

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katka Uya. I. m. 4

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

—Swami Vivekananda.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA,

RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE)

XXI.

[Place—Calcutta. Year—1898.

Subjects · *Swamiji visits the Zoological Gardens at Alipur with Sister Nivedita and others.—Conversations during the visit and pleasantries.—Taking tea with Rai Rambrahma Sanyal Bahadur, the Superintendent of the Gardens, and conversation on the evolution theory.—The conclusion of Western scholars on the causes of evolution are not the last words on the subject.—What the sage Patanjali says on the point.—After returning to Baghbazur Swamiji reverts to the topic of evolution.—Though the causes which according to Western scholars underlie evolution may hold good in the animal kingdom, self-control and sacrifice alone are the causes of the highest developments in man.—Why Swamiji advocates first of all the strengthening of the physique for all*

Swamiji has been staying at Baghbazur in the late Balaram Bose's house, for the last three days. Crowds of visitors see him everyday. Swami Yogananda also is staying with Swamiji. To-day Swamiji will go to visit the Zoological Gardens at Alipur, taking Sister Nivedita with him. When the disciple presented himself, Swamiji told him and the Swami Yogananda, "You go ahead,—I shall go presently in a coach with Sister Nivedita."

Swami Yogananda started with the disciple at about half past two by tram. Then the tramcars used to be dragged by horse

At about 4 p. m. they reached the Zoo Gardens and saw Rai Rambrahma Sanyal Bahadur, the then Superintendent of the Gardens. The latter was delighted to hear that Swamiji was coming, and waited at the gate to receive him. At about half past four Swamiji arrived there in company of Sister Nivedita. Rambrahma Babu cordially received them, conducted them into the Garden and accompanied them for about an hour and a half, showing them the different sites. Swami Yogananda and the disciple followed the party. Rambrahma Babu was an expert

Botanist, and he pointed out, as the party advanced, various trees in the Garden, incidentally remarking how a particular plant had developed in course of time, according to Botanists. Swamiji, too, as he went on seeing the various species of animals, casually referred to the Darwinian theory of the gradual evolution of animals. The disciple remembers how, entering the room for snakes, he pointed to a huge python with circular rings on its body, with the remark, "From this the tortoise has evolved in course of time. That very snake, by remaining stationary at one spot for a long time, has gradually turned hard-backed," saying this he said in fun to the disciple, "You eat tortoises, don't you? Darwin holds that it is this snake that has evolved into the tortoise in the process of time;—then you eat snakes too!" The disciple turned his head away in disgust and said,—

"Sir, when a thing is metamorphosed into another thing through evolution, it has no more its former shape and habits; then how can you say that eating tortoises means eating snakes?"

At these words of the disciple both Swamiji and Rambrahma Babu burst out laughing, and on their being explained to Sister Nivedita, she too joined in the laughter. In a little while the party advanced towards the cell where lions and tigers were kept.

At Rambrahma Babu's bidding, the guards brought a lot of meat for the lions and tigers and began to feed them in our presence. We enjoyed their gleeful growls, as they fell to their hearty repast, and shortly after repaired to Rambrahma Babu's quarters in the garden. Tea and refreshments were ready there. Swamiji took a little tea, and Sister Nivedita also took tea. Finding that the disciple hesitated to sit

at the same table and partake of the sweets and tea which Sister Nivedita had touched, Swamiji repeatedly urged him to take them, which he was induced to do, and drinking water himself, gave the rest of it to the disciple to drink. After this there was a short conversation on Darwin's evolution theory.

Rambrahma Babu.— What is your opinion on the evolution theory of Darwin and the causes he has put forward for it?

Swamiji.— Taking for granted that Darwin is right, I cannot yet admit that it is the final conclusion about the causes of evolution.

Rambrahma Babu.— Did the ancient scholars of our country discuss this subject?

Swamiji.— The subject has been nicely discussed in the Sankhya Philosophy. I am of opinion that the conclusion of the ancient Indian philosophers is the last word on the causes of evolution.

Rambrahma Babu.— I shall be glad to hear of it, if it can be explained in a few words.

Swamiji.— You are certainly aware of the laws of struggle for existence, survival of the fittest, natural selection and so forth, which have been held by the Western scholars to be the causes of elevating a lower species to a higher. But none of these has been advocated as the cause of that in the system of Patanjali. Patanjali holds that the transformation of one species into another is effected by the "in-filling of nature" (प्रकृत्यापूरणम्). It is not that this is done by the constant struggle against obstacles. In my opinion, struggle and competition sometimes stand in the way of a being attaining its perfection. If the evolution of an animal is achieved by the destruction of a thousand others, then one must confess that this evolution is doing very little good to the world. Taking for

granted that it conduces to physical well being, we cannot help admitting that it is a serious obstacle to spiritual development. According to the philosophers of our country, every being is a perfect Soul, and the diversity of evolution and manifestation of Nature is simply due to the difference in the degree of manifestation of this Soul. The moment the obstacles to the evolution and manifestation of Nature are completely removed, the Soul manifests Itself perfectly. Whatever may happen in the lower strata of Nature's evolutions, in the higher strata at any rate it is not true that it is only by constantly struggling against obstacles that one has to go beyond them. Rather it is observed that there the obstacles give way and a greater manifestation of the Soul takes place through education and culture, through concentration and meditation, and above all through sacrifice. Therefore, to designate the obstacles not as the effects but as the causes of the Soul-manifestation, and describe them as aiding this wonderful diversity of Nature, is not consonant with reason. The attempt to remove evil from the world by killing a thousand evil-doers, only adds to the evil in the world. But if the people can be made to desist from evil-doing by means of spiritual instruction, there is no more evil in the world. Now see, how horrible the Western struggle theory becomes !

Rambrahma Babu was stupefied to hear Swamiji's words and at length said, "India badly needs at the present moment men well-versed in the Eastern and Western philosophies like you. Such men alone are able to point out the mistakes of the educated people who see only one side of the shield. I am extremely delighted to hear your original explanation of the evolution theory "

When the time for leave-taking came, Rambrahma Babu came as far as the gate of the Gardens to see Swamiji off, and promised to see him one day in private whenever opportunity would permit. We cannot say whether Rambrahma Babu ever had the opportunity to come to Swamiji, for he breathed his last shortly after the above incident.

The disciple returned with the Swami Yogananda to Baghbazar, by tram, at 8 P. M. Swamiji had arrived about a quarter of an hour before that and was taking rest. After about half an hour's rest he came to us in the drawing room, where there were the Swami Yogananda, the late Sarat Chandra Sarkar, Dr. Sasi Bhushan Ghosh, S. Santiram Ghosh, some other friends, and about half a dozen new-comers who had come to interview Swamiji. They had learnt that Swamiji had given a wonderful explanation of the evolution theory to-day before Rambrahma Babu, during his visit to the Zoological Gardens, and all were eager to hear of it in detail. Therefore, when Swamiji came to the room, the disciple, as the spokesman of the meeting, raised that very topic.

Disciple.—Sir, I have not been able to follow you quite in your remarks about the evolution theory at the Zoo Gardens. Will you kindly recapitulate them in simple words ?

Swamiji.— Why, which points did you fail to grasp ?

Disciple.— You have often told us that it is the power to struggle with the external forces which constitutes the sign of life, and the first step towards improvement. To-day you seem to have spoken just the opposite thing.

Swamiji.— Why should I speak differently ? It was you who could not follow

me. In the animal kingdom we really see such laws as struggle for existence, survival of the fittest etc. clearly at work. Therefore Darwin's theory seems true to a certain extent. But in the human kingdom, where there is the manifestation of rationality, we find just the reverse of those laws. For instance, in those whom we consider really great men or ideal characters, we scarcely observe any external struggle. In the animal kingdom instinct prevails; but the more a man advances, the more he manifests rationality. For this reason, progress in the rational human kingdom cannot be achieved, like that in the animal kingdom, by the destruction of others! The highest evolution of man is effected through sacrifice alone. A man is great among his fellows in proportion as he can sacrifice for the sake of others. While in the lower strata of the animal kingdom, that animal is the strongest which can kill the greatest number of animals. Hence the struggle theory is not equally applicable to both kingdoms. Man's struggle is in the mental sphere. A man is greater in proportion as he can control his mind. When the mind's activities are perfectly at rest, the Atman manifests Itself. The struggle which we observe in the animal kingdom for the preservation of the gross body, obtains in the human plane of existence for gaining mastery over the mind or for attaining the state of balance. Like a living tree and its reflection in the water of a tank, we find opposite kinds of struggle in the animal and human kingdoms!

Disciple.— Why then do you advocate so much the improvement of our physique?

