

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

JNANA-YOGA.

First, Meditation should be of a negative nature. Think away everything. Analyse everything that comes in the mind by the sheer action of the will.

Next, assert what we really are—existence, knowledge and bliss—being, knowing and loving.

Meditation is the means of unification of the subject and object. Meditate :

“ Above it is full of me, below it is full of me, in the middle it is full of me. I am in all beings and all beings are in me. Om Tat Sat, I am It.

I am existence above mind.

I am the one Spirit of the universe.

I am neither pleasure nor pain.

The body drinks, eats, and so on. I am not the body.

I am not mind. I am He.

I am the witness. I look on.

When health comes I am the witness.

When disease comes I am the witness.

I am Existence, Knowledge, Bliss.

I am the essence and nectar of knowledge.

Through eternity I change not. I am calm, resplendent and unchanging.

THE REALITY AND SHADOW.

That which differentiates one thing from another is time, space and causation.

The differentiation is in the form, not in the substance.

You may destroy the form and it disappears for ever ; but the substance remains the same. You can never destroy the substance.

Evolution is in nature, not in the soul,— evolution of nature, manifestation of the soul.

Maya is not illusion as it is popularly interpreted. Maya is real, yet it is not real. It is real in that the Real is behind it and gives it its appearance of reality. That which is real in Maya is the Reality in and through Maya. Yet the Reality is never seen, and hence that which is seen is unreal, and it has no real independent existence of itself, but is dependent upon the Real for its existence.

Maya then is a paradox—real, yet not real, an illusion, yet not an illusion.

He who knows the Real sees in Maya not illusion, but reality. He who knows not the Real sees in Maya illusion and thinks it real.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE wonders of science have made it a truism to say now-a-days that truth is stranger than fiction. Modern occultism on the other hand fills the air with its high-sounding claims. But all such marvels and mysteries shrink into insignificance before the greatest miracle of the modern age,—the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It was, however, as the silent oncoming of the Divine Immensity over the sandy shores of human life, and no mighty stir was therefore created to compel attention, when such a stupendous fact came into being.

It is a miracle, for modern science cannot explain this life. It is the surest and boldest testimony of the superiority of the Indian culture to the scientific culture of the West, and it has won for the spiritual science of India a distinct triumph over modern science. What Sri Ramakrishna used to call his Vijnana or science has paled the glories and shamed the pedantries of what the West calls its science. On the authority of direct observation, the latter declared that it is all matter and force, and on the self-same authority Sri Ramakrishna declared that it is all God. Western science claimed to put you and me on the way of finding out for ourselves that all is matter and force, and Sri Ramakrishna did the same with regard to his own conclusion, namely that all is God and nothing else. In fact, no scientific ground is left for modern science to boast of its own truths as being more scientific.

Science was stifling all divinity out of man and his world. It was pulverising everything into atoms and molecules, practically declaring to man in respect of both his body and soul,—“Dust thou art, to dust returnest.”

It was proselyting man all over the world to its tempting creed of “enjoy while you live,” and day after day spreading out to him clever means and contrivances for gratifying luxury and greed. Cut off from an appeal to direct observation, philosophy and religion found their authority waning on every side and tacitly left the field before the triumphant march of science, for which the latter paid them the half-patronising, half-reproving compliment of calling their fundamental verities by the name of mysticism. Like the emperors of ancient India who used to perform the *ashwamedha*, proud science had let loose the sacrificial horse to defy all whom it might concern to contest its exclusive claims in the domain of truth, and without let or hindrance this horse had roamed all over the world, till it found itself captured at last on the banks of the holy Ganges! For from the Temple of Dakshineswar the death-knell to those exclusive claims of science had been sounded and henceforth it will have to own the supremacy of religion and study nature from its proper subordinate point of view.

But no disparagement is meant hereby to science in the true sense of this term, and modern science is science only in a very narrow, restricted sense. Science indeed has to be the only and the surest way to Truth, simply because it accepts Experience and Experience alone to be its foundation and seat of authority. But unfortunately, modern science does not build its edifice of knowledge on the whole range of human experience as it should, but only on that sensuous part of it where man is more a bondsman to matter than his own master. Human experience ranges from sensuous perceptions

to those higher spiritual intuitions which lie far beyond the object-world of the senses. Why should science, therefore, confine itself within the narrow limits of the material point of view and yet pose as the sole custodian of incontestable truths for man? Who knows that the very wrong foundation of experience that it has chosen for itself does not already vitiate its view of things and disqualify it from getting at the whole truth about man's life and his world? Rather should science pitch its foundation and seat of authority on the highest experiences of man and then seek to explain facts on the sensuous plane by following up every generalisation there with an appeal to those highest experiences. This is the method which science in ancient India must have followed, and the results attained, for those primitive ages of human culture, were simply marvelous. The miracle of Sri Ramakrishna's life has burst upon modern culture, as it were, not simply to destroy the proud pretensions of its materialistic science, but to herald as well the rise of a new science with a foundation more broad and a method more perfect,—verily the science which evolved in ancient India its wonderful culture.

Not less momentous and far-reaching is the significance of Sri Ramakrishna's life with regard to Religion. Religion is one thing, creed another; the one is a uniformity, the other a variety. But Religion in modern times was losing its reality and shading imperceptibly into creeds, so that when the nineteenth century brought men of all climes into close contact with one another, one of the foremost postulates of their common experience was that *religions* are many. Such a postulate is bound to prove fatal to the lasting solidarity of man, for nothing but community in Religion will be found in the long run to avail in uniting all mankind together in the bond of one universal life. Every other interest of man except Religion moves

too near the diversified surface of his nature to warrant any world-wide community on its basis. So the clearest demand of the modern age was that Religion be re-vitalised and re-instated as a uniformity. Sri Ramakrishna's life not only fulfilled this demand, but re-affirmed the necessity of all the various creeds,—he himself demonstrating through his individual life how humanity has to collectively realise the unity of Religion through the practice of all these creeds.

And in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa Religion found back its lost reality. Religion had come to be with us a mere fact of our belief and sentiment, and necessarily therefore in the growth of collective life everywhere in the world, worldly interests which move on the *terra firma* of experience scored an easy triumph and pushed Religion to a corner. As a result, the brute in *man as the individual* re-appeared as the brute in *man as the nation*, and Religion was powerless to bring man in his new aspect under its humanising influences. Modern humanity in this way was steadily drifting away from its ancient moorings in Religion, while the ruthless competition in worldly pursuits was eddying on every side to draw it into the gaping jaws of death. Now surely was the time for Religion to incarnate itself among men and assert its full authority and glory, and the Divine mantle fell upon the son of a poor Brahmin in a small village in the district of Hughly.

But behold what vast world-moving power lay stored and hidden within the simple exterior of this village Brahmin who passed his life mostly within the four corners of a temple-garden! Within ten years of his passing away the wave of his spirituality encircled the globe, and he has left the spiritual atmosphere so heavily surcharged with inspiration, that wave after wave like the first is bound to flood the world as time is ripe for

each. For does not the demand that he came to meet justify our anticipating a supply commensurate with it? And does it not lie in his power, as Swami Vivekananda assured us, to raise up his valiant workers, if he chooses, from the dust by hundreds and thousands? Here indeed was a man who could shape your mind as he pleased as if it was a ball of earth in his hand, who toyed with time and space as if they were dice for his game, who could manipulate and hold in check all his supernatural powers with the ease and placidity of a child at play, and yet the ego in him had disappeared without any trace and it was the Mother that was left through every atom and pore of his being!

And language fails to describe the versatile character of his exalted spiritual moods. He was as a perfect living museum of all the types of ecstasy of Love and vision of Truth,—from the lowest type to the highest. What theory would explain how the whole world-culture in Religion came out focussed through one man? What science can explain that wonderful fusion of the individual into the universal, so that we could not fix upon one set of spiritual characteristics and say that he was this and not that? He was that perfect orb of spirituality which presented to the circumscribed vision of every religious aspirant that approached him just one luminous facet or disc. He was therefore, as we said above, the very spirit of Religion incarnate among

men; and he reinstalled Religion as the most solid fact of human experience, in presence of which the claims of all other facts for supplying the foundation of our individual and collective life should vanish into thin air.

