the Indian masses. The educated classes in India to-day practically live in exile, and all their fussy solicitude for "the depressed classes" would prove quite fruitless, if not foolishly harmful, unless they go back to the villages where India lives. First give back to the masses as far as possible the polity and structure of their rural life of old, and we shall find that our own ideas and ideals, the modern outlook on life, will steadily filter down to them as a matter of course, for since we broke away from the old scheme of rural and agricultural life, the arteries and capillaries through which ideas flowed from the heart to all the other limbs in the village organism have been lying disabled and dried up. Our country is essentially agricultural, whereas the educated classes have all joined in a mad general stampede towards professions mostly clerical. As a result, agriculture in India, wrenched apart from all the intelligence in the country, has suffered a most lamentable set-back and is now going to be led by the nose as a bondslave to foreign commerce. If we leave agriculture in this pitiable condition, we can never hope to build up trade and commerce in the country on a firm, healthy basis and thus to set free our collective life from the killing incubus of the economic problem.

So let the trumpet-call for a return to the villages be sounded forth, and let the educated classes, with a clear vision of the spiritual end of our collective life and with all the stock of experience and knowledge they have earned about the modern world and its methods, come back to their proper place by the side of the rural masses, too long left alone to struggle amidst depressing circumstances. Rural insanitation ought to be no excuse for them now, for who will fight it out but themselves, even after the Government is led to sanction large grants? Surely no mosquito brigades can supply what the new-born enthusiasm for service to the motherland, when properly directed, can do in this combat! Insanitation is only the penalty we are paying for neglecting and deserting our villagers,—a penalty for all our

mad scampering after town life in preference to the plain living which the villages provided. And if the old system of rural drainage has been perverted or tampered with, we have only our own culpable negligence to thank for it and it is now too late and foolish to lay the *whole* blame on railway companies. But it is not now too late to turn back, combine and move forward to reconquer the lost ground. So let the educated classes concentrate their resources of thought, sentiment and activity on the work of re-organising our village life with the spiritual mission of India as the basis, the key-note and the collective end, for unless a healthy, efficient public life springs up from our villages all over India, even the Government will never be in a position to impart real efficiency to all its measures for public good.

We cannot have any word in the English language to stand as an equivalent for Brahmacharya. The word sexual self control is too poor a rendering. Brahmacharya is a word round which noble associations of moral and spiritual discipline had gathered for centuries. It is a word peculiar to our spiritual culture, having a glory all its own. In the ancient India of the Rishis, Brahmacharya was considered to be the open sesame to all sorts of lofty mental and spiritual attainments and it held a very honoured place in the code of spiritual observances. In the ancient society also, no one was considered to be a qualified unit unless he had passed during his early life through the discipline of Brahmacharya and had thus acquired the moral power that it implies. In fact if there was one ideal which was cultivated in ancient India as being the highest secret of a successful social life more than another, it was Brahmacharya. It was an ideal into whose keeping society surrendered itself and its destinies, and if it be put to us as to what is the greatest social calamity from which we suffer now-a-days, we would unhesitatingly point to the tacit but shameful falling-off of our society from this ideal of Brahmacharya. Most of our present-day social evils are only offshoots of this profound calamity, and we make the social confusion worse confounded, when, blindly leaving this very ideal of Brahmacharya out of account, we rush forward to reform these social evils which

our apostasy from this ideal has bred and nurtured. Let us illustrate.

