

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

Katha Upan. 1. iii. 4

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA.

8th July, 1920 (continued).

There is no more despicable creature than one subject to passions. To what indignities he puts himself ! Thank your stars that you have escaped their influence. Even the men of light and leading succumb to them. There is a story of a king who was very henpecked. One day a friend touched on this weak point of his, and thenceforth he tried to correct himself. He came to his inner apartments, but talked little with the queen except on urgent matters. He was very grave. The queen understood everything. The king was taking his meal, and the queen's pet cat was nibbling at his plate. He was trying to drive the animal but

it was coming again. The queen thereupon tauntingly reminded him that the animal had got enough indulgence already, and was not to be beaten off now. One cannot remove a pest that has already got free indulgence. One must hold the reins tight in one's own hand, and never relax them. Otherwise the case is hopeless.

Swamiji used to say, "Ready to attach and ready to detach any minute!" We take up a work and get attached to it—we can no more back out of it. But this should not be. We must have the power to give up at will—leaving everything behind, for nothing is really ours. Look at Sri Ramakrishna. Hriday was ordered to clear out of Dakshineswar. The durwan came and said to Sri Ramakrishna, "You will have to leave this place." "What do you mean? It is not I, but Hriday," replied Sri Ramakrishna. The man said, "No, my master has ordered that both of you should go." This decided the question. He put on his slippers and moved towards the gate. The owner saw this from the concert room, ran and fell at his feet, saying, "Sir, why are *you* going? I have not asked *you* to quit this place." Without speaking a word Sri Ramakrishna came back. Did you mark—how there was not a bit of animus in his renunciation? And how we raise a dust over our deeds! Had we been in his place, we would surely have given the Babu a piece of our mind. But Sri Ramakrishna said nothing—he was as ready to go as to return.

He used to be shabbily dressed, so much so that one day a man mistook him for a gardener and

ordered him to pluck a rose for him, which he immediately did. Some time after, perhaps that very man came to know about his mistake and stammered out an apology. At this Sri Ramakrishna's reply was that there was nothing wrong,—as one asking for help should be assisted by all means! Isn't it grand? Again look at Swamiji. When he went to New York for the second time, — was there. Seeing Swamiji back, he said, "This is your place, please take it back. Once—twice— Swamiji paid no heed to it. But on being pressed a third time he said, "I have given it to you. For me there is the wide world." What a splendid renunciation he possessed! He gave away everything not to his disciples but to his brother-disciples. Among the first trustees you will find only his brother-disciples, and not one disciple. He used to live upon a private fund, and state the reason for it, "I have given away everything." Once he wrote to me, "Now that I have given everything to you, I am at peace." What a wonderful man! You could have seen his influence, had you gone to the West. He himself used to say, "My work will be more in the West; thence it will react on India."

One day he got angry and said, "You are all mean people, whom it is not fit to live with. You quarrel over trifles. I spit upon your place." Saying this he actually walked out. But what did he do in the end? He gave away everything to those very 'mean people'! Another day he was very much annoyed and said, "I see I have to conduct the whole music single-handed—to sing and play

the instruments and do everything myself, with none to assist me !” Not only did he abuse us, but he was very cross with Sri Ramakrishna also, and he gave vent to his feelings saying, “A mad priest, illiterate—this life is wasted after him !” We were all very sorry to hear these words of his. But immediately after he added, “But there is one thing. One cannot take back what has been once made over. What if one amongst the infinite series of lives is lost in the hands of a mad priest?” Do you see his spirit? The words acted as a balm to our hearts.

It is good to know these things. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. One can avoid a ditch or a thorny bush if only one knows their whereabouts. Sri Ramakrishna had a lot of information about things. Girish Babu once said to him, “You are my superior in every respect—even in wicked things.” At this Sri Ramakrishna said, “No, no, it is not that. Here (meaning himself) there are no Samskaras. There is a world of difference between knowing a thing by actual experience and learning about it through study or observation. Experience leaves impressions on the mind which it is most difficult to get rid of. This is not the case with knowing about it through study or observation.”



OCCASIONAL NOTES.

“COUNTRIES which were democratic until yesterday are now pervaded by the spirit of reaction and violence. There are countries in Europe which were free until yesterday, and in which there is no longer a Parliament and a free press. Many men are convinced that violence is a form of activity by which one can live and live well. Thus we are descending the steps of morality to the level of barbarian people, for whom might is right. Every day, in fact, people talk of the rights of victory. It is the argument which the barbarians used—that he who conquers can do what he likes.” Thus does Signor Nitti deplore the present decadence in Europe. But these poignant words are true of all militaristic countries in both the hemispheres. Until recently there was a mad rush among the Western nations for world-hegemony through the conquest and colonisation of large areas populated by “backward” coloured races. But although almost all habitable lands have been explored and annexed, the unquenchable greed for territorial expansion and economic exploitation continues to possess the soul of the Occidental nations. The result is that they are now more anxious than ever to conquer and enslave the weaker of their European neighbours, sharing in the main the same civilisation and culture with themselves. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity are being recklessly thrown to the winds. Even the democratic nations are fast developing the dreadful ideas of

militarism. Arrogant nationalism, uncontrollable greed for wealth and possessions, bitter hatred and jealousy towards other nations and races,—all these are undermining the moral foundation of national life in the West. And naturally the signs of degeneration are manifesting themselves in all their horrors throughout the militaristic world.