And the strangest power which this strange man wielded was the way in which he would impart truth and spirituality to whomsoever he chose. Holiness, ecstasy, purity, love, renunciation, spiritual vision and exaltation, were to him tangible entities admitting of actual give and take just as material objects do in our hands, and he would by a simple touch make years, and even lives, of spiritual effort crowd themselves into a moment to lift a man out of the ordinary plane to any plane of higher experience he liked. This is why we said that time and space were with him as playthings, and this is why we are enabled to find out that he was not simply holy, but Holiness itself, not simply pure, but Purity itself, not simply a man of ecstasy, renunciation, love and truth, but Ecstasy, Renunciation, Love and Truth incarnate. Those of us, therefore, who adore this man in truth, renunciation, love and purity, adore him truly and best, but those who merely use his name and form to label themselves his followers, only gratify a narrow sectarianism to which they have fallen a prey, but from which the miracle of Sri Ramakrishna's life seeks most to save mankind.

THE THREE ESSENTIALS OF THE GOSPEL.

THREE essential features seem to stand out from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna as having paramount importance for mankind in modern times. Stated in short propositions, they are: first, religion is one; second, religion is realisation; third, religion is incompatible with *kama* and *kanchana*, i. e. lust

and mammon. These three go to make up respectively, according to the Gospel, the theory, practice and prerequisites of religion.

The unity of religion is a Vedic postulate,—**एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति**, "The One Being the sages express variously." There are evidences in the Vedas of religious dissen-

was among the votaries of the various gods such as Indra, Marudah (the later Merodach of Babylon), Asura Mahadivah (the Ahuramazda of Iran) etc. But it was the distinctive feature of that main branch of Vedic culture which established itself in India that it rose beyond such disputes to a height of wisdom which made the vision of the unity of religion possible; and this vision formed the fundamental principle in the life-history of the Indo-aryan race. At the dawn of the post-Vedic age, when the Vedas were compiled for the last time in India, the circumstances demanded that this fundamental principle be again voiced forth and according to the Gita, Sri Krishna did it in clear distinct terms. But nowhere in the history of the whole world, the necessity for declaring the unity of religion appeared so imperative as in modern times, for the idea of one religion and one God is the indispensable precondition and counterpart of that idea of one humanity which is steadily but irresistibly tightening its hold on modern world-culture.

The unity of religion in and through a diversity of creeds,—this is the truth which Sri Ramakrishna declared to mankind, and he declared it not on the authority of any intellectual synthesis, but on the strictest authority of personal experience, of practical demonstration. We have witnessed in modern times serious efforts of the intellect to manufacture a universal religion in order to meet the modern demand for it. The method generally followed is to lop off from all the faiths and creeds such doctrines and rituals as do not fit in with the ideas of a party of men and then to hold up high the common remainder as the universal religion. When an old religion or faith undergoes such a process of mutilation, it is said to be liberalised. Sometimes this process is to be supplemented by a nice method of bluff, which consists in declaring all religions to be harmonised, when by putting new interpretations on their symbology,

all its reality is first explained away and then empty forms and names are adopted from it to be foisted on new, liberalised sacraments.

But the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna assures us that all our laboured intellectual devices to universalise religion is absolutely uncalled-for, for religion, by its very birth-right as it were, is already universal and it is we ourselves that lack the vision of its unity and universality. Hands off, therefore; do not trifle with the sincere convictions of your struggling fellow-beings to dress them up according to your own standards of universality. Nature, our Universal Mother, is a better cateress than any of you and serves up, as Sri Ramakrishna used to say, different preparations of the same food to her sons who have not all an equal power of digestion. But the process of digestion again is the same for all and the nourishment derived is universal. So the same religion comes to us all behind a varied exterior of different and conflicting creeds, but in its work of uplifting our soul, it affects the inmost economy of our being through the self-same process and ultimately leads us to the same goal. This momentous truth we have to recognise in our religious life and culture from the very outset, so that all tall talk about universal tolerance must cease and in its place, we must be ready to offer universal acceptance. Strict fidelity to one's own convictions does not imply necessarily a crusader's attitude towards the convictions of others. The age of blind bigotry must now depart from the world for good, and however much our creeds may differ, we must always be prepared to say to another, "Brother, we belong to the same religion, only we have got to realise it through different creeds."

The second important point in the Gospel is the absolute necessity, it seeks to impress on our mind, of making religion as real to our inner experience as the world of matter is real to our senses. Religion is a thing to be

realised, not a mere subject for intellectual verification, nor an object of mere sentimental enjoyment. At the present age, the theorising feats of a man tend to fly off immensely ahead of his practical abilities, and we find that people, who are by nature bound hand and foot down to the material plane of reality, pull down, in imitation of perhaps some more fortunate brethren, all external symbols of worship in a fit of false rationalism and then spin out laboured and long-drawn addresses to God to thank, supplicate or glorify him, seeking to squeeze out of words some sustenance or fillip for their religious feelings. In this way more waggon-loads of insincerity are being piled up within cultured prayer-halls than ever lay accumulated within the much-abused idolater's temples. Symbols, every worshipper is bound to use, whether he closes his eyes in worship to crowd them into his language or manipulate them with open eyes just to begin by giving his religion at least the reality which his ordinary life possesses for him. The important point is that we should not too long keep our feeling heart, our earnest soul, our sincere faith on the deceitful ration of abstractions and thus pervert their natural, healthy, spontaneous life. Far better it is for us to have to start with the borrowed reality of material symbols, than to be groping about for some touch with reality through the distracting labyrinth of wordy abstractions. For it is of the utmost importance that religion in all stages of our progress must have for us the reality of our direct experience, be that reality intrinsic or extrinsic, borrowed or inherent. Otherwise it would be too easy and natural for the reality of the worldly life to get the better of us and stealthily oust religion into the limbo of enjoyable abstractions.

Sri Ramakrishna once said that when in his early life he used to sing devotional songs to his Mother in the temple, his mind would be filled with the anxious

desire to *know for certain* that his songs were being listened to as he sang them. This anxious desire impelled him precipitately towards realisation. Every worshipper believes that his words or hymns are listened to by his God. But that belief is generally a curious one, for it has not even the force of that other belief which makes you and me speak aloud to a third person at close quarters though out of sight. Shall we not at once stop speaking to him the moment we are aware that he is not attending, for if we do not stop, we would be acting like muddle-heads. This direct *awareness* of how he who is spoken to by us is listening to our words constitutes what gives reality to our conversation with men, and religion cannot be anything real to us unless at least the same amount of awareness is present within us when we pray or sing to God. But in religion we choose to remain muddle-heads all the world over, and with our words and grimaces play the buffoon, in a manner, to the darkness that lies before our closed eyes. The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna calls upon us to break through all this insidious hypocrisy of our religious life in modern times, and pledge ourselves bravely to a life of direct experience in religion. So let the fire of a new earnestness be lit up within us, let our meditations be more penetrative and less of the nature of a tug of war, let our detachment from the ties of worldliness be more sincere and complete, and last but not the least, let *kama kanchana*, lust and mammon, die within us for good.

