

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य त्रसन्निबोधत

Katha Upan. 1. iii. 4

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CIVILISATION.*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(*Translated from Bengali*)

THE borders of the Red Sea were a great centre of ancient civilisation. There, on the other side, are the deserts of Arabia; and on this—Egypt. This is that ancient Egypt. Thousands of years ago, these Egyptians starting from Punt (probably Malabar) crossed the Red Sea, and steadily extended their kingdom till they reached Egypt. Wonderful was the expansion of their power, their territory and their civilisation. The Greeks were the disciples of these. The wonderful mausoleums of their kings, the Pyramids, with

*Written *en route* to the West to a brother-disciple.

figures of the Sphinx, and even their dead bodies are preserved to this day. Here lived the ancient Egyptian people, with curling hair and ear-rings, and wearing snow-white *dhotis*, without one end being tucked up behind. This is Egypt—the memorable stage where the Hyksos, the Pharaohs, the Persian Emperors, Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies and the Roman and Arab conquerors played their part. So many centuries ago, they left their history described in great detail in hieroglyphic characters on papyrus, on stone slabs and on the sides of earthen vessels.

This is the land where Isis was worshipped and Horus flourished. According to these ancient Egyptians, when a man dies, his subtle body moves about, but any injury done to the dead body affects the subtle body, and the destruction of the former means the total annihilation of the latter. Hence they took such pains to preserve the corpse. Hence the pyramids of the kings and emperors. What devices, how much labour!—all, all in vain! Lured by the treasures, robbers have dug into the pyramids, and penetrating the mysteries of the labyrinths, have stolen the royal bodies. Not now, it was the work of the ancient Egyptians themselves. Some five or six centuries ago, these desiccated mummies the Jewish and Arab physicians looked upon as possessing great medicinal properties and prescribed them for patients all over Europe. To this day, perhaps, it is the genuine “*numia*” of the Unani and Hakimi methods of treatment!

Emperor Asoke sent preachers to this Egypt

during the reign of the Ptolemy dynasty. They used to preach religion, cure diseases, live on vegetable food, lead celibate lives and make Sannyasin disciples. They came to found many sects—the Therapeutæ, Essenes, Manichæans and the like, from which modern Christianity has sprung. It was Egypt that became, during the Ptolemaic rule, the nursery of all learning. Here was that city of Alexandria, famous all over the world for its university, its library and its literature;—that Alexandria which falling into the hands of illiterate, bigoted and vulgar Christians, suffered destruction, with its library burnt into ashes and learning stamped out! Finally, the Christians killed the lady savant—Hypatia—subjected her dead body to all sorts of abominable insults, and dragged it through the streets till every bit of flesh was removed from the bones!



OCCASIONAL NOTES.

RELIGION is the soul of India and the true history of India is the history of the evolution and progress of her religion. Dominated as the generality of the children of Aryavarta has been by the higher considerations of life, they cared more for subjects concerned with the eternal interests of man than with the mundane affairs that minister to the transient physical comforts and material progress of the individual and society. Judged aright, the tendency of the Hindu race is found to

be decidedly spiritualistic, and this spirit is clearly reflected in all its activity and thought.

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The story of Buddhism—its genesis and growth, its triumph and achievement, its degeneration and fall—forms a most glorious chapter to the history of Bharatavarsha. The advent of Buddha marked a new epoch in the religious history of the world. He was born at a time when the noble and ancient religion of Aryavarta, promulgated by the Vedic seers of truth and developed and preached by successive lines of sages and saints, became enmeshed in dead formalism and blind ceremonials, in meaningless penances and mortifications. In direct opposition to the grand principles of the Religion Eternal, there came into existence, as time rolled on, invidious distinctions of privileges, inhuman oppression of the poor, and bloody sacrifices which showed utter disregard for the sanctity of animal life.

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The task before Buddha was no easy one. Fully conscious of the great mission which he came to fulfil, he gave up the glories of royalty, cut asunder the tenderest ties of the world, and gladly chose for himself the hard life of a Bhikshu to realise the truth and to find out the way to Nirvana. He had to fight the iniquities and irreligion of the age. He placed before man the true spirit of religion and brought the message of love and salvation to the doors of all—to the Aryan and the non-Aryan, the high and the low, the privileged and the oppressed alike. He preached a highly ethical religion and in his moral code there was place for every living

being, even for birds and beasts. His was a universal religion and this backed by the great personality and the spiritual forces of the Master became the dominating faith in the continent of Asia. In every country where the religion of Buddha was propagated, whether in the land of its birth or in foreign countries, it fought against the sacrifice of animals, against immorality and unrighteousness. The triumph of Buddhism did not lie in grand temples and pompous ceremonials introduced later on by the followers, but in the moral precepts and in the message of "mercy and charity, truth and purity, kindness and goodness"—which the great founder preached at Benares Rajagriha and other places,—teachings that are enshrined in the immortal Tripitakas of the Buddhists.

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Of all the great religions of the world it is the special glory of the Vedic religion and its rebel child, Buddhism, that they were preached not by the power of the sword but by the innate strength and invincible potency of their principles and culture. The sphere of the influence of Buddhism has been much greater than that of the Mother-religion. And between the fifth and tenth centuries of the Christian era, more than one half of the human race embraced the religion of the Enlightened One. This was accomplished not with the help of religious persecutions or forcible conversions, which taint the history of the Semitic religions, but by the unconquerable power of love and by the unflinching appeal which the religion of Buddha made to the higher sense of mankind. The Indo-Aryans who

went to foreign lands never made their religion subserve any material end. And the commercial adventures, colonising enterprises and missionary projects they undertook were under no circumstances utilised as means to further any form of political domination or economic exploitation. India had no imperialistic policy and ambition, and, therefore, she never cared to make herself rich in material wealth by exploiting any nation on earth. No people that came under the direct influence of an Indian religion, be it Hinduism or Buddhism, had any occasion to complain of any political motive on her part as did the African chief who referring to the policy of the Christian nations of the West most pathetically said, "First the missionary, then the trader—then the gun-boat, and then—Oh Lord!" The great glory of India lies in the fact that she tried to keep her material prosperity subservient to the ultimate spiritual end of life. And India's missionaries, to whichever land they carried their message of peace and harmony, remained satisfied to advance only the cause of their religion and culture, without attempting, like the missionaries of the West, to destroy the distinctive civilisation of the children of the soil.