The nations of the ^{*}West ^{* *} sowed the seeds of their future decadence the moment they made world-hegemony the summum bonum of their national existence, and the unscrupulous domination and exploitation of non-European races the easiest means to the realisation of this illusory goal. Naturally this false ideal became “combined,” to quote the pungent words of Dean Inge, “with a hatred and contempt for other nations and with a complete denial of any moral obligation to people outside Europe, who are arrogantly called the inferior races.” The result has been that the ideals of national and international morality exist practically nowhere in the West, although few nations are willing to openly avow this fact with regard to themselves. And the gulf between individual and national morality is widening everyday. Violence and murder when committed by individuals become crimes, but these when perpetrated by one nation on another are looked upon as objects of honour and glorification. Deceit and untruth are still objects of condemnation in private life. But these are the chief instruments in the hands of statesmen and diplomats with regard to most international affairs. Actions which no man of honour and integrity will ever think of doing, are

committed by those "old gentlemen wearing decorations," who hold in their hands the destinies of nations. The abominable lies of propaganda, the secret treaties of aggression and exploitation, the enslavement of helpless peoples,—these have brought about a deplorable break-down of national and international morality in the West. Is there then any wonder that "vast parts of the Continent have been converted periodically," as Lord Loreburn, the late Lord Chancellor of England, says about Europe in his notable book, 'How the War came,' "into a hell, full of murder, massacre, starvation, sorrow and hatred?" By the inevitable law of Karma upon Europe are being visited her own sins. The horrible atrocities that were and are still being committed in the "coloured" lands by the European colonists and conquerors are now making their appearance in all their violence on the soil of Europe itself.

The history of the ^{* * *} colonisation and conquest of America, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pacific islands and a host of other places, is a long tale of man's unspeakable inhumanity towards man. Says Mr. Andrews in his book, 'Christ and Labour'—"Slavery, plunder and subjection went hand in hand. Cruelties of the most hateful kind were practised in the inflamed atmosphere of insensate lust for gold and silver. Each nation in turn which set out on its career of piracy and conquest, behaved in an equally savage manner." The predatory among the nations of the West ruthlessly decimated and even exterminated many aboriginal tribes and settled on their lands in ease

and comfort. Their object in doing all this was, as they said, a noble one; it was to spread the religion, commerce and civilisation of the "race Adamique" in coloured, heathen lands! And "First the missionary, then the trader, then the gunboat, and then,—oh Lord!"—this became the general order of colonisation and annexation, as an African chief most pathetically observed. Again, so very keen was the sacred desire of the colonists to preserve the European type of men and culture that they often drove coloured peoples to marshy unproductive lands, and even slaughtered them when they offered any resistance to the conquerors!

Speaking about the ^{*}deeds ^{*}of his people in the East Indies a Dutch chronicler says, "De Vlaming visited the Spice Islands, and destroyed all the villages and large boats and all fruit-bearing trees and sago palms, so that the inhabitants were deprived of food and starved. . . . The natives of the islands would not listen to reason. So on the night of December 22nd, we surprised the chiefs who were gathered at one of their assemblies. It was deemed that the island of Bona was of little use to the company. Therefore, all the means of livelihood were destroyed, especially the clove trees, which were the only inducement to our enemies to visit these islands. Later on, the inhabitants, showing signs of revolt, were all removed, with the result that Manipe and Bona are now barren wastes." At some places the European colonists tried to get rid of the aborigines not only by plundering and slaughtering them, but also by

poisoning them with arsenic, or by spreading among them a virulent epidemic of measles. All sense of humanity was thus sacrificed at the altar of the demon of greed.

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The festering sores of modern civilisation must be laid bare if these are to be cured at all. Every form of wrong-doing should be exposed to rouse the moral sentiment of men against all barbarities practised in the name of civilisation and culture. Dr. Theodor Waltz, a distinguished anthropologist thus disclosed the savagery of the colonists in his "Introduction to Anthropology" (1863)—"It is an historical fact that powerful tribes have, chiefly by the wars with the Whites, been either exterminated or brought so near extinction that they no longer exist as nations. Even at this day the Indians in the gold districts of California are hunted like wild beasts.... Among the so-called heroes of Old Kentucky and Virginia there were men-hunters who, as regards cruelty and barbarity, did not yield to the Dutch Boers on the Cape. The history of the conquest of Mexico and Peru, the extermination of the peaceable population of the West India islands, the oppression of the Spanish Governors in Yucatan, the extermination of the Indians in Popayan Chiquitos by mining labour, have, by the old historians of these countries, been preserved by documentary evidence, which fills, unquestionably, one of the darkest pages of human history."