For religion is incompatible with these two. This fact is very conveniently overlooked by the modern world and very easily it closes with terms of compromise offered by the twin seducers. Desire is rooted deep into the very constitution of our mind and body. The Christian theory of sin is only a muffled echo of this truth. But the redeeming counterpart of the same truth is that divinity is the deepest

and truest source of our being; and what has choked up all access to this source is desire. In our daily and hourly combat with such an evil, it is impossible for us to be too wary, and alas, even all our wariness may not avail us, so powerful may be the roots of desire buried deep into our nature. When so terribly serious are the real facts through which our way to religion lies, how imbecile and fatal is the way in which people generally seek to serve both masters, both God and lust, or God and mammon! The result is as if a banished prince comes and strolls unbidden and unrecognised in the streets of his kingdom as a beggar turned out from door to door, while the whole kingdom rings with high festivities and banquets held in his name, coins jingle everywhere bearing the stamp of his face, and from banners flying and flags hoisted, from big tablets on big houses, from headlines in newspapers, from toys, mementos and pictures on sale, from every side and corner that is to say, he finds his own name standing out as the great ruler of the land! In modern life as we find it all over the world, we have brought religion to such a state of existence by the many compromises we have made in our religious life with lust and mammon. It is the latter who rule over the modern world with the glaring name and style of religion blazoned forth from every creek and corner, while religion wanders abroad unrecognised and turned out from one door to another.

What a tremendous spiritual power is necessary to set right such perversities of the modern religious life! And when the whole world were running mad over the worship of mammon, a man appeared on the scene, the very nerves of whose body would not bear, even during sleep, the touch of money! It is impossible even to imagine what a world-moving power of protest and reaction against mammon was stored behind his wonderful body that would be thrown, even in sleep,

into suffocation, if a small knot was made somewhere with the clothes he had on, for such a knot symbolises the instinct of laying by money or things of the world! How inconceivably great must have been the power of holiness that came down accumulated and embodied in this man, whose consciousness would retire into depths of *Samadhi* from the material body if it is touched with a lustful hand! And all this tremendous force of purity and holiness lies concentrated behind the infinite love of this man for mankind,—a love which rests undying like a brooding presence over humanity to rescue it from lust and mammon.

ON SEEING SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S PORTRAIT.

(A SONNET)

As science sheds the light of day through night
By wires metallic, frail, though quickened strange,
So thine it was, Oh Lord, to so arrange
That, mortal though thy fleshy frame to sight,
With Light Divine it floods the world of gloom
For ever to illumine each path where lies
Our *Dharma*, worse bedimmed by Learning's guise
A Symbol, through which all the glories loom
Of Highest Life in store for struggling man.
Hast thou vouchsafed by taking human form,
And, more than that, above each soul to span
Thy Love's refuge through all life's toil and storm,
Where he who nestles full shall never miss
The strength that shakes the world and showers
Peace.

P. S. I.

HINDUISM AND SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

BY THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Translated from Bengali*)

BY the word "the Shastras" the Vedas without beginning or end are meant. In matters of religious duty the Vedas are the only capable authority.

The Puranas and other religious scriptures are all denoted by the word "Smriti." Their authority goes so far as they follow the Vedas and do not contradict them.

Truth is of two kinds:—(1) that which is cognisable by the five ordinary senses of man, and by reasonings based thereon. (2) that which is cognisable by the subtle, supersensuous power of Yoga.

Knowledge acquired by the first means is called Science; and knowledge acquired by the second is called the Vedas.

The whole body of supersensuous truths, having no beginning or end, and called by the name of the Vedas, are ever-existent. The Creator himself with the help of these truths is creating, preserving and destroying the Universe. The person in whom this supersensuous power is manifested, is called a Rishi and the supersensuous truths which he realises by this power are called the Vedas.

This Rishihood, this power of supersensuous perception of the Vedas, is real religion. And so long as this does not develop in the life of an initiate, so long is religion a mere empty word to him and it is to be understood that he has not taken yet the first step in religion.

The authority of the Vedas extends to all ages, climes and persons; that is to say, their application is not confined to any particular place, time and persons.

The Vedas are the only exponent of the Universal Religion.

Although the supersensuous vision of truths is to be met with in some measure in our Puranas and Itihasas and in the religious scriptures of other races, still the four-fold scriptures known among the Aryan race as the Vedas being the first, the most complete, and the most undistorted collection of spiritual truths, deserve to occupy the

highest place among all scriptures commanding the respect of all nations of the earth, and furnish the rationale of all their respective scriptures.

With regard to the whole Vedic collection of truths discovered by the Aryan race, this also has to be understood that those portions alone which do not refer to purely secular matters and which do not merely record tradition or history, or merely provide incentives to duty, form the Vedas in the real sense.

The Vedas are divided into two portions, the Jnana-kanda (knowledge-portion) and the Karma-kanda (ritual-portion). The ceremonies and the fruits of the Karma-kanda are for ever confined within the limits of the world of *Maya* and therefore they have been undergoing and will undergo transformation according to the law of change which operates through time, space and personality.

Social laws and customs likewise, being based on this Karma-kanda, have been changing and will continue to change hereafter. Besides these, minor social usages have from time to time been recognised and accepted as being compatible with the spirit of the true scriptures and the conduct and example of holy sages. But blind allegiance only to usages such as are repugnant to the spirit of the Shastras and the conduct of holy sages has been one of the main causes of the downfall of the Aryan race.

It is the Jnana-kanda or the Vedanta only that has for all time commanded recognition for leading men across *Maya* and bestowing salvation on them through the practice of Yoga, Bhakti, Jnana or selfless work; and as its validity and authority remain unaffected by any limitations of time, place or persons, it is the only exponent of the universal and eternal religion for all mankind.

The Samhitas of Manu and other sages following the lines laid down in Karma-kanda have mainly ordained rules of conduct conducive to social welfare and applicable according to the diversities of time, place and persons. The Puranas have taken up the truths imbedded in the Vedanta and have explained them in detail in the course of describing the exalted life and deeds of *Avataras* and others. They have each emphasised, besides, some out of the infinite aspects of the Divine Lord to teach men about them.

But when by the process of time, fallen from the true ideals and rules of conduct and devoid of the spirit of renunciation, addicted only to blind usages and degraded in intellect, the descendants of the Aryans failed to appreciate even the spirit of these Puranas which taught men of ordinary intelligence the abstruse truths of the Vedānta in concrete form and diffuse language and appeared antagonistic to one another on the surface, because of each inculcating with special emphasis only particular aspects of the Spiritual Ideal,

and when, as a consequence, they reduced India, the fair land of religion, to a scene of almost infernal confusion by breaking up piecemeal the one Eternal Religion of the Vedas (Sanatana Dharma), the grand synthesis of all the aspects of the Spiritual Ideal, into conflicting sects and by seeking to sacrifice each other in the flames of sectarian hatred and intolerance,

then it was that Sri Bhagavan Ramakrishna incarnated himself in India

—to demonstrate what the true religion of the Aryan race is,

—to show where amidst all its many divisions and offshoots, scattered over the land in the course of its immemorial history, lies the true unity of the Hindu religion, which by its overwhelming number of sects discordant to superficial view, quarelling constantly with each other and abounding in customs divergent in every way, has constituted itself a misleading enigma for our countrymen and the butt of contempt for foreigners,

—and, above all, to hold up before men, for their lasting welfare and as a living embodiment of the Sanatana Dharma, his own wonderful life into which he infused the universal spirit and character of the Dharma, so long cast into oblivion by the process of time.

In order to show how the Vedic truths,—eternally existent as the instrument with the Creator in his work of creation, preservation and dissolution—reveal themselves spontaneously in the mind of the Rishis purified from all impressions of worldly attachment, and because such verification and confirmation of the scriptural truths will help the revival, re-establishment and spread of Religion, the Lord, though the very embodiment of the Vedas, in this his new incarnation has thoroughly discarded all external forms of learning.

That the Lord incarnates again and again in human form for the protection of the Vedas, the true religion, and of Brahminhood or the ministry of that religion—is a doctrine well-established in the Puranas.

The waters of a river falling in a cataract acquire greater velocity, the rising wave after a hollow swells higher; so after every spell of decline the Aryan society recovering from all the evils by the merciful dispensation of Providence has risen the more glorious and powerful;—such is the testimony of history.

After rising from every fall our revived society is expressing more and more its innate eternal perfection and so also the omnipresent Lord in each successive incarnation is manifesting himself more and more.

Again and again our Bharatvarsa has fallen into swoon, as it were, and again and again has India's Lord by the manifestation of himself has revived her.