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Buddhism represents only a certain aspect of the great and ancient religion of the Indo-Aryans. The Sanatana Dharma takes into full consideration the capacity and tendencies of men to strive for the *summum bonum* of life. It recognises the great psychological fact that although the Highest Truth is one, there must be innumerable steps leading to it, and

men must travel from lower truths to higher truths until the very culmination is reached. In spite of the exaltation of Sannyasa, the Vedic religion does not inculcate that monasticism is the only way to salvation. The life of the monk and the life of the householder are both good; knowledge alone is essential for man's emancipation—this is the precept of the Sanatana Dharma. But Buddhism on the other hand put the greatest stress on monasticism and preached that it is indispensable for escaping the miseries of existence and attaining Nirvana. It placed the highest ideal of Sannyasa and Ahimsa before even the uncultured and uncivilised. It forgot that the pure and self-controlled alone can lead the life of true renunciation, and the strong and fearless only can practise non-injury in thought, word and deed. In the mad rush of the Buddhists to realise the highest ideal of religion and attain Nirvana, monasticism became in most cases a travesty, and Ahimsa a cloak to hide a dreadful weakness. This contributed to no small extent to the emasculation and degeneration of the people of India, and to the downfall of the country from the pinnacle of her glory.

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Whatever may be the nature of degraded Buddhism, however great might be its divergence from the great Mother-religion, the pure form of Buddhism as preached by the Enlightened One, is an exposition of the true spirit of the ancient faith, a natural development of the old religion of the Vedas. Hinduism represents the brain, and Buddhism the heart of the same ancient religion of India.

The followers of the two great religions have lived long in utter isolation to the great disadvantage of both. We want now a true union based on the eternal principles common to Hinduism and Buddhism alike. We should now recognise that the Hindu and the Buddhist both belong to the same Sanatana Dharma of India, so that we may realise the underlying unity, like the Nepali Buddhist who would resent and retort, if he is called a non-Hindu by any of his Hindu countrymen, saying, "You are a Hindu and so am I. You are a worshipper of Siva, and I am a worshipper of Buddha." In memorable words Swami Vivekananda advocated the union between the Hindu and the Buddhist, in the Chicago Parliament of Religions; and that day would indeed be blessed when we all would realise the true significance of his momentous utterance:—"Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. The Buddhist cannot stand without the brain and philosophy of the Brahmanas. nor the Brahmana without the heart of the Buddhist. Let us join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmana with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanising power of the Great Master." Such a union is sure to lead to the uplift not only of India but also of all the Buddhist countries of Asia. It would see the beginning of a world-federation established on the bed-rock of a common spiritual ideal, and strengthened by the common desire and efforts to realise the truth and perfection, the goal of man's existence on earth.

THE SWAMI BRAHMANANDA.

SRIMAT Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, the Head of the Ramakrishna Order ever since its inception, has entered into Mahasamadhi at the age of sixty on the 10th of April last. The suddenness of his exit from the arena of his activities as the fountain-head of inspiration to this monastic body and the large number of lay devotees and admirers who have gathered round the names of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, has given a terrible blow to the hearts of these people, whose idol he was. Those, specially, who had the good fortune to come into close personal contact with him feel it as a never-to-be-forgotten loss, a calamity all the more serious because they had scarcely yet recovered from the shock of bereavement of the Holy Mother about a year and a half ago, and it was to the Swami Brahmananda that they looked for guidance and support in their hours of trial and need, in the absence of the Mother. The decree of Providence has removed him, too, from their midst, and no wonder that the members of the Ramakrishna Order are dismayed to think how they can find life worth living without the serene presence of their beloved leader and guide amidst them. The thousand and one qualities of head and heart that, along with his rare spirituality, conspired to make Swami Brahmananda the towering personality that he was, leave one in no doubt as to the fact that he had attained the consummation of life—not only for himself, but also as a

beacon-light to guide countless others through the pathless ocean of this world.

We have it from Swami Ramakrishnananda that it was during the life-time of the Master that one day Swami Vivekananda, or Narendranath as he was then called, came and said to Sri Ramakrishna, "We have made Rakhal (the former name of Swami Brahmananda) our king (Raja)." Then addressing his brother-disciples present he said, "He is our king; you fellows are his subjects,"—at which Sri Ramakrishna expressed great satisfaction. From that time forward Swami Brahmananda has been called by his Gurubhais as "Raja" and latterly as "Maharaj," and in the Ramakrishna Order he was known by this distinctive title and, out of respect, never mentioned by name. Swami Ramakrishnananda also said, "None of us mixed with Sri Ramakrishna so intimately as he did." In fact, the Master always looked upon the Swami Brahmananda as his "spiritual son," sent specially by the Divine Mother to take care of his body. Consequently he allowed the Swami privileges that were vouchsafed to none else. He took "Maharaj" on his shoulders, and often did Maharaj lie resting his head on Sri Ramakrishna's lap. During this period of intimate association Sri Ramakrishna trained his favourite boy for the great mission he was to fulfil in after-life, and besides making him undergo various spiritual practices under his direct guidance, equipped him also with a rare amount of secular knowledge which later on enabled the Swami to be equal to any occasion, and lent that remarkable versatility to his genius. For example,

the Master instructed him how to judge a person's character by sight, and everyone knows how through this insight he could tackle with consummate skill the multifarious problems arising in connection with the individual and collective welfare of the Brotherhood of which he was the Head and of the numerous lay devotees who sought his advice and guidance—secular as well as spiritual. Nature had endowed him with another fascinating element in his character—namely, his childlike simplicity. We have it from the authority already quoted that on one occasion Sri Ramakrishna was so much struck with this trait of his, that he burst into tears as he said, "You are so simple ! Ah, who will look after you after I am gone !" It was gratifying to note how this affectionate solicitude of Sri Ramakrishna was responded to by everyone taking the utmost care of the Swami throughout his life. In the prophetic words of the Swami Vivekananda : The Divine Mother writes with Her own hand on the forehead of people of such spiritual stamp that all nature must honour them, and nature instinctively obeys !

After the passing away of Sri Ramakrishna in 1886, the Swami Brahmananda spent over six years outside the Math, practising Sadhana and leading a wandering monk's life, mostly accompanied by a brother-disciple. During this period he visited many holy places of Northern India and went as far as Dwarka in Kathiawar. Thus he had the opportunity to get a first hand knowledge of the condition of the country and the infinite variety of beliefs and opinions that obtain in this miniature

continent. Though accustomed to the comforts of a luxurious life from his birth,—for he was the son of a Zamindar of Basirhat in the district of 24 Perganas,—he showed a wonderful adaptability to the new life of renunciation he had cheerfully embraced at the call of Sri Ramakrishna, and took no thought for physical necessities, intent all the while on the realisation of the highest truths of religion, which alone he ever considered as the supreme goal of human aspirations. Sri Ramakrishna had clearly detected the sterling qualities of his pupil's mind and described him in the following glowing terms: "He is a Nitya-siddha,—an Iswara-koti. He belongs to that class of exceptional personages who have already finished their course of Sadhana and realised the Goal in some previous birth, and whose spiritual practices in this life are superfluous, being simply to re-discover their past realisations. Their advent on earth is for teaching mankind. These pure souls form the retinue of the Lord in His Incarnation." Be it said here that this unique distinction of being an Iswara-koti, Sri Ramakrishna, conferred on only six of his disciples, the foremost among them being the Swami Vivekananda. Those who have come into personal touch with the Swami Brahmananda may verify for themselves whether Sri Ramakrishna's supersensuous vision was correct or not, for the Swami was the embodiment of Love and his very presence always created an atmosphere of the highest purity, blessedness and peace which never failed unconsciously to take off the burden of sorrow and anxiety from the hearts of those who sought shelter at his feet. If

the time-honoured scriptures are an authority, then certainly the Swami Brahmananda was a man of realisation par excellence, for in him one could notice a full measure of those characteristics of a free soul—purity, unselfishness and love, and these coupled with a deep insight into the spirit of the scriptures made him an ideal teacher, ever ready to serve afflicted humanity with the best fruits of his realisation