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Many of the Occidental nations are still trying to realise world-supremacy by the old method of

territorial conquest and economic exploitation. At those places where the "inferior" races are too numerous and sturdy to die out, they are being driven from their fertile, ancestral lands to worthless, unproductive tracts, and shut up in these specified areas as far as practicable. The conquerors want to arrogate to themselves the most productive territories and scrupulously bar all other races from these areas. They demand the right to settle wheresoever they please, and deny the same right to other peoples. In the case of the white race might is right ; but with regard to the coloured people right even often counts for nothing. At most places there is one law for the "superior" and another for the "inferior" race. Even lawlessness is sometimes the law in the case of the coloured people. The "lynch law" of America is only an extreme expression of this legalised lawlessness. The dominating nations often deny even elementary justice to men, simply because the latter belong to the coloured race, and hence according to the average Westerner, to an inferior stock. "He who conquers can do what he likes"—this has become the law of all laws. Rightly has St. Augustine said—"Take away justice and what are empires but great acts of brigandage?"

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The demon of militarism stalks upon the earth, carrying destruction and death in its train, bringing indescribable misery and suffering to all peoples, to the conqueror and the conquered alike. By undermining the very basis of morality it is degenerating the soul of the exploiter as well as of the exploited in every land. All nations and races

should, therefore, join hands with one another to fight this terrible spirit of destruction with all its attending evils. This common enemy of mankind has its birth in the human heart, and to get rid of it for ever must be removed its root-cause—man's insatiable lust for material wealth and possessions. New ideals must now reign in the hearts of men. The militaristic nations have till now made the mere profession of high ideals a cover to hide their ignoble designs. But they must now be guided by ideals of justice and equity in their relation to the subject races, if they at all want to save themselves from the disaster that threatens their very existence at present. The imperialistically exploited people, on the other hand, must gain in strength, self-reliance and self-respect. A moral revolution alone can eradicate the roots of all evils and bring about the redemption of the human race.

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There is slowly awakening a sincere moral conscience all over the Western world. In the past terrible cruelties and barbarities practised in other lands failed to stir the soul of Europe. Now that these horrible acts are being perpetrated in their own countries, all thoughtful men and women of the West are realising more and more the dangers of material ideals and all their attending evils. As a matter of fact humanity had never been dead to high ideals and noble sentiments. There had always been upright and spiritual persons who did not allow themselves to be swayed by an arrogant and blinding nationalism. They raised their voice against all acts of injustice and cruelty indulged in by their countrymen in other parts of the globe.

But they only cried in the wilderness. However, the horrors and sufferings of war are slowly opening the eyes of the masses and the classes alike more or less in every land. The ideals of brotherhood and international justice are appealing more and more to an ever-increasing number of men and women. Although many among the members of the dying generation, especially the politicians and diplomats, are more anxious to talk of justice and equality than to practise these in their individual and collective life, the youth in most lands are being sincerely actuated by a noble idealism standing against all militaristic policies and practices. Even in the midst of political struggles, economic unrest and moral chaos, new ideals are being born in the hearts of men. The fetish of the "white race superiority" and the myth of the "white man's burden" must now be thrown to the winds for ever. The human mind should be thoroughly purified from all its dross. Then only will be realised the fundamental unity of the human race. And the yawning gulf between people and people will be bridged over, and peace and good-will will be established on earth. Humanity stands in need of noble missionaries who will boldly preach the gospel of love and brotherhood and fight against all forms of national selfishness and racial exclusiveness wherever these may be found. This alone can usher in a new era of peace and harmony throughout the world.



THE VIRTUE OF QUIETUDE.

“JOHN O’London’s Weekly” occupies a position of excellent standing among the many periodicals which make their regular appeals to readers of English at home and abroad. Its editor succeeds in retaining the interest of those readers by maintaining the quality of the articles published in his pages and by the variety and utility of the matter discussed by his writers. For the moment we are content to refer to “The Faith of Silence, A Literary Pilgrimage to a Quaker Shrine,” appearing on September 29th, 1923. The term “Quaker,” be it remembered, is very generally applied to that religious body which is better described as “The Society of Friends.” The author of the article mentioned above concludes his pilgrimage by a quotation from Thomas Carlyle; “Silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves, at length to emerge full formed into the daylight of life.” That quotation practically embodies the position of “The Society of Friends.”