Swamiji.— Well, do you consider yourselves as men? You have got only a bit of rationality,—that is all. How will you struggle with the mind unless the physique be strong? Do you deserve to

be called men any longer,—the highest evolution in the world? What have you got besides eating, sleeping and satisfying the creature-comforts? Thank your stars that you have not developed into quadrupeds yet! Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "He is the man who is conscious of his dignity." You are but standing witnesses to the lowest class of insect-like existence of which the scripture speaks that they simply undergo the round of births and deaths, without being allowed to go to any of the higher spheres! You are simply living a life of jealousy among yourselves and are objects of hatred in the eyes of the foreigner! You are animals, therefore I recommend you to struggle. Leave aside theories and all that. Just reflect calmly on your own every-day acts and dealings, and find out whether you are not a species of beings intermediate between the animal and human planes of existence! First build up your physique. Then only you can get control over the mind—*नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः*—This Self is not to be attained by the weak.

Disciple.— Bnt, Sir, the commentator (Sankara) has interpreted the word 'weak' to mean 'devoid of Brahmacharya or continence.'

Swamiji.— Let him. I say—'The physically weak are unfit for the realisation of the Self.'

Disciple.— But many dull-headed persons also have strong bodies?

Swamiji.— If you can take the pains to give them good ideas once, they will be able to work them out sooner than physically unfit people. Don't you find, in a weak physique it is difficult to control the sex-appetite or anger? Lean people are quickly incensed and are quickly overcome by the sex-instinct?

Disciple.— But we find exceptions to the rule also.

Swamiji.— Who denies it? Once a person gets control over the mind, it matters little whether the body remains strong or becomes emaciated. The gist of the thing is that unless one has a good physique one can never aspire to Self-realisation. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "One fails to attain Realisation if there be but a slight defect in the body."

Finding that Swamiji had grown excited as he uttered these words, the disciple did not dare to push on the topic further, but remained quiet accepting Swamiji's view. Shortly after, Swamiji addressing those present, said, "By the bye, have you heard that this 'priest' has to-day taken food which was touched by Nivedita? That he took the sweets touched by her did not matter so much, but"—here he addressed the disciple—"how did you drink the water she had touched?"

Disciple.— But it was you, Sir, who ordered me to do so. Under the Guru's orders I can do anything. I was unwilling

to drink the water, though. But you drank it and I had to take it as Prasada.

Swamiji.— Well, your caste is gone for ever. Now nobody will respect you as a Brahmin of the priest class.

Disciple.— I don't care if they do not. I can take the rice from the house of a pariah if you order me to.

These words set Swamiji and all those present in a roar of laughter.

The conversation lasted till it was past midnight. The disciple, on returning to his lodging that night, found that the door had been bolted. His repeated shouts failed to rouse anybody, and he had no other alternative but to pass the night on the platform in front of the house.

The wheel of Time has rolled on in its unrelenting course, and Swamiji, the Swami Yogananda and Sister Nivedita are now no more on earth. Only the sacred memory of their lives remains,—and the disciple considers himself blessed to be able to record, in ever so meagre a way, these reminiscences.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

THE birthday anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda was celebrated on the 23rd January, 1919 and many a heart in distant parts of India was lifted up in memory of the Great Ideal that was born and gave an impetus to our life and activities. It is an occasion for the searching of hearts and to question ourselves how far we have nobly striven and achieved towards the realisation of the message and work which he has left to posterity as sacred trust. Knowing the great love and solicitude he himself cherished for the

cause which he laboured to serve his whole life, everyone who feels bound by love and admiration for him, must feel himself interested in the cause which he represented. We must dismiss from our minds the idea that our love and regards for him end only with giving personal credit to the man, but must practicalise into sincere identification with the objects and interests which he sought to advance. The ring of hope and confiding trust with which he exclaims, "I am firmly convinced that if I die to-morrow, there will be thousands

coming up from the ranks of the youth of my country, who will carry the work further than ever my most hopeful imagination ever painted," is one which compels the interest of all who have come under the shadow of his personality.

His own life has been the epitome of the renascent Indian ideal. His own life indicates the channel in which the course of Indian life should flow. We find in his life the heirship to all the struggles which are incidental to Indian life in this period of transition. Himself of a meditative and scholarly nature, losing himself in long spells of silent thought and abstractedness, a beneficent Fate impelled him forward from the old orthodox modes of religious perfection and brought him face to face with the realities of modern conditions with their whirl of constant external activity. All through, his life was a constant effort to express the same concentrated will, which imperceptibly took him into the deepest meditation, into channels of outward manifestation and activity. And in the teachings of his Master, he caught the rhythm of the ringing message as the interpretation of the Sanátana Dharma according to the needs of the age. It is related that the master was one day dilating on a certain teaching of the Vaishnava sect and remarked: 'They teach three things as essentials for the Sádha (religious aspirant)—glorifying and loving the name of the Lord, serving the Vaishnavas and compassion to all creatures. Linger on the injunction 'compassion to all creatures, he was repelled by the thought, "What, compassion! Who are you, an insignificant being, to feel compassion for the Lord's creatures? Not compassion, but service and love of all beings as the Lord Himself manifest" The

attitude of compassion was to the master too exalted and self-important to adopt, and according to him a truer statement of the truth was *love and service of all beings*. The Swami Vivekananda hearing these words of the Master afterwards spoke to others in an aside, "The Master has thrown a flood of light on Vedantic thought by his last statement. The stern, dry and transcendental teachings of the Vedanta can be made human and sweet and brought into line with our temporal interests. So long it has been the idea that to realise the truths of the Vedanta, one has to renounce all human interests, to kill out all human faculties, to make one's life a barren waste. One thought that one's spiritual interests were antagonised by his material; so one considered the world and worldly relations as obstacles in his path and harboured feelings of hatred against them. But in the light of this teaching, one need not run the risk of rousing ill-feeling or suppressing one's human faculties. The Vedanta can be brought from forest-seclusions and worked out in the ordinary life of man and with the help of its light the most ordinary duties and works of life can be performed to the highest advantage. If he remembers that every being, every work, the whole world is the Lord manifest, then with this remembrance he may live anywhere and do the most humble works of life,—his life and work will be deified. By this loving service of all in the universe, his mind will be purified and he will feel himself united with the Universal Self and realise his own Blissful Nature. '*

This teaching has a very apt application to the requirements of the age and

* *Liláprasanga* in Bengali, by the Swami Saradananda.

times we live in. The teachings of the Vedanta have thus been universalised and broadened by the Swami in his message. Not suppression, but higher direction, not particularism in outlook and interests, but broad universalism, is the keynote of the music which runs through the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. For the Vedanta preaches Oneness everywhere,—One Life, without any distinction of secular and spiritual. Religion, which had so long been confined to churches, must come and live in every act of man. The spiritual and temporal interests of man need not antagonise, but will be synthesised by this comprehensive outlook.

The life of the Swami was built on this pattern. Much as he appeared as the ideal monk, indifferent to the outer world and absorbed in transcendental interests, moving with perfect unattachment for the things of the world, how often he donned the garment of the ideal householder, with yearning to defend, protect and save,—and threw a world of energy in secular endeavours! He always tried to be up-

to-date and keep himself abreast of the times, and exhorted others to do the same. The attitude of mental isolation from interests and endeavours, he deprecated, and the intensification of this attitude has contributed not a little to our misfortunes.

Humanity in its march pursues more and more comprehensive ideals and the Divine Mother brings about different types of human perfection in different ages. The Time-spirit works and weaves different garments for the soul of man. The Time-spirit is calling us to come out of our narrow grooves and broaden out and universalise. In the words of the Swami, "The history of the past has gone to develop the inner life of India and the activity (outer life) of the West. Hitherto these have been divergent; the time has come for them to unite." If we do not combine our inner life with outer activity and if the others also do not temper activity with a pronounced development of the inner life, we work against the Divine will and both will lose their very right to exist.

TWO SIDES OF TRUTH.

WISDOM lies, assuredly, not so much in the pursuit of philosophical disputation, as in putting the utterances of philosophy to personal use. There is a fascination in the dissection and analysis of various forms of religious thought and expression, but one may be permitted to wonder whether intellectual gymnastics of that kind are well calculated to create and maintain a really spiritual attitude.

Controversy helps men little on the Way. It may to some extent clear the air

It may serve to disclose sign-posts on the road. It may indeed, in certain cases, assist the heaven-ward traveller by emphasising routes and directions. On the other hand, the majority of enquirers are apt to find themselves misled among the multitude of talkers and debaters.

Such admirable "Occasional Notes" as those with which the Prabuddha Bharata favoured its readers in September last, are simply invaluable. The writer of those notes brought us to the bed-rock of

a sane and practical religious policy.

Throughout the sayings of Swami Vivekananda one enduring purpose made itself felt by its predominance, and that purpose was the enforcement of the truth that work was essential. He consistently and strenuously advocated activity of mind and of body.