Swami Brahmananda was the quiet type of preacher while Swami Vivekananda was the thundering type. He never except once lectured from a public platform, yet his influence was unique; it was like the gentle influence of the spring which works silently, unperceived, but clothes the whole of nature with heavenly beauty. Sri Ramakrishna himself hit off this peculiarity of his disciple in his characteristic way, describing him as “a mango that does not change its colour to let people know that it is ripe.” How true and how significant! Another tribute the Master used to apply to the Swami Brahmananda, viz., that he was like “a flint which you might put a thousand years under water but which would emit fire the moment you hit it.” The Swami, like his great Master, was not a “stingy, pain-bugging” Sadhu, but lived apparently amidst princely surroundings, which sometimes misled casual observers, who, however, if they cared to look deeper, always came face to face with the underlying bed-rock of spirituality that, ever beyond the touch of worldliness, spurned at things mundane as mere rubbish! About men of realisation we hear that they never “make a false step.”

So we find that Swami Brahmananda had a keen sense of proportion which enabled him to put everything into its proper place, and this it was that made even brass look like gold in his care, not only figuratively but literally. He was born to educate people not of the mediæval period but of the twentieth century, and as such a certain amount of modernity was necessary in him. Accordingly we find him representing the ancient ideals of Indian life in a vesture suited to the requirements of the modern age. While he exhorted the young monastic members of the Mission to a life of intense spiritual practice, he warned them against needless hardship, which, he knew, would tell upon their weaker constitution and so baffle the very object for which they set out. His methods were always constructive and never destructive, and like a true teacher he always suited his instructions to the taste and capacities of the pupil, and each therefore had just that kind of Sadhana prescribed for him as would take him to his goal by the shortest route. The Ramakrishna Order comprises monks of all shades of opinion, and Swami Brahmananda's large-heartedness and active sympathy, as much as his wisdom and foresight, guided everyone in the best possible way for his individual growth and well-being as well as the furtherance of the work and objects of the Mission itself. As, on the one hand, he looked to the spiritual progress of the inmates of the particular monastery where he might be for the time being—for he occasionally made long tours and visited one or other of the branch centres of the Order—so, on the other hand, he always tried

to see that they got congenial food and clothing and habitation. The monasteries always had an atmosphere of holiness about them under his direction, and he took particular pleasure in planting flower-beds and suitable kitchen-gardens in them and the Ashrama cows got a full share of his personal attention.

Swami Brahmananda, with his high degree of spirituality, was the very embodiment of bliss—radiating joy at every movement. He was also a lover of fun and an intimate friend to children. Wherever he might be, there always gathered round him a group of little children who were as free with him as with one among their playmates. It was a treat to see him, coming down from his spiritual altitude in which perhaps he held the audience spell-bound by the sweet flow of his soul-stirring words of encouragement and assurance to the spiritual aspirants, indulge in childlike gambols with the little children who perhaps were seeking for this opportunity to come to him. It was a side-splitting laughter that he could create by inventing novel ways of amusing them by facial expressions, or the use of masks, and the passing away of the Swami has been a rude shock to the joys of this little fraternity who have lost in him their best friend and companion.

The lady-devotees of Sri Ramakrishna also have suffered an irreparable loss at the sudden disappearance of the Swami, specially as they had of late been deprived of the blessed communion with the Holy Mother. The Swami Brahmananda had a good number of lady-disciples—as he had hundreds

of disciples, lay and monastic, among his own sex—and they used to snatch an hour or two from their busy occupations and receive solace and spiritual comfort at the paternal feet of the venerable Swami who often obliged them by partaking of the cooked delicacies they brought. He was quite free with them and would teach them, often, as he once expressed it, forgetting that he was in female company. By his own realisation and through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna he was above the sex-idea and thus could freely impart to the lady-devotees the priceless treasures of his spiritual experience—leaving indelible impressions on their minds which will never fail to help them as mothers to influence their children's lives as well.

The Swami Brahmananda was always kind to all, even the so-called untouchable classes. Last year he revisited Benares after six years, and one of the first things he did was to inquire about the sweeper, whom he had brought to his presence and asked how his children were doing. The menial servants of the monasteries always received his kind attention and presents.

The Swami took special pleasure in feeding people and wherever he went there was always a good stock of Prasad available. He was a believer in image-worship as an indispensable discipline in the spiritual development of ordinary men. Those who are acquainted with the actual Mantrams and procedure followed in these worships know that they are based upon the Advaita as their background. In 1912 the Swami was at Kankhal (Haridwar), one of the great religious centres of

Northern India and while there it occurred to him to worship the Goddess Duiga in the image, in that stronghold of Sadhus of the old type who look askance at worship of all kinds, considering it as beneath the dignity of a Sannyasin to do. The image was brought from Calcutta and for the first time the Kankhal public had a typical Bengalee scene bodily transposed into their midst. The Tantras enjoin some kind of Bali or offering in this worship and this generally takes the shape of animal-sacrifice. The Swami had of course planned an offering of vegetables, and the Sadhus, who had been invited, closely watched the proceedings, specially what fate awaited the offered fruits—whether they later on found their way among the things cooked and presented as sacramental food. To their great relief they found that the offered fruits and vegetables remained as they were. Swami Brahmananda had prepared quite an agreeable surprise for them in the shape of various sweetmeats—delicacies of Bengal unknown to them, and they had to confess, as they do even now, that they had never before tasted anything so palatable. This is only one instance of the Swami's subtle sense of humour and of his manner of entertaining people in general.