But greater than the present deep night of gloom, now almost over, no pall of darkness had ever before enveloped this holy land of ours. And compared to the depth of this fall all previous falls appear like the hollow made by the cow's foot.

Therefore before the effulgence of this new awakening, the glory of all past revivals in her history will pale like stars before the rising sun and compared to this mighty manifestation of renewed strength all the many past epochs of such restoration will be as child's play.

The various constituent ideals of the one Sanatana Dharma (or, Eternal Religion) during its present state of decline have been lying scattered here and there for want of competent men to realise them,—some being preserved partially among small sects and some completely lost.

But strong in the strength of this new spiritual renaissance, men, after reorganising these scattered and disconnected spiritual ideals, will be able to comprehend and practise them in their own lives and also to recover from oblivion those that are lost. And as the sure pledge of this glorious future, the all-merciful Lord has manifested, as said above, in the present age, an incarnation which in point of completeness in revelation, in point of its synthetic harmonising of all ideals and in point of its promoting every sphere of spiritual culture

surpasses the manifestations of all past ages.

So at the very dawn of this momentous epoch, the reconciliation of all aspects and ideals of religious thought and worship is being proclaimed; this boundless, all-embracing Idea had been lying inherent, but so long concealed, in the Religion Eternal and its scriptures, and now rediscovered, it is being declared to humanity in lofty tones.

This new dispensation of the age is the source of great good to the whole world, specially to India; and the inspirer of this dispensation, Sri Bhagavan Ramakrishna is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the previous epoch-makers in religion. Oh! man, have faith in this, and lay it to heart.

The dead does not return, Oh! man, the past night does not reappear, a spent-up wave of emotion does not rise anew in its former intensity, neither does man inhabit the same body over again. So from the worship of the dead past, we invite you to the worship of the living present, from the regretful brooding over by-gones, we invite you to the activities of the present, from all the waste of energy in retracing lost and demolished pathways, we call you back to new-laid paths which lie broad and near. He that is wise, let him understand.

Of that power which at the very first impulse has roused distant echoes from all the four quarters of the globe, conceive in your mind the manifestation in its fulness! and discarding all idle misgivings, weaknesses and the jealousies characteristic of enslaved peoples, come and help in the turning of the wheel of this new dispensation.

With the conviction firmly rooted in your heart that we are the servants of the Lord, his children, factors in the fulfilment of his purposes, enter the field of work.

THE PARABLES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

(I)

THE PARABLE OF THE DIAMOND.

To market with a diamond sent,
A servant old in service he,—
What price they there would set on it
His master asked him just to see.

One dealer of his *brinjals* proud,
He turned and turned the stone to say,
“Nine *seers* of *brinjals* worth this is,—
Well, nine *seers* just,—more I can't pay.”

“One *seer* may well you rise, my friend,”
In vain the servant bargained hard,—
“That's higher than the bazar rate,”
The dealer said, “yet more? absurd!”

So back he walked home with the stone;
The master, much amused, him told,
“To him who deals in cloth o'er there
Just go and drive a bargain bold.”

O'er spectacles slid down the nose
The merchant spied awhile and said,
“It's good for ladies of one's home,
If, say, some ornament be made.”

“Nine hundred I may give for this”—
With upturned face concluded he;
“One hundred more do rise, my sir,
I close and leave the thing with thee.”

“Good God, I rose beyond, you know,
The current rate, and suits it not?
Well, I can't pay a rupee more!”—
His way back home the servant sought.

The master smiling sent him next
To one old j'weller some way off;
He in a moment knew and said:
“It sells for one *lakh* rupees rough”!

Just so it happens when on earth
In flesh and blood the God-men live,
For as his store so each man rates,—
Their glory true but few perceive.

When Ramachandra lived as prince,
A dozen Rishis only knew
That God revealed Himself in him,
While others failed to have that view.

Sree Ramakrishna uttered thus
The lesson for us all to learn
How worldliness or bias fails
His real greatness to discern.

P. S. I.

IN THE HOLY LAND.

EF late years Palestine has been the objective point of very many winter tourists, and is every year finding favour with a continually increasing number. Its extent, its diversity, its chequered historical associations, the important part it has played in the fortunes and affairs of the human race, differentiate it from any other country. And among its many aspects of interest, it has the special claim that it is the living background of the life of Jesus Christ. It is one of the countries in the world which is held to be sacrosanct, because of the love which consecrated it and the faith which enshrines it.

My visit to Egypt I consider a fitting prelude to a journey to Palestine, as the well-known scenes in that land helped to illustrate the relation in which each stands to the other.

It was a beautiful day in the month of March, when I left Port Said by the Khedivial steamer which makes a weekly trip to Jaffa. I dined and slept on board and on the morning of the following day, while at breakfast, heard that we were nearing the Palestinian shores. The town of Jaffa was now in sight and looked very picturesque, situated on a castle-crowned promontory rising above the Mediterranean Sea, its base washed by the emerald waters.

The short voyage from Egypt to Palestine is invigorating and stimulating to those who are indifferent or superior to *mal-de-mer*. On this occasion the water was considerably ruffled by a wind that followed us in from the sea, which made landing in small boats decidedly unpleasant. A reef of dangerous rocks, over which the incoming waves hurl themselves fiercely, runs parallel with the shore. A narrow opening admits boats to the harbour inside, the roadstead being too

shallow for ships which must remain in the open sea some distance from land.

The excitement of disembarking baffles description. It needs a person of phlegmatic temperament to stand the haggling and disputing of the coolies and hotel-porters on landing. Crowds of men were shouting, jostling and pushing while endeavouring to clear the baggage. Amid this welter of confusion, I found myself and hand-bags swept off into one of the surf-boats manned by native Syrian boatmen waiting to convey passengers to shore. Here, I met my dragoon, Gabriel by name, who later proved himself an entertaining as well as an informative guide and adviser.

JAFFA.

Jaffa or Joppa is a very ancient town having been a considerable seaport in the time of Solomon, one thousand years before the birth of Christ. It was the port of Jerusalem and the landing-place of the cedars which Hiram, King of Tyre, sent to Solomon for building the Temple. Hence they were carried to Jerusalem on the backs of camels.

The streets are mostly narrow and fairly well-paved; they rise regularly above one another in tiers and many of them are connected by flights of steps. Numerous orange-vendors proffer the beautiful fruit from the world-famous orange-groves of the neighbourhood, and the new-comer has to pass warily through the bazaars which are littered with peel.

A few hours suffice to see everything of interest in Jaffa. The show place is the so-called House of Simon the Tanner, where Saint Peter lodged and on whose house-top he had his famous vision. The rude staircase to the roof of the modern building, flat, as of old, leads us to the view which gives a

long sweep of the Mediterranean Sea, with its nearer waves breaking against the belt of rocks, from which, in ancient Greek legends, Perseus rescued the fair Andromeda, after she had been chained to a rock by her royal father as a sacrificial offering to a sea-dragon.

In due time, I was piloted by my dragoon to the railway station, from whence we started by the conventional route for Jerusalem, a distance of fifty-three miles, usually covered in three and a half hours. After leaving the station, we, in a short time, emerged upon the Plain of Sharon, which was formerly noted for its fertile fields and groves of olives interspersed with palms, but the trees have all, long ago, disappeared. The ground was carpeted with flowers, a rich harmony of colour, all combining in a sweet tapestried beauty to deck Mother Earth, and the soft spring air was impregnated with the scent of growing things. At several of the stations at which we stopped *en route*, there were peasant women and children waiting to sell baskets of golden fruit and bunches of flowers to the travellers. Presently, the Agricultural School of the Alliance Israelite was pointed out to me, a very flourishing Institution, so I was told. An interesting circumstance in the recent development of the country, is the founding of Jewish colonies, engaged in various branches of agriculture.

There are five stations between Jaffa and Jerusalem, and the first station out is Lydda. St. George, the patron-saint of England, is said to have been a native of the place, and a mediæval crusading church, dedicated to St. George, is still in existence there. In the crypt beneath the altar, his tomb is shown.