The lot of a widow in Hindu homes is considered to be intolerable and widow-remarriage forms the topmost agendum in the programme of the modern social reformer. The privations of widowhood form the head and front of the reformer's arguments against what he calls the forced widowhood of Hindu women. Why should we deprive the widows of marriageable age of the benefits of a married life?—the reformer asks, and it is no doubt a pertinent question. It is indeed cruel to force upon our daughters that Brahmacharya which in our domestic life we ourselves have so cleanly thrown overboard. It is indeed a very hard lot for them to live in Brahmacharya when everybody around her,—her nearest relative or guardian—is so keen to enjoy the “benefits” of a married life. It is indeed most cruel of parents and relatives to have to deprive young daughters of those marital comforts which fill up such a big, real place in the economy of their own domestic life. The crux of the widow problem therefore is the necessity which it creates for young widows to live up to Brahmacharya which has become an impossible ideal for all their kith and kin. The whole family tacitly moves towards unrestrained self-indulgence and the existence of a youthful widow in the family has therefore become a cruel anomaly. The compulsory practice of Brahmacharya or control over one's sexual nature is a thing of the past, and our boys and girls are brought up in the happy expectation of a married life, the “benefits” of which are made to dangle constantly before their eyes such as no other benefits of grown-up existence are. The want of Brahmacharya has corrupted the whole trend and tenour of our family life and is it any wonder that such an environment would raise up the Frankenstein of a widow problem which we are powerless to allay? It is a shame of the deepest dye for any enlightened society when in its view it becomes a social cruelty if four or five per cent of its young ladies are destined by the hand of death to live a life of Brahmacharya, a life fraught with the glorious possibilities of service to that society itself.

Another grim and grave evil to which our society has made itself a ready victim by its apostasy from Brahmacharya is marriage by compulsion: every girl that is born in the society is an inevitable sacrifice to Hymen. This arbitrary custom amounts to snatching away from every woman in the society her *full* right of control over her own sexual nature; it is a halter to bind every woman down by the neck to flesh, no matter what divine right as a human being she may possess to strive for freedom from this bondage. A society that sets its seal upon such a custom violates the divinity of man and is doomed to everlasting humiliation. In its halcyon days this very society used to overflow with the joy and the strength that are born of the practice of Brahmacharya and we find not only the daughters of Brahmin sages like Sandilya of Brahmavarta, but those of royal families like that of Kashi living a life of renunciation and Brahmacharya, of spiritual eminence and social utility. But we must remember that in the West, celibacy comes to a woman through her choice as a matter of social allotment, while in ancient India it used to come through Brahmacharya as a matter of spiritual triumph. Now in our moral infatuation, we have fallen off from our national ideal of Brahmacharya and have blindly and stupidly closed against our daughters the avenue to this spiritual glory with the dreadful result that we have to burn to death a girl of the spiritual promise of a Snehalata Devi!

For, rightly understood, this heroic maiden did not die a victim to the custom of extorting marriage-dowries, but to a larger social evil which is the direct outcome of our withdrawal from the practice of Brahmacharya. The compulsory payment of dowries by the bride's father is only a side issue of the whole problem. The main issue lies in that social necessity which compels him to admit his weak position and try to make up for it by payment of money. So long as this necessity is there to jeopardise and weaken the position of the bride's father, he is bound to approach the bridegroom's party with voluntary offerings of money and no end of vows on the part of prospective bridegrooms will improve *his* case. While he is helplessly exposed by this social necessity to a harrowing anxiety for giving his daughter a life-

mate, the bridegroom's father enjoys perfect freedom and scope for leisurely choice which has to be determined by a thousand and one considerations. As the inevitable result, the bride's father in his transactions has to come prepared for some amount of fleecing, and it is through the necessary loophole of this *willingness* on his part, that the custom of extorting dowries has been able to assert itself gradually. So even though our students pledge themselves to accept only voluntary dowries, the process through which this evil custom develops itself is left quite unaffected and it will again and again reappear in its vilest form. The fittest remedy, therefore, is to remove once for all the social necessity that so cruelly puts the screw on the bride's father, and to do that, we have again to veer round in our domestic life towards the practice of Brahmacharya and at the same time make it a rule for our girls to undergo a good religious training for a life of self-control useful to family and to society, till offers of marriage are secured for them in a smooth peaceful way without all the anxiety and worry which at present our own un-Hindu outlook on domestic life impose on us by creating a foolish necessity for solving the sex-problem for our daughters after the manner we solve it for ourselves, namely by self-indulgence under social sanction.