He was a great lover of devotional music, and considered it as a very useful aid in the religious life. Accordingly he lost no opportunity to convene musical *soirees* wherever he went, and expert singers and players considered it their proud privilege to entertain him with performances of their skill. His keen æsthetic sense at once picked out what things were worth taking from the towns and

provinces he visited, and he transplanted them to other parts, so that these good things might be universally shared. As an instance of this we may mention his introduction into the Math of the Rama-nama chant which he heard for the first time recited in Madras in 1909. He breathed quite a new life into it by causing it to be sung in fascinating tunes. Now the Rama-nama chant may be heard throughout Bengal, and in various other parts of India, including the place of its birth where one can scarcely recognise it now in its new garb.

Under the Swami Brahmananda's fostering care the infant Ramakrishna Mission handed over to his charge by his great brother-disciple, the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, has spread its branches far and wide, doing its humble bit of service in the alleviation of the sufferings of man.

In his passing away the country, and in a remote way the world, has suffered a serious loss, the extent of which it is at present too early to judge. During the last two years of his life the Swami set himself to build a monastery at Bhubaneswar, in the Puri District, and almost brought it to completion, when he came to Calcutta in January last. He was in pretty good health and, after finishing many important items of work, was thinking of going back to the quieter atmosphere of Bhubaneswar, when he had an attack of cholera in the last week of March, from which he was just recovering when he had a violent relapse of diabetes which had once overtaken him some three years ago. The attack soon proved too serious for treatment and the doctors as well as the Swami knew that the

end was approaching. Two days before the fateful night, he called his Gurubhais and disciples near him, and in a most exalted mood spoke hour after hour on spiritual topics in a manner that will never be effaced from the memory of the listeners. These last exhortations were too sweet and ethereal to be reproduced in words. The Swami felt and indicated that it was time for him to end his sport on earth, that the Voice of the Beloved Lord was calling him back, now that his task was over, to His blessed companionship. The hour drew nigh. The curtain fell—the Swami entered into Mahasamadhi.

Space does not permit us to do justice even to a fraction of the wonderful many-sidedness of the Swami's character—if at all one had the power to do so—and all we can say is that everything about this unique personality was pure, lovable and sweet, a perennial source of joy and inspiration, which unconsciously lifted those who came in his contact to regions far beyond their reach, and yet by its very simplicity and appealing directness made all forget for the time being that they were in such an august presence, that he who was exhorting them in such a motherly way to lead an active, unselfish, spiritual life was a messenger from other spheres which the corruptions of the world cannot reach but the blissful denizens of which are melted into pity by the wailings of creatures on earth, and who therefore come down, giving up their never-ending bliss, to share the burden of suffering humanity and show them the way to eternal Blessedness and Peace. Our only consolation now is that such spiritual giants cannot die, that they live for

ever. Death has no power over them ; their entrances into, and exits from the world are quite at their will. Sri Maharaj was living, is living, and will live ever after. He just put on the temporary clothing of a body which it has now pleased him to give up. But in his spiritual body he is ever present, here and now—in the heart of all sincere devotees, shedding his benign influence and guiding them to their destined Goal !

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥ॐ॥

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EPISTLE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Almora.

The 29th July, 1897

My dear Miss Noble,*

A letter from S—— reached me yesterday, informing me that you are determined to come to India and see things with your own eyes. I replied to that yesterday, but what I learnt from Miss —— about your plans makes this further note necessary, and it is better that it should be direct.

Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man but a woman ; a real lioness, to work for the Indians, women specially.

India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education

*Later on known as the Sister Nivedita

sincerity, purity, immense love, determination and above all, the Celtic blood make you just the woman wanted.

Yet the difficulties are many. You cannot form any idea of the misery, the superstition, and the slavery that are here. You will be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank and every one of your movements will be watched with suspicion.

Then the climate is fearfully hot our winter in most places being like your summer, and in the south it is always blazing.

Not one European comfort is to be had in places out of the cities. If in spite of all this you dare venture into the work, you are welcome, hundred times welcome. As for me, I am nobody here as elsewhere, but what little influence I have, shall be devoted to your service.

You must think well before you plunge in, and after work, if you fail in this or get disgusted, on my part I promise you *I will stand by you unto death* whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it. "The tusks of the elephant come out but never go back;"—so are the words of a man never retracted. I promise you that. Again I must give you a bit of warning. You must stand on your own feet and not be under the wings of — or anybody else. — is a good lady in her own way, but unfortunately it got into her head, when she was a girl, that she was a born leader and that no other qualifications were necessary to move the world but money! This idea is coming on the surface again and again in spite of herself and you will find it impossible to pull on with her in a few days. She now

intends to take a house in Calcutta for herself and yourself and other European or American friends who may come.

It is very kind and good of her but her Lady Abbess plan will never be carried out for two reasons,—her violent temper and overbearing conduct, and her awfully vacillating mind. Friendship with many is best at a distance and everything goes well with the person who stands on his own feet.

Mrs.— is a jewel of a lady, so good, so kind. The —s are the *only* English people who do not hate the *natives*, — not excepted. Mr. and Mrs.— are the only persons who *did not come* to patronise us but they have no fixed plans yet. When you come, you may get them to work with you and that will be really helpful to them and to you. But after all it is absolutely necessary to stand on one's own feet.

I learn from America two friends of mine, Mrs.— of Boston and Miss —, are coming on a visit to India this autumn. Miss — you already know in London, that Paris-dressed young American lady, Mrs. — is about fifty and has been a kind friend to me in America.

I may suggest that your joining the party may while away the tedium of the journey, as they also are coming by way of Europe.

I am glad to receive a note at last from S— after long. But it was so stiff and cold. It seems he is disappointed at the collapse of the London work.

With everlasting love,

Yours ever in the Lord,

Vivekananda.

THE AGE OF THE RAMAYANA.

TRADITION assigns to the Ramayana a higher antiquity than the Mahabharata. Weber says that the poem "bears plainly enough on its surface, in rhyme and metre, the traces of a later date" (Sans. Lit. p. 191) Again, because the word "sita" means "field-furrow," she "represents Aryan husbandry" and Mr. R. C. Dutt also confirms Weber's theory by saying, "when cultivation gradually spread towards Southern India, it was not difficult to invent a poetical myth that Sita was carried to the south." Thus Prof. Weber and his follower Mr. Dutt are in the Ramayana "from the very outset in the region of allegory." Prof. Weber's theory that "the colonisation of Southern India could hardly begin until the settlement of Hindustan by the Aryans had been completed and the feuds that arose there had been fought out," falls to the ground when we see that the Mahabharata war did not take place at the time of the Aryan colonisation of the north, which had occurred many centuries before. It was a war for overlordship, for bringing all tribes and races of the time under one imperial sway and not a war of colonisation. Mr. Dutt bewails the passing away of the heroic age of India on reading the Ramayana and he misses "characters distinguished by fiery valour, and battles fought with real obstinacy and determination," and so he is inclined to place the Ramayana after the Mahabharata. This is due to Mr. Dutt's own individual temperament and his Western discipleship. Because the poet of the Ramayana shows greater poetical skill in the handling of his subject-matter and tries to humanise his characters with his fine sense of art, we cannot set him down to a later age. Prof. Macdonell explodes Prof. Weber's assumption of Greek influence in the story of the Ramayana. This German scholar is an upholder of Hellenic culture and sings in praise of Hellas in season and out of season. The chance resemblances of the tale of the abduction of Sita and

the expedition to Lanka for her recovery with that of the rape of Helen and the Trojan war, and the account of the bending of the great bow by Rama in order to win Sita with the adventure of Ulysses have been adduced by Weber to prove Hellenic influence in the Ramayana. This is out-Heroding Herod in the matter of historical discussion and shows racial bias and prejudiced ideas.

