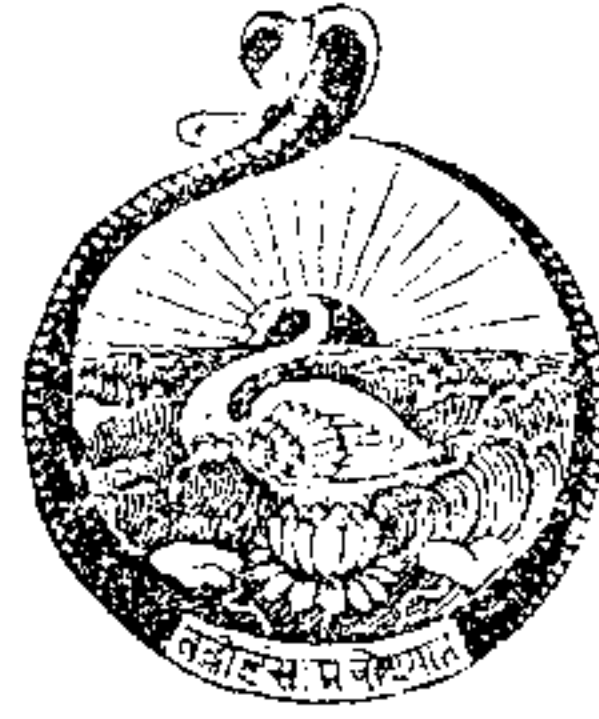


Prabuddha Bharata

OR

Awakened India



वसिष्ठत ज्ञानत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

Vol. XXI, No. 238, MAY, 1916.

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Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराशिबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

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MAY 1916

[No. 238

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

[II.—Continued from page 62.]

[Subjects: Religion is a matter of realisation; intense longing is the means to realise religion. In the present Yuga there is the necessity of performing work as taught by the Gita—Sri Krishna is to be worshipped as the author of the Gita—the country requires the quality of Rajas to be developed.]

After the evening Swamiji called the disciple and asked him “Do you have the Kathopanishad committed to memory?”

Disciple— No Sir, I have only read it with Sankara's commentary.

Swamiji— In all the Upanishads, there can be found no such beautiful book. I wish you would all keep that in your memory. What will it do only to read it? Rather try to bring into your life the faith, the courage, the discrimination and the renunciation of Nachiketá.

Disciple— Give your blessings please, that this servant may realise these.

Swamiji— You have heard of Thakur's* words, haven't you? He used to say, “The breeze of Mercy is already blowing, do you only lift the sail.” Can anybody, my child,

effect the growth of another into something else? One's future is in one's own hand,—the Guru only makes this much understood. Through the power of the seed itself, the tree grows, the air and water are only aids.

Disciple— There is, Sir, the necessity also of extraneous help.

Swamiji— Yes, there is. But you should know that if there be no substance within, no end of outside help will avail anything. Yet, there comes a time for everyone to realise the Self. For everyone is Brahman. The distinction of higher and lower is drawn only so far as the differentiation in the manifestation of that Brahman is concerned. In time, everyone will have perfect manifestation. Hence the Shastras say—“कालेनात्मनि विन्दति”—“In time, That is realised in self.”

* i. e. Sri Ramakrishna's.

Disciple— When, alas, will that happen, Sir? From the Shastras we hear how many births we had to pass in ignorance!

Swamiji— What's the fear? When you have come here this time, the goal would be attained in this life. Liberation or Samadhi—all this only consists in doing away with the obstacles to the manifestation of Brahman. Otherwise the Self is always shining forth like the sun. The cloud of ignorance has only veiled It. Remove the cloud and the Sun manifests. Then you get into the state of **भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः** (the knots or bondages of the heart are torn asunder) etc. The various paths that you find all advise you to remove the obstacles on the way. The way one realised the Self, is the way which he has preached to all. But the end of all ways is the knowledge of Self, the realisation of this Self. To it all men, all nations, have equal right. This is the view acceptable to all faiths.

Disciple— Sir, when I read or hear these words of the Shastras, thinking that the Self has not been realised even to this day, the heart becomes disconsolate.

Swamiji— This is what is called longing. The more it grows the more is the cloud of obstacles dispelled, and stronger will faith be established. Gradually the Self will be realised like an *amlok* fruit placed on the palm of hand. This realisation alone is the life of religion. Every one can go on abiding by some observances and customs. Everyone can fulfil certain injunctions and prohibitions, but how few have this longing for realisation? This intense longing,—becoming mad after realising God or getting the knowledge of Self—is the real spirituality. The irresistible madness which the Gopis had for the Lord, Sri Krishna,—yea, it is intense longing like that which is necessary for the realisation of the Self! Even in the Gopis' mind there was a slight distinction of man and woman. But

in real Self-knowledge, there is even no such distinction.

While speaking thus, Swamiji introduced the subject of 'Geeta-Govinda' and continued saying:—

"Joydeva was the last poet in Sanskrit literature. But Joydeva often cared more for the jingling of words than for depth of sentiment. But just see, how the poet has shown the culmination of love and longing in the Sloka **पतति पतत्रे** etc.* Such love indeed is necessary for Self-realisation. There must be fretting and pining within the heart. Now from his playful life at Vrindaban come to the Krishna of Kurukshetra, and see how that also is fascinating,—how amidst all that horrible din and uproar of fighting Krishna remains calm, deep and peaceful. Aye, on the very battle-field, he is speaking the Gita to Arjuna and getting him on to fight, which is the *dharma* of a Kshatriya! Himself an agent to bring about this terrible warfare, how Sri Krishna remains unattached to action,—he did not touch any weapon. To whichsoever phase of it you look, you find the character of Sri Krishna perfect. Knowledge, work, devotion, power of concentration,—as if, he was the embodiment of all these. In the present age, this aspect of Sri Krishna should be specially studied. Only contemplating the piping Krishna of Vrindaban, won't do now-a-days,—that will not bring salvation to men. Now is needed the worship of Sri Krishna, uttering forth the lion-roar of the Gita, of Rama with his bow and arrows, of Mahavira, of Mother Kali. Then will the people grow strong by going to work with great energy and will.

* पतति पतत्रे विचलति पत्रे शङ्कितभवदुषयानं ।

रचयति शयनं सचकितनयनं पश्यति तत्र पन्थानं ॥

"At the flying down of a bird or the stirring of a leaf, she fancies you are coming; she arranges your bed with eyes all alert looking towards the way you would come."

I have thought it out most carefully, that of those who profess and talk of religion now-a-days in this country, the majority are full of morbidity,—crack-brained or fanatic. Without the development of an abundance of Rajas, you have neither hope in this world, nor in the next. The whole country is enveloped in intense Tamas; and naturally the result is—servitude in this life and hell in the next.

Disciple— Do you hope when you find Rajas in the Westerners that they will gradually become Sattvic?

Swamiji— Certainly. Possessed of a plenitude of Rajas, they have now reached the culmination of Bhoga or enjoyment. Do you think that it is not they but you who are going to achieve Yoga, you who hang on about for the sake of your bellies? At the sight of their highly refined enjoyment, that delineation in Meghaduta विद्युद्भ्रन्तं ललितवसनाः etc.* comes to my mind. And your Bhoga consists in lying on a threadbare bed-rag, in a muggy room, multiplying progeny every year like a hog!—Begetting a band of famished beggars and slaves! Hence do I

* विद्युद्भ्रन्तं ललितवसनाः सेन्द्रचापं सचित्राः

सङ्गीताय प्रहतमुरजाः सिग्धगन्भीरधोषं

अन्तस्तोयं मणिमयभुवस्तुङ्गमभ्रलिहासाः

प्रासादास्त्वां तुल्यितुमलं यत्र तैस्तैर्विशेषैः ।

“The mansions of that city may well be compared with you, O cloud, for there is correspondence in features: while flashes of lightning play within you, they have charmingly attired damsels moving within them; while you have the rainbow, they have their paintings; you have your deep, rolling, rumble, they have their drums sounding forth music; you contain pellucid water within you, they have their interior bedecked with transparent gems; you roar so high, their roofs also kiss the sky.” Kalidasa thus introduces his description of the enjoyments of Alakápurī. So the reference here is not only to the first verse quoted, but to this whole description which follows.

say, let people be made energetic and active in nature by the stimulation of Rajas. Work, work, work, नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय : there is no other path of liberation but this.

Disciple— Sir, did our forefathers possess such quality of Rajas?