The railway now passes through extensive gardens of olives, and about seven miles farther on is the town of Ramleh, which was of great importance during the crusading period, being a well-fortified city surrounded by strong walls. Gezer is a place at which the "Palestine Exploration Fund"

have made extensive excavations. The remains of seven cities, each built over the ruins of its predecessor, have been found. Under all are the cave-dwellings of the primitive inhabitants in which flint implements and pottery have been unearthed. The cave-dwellers burnt the bodies of their dead and the crematorium has been revealed. Still more interesting is the place of worship of these Troglodites, a rock surface covered with cup-marks and connected with very remarkable caves. Discoveries were made which suggest human sacrifice.

In some Christian tombs on a neighbouring hill, many objects have been discovered, chief among which is a bronze signet-ring bearing an early portrait of Christ.

We now traversed a rather bare upland and subsequently entered a wild impressive mountain gorge, in which several large caves are seen in the cliffs; they give one a good idea of the caves so often mentioned in the Old Testament as refuges and hiding-places. Soon afterwards the line enters the *Wady-el-Wurd*, or "Valley of Roses," and the steep incline from the plain to the heights of Judæa commences. Finally the train comes to a halt at the railway terminus of Jerusalem, in the German Colony, the altitude being 2,400 feet above the sea-level.

The city is about a mile from the station, and driving along the well-kept road, we soon perceived the walls of Jerusalem. I felt as if living in Biblical times. Here, are tall, dark Arabs in their flowing robes and distinctive head-gear; there, women walking to and fro with water-jars on their heads; a venerable old Sheikh, with a long grey beard, rides past on his donkey, and following closely on to him is a stately camel with an Isaac or Jacob on his back. There is an insidious charm about the people, and to the Occidental, the fascination which is exercised over his mind when coming in contact with the Orientals on their own soil naturally

makes him enthusiastic. It is not possible to convey a tithe of the impressions of novelty and interest with which the drive from the station to the Jaffa Gate filled my artistic consciousness.

The sun was casting his magic spell over the western plain, as it has done for so many thousands of years, and the sky was radiant with every shade of crimson, amethyst and gold.

And so we came up in the glory of the Eastern sunshine to the Holy City!

C. E. S.

(To be continued).

A GLIMPSE OF TRUTH.

NELLIE M. HAMMOND.

"Here is Thy footstool and there rest Thy feet,
Where live the poorest and lowliest and lost."

—Rabindranath Tagore.

I should like, in relating this that "came to me," to call it a vision, for it was properly that. But perhaps the word vision has come to mean, to some people, a thing in which the imagination plays a great part. It may even have come to mean a phantasy, and that would be a misnomer in this case.

I will begin at the beginning. I had some business to attend to in a quiet street, between Vauxhall Bridge Road and Westminster. It was on a hot, dull, sultry morning in August. There was no breeze and the air felt stifling and oppressive. I left home directly after breakfast, and taking the train for Vauxhall, got into a third-class compartment. The only other person there, was a woman nursing a baby. I sat opposite to her and glanced at her now and again, as one does to one's *vis-à-vis* in a narrow railway carriage, while the train went steadily on. Presently I noticed how delicate and fair her skin was. She was of the artisan class and neatly dressed. The baby was very young, not many weeks old. Then I noticed that the young mother had sea-grey eyes and light hair. After a little, the clear delicacy and purity

of her skin and the beauty of her expression arrested me, and I gazed till I could have knelt at her feet and have kissed the hem of her dress. She became to me, in sober truth, the incarnation of motherhood. Tears welled into my eyes, I restrained myself and sat quiet, and still with worship and wonder and delight. The train arrived at Vauxhall and I got out, and was soon in the hot streets, smelling, on that airless, almost tropical day, of stale fish and vegetables and of beer, as I passed through a busy poor thoroughfare. I saw the poverty; little knots of wearied women standing round the stalls; poor things, untidy and dirty for the most part, doing their petty buying, and chatting with neighbours. I saw the poverty of it all, on that oppressive morning, but I saw also most worshipful beauty in it all; for I saw that these were Mothers, strong with the endurance and patience of motherhood, full of mother-love and intent on mother-caring. I saw in them the worthy mothers of our race, and all was filled with beauty.

A woman came from a public house, a worker from a dust-yard near by. She was a fine big woman, and as she stood for a minute on the step and looked around,—her coarse canvas apron caught to her by a piece of string and falling from her waist in folds,—she was, to me, classical in her beauty and grace of outline and of pose. I suppose some old memory of a statue or a picture must have come to the surface of my mind unbidden, and I said aloud "Pallas Athene," and stretched out my hands to the wonderful loveliness of it. Another woman, in a little group near, laughed, and one, in a husky voice with an Irish accent, said "Whisht! Whisht! She has the sight, I tell ye!" And I passed on.

My business done I returned home, and gradually, as I returned, the glamour faded and ordinary things appeared again in ordinary light. Yet the effect of that vision has never passed. I know that these dingy, mean streets are neither dingy nor mean; they are long lines of homes, each full of interest and life, each made wonderful and holy through Motherhood. I know that the chimneys with their trails of smoke rise over altars each one sacred; and I know that each one is near and dear to the heart of that One Whom we, with appealing love and trust, call Father or, as it may be given to us, Mother.

ON THE CONNING TOWER.

THERE is such a thing as the "tortoise policy" in the economy of social evolution. We all know how the tortoise shrinks back into its shell, and feigns death, when there is some danger ahead. In India, the ancient Aryan society had to adopt the same policy, when the invasion of alien hordes across the frontiers, or the upheaval of non-Aryan ideals of life forced upon it the imminent danger of dissolution. This policy consists in arresting the spontaneous development of social relations and activities and withdrawing into a strict social isolation from the world outside. As a result, society gradually loses the capacity of readily adjusting itself to changing circumstances, though for the time being it saves itself from imminent death.

This "tortoise policy" influenced, to a very large extent, our social history during the post-Vedic ages. Society was never considered by the ancient law-givers, such as Manu, Yajnavalkya, Parasara, Atri and others, as an end by itself. They took it as a means to subserve the spiritual end of human existence, and therefore, through the ordinances they announced to society, they always sought to adapt its circumstances and necessities to the spiritual end to be promoted. Now so long as there is spirituality enough in the society to hold up before it in full effulgence this spiritual end and the way in which it should affect every modification of a social law and custom, social adjustments in changing circumstances and needs are smoothly effected and a deadlock in social progress is easily avoided. But the abnormal necessity of adopting the "tortoise policy" presents itself, when non-Aryan ideals of life rush upon society with a vandalism that gives no chance to all the spirituality in the society to assert itself in fair competition. Such has repeatedly been the case with our society, ever since the close of that glorious era which witnessed the Kurukshetra wars and the last compilation of the Vedas; and as an inevitable consequence, in the ancient systems of social code that have come down to us bearing all

the marks of occasional elaboration and elimination, we find stringent social rules, scattered all over, such as are evidently the outcome of a "tortoise policy" of alarm, self-distrust and self-isolation.

Now we are confronted to-day with the supreme question as to what shall we do with this body of stringent social rules, that seeks to confine us, as it were, into close water-tight compartments, and rather seems to pledge society to a death from within if purely Divine providence does not come to the rescue, than expose it to a death from without. Shall we still cling desperately on to the policy of the tortoise? Evidently the answer is either—yes, if the occasion for it still continues,—or no, if that occasion has disappeared. So we are first called upon to decide whether the present environments of our social life are such as to preclude the possibility of our ancient ideals of life asserting themselves in fair competition,—whether the Vedic spirituality finds itself hopelessly hampered by those environments in its natural course of self-manifestation. It is impossible, of course, to avoid a healthy conflict between the Aryan and the Western ideals of life and social values, but what is necessary for us now is to compute what chances of victory our own ideals have got in this modern conflict.