Internal evidence proves that the Ramayana had been composed before the Mahabharata assumed a definite shape. We do not come across a single instance where the heroes of the Mahabharata or any parts of the story have been mentioned in the Ramayana, while the heroes of the latter have been referred to in the Mahabharata. The Ramopakhyana or the Episode of Rama in Book III is based on the Ramayana. "Again, in a passage of Book VII of the Mahabharata, which cannot be regarded as a later addition, two lines are quoted as Valmiki's that occur unaltered in Book VI of the Ramayana. The poem of Valmiki must therefore have been generally known as an old work before the Mahabharata assumed a coherent form." (Macdonell's Hist. of Sans. Lit. p. 306). This agrees well with tradition also, which says that Valmiki is the first poet and his epic is the first poetic work of the human mind. We do not understand why writers of history should abandon tradition altogether in their zeal for finding out historical truths. Tradition should not be neglected but should be taken into account and brought to bear upon facts. Tradition embalms and preserves events of prehistoric times, and though the memory of men is not always faithful, yet its service cannot be altogether overlooked. Let us see what Schlegel says with regard to researches in ancient history. "Historical tradition must never be abandoned in the Philosophy of History, otherwise we lose all firm ground and footing. But historical tradition ever so accurately conceived and carefully sifted doth not always, especially in the early and primitive stages, bring with it a full and demonstrative certainty. In such cases, we have nothing to do but to record, as it is given, the best and safest testimony which tradition, so far as we have

it, can afford, supposing even that some things in that testimony may appear strange, obscure, and even enigmatical; and perhaps a comparison with some other part of historical science, or if I may so speak, stream of tradition, will unexpectedly lead to the solution of the difficulty." (Schlegel's *Philosophy of History*, Translated by J. B. Robertson, p. 71). Thus historians must not disregard and leave out tradition of a country in ascertaining chronological data and historical events. European Orientalists and their Indian followers suppose the events narrated in the Mahabharata to have taken place before those narrated in the Ramayana. But the vast body of Sanskrit literature, and tradition of the Hindus, the difference in the style of composition of the two epics, and the reference in the Mahabharata to the events narrated in the Ramayana, go against their assumption and corroborate our view that the Ramayana is prior to the Mahabharata.

The Ramayana is partly a story of the colonisation of the South by the Aryans—a tale of the great struggle between the Aryans of the North and the aborigines of the South. It is probable that Ravana, a Dravidian king, to whom the Uraons trace their descent, reigned over a portion of Southern India. Rama, the greatest Aryan hero, penetrated into the South and carried the Aryan arms to the southernmost point of India. The scanty geographical knowledge of the Hindus in that remote age is reflected in the Ramayana and though the South was not colonised by the Aryans, feudatory kingdoms owing allegiance to the Aryan arms, were established in the mainland with Sugriva as its chief and in Ceylon with Bibhishana as its ruler. The solar king Ikshvaku founded the ancient kingdom of Ayodhya and Prof Heeren places Rama in the 37th generation and Sir William Jones (*On the Chronology of the Hindus—Asiatic Researches*, Vol. II) places him in the 56th generation from Ikshvaku. Prof. Heeren places the origin of Ayodhya "from 1500 to 2000 years before the Christian era." (Heeren's *Historical Researches*, Vol. II, p. 270) Taking for granted the calculation of the Western Orientalists that Ramachandra was born in the 17th century B. C., we

shall not be accused of over-calculation if we think that the Ramayana celebrating the achievements of the great hero, was composed in his life-time. For in the Ramayana itself we see that Rama heard the poem recited by Kusa and Laba in accompaniment with the lyre in the royal assembly. It is natural that the poet composed his celebrated poem and had it sung before his royal patron. Thus we shall not be wide of the mark if we say that the Ramayana was composed in the 17th century B. C.

HARIPADA GHOSAL, M. A., M. R. A. S.



A MEDITATION.

IS there no Power greater than that wielded by my pettier self? Is there no Strength upon which I can found the sureness of my soul, its peace eternal and its rest sublime; or is there neither strength, nor soul, nor peace, nor rest, and is life a whirling of woes?

Is weakness all inherent, and can will never cleave its way to purpose? Is there no Law upon whose certain workings one may build the lofty temple of expressed ideals, or is all chaos uttermost, and are ideals only dreams of those who can but dream?

Where is there life set fast upon a changelessness of Vision? Where is there an ideal fixed as adamant, so that the soul may go towards it with purpose overwhelming; or is it folly to be strong in life, is it blindness to see but One, Great Single Fact?

O, the paths of life are multiple, and dreams do bind and dreamers die. The scene shifts oft and blinds from accurate sight the greatness of whatever is. The changes that come over the soul are myriad-fold and myriad-numbered; and on the rush of ceaseless things the soul is hurled from birth to death.

How petty are the dreamer's dreams; how weak is the effort to be; for the effort is checked by numberless things that stint the growth and stunt the form of life. Aye! Let struggle cease!

Let go the reins of the restless steeds that draw the chariot of the mind and form a never ending race,—for it is only the fool who cares for the goal when the goal is set nowhere.

Aye! The countless throngs are innumerable that storm across the field of life and storm to failure and to stress, and storm to vanities and death.

The course is a myth and the spectators spectres, and the whole is set in the dream of a fool. Free thy Self from the vacant dream! Renounce it all; it only leads to sorrow, to struggle renewed, to death.

Dreams that come and dreams that go, like clouds, travel over the moon of the soul, but passing is the nature of dreams, and freedom is the soul's own, is the Atman's; the rest is naught and is dead and binding.

Sing the Atman's strength; sing the Atman's life, for "Thou art That" and freedom from all bonds is thy heritage and right! Break the bonds! Break the dreams! Thou art the Atman free!

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 147.)

विदेहानां पुरे ह्यस्मिन्नहमेकैव मूढधीः ।

याऽन्यमिच्छन्त्यस्यस्मादात्मदात्काममच्युतात् ॥३४॥

34. In this city of Videha, verily I am the only foolish person who, of wicked heart, seeks any other source of enjoyment than the Lord who confers (the realisation of) the Self.