He, the great master of inspiration, drew forcible attention to the fact that the ascetic who, by rigorous abstinence and mortification strives to realise salvation, may cherish a subtle form of selfishness, rendering him incapable of helping others onward. He becomes so completely absorbed in the practice of the ritual of his choice, that the main motive of his absorption may be forgotten or ignored. In his high endeavour to achieve one-ness with the One, he grows more and more entangled in the meshes of the mere endeavour. The light that, in the beginning, he sought to follow, is merged in darkness brought about by a distorted vision. He is apt to forget, too, as the "Notes" pointed out, that "As in meditation the whole *mind* is concentrated, so in work the whole *man* is concentrated, and the concentrated force expresses itself not only through the mind but his very hands and feet and all the faculties of mind and heart." For—and this is of immense value,—“we should turn from no work however humble, and every detail would receive infinite significance and meaning by its connection with the *shakti* behind.”

The history of Indian religious evolution proves demonstrably that a vast number of devotees have indeed lost themselves through the very fervour of their devotion, or, at best, have spent toilsome years with but little avail.

So, in the West. work for work's sake.

has paralysed the soul's desire for contemplation, meditation and the serener phase of the religious life. Material objects have engrossed most faculties. The paramount design of the majority, whatever spiritual position may have cloaked them, is success in money-making or arrival at some distinguished stage in one or other of the professions or the arts. Yet underneath the cloak, underneath the struggle for wealth or fame or title or degree, the soul has been animated by a great ideal; in a word, "the *shakti* remained behind." This ideal, by no means always consciously recognised, has, on the whole,—let us instance Great Britain and America as examples,—determined its possessors towards the institution and application of justice and righteousness. England glories in having been, and in being, the home of the disinherited. Her shores have welcomed, and still welcome, outcasts of other lands who have claimed refuge from religious or political persecution. Thus her inhabitants to-day comprise men and women of various races and tongues almost inextricably intermingled. In this one sees reaped no small advantage, since each in-coming people has brought new knowledge of commercial and of cultural beneficence. Even her language bears evidence of borrowed words which enrich the original.

“To err is human;” therefore, now and again, justice and righteousness have fallen short of their aim, but, speaking broadly, the world acknowledges that England and America aspire to the development of good, and may claim to have realised their aspiration to a notable degree. Perfection cannot be utterly reached, but the universe is brighter and better for every impulse which has perfection for its standard.

India has, as we have noted, throughout



vicissitudes and conquests, stood unflinchingly on a spiritual position of magnificent meaning, she has never yielded to the siren-song of material majesty, she has, instead, preferred to continue her heart-grip of the cord which links the human with the divine. Consequently perhaps, advance in things that make for earthly eminence has not loomed large in her more modern history. Natural resources are hers at command. She possesses remarkable intellectual power and possibility, she has artistic faculties, and certain admirable forms of handicraft are her heritage. Eloquence and poetry are the attributes of her people.

Notwithstanding all these elements of racial evolution, her content in the cultivation of inward "realisation" has contributed not a little to her quiescence in the world's market and the world's university.

Again, while the Hindu proclaims his preference for an open statement of his religious and philosophical standpoint, the average Briton has a habit, not wholly wise, of hiding whatever of religion or philosophy he cherishes. Britons seldom speak loudly of what they adore. They deem it "bad form" to discuss things of deep interest in the market-place or in any very public way. A Hindu might pass hours and days in the dissection of intricacies relative to the attributes of the Gods. An Englishman says little, if at all; but, even if his head remains erect, his heart bows at the mention of the holy name.

Climate, without doubt, contributes to this condition. Where the sun shines day after day in the fulness of his glory and nature smiles lovingly and caressingly on her children, they can lie leisurely in the shade and express themselves one

to another. Under greyer skies, under the cooling power of keen wind, rain, or other adverse circumstances, physical movement is necessary. Only "the divine urge" within could enable men among British surroundings, to persist in and hold fast to the faith that preserves them from loss of spiritual life. Or may we presume that climatic difficulties compel them towards less loud-voiced but abiding effort towards God-hood?

East and West, if each could recognise the truth in each, has its own definite part to play in the redemption of the world. "It the One and the many are the same reality, every movement, every manifestation, is a worship. . . . If work is worship, it will arouse the best of our faculties, it will be one continuous meditation." Meditation, concentration,—these are work, but, by actual "work," work for the world, work for others, work above all for those in poverty, ignorance and suffering, "deeper levels of being and concentration will be brought out."

We owe, for these thoughts of ours, a great debt to the author of "Occasional Notes." We find him, to our joy and rejoicing, in complete accord with a Western writer of to-day (John Coedler):—"There is a unity in this variety, for all these units are centred on one point; each grows by the laws which rule the universal growth; each draws its life from out one sacred heart."

To sum up:—Each is essential to the other, the East to the West, the West to the East. Each has within it something which the other needs. Each, acquiring knowledge of and from the other, shall gain in a common life, a common love, a common regeneration.

FRED HAMMOND.

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Translated from Bengali.*)

CXLVII

1895

My dear —,

Just now I got your letter and was glad to go through it. No matter whether there is any work done in India or not, the real work lies here. I do not want anybody to come over now. On my return to India I shall train a few men, and after that there will be no danger for them in the West. Yes, it was of G— that I wrote. Give my special love and blessings to H— and others. Never take part in quarrels and disputes. Who on earth possesses the power to put the Raja of — down?—The Divine Mother is at his elbow! I have received K—'s letter too. It will be very good indeed if you can start a centre in Kashmir. Wherever you can, open a centre. * * Now I have laid the foundations firm here and in England, and nobody has the power to shake them. New York is in a commotion this year. Next year will come the turn of London. Even big giants will give way. Who counts your pigmies! Gird up your loins and set yourselves to work! We must throw the world into convulsions with our triumphal shouts. This is but the beginning, my boy. Do you think there are *men* in our country, it is a Golgotha. There is some chance if you can impart education to the masses. Is there a greater strength than that of knowledge? Can you give them education. Name me the country where rich men ever helped anybody! In all countries it is the middle classes that do all great works. How long will it take to raise the money? Where are the *men*? Are there any in our country? Our countrymen are boys, and we must treat them as such. * * There are some very religious and philosophical books

left,—the remnants of the mansion that has been burnt down; take them with you, quick, and come over to this country. * *

Never fear! The Divine Mother is helping me! This year such work is going to be turned out, that you will be struck dumb to hear of it!

What fear! Whom to fear! Steel your hearts and set yourselves to work!

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda.

P. S. S— is talking of bringing out a Bengali magazine. Help it with all your might. It is not a bad idea. You must not throw cold water on anybody's project. Give up criticism altogether. Help all as long as you find they are doing all right, and in cases where they seem to be going wrong, show them their mistakes gently. It is criticising each other that is at the root of all mischief. That is the chief factor in breaking down organisations. * *

CXLVIII

U. S. A.

11th April, 1895.

My dear —,

* * You write that you have recovered from your illness, but you must henceforth be very careful. Late dinners, or unwholesome food, or living in a stinking place may bring on a relapse, and make it hard to escape the clutches of malaria. First of all you should hire a small garden-house,—you may get one for 30 or 40 rupees. Secondly, see that cooking and drinking water be filtered,—a bamboo filter of a big size will do. Water is the cause of all sorts of disease.—It is not the clearness or dirtiness of water, but its being full of disease germs, that causes disease,

Let the water be boiled and filtered. You must all pay attention to your health first. A cook, a servant, clean beds, and timely meals,—these are absolutely necessary. Please see that all these suggestions be carried out *in toto*. * * The success of your undertakings depends wholly upon your mutual love. There is no good in store so long as malice and jealousy and egotism will prevail. * * K—'s pamphlet is very well-written, and has no exaggerations. Know that talking ill of others in private is a sin. You must wholly avoid it. Many things may occur to the mind, but it gradually makes a mountain of a mole-hill if you try to express them. Everything is ended if you forgive and forget. It is a welcome news that Sri Ramakrishna's Festival was celebrated with great eclat. You must try so that there is a muster of hundred thousand people next year. Put your energies together to start a magazine. Shyness won't do any more. * * He who has infinite patience and infinite energy at his back, will alone succeed. You must pay special attention to study. Do you understand? You must not huddle together too many fools. I shall be glad if you bring together a few real men. Way, I don't hear even a single one opening his lips. You distributed sweets in the Festival, and there was singing by some parties, mostly idlers. True, but I don't hear what spiritual food you have given. So long as that *nil admirari* attitude is not gone, you will not be able to

do anything, and none of you will have courage. Bullies are always cowards.

Take up everyone with sympathy, whether he believes in Sri Ramakrishna or not. If anybody comes to you for vain dispute, politely withdraw yourselves. * * You must express your sympathy with people of all sects. When these cardinal virtues will be manifested in you, then only you will be able to work with great energy. Otherwise, mere taking the name of the Guru will not do. However, there is no doubt that this year's Festival has been a great success, and you deserve special thanks for it, but you must push forward, do you see? What is S— doing? Never shall you be able to know anything if you persist in pleading ignorance. * * We want something of a higher tone,—that will appeal to the intellect of the learned. It won't do merely to get up musical parties and all that. Not only will this Festival be his memorial but also the central union of an intense propaganda of his doctrines. * * All will come in good time. But at times I fret and stamp like a leashed hound. Onward and forward, my old watchward. I am doing well. No use going back to India in a hurry. Summon all your energies and set yourselves to work, heart and soul—that will really be heroic.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda

THE MARRIED AND THE MONASTIC LIFE.