Swamiji— Why, did they not? Look how history tells us that they established colonies in many countries, and sent preachers of religion to Thibet, China, Sumatra and even to far-off Japan. Is there any other means indeed of achieving progress except you go through Rajas?

As conversation thus went on, night approached; and meanwhile Miss Muller came there. She was an English lady, having great reverence for Swamiji. Swamiji introduced the disciple to her, and after a short talk Miss Muller went upstairs.

Swamiji— See, to what a heroic nation they belong! How, far-off is her home, the daughter of a rich man,—yet how long a way has she come only with the hope of realising the spiritual ideal.

Disciple— Yes Sir, but your works are more strange indeed! How so many European ladies and gentlemen are always eager to serve you! For this age, it is very strange indeed!

Swamiji— (Pointing to his own body)— If this body lasts, you will see many more things. If I can get some youngmen of heart and energy, I can revolutionise the whole country. There are a few in Madras. But I have more hope in Bengal. Such clear brains are to be found scarcely in any other country. But they have no strength in their muscles. Brain and muscles must develop simultaneously. Iron nerves with a well-intelligent brain—and the whole world is at your feet.

Word was brought that supper was ready for Swamiji. He said to the disciple “Come

and have a look at my food." While going on with the supper, he said, "It is not good to take much fatty or oily substances. *Roti* is better than *luchi*. *Luchi* is the food of the sick. Take fish and meat and fresh vegetables but sweets sparingly." While thus talking, he enquired, "Well, how many *rotis* have I taken? Am I to take more?" He could not remember how

much he took, and did not feel even if he yet had any appetite. The sense of body faded away so much while he used to talk!

He finished after taking a little more. The disciple also took leave and went back to Calcutta. Getting no cab for hire, he had to walk, and while walking he brooded in his mind how soon again the next day he would come to see Swamiji.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

WE know what a man is, if we know what he values. There is a soul of desire in every man which defines and determines the unfolding web of his life; and this inmost soul, this secret of his being, gives itself out in the principle of valuation a man is applying to things and facts lying all around. Ask why a thing is of value to your friend, and the question pursued a little leads through the corridor of many implied interests to the inmost chamber of his being, whence issues the whole ordering of his present life. So perfect insight into human character is not a miracle, provided the enquiry into what another values and why is not reacted upon and confounded by what you yourself value and why.

The whole show of life that is ever bulging out into a thought-globe of heavens and earth has nothing to stand upon. For analysis shews that the fivefold variety of sense-impression is a projection from our consciousness; and so this 'solid, solid earth' is what we know not, and surely not what it appears to be. Somehow associated with the brain exists something we have named consciousness which evidently is an engine, a battery, of valuation, for primal, undifferentiated impressions are being *valued* by it into sense-objects and their systematised whole.

Thus valuation is creation; by ceaseless valuing, we go on creating our lives, and as we go on valuing, new contents of our life forge out into being every moment. Somehow we have been caught in a whirl of valuation, and a wheeling film of heavens, earth, life, death, happiness, misery, goes on turning round and round. Oh, how to stop this whirl, for every active impulse in us is subject to valuation! Valueate we must; so religion seeks to give us a valuation that values out all values.

But why not accept life as it is and let the valuation go on and on? Why not play on with values, rejecting old ones, bringing out new? Why back out from the game or fly from more experience, more life? The great 'reason why' comes home to few indeed. Non-attachment is indeed a principle of religion, and many pay religion the tribute of attempting or professing to practice it, without inwardly *feeling* called upon to do so. **पराश्रि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयम्भूः**—the Self-born One constituted the organs as tending outwards. So it is natural for us to go in for more experience, more life. The organs of our life constantly wander out, and new occupation is perpetually provided by putting new values on what is stale and effete. The outstanding facts of the world, as much as

the sun, moon, stars, seas, mountains and so on, remain very much the same, the world revolves on the same wheels always, but new valuation by constantly renewing significance keeps all things new. But evidently enough, this newness is the newness which cosmetics give to aged looks. It is newness on the surface of life. The heart of the whole show is old, stale, monotonous. The catching novelties are all relative to new itchings of Desire, which is the biggest mystery of life, maintaining itself ever-attractive by the ever-changing guise of pursuable objects.

The whole thing is a big, hollow trick of this Desire. Analyse this mysterious principle, you find a subjective element, an objective element, and a craving to realise their relation. So easily we generalise that Desire is the craving for realising subject-object relations. And as subject-object relations weave out the whole web of existence as we find it, Desire is the moving, impelling force which underlies the endless whirl of valuation, as we called it. So, constituted as we find ourselves to be, desire we must; and religion puts us on the way of desiring out all desires, simultaneously it puts us on the way of valuing out all values. That action of desire and valuation which tends to put out of action all desires and values is called *Vidyâ* in our scriptures, while the other kind of action which tends to perpetuate desires and values is called *Avidyâ*. All theories of religion do not sufficiently take note of this distinction between desire or valuation as *Vidyâ* and as *Avidyâ*, but they unwittingly apply in their disciplines the principle underlying it. For instance, Prof. James of U. S. A. accuses the Hindu and the Buddhist of being "afraid of more experience, more life." But in fact, even the theory he propounds of religion tends to circumscribe experience or life within limits valued by him as ethical, and who knows but this valuation, with progress of religious life under

his scheme, may not progressively shorten those limits? Spiritual experience proves that the more we scale its heights, life gains in intensity but loses in extensity. Those who had their life greatly intensified at spiritual heights come down to exert comparatively more extensive and lasting influence in the world. Thus experience gets less diffused but more intensified towards the core of life, but more diffused and less intensified towards the outlying sectors; and the cry for more experience through religion is a mistaken demand. It is a sorry self-contradiction.

In religious life, therefore, we have to keep the strictest watch as to how we desire and value. From what we have said it is clear that we desire and value correctly so long as our desires and values tend to intensify our life,—that is to say, intensify our spiritual knowing, feeling and willing; but if instead, their tendency is to diffuse and relax this spiritual knowing, willing and feeling we must know that we are desiring and valuing wrongly. Now what we have called spiritual knowing, willing and feeling, are not usually recognised or expressed by these terms. In the spiritual practice of most people, there is an *Ishta*, or a central object of adoration,—some conception of God. In such cases, the spiritual knowing, willing and feeling are to be concentrated on this *Ishta*; that is, we should know him, feel devotion for him and exert our will towards him. Here we should take care that all our desires and values in life tend only to intensify this self-consecration to the *Ishta* and not relax it in any way. For instance, the idea of life in a heaven or a life of miraculous spiritual endowments may form a part of the conception of God one is striving to realise. Now if our spiritual knowing, willing and feeling, instead of being fully centred in the *Ishta*, are refracted in the least towards the enjoyments of that heaven or the spiritual endow-

ments, we may be quite sure that there is something wrong in our desiring and valuating and that our desires and values are affecting harmfully the proper intensification of our spiritual life.

Thus it is very important to scrutinise our ideals of spiritual realisation. For if in this particular goal of realisation which we may happen to strive for, there is any such feature which tends to affect our devotion of mind and soul with an alloy of the Avidya type of desire and valuation, then such a feature is bound to prove a hindrance to our attainment of real spirituality. These ideals of spiritual realisation, in the case of many people, would involve the central conception of an Ishta, as we have said before, and this Ishta obviously stands for God how variously soever conceived by these people. Now the important question is as to whether there is any principle, provided for in our spiritual culture in India, by which all these various conceptions of God can be maintained free from the alloy of the Avidya type of desire and valuation. And if we recognise in the Vedic spiritual culture evolved in our country the unity of a system, we have to answer this question in the affirmative. From the earliest Vedic ages we find our spiritual culture grappling with the problem of variety in the conceptions of God. We find objects of worship tending to vary with worshippers. Upáshanâ or worship proved itself even in these early ages to be कर्तृतन्त्र or variously conditioned according to variety in the agent of worship. Conceptions of God and ritualism differed according to the type of worshipper, and the problem was to harmonise and regulate these differences by making them ultimately वस्तुतन्त्र, or governed by the Reality.