सुहृत्प्रेष्ठतमो नाथ आत्मा चायं शरीरिणाम् ।

तं विक्रीयात्मनैवाहं रमंऽनेन यथा रसा ॥३५॥

35. He is the friend, the dearest of the dear, the Master, nay, the very Self of all embodied beings; winning Him over by giving up the body (to Him), I shall enjoy His company, like Lakshmi.

कियत्प्रियं ते व्यभजन्कामा ये कामदा नराः ।

आद्यन्तवन्तो भार्याया देवा वा कालविद्रुताः ॥३६॥

36. How much¹ enjoyment have these ever conferred on women who depend upon them—your sense-objects, or men who pose as fulfilling desires, or your gods either, having a beginning and end and being overrun by Time ?

[¹ *How much etc.*—None but God can give us lasting bliss. He is the only Refuge of all beings.]

नून मे भगवान्प्रीतो विष्णुः केनापि कर्मणा ।

निर्वेदोऽयं दुराशया यन्मे जातः सुखावहः ॥३७॥

37 Surely I have pleased the Lord Vishnu by some deed or other, since out of a vain expectation this happy disgust has come to me.

मैवं स्युर्मन्दभाग्यायाः क्लेशा निर्वेदहेतवः ।

येनानुबन्धं निर्हृत्य पुरुषः शममृच्छति ॥३८॥

38. Otherwise, unhappy that I am, these miseries would not have fallen to my lot, bringing on disgust, by means of which man getting rid of trammels¹ attains to peace.

[¹ *Trammels*—e. g. the house and chattels etc.]

तेनोपकृतमादाय शिरसा ग्राम्यसंगताः ।

त्यक्त्वा दुराशाः शरणं ब्रजामि तमधीश्वरम् ॥३९॥

39. Accepting this gift of the Lord on my head, I give up my vain expectations that pertain only to sense-objects, and take refuge in the Supreme Lord.

[¹ *On my head*—i. e. reverentially.]

संतुष्टा श्रद्धधृत्येतद्यथालाभेन जीवती ।

विहराम्यमुनैवाहमात्मना रमणेन वै ॥४०॥

40. Putting my faith in this (gift of the Lord) I shall live content on what comes to me, and shall enjoy the company of that Lover—the Atman.

संसारकूपे पतितं विषयैर्मुषितेक्षणम् ।

ग्रस्तं कालाहिनाऽऽत्मानं कोऽन्यस्त्रातुमधीश्वरः ॥४१॥

41. Who else can save the Jiva fallen into the pit of transmigration, robbed of his vision by the senses¹ and swallowed up by the serpent of Time?

[¹ *Senses*—i. e. the clinging to the senses.]

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो गोप्ता निर्विद्येत यदाखिलात् ।

अप्रमत्त इदं पश्येद्ग्रस्तं कालाहिना जगत् ॥४२॥

42. When one beholds this universe swallowed up by the serpent of Time, becomes watchful and turns oneself away from everything, then the 'Self alone¹ is the saviour of oneself.

[¹ *Self alone etc.*—This suggests that Pingala, having now attained this state of dispassion, is not anxious for Mukti and

wishes to serve the Lord from no selfish motive but simply for love.]

ब्राह्मणा उवाच ।

एवं व्यवसितमतिर्दुराशां कान्ततर्षजाम् ।

छित्त्वोपशममास्थाय शय्यामुपविवेश सा ॥४३॥

The Brahmin said:

43. Having thus determined in her mind, she broke loose from the vain expectations due to a hankering for lovers, and sat in her bed, attaining composure.

आशा हि परमं दुःखं नैराश्यं परमं सुखम् ।

यथा संछिद्य कान्ताशां सुखं सुष्वाप पिङ्गला ॥४४॥

44. Expectation is surely the greatest misery, and giving up all expectations is the greatest bliss.—As Pingala slept happily, getting rid of the hankering for lovers.

(To be continued.)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Sri Ramakrishna Galpa-lahari. Part I—(Bengali) Compiled by the Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Kalma (Dacca). Published by Das Chakravarty & Co., Booksellers and Publishers, No. 6 Kalidas Singh's Lane, Calcutta. Pp. 44. Price 5 as.

We are very glad to receive this small collection of parables of Sri Ramakrishna, elucidated and modified to suit the requirements of little children. The moral is given at the end of each story. The booklet, we are sure, will be welcome and profitable to the Child Narayanas to whom it is dedicated.

Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama Granthamala (Canarese)—Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bull Temple Road, Bangalore City. Annual Subscription Rs. 3. Single copy 10 annas.

This is a bi-monthly that intends to present to the Canarese-knowing public translations of the Bengali literature of the Ramakrishna Order. The first issue contains about 50 pages of Demy size and gives translations of the first few chapters of "Swami Sishya Samvad"—Conversations and Dialogues of Swami Vivekananda, recorded by Srijut Sarat Chandra Chakravarty, B. A.—and of the famous "Lilaprasanga" by Srimat Swami Saradananda, dealing with the life of Sri Ramakrishna in a comprehensive manner. Both the translators are specialists in Canarese and are well conversant with Bengali literature. The translation keeps up the spirit of the original. The printing and paper are good. We heartily recommend it to the Canarese-reading public.

The Brain of India.—By Sri Aurobindo Ghose. Published by Prabartak Publishing House, Boraichanditala, Chandernagore. Pp. 47.

The book is a reprint of some thoughtful articles that once appeared in the *Karma-Yogin*. We see here in a nutshell the secret of India's past brain-power and her system of education with suggestions for a new adjustment that will not miss the ancient spiritual ideal.

At the outset the author analyses, like a true critic, the Bengali intellect and points out its merits and demerits. Possessed of 'the emotion and imagination which is open to the great inspirations, the mighty heart-stirring ideas that move humanity,' the gift of thinking with the heart, the subtle brain that can pierce into the mysteries of thought and nature, the mighty will-power—the fruit of his long worship of *Shakti* and practice of Tantra and above all, the intuitional insight that can do away with education and command any knowledge easily, the Bengali 'has led and still leads the higher thought of India.' But he lacks the reasoning power noticeable in the Madrasi and the Marathi, that 'creates the accurate and careful scholar, the sober critic and the rationalist and cautious politician.'

Next is considered, as succinctly as is consistent with clearness, the main psychological principles on which was

based the system of ancient Indian education. Education in India unlike that in Western countries is the manifestation of the perfection already in man and should, according to the author, stand on the bed-rock of *Brahmacharya*—the practice of chastity in thought, word and deed—which will develop the *Sattvika* element in man. Such an education produced giants in history and will continue to do so as is evidenced by the wonderful critical intellect of Shankara and the transcendental divine insight of Sri Ramakrishna.