THE whole of creation is struggling towards freedom. Consciously or unconsciously every being from man down to the lowest worm is trying to be free from all sorts of bondage. That such is the case with the Devas and other higher beings also, can be gathered from the Scriptures of various religions, and science demonstrates to-day

that the same phenomenon is taking place among the vegetable species also. Everyone coming under the influence of environments strives to master them and derive the maximum of benefit out of them, according to the idea which each has of this. In the animal and vegetable kingdoms this benefit takes a physical aspect and the struggle is to secure

those things that prolong and develop the material existence,—a healthy body and a long life. In man who is endowed with the thinking faculty, the struggle is not, except in the very lowest strata, confined to the physical well-being, but attention is paid to the intellectual, moral and spiritual development as well.

According as the man is higher in the scale of life, his cravings tend more and more from physical towards intellectual, and moral, and finally, spiritual pursuits. A child loves play and sweets when he is very young; the same child, when he is a little grown up, will like to shine at school as well as in the playground; when he is grown up into a youth, he will be paying as much attention to his character as to his studies and sports; then after leaving college he will seek out a job or profession, and perhaps marry; and finally when he has grown old and got children and grandchildren, he will turn his thoughts to God and the hereafter. These are the normal stages of progress from materiality to spirituality. Enjoyment first, and then higher and higher thoughts, as the mind tones down and the mad rush for sense-pleasures is at an end. Similar is the case with races also. Those races that are in their infancy, so to speak, run more after the physical comforts, while others that have tasted the joys of life, are sober and turn to higher culture. Nature is the infinite source of experience, and unless one passes through it, one seldom yearns for things other than material comforts,—for to the ordinary sense-bound man this body is the *sine qua non* of happiness, and therefore he cannot help offering it all possible attention. And the wise man who is to play the part of a teacher must take this vital fact into consideration, and prescribe courses that suit the particular individual or race that he seeks to guide.

The Hindus are an ancient race, and the law of 'renunciation *after* enjoyment' has naturally turned them much more towards the higher pursuits than the mere ministering to

the body and its needs. As a result, the civilisation of the Hindu race not only dates far back into the past, but is of quite an extraordinary type—so much so that no other nation on earth can compete with them in the nobility and depth of spirituality which the Hindus have inherited from time immemorial. No other race has got such ancient Scriptures, and nowhere else can one find so lofty and soul-ravishing thoughts as in the Hindu Scriptures. And these thoughts have not been the mere spinning out of nice intellectual theories, which are liable to be set at naught by a more powerful intellect, but they are the records of actual realisations, greater, grander, and more wonderful than any that have fallen to the lot of any other nation on the face of the earth to achieve and proclaim. Those ancient Hindus scaled the very summit of spiritual knowledge at a time of which history keeps no record, and by so doing they exhausted the fund of original, first-hand truth, and the outside world since has been repeating in more or less imperfect language only fractions of the mighty realisation that whatever is, is Brahman, the One without a second, and we are one with That,—whence speech returns baffled together with the mind, unable to reach. This is the quintessence of knowledge, the highest truth, of which all other truths are but lower manifestations. The highest truth is one and eternal, beyond the range of time, space and causation within which our conditioned mind moves. We catch glimpses of it now and then, *discover* it, and the sages whose pure minds caught the reflection of this truth have been called Rishis or Seers. Now, the Hindus have made these sages or Rishis their law-givers and guides, and the spirit of the laws which they in their infinite wisdom formulated for the guidance of men, still holds sway over them, though the forms have changed, as they are bound to do, with the lapse of centuries. According to the exigencies of time new clothings have been put over them, and when a doubt or

difficulty arises as to which course of action to choose, we invariably turn to the Shastras for light and inspiration.

The Hindu society also is the creation of these ancient sages, who studied the temperament of the different individuals and grouped them under four broad divisions—the Varnas—viz. the Bráhmāna, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra, and instituted four orders of life, the Ashramas, for the first three, the last class being absolved from this stringent course of discipline. These Ashramas are Brahmacharya, the celibate life, Gárhastha, the householder's life, Váraprastha or the retired life, and Sannyása or the monastic life. They prescribed particular duties for each group as well as order. This they did to provide a graduated series of steps to ascend to the highest truth, viz. the oneness of Brahman. Caste, which originally was determined by individual traits of character, became gradually confined to heredity, and a Brahmin's son came to be looked upon as a Brahmin, and so with the other three castes. Time brought about an infinite intermixture among all these castes till at last it is impossible now-a-days to tell with certainty who belongs to which caste. The four orders of life also have in course of time been generally reduced to two, viz., the householder's life and the monastic life, while the Brahmachari's life remains in name only, as a shadow of its glorious past, to serve as an entrance to either of the two distinct ways of life. Formerly the rule was that one might either pass through all these four stages of life successively, or one might omit one or both of the intermediate stages and pass, on the completion of the celibate life, at once into the monastic life. That was at the option of the individual. The Jábáa Upanishad is very emphatic about this. Now let us see what is the state of things at present.

Casting one's glance over the working of the social phenomena of the present day one finds that there is no regular provision for

even the fourth order of life, which is more of an accident than a natural outcome of the social forces, and exists not in obedience to the wishes of society, but rather in spite of it; and somehow or other the notion has gained ground in the minds of all Hindus that the married life must follow the student life as the night the day. And we have already hinted that the student life of to-day is only the ghost of its former self, for in truth no attempt is made now to mould the lives of the young learner after the ideal lives of qualified Gurus or teachers, as it used to be in times of old, and instead, we find now an unskilful imitation of the Western system of education prevailing in India. Like all imitations, the present system has not only cut itself loose from the old traditions, but also failed to imbibe the good points of the Western system. In the West the principal aim is an intellectual culture, and even for that there is the arrangement of residential colleges. But in India, where formerly people were never satisfied with the mere intellectual training of their boys, we find that schools and colleges help to turn out tens of thousands of clerks only every year, and the negative teaching they get at school makes their life a curse, converting them into wretched money-making machines with no *ideal* to steer them in the perilous voyage on the waters of life. The guardians who have themselves been creatures of this present Godless method of education, scarcely perceive the baneful effects of the system, and even if they do, have neither the initiative nor the necessary ability and sacrifice to unite and improve this condition.

Worse is the case with girls. In ancient times the strict injunction of the Shastras was that the girls too should be educated and brought up with as much care as the boys. In their case the family influence itself served to replace the conditions of living in the house of the Guru enjoined in the case of boys, and thus every married couple found

themselves on a par with each other as regards intellectual and moral equipment. But now the girls seldom get even that much of education which the boys get, and even if they do in some rare cases, the education is a travesty of real education, and instead of qualifying them to be counterparts of their husbands in the sphere of domestic duties, very often makes them grow into a curious species of exotics, driving away the peaceful charm of home-life. In the home environments of to-day the girls do not find examples of the ancient self-control and sacrifice, gentleness and love, and the ignorance in the midst of which they are kept makes them superstitious to a degree. All this tells badly upon the children they have in future.

The above is the state of things in which the boys and girls of to-day find themselves throughout India. And in the midst of such circumstances the parents of either party insist on their marriage as if it were a settled fact of life, as much as birth and death. Think in what a sorry predicament the married pair find themselves, specially when they are, as is very often the case, married quite young. We leave out of consideration the abnormal but not unfrequent cases where child husbands are wedded to baby wives.—But the conditions prevailing in educated circles do not present a less gloomy outlook either. Now, we may justly ask, who put it into the heads of the parents and guardians of our boys and girls that it is a religious duty laid upon them to marry their sons and daughters as a compulsory course, and that even before they have come to grasp the meaning of the responsibilities of the married life? Who told them that there is one and only one way to salvation and that is through marriage? Do they profess to be Hindus, the descendants of the ancient Aryans, and at the same time insist on marriage as the indispensable condition of a pious life? Is it the injunction of their Scriptures, from which they blandly quote passages, in season and

out of season? Leaving the question of the marriages of girls for the present, we shall discuss the question of the compulsory marriage of boys a little further.