St. Luke puts the matter expressively when he says, “In your patience possess ye your souls;” and, commenting on the word *patience* Dr. Cruden remarks in his Concordance, “Patience signifies that grace which enables us to bear afflictions and calamities with constancy and calmness of mind and with a ready submission to the will of God.” Now “Silence” is interpreted by the same learned authority thus—“This word does not only signify the ordinary silence or refraining from speaking; but also, in the style of the Hebrews, it is taken for to be quiet, to remain immovable.” Here, as it were in a nutshell, is the core and centre of the Vedantic principle. Swami Atulananda, writing with fine sympathy and appreciation of Thomas-a-Kempis (Prabuddha Bharata, September, 1923), took wise occasion to adopt this passage from “The Imitation”;—“A pure, simple and steadfast spirit is not distracted, though it be employed

in many works ; for it does all for the honour of God, and being at rest within, seeks not itself in anything it does." And, again, "Peace of heart is necessary for progress." Silence, patience, peace ; these three form a trinity ; a unity of qualities leading from and to the divine.

Tennyson sang, "There is no joy but calm ;" the calm which comes through the acceptance and exercise of this sacred trinity. Quietude, meditation, contemplation ; these three, too, are inseparable from calm.

So our Pilgrim to a Quaker shrine carries us to " 'Jordans,' a place-name now standing for a little red brick meeting-house, built in 1688, with bare, white-washed walls within, and rude unvarnished forms, set in a beech-sheltered Buckinghamshire dell. Before it stretches a green-turfed burial-ground where the fathers of the Quaker faith lie buried. It is a lonely place and silent—silence is a very precious thing to all Quakers—save for the wind in the beech-leaves and the minstrelsy of birds ; a shrine, in the truest sense of the word. Pilgrims come from all the world over to stand by the grave of William Penn, buried here in 1718, the statesman, courtier and writer who founded the state which, against his wish, was named in his honour Pennsylvania" (U. S. A.). We are further told that Ernest Warner in his book on "Jordans" asserts that the inspiration of "The Society of Friends" is silence, which is the priesthood of all believers. The Pilgrim adds that in the society there are no clergy and therefore there is no laity—only the bonds of equality and fellowship. There is no order of service, no ritual, no creed, no prepared sermon or music ; the meeting gathers in silence.

Is it strange, or is it spiritually natural, that the Friend (the Quaker) and Thomas-a-Kempis—a monk of the Roman church, should possess so much in common ? The same exaltation of spirit, the same sanctification of the soul, seems to be sought and found in the quietude of Quakerdom and during the celebration of the Mass. Seekers after God, seekers desiring realisation, discover and gain the value and worth of silence. Miss Lena Ashwell, an actress of remarkable

ability, holds gatherings week by week in London. Folk from far and near eagerly listen to her as she pleads for silence as the gateway to the divine road. In London, too, there exists a community entitled "The Sisterhood of Silence," whose members devote themselves to nursing and healing the poor and the miserable. In silence they acquire the power and possibilities which they employ in alleviating sorrow and distress. Geographically far away from these agencies, from these metropolitan silences and their consequent sacramental activities, the Bahais of Persia continue their programme of peace and unity. Under the leadership of Shoghi Effendi, successor to the revered Sir Abdul Baha, this movement makes itself felt in Europe, America, and elsewhere. A letter, lately received from Haifa, Palestine, the head-centre of the cause, states, "In full sympathy with the many thousands of people who have been suffering as a result of the calamities that befall the world, let us put on the arms of service, fixing our mind and thought on the following words of the beloved Master, 'The earth can be made a Paradise;' let all the servants of God always strive that such a great happiness may accrue to the world of humanity." Active service for souls and bodies; the outcome of silence, of quiet, of meditation upon the One.

Thus, here, there, everywhere, under the benign influence of the Lord, a oneness of feeling and of effort is blending men and women of all sorts and conditions in a spiritual sense of common weal. Differences are discerned to be external things; union is being realised as an eternal unity. The Bahais possess, in "Hidden Words," a psalm of praise worthy of record; "Praise be to Thee, O God! Praise be to Thee, for Thou hast made known Thy Day unto Thy servants, wherein the River of Life hath streamed forth from Thy generosity, and the Fountain of Unity hath become manifest by Thy manifestation to all who are in Thy earth and Heaven."

Unity is verily in the air. The movement towards bringing the various Christian churches into closer communion

finds many eager supporters; surely because the soul of the people is being directed by the one indivisible spirit. Can any peace for the world be attained until the children of men and of God meet one another in the bond of unity?

It was on the morning of Monday, October 2, 1923, that, in the historic Cabinet Room at 10, Downing St., London, the British Prime Minister welcomed the representatives to the Imperial Conference, comprising India, the Dominions and Great Britain. It was the Maharajah of Alwar, who speaking on behalf of the Indian delegates to that Conference, uttered these weighty words:—"With a little sacrifice, a little toleration, a little understanding, all this world can, I believe, still be made a play-ground for God's children." General Smuts (S. Africa) said, in his reply to Mr. Baldwin (the Prime Minister), "The spirit of good-will and friendship in which we meet here makes every question soluble." Such utterances as these are pregnant with great purpose; a purpose thought out and wrought out in self-communion, in the private places of man's soul.