The problem of marriage reform in our society is not merely a problem for the physiologist, the

economist or the educationist. All our social institutions evolved out of spiritual ideals and with their decay, these institutions are bound to become perverted and putrefied. As a general rule therefore, social reform with us must consist in restoring such declining ideals of spiritual life. This is what the Swami Vivekananda used to call reform and growth *from within*. If we faithfully hold on to the spiritual ideals, that underlie our social institutions, through all the vicissitudes of our social life, customs and institutions are sure to adapt themselves on the healthiest line possible to changing circumstances, and our society will be spared all the confusion of a social revolution on one side and the worse than useless tinkering methods of a blind conservatism on the other. All the present stir in the public life of Bengal about the Hindu marriage problem would conduce to permanent social welfare and progress, only if the educated classes are now able to discover for themselves how by tacitly and gradually doing away with the practice of Brahmacharya as a social ideal, we have been all along preparing the soil for a rich crop of social evils and abuses. Otherwise no such patchy methods as taking paper pledges from prospective bridegrooms or springing upon the people vigilance committees,—a highly fruitful source of social factions and intrigues,—will by themselves alone succeed in removing the evils which we have got to combat today in all earnestness.



THE FIFTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

AT THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH, BELUR.

THE fifty-second birthday anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great *éclat* at the Belur Math on 25th January last. The Tithipuja day falling on the 18th., happened to be a Sunday this year and this gave a much-desired opportunity to many devotees to come and join in the proceedings of that auspicious day, which consisted of special Puja offerings and Homa, devout songs by experts, and distribution of Prasada.

The public celebration came off on the Sunday

following, and the Math people had been preparing themselves to receive the thousands of Bhaktas of all denominations that would assemble there to pay their homage to the memory of the great Swamiji. Already since the preceding night the culinary department was in full activity, and huge vesselfuls of curry and sweets were being stored against the morrow's demands.

The day dawned with solemn splendour and it was a sight of unwonted joy and blessedness that met one's eyes from the roof of the Visitor's Room,

as it is called. The sun was just rising, and the busy hum of life had not yet commenced.

Devotees began to come in, at first in small numbers, then by tens, and hundreds, and by noon one could find surging crowds everywhere. Swamiji's own room had been tastefully decorated, as also his standing Sannyasin portrait in the courtyard below and his marble image inside the small temple on the southern side of the Math premises. The Visitor's Room was crowded by eager listeners, for music was going on performed by master-singers. About 11 o'clock, devotees began to be served with Prasada, and soon after the most important function of the day, the feeding of the Poor Narayanas, commenced. It was an edifying sight,—those long rows of hungry Narayanas assembled on the spacious lawn enjoying a hearty repast offered with the utmost tenderness. They were Narayanas to the hosts, and they seemed to be conscious of their privilege and were perfectly at home there.

The feeding of Bhaktas and the Poor Narayanas went on for some hours and was drawing to a close, when Pundit Suresh Chandra Samajpati spoke to an attentive audience on this aspect of Swamiji's teachings, viz., the service of the Poor Narayanas. He was followed by Mr. Sharma of the Bengalee Office and two or three other gentlemen who dealt with other aspects of Swamiji's teachings.

Towards sunset the huge concourse of devotees numbering about 8000 gradually thinned away and as the evening shades were enveloping all around, the last batch of Bhaktas left the Math amid shouts, responded to the hundredth time, of "Jay Sri Guru Maharajji ki jay! Jay Swamiji Maharajji ki jay!"

AT THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHAMRA, BANGALORE CITY.

The fifty-second birthday anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on the 25th January at the Ashrama under the auspices of Swami Nirmalanandaji in the presence of a large gathering. Among those present were Dewan Bahadur K. P. Puttanna Chetty, Messrs. Karpur Srinivasa Rao, Dewan Bahadur J. S. Chakravarti, Messrs. K. Chandy, M. Narayana Iyengar, K. Krishna Iyengar and B. S. Ranoj Rao. At 12 o'clock in the noon three cars with Swamiji's picture decorated with flowers and garlands, followed by a big procession of Bhaktas from the City and Cantonment with band and Sankirtan parties, entered the Ashrama compound. It was a very heart-stirring sight to see the spacious compound swarming with a large concourse of men, numbering about 4000, all admirers of the Swami in this remote part of India, attesting to the fact that the Swami's ideals and personality are fast capturing the imagination of his people, and the cherished mission of his life

of rallying the people of India round the banner of Sanatana Dharma is coming to sure fruition.