Our scriptures, in view of the two distinct types of tendencies in us, prescribe two different modes of life, viz. those of Pravritti and Nivritti, meaning rational enjoyment and abstention, respectively. The former path is meant for those whose tendencies towards sense-enjoyment are so strong that unless they are given a judicious vent, they will work mischief, leading to an internal brooding on them while there is no external outlet. It is like the treatment of an abscess—just going to form. The doctor knows whether the conditions are such as will allow it to subside, or it is mature enough to require an incision in the near future. The medicine he uses is according to the nature of the case. Similarly a man of the above type must be shown a course of life where his strong inclinations will calm down a little through their regulated satisfaction, and the higher virtues unbedded in every individual will then get a chance of coming to the surface. This is the only course left in such a case, and the teacher will be lacking in insight into human character if he forces such a disciple to a total abstention. But in the case of a man who has either no hankering after the senses or whose passions are such that they will be easily brought under subjection through holy association, will it not be the height of folly to insist that he must undergo the trials and temptations of the conjugal life, when he himself prefers a life of continence to one of enjoyment, and is sure in his heart of succeeding in that line? It does not require an uncommon degree of intelligence to understand that the goal to which both these paths lead is absolute Independence—*Kaivalya* or *Moksha*,—to regain the *apparently* lost purity and perfection that every Scripture declares is our very nature? Why then compel one to adopt a course which is not only not after his heart, but

which he thinks is degrading to him? Who will answer this question? We are so apt to think in the accustomed ways, that anything that is ever so slightly divergent from the courses we have been used to, seems a bugbear to us, and naturally enough each parent or guardian conjures up a whole host of misfortunes as certain to beset the future career of his dear son or ward, in case he turns his thoughts wholly to God, and passes his life in the company of men of approved holiness. Such is the power of convention. And how they try to convince their boys that nothing is superior to a householder's life and move heaven and earth to chain them down to it, by force or guile! Little do they know that truth triumphs in the long run, and when there is real sincerity and thirst for religion in the aspirant, no human efforts are of any avail against them. Śākya Muni's father did all he could to shut his grant-hearted son up in the world of senses, but the gods willed otherwise, and the world would have been without the wonderful life-story of Lord Buddha, had he succeeded.

We set aside as silly the objection of the householders that creation would stop if all embraced the monastic life, for such a state can never be. Now, leaving all material considerations aside, the objections of the parents are due to a misconception of the relative difficulties of the two paths. They think that the married life is much easier than the monastic life. But it should always be remembered that just as neither of the two paths can be claimed as superior to the other, so neither can be proved to be easier to pursue than the other. Mukti can be attained through both,—no doubt of that, but the essential thing to bear in mind is that it is *perfection* in each line that ensures the final success, and mediocrity in either is attended with but scanty results. Even then, it can fairly be asserted that an average Sadhu who simply keeps his vow of celibacy and begs his whole life from door to door without any

high thinking, has more chances than an average householder. For he has overcome one of the most terrible of attractions, viz. that of sex, and is not trammelled in any way, so that when he is fortunately awakened to a sense of his real duties, be it in old age,—he can do so freely and work up to success whereas the unsuccessful householder, even if he wishes late in life to devote himself solely to God, finds he has got lots of social duties dragging him down, and in most cases, even if somebody else steps forward to fulfil those social duties for him, he finds he cannot get rid of his attachment. Such is the result of an unbiased comparison between the partial success in the two paths. And as for perfection in either, observation shows that where you can find ten perfected Sannyasins, you can find only *one* perfected householder, for the difficulties in the case of the latter are obviously much more than in the former, and it is for this reason that intending monastics seek a more suitable environment, where they may be away from the thousand and one temptations and self-imposed duties of the worldly life.

And they are no unnecessary burden on the society, as most English-educated people seem to think. They give upon the charity of the householders no doubt, but in exchange for this crumb of bread they spread religious education throughout the country, ay, even the most illiterate of them, by recitations from the illustrious saints of the land. And the householder gives his dole cheerfully and as a religious act. It should also be noted that it is these Sannyasins who have been the friends and sympathisers of the poor and down-trodden in the past as well as in the present. The monastic institution is not an innovation in the land, but the cry that is now heard against monks is simply due to the dearth of food in the country. In former times, India used to produce more than her necessary quantity of food, and a portion of this superfluous stock went to be set up in the Sannyas-

and so profitably. So, instead of condemning on the now-pretexts the whole brotherhood of Sannyasins, the proper way is to devise new plans of intensifying the produce of the land.

We have dealt briefly with the various side-issues of the question. We ask our readers to ponder over them and come to their own conclusions. We suggest that every one should hold the balance even between the monastic and the family life. Every householder in India, as much as any Sannyasin, thinks it part of his daily duty to worship God, under whatever name and form he may please, and we know every pious family keeps the best fruits of its field or garden apart as an offering for the Lord. To the bulk of Indian householders God is never a mere philosophical abstraction, but the nearest of all relations, dearer than life itself, nay, than the inmost soul. They worship Him with the utmost faith and devotion that they can command. All this is highly becoming to the descendants of the ancient Aryan Kshis. It

now behoves them only to give their noble impulses a proper direction, and always stick to truth under any circumstances, being ever ready to undergo any sacrifice at the call of their Religion and country. They should abide by the injunctions of the Shastras, interpreting them in their true spirit, regardless of consequences, and strive their best to make the foundations of society strong by developing the ideal of Brahmacharya. This they can do by leading moderate lives themselves, and by making it a point to give their children a spiritual education in an organised way, from their very childhood, so that they may grow up to be either useful members of society as ideal householders, or play ably the higher and more fortunate role of teachers of society as Sannyasins. They should carefully watch the tendencies of their children, and direct them candidly in that path for which they are deemed to be fittest, and the Lord's blessings will ever be on them and theirs.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

WITH THE SWAMIS IN AMERICA.

V.

THE Swami Turiyananda did not stay in New York for a long time permanently. Swami Saradananda, then returned to India, had been very successful in his labour in Montclair, a beautiful country town, about an hour's journey from New York. He had made many friends there and devoted students. And as now these students were without a teacher, they requested the Swami Turiyananda to take up the work so ably started by his brother-Sannyasin.

The Swami consented with the proviso that he be allowed to keep up the work in New York also, for the Swami Abhedananda was then absent on a lecturing tour. This was agreed upon. The Swami went to Montclair, visiting the New York centre every Saturday and staying over Sunday to hold classes and to give lectures. Thus, every

Saturday and Sunday we had him with us.

Very soon the Swami made himself beloved in Montclair as he had done in New York. He was the guest at the home of one of Swami Saradananda's most devoted students. It was a home of culture, piety and cheerfulness,—one of those healthy, balanced American homes rich in mutual love and consideration, with a great deal of freedom but perfectly regulated; the children full of life and enterprise, adoring the parents and very free with them, a home of mutual understanding. The Swami enjoyed being there and every member of the family loved and respected him. The Swami saw American family-life at its best, and it was a revelation to him. The husband was a Christian Scientist but sympathetic towards Vedanta. The wife was a staunch Vedantist of the devotional

type. The Swami often spoke of her as one of the most spiritual women he had ever met. "She is so Sattvic," he used to say, "firm, quiet, she always does the right thing at the right time without the least fuss."

Once, while staying there, the Swami received a letter from India. It contained the sad news that part of Bengal was under the grip of a devastating famine. His hostess saw that the letter saddened the Swami. She enquired whether he had received bad news. Reluctantly the Swami told her that the people of Bengal were visited by famine. Not another word was said. But a few days later his hostess presented the Swami with a purse of money to send to India for the famine-stricken people. Quietly, without the Swami knowing anything about it she had gone to her friends and collected the money.

An interesting incident took place when the Swami Saradananda was living at this happy home. The Swami had often spoken about Sri Ramakrishna and one day he produced his Master's photograph and showed it to the lady of the house. "Oh, Swami," she exclaimed, "it is the same face!" "What do you mean?" said the Swami. And then she told him that long ago, in her youth, before she was married, she had had a vision of a Hindu and that it was the same face that now she saw in the photograph. "It was Sri Ramakrishna," she said, "but I did not know it until now. I was so much impressed and charmed at the vision at the time, that I remember the face very distinctly, and I have been going about here and there ever since I had the vision, whenever I heard that a Hindu had come to America, but I was always disappointed, not finding the same face. And now at last I see that it was Ramakrishna."

And now a new event took place. The Swami Vivekananda came to New York. But, alas it was only for a short visit. He stayed with us for less than two weeks. Though under the kind ministrations of friends at a country-home the Swamiji had partly recuperated his health, he was still far from being well and it had been arranged to send him to California, three thousand miles from New York, to the land of sunshine and warmth and fragrant air.

On his way to California the Swamiji halted at Chicago for one week. There he was with his

devoted and admiring friends who had witnessed his triumph at the Religious Congress, some years previously. Then Swamiji proceeded to California where he soon found himself strong enough to appear on the lecture platform from where he attracted large audiences.

During the short period the Swamiji stayed in New York, there was great rejoicing at the Vedanta Home. Swamiji did not give any public lectures but he attended the classes and meetings at the Vedanta Home and there he gave short talks and answered questions. A public reception was given to him at the Home and his former friends and students gathered in large numbers to meet their beloved teacher again. It was a very happy gathering. Others were also present who had long desired to meet the great Swamiji of whom they had heard so much.