"In quiet and in assurance," said a prophet of old and of the East, "shall be your strength." First the meditation and concentration; then the full knowledge of the Way. Says another, "Commune with thine own heart, and be still." In the stillness one may realise, as Dr. James Martineau was wont to observe, that there is no such thing as mere outside evidence of matters either human or Divine. It is all reciprocation and response between the inner soul and the outer object; and the quickness of that response, the penetration of the glance, the certainty of the mutual understanding, will depend not on the coldness, but on the fixed intensity of the mind that sends forth its look. Nor can the intensity be firmly fixed unless it is gained by internal intercourse and in the place and hour of quiet. Swami Vivekananda's dictum on this point is decided and definite; "The Infinite will never find expression upon the material plane; nor is it possible or thinkable." The Light "that lighteth every man that cometh into this world," shines within, and shines;

above all, when outward things are curtained off and not allowed to cast their clouding shadows upon it. Luminosity creates love. Before it darkness and doubt and distrust flee away. Illumined by this light, men are no longer blinded by fear of one another; fear is utterly cast out by this light of love. With what lofty eloquence, with what well-chosen words—selected and grouped together as in an exquisite mosaic—Swamiji proclaimed this doctrine; “We find many sects and societies with almost the same ideas, fighting each other because the one does not want to set forth those ideas in precisely the same way as the others. Religions have to broaden. Religious ideas will have to become universal, vast and infinite, and then alone will it have its fullest play; for the power of religion has only just begun in the world. The power of religion, broadened and purified, is going to penetrate every part of human life. When men have come to the real, universal spiritual concept, then and then alone, religion will become real and living; it will come into our very nature, live in every movement of the human being; it will penetrate every pore of society and be infinitely more a power for good than it has ever been before. What is needed is a fellow-feeling between the different types of religion, seeing that they all stand or fall together; a fellow-feeling which springs from mutual esteem and mutual respect.”

Wandering with staff and bowl from village to village; withdrawing himself from constant communion with his neighbours and his friends; wandering alone; thinking, meditating; away from all the allurements of the world; the Light shone in him and upon him. So, in silence and in solitude, he gathered wondrous gifts of the spirit, to share, later on and in due season, with his fellow-men throughout the earth.

ERIC HAMMOND.



LOVE TRNSCENDENTAL:

[*Adapted from Swami Saradananda's "Lilaprasanga."*]

IN the Vaishnava mode of worship there are five attitudes or relationships with God. These are the Santa, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya and Madhura, typifying respectively a general attitude of reverence and the special attitudes of a servant, a friend, a parent and a beloved. All of these hinge upon that one potent factor of human life, Love. In the ascending hierarchy of worship the Sadhaka takes less and less notice of the grandeur of his ideal—he becomes more and more free and intimate with the object of his adoration and only the sweetness of the relation is of interest to him. Considered in this light, the Madhura Bhava, or the conjugal relation, effecting the closest union between the worshipper and the object of worship, is assuredly the highest of these forms of practice, though each of them is capable of bringing the aspirant into oneness with his Beloved and making him forget his own identity. That such oneness even produces physical transformation in the devotee is repeatedly borne out by the evidence of spiritual history. In the conjugal relation with the Deity of which we are speaking of, the devotee thinks of his Beloved with the same intensity with which a mistress dwells on the attributes of her lover. There is no artificial barrier, no obstructing social or moral tie between her desire and its fulfilment. She pursues her object with the whole energy of her soul, and is happy only when she has attained her end. This phase of religious practice was brought into prominence by Sri Chaitanya and his followers. In the ancient religious history of India as embodied in the Puranas, it finds a beautiful expression in the Vrindavana episode of Sri Krishna's life. The milkmaids of Vrindavana were simply mad after Sri Krishna and considered no social or moral tie as of any moment before this absorbing passion. The most noticeable feature of this attraction was that the

Gopis sought no personal end of their own; they did not care for their own happiness, but their one object was to please Sri Krishna—the embodiment of beauty in all its phases—to whom they had surrendered their body, mind and soul. The imageries used in the Puranas to describe their marvellous relation have of course been borrowed from human experience and consequently smack of the sensuous, but it should always be remembered that, as Sri Ramakrishna used to say, the Gopis' love for Krishna was so intense and so sublime that the very sight of Him made them forget their body in a tumult of bliss so that sense enjoyment was altogether out of the question in their case. The philosophy at the background of this religion of Love may be summed up as follows :