In the afternoon about 2 o'clock, the chief feature of Swami Vivekananda anniversaries, the feeding of the poor, was gone through and about 2000 poor people of the place were treated to a sumptuous repast. From 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., Harikatha performance or recital of the Pauranic story of Dhruva was carried on by Vedamurti Krishna Dass in Kannada and was very appealing to the audience. H. H. the Yuvaraja of Mysore accompanied by Mr. M. Visveswaraya C. I. E., Dewan, arrived in a motor car at 6 p. m. At 5 p. m. Mr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar, Professor, Central College read a paper on the Mission of Swami Vivekananda, after which Mr. N. Venkatesa Iyengar spoke in Kannada on the teachings of the Swami to a very appreciative audience. At 6-15 p.m. increasing numbers of people began to file in and the crowd grew thicker when amidst applause H. H. the Yuvaraja rose and made a speech, remarkable in point of intellectual penetration into the deepest teachings of the Swami and comprehension of his many-sided interests. Mr. K. P. Puttanna Chetty made a short speech dealing with the incidents that took place during the late Swami's stay in Mysore. Then Mr. M. A. Narayana Iyengar announced that the Yuvaraja had contributed Rs. 100 for the upkeep of the Mutt and thanked the Yuvaraja on behalf of the Swamis of the Mutt for having graced the occasion. The celebrations terminated by Mangalarathi and distribution of Prasad. Afterwards Swami Nirmalananda garlanded the Yuvaraja who then inspected the Mutt with the Dewan and left at 8. p. m.

At the premises of Chatur Veda S. Sabha School, Cavalry Road, Bangalore Cantonment, the Utsab was celebrated on the 15th of Feb. according to a programme consisting of the feeding of the poor, music, discourse on the Swami's life and Rathotsavam with Sankirtan.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA HOME, MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

The celebrations began with *Bhajana* and several leading gentlemen of Madras including the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sadasiva Iyer were present. About 10 o'clock, there was a temporary cessation of *Bhajana*, and the most important item of the day, the feeding of the poor, was gone through and about 2500 poor people were fed in the market. At 4 p. m. Mr. N. K. Tathachariar read an interesting and instructive lecture in Tamil on "The Significance of Swami Vivekananda's teachings" before a large gathering.

At 5-30 p. m. a meeting was held presided over by Mr. S. Ramaswamy Iyengar, Judge, Small Causes Court, when Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, delivered an address on the "Influence of the Swami's Teachings." The chairman in introduc-

ing the lecturer referred to the death of the late Mr. Justice P. R. Sundara Iyer who was intimately connected with the Mission and had personally discussed with the Swami about Hindu philosophy and religion. In the course of his interesting lecture Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar said that the first impression of the Swami was his great strength and his great power. They felt at once they were in the presence of a mighty intellect. He was not a Sannyasin of the class with which they were acquainted. He had assimilated the culture of the West and drunk deep of the waters of the Western knowledge, and at the same time they saw before them the illuminating presence of a great spiritual personality. He seemed to them the very embodiment, the incarnate presence, of Eastern spirituality. Another striking feature in him was his absolute frankness and freedom and his independence. He was a spiritual teacher, but he told them to be strong, strong in body, and to be manly, absolutely fearless and invincible. To him religion was not an isolated province of human endeavour. His religion was not simply solitary meditation for selfish development, but service to men in whom he perceived the Divine. He taught them to find the Divine in man not by blind belief but by experiment, by reason and by vision. The whole soul of him throbbed with infinite tenderness and infinite anguish over the lot of Indians. He consecrated his life to the service of India, particularly the poor, the oppressed and the outcaste. The inspiration of the life which he led and the force of his teachings were evident in all sides of Indian activity. They were striving to raise their masses, they were striving for universal education and for greater prosperity of the lower classes. They had come to realise the dignity of man as man and the devoted band of disciples of the Swami had shown them by their acts in times of plague, famine and sickness that they were willing to render loving service to the lowest and the poorest without distinction of caste or creed and that they were in no way inferior to the Western races.