The cue was taken from ordinary sense-experience. The sensuous perception of an

external object, such as a tree or a cow, does not differ in the case of all men. It is the objective reality of a tree or a cow, which causes such unanimity, even when the subjective act of perception is a different act in each individual. Arguing from this, it is easy to conclude that the only remedy for differences of a subjective origin is to have the authority, of something real beyond subjective experience, constantly exercised over subjective functions. Some *Vastu or reality in itself* must be accepted by all as the object of common reference, where purely subjective functions tend to create differences. And if we study the Vedic scriptures in a synthetic spirit free from that sectarianism which decidedly helped to evolve later on in our history the conflicting systems of philosophy, we are sure to find that this *Vastu or reality in itself* which these scriptures hold up before us as the authority for universal reference in the pursuit of our varying conceptions of God and ritualism is the Absolute Reality of Brahman as revealed in those scriptures,—the परमपदं, the Supreme Essence, of every conception of God whether as Vishnu, Indra, Shiva, Devi, Surya, Ganapati etc.

This central method of harmonising and regulating all differences in the pursuit of the various conceptions of God and ritualism by an ultimate reference to the authority of the Supreme Reality as revealed through Vedic experience is the very soul of the whole system of spiritual culture inherited by us from the past. By this important method, all modes of *kartritantra* worship are finally rendered *vastu-tantra*, and therefore mutually reconcilable. And one momentous result flowing from the application of this method is that we are enabled to discriminate the essentials from the non-essentials in our individual conception of God and its pursuit. For if the Paramapada or the supreme reality of God in the form in which we worship Him be Brahman or the Only Reality, then any

feature in our conception of God which tends to dispute that Reality may be easily eliminated as we progressively pursue and practise that conception. In the first stages of our spiritual progress, our conceptions of God may involve such forms of experience as are accepted by us as real by the side of the supreme reality or Brahmanhood of our God. The matter and form of such possible experiences evidently tend to make our God a God of divided reality, a God existing, it may be, as the centre of other realities. Now the reason why we feel constrained to divide and allot reality as between our God and some other experiences with which we associate His realisation can be easily traced to the fact that by virtue of our peculiar desire and valuation we are obliged to cling to the possibility of those experiences. The traces and tendencies of desire as pursued in our world of sense tie us down to the idea of such possible experiences.

So if we carry this insidious bondage of desire into our progressive conception of God and His realisation, we fail to steer our religious life free from the operation of Avidya.

But if it were purely the authority of one's own reason that we have to follow, nobody will agree to give up or modify his own conception of God-realisation, for nobody is aware how his deep rooted desire affects the operation of his individual reason. So to avoid a perfect hell of confusion with regard to spiritual pursuits, our ancient culture holds up before us the authority of a supreme test by which we can detect and gradually eliminate even subtle elements of Avidya in our conceptions of God-realisation. We value because, and according as, we desire; and valuation consists in creating subject-object relations. The Vedas, therefore, by revealing to us a Reality beyond all subject-object relations and enjoining on us to keep that Reality as the goal of all our conceptions and pursuits of spiritual realisation, give us really the only effective clue for constantly checking the contents of our spiritual experience and ideal. Only when we carry this clue, this touchstone of Advaita, along with us in our practice of religion, are we sure to extricate ourselves from the great whirl of desire and valuation into which we find ourselves involved.

THE SEAL OF NATIONALISM.

CAN anybody doubt that the problem of nationalism underlies all the various problems with which we are beset to-day in India?

For it is nationalism which organises thought and activity in every country in the modern world, and national organisation is the secret of all success and efficiency in modern life. Tour round the world and you will find that every modern country goes to work in every department of its life imbued with the spirit of its nationalism, and as a result, all the forces and resources of the people are unquestioningly placed at its dis-

posal, and it never errs as to the right means to the right end, scoring success everywhere as a foregone conclusion. This free, easy, natural flow of collective efforts, spontaneously leading from right ways and means to the right end, is only a phenomenon of nationalism. The absence of this phenomenon in India is due to the fact that our nationalism has not yet been understood by us.

And the very first point to understand and remember is the sterling truth that the nationalism for one country may not be the nationalism for another.

The history of every country seeks to

realise a definite scheme of life, and in the modern age, this scheme of life asserts itself in the form of nationalism. Therefore if a country differs from another in its scheme of life, it is bound to differ also in its type of nationalism.

So in order to determine what is nationalism for us in India, we have first to go into our history and find out what that scheme of life is round which our history has evolved.

The verdict of history on this issue is as clear as possible; for there is one word which comes shot out as a bombshell, as it were, from the whole life-process our country has been undergoing for long ages and centuries, and that is Paramârtha. In this one simple word is verily contained the whole scheme of life India has all along been seeking to realise in history.

Paramârtha means Supreme End. This is its primary, radical meaning.* But this meaning was changed or added to, and we find it now to mean religion. Now what is it that rang this significant change on the meaning of this word? It was our nationalism, that has all along been working in our history in the shape of a definite scheme of life involving a definite supreme end to govern all possible ends of life. And this important word was made to identify that supreme end for all time to come with religion.

With the clue enshrined in this word, it is easy to set forth that scheme of life. The fact of religion being the supreme end in this scheme gives us not a mere gradation of all the ends of life, but an organic system of those ends. And if we have before us a scheme in which all the ends of life are organised into such a system, we are not at all left in doubt as to the respective value of each and the way it has to be pursued. For the question as to how and how far each end

is to be pursued is determined by the question as to how and how far each end can be made conducive as a means to the pursuit of the supreme end of religion.

Here we need not go into this question of 'how and how far' with regard to the pursuit of all the various subordinate ends of our collective life, such as politics, education, social and economic efficiency, sanitation, trade etc. But let us point out in a few words how our nationalism requires the political end of our collective life to be pursued at present, as distinguished from how Western nationalism requires that end to be pursued.

Politics is the governing end in Western nationalism. That is to say, it determines how and how far the other ends of the collective life are each to be pursued, and organises them into a system or scheme of life according to their relative importance. The political state therefore is the organising and determining authority in all matters pertaining to the pursuit of each end. Under this form of nationalism consequently, political autonomy or freedom is equivalent to national autonomy or freedom, and political enslavement to national enslavement.

In Indian nationalism, religion* is the governing end, for it determines how and how far the other ends of our collective life are to be pursued and realised, and organises them (specially whenever its central authority becomes embodied in an institution of national guides or philosophers) into a system according to their relative importance. The business of politics, therefore, in Indian nationalism is not to develop, guide or govern

* *Artha* may mean 'thing,' 'truth' 'good' etc. But the radical meaning 'end' includes in its denotation all such meaning.

* By religion (the spiritual end or Paramârtha) is meant that synthetic Spiritual Ideal round which the whole spiritual history in India has evolved and which has been demonstrated in the present age to embrace all sects and phases of religious belief and practice. So this religion is not at all a dividing factor, but the only real principle of our national unity.

the pursuit of other ends, but simply to safeguard such interests of that pursuit as it lies purely in the power of the political state established in the country to protect. So it is not essential to Indian nationalism as to who rules over the country politically, provided, such interests specially as safety of person and property, impartial and equitable administration of justice, neutrality of the state in matters of social and religious organisation and relief from such exploitation from outside as impairs the economic efficiency of the people for the pursuit of their collective spiritual end, are properly and adequately fulfilled by the political powers that be.

With regard to our nationalism, political subjection does not mean national subjection, as political freedom does not mean national freedom either. So long as the collective spiritual end,—the preserving, preaching and practising of the Spiritual Ideal revealed in our history—is free to rally us round itself into the unity of a nation, so long as it is free to inspire and guide us to form organisations for educating the people, so long as it is free to remould our social life conformably to its own purposes, so long as it is free to direct our organised activities into fruitful channels of economic efficiency, so long as it is free to stimulate organised enthusiasm in us for the improvement of sanitation, it would not really matter to our nationalism if we have to work under political subjection while giving our co-operation or service to the political government in the fulfilment of those four interests, mentioned above, which are bound up with the collective pursuit of the higher ends of our national life.

It is we ourselves who have spoiled our own nest by imbibing the method of Western nationalism in which every interest of collective life (education, sanitation etc.) is always sought to be fulfilled through politics. We have so long been running to the

Government to have everything done. Every time we have done so specially for the sake of our educational, social or religious progress, we have violated our own nationalism. Every time we have asked politics to organise such efforts of our collective life as our nationalism requires to be organised by our spiritual end, we have forged one link in our political bondage.

But it is not yet too late to go back on our mistaken pursuit of Western politics. It is not yet difficult to form a clear conception of our nationalism. It is yet possible to rally the whole country round our collective spiritual end, and when once we have become organised there, it would be found easy to direct our organised efforts with sure success into every other sphere of our collective life as clearly defined and put before our view by the actual needs of that collective spiritual pursuit on which we have already started. Then only we shall unerringly and inalienably grow into the fulness of our national life. Then only we shall move on and work with that seal of nationalism in our possession which will imprint on every effort we make the authoritative hall-mark of success.