Sri Krishna—the Paramatman, the Embodiment of Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute—is the one Purusha or Male Personality in the universe, and as every object in creation, gross or subtle, and every finite being is a part of His Prakriti or Infinite Nature characterised by the group of Divine Attributes technically called Mahabhava, everything and everybody belonging to the phenomenal universe is necessarily His consort. Hence if one worships Him wholeheartedly with an absolute purity of spirit, through His grace one attains the goal—which is liberation or Bliss Absolute. Mahabhava is the synthesis of all finite Bhavas or relationships. The foremost among the Gopis, Sri Radha, is the personification of that Mahabhava, while all other Gopis represent one or more of the varied relationships which it includes. Therefore an aspirant who sets himself to realise one or other of these subsidiary relations after the manner of the Gopis of Vrindavana, is crowned with success and is ultimately blessed with a glimpse of the Mahabhava. To make Radha's relationship with Krishna the basis of one's meditation, like her, to feel pleasure only in that of Krishna, to the exclusion of all personal motives, is considered the goal of this mode of Sadhana. It is the summation of the foregoing modes of devotion, for the votary of conjugal

relation serves his Beloved like a servant, counsels Him and sympathises in His joys and sorrows like a friend and watches over His mental and physical comforts like a mother—thus trying to please Him in all respects. The best devotee of this class is obviously one who looks only to the comfort of the Beloved, regardless of personal pleasure or pain.

Though jarring upon modern ears, this form of discipline has its own value to the Vedantist. He knows that it is one's ideas that in the course of repeated practice are converted into settled belief and that it is these impressions of countless past lives that compel one to view the One Indivisible Brahman as this phenomenal world, so full of diversity. He knows also that if through the grace of God a man can fully persuade himself that there is no such thing as the universe, it will immediately vanish from his sight. It is the human mind that projects the universe. One is a man because he thinks himself as such, and another is a woman because she thinks otherwise. Again, to the Vedantist it is a matter of common experience that one set of ideas becomes so predominant as to stamp out a different set of ideas. So does he considers this attempt on the part of the aspirant to control and finally root out his vulgar ideas by successfully establishing between himself and his Lord the relation of a mistress to his lover. It is like using a thorn to take out another. The idea which is the basis of all other ideas in man is the conviction that he is a body and consequently either a man or a woman. So if he can accustom himself to the thought that he is not a man but a woman, it goes without saying that he will thereafter be able to get rid of that idea also and reach that high level of spiritual development where there is neither man nor woman. To the Vedantist, therefore, it is a foregone conclusion that the aspirant who perfects himself in the practice of conjugal relation with God, will very closely approach that Transcendent State which is the goal of the Advaitist.

To induce in himself the same feeling as that of Radha is the ideal of the Sadhaka in this cult. Though the Vaishnavite

teachers have denied this rare privilege to the ordinary man or woman, yet this seems to be the logical conclusion of their position. For the difference between Radha and her companions, as depicted in the sacred books, is not one of quality, but one of degree. They too worshipped Krishna as husband in the same way as Radha did, their own desire being to effect a union of Radha and Krishna as they found their Beloved most happy in her company. Again it is a significant fact that the celebrated Vaishnava Acharyas like Rupa, Sanatana and Jiva who spent their lives in the worship of Sri Krishna considering Him as husband, never added to the image of Krishna that of Radha also. The only conclusion that can be drawn from this is that they must have put themselves in the position of Radha.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

IT is customary with us—the members of the Ramakrishna Order—to celebrate the Christmas festival. At our monastery in the little village of Belur, beside the Ganges, we Hindu monks and devotees come together year after year to commemorate the birth of Jesus the Christ. And so it is at many of our other monasteries.

In doing so we are in perfect concord with the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and the Swami Vivekananda who have done so much to promote harmony between different religions, and who have pointed out and demonstrated that in essence all religions teach one and the same truth.

We fully agree with our Christian brethren when they claim that Jesus was the only begotten Son of God who came to bring salvation to the world. But with this we carry the conviction that he who came as Jesus had come to earth before and that he incarnates again and again whenever the world stands in need of divine guidance. “It is one and the same Avatara,” Sri Ramakrishna said, “who having plunged

into the ocean of life, rises up in one place and is known as Krishna, and diving down again rises up in another place and is known as Christ." To us then it comes quite natural to accept and worship different Avataras.

Unfortunately religion through all ages has sometimes acted as a barrier between different races, nay, even between inhabitants of the same land, even between people of the same blood. It is one of the great objects of our Mission to remove that barrier, not by tearing down religions but by regarding them as different paths leading to the same goal. It is our object to establish a world-wide religious brotherhood in which each one is at perfect liberty to follow his own chosen path. Christian, Hindu, Mohammedan or Buddhist, we are all children of one God. When this truth is generally realised and acted upon, then and then alone class and race and colour hatred will fall away and the world will know a greater peace. Then the world will respect all religions and all nationalities. And that will be a great step toward the establishment of a universal brotherhood.