AT BOMBAY.

(1) THE CHARNI ROAD CELEBRATION.

On Sunday the 25th January, the fifty-second birthday anniversary of Srimat Swami Vivekananda the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission, was celebrated with greater enthusiasm and success than ever before at the residence of Mr. H. Deva Row, Soman Building, Charni Road, Bombay, commencing with a recitation from the Rigveda by four Brahmins, distribution of rice to the poor which numbered about 400 and a Pooja at noon. A large gathering of both invited and uninvited guests was present at the time as the occasion was purely a non-sectarian one and open to the public according to the programme. There was a Bhajana in

the night followed by a Puja, during which time the appreciably decorated hall was packed with an assembly of about 150 earnest followers of the Swamiji. The occasion was brought to a termination with the distribution of Prasad and the thanking of the assembly by Mr. H. Deva Row for the kindness they had shown towards him and the respects they had paid to the memory of the Swami.

(2) THE HIRA BAUG CELEBRATION.

The 52nd birthday anniversary of the late Swami Vivekananda, the founder of the well-known Ramakrishna Mission of Bengal, who earned world-wide celebrity as the most prominent figure at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893, was for the first time celebrated publicly by his followers and admirers, at the Hira Baug, opposite C. P. Tank, Bombay, on the 25th January.

There was a large audience composed mostly of Marathi and Gujrati Hindus.

Mr. Daji Abaji Khare, B. A., LL. B., was voted to the chair and among those who addressed the gathering on the Life and Mission of Swami Vivekananda, were Messrs. K. Natarajan, Editor of the "Indian Social Reformer," B. V. Vidhvansa, B. A., LL. B., G. K. Devdhar, M. A., of the Servants of India Society, G. B. Trivedi and others. The speeches were delivered in English, Marathi and Gujrati.

The chairman Mr. Daji Abaji Khare said:—Gentlemen, you all know from the handbills circulated that we mean to celebrate today the anniversary of one who was one of the greatest sons of India. Swami Vivekananda's name is not only a household word in this country, but he has made himself famous all over the world, especially in America and Europe. The great message he delivered to the world was that every Hindu, if he had but self-confidence and if he only knew what real Hinduism was, would be great not only by himself, but would be a very great power in the whole world. This message he first delivered in rather low tones, but the volume of the tone gathered strength, and ran from one end of the country to the other. He carried that same message to America, and in the Parliament of Religions there, he exemplified and demonstrated to all the great representatives that had congregated that Hinduism had up till then been very much misunderstood.

I think it must be admitted that in Swami Vivekananda India had produced a son of whom she ought to be proud. His interpretation of the Indian philosophy was on the lines of the Bhagavad-Gita. The great message he delivered to the world was work, unselfish work, for the good of your fellow-beings, and it is by such work you achieve the lasting benefit of mankind.

Another great message which he delivered was that, whatever religion a man pursued, that would not raise or degrade him over his fellowmen. As

the Bhagavad Gita says, "the object of all is to approach Him," like the great rivers which, whatever courses they pursue, ultimately fall into the great sea. In the same way all religions, whatever doctrines they inculcate, whatever form of worship they teach, teach but ultimately the truth, that every one must endeavour in the best possible way to help his fellow-beings and thus reach the great Immortal Self.

Gentlemen, as you know, there are a good many speakers to-day, and it is not desirable that I should take up any more of your time. The only apology I can offer you for having consented to preside to-day is not because that I have studied Swami Vivekananda's works to such a great extent as to be able to expound and demonstrate his doctrines, but my great excuse is, I think, that I am wanting more in modesty than the other gentlemen who will now address you. They will state their subjects much more clearly than I have done. I will now call upon Mr. Natarajan to address the meeting.