That we have been allowed all the chances of a fair competition would be evident from the attitude of neutrality which the political state established in the country maintains towards all our social and religious developments, provided they are above the suspicion of underhand political motives, as clearly they ought to be in accordance with the spiritual scheme of life we have got to organise in our society. Thus we have no cause to complain that foreign domination in politics necessarily implies foreign domination in the sphere of our social or religious life. For had that been the case, the fact would not have escaped the clear vision of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa who came into our

midst to open our eyes to the spiritual possibilities of the Aryan race in modern times, and who expressly enjoined on us, like Christ, to give unto Cæsar what is due to him. Besides the chances of a fair competition, the chances of an ultimate triumph have also been assured to us by the glorious achievements of the Vedanta or the Eternal Religion of the Vedas on the arena of the modern world-culture. Blind indeed must be the man whose cranky conservatism still maintains, in the face of all these hopeful circumstances, that the tortoise of our society must still lie crouching in morbid fear beneath the shell of a desperate self-isolation.

Swami Vivekananda in trumpet tones proclaimed it to our country that the times are propitious and that our spiritual ideals of life are bound to score victory after victory, if we preach them now to the world outside. He pointed out to us that the dangers which dictated to our forefathers the policy of the tortoise are all blown over now, and it is therefore our urgent duty to begin re-adjusting our social life on the original lines of active beneficence to the world outside and to the masses in India who seek our social and spiritual protection. In fact, the lives of Swami Vivekananda and his Master signalled the first triumphant outburst of our ancient society upon the world of modern life and culture, from its desperate long-protracted refuge in the "tortoise policy." Woe unto our social leaders if they still choose to remain blind to the significance of their lives and impervious to the inspiration of that all-conquering spirituality of the Aryan race which they embodied in themselves!

they foolishly fancy that our society can very well afford to feign death like the tortoise with perfect impunity quite as long as it pleases. They have no eyes to see what a severe penalty our society has been paying for its too long adherence to the "tortoise policy," which is only a policy of desperation—an *Apaddharma*, or an exceptional social measure to be taken only under exceptional circumstances of fatal danger. It implied, as we said above, a slow but sure surrender to a death from within in our desperate attempt to avert a death from without, and if by the advocates of this desperate policy is trotted out from old texts the plea of self-preservation that had force perhaps a thousand years ago, we have got to meet it by the same plea, though deriving all its force from the actual circumstances of the present day.

For like the human body, the social organism is also bound to become crippled if it has to live under the constant necessity of being closely shut up from all intercourse with the outside world and has to perpetually brood over the possibility of grave danger falling upon it from some side or other. This constant shrinking and dreading cramped the very soul of our society, and all its energies became confined to guarding old customs and observances that gradually mummified and to maintaining social distinctions that gradually multiplied. The wonderful power of absorbing alien elements by transforming them through the powerful chemicals of spiritual discipline, the active altruism that promptly devised means for the uplifting of the lower classes, the spiritual perspective which inspired every movement of our social life, the pursuit of those higher aims and ideals which constituted our society a mighty force in the wider sphere of human progress,—all these became lost to us in course of time, and society has been drifting steadily towards terrible disorganisation and dissolution. Is it not time for us now to gradually give back to our society that healthy natural course of life which it pursued before the sad exigencies of chronic invasion by non-Aryan vandalism forced upon it the desperate policy of the tortoise? For those who have the eyes to see know full well how Divine providence has already intervened to save our society and to

So there is no justification or necessity now for our society to play the tortoise again, for already it stands out on the broad, wide world in the strength of a glorious self-consciousness. It need have now no craven fear of contamination, for its ideals of life have been proved to be strong enough for conquest wherever on the globe they are carried with us. Those who mean to command our society now to skulk back beneath the tortoise-shell out-Canute Canute of English history who had the foolishness to command the sea-waves. Moreover

restore to us that spiritual perspective that alone can render social readjustment possible.

Last month, we pointed out how by giving up the practice of Brahmacharya as a social ideal, we have been raising a rich crop of social evils and abuses. Now the practice of Brahmacharya presupposes religious training, and the question naturally arises as to how we are to provide this religious training for our children. The question of imparting a theoretical training in religion has been mooted much of late and various are the modern methods suggested. But strange to say, the traditional methods of imparting religious training have come in for a very small share of our attention. So let us here discuss very briefly the important principle that underlies those traditional methods and their salient features.

To the Hindu mind, intent on building up life, the perpetual suggestion was the temple. The individual must consider his body to be the temple of God; the family must make its house the temple of God; the village must realise its unity in and through the village temple; the whole of India is interspersed with *pitasthanas*,—places of pilgrimage and worship dedicated to the one Mother,—so that the geographical unity of India is replaced in the Hindu consciousness by a higher ideal unity to be realised through a collective life based on spiritual pursuits. What a fruitful source is this temple-idea for supplying collective life on any scale its truest motive and method and end! And yet this very idea we are going to push aside to-day in a hasty general bid for Western methods of collective life.

This temple-idea gives us the principle on which the life of the family or the community is to be pivoted. Every house must contain a chapel-room or temple to symbolise Divine presence within it, and the whole family must consider itself the *shebait* or priest of the household Deity, its daily life with its usual round of activities revolving round Him as the centre. It is needless here to describe in detail this spiritual polity of home life, for

every Hindu knows it from experience. But the question that demands our earnest consideration to-day is: shall we pull down with one hand this wonderful polity and with the other smite our forehead in deploring the want of religious training from which our children of both sexes are suffering now-a-days? Shall we banish the household Deity from our family houses and with Him all the many small offices of loving worship that would give to our maidens and widows their proper pursuits and the practical religious training necessary for their life of Brahmacharya, and then foolishly feel crushed under the problem of their 'enforced' maidenhood or widowhood, because we do not find our homes to be quite fit places for their existence?

Practical training in religion, like charity, must begin at home. School instructions, literature, lectures, dramatic representations of the spiritual ideals of life, and so on, may very well develop the theoretical and sentimental side of our religious nature, but there must be the practical spiritual discipline of a home life to work at the bottom of it all. And it ought to be the temple mostly where our people should have to resort to for the in-door as well as the out-door training, for a Hindu should live best, if he lives everywhere under the shadow of a temple. It is not difficult to arrange, if we have the mind to, for religious instructions, readings and discourses, *Kathakatas* or minstrel services, and such like things at the common temple which every village should possess. But we must remember that no system of religious training outside the home would long continue to prosper,—no out-door temple would long echo with the merry bells of worship or the solemn sound of religious discourses,—if the temple indoors wears a deserted look. The sad disorganisation of the present day in our collective religious life has been the necessary outcome of our making the home the modern "chummery" that it has come to be, instead of making it the temple that it should be. Next to the ideal of Brahmacharya, which we last spoke about, the temple-idea claims to-day our best efforts to enshrine it in our home life.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA FESTIVAL.

AT THE MATH, BELUR.

WHAT a great incentive it would be to religious life all over India if the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa becomes a nationalised festival? It would be indeed a great step forward towards the harmony of all creeds and sects, for no other religious festival would so inspiringly offer to all sects and creeds the common ground to meet in common rejoicings.

The most striking feature of the annual festival which the Math at Belur celebrates on the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna is the way in which the Math authorities place their extensive grounds at the disposal of the huge gathering and expects it to be representative of all the creeds and sects, keeping to themselves only the important function of providing special accommodation where necessary and keeping huge masses of *prasad* ready for distribution. Everything else necessary to make the whole affair a success is contributed to by enthusiastic people from outside.

The formal ceremonies pertaining to *Tithipuja* were performed at the Math on the 27th of February, and came to a close after 2-30 a.m. on the 28th. On that day more than 500 visitors sat on the courtyard of the Math to a sumptuous dinner, and great spiritual joy and blessedness pervaded the whole monastery. The great festive occasion had begun to be announced already by the dulcet music of the *rushanchouki* (the Indian hautboy and timbrel) which by its indescribable sweetness infused the festive spirit into the soul of everybody visiting and taking part in the festivities.