This month it is but fit that we should call to memory the story of Jesus' birth. Of this story I shall now give only a short outline.

At the time when Jesus lived on earth, Palestine, known as the Holy Land, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, was divided into four provinces, the most northern of which was called Galilee. Galilee was a fertile and densely populated country, inhabited by Jews and Gentiles. The lower part was a great plain, the upper part was made up of hills, mountains and valleys.

Nestled on the northern slope of the hills, among other villages, was the little town of Nazareth, with narrow streets climbing the hills between rows of white cottages, some of brick or stone, others of clay. In one of the humblest of these cottages lived a Jewish girl, named Mary, now known over all the civilised world as the virgin mother of Christ. Of her parents, Joachim and Anne, we know very little, but we may well suppose that they were pious, God-loving persons. Of

Mary we know that she possessed very high virtues. She was chaste, humble, prudent, gentle and courageous, and full of faith and devotion to God. This young girl was betrothed to a just and pious man, Joseph by name, considerably older than she was, a carpenter by trade. They both belonged to the common people, but they could trace their lineage back to David, the greatest king of Israel.

Mary was a serious little girl, quiet and thoughtful. She helped her mother in the household, carried water from the village well, and on the Sabbath would go to the Synagogue where in the women's gallery she would listen attentively to the reading of the Bible. Or, she would climb the stone staircase that led to the flat roof of her little home, and there would give herself to prayer and meditation.

When she was there all by herself on the roof under the starry sky, she would also think of the future, when she would be married and become a mother. For motherhood was most highly esteemed among the Jews. "God could not be everywhere," was one of the Hebrew sayings, "and so He made mothers." The Jews knew that on the mothers depended the present and future well-being of the national life.

The Jews, once a great and glorious nation, were now under the rule of the Roman emperor Augustus whose representatives were tyrants ruling the subject race with iron fists. High-spirited, proud of their past and hopeful for the future, the Jews chafed under this foreign rule. But every attempt at revolt on their part was quelled with bloodshed and cruelty. They, however, could not be content unless they could be free. "No master but God!" was their cry. They felt that they were God's chosen people, and that they had a right to rule themselves. And in the Bible they read the promises of the prophets that from Israel would come a king from David's line, who would rule the world. They were always expecting this mighty king. No one knew of whom and when the future king would be born. The privilege of bearing him might come to any mother. And it was

the secret hope of every Jewish girl to become the parent of ancestor of the deliverer of the race. These thoughts, we may be sure, must have often occupied the girl's mind.

Now it happened one day when Mary was alone, that suddenly she beheld a bright light surrounding her. And in the light, near her, stood a gloriously-shining being. It was the angel Gabriel, come from heaven to bring her a wonderful message:

“Peace be to you, Mary!” the angel said. “You are greatly blessed, for the Lord is with you!”

Mary was startled and amazed. But the angel quieting her in a gentle voice, said :

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for God has chosen you among all women for his special favour. You shall have a son; and you shall call him Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest God. God shall give him the throne and the kingdom of his father David. He shall reign for ever over the people of Israel, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

The young girl, only twelve years old, when she heard these words became confused.

Then the angel spoke :

“The Divine Breath shall come to you and shall overshadow you; therefore the holy child that you will receive shall be called the Son of God.”

But that would be a miracle indeed! So to strengthen Mary's faith, and to quiet her troubled heart, the angel told her that God had worked another miracle. Her cousin Elizabeth who was old and had been barren all her life, had conceived a son in her old age. This had happened six months earlier. So nothing was impossible with God.

The voice of the angel was so sweet, and his presence filled her with so much confidence and so great a joy, that all her fear left her. She felt assured that everything would come out all right, though she could not understand it. In a simple way she said :

“I am the Lord’s servant. I trust in Him. Let it be unto me according to thy word.”

And at the very moment the mystery of divine conception took place. The angel smiled upon her, and vanished. Mary was left alone. How wonderful! She would be the mother of the long-promised king of Israel! She could hardly realise it. She would keep it a secret, for who would believe her story? Perhaps not even her parents. And how could she explain this incredible mystery to her affianced husband?

But after some time she felt that she must tell her secret to some one. She could not keep her condition hidden; and she needed advice in her delicate position. She therefore resolved to visit her old cousin Elizabeth who would perhaps understand and believe her, for had not God worked a miracle in her also? To this good, old lady she would go for advice.

From Nazareth to Elizabeth’s home at Hebron, was a long and troublesome journey of nearly 120 miles. Mary was too young and inexperienced to travel alone. Still with this great secret in her heart, she did not want the company of friends. She preferred to travel with strangers. She therefore joined one of the caravans that journeyed to Jerusalem to attend the great feast held every year in the city. Among the kind pilgrims she felt perfectly safe. No one questioned her closely, and she got what help she needed. In a week she reached Jerusalem, where she stayed with friends till the feast was over. Then she joined another caravan going home to Hebron, twenty miles away.