Do we possess this seal of nationalism? Alas, we do not, and that is the root-cause of all our misfortunes in India. Not that we have no scholars and workers in the various spheres of our collective life; and these scholars and workers would have proved a sure lever in the uplifting of national life in any other country. But here in India so far as sure steady cumulative effect on the development of national life is concerned, their contributions are found mostly to go amiss. And the only reason of this is that these contributions do not bear on themselves the seal of nationalism.

The number of enthusiastic workers we have got already in the cause of our country is quite sufficient for making an irresistible start on adamant foundations towards a

most glorious future. But how is it that they live and work and die leaving behind only a current of activity which loses itself so soon in the sands of time without fertilising the soil of our collective life into lasting, growing forms of verdure? Why is it that their activities do not produce an immediate telling effect on the formation of that national unity and life which is ever eluding our expectations like a chimera? Why is it that the hopeful efforts coming from generation after generation of workers have not yet advanced to any appreciable extent the great initial work of organising our countrymen into the unity of a collective life? Growing inter-communication of thought and activity is not organisation, for organisation implies a solid unity in underlying motive, in form of action, in conception of goal. Are we in India growing one in this sense? If not, admit that our efforts for so many decades have been infructuous in a very fundamental sense; admit that there must have been something wrong, something vitally defective, in the very way in which these efforts have been made so long, no matter how sincere or self-sacrificing they have been.

And this vital defect in the way in which we have been labouring so long on the various fields of our thought and activity, is the defect of nationalism. Neither did we start, nor yet agree to re-start, with a clear conception of what is for us *our* nationalism. Without such a clear conception in the mind, we fail at every step to give to every collective effort or movement in our country that mark of nationalism which is its passport to real lasting success. For sure as fate, the inscrutable processes of the Time-spirit will reject, to-day or tomorrow, every offering that we make, in word, deed or feeling, to our country unless it bears on itself the seal of *our* nationalism.



EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

LXXXVIII.

The Math, Belur.
11th Dec. 1900.

Dear Joe,

I arrived night before last. Alas! my hurrying was of no use.

Poor Captain S— passed away, a few days ago. Thus the great Englishmen gave up their lives for us—us the Hindus. This is martyrdom if anything is. Mrs. S— I have written to just now, to know her decision.

I am well, things are well here—every way. Excuse this haste. I will write longer ere long.

Ever yours in truth

Vivekananda.

LXXXIX.

The Math, Belur
26th Dec. 1900.

Dear Joe,

This mail brought your letter including that of M— and A—. What the learned friend of A— says about Russia is about the same I think myself. Only there is one difficulty of thought—is it possible for the Hindu race to be Russianised?

Dear Mr. S— passed away before I could reach. He was cremated on the banks of the river, that flows by his *Ashrama*, à la Hindu, covered with garlands, the Brahmins carrying the body and boys chanting the Vedas.

The cause has already two martyrs. It makes me love dear old England and its heroic breed. The Mother is watering the plant of future India with the best blood of England. Glory unto Her.

Dear Mrs. S— is calm. A letter she wrote me to Paris comes back this mail. I am going up to-morrow to pay her a visit. Lord bless her dear brave soul.

I am calm and strong. Occasion never found me low yet; Mother will not make me now depressed.

It is very pleasant here, now the winter is on. The Himalayas will be still more beautiful with the uncovered snows.

The young man who started from New York, Mr. J—, has taken the vow of Brahmacharin and is at Mayavati.

Send the money to S— in the Math, as I will be away in the hills.

They have worked alright as far as they could, I am glad, and feel myself quite a fool on account of my nervous chagrin.

They are as good and as faithful as ever, and they are in good health. Write all this to Mrs. B—, and tell her she was always right and I was wrong and I beg a hundred thousand pardons of her.

Oceans of love for her and for M—.

“I look behind and after and

Find that all is right

In my deepest sorrows

There is a soul of light.”

All love to M—, Mrs. C—, to dear J. B—, and to you, dear Joe, *Pronams*

Vivekananda.

XC.

The Math, Belur,
7th Sept. 1901.

Dear—

We all work by bits, that is to say, in this cause. I try to keep down the spring, but something or other happens and the spring goes whir, and there you are—thinking, remembering, squibbling, scrawling and all that!

Well, about the rains—they have come down now in right earnest and it is a deluge, pouring, pouring, pouring night and day. The river is rising, flooding the banks, the ponds and tanks have overflowed. I have just now returned from lending a hand in cutting a deep drain to take off the water from the Math grounds. The rain water stands at

places some feet high. My huge stork is full of glee and so are the ducks and geese. My tame antelope fled the Math and gave us some days of anxiety in finding him out. One of my ducks unfortunately died yesterday. She had been gasping for breath more than a week. One of my waggish old monks says, “Sir, it is no use living in this Kali Yuga when ducks catch cold from damp and rain and frogs sneeze!”

One of the geese had her plumes falling off. Knowing no other method I left her some minutes in a tub of water mixed with mild carbolic, so that it might either kill or heal—and she is alright now.

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

XCI.

Belur,
October 8th, 1901.

Dear—

* * * *

I am bobbing up and down in the current of life—to-day it is rather down.

* * * *

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

THE VAIRAGYA-SATAKAM

OR THE HUNDRED VERSES ON RENUNCIATION BY BHARTRIHARI.

(Continued from page 74).

वैराग्यशतकम् ।

चण्डालः किमयं द्विजातिरथवा शूद्रोऽथ किं

तापसः

किं वा तत्त्वविवेकपेशलमतिर्योगीश्वरः कोऽपि

किम् ।

इत्युत्पन्नविकल्पजल्पमुखरैराभाष्यमाणा जनै-

र्न क्रुद्धाः पथि नैव तुष्टमनसो यान्ति स्वयं

योगिनः ॥६६॥

96. When accosted by people who loquaciously express doubt and surmise, such as "Is he a Chandâla, or a twice-born one, or a Sudra, or an ascetic, or perhaps some supreme Yogi with his mind full of the discrimination of Reality," the Yogis themselves go their way neither pleased nor displeased in mind.

[The Chandâla is accursed beyond the pale of the four castes, while the Sudra belongs to the fourth caste. The Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya form the three twice-born castes.]

हिंसाशून्यमयत्नलभ्यमशनं धात्रा मरुत्कल्पितं
व्यालानां पशवस्तृणाङ्कुरभुजस्तुष्टाः स्थली-
शायिनः ।
संसारार्णवलङ्घनक्षमधियां वृत्तिः कृता सा नृणां
तामन्वेषयतां प्रयान्ति सततं सर्वे समाप्तिं
गुणाः ॥६७॥

97. (If) for serpents (even) air has been provided by the Creator as food obtainable without killing or toiling ; (if) beasts are contented with feeding on grass-sprouts and lying on ground ; for men (also) with self-devotion strong to lead across the ocean of transmigratory existence some such livelihood has been created ; and those who seek this have all their *gunas* invariably brought to their final dissolution.

[When the *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, are finally reduced to the inactivity of equipoise, the Yogi reaches beyond Maya.]

गङ्गातीरे हिमगिरिशिलावद्धपद्मासनस्य
ब्रह्मध्यानाभ्यसनविधिना योगनिद्रां गतस्य ।
किं तैर्भाव्यं मम सुदिवसैर्यत्र ते निर्विशङ्काः
कण्डूयन्ते जरठहरिणाः स्वाङ्गमङ्गे मदीये ॥६८॥

98. Will those happy days come to me when on the bank of the Ganges, sitting in the lotus-posture on a piece of stone in the Himalayas, I shall fall into the *yoga-nidra* (i. e. lose all consciousness in Samadhi or perfect concentration) resulting from a

regular practice of the contemplation of Brahman, and when old antelopes having nothing to fear, will rub their limbs against my body !

[पद्मासन—lit. lotus-seat ; sitting cross-legged so that the soles of the feet protrude above along the thighs.]