Mr. K. Natarajan, Editor of the "Indian Social Reformer," who followed next said that at the outset he must disclaim the Chairman's implication that those who came after him would be able to explain their subjects more profoundly than he had done. However it was generally considered a journalist's business to know something about everything, and in this particular case it had so happened that he not only knew something of Swami Vivekananda's life and career, but he had had opportunities of knowing them rather more intimately. He then gave a brief account of Swami Vivekananda's life and said that when he first landed in Madras, one of the first men to approach him was Mr. Justice Sundara Iyer—a brilliant scholar, and there was also another gentleman who was at first considered to be practically an atheist but who subsequently became one of the accepted disciples of the Swami, which created a profound impression then. Then in Madras Swami Vivekananda was able to get some help from men like the Raja of Ramnad. He attended Chicago with the help of that Maharaja. He went to England; he saw Professor Max Muller; he came in contact with European orientalist and he also saw that the West had many things to teach them, and that was really the speaker's impression too. He came back to India via Colombo, and the speaker added that he remembered very well the great difficulties of seeing him in Madras when the Swami arrived there. He also remembered the huge Town Hall meeting held in his honour in Madras; the Swami launched in fierce denunciations, in spite of the request of his best friends, against the Theosophical Society and Occultism. He also well remembered the Swami's very remarkable speech when the Social Reform Association presented him with an address, and there also he made very strong remarks against the Theosophical Society.

From there he went to Calcutta, and there he devoted himself to the organisation of social work with a band of youngmen, and the great work that they did was in connection with the great famine of 1899 in Rajputana.

Continuing further, the speaker said that it might be questioned why he (the speaker) who was not a real Hindu, should stand there and speak of this great man, and he submitted that his excuse for appearing before them in commemorating the memory of the great Swami, was because the Swami was a man of great heart who felt that if the Indian people had to be raised, it was necessary for them to feel the impulse of national greatness. That could be done, not by politics or social reform, but by a strong religious impulse. His great idea was to establish a Sanskrit College somewhere in India. But with all his desire for the elevation of the Indian people, he was not in the speaker's opinion, a great religious thinker or philosopher, nor a great scholar, but he was a man with consummate genius for national reconstruction. When the Swami went to Madras with that glorious mission, some of his own followers who were Brahmins,—and it is known how orthodox and consummate Brahmins in Madras are, began to question him as to what he ate in America, where he stayed there, and so on. When he was thus criticised by his own countrymen, he naturally lost heart and came to the conclusion that national regeneration must come from outside and settled down in America. One thing he had taught us, and that was that Hinduism had an universal and dynamic aspect. The religion of Vedantism as Swami had explained, would bring about the brotherhood of man, and that was the essence of Hinduism, and it was in that direction that the trend of Indian religious mind was always turning.

He thought therefore that they might well emulate in that respect, viz. they might try as far as they could, to conceive of their country and of the universe, in spite of the phenomenal distinctions of race, colour and creed, as embodying a spiritual principle, and also to endeavour, with all the heart and soul, to further its progress in all directions. Concluding his remarks, he asked his hearers to remember one important point and that is that while Christianity taught them to treat their neighbours as themselves, the Upanishads went a step further and taught them that their neighbours *were* themselves.

Mr. G. K. Devdhar said that one of the many aspects which the life and labours of Swami Vivekananda presented to an early student was the aspect of a patriot. He was a great religious worker, and in a certain way, a social reformer. He felt the need for religious work and the necessity of social reform, because he believed in the immediate need of regenerating and lifting the people of his motherland. Swami Vivekananda was

thus a great power and a force during the closing portion of the last century, and those who had been able to read his speeches and see some of his works, as the speaker had done, were necessarily struck with the great and fervent patriotism which was the root passion of all his actions. Mr. Devdhar said that he had the great privilege of visiting almost all the places which were at one time inhabited by the Swami; the Swami was a religious worker but his religion was not of negation; it did not preach narrowness; but his religion was of construction, absorption and inclusion, and above all, his religion was most suited for the India of to-day. He interpreted the principles of Upanishads not in the light of the 12th or 13th century or of the Shastris or Pandits, but in the light of the 19th or 20th century, or to be more clear, in the light of the need of his people. Therefore wherever he went he preached the loftiness of his philosophy and at the same time exposed the hollowness of the present-day practices.