But from the evening of the 28th February the sky began to assume a threatening aspect and rain beginning to shower down from 9-30 p. m. the arrangements which were proceeding for the public festivities of the next day were hampered to some extent. But the enthusiasm of the workers bore down everything before them, and the whole night was spent by most in sleepless preparations and joyous music.

The same lowering sky and drizzle greeted the busy workers early next morning and the great day of the festivities dawned amidst much apprehension and misgiving. But from 9 a. m. that is shortly before the Holy Mother arrived with her party at the Math from her Calcutta residence to witness the *utsab*, the clouds began to disperse, revealing King Sol high up on the sky in all his glory.

From more than a fortnight before, Messrs. Hoare Miller & Co. were planting jetty on the river by the side of the Math grounds and arranging for other necessities of a safe landing of crowds from their steamers on the celebration day; and when that much-expected day dawned, it was an inspiring sight to see a number of big steamers plying almost the whole day from 8 in the morning to 8 at night between Calcutta and the Math and carrying every time hundreds of eager, lively visitors touched by the blessedness of the occasion and bent upon enjoying the festivities. Besides these steamers, about 500 boats profited by this annually expected windfall in their trade. No less brisk was the traffic which the ferry steamers of the Port Commissioners, the E. I. Ry. Company and the Calcutta and suburban cabmen derived on the occasion and plenty of motor cars was also in evidence, so that by noon the spacious compound of the monastery was swarming all over with more than 50,000 people joining the festivities.

And while hundreds of young volunteers were busy everywhere, with a wonderful spirit of organisation and helpfulness, distributing *prasad* to all and exercising the important functions of inspecting and enquiring which necessitated the setting up of camp offices, the immense concourse of visitors moved about the festival grounds with their minds lifted up in the contemplation of Sri Ramakrishna's greatness and regaled by the devotional songs of various parties of musicians constantly pouring into the scene and by the soul-stirring strains from many a concert-parties. Among these, the concert party of Professor Dakshinaranjan Sen, Vaishnavacharan's band of *Kirtanias* (who by their sweet minstrel art once used to win plaudits so much from Sri Ramakrishna) and the *Kali-kirtan* party of Andul are well-known throughout the province. The *Jaltaranga* of Baranagore and the village *Tarjas* were entertaining enough to draw ceaseless crowds around them.

The life-size portrait of Sri Ramakrishna most tastefully decorated and placed in an artificial grove of ever-greens and flowers beneath a beautiful shed formed the objective point for all the Kirtan parties and the ecstatic music that rose constantly from this particular spot baffles all description. On an extensive space enclosed within the Math gardens, rows and rows of visitors were in successive turns sitting down to a blessed repast of *prasad*, consisting of Kichri and other delicacies, and constant lusty shouts were being heard from this direction as well as from the landing ghats of "Jay Sri Guru Maharajji ki Jay." All these enthusiastic shouts, the reverberating sound of musical instruments, the inebriating music of religious devotees, the solemn strains of concert-parties,—all combined to thrill one's soul with unutterable joy, and when the shadows of the ap-

proaching evening were slowly stealing upon the festival grounds, one realised while leaving the blessed scene of the day's rejoicings that the Sri Ramakrishna Festival should be cherished all over the country as a red-letter day for universal festivities unhampered by the narrow considerations of creed, sect, race or rank.

The festival was brought to a close by the grand display of fireworks by the enterprising firm of Sri Hemchandra Chitrakar, who entertained the visitors on this memorable occasion of his own accord and quite free of charge. Besides many notable visitors from Calcutta, there were present on this day, to witness the festivities, guests from distant districts and provinces,—one Russian military officer and a few European ladies and gentlemen. The solemnity of the whole occasion was, to the followers of Sri Ramakrishna, evidently enhanced by the presence of the Holy Mother at the Math temple during the whole day.

AT THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA ASHAMRA, BANGALORE.

The birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was publicly celebrated on Sunday at the Math, Basavangudi, Bangalore City. Bhajana parties went in procession in the morning with the Gurn's picture in their midst. After the feeding of the poor, about 2000 people in number, a Harikatha performance was given in the afternoon before a large audience of both sexes. Lectures commenced at about 6 p. m. Brahmashri Dodda-bele Narayana Sastriyar giving a detailed account in the vernacular of the life and teachings of the Paramahansa. He also recited a Sanskrit verse composed by him for the occasion. Mr. M. G. Varadachar, Advocate, delivered an eloquent address on the significance of the life of the great saint bringing into prominence his sincerity, humility, devotion and his resistance of the dual forces of lust and lucre. Dewan Bahadur J. S. Chakravarti who was the chairman then got up and delivered a long learned discourse drawing attention to the spiritual mission of India in the world. He referred to the good work that is being done here by Swami Nirmalanandaji and to the assistance given him by Mr. M. A. Narayana Iyengar and other gentlemen. With a vote of thanks proposed by Rao Bahadur D. Shama Rao and the distribution of *prasad*, the function came to a close.

AT RANGOON, BURMA.

On Sunday the 1st March 1914, the Ramakrishna Sevak Samiti and the Ramakrishna Society, Rangoon conjointly celebrated the 81st birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva in the premises of the Bengal Social Club, Rangoon. The celebration commenced with Bhajana. Sweets and alms were distributed to the poor irrespective of nationality. At 4-40 p. m. under the presidency

of Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, M. R. C. S., L. R. C. P., a public meeting was convened at which two papers were read—one by Mr. C. Pullaiya on "Bhakti-yoga" and the other by Mr. G. N. Sircar on the "Ramakrishna Mission abroad." Mr. Pullaiya said that there were two forms of Bhakti—the Gauni and the Para or the lower and the supreme Bhakti. He stated that forms, symbols, rituals, visits to Tirthas and temples, in themselves are not capable of giving either Bhakti or Mukti but are useful only so far as they take us a step further towards supreme love. The intense love which men feel for the fleeting objects of the senses should be directed to God, the centre of all attraction. Then the Bhakta acquires perfect renunciation which leads him to universal love and complete self-surrender.

Mr. Sircar who had recently returned from an extensive tour both in Europe and America gave a brief account of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission abroad. He stated that he had visited several Hindu temples and that the Western peoples were receiving the teachings of the Vedanta with much eagerness and enthusiasm. He bore testimony to the self-sacrificing spirit of the Swamies who worked daily several hours in order to cope with their extensive duties. He added that there was considerable scope for the propagation of Vedanta in the West.

Dr. Rajan in bringing the proceedings to a close made a short speech in the course of which he emphasised the teaching of Paramahansa regarding the fundamental unity of all religions and the extensive love and sympathy that he cherished towards all religions. He paid a high tribute to Bengal which was ahead of all the other provinces of India in having produced the greatest saint, the greatest scientist, the greatest poet and scores of other men who had distinguished themselves in all spheres of human activity.

With a vote of thanks to the chair, the meeting terminated. The celebration was a splendid success through the united efforts of Messrs. N. C. Mukerji, Rai Sahib, G. N. Sircar and Bhavanandam Mudaliar.

AT DACCA.

The Dacca Ramakrishna Mission organised a *Sankirtan* procession on Saturday (the 28th Feb.) afternoon. It started from the Joykali temple at Thatari Bazar. At Buckland Bund the Sankirtan party was joined by nearly two hundred youngmen and the whole procession at times contained nearly five hundred persons. The procession stopped in front of all Hindu temples and sang and danced for some time. It entered and paraded the East Bengal Brahma Samaj compound where some of the Brahma gentlemen joined the procession. At Northbrook Hall lights were taken

and dancing was kept up all through Bangla Bazar and Sutrapur. At Sutrapur Bazar some Moslem gentlemen asked the processionists to stop singing and this was done immediately. Entering Farashgunge road the party, in front of a Hindu temple, danced and sang frantically. But the climax was reached when the procession reached the late Babu Mohini Mohan Das's house in Sabjimahal, the head quarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. Here dancing and singing began afresh and with resumed vigour, and even all attempts to stop it failed for some time.