Though public the reception was informal. The Swami had a smile, a joke or a kind word for everyone of his old friends. Part of the time he was seated on the floor, in the Indian fashion, some of the friends following his example. There was much talking and laughing and the Swami showed by a gesture or a remark that he had never forgotten his old students.

About Swamiji much has been written* and I do not wish to go into repetition. Let me record only one of my impressions of the evening. I do so because it came to me with such great force.

Swamiji was so simple in his behaviour, so like one of the crowd that he did not impress me so much when I first saw him. There was nothing about his ways that would mark him as the lion of New York society as so often he had been. Simple in dress and behaviour he was just like one of us. He did not put himself aside on a pedestal as is so often the case with honored personages. He walked about the room, sat on the floor, laughed, joked, chatted, nothing formal. Of course I had noticed his magnificent brilliant eyes, his beautiful features and majestic bearing, for these were parts of him that no circumstances could hide. But when I saw him for a few minutes standing on a platform surrounded by others it flashed into my mind: "What a giant, what strength, what

* "The Life of the Swami Vivekananda" in 4 volumes; The Master as I saw Him, etc.

manliness, what a personality! Every one near him looks so insignificant compared with him." It came to me almost as a shock, it seemed to startle me. What was it that gave Swamiji this distinction? Was it his height? No, there were gentlemen there taller than he was. Was it his build? No, there were near him some very fine specimens of American manhood. It seemed to be more in the expression of the face than anything else. Was it his purity? What was it? I could not analyse it. I remembered what had been said of Lord Buddha,—“a lion amongst men.” I felt that Swamiji had unlimited power, that he could move heaven and earth if he willed it. This was my strongest and lasting impression of him.

When the Swamiji returned from California I was no longer in New York, so I never saw him again. But I am grateful that I have seen him and that during those two weeks he has sometimes been very kind to me. And even now as I read and re-read the Swami's lectures, that picture of wonderful strength and purity comes before my mental vision. And in those printed lines there still seems to vibrate something of that great spirit that came to enlighten the Western world. “These great and peaceful teachers,” says the sage Sankaracharya, “come to regenerate the world like the spring that brings forth new fruits and flowers. And after they themselves have crossed over the ocean of world-bondage, they help those who strive for liberation to reach the haven of peace and blessedness. And this they do from a purely unselfish motive.”

In the preceding papers I have now and then alluded to the Shanti Ashrama. It may interest the reader to know how this Ashrama came into existence and something about the life and work there.

Before the Swami Vivekananda returned from California a young Vedanta student in New York, no longer satisfied to live a life of comparative ease and luxury, and impelled from within to make his external life conform to the teaching of Vedanta as he had understood it, had resolved to renounce the world. His object was known at the Vedanta Society and it was the subject of some talk at the Vedanta Home.

The question was: How to live the life of renunciation in a country where no provision is made for

Sannyasins, where itinerant monks have never been produced and where religious mendicancy would not be recognised by society? A wandering monk would in America be looked upon and treated as a vagrant. It was a question of some weight, for the young man was determined to carry out his ideal and he was ready to meet the consequences.

There are monasteries in America where Roman Catholics who renounce the world find shelter and every opportunity to live a strict and holy life. But to be allowed entrance into these monasteries one has to subscribe to the creed of the Roman Catholic church. This the young student of Vedanta could not do. The only choice he had was either to live in the streets of New York and beg his food, or go to a place not far from New York where some good people were living who were ready to receive him. The first course would mean arrest by the police for vagrancy, the other course would mean hard physical labour for which he was ill-fitted. He chose the latter course.

This question being discussed at the Vedanta Home, one of Swami Abhedananda's students was strongly impressed with the idea that the Vedanta movement should have a place of retreat where those who wished to renounce the world, temporarily or permanently, could find refuge under suitable conditions. She possessed a homestead in California,—160 acres of free government land. And this place, she thought, could answer the purpose. It had its disadvantages, it was fifty miles from the nearest railway station and market, but it would do to begin with. It would be solitary anyhow. And she very generously offered this place to the Swami Vivekananda to be used as a Vedanta retreat.

Swamiji was willing to accept the gift but he could not return to California then to take charge of the place himself. So it was decided that the Swami Turiyananda should go there and open an Ashrama for the students of Vedanta. “Go there,” Swamiji told him, “put your life into the work, live like a Sannyasin and forget India.” The Swami obeyed, except, I am afraid, in one respect,—he could not entirely forget India, his beloved motherland. “You understand,” he said one day in the Ashrama, “how I love you all how I feel at one with you. I regard you as my own people, in fact, at times I forget that I am in a foreign land,

but to forget India altogether, that is not possible."

I have sometimes met with Hindus who seem to think that loyalty to their own country necessitates depreciation of everything foreign, no matter how good and praiseworthy it may be. Needless to say that these gentlemen have never visited foreign lands. None of the Swamis in the West shared such narrow views. The Swami Turiyananda was very open-minded. He appreciated what was good in the West and sometimes he would give vent to his feelings "How strong and independent are your women; what a nice relationship there is between the sexes I like the way in which you treat your servants; with all your activity you are so subdued in your speech, there is no shouting and loud talk; you are so orderly and punctual and you keep everything so neat and clean," etc. But India was the holy land, the land of wisdom and of sages. And he loved India with all his heart.

The Swami Turiyananda then went to California. Miss Boock, the kind donor of the land for the prospective Ashrama, accompanied him. They first went to Los Angeles where Swamiji's friends received them warmly. The Swami was entertained at the same home that had been blessed by having had Swamiji as its guest. There were three sisters there, enthusiastic Vedantists,—"the three Graces," as Swamiji jokingly called them. The Swami was delighted with the country. He was taken to the sea-shore, visited surrounding towns, saw the orange groves for which California is famous and he had a very pleasant time there. But he never forgot his Mother. Teaching and talking and holding classes the Swami became an influence in

Los Angeles. The people wanted to keep him there, but he was sent for other work. So after a few weeks' stay in that beautiful city he took the train for San Francisco accompanied by one or two of his Los Angeles friends.

In San Francisco the Swami met with an enthusiastic reception. The students of that lively western city expected much from him, for it was to them that Swamiji had said, when leaving San Francisco: "I have only talked, but I shall send you one of my brethren who will show you how to live what I have taught."

A few of Swamiji's students had clubbed together and had formed a small nucleus, the Vedanta Society of San Francisco. With these few friends the Swami began to work and gradually the number increased. Then came the day on which the Swami started out for the great work for which he had been sent to California. With a dozen students he set out for the San Antonio valley to found the Shanti Ashrama, the first Vedanta retreat in America.

It was a long journey from San Francisco to the new place,—first by train to San Jose, then by a four-horse stage, following a winding road, to the "Lick Observatory" at the top of Mount Hamilton, 4400 feet high; then by carriage down to the valley. But the journey was by no means tedious. The beautiful mountain scenery, the bracing air, the fruit orchards, olive groves and vineyards, the enthusiasm of the enterprising party, the Swami's chanting and interesting conversation, made the trip one long delight. The students were elated.

A BRAHMACHARIN.

VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 23.)

पञ्चानामपि कोशानां निषेधे युक्तिः श्रुतेः ।

तन्निषेधावधिः साक्षी बोधरूपोऽवशिष्यते ॥२१०॥

210. When all the five Sheaths have been eliminated by the reasoning upon Sruti passages, what remains as the culminating point of the process, is the Witness, the Knowledge Absolute.—the Atman.

Sruti passages—those that describe the Atman negatively, by the *Neti neti* (not this, not this) method

Culminating point—beyond which the process of reasoning or analysis cannot be carried any farther. What takes place then is termed the *Aparokshanubhuti*, Realisation, and the mind is then said to be in the Samadhi state]

योऽयमात्मा स्वयंज्योतिः पञ्चकोशविलक्षणाः ।
 अवस्थात्रयसाक्षी सन्निर्विकारो निरञ्जनः ।
 सदानन्दः स विज्ञेयः स्वात्मत्वेन विपश्चिता ॥२११॥

211. This self-effulgent Atman, which is distinct from the five Sheaths, the Witness of the three states, the Real, the Changeless, the Untainted, the everlasting Bliss,—is to be realised by the wise one in one's own Self.

[Untainted—by Nescience, hence Absolute]

शिष्य उवाच ।

मिथ्यात्वेन निषिद्धेषु कोशेष्वेतेषु पञ्चसु ।
 सर्वाभावं विना किञ्चिन्न पश्याम्यत्र हे गुरो ।
 विज्ञेयं किमु वस्त्वस्ति स्वात्मनाऽऽत्मविपश्चिता ॥

212. The disciple questioned, "After these five Sheaths have been eliminated as unreal, I find nothing, O Teacher, in this universe but a Void, the absence of everything. What entity does there at all remain with which the wise man should realise his identity?"