Continuing further, the speaker said that they met there to commemorate the memory of such a great man, and asked if it was not their duty that that honour must be shown in some practical form. What was the best way in which they could please the great soul that might be watching over their assembly that evening—not certainly by their words and certainly a man like the Swami would never be pleased with their lectures,—but if they could have a few youngmen who would go about, following the principles which the Swami had enunciated in his lectures and in his life and mix with the people,—not hate them for their backwardness and ignorance,—but love them and lift them up, the speaker said that they would be commemorating the life and labours of a great man in the most proper manner possible.

Mr. Munshi, Advocate of the Bombay High Court, in paying a tribute to the memory of Swami Vivekananda said that when the Swami came amidst them first, Europeanisation was considered the sole salvation for India. India's literature, India's civilisation and India's religion were alike considered by the lovers of this land as a dried-up and exhausted fountain. The best of our minds, those who loved the country best at that time, turned for their inspiration to the oracles of the West and tried to inoculate themselves, in frantic despair, with the Western culture and if there was any one who tried to unearth the spirit of our civilisation and undertook the arduous task of restoring in them confidence and self-reliance, and also of appealing to our philosophy for the reconstruction of ourselves and our nation, it was Swami Vivekananda. "There is therefore a different atmosphere now. At the present time youngmen of 20 and 25 try to dive deep into the mysteries of the Gita which was once supposed

to be the monopoly of those who had one foot in the grave."

Another thing which Swami Vivekananda preached was the spirit of self-assertion. It was an admitted fact that they were a sort of exclusive nation; they were very proud of their own virtues and qualifications, of their own past glories and achievements. And Swami Vivekananda told them that their philosophy might be the greatest on earth, their religious principles might be the best that the world ever knew of, but unless they went to other nations and mixed with them freely, none would be prepared to acknowledge their just rights; and the speaker considered it necessary to emphasise this point at the present time, for he was of the opinion that, only when they went out, when in competition with foreigners,—be it in politics, education, religion, or in any sphere whatsoever, then alone they would be in a better position to assert their rights.

Several other speakers also addressed the assemblage.

At the conclusion of the speeches, Mr. Devdhar spoke of the desirability of forming a permanent Vedanta Society in Bombay to carry out the teachings of the late Swami in a practical manner. The need of such a society was widely felt and he had every reason to believe that, if it was started, it would be widely supported. A committee of gentlemen named at the meeting was formed to take the preliminary steps to organise the association in view.

A vote of thanks to the chair brought the proceedings to an end.

AT BENARES.

The fifty-second birthday anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Benares, on the 25th January last. His Holiness Swami Brahmananda President of the Ramakrishna Mission was present on the occasion and personally supervised the proceedings. The special features of the day were the feeding of the poor and a lecture by Sriji Shyama Charan Dey, M. A. Professor, Central Hindu College. He was followed by another gentleman who spoke in Hindi and by His Holiness Swami Premananda. About 800 poor Narayans were sumptuously fed this year. Many students of the local schools and colleges took an active part in the entertainment and many well-known gentlemen and a few ladies were present to encourage the youngmen in their practical sympathy with their less fortunate brethren. From 5 to 7 p. m. there was Bhajana with music, after which the festivities closed with the distribution of Prasada.

AT KANKHAL.

The premises of the Sevashrama were tastefully decorated and portraits of the Swami and his Master were beautifully decked and prominently placed. 800 poor people were fed with *luchis*, vegetables

and sweets. There was a good concourse of local Sadhus and gentlemen who were addressed by Swami Hridoyananda on the life and message of the Swami and were treated to music, *bhajan*s and gramophone.

AT COLOMBO.

Over 500 gentlemen assembled in the rooms of the local Vivekananda Society. Proceedings began at 3-30 p. m. Besides the chanting of the Tamil Vetham, there was music at intervals by a band of expert musicians. Pundit S. Kandiapillai addressed the audience on the "Life of the Swami." There was another lecture on the Vedanta. Oriental refreshments were served. The proceedings closed with music, the distribution of "Thampoolam," and sprinkling of rosewater.

AT RANGOON.