On Sunday, the 1st March, the house of the late Babu Mohini Mohan Das was gaily decorated. On one side of the courtyard was hung a nice big scene depicting the Dakshineswar Kalibari. At the middle of the drawing was placed the portrait of Paramahansa Deva decorated with flowers and garlands. The students and others sang songs, hymns and Bhajans from 7 in the morning. In the afternoon Babu Thakur Chand Mukherjee read out an essay on the life of Paramahansa Deva. He was followed by Pandit Matilal Churamani who spoke at some length on the life of the great sage. A *Jatra* performance began at 4 in the afternoon. Pandit Hariprosanna Goswami of Munshigunge has organised this party and he calls it Ramakrishna Sangit Sampradaya. On Friday nearly a thousand persons were fed with rich delicacies in the mission house. And on Sunday nearly one hundred workers took their meals in the Mission house. This year's festivities were very successful from every point of view.

AT THE SRI RAMAKRISHNA HOME, MADRAS.

The festivities commenced here on the 1st of March with *bhajana* in the morning. During afternoon about 6000 poor people were fed by the Home, and Harikatha performances on the life of Prahlad were held. The festivities closed in the evening with a public meeting which was addressed on the subject of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna by Dewan Bahadur P. Rajaratna Mudaliar Avergal C. I. E.

AT THE R-K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL.

About three hundred Sadhu Mahatmas and respectable local gentlemen joined in the festivities held here on the 1st of march. The celebration was held in the usual style with *pujas*, Bhajanas etc., while Swami Hridayananda addressed the gathering on the life of Sri Ramakrishna. Many poor people were also fed on this day.

AT MYMENSING.

The birthday ceremony of Ramakrishna Paramahansa was celebrated here on the 1st March. A large number of poor were fed. In the evening a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, presided over by Mr. Spry, Magistrate, who in

course of a speech suggested that the sphere of action of the Ramakrishna Mission should be such that the members could be useful to the communities.

AT HARINAKUNDA, JESSORE.

The birthday anniversary was celebrated here on the 18th March by the local Vivekananda Ashrama, which has been working there during the last four years with its Charitable Dispensary, Night School and Library. The festivities consisted of distribution of *prasad* and alms, chanting of the Vedic Shastras, *Sankirtan* and *Kathakatha*.

AT BARBARIA, MIDNAPORE.

On the 1st March the flood-relief centre at Barbaria, celebrated the birthday anniversary in proper style, the most popular feature being the feeding of hundreds of the poor.

Besides the above places, the anniversary was observed in many other places and centres of the Ramakrishna Mission, such as Nagpur, Benares, Bhabda (Murshidabad) etc.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

(CULLED AND CONDENSED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES)

THE Education Committee of the London County Council has recommended to the Council a grant of two thousand sterling per annum for the maintenance of a school of oriental studies at the London Institution.

A correspondent from Orai sent the Lucknow 'Advocate' an account of the bravery shown by Mr. Corbett, Deputy Superintendent of Police. Mr. Corbett on hearing that one of the workmen engaged in constructing a well was buried under debris of earth at a depth of 80 feet and no workman was willing to rescue him, himself went down into the well by means of a rope and at great risk of his own life after two hours' hard work in digging saved the life of the coolie.

IN Mysore, active and vigorous efforts are being made for the elevation and advancement of the *Panchamas* there. Four Girls' Schools, four Boys' Schools and three Night Schools for the Panchama labouring classes have been started by the Hindu Depressed Classes Mission there. Arrangements have also been made to give an industrial turn to the instruction imparted. *Rattan* work has been started as a beginning and other industries will also be tried in time as opportunities occur. The response it has received from the Panchama community itself has inspired the organisers with promise of the most favourable results. The Mission is under the guidance of a Committee which includes many eminent local gentlemen. Her Highness

the Maharajee Vani Vilasa Sammilhana has been graciously pleased to become the patron and to give the Mission a generous donation of Rs. 1000. H. H. the Maharaja Scindia and H. H. the Maharaja of Alwar have also graciously given a donation of Rs. 500 and 250 respectively.

SOMEONE has invented a night trap for mosquitoes which, according to "Chambers's Journal," has proved highly successful under exacting tests. The contrivance depends on the use of the luminous paint the Doctor Balmain invented some years ago. In this paint there is no phosphorus. The mosquito trap is a short glass cylinder, about six inches in length and one inch in diameter. The interior surface of it is coated with Balmain compound, and the ends are sealed. On the outer surface of the glass there is a coat of adhesive substance like that on ordinary fly paper, and the tube hangs by a string in any convenient place. Exposure to day-light causes the Balmain paint to collect and store up sunlight, which it throws off at night. The faint, steady glow attracts the insects, and as there is no heat about the light the mosquitoes settle upon the glass, and are caught by the adhesive. When it is necessary to clean the trap, you take a piece of wood—a match will do—and scrape off the insects, and then apply a fresh coating of the adhesive.

Professor Little, the President of the American Chemical Society, believes that "during the next generation—the next two generations—there is going to be a development in chemistry which will far surpass in importance and value to the human race that of electricity in the last few years—a development which is going to revolutionise methods of manufacture." For instance, the development of agricultural machinery has in half a century reduced the cost of labour in seven crops by 680 millions of dollars. Years of co-ordinated effort directed by experimental research have resulted in the wonderful machinery used in the hoot trade. New York has twice as many telephones at work as London. Los Angeles has one to every four inhabitants. The American Telephone and Telegraph spends yearly in research the income of a University. The development of a single invention of Edison has sometimes involved millions. In every forty-six days the output of the low-priced American car represents the total energy development at the Niagara Falls. A single tyre manufacturer spends on his laboratory \$ 100,000 a year.

THE "Bergales," in one of its recent editorials, says: Let the Brahmins begin to live true and pure Hindu lives. Let them not trouble about exclusion and ex-communication. Let them once more be the exponents of truth and the exemplars of life

and conduct as they once were. A high order of mentally, honest and truthful conduct, a keen insight, will bring them back their powers. Sri Ramakrishna Pararahansa was quite innocent of all modern learning; he realised in his life the spiritual ideals of Hinduism and as such he was a centre of attraction to even those who were in the habit of regarding with distrust the teachings of our Shastras. The self-regarding activities, the low and languid purpose of life which have made Hindu Society materially poor, intellectually sterile and spiritually stagnant require purification and elevation. But where is the mighty force to draw all these scattered, enfeebled and vegetating units of life unto itself and render them instinct with power and inspiration to realise the destiny of the race? The Brahmins if they can make themselves into such a force will attract all and repel none. They will infuse into all strength, purity and love of race, religion and country for the absence of which they now fear to incorporate what they consider to be undesirable elements.

THE award is made by the Government of Madras of a University Research Scholarship in mathematics valued at £200 a year, and tenable for two years to Mr. S. Ramanujam, in order that he might continue the Mathematical research work at Trinity College, Cambridge. Born of humble and poor parents, Mr. Ramanujam was educated at the High School at Kumbakonam, once the famous home of South Indian mathematicians. While there he showed great skill in mathematics, a study for which from his earlier days he had shown special aptitude, so much so that even before passing his Matriculation he could solve with ease problems given to the B. A. students. About 10 years ago, Mr. Ramanujam, after sitting unsuccessfully for the F. A. examination, came to Madras, and found employment as a clerk in the Port Trust Office on a salary of Rs. 20 per mensem. After office hours he devoted himself to the study of mathematics, and soon attained so great a proficiency that he was able to solve some of the most intricate problems appearing in the Trinity College Magazine, which had baffled many of the mathematicians of Cambridge. The authorities of Trinity College soon came to recognise his genius and superior intellect. They communicated with the local educational authorities in Madras regarding his marvelous capabilities. Recently when Mr. Neville, the eminent Mathematical Professor of Cambridge came to the city to give a series of University lectures, he made enquiries about Mr. Ramanujam, and brought his powers to the notice of the Government, and the scholarship to which reference has been made is the result of this representation.