[The position of the *Shunyaraddins* or Nihilists who deny that there remains anything positive after the ultimate analysis, is set forth in this Sloka as a *prima facie* view, and the refutation is given in the next few Slokas.]

श्रीगुरुवाच ।

सत्यमुक्तं त्वया विद्वन्निपुणोऽसि विचारणो ।
 अहमादिविकारास्ते तदभावोऽयमप्यनु ॥२१३॥
 सर्वे येनानुभूयन्ते यः स्वयं नानुभूयते ।
 तमात्मानं वेदितारं विद्धि बुद्ध्या सुसूक्ष्मया ॥२१४॥

213-4. The Gurn answered: Thou hast rightly said, O learned one! Thou art clever indeed in discrimination. That by which all those modifications such as egoism etc. and their absence as well which follows (during deep sleep) are perceived, but which Itself is not perceived, know thou that Atman—the Knower—through the sharpest intellect.

[The argument is this. The Atman as the Eternal Subject must remain always. Otherwise there

being no Subject, knowledge itself will be impossible. Even in the Sushupti state there must be the Eternal Subject not to record the blissful memory of that state. To take a familiar example. In a bioscope there must be the screen to allow the moving pictures to coalesce and form a connected whole. Motion presupposes rest. So the ever changing Prakriti must have behind it the immutable Atman.

Through the sharpest intellect. An echo of Katha Upanishad I. 11. 12.]

तत्साक्षिकं भवेत्तत्तद्यद्येनानुभूयते ।

कस्याप्यननुभूतार्थे साक्षित्वं नोपयुज्यते ॥२१५॥

215. That which is perceived by something else has for its witness the latter. When there is no agent to perceive a thing, we cannot speak of that thing having been perceived at all.

असौ स्वसाक्षिको भावो यतः स्वेनानुभूयते ।

अतः परं स्वयं मात्तात्प्रत्यगात्मा न चेततः ॥२१६॥

216. This Atman is a self-cognised entity, because It is cognised by Itself. Hence the individual soul is itself and directly the Supreme Brahman, and nothing else.

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिषु स्पुटतरं योऽसौ समुज्जृम्भते
 प्रत्यग्रपतया सदाहमहमित्यन्तः स्फुरन्नैकधा ॥
 नानाकारविकारभागिन इमान् पश्यन्नहंभीमुखान्
 नित्यानन्दचिदात्मना स्फुरति तं विद्धि

स्वमेतं हृदि ॥२१७॥

217. That which clearly manifests Itself in the states of wakefulness, dream and profound sleep; which is inwardly perceived in the mind in various forms, as an unbroken series of egoistic impressions; which witnesses the egoism, the Buddhi etc., which are of diverse forms and modifications; and which makes Itself felt as the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute; know thou this Atman, thy own Self within thy heart.

[According to the Sankhya Philosophy, the whole universe, as it appears to us, is a mixture of

Purusha and Prakriti—of something which impinges on or gives the suggestion to our minds and of the mind which reacts and covers it as it were, with a coating of its own. In other words, everything we perceive is this unknown something plus the mind, or to put it briefly X + mind. Vedanta substitutes Brahman for Purusha and postulates a Nescience as the inscrutable power of Brahman which covers the real nature of Brahman and makes it manifest in various sorts of change and limitation. It is only another name of Brahman. So hence if we perceive a thing, from any mental impression, it must be the Atman and nothing else that we perceive. Only in our ignorance we fail to grasp the real nature of the thing experienced (the Atman) and call it under various names and forms. So our egoism, our intellect, and all mental states are manifestations of the Atman and Atman alone.

घटोदके विम्बितमर्कविम्ब-

मालोक्य मूढो रविमेव मन्यते ।

तथा चिदाभासमुपाधिसंभ्रं

भ्रान्त्याहमित्येव जडोऽभिमन्यते ॥२१८॥

218. Seeing the reflection of the sun mirrored in the water of a jar the fool thinks it is the sun itself. Similarly the stupid man, through delusion, identifies himself with the reflection of the Chit caught in the Buddhi which is its superimposition.

[*Chit*—the Atman which is Knowledge Absolute.]

घटं जलं तद्गतमर्कविम्बं

विहाय सर्वं विनिरीक्ष्यतेऽर्कः ।

तदस्य एतत्त्रितयावभासकः

स्वयंप्रकाशो विदुषा यथा तथा ॥२१९॥

219. Just as the wise man leaves aside the jar, the water in it and the reflection of the sun in that water, and sees the self-luminous sun which illuminates these three and is independent of them;

[*Independent &c.* these being merely its reflections, which serve to suggest the real sun.]

देहं धियं चित्प्रतिविम्बमेवं

विस्मृत्य बुद्धौ निहितं गुहायाम् ।

द्रष्टारत्वात्मानमस्वयं चोच्यते

सर्वप्रकाशं सदसद्विलक्षणम् ॥२२०॥

नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्म-

मन्तर्बुद्धिः शून्यमनन्यमात्मनः ।

विहाय सम्यङ्निजरूपमनत्

पुराणं विपाप्मा विरजो विमृत् ॥२२१॥

विशोकं भ्रान्तघनो विरश्चित्

स्वयं कुतश्चिन्न विभेति कश्चित् ।

नान्योऽस्ति पन्था भवबन्धमुक्ते-

र्विना स्वनत्वावगम मुमुक्षोः ॥२२२॥

220-2. Similarly, discarding the body, the Buddhi, and the reflection of the Chit in it, and realising the Witness, the Self, the Knowledge Absolute, the cause of the manifestation of everything, which is hidden in the recesses of the Buddhi and is distinct from the gross and subtle, eternal, omnipresent, all-pervading, extremely subtle, which has neither interior nor exterior, and is identical with oneself,—fully realising this true nature of oneself, one becomes free from sin, and taint, and death and grief, and becomes the embodiment of Bliss. Illumined himself, he is afraid of none. For a seeker after liberation there is no other way to the breaking of the bonds of transmigration than the realisation of the truth of one's own Self.

[*Hidden Buddhi*—It is the *purushe* Buddhi which catches a glimpse of the Atman.]

The sense of various Sruti passages of Advaitic import is reproduced in these Slokas. The reader is specially referred to the Brihadātanyaka III. viii. 8, Taittiriya II. 2 and Svetāsvatara III. 8.

ब्रह्माभिन्नत्वविज्ञानं भवमोक्षस्य कारणम् ।

येनाद्वितीयमानन्दं ब्रह्म सम्पद्यते बुधैः ॥२२३॥

223. The realisation of one's identity with the Brahman is the cause of liberation from the bonds of Samsara, by means of which the wise man attains Brahman, the One without a second, the Bliss Absolute.

ब्रह्मभूतस्तु संसृत्यै विद्वान्नावर्तते पुनः ।

विज्ञातव्यमतः सम्यग्ब्रह्माभिन्नत्वमात्मनः ॥२२४॥

224. Once having realised the Brahman one no longer returns to the realm of transmigration. Therefore, one must fully realise one's identity with the Brahman.

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म विशुद्धं पर स्वतः सिद्धम् ।

नित्यानन्दैकरसं प्रत्यगभिन्नं निरन्तरं जयति ॥२२५॥

225. Brahman is Existence, Knowledge, the Absolute, pure, supreme, self-existent, eternal and indivisible Bliss, not different (in reality) from the individual soul, and devoid of interior or exterior,—there It reigns triumphant.

सदिदं परमाद्वैतं स्वस्मादन्यस्य वस्तुनोऽभावात् ।

न ह्यन्यदस्ति किञ्चित् सम्यक् परमार्थतत्त्व-

बोधदशायाम् ॥२२६॥

226. It is this Supreme Oneness which alone is real, since there is nothing else but the Self. Verily, there remains no other independent entity in the state of realisation of the highest Truth.

[*Nothing else*—Everything but the Self is an appearance merely.

यदिदं सकलं विश्वं नानारूपं प्रतीतमज्ञानात् ।

तत्सर्वं ब्रह्मैव प्रत्यक्षाद्येषभावनादोषम् ॥२२७॥

227. All this universe which appears as of diverse forms through ignorance, is nothing else but Brahman which is absolutely free from all the limitations of human thought.

Free from.....thought—We imagine all sorts of things through ignorance, but Brahman is ever beyond them, and 's the only Reality.]

मृत्कार्यभूतोऽपि मृदो न भिन्नः

कुम्भोऽस्ति सर्वत्र तु मृत्स्वरूपात् ।

न कुम्भरूपं पृथगस्ति कुम्भः

कुतो मृषा कल्पितनाममात्रः ॥२२८॥

228. A jar, though a modification of earth, is not different from the earth;

everywhere the jar is essentially the same as the earth. Why then call it a jar?—It is fictitious, a fancied name merely.