पाणिः पात्रं पवित्रं भ्रमणपरिगतं भैक्षमक्षय्यमन्नं
विस्तीर्णं वस्त्रमाशादशकमचपलं तल्पमस्वल्प-
मुर्वी ।
येषां निःसङ्गताङ्गीकरणपरिगतस्वान्तसंतोषिणस्ते
धन्याः संन्यस्तदैन्यव्यतिकरनिकराः कर्म
निर्मूलयन्ति ॥६९॥

99. With the hand serving as sacred cup, with begged food that comes through wandering and never runs short, with the ten quarters as their ample garment and the earth as a fixed, spacious bed,—blessed are they who, having forsaken the manifold worldly associations which an attitude of want breeds, and self-contented with a heart fully matured through their acceptance of absolute seclusion, root out all Karma (i. e. the complex of causes and effects which grows on as action and desire in life follow each other.)

[दैन्यव्यतिकरनिकराः we prefer to take as the many forms of contact with the world which result from the poverty of an attitude of seeking after worldly objects.]

मातर्मैदिनि तात मारुत सखे तेजः सुबन्धो जल
भ्रातर्व्योम निबद्ध एव भवतामन्त्यः प्रणा-
माञ्जलिः ।
युष्मत्सङ्गवशोपजातसुकृतस्फारस्फुरन्निर्मल-
ज्ञानापास्तसमस्तमोहमहिमा लीये पर-
ब्रह्मणि ॥७०॥

100. Oh Earth, my mother ! Oh Wind, my father ! Oh Fire, my friend ! Oh Water, my good relative ! Oh Sky, my brother ! here is my last salutation to you with clasped hands ! Having cast away Ignorance with its

wonderful infatuations by means of pure knowledge resplendent with shining merits developed through my association with you all, I now merge in the Supreme Brahman.

[The terms of familiarity and endearment used of the five elements are appropriate in view of the final point of blissful parting to which the Yogin has been carried through the subtle Tattvas or essences of those five elements which characterise intermediate stages of Yogic practice.]

इति सुभाषितत्रिशत्यां वैराग्यशतकं संपूर्णम् ।

Here ends the Vairagya-Satakam or the Hundred Verses on Renunciation of the triple series of such hundred verses named 'Subhashita-Trishati.'

AN APPEAL FOR STUDY OF SANSKRIT.

[*Being the Presidential address delivered by Lieut. Colonel His Highness Shri Sewai Maharajadhiraj Sir Jey Singhji Bahadur Narendra Shiromani Deo K. C. S. I., K. C. I. E., of Alwar, on the 7th Feb. 1916 at a special meeting convened by the Hindu University Committee at Benares.*]

ॐ

त्वमादिदेवः पुरुषः पुराणस्त्वमस्य विश्वस्य परं मिधानम् ।
वेत्तासि वेद्यं च परं च धाम त्वया तत् विश्वमन्तरूपम् ॥
तस्मात्प्रणम्य प्रणिधाय कायं प्रसादये न्वा महमीश मीड्यम् ।
पितेव पुत्रस्य सखेव सख्युः प्रियः प्रियायार्हसि देव ! सोढुम् ॥

In this holy city of Kashi which has been renowned through many centuries for its high wisdom and culture is assembled to-day this distinguished gathering, consisting as it does to a large extent of the flower of our ancient learning, and whose fragrance and aroma of name and fame is spread far and wide over our land. The inherent virtues of such gentlemen have been sung in the great song celestial Bhagawat-Gita:—

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्ति रार्जव मेव च ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञान मास्तिव्यं ब्रह्म कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥

To them as the heads of our four Varnas, it is my primary duty as a Kshatriya to pay abhivadan and reverence and to ask them to invoke their blessings on the proceedings of the day. Then there are present here leaders of communities and representatives of that part of Arya Varta whose past traditions have been rich in deeds of valour and glory. They represent one-third of India which is being administered by Ruling Princes who in their own spheres are the guardians and protectors of our ancient Dharma, and who are the emblems of:—

शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दान मीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥

To such Brother-Princes as well as to the rest of the distinguished assemblage present to-day, I wish to extend my most cordial and sincere welcome.

Revered Preceptors, Your Highness and Gentlemen, the primary object for which we have gathered in this holy city, namely, to partake in the great function of the laying of the foundation stone of our Hindu University has been happily fulfilled, because at the hands of the honored representative of the Sovereign of India the sacred stone has been declared to be well and truly laid. Thus starts another chapter in our history which will bear much interest for the present generation and even greater importance for those coming in the future.

The public gathering which we all witnessed four days ago has perhaps in many ways been one of the most significant that has ever assembled in modern times in India, representing as it did so many different elements of our communities. It is not necessary for me here to deal with the inception of this scheme, because it is probably well-known to most of you, but I should like to take advantage of the present opportunity of expressing once more our gratitude to those patriots who have been responsible for working up the proposals, the results of which have borne happy fruits in so far as the commencement has been made, and we are thankful to His Excellency the Viceroy as well as Sir Harcourt Butler, the late Member for Education in the Government of India, for their sympathies

and encouragement due to which the institution has now been put on its legs. If the entire scheme is not exactly as all of us could have wished, I have no doubt there will be possibilities whereby it will grow still more in general popularity and gradually work out its high salvation. As the University grows—and we must make our best efforts to enable it to grow—into a properly organised institution, we may hope that it will not only be a nursery for creating men that will be worthy of our sacred land, but that it will also be an example for other similar institutions in the country to follow.

In connection with the commemoration of this institution four days have been set aside for lectures on different topics and at the kind invitation of the University Committee the one over which it is my good fortune to preside to-day is regarding a subject which, though much to my sorrow, did not form a part of the studies in my early days, yet is one which is very dear to my heart and which I think will play an important role in the regeneration of our land.

A language is principally the means of communicating and perpetuating the ideas of humanity and with the circumstances of the time, it passes through vicissitudes or gives place to others, examples of which we have before us in our histories. From Sanskrit, the language of our land changed into Prakrit and other dialects and thence to a great extent the official language of the country became Persian and Urdu, which have now given place to English.

The needs of the moment demand that in order to keep pace with the times and to earn a suitable living in the different avenues of life it is necessary to qualify ourselves in the language of the Rulers of the country. The first natural human tendency is to provide oneself with the means that will enable one to earn a livelihood but alongside this we must not forget that it is still more necessary for us not to lose touch with the principal language of our nationality in which are perpetuated the greatest teachings and glories of our Sanatan Dharma. We can no longer afford to neglect the study of the language which was the Deo-Vanee of our ancient Rishis and forefathers, and which, it gives me joy to say, is so well studied even at the present day by many of our religious heads and

teachers particularly in this sacred and renowned land of Kashi. The growing tendency however now-a-days is to style this Deo-Vanee as the dead language. I personally do not like to give it that name but if we must admit that it is the language of ancient days and that it is dead now, upon whom rests the duty of making it once more alive? Friends, it is upon our shoulders that this responsibility rests and on no one else. It is for us to realise the importance of its revival and if any of us have not had the opportunities of learning it ourselves, at any rate to make certain that our future generations shall not be neglected with the study thereof. The influence of modern civilisation in this hard struggle for existence has been so great and there have been so many factors surrounding us on all sides that they cannot help playing an important part in guiding our destinies. India is gradually I might almost say rapidly awakening towards the modern idea of nationhood, which to my mind appears to have its basis on political and geographical distinctions. If we are to unite our efforts towards the ultimate goal of union and good-will it must not be by submerging our individuality into a heterogenous mass but on the other hand it must be by cultivating and perfecting the individual units in order that they may form a harmonious combination. That end can only be attained by marching along the various paths that have been assigned for us by destiny in accordance with the best and highest precepts of various religions which teach discipline and cultivate character so necessary for meeting the distracting influences of existence. While progressing along with the march of time if we on our part, are to hold our own and be Aryas as Aryas were in the past and if our foundation is to continue to rest on the bed-rock which has survived through so many thousands of years without losing our nationality and originality—and if India is to wake ultimately one day to place itself on a footing of mutual esteem and respect with other nations of the world, it is through Dharma, and Dharma alone, and the proper realisation thereof, that we can expect to advance in the right direction. While the various nationalities in the world possess other virtues in varying degrees it can be observed that it is generally one quality in which they excel others. One nation is making rapid progress on

commercial lines, a second marches along the path of science, a third excels in political development; while a fourth has made militarism the principal object of its existence, and so on. But, the heart of India through all these rolling centuries, for good or for ill, has chosen the path of Dharma which is our proud heritage and by the study of which even other countries outside India have been able to realise the heights and glories of our ancient civilisation.