On the 18th Jan. there was Puja in the Ramakrishna Society rooms, followed by *bhajan* and music in Bengalee and Madrassie, distribution of *Prasad* in the morning and *Sankirtan* in the evening. On the 25th, Bengalee and Madrassie music and *bhajan* lasted till 11. 20 a. m. 120 poor people were then sumptuously fed till 1. 20 p. m. Music and gramophone records then followed till 4. 30 p. m., when the public meeting commenced. The speakers were Mr. S. Davaji and Dr. T. S. S. Rajan. The day closed with the distribution of *Prasadam*.

AT SINGAPORE.

The Utsab was held on the 13th February at the Aryasangam premises. The portraits of Bhagavan Ramakrishna and the Swami were tastefully decked with flowers. The meeting began with solemn *puja* and was addressed in Tamil by Mr. K. S. Chakravarty and in English by Mr. E. N. Lingam. It closed with distribution of sweets, fruits and *prasad*. On the 15th there was *puja* at the Sri Krishna Temple and 300 poor people were fed.

AT TEPPAKULAM, TRICHINOPOLY.

The hall of the Hindu Secondary School was decorated and portraits of the Swami and his Master were prominently placed. The hall was packed with 500 people during the Harikatha with which the proceedings commenced at 3-30. The meeting was addressed by Mr. T. V. Swaminatha Aiyar and one Kadimudi Sastrigal and it was closed with Arati and distribution of *prasad* at 8 p. m. In the morning from 9 to 11 a. m. 400 poor *Narayan*s were fed sumptuously amidst great rejoicings.

AT TIROVALUR, TANJORE.

In the morning there were *puja*, chanting of the Vedas, *bhajan* and instrumental music, in the afternoon feasting and music, and in the evening, reading of a stotra in Tamil and English and a sketch of the Swami's life by Mr. K. R. Krishnamurthi Aiyar, and two impressive speeches by Mr. P. K. Subh-aiyar and Mr. Shastri respectively. The meeting

closed with vocal music, *mangalarati* and distribution of *prasad*.

AT SIVAGANGA.

On the 18th Jan. for the first time in this place the anniversary was celebrated with great enthusiasm. In the morning there was *bhajana*, and in the afternoon, *aradhanam* with readings and recitations from Sacred Texts. After the distribution of *prasadam*, the public meeting commenced presided over by Mr. R. S. S. Avergal, District Munsiff. A thoughtful and interesting paper in English was read by Mr. A. Gunapatir and two lectures in Tamil was made by Mr. P. S. Ramaswami Iyer and Pundit. Krishnacharya of Elattur. The chairman then closed the proceedings with an impressive speech.

AT CONJEEVERAM.

A whole-day celebration was held at this place on the 18th Feb. according to a programme which included Puja, *bhajana*, feeding the poor, Sanskrit recitations, and lectures. Swami Sarvananda of the Madras Math presided.

AT KATHIHAL, PUNJAB.

The celebration was held on the 18th of Feb. at the Ram Ashram Dispensary Buildings. The proceedings began at 10-30 a. m. with *bhajan*s by the students of the Depressed Classes School and closed with the same and Arati after 12-30 noon. The speakers were Mr. Sriram and Mr. B. Ganapat Rai who spoke impressively on lessons and anecdotes from the Swami's life.

AT ALMORA.

The Tithipuja on the 18th Jan. was performed solemnly by His Holiness the Swami Shivananda, who is sojourning at the place, amidst the many admirers and followers of the Swami. On the 25th Feb. Mr. F. J. Alexander who has been doing splendid work among the local students held special classes on the Swami's teachings and distributed, with the kind permission of the reverend gentleman in charge, 100 blankets, sweets and choice fruits to the inmates of the local Leper Asylum.

AT THE MIDNAPORE CENTRES OF FLOOD-RELIEF WORK.

At the Chandipur centre on the 18th Jan. the Tithipuja was observed and 3000 poor people were fed. On the 25th at the Bhagavanpur centre, there were *puja* and feeding of 1000 poor people and 200 poor children.

Besides the above-mentioned places, celebrations were held in the usual style at all the other centres of the Ramakrishna Mission and at several other places, from which reports are still pouring in to our office. We just find it possible to summarise considerably some of the reports that reached us early in order to allow them space in this number.