[*Fictitious name merely*—Quoted in sense from the Chhandogya Upa, Ch. VI]

केनापि मृद्भिन्नतया स्वरूपं

घटस्य संदर्शयितुं न शक्यते ।

अतो घटः कल्पित एव मोहा-

न्मृदेव सत्यं परमार्थभूतम् ॥२२९॥

229. None can demonstrate that the essence of a jar is something other than the earth (of which it is made). Hence the jar is merely imagined through delusion, and the component earth alone is the abiding reality in respect of it.

सद्ब्रह्मकार्यं सकलं सदेवं

तन्मात्रमेतन्न ततोऽन्यदस्ति ।

अस्तीति यो वक्ति न तस्य मोहो

विनिर्गतो निद्रितवत्प्रजल्पः ॥२३०॥

230. Similarly, the whole universe being the effect of the real Brahman, is in reality nothing but Brahman. Its essence is That, and it does not exist apart from It. He who says 'it is,' is still under delusion,—he babbles like one asleep.

[*Like one asleep* i. e. incoherently.]

ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमित्येव वाणी

श्रौती ब्रूतेऽथर्वनिष्ठा वरिष्ठा ।

तस्मादेदद्ब्रह्ममात्रं हि विश्वं

नाधिष्ठानाद्भिन्नताऽरोपितस्य ॥२३१॥

231. This universe is verily Brahman—such is the august pronouncement of the Atharva Veda. Therefore this universe is nothing but Brahman,—for that which is superimposed (on something) has no separate existence from its substratum.

[The reference is to Mndaka (II. II. 11), which is one of the Upanishads belonging to the Atharva Veda.

(To be continued).

REVIEWS.

Is India Civilized? (Essays on Indian Culture)

By Sir John Woodroffe. Published by Messrs Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp 238 Price Rs 2

We have already expressed our opinion on this admirable book in the Occasional Notes of last month. It is a crushing reply to Mr Wm Archer's recent book, "India and the Future," in which that author attacks Indian culture, damning it as "Barbarism." And Sir John rightly comes forward to vindicate India, with the remark that "India cannot at the present moment allow any charges against her to go unanswered." The present book has been written from the Vedantic standpoint, in the light of the Shakta Agama. It consists of twelve chapters entitled: Civilization and Progress; East and West, What is Culture? Conflict of Cultures. Competition concert sacrifice. Cultural attack on India; An Example, A Reply; Bharata Dharma, the Common Principles of Indian Civilization, Brahmanism. Imitation and Some conclusions. The book, from start to finish, shows that the author has a masterly and sympathetic grasp of the whole situation and one who goes through it will find himself in touch with the essentials of Indian civilisation—a civilisation that has stood the test of centuries upon centuries. The following few lines quoted at random, will serve as an index to the writer's views. "Whilst.....the English are carrying out their Dharma, India has a Dharma of Her own to follow. . . . What form the future may take we cannot with certainty say. But of this I am convinced that if we each do our duty by our country and our forefathers and maintain what is best, and has not suffered corruption, in our respective cultural inheritances, the result of such rivalry cannot be other than good. . . . A good result is not likely to be attained if India wholly surrenders Her soul to foreign influences." We wish the book a wide circulation.

President Wilson—the Modern Apostle of Freedom. Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras. With a Foreword by Dr S Subramanya Aiyer. Pp xxv + 94. Price Re 1

This is a neat little volume, containing ten speeches by the President, with a life-sketch by Mr K Vyasa Rao. President Wilson is the cynosure

of all eyes to-day, and the book under review is therefore a timely publication, giving the public a glimpse into the great man's life and utterances.

Guttula - the Divine Muschel of Benares. A Poem.

By F G and L M Pearce. Pp 73 Board-bound. Price 12 as. Publishers Messrs. Ganesh & Co.

The book is based on an English version of the Sinhalese "Guttula Kavya" by Mrs Musæus Higgins. Guttula is the name of a former Incarnation of the Lord Buddha, and the tale forms one of the Jataka stories. To improve the narration the authors have made slight additions and alterations in the framework of the story. Lord Buddha's life has been immortalised in English verse by Sir Edwin Arnold. The present version of the Jataka-story follows the same lines as the "Light of Asia," and is very successful too. It is a pleasure to go through these delightful lines, and the diction is smooth and melodious.

Ode to Truth By James H Cousins. Pp 22.

Price as 8. Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co.

The author tells us that this metrical composition was read by him at the foundation-day celebration of the Theosophical Society in Madras, on November 17, 1918. Mr Cousins has already made a name in the world of letters, and the present brochure adds another laurel to his crown. The poem shows evidences of great poetical power.

The Silken Tassel By Ardeshir K Khabardar.

Published by the Theosophical Publishing House Adyar, Madras. Cloth-bound. Pp. 122.

Mr J. H. Cousins, in introducing this symposium of songs, writes: "Mr. Khabardar is a popular poet in his mother-tongue, Gujarati." The book is mainly divided into the following sections: Songs of the Muse, Songs of Nature, Songs of the Heart; Songs of Life's Highway and Sonnets. It is no easy thing for anybody to excel in writing poetry in a foreign tongue, specially when an Indian undertakes to versify in a Western language. The present attempt of Mr. Khabardar must however be reckoned as a great success, considering the ease with which he generally handles the English metres. Western lovers of Indian thoughts will find this volume of great help.

THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION FAMINE RELIEF WORK.

The public is fully aware of the approach of a wide-spread distress of famine in this Province and abroad, which we apprehended last year judging from the irregularity and insufficiency of rain-fall. The first effects of this calamitous visitation are now being felt in the district of Manbhum. One of our workers there at an early stage first hinted us about the critical situation of the place, and to investigate the actual conditions we sent some more of our workers in the beginning of the present month. We publish here the most up-to-date account based on the most recent reports which we have been able to collect so that the generous public will be fully acquainted with the real situation of the distressed area.

Cultivation was very bad in the year 1917 and so the crop was very poor. Since that time people in swarms began to leave their villages and moved to the neighbouring district-towns to earn their livelihood as ordinary labourers. Again, in the year 1918 ploughing and sowing were only possible in the lowlands (in proportion a very small area), on account of the scarcity of water in the high grounds from great drought, and to save this scanty crop the people used very lavishly the 'band' and the tank water,—thus giving rise to every apprehension of great distress from scarcity of water in the near future (similar to the one that visited the district of Bankura in the year 1916), which may be the cause of the outbreak of a great pestilence.

At present in the affected areas very coarse rice sells at 8 seers per rupee and paddy at 16 seers only and these too not available everywhere. Scarcity of cloth is also very keenly felt. The Sub-Divisional Officer of Purulia is selling cloth through his officers at a somewhat reduced price still we believe free distribution of cloth is very urgently needed knowing as we all do, that this district of Manbhum is one of the poorest in the neighbouring districts of Bengal and Behar. The distress and the difficulty of the situation are very much intensified by the outbreak of the new Influenza epidemic.

Now our workers intend to open relief works at present in three Thanas, viz. Pancha, Manbazari, Huda and also a part of Gourah. Other portions

of the district are not so much affected owing to the employment obtained by the journeymen and population thrown out of their lands, as labourers in the Jhena Coal Mine and Tata Iron Factory at Sakchi. But the middle-class people of the whole district are suffering mostly owing to their inability to do outdoor manual labour. They have fought a close fight up till now to meet the situation and to keep starvation and distress off from their doors. Now is the proper time for the benevolent public to unloose their purse-strings to convey ready help and relief to their fellow brethren in their hour of dire distress and save them from imminent starvation. All contributions in the shape of money or cloth, however small, may be sent to the following addresses and will be most thankfully accepted and acknowledged — (1) The President, Ramkrishna Mission, Belur, Howrah. (2) The Secretary, Ramkrishna Mission, Udhodhan Office, 1 Mukerji Lane, Bagbazar, Calcutta.

Swami Brahmananda.

President, R. K. Mission.

NEWS AND NOTES.

We are glad to announce that the Eighty-fourth Birthday Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Deva will be celebrated on the 9th March, 1919 at the Belur Math (Howrah) and the branch centres of the Ramkrishna Mission. The *Tithipuja* comes off on Tuesday the 4th March.

We received the following notice for publication in January last. The Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service Benares has been carrying on the influenza epidemic relief work in Benares Dist. by opening several centres in the most affected parts since the beginning of December 1918. More than 1500 new cases have been treated and supplied with diet and some clothing where necessary. Some of the centres have been closed lately as the places are free of the disease now. Work is still going on at the Pindia and Natwan centres. It is very gratifying to note that only a few cases proved fatal since the Home began the relief work. The President of the Ramkrishna Mission gave Rs. 500 from the Provident Fund for this relief work.

The Committee of the Ramkrishna Mission Home of Service Benares has much pleasure in acknowledging an endowment for the maintenance of the poor and sick in Benares, in memory of Trivedi Jethabhai Ambardas and his wife, Haibai, through their dutiful son, Trivedi Mulshankar of Dholka, in Ahmedabad Dist.