If we are some day to soar once again to these lofty regions and to stand in equal comparison with other nations of the world, then while we should be prepared to receive from them the best of what they can give whether it be in the direction of politics, militarism, science or commercial advancement, we must be in a position also to give of what we possess. And what is this that we are in a position to give—nay what the outside world even to-day is waiting for and of which we feel proud before the world? It is that which is embodied in the all-embracing word 'Dharma' in its highest and broadest sense, which includes some of those magnificent philosophies so keenly read even by European philosophers and in connection with which—to quote only one of them,—Schopenhaur has said that he found in the study thereof the solace of his life and that they would be the solace of his death. It is in these treasures which are our own that we find embodied the life-sustaining principles wherein there is no such thing as fear—not only of death, man or other things, but not even the fear of God himself. It is this grand philosophy with respect to the Atma that has been so well expounded in that song of Shri Krishna:—

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥

Not fear but love and love alone is the principal source through which we must deal with the outside world and by the eventual cultivation of which quality we can create an atmosphere which will throw out its radiance and lustre all around us. It is the study of these ancient treasures that will teach toleration for other people's ideas and beliefs, which will leave no room for the breeding of blind fanaticism or narrow sectarianism and which moreover embraces all true paths of different religions with the same good will, and recognises

in them only so many courses of reaching the same goal. It is this Dharma which teaches us how to overcome our selfishness and to breed in its place the grand idea of real self-hood, which sees no distinction between one another—the self-hood which is even higher than brotherhood—for while the latter teaches respect and esteem mutually, the former enjoins upon us to cultivate that love which sees no other but ourself in everything surrounding us on all sides;—that very self-hood which Madalsa preached to her son when he was yet in his cradle:—

बुद्धोसि बुद्धोसि निरञ्जनोसि संसारमाया परिवर्जितोसि ।

संसारस्वप्न त्यज मोहनिद्रां मदालसा वाक्य मुवाच पुत्रं ॥

I can but only briefly touch the merest fringe of this subject to-day, while abler tongues than mine can take you through these store-houses of our treasures and give you a feast in which you can revel not only for hours and days but through years, and perhaps for lifetimes, and to those who are in the happy position of being able to study the original subject themselves it can produce that deep intoxication of knowledge and love where there is nothing else besides existence, intelligence and bliss. My countrymen! any organised system of education can cultivate the mind, but the mind is a dangerous thing if cultivated without discipline, and it is this particular discipline embodied in Dharma that is so necessary for us in order to make ourselves useful citizens of our country. And how is that Dharma to be obtained and learnt? It can no doubt to some extent be studied through translations but translations are never the real thing and in order to obtain knowledge at first hand and in its original form, it is necessary to know our religion through the language in which it is embodied. That language is the glorious Deva-Vanee Sanskrit. If we do not make it our business to study this sacred tongue how will it be possible for us to assume that position where we shall possess the necessary qualification for being able to give of our wealth to others? Although translations may help us, if through our good fortune we obtain the right ones—and there is a great danger sometimes of obtaining wrong ones, it is not possible to obtain first-hand knowledge through them in the same manner as we can naturally do from the original scriptures; at any rate it is for us to see

that our successors hold the key which alone can unlock the door of true knowledge. The vehicle that will convey us in the best manner along the journey to our ultimate destination and which will help us on our path, will be the language which some call the dead language and which it must be our duty to make a common possession of the future.

It is not necessary for me to enlarge on the utility of studying Sanskrit, for it has been well understood and realised in olden times. It is only the modern circumstances, which tend to move us in directions which are not altogether within our control, that have resulted to some extent in a neglect of its study. Let us then make our best efforts to revive it once more and to sing its praises from one end of Arya Varta to the other as were sung in olden times by *Dandin, Patanjali and Vishwanath in the Kavya-darsha, Mahabhashya, and Sahitya Darpan* :—

संस्कृतं स्वमिणां भाषा शब्दशास्त्रेषु निश्चिता ।

भाषासु सुख्या मधुरा दिव्या गीर्वाणभारती ॥

अनादिनिधना दिव्या वागुत्सृष्टा स्वयंभवा

आदौ वेदमयी नित्या यतः सर्वाः प्रवृत्तयः ॥

पुरुषाणामनीचानां संस्कृतं स्यात्कृतात्मनाम् ।

Apart from its ancient glory the stress I lay upon the study of our sacred tongue is particularly with respect to the future. I understand that it is in this respect that our University is to be so different from those that now exist, namely, that while the others only give secular education, this institution will not only teach Sanskrit but through it also the moral and religious side of life.

Gentlemen, I do not wish to detain you much longer because many of you present here are in a far better position than myself to realise the importance of the study of this sacred language in our country and will no doubt exert your influence and use your best endeavours to help our University to attain that end. I hope that as we have given it our good wishes as well as moral and material support it will continue to receive the kind attention of our countrymen in order that its future advancement may be secured, and as the squirrel that laid its quota of dust to make a bridge in order to let the armies of Shri Rama proceed to

Lanka, I hope you will not think me presumptuous announcing to-day that as a further addition to my subscription to our University—little as the sum may have been—my State will give a chair for Sanskrit literature and philosophy at a cost of 12,000 Rs. annually for the next five years.

Gentlemen, I know you must be impatient to listen to the lectures of the three different scholars who have been requested to deliver their addresses on Sanskrit, and as I have no doubt they will enlighten us with their eloquence more ably than I can regarding the importance and esteem attached to this subject, I will detain you no longer and will call upon them by turn to give their speeches. Before doing so however, I will say one more word. This is the first public function at which it has been my good fortune to preside in British India and it will in itself explain facts if you detect any omissions on my part in what I have attempted to say, but I am nevertheless proud of the fact that on this occasion I have had the good fortune of presiding over a subject which has been the ancient glory of our ancestors in the past and which is of such momentous importance for the future of our land and its sons.


If one day, and let us hope that may be within the lives of many of us present here to-day, this University begins to bear its fruit and our cherished hopes begin to fulfil themselves, and through the sympathetic generous tutelage and guardianship of its present Rulers, India awakens and rises once more to its ancient glories, it will be a pleasant day to look back to and to be able to feel that we were able to do our little best in giving to this institution both our moral and material support. When the united efforts of all those concerned are able to create in the future sons of India,—who are steadfast in their Dharma which is at the foundation of all right-living,—loyalty, justice and advancement, then we shall have no cause to be ashamed of what little effort we have been able to make in this direction, and when the time comes for us to lay down our armour and to unbuckle our sword, we may then be able to say conscientiously to our successors, that we tried to do our duty.



THOUGHTS ON BROTHER LAWRENCE.

I.

(*By a California Disciple.*)

 DELIGHTFUL spiritual hour may be passed in the perusal of a booklet named, "The Practice of the Presence of God, the best rule of a holy life." It consists of conversations had with, and letters written by Brother Lawrence, a spiritual character too great to be lost in the passing of centuries.

In the reading, however, one must be content with nothing but a bare suggestion of the personality of this holy man, for his few words are as ripples on the surface of his deep, wonderful life. Before he became Brother Lawrence among the barefooted Carmelites at Paris, his name was Nicholas Herman. He was born in Lorraine in 1666, and passed away in the monastery of his novitiate at the age of eighty-four. He was a large, awkward, uneducated man, and before his novitiate served as footman and soldier.

Brother Lawrence was a cripple, and his condition was a source of much embarrassment to him. One of the reasons for his desiring to enter a monastery was to be made to smart for his clumsiness on this account as well as for his faults in general. Herein "God disappointed him, he having met with nothing but satisfaction in that state." His mature spiritual consciousness was attained in the common, humble works of the world, and it is fairly presumptive that the monastic life added nothing to his spiritual nature. In entering it he but followed the vogue of the time among men who felt called to the religious life.

For fifteen years he was cook in the monastery. This work was distasteful to him as well as difficult on account of his crippled condition. One imagines him amidst the clamor of oft-times strident voices, calling on him at once, responding with difficulty to each hurried command or request, not with the grim resistance of the stoic, but with the alertness and placidity of one risen above himself. "His very countenance was edifying, such a

sweet and calm devotion appearing in it as could not but affect the beholders. And it was observed that in the greatest hurry of business in the kitchen he still preserved his recollection and heavenly-mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in its season with an even, uninterrupted composure and tranquility of spirit. 'The time of business,' said he, 'does with me not differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in a great tranquility as if I were on my knees at the blessed sacrament.'"