Character-building. By Earnest Wood. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 84.

It is a practical course containing hints and exercises calculated to bring about a harmonious development of the noble faculties of human nature. "There is one quality," says the author very truly, "which lies at the root of all successful and permanent development of character, and that is courage, and this should form the foundation of your building of character."

Sanatana Dharma.—A lecture delivered by Srimat Swami Abhedananda at Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S. Published by the Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur. Pp. 14.

The Swami speaks of the high principles and ideals of the Religion Eternal, and of its great catholicity and bright future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Parityakta—(A drama in Bengali)—By Sri Narayan Chandra Ghosh. Published by Bangabani Samavay, 37, Wellington Street, Calcutta. Pp. 146. Price Re. 1.

India in England.—By Helena Normanton, B. A. Published by S. Ganesan, Publisher, Triplicane, Madras. Pp. 248. Price Rs. 2.

*The Chirala Perala Tragedy.** An episode of voluntary exile. By G. V. Krishna Rao. Pp. 153. Price Re. 1.

*The Temple of Freedom.**—Presidential address to the Students' Conference, Ahmedabad, December, 1921.—By Sarojini Devi. Pp. 22.

*Thoughts upon Democracy.**—By Joseph Mazzini. Pp. 44.

*Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras.

REPORTS AND APPEALS

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, 119/1 Corporation Street, Calcutta, for the year 1921.

Under the direct care and management of an able monastic member of the Mission this small but unique institution is silently doing its noble work of turning out all-round young men by supplementing university education by practical, intellectual and spiritual training. Special care is taken to instil high ideals into the minds of the students and to create a healthy atmosphere favourable to their growth. At the end of the year under report there were eight students, seven free and one paying. The total receipts during the year amounted to Rs. 3301-0-1 and total disbursements to Rs. 2315-4-9. The balance of the year 1921, Rs. 985-11-4, together with the previous year's balance of Rs. 1,367-7-6, makes a total balance of Rs. 2,353-2-10. This clearly shows that the financial condition of the Institution is far from satisfactory.

The Home is at present situated in a rented house which cannot accommodate more than eight students. It should have a building of its own, large enough to accommodate at least twenty students, as also funds necessary for maintaining them. The Institution is, besides, in urgent need of a plot of land in the outskirts of Calcutta, and a decent fund to arrange for the vocational training of its inmates. We earnestly hope that our generous countrymen will come forward with their financial support and encouragement.

The Twenty-first Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares.

Started in the year 1900 under the inspiration of that great lover of suffering humanity, Swami Vivekananda, the Home has been trying its best during the long period of 21 years to realise the Ideals of Renunciation and Service as preached by the Swami for the regeneration of the country

The report for the year 1921, to quote from the words of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, who presided at the twentieth annual meeting of the Home, "is an eloquent testimony to the splendid efforts made by the home in the direction of alleviating human suffering."

The total number of persons relieved during the year 1921 was 13,911, of which 1,167 were indoor and 12,744 outdoor patients.

The total receipts of the year under report including the previous year's balance amounted to Rs. 61,462-9-0 and the total expenditure to Rs. 48,500-5-5, the balance left at the end of the year being Rs. 12,962-3-7.

The Home makes a special appeal for funds to complete the Refuge Block, which is meant for helpless invalids. The building is lying in an unfinished condition for want of funds. Memorial rooms can be erected in this block at a cost of Rs. 1,500 for each room.

The Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Students' Home, Madras, for the year 1921.

The year under report indeed marks an epoch in the history of the institution as it witnessed the establishment of the Home in a suitable permanent habitation of its own. We congratulate the management on the great efficiency with which the work of the Home is being conducted.

The year began with 45 students on the rolls and the strength at the end of the year was 68, the boys being drawn from various parts of South India and from all castes of the Hindu society without distinction. The progress of the boys was satisfactory as is evidenced by their success in the university and class examinations held during the year.

The special feature of the institution is that the internal management is practically in the hands of the boys, and this cultivates in them the spirit of self-reliance and service which is absolutely necessary for the formation of a strong and healthy character. Religious instruction is also imparted to the boys by an able Pandit and also by the head of the Sri

Ramakrishna Math, Madras. A Sannyasin of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna now resides permanently in the Home helping and guiding the boys to bring about a harmonious development of their moral, intellectual and spiritual faculties.

During the year under report a sum of Rs. 64,668-5-9 was received towards the Building Fund bringing the total receipts up to date to Rs. 2,29,036-13-7 including the Government grant. The total receipts for the maintenance of the Home, excluding endowments, amounted to Rs. 12,938-4-2 and the total expenditure to Rs. 11,570-0-9.

The authorities of the Home appeal for funds to ensure its permanent maintenance, as also to found a Technical Institute to impart manual training to meet the modern conditions of life. We fervently hope this appeal will meet with a ready response from the philanthropic public, which it so richly deserves.

NEWS AND NOTES.

Indian Culture and University Education

The modern university education in India has utterly neglected Indian culture and has succeeded only in producing a hybrid type of men who are not actuated by Indian ideals and civilisation. Hence it is no wonder that it does not satisfy the newly awakened national aspirations of the Indian people. Prof. Lalit Kumar Banerjee, President of the Literary Section of the last Bengal Literary Conference, spoke on the deplorable consequences of university education in India. We give below a substance of the report of the address published in the "Servant" of Calcutta. Prof. Banerjee said that in spite of its benefits to the country, the university established for the purpose of the spread of Western knowledge, to the almost supersession of a knowledge of India's past achievements in various branches of learning, had produced a deplorable impression in the country that the Westerner had the sole

monopoly of the highest knowledge and culture. This had in consequence brought on a blind admiration for the West, a "slave-mentality" which was more fatal than political subjection. The system of education in vogue familiarised the Indian students from their childhood with examples of nobleness of character among foreigners, to the complete exclusion of such examples derived from their own national records and legends. All knowledge in various departments of learning came from the West, and, except in the lowest classes, it was communicated through the medium of English, a foreign tongue. The place accorded to the mother tongue of the students was very low even under the new regulations of the Calcutta University. The true natural process should be the acquisition of knowledge which was distinctly Indian, first of all, and this should be supplemented by the knowledge obtainable from the West. Such a combination is calculated to make education complete.

The Professor further said that antiquarian knowledge alone would not be adequate for a truly national education. The spirit of India's past national culture and her high ideals in all spheres of life should permeate her current literature. This was necessary to save the Indian society from the evils arising from a blind admiration for the Western society and Western literature.