Brother Lawrence does not dally with words, ideas or theories, but goes directly to the heart of his subject with that precision which only incarnations of heroic endeavour in the spiritual life can produce. The valor of deeds accomplished, of actions finished perfectly, is transmitted to his simple words and sentences with inspiring humility. This vital quality in his writings atones in measure for the lack of personal data. Yet, he is the spokesman of the impersonal. It is as though the experiences of the human race in its spiritual struggle in all ages are caught up in eddies of concentrated thought. And the thought? The omnipresence of God, sustaining the Universe, and the Divine personal presence in every personal life.

It takes but a little thing sometimes to turn the mind irrevocably to God. The sight of a leafless tree in midwinter was all that was necessary to awaken in Nicholas Herman a knowledge of, and a faith in God which continued with unabated fervor the rest of his life. A miracle was not enacted. He was merely equal to the occasion. He contemplated the changes which a few brief months were to work in that tree. Now barren and all but dead in appearance, it was soon to take on the investiture of life and flourish. This change could not take place except by the presence and power of God. His presence was everywhere, and His power working in all things. Life could not go on without Him, and, consequently, had no significance apart from His presence giving it significance.

How one longs here for the annals of the formative period of his spiritual life! One pic-

tures him, untutored though he was, and while working as footman or serving as soldier, settling many an ethical, moral and spiritual question in the silence of his own mind, unaided by the example of spiritual associates. Not by laborious reasonings, perhaps, was he prepared for the great step he was to make, for subtleties of thought did not characterize his mental processes at any time during his professed spiritual life. It seems more than likely that wisdom came to him in intuitive flashes while on the march or while performing humble service. Out of years of luminous silence he came to that simple, leafless tree, and his fate was then and there determined. His stored-up spiritual experiences were called to the surface, and he stepped forth in the full bloom of spiritual vigor, deep in love for God, and impregnable in faith.

The depth of his experience carried him beyond the treacherous shoals of reaction, for to be left high and dry by receding enthusiasm does not appear to have taken place with him. His consecration was so absolute that "it perfectly set him loose from the world, and kindled within him such a love for God that he could not tell whether it had increased during the more than forty years he had lived since."

It is true, he lets us know, that he did at times suffer from that feeling of helplessness which comes from prayers seemingly unanswered, and from love apparently unrequited. But this did not depress him, for he considered such experiences as evidence of God's presence indicating to him that the human in him still lived and thrived, and longed for sensual happiness. During such times he was conscious of a depth within himself which always remained untouched by this dryness, and which was fresh and joyous whatever the condition of his surface mind might be. Periods of "dryness, irksomeness and insensibility in prayer," which come to all, he considered as occasions to renew his consecration to God; for at such times, he claimed, God tests His devotee, and urges him to meet the test. He advised that special practice at such times would very decidedly advance one in the spiritual life.

With holy transparency of mind the abstrusely theoretical and psychological departures in reli-

gious discipline were brushed aside by this Christian saint as worthless. The master-theme of his life, to which special practices and austerities were merely incidental and temporary, was *to know* God as actually present in every act, however trivial, throughout his life. Said he, "I cannot imagine how religious persons can live satisfied without the practice of the *presence* of God. I keep myself retired with Him in the fund or centre of my soul as much as I can; and while I am so with Him I fear nothing, but the least turning from Him is insupportable.

"This exercise does not much fatigue the body; it is, however, proper to deprive it sometimes, nay often, of many little pleasures which are innocent and lawful, for God will not permit that a soul which desires to be devoted entire to Him should take other pleasures than with Him: that is more than reasonable.

"I do not say that therefore we must put any violent constraint upon ourselves. No, we must serve God in a holy freedom; we must do our business faithfully; without trouble or disquiet, recalling our mind to God mildly, and with tranquility, as often as we find it wandering from Him.

"It is, however, necessary to put our whole trust in God, laying aside all other cares, and even some particular forms of devotion, though very good in themselves, yet such as one often engages in unreasonably, because these devotions are only means to attain to the end. So when by this exercise of *the presence* of God, we are *with Him* who is our end, it is then useless to return to the means; but we may continue with Him our commerce of love, persevering in His holy presence, one while by an act of praise, of adoration or of desire; one while by an act of resignation or thanksgiving; and in all ways which our spirit can invent."

It is thus plain that his idea of austerities was nothing more than a heroic determination not to let anything stand in his way to realise God's presence. He saw clearly that spiritual progress was not a matter of human effort, but, rather, of God's presence displacing the human. For, "they who have the gale of the Holy Spirit go forward even in sleep."

His attitude toward all was friendly and personal,

though manifestly, he spoke from that mystical point, deep, deep within his consciousness, where the human had lost its littleness in union with God.

He addresses himself to workers, laborers, fighters in the spiritual life, to men who have plunged into the fray with the unalterable determination never to look back. If in reading this work one feels the shock of self-reproach, he will find his compensation in renewed enthusiasm.

His message is universal, direct and unmistakable,—the total surrender of the personal human life to God, Who is always present whether we see Him or not, and Who is ever ready to accept that surrender, and to bestow in return the consciousness of eternal life. He taught no particular rites or forms of devotion, but insisted that we accept every incident of our lives as an opportunity to direct the mind toward God.

The little brochure of sixty-three pages, referred to, sets forth the whole of practical religion, not only with masterly simplicity, but with the happiest humility. Brother Lawrence is so supremely genuine, and so entirely happy in his loving companionship with the Lord that spiritual thoughts, commonly considered austere and remote, are given the guise of attractive familiarity. He makes it clear that the "narrow way" of one-pointedness of mind toward God is really the broad, happy way, leading into the fullness, the maturity of life.

ON THE CONNING TOWER.

Prof. Benoy Kumar Sirkar, already a widely reputed writer on comparative history and comparative culture, recently made a tour round the world—that is to say, through those parts of it which the present war has yet left free of access. And what imparts singular importance and interest to this tour is the series of literary contributions, made by the professor as its outcome, on the evolution of culture in modern countries, its present state and the development of its institutions. But these contributions are mostly in the vernacular of Bengal, as also their compilation in book-form, which un-

fortunately we have not yet come across. Still we would accept to-day one important topic from the valuable observations and reflections of the tourist professor, because the particular interest of this topic evidently entitles it to a wider sphere of discussion than any provincial vernacular can possibly reach.

Prof. Sirkar concludes an article, "*The Contact of India with America*," in the *Prabasi* of the first month of the Bengali year, with the following reflection: "From the present state of Indian thought it seems that the pragmatic philosophy of the Western world is fitted to the needs of the Indian. Young India is living his life in conformity to this philosophy. Therefore, the Indian need not pay much attention to the Life's Basis of the German Eucken, or the Creative Evolution of the French Bergson, or the Platonism of the Oxford professors and so forth. In the present epoch the mode of thinking brought into vogue by the philosopher James of Harvard would be acceptable for the Indian. Now is necessary in India the doctrine of actual results, of empiricism, of pluralism, of variety, of personality. The three volumes of James,—*Pragmatism*, *The Pluralistic Universe* and *Varieties of Religious Experience*,—should be translated into the provincial languages of India. Young India has now become pragmatic, pluralist and varied. In the speculation of James can be found philosophical conclusions and arguments congenial to the life they are living."

The professor himself is a fair representative of young India bred up in the culture of the West, and he has keenly caught up a very triumphant note in the latest developments of Western philosophy. But when the Indian mind plunges into a study of Western thought with a view to absorb from it what is good and helpful, it should not, however, lose its own intrinsic bearings as the product of its own national culture. It is only when we have our foothold firmly planted on our national view and scheme of life, that we may be granted strong enough to reach out our hands for what the West has to offer us. So we must know first how Prof. Sirkar defines our national standpoint in life and thought, before we can hope

to understand why precisely he makes such an enthusiastic bid for Western pragmatism. And in the article in question we find him thus indicating this national standpoint: "The Western conquerors of the nineteenth century gave out abroad the following with regard to Indian society and thought-life: 'The Indians are without any practical worth, full of sentimentality, devoid of common sense, governed by the hereafter, indifferent to actual life and prone to despair.' And yet from the epoch of the Maurya Chandragupta to the Mahratta hero Vaji Rao, the people of India were never backward in arts, industries, warfare, fortification, marine trade, state administration, or conquest of enemy. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, travellers of various races—Portuguese, French, Italian, English—came over to India. They had enough admiration for the city government, popular prosperity and health, communications etc. in India. In the eyes of the English Clive the Murshidabad of those days was more advanced than London. In the eyes of a French captain, the sea-going ships of India were considered more capable and stout than French and British ships. And still it is this very race which has preached the inferiority of worldly life by producing its Vedanta, Upanishad, Gita, Bhakti and Yoga scriptures. The truth of the matter is that the Hindus directed their insight equally in both directions,—in their culture we find the utmost experience with regard to realistic life and at the same time the nicest analysis of the world beyond sense."

Very true indeed; but how was it possible for the Hindus to combine such wonderful insight into supersensuous truths with such wonderful command over the realities and resources of worldly life? What was it that made the ancient Hindus such experts both in the things of the world and in the things of the spirit? What was that comprehensive philosophy—that organic scheme—of life which gave the Hindus such mastery both over the secular and the spiritual spheres of experience? Prof. Sirkar has not gone into this fundamental question. He mentions the bare fact of the Hindu's culture being rich both in lessons of secular experience and in truths of spiritual insight. But unless first he *explains* this fact,

thereby making clear what he thinks to have been in our history the philosophical standpoint in our life and thought, he cannot justify either his condemnation of Mayavada and Vedanta or his paean of praise for Prof. James's pragmatism. It would be a great misfortune if young India allows himself to be so superficial in his interpretation and study of our ancient achievements and modern needs.

A superficial understanding of Vedanta and its Mayavada naturally results in an attitude of protest against them as being opposed in spirit to the material progress of one's society and country. It is this attitude which underlies the enthusiastic bid which the tourist professor has made for the pragmatic philosophy of Prof. James. Otherwise Vedanta is the highest pragmatism in the real sense of the term. The Western pragmatism is pledged not to accept anything as true unless it is verified in practical experience. In Vedanta also the True, the Real, is not what has been reasoned out (as in Western rationalistic philosophisings) but what has been actually *experienced*. The pragmatic method requires us to judge every proposed theory by ascertaining what difference it makes in our practical experience. Vedanta also applies this test of experience in assigning value and place in its comprehensive system of thought to every sincere theory or faith, and this is how it maintains its synthetic and cosmopolitan character. The essential feature of Western pragmatism is its peculiar theory of truth which declares that truth is not something existing abstracted from and independent of actual human experience, but it is the very fact of its proposition actually continuing to be verified through experience. Truth, according to pragmatism, is not an object of mere intellectual comprehension but a fact of empiric realisation. It is not an excogitated product but a realisation in experience. And does not Vedanta hold the same view about truth? Is its Absolute the philosophised-out Absolute of the West? Is it not rather a Realisation in human experience?

The vital defect in the pragmatism of Prof. James is its unwarrantedly limited view of human

* Vide the article "Swami Vivekananda and Modern Thought" in the Feb.—March P. B.

experience. This limitation operating as a false assumption at the very foundation vitiates the whole fabric of his thought. Why should he take only the experience of the common run of men to build his philosophy on? Why does he fly from the authority of the higher spiritual experiences of man? While admitting that these higher experiences "break down the authority of the non-mystical or rationalistic consciousness, based upon the understanding and the senses alone," "show the latter to be only one kind of consciousness," what makes him, we ask, place the authority of common experiences above the authority of the mystic experiences? Did he not sadly fail to reconcile these two authorities, which Vedanta fully reconciles by its Mayavada? While the pragmatism of Vedanta accepts human experience in all its richness, allotting their proper value and place to all superconscious and conscious states, the pragmatism of Prof. James weighs superconscious states in the balance of conscious states and thereby misreads and expunges most of them, leaving human experience, the foundation of his philosophy, all the more irretrievably impoverished. And in same breath, he admits that "the existence of mystical states absolutely overthrows the pretension of non-mystical states to be the sole and ultimate dictators of what we may believe."

In the West, this scant courtesy shown to what has been dubbed "mystical" is not much provocative of criticism. Mysticism is not properly a client or protégé either of the rationalists or of the empiricists who practically divide the philosophical camp between themselves. The term mysticism is still savoury of reproach, in spite of so much solemn talk about it in recent times. But why should a representative of young India fall in love with Prof. James's pragmatism that plays fast and loose with the truth of superconscious experiences on which the whole *pragmatic* evolution of our national culture was based? Why should he fall foul of a Mayavada which never denied to common consciousness the reality of its experiences, but simply makes the superconscious truth authoritative over it? It is this adjustment of authority in which Vedantic pragmatism really differs from Western pragmatism. So long as this

Vedantic adjustment of authority as between the two orders of human experience is maintained, the fact of young India becoming pragmatic, pluralistic and varied in his activities would be tantamount to making our own Vedanta practical in the same sense in which it was practical in the days of our ancient glory, but if, otherwise, the wholesale pragmatism of Prof. James be imported into our country, we would be digging the grave of our national life and culture.†

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

THE Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares, completed its fifteenth year on the 31st December last. The Annual Report will be published shortly. The number of indoor and outdoor patients has again gone ahead in comparison with the past. The Home has been able to erect five more wards for infectious diseases on the newly acquired land through the kind help of several generous donors and these wards will be opened as soon as arrangement for drainage can be made. The building fund of the Home has been completely exhausted by the erection of boundary wall of the new land and several outhouses which are necessary in connection with the aforesaid wards. We hope, friends of the suffering humanity for whom the Home stands begging at their door will come forward without delay with their kind contributions to enable the Managing Committee to complete the drainage work and open their gate to sick Narayans.

DURING the month of March 1916, the Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama at Vrindaban had in its indoor department 14 cases from the previous month and 22 newly admitted cases; out of these 36 patients, 20 were discharged cured, 2 died and 14 are still under treatment. There were 2780

† The reflections of Prof. Sirkar on the Vedantic Mission in America, as also the valuable suggestions of Sriji Lajpat Rai on the same subject which have appeared in the "Modern Review," will be dealt with in a separate article next month.

outdoor patients in the month, of which 572 were new cases, and 2208 repeated entries. The expenses during the month for the Sevashrama were Rs. 345-6-3, and for the new building Rs. 43-10, and the collections during the month from subscription, donation etc. amounted to Rs 171-4-0. For contributions to the Building Fund, appeal is still being made to the generous public, and we hope by their kind support, the funds will continue to increase, bringing within immediate prospect the establishment of a permanent habitation for this useful charitable institution.

THE 16th anniversary of the Entally Ramakrishna Archanalaya was successfully celebrated by the members on Sunday, the 23rd April. The day was spent in singing hymns, the distribution of Prasada to Bhaktas and the feeding of the poor. The portraits of Sri Ramakrishna and of his favourite disciple Debendranath (the founder of the Entally Ramakrishna Archanalaya) were decorated with flowers. From Belur math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission, came many Swamis, headed by Swami Brahmananda, the President of the Mission, and most of the Brahmacharis. Religious discourses were held and Swami Sharvananda delivered a short speech. Many Bhaktas attended and the poor were sumptuously fed. This institution is doing much good among the people of Entally and neighbourhood by distributing rice every month to the deserving poor and helping the sick and the infirm. As this institution has no building of its own, the members are raising a fund among themselves, but this will hardly suffice and any assistance that the public may be disposed to give in this connection will be gratefully acknowledged by the Secretary, Archanalaya, at 20, Deb Lane, Entally, Calcutta.—*A. B. Patrika.*

WE have received for review the Sixth Annual Report of the Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah, Madras Presidency. The institution was first started in memory of the Great Master as a free reading room, but as its scope of activities widened the present name was unanimously adopted. Besides providing a public reading-room where attendance is steadily growing, the Samaj holds daily meetings where readings and Bhajanas are

conducted and keeps a Free Night School having on its rolls pupils averaging 19 boys and 4 girls. The Samaj is fortunate in enlisting the sympathies of both Hindu and Mahomedan gentlemen of the locality. Of the six Mahomedan members on its rolls, the Khan Bahadur H. S. A. M. Manju Meen Saheb, an Honorary Magistrate of the locality, has become a Life Member. He gave about 200 books to the library of the Samaj which was started with the nucleus of a magnificent gift of books made by Brahmasri V. Venkateswara Sastri Garu. The total number of books in the Library is now 1067 and the total issues in the register during the year is 480. The yearly income of the Samaj last year was Rs. 234-14-4. Donations are being collected with some success for giving the Samaj a permanent habitation and a site chosen for the proposed building has been sanctioned by the authorities. The Report makes proud mention of two distinguished visitors during the year: (1) His Holiness the Jagatguru Sri Sankaracharya of Sivaganga Mutt and (2) Mrs. Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society.

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