The Origin of the so-called Depressed Classes

In spite of the arguments advanced by those who support "untouchability" on sanitary and cultural considerations, the neglect of the so-called lower classes by the higher classes in India has been undoubtedly inhuman. Certain sections of the high caste Hindus have been so much possessed by the idea of pollution that not only will they not touch the Panchama or Pariah but will not even allow him to approach them beyond the 'pollution range'—a distance which may vary with the rank of the different groups of the outcaste people in the orthodox Hindu social scale!

This complete isolation of the outcaste people is partly

due to some deliberate actions of society—to social ban or ostracism—as in the case of, to quote only one out of many instances, the children of the high caste women mated to lower caste men. But in the majority of cases the reason for the practising of exclusiveness is of a different nature. Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Haraprasad Sastri in a paper on Buddhism in Bengal contributed to the Dacca Review throws a good deal of light on this point. He says, “The so-called Depressed Classes, the classes with whom the Brahmins and their followers are not in the habit of keeping any intercourse, are really, ‘most of them, the survivals of the once most powerful, royal, nay, imperial race of Buddhists in Bengal. They have not been depressed or suppressed by the Hindus, but they are disorganised, disintegrated, dismembered and demoralised.’”

From the analogy of Nepal where the Hindu and the Buddhist communities live in utter exclusiveness from each other and do not use even the same well or spring, not to speak of taking water from each other's hands, the Pandit has attempted to prove that the term “Depressed Classes” is a misnomer. There is no evidence to show that the so-called depressed classes were persecuted or suppressed by the Brahmins or their followers. Before the Muhammedan invasion the Buddhists were practically the rulers of the land. But with the political ascendancy of the followers of Islam, the Buddhists who formed the ruling classes suffered more heavily than the Hindu community. A vast majority of the Buddhists was converted into Islam, while those who remained true to their own religion became disorganised and degenerated. Many gradually came within the fold of Hinduism and this process is still going on. “The Brahmins have improved,” says the Pandit, “the organisation of their society. But the Buddhists have lost their organisation, lost their proud tradition, lost their self-consciousness and are now coming to be incorporated in some form or other to the Hindu community of four castes.”

Whatever may be the origin of the depressed classes in

India, the segregation and exclusiveness as current in the present day Hindu society can by no means be supported. The lower classes must be educated and elevated and no efforts are too great to achieve this object. We are to banish all forms of social tyranny from the Hindu society, to effect the union of all castes and creeds, and this is the first condition of our national progress. Unless we set our own house in order by removing untouchability and caste segregation, we can never fight successfully the curse of racial hatred and racial segregation that stands as the greatest impediment to the evolution of humanity and the regeneration of the world.

The Disease of Dignity

Egotism is one of the greatest enemies of man and stands in the way of all human progress, spiritual, intellectual and even material. In a remarkable address delivered at the inaugural meeting of the League of the Educationists, held at Patna, Principal J. H. Thickett of the Patna Training College criticised the present system of Education and exposed some of the evil effects of one of the worst aspects of egotism—the false sense of dignity—on the educational progress in India. He said, “One of the greatest hindrances to healthy educational life here is a widespread endemic disease. It is usually called ‘dignity’ but specialists would probably diagnose it as pride and false pride at that.....We all know the symptoms; the dignified head who can be approached only through request, and the dignified teacher who cannot carry a book or move a black-board without loss of prestige. But the dignified administrative officer is beyond hope.” The remedy has not yet been discovered, but a few injections of horse-sense, so Mr. Thickett thinks, would probably give relief.

The superior officer at present receives from those whom he is pleased to call his subordinates far more attention than is strictly his due. A teacher, whether he belongs to a village primary school or a university college, finds it more profitable to study the whims and prejudices of the superior officer than the character and capacity of the children or students

entrusted to his care. "All this myopic vision and misplaced emphasis on subsidiary factors," said Principal Thickett, "simply means that we have not yet seen the light of true educational principles."

Sri Ramakrishna's Anniversary

The eighty-seventh birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on March 5th, 1922, at the Hindu Temple of San Francisco, with the usual devotion and services. The votaries of all faiths came from far and near to pay their reverential homage to the great Messenger of Light. At the morning service the Swami Prakashananda laid stress upon the indispensable necessity of a great World-teacher in the midst of the world-chaos and tottering material civilisation of the day. Sri Ramakrishna came to hold aloft the great torch of spiritual ideal before matter-ridden and deluded humanity. At the evening service the Swami dwelt elaborately on the Master's inspiring message of harmony and universality which teaches men that they are all children of one Divine family, thereby showing the way to the true Federation of races, and Brotherhood of man. Appropriate solos were rendered on the organs, and devotional hymns were sung both in the morning and evening.

The birthday was celebrated on the 6th April, 1922, at the Vivekananda Society, Gobichettipalayam (Madras Presy.) under the presidency of Srimat Swami Nirmalanandaji, the Head of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore City. The Society also presented an address of welcome to the Swamiji.

The birthday was celebrated by Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Ottapalam (South India) on the 9th April, 1922. The presence of the Swami Nirmalananda added to the solemnity of the occasion.

The Vivekananda Ashrama, Kuala Lumpur, celebrated the birthday on the 5th March, 1922, with great eclat and devotion. About 3000 poor Narayanas were fed, including Indians, Chinese and Malayas. The public meeting was presided over by Mr. Low Y. Swee, a Chinese devotee and admirer of

Sri Ramakrishna. Lectures on the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna were delivered both in English and Tamil.

The birthday was also celebrated at Sri Ramakrishna Brahmacharyalaya, Kagdi (Faridpore) on the 5th March last, with Puja, feeding and Bhajans.

Miscellany

We are glad to receive the report of the Sri Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Tajpur, Dacca, from the first to the sixth year of its existence. The work of the institution is missionary, educational and charitable. The record of the service done along these lines reflects great credit on the workers. The extracts from the visitors' book distinctly shows that the institution occupies a high place in the estimation of all persons, both official and non-official.

The new premises of the Vivekananda School, Kuala Lumpur, were opened by Swami Videhananda, the Head of the Vivekananda Ashrama of the place, on the 28th February last.

The twenty-second anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Archanalaya, Entally, Calcutta, was celebrated on Sunday, the 16th April last with special Puja, Kirtan, feeding of poor Narayanas and distribution of Prasad.

The Exhibition of Indian Arts and Crafts which was organised by the Art Section of the 1921 Club, Madras, was opened on March 1, in the Club's premises, Y. M. I. A., Armenian Street, and closed on March 8. On the Art side, the exhibition contained several examples of past schools of Indian Painting, as also pictures by many of the present day painters of the Neo-Bengal School. This year a Handicraft section was also organised. It proved to be an admirable demonstration of the variety, and excellence of extant handicrafts, some of which, however, are in danger of extinction for want of support. During the exhibition a series of afternoon lecturettes was given on topics related to the work of the Exhibition.