At last the long journey was over, and with beating heart Mary knocked at the door of her cousin’s home. A moment, and the door opened. There stood Elizabeth with open arms to welcome her, for in a strange way God had revealed to her all that had happened to Mary. The old lady seeing the little girl embraced her, and under the stress of lively emotion greeted her with the comforting words :

“Blessed art thou among women. And blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Whence is this come to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that has believed the angel’s words, for these words shall surely come true.”

What comfort, what happiness, what assurance must these words have brought to the anxious girl. Elizabeth had understood and blessed her!

Mary’s pure, devout soul rose up in ecstasy, and her feelings so long held in broke out into a beautiful song of exaltation. Clinging to her dear, old cousin, her eyes turned heavenward, her spirit tasting a wonderful freedom, her lips moved under the power of divine inspiration, and she sang in a clear voice:

“My soul beholds the greatness of God, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. He hath looked upon his humble servant, and henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.” Thus the song goes on in praise of God.

For three months Mary stayed with Elizabeth and her pious husband Zacharias, who was a priest, in their quiet home at Hebron. Here the two women, so far removed in age, but so closely united in God, both soon to be mothers, talked and prayed together rejoicing in the Lord. To Elizabeth a child was born, he, who was later known as John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ.

Mary’s time was also advancing, and she returned home with another party of pilgrims. She had experienced and learned many things during her stay with the old couple. Her mind had matured, and her spirit was comforted.

Mary’s motherhood was approaching. But she, on her return to Nazareth, being content to let God reveal things in His own good time, offered no explanation to her promised husband. Joseph, therefore, began to question in his mind

whether he ought to marry her or break the engagement. But one night in a dream he saw an angel standing by his side. The angel said to him, "Joseph, fear not to take Mary for your wife. She shall have a son conceived of the Divine Breath; and his name shall be Jesus (which means Saviour), for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."

Then Joseph, awakening from his sleep, hesitated no more. He did as the angel had bidden him. He married Mary and led her to his own home. There they lived happily till something unexpected happened.

Shortly after their marriage there went forth an edict from the emperor Augustus which prescribed the enrolment of the entire Roman world, with the purpose of laying a tax upon every family in the land. All Jews who did not live in the city of their forefathers had to go to that city to have their names inscribed in the Census Registers. This made it necessary for Joseph to go to Bethlehem, the birthplace of his ancestors. It was a long journey of about 80 miles. But Mary knowing that the time of her deliverance was near did not want to be separated from her husband. Furthermore, she knew that according to the prophets, the deliverer of her race would be born in Bethlehem. So she prevailed on her husband to let her go with him. Joseph locked up his carpenter shop, hired an ass for his wife and with a staff in his hand walking beside her set out for Bethlehem. They travelled slowly in short stages.

The number of strangers at Bethlehem during this time was great. And when they arrived there was no place for them in the caravansary. The courtyard was filled with asses, camels, baggage and vehicles, and all the rooms around the court were crowded with visitors. Greatly disappointed Joseph looked for another place where they might stay for the night. He found a cave hollowed out in the hill-side. It was used as a stable for cattle, but it was a shelter anyhow. And miserable as the place was, Mary weary and tired from the journey was glad to lie down there upon the straw and rest.

And then, in the middle of the night, the great event took place. Jesus, the Saviour, was born. With her own hands Mary took the child and wrapped him in swaddling-bands and laid him in the manger where the animals had fed. In this manger-cradle the little Jesus slept his first sleep. And here he received his first visitors. For the very night some shepherds came to the cave.

These shepherds were, with their flocks in the fields around Bethlehem, watching their sheep during the night, when suddenly a bright light flashed upon them. And they saw an angel standing in the light. Frightened they fell upon their faces on the ground. But the angel quieted their fears with the words: "Fear not, for behold I bring you tidings of great joy, news for all God's people. For this very night is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David." And he told them where they might find the Child and how they might know him, "This will be a sign unto you," he said, "you shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Then, as the shepherds looked up, they saw the sky filled with a multitude of heavenly beings praising God. "Glory to God in the highest," they sang, "and on earth peace, goodwill towards men."

Then the vision faded away.

The shepherds filled with amazement, said to each other: "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this wonderful thing which the Lord has made known to us." And they came with great haste; and they found the cave with Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger. They gazed with love and devotion upon the holy child. Then they bowed low before him, and praising God for his goodness returned to their flocks in the field.

Mary, seeing these strange things, silently clasped her baby to her breast. She could find no words to express her emotions.

In the morning Joseph found a better lodging—a small room—where they stayed for some time. On the eighth day

the child was circumcised, and they called him Jesus, as the angel had ordained.

The Holy Family, forty days after the Nativity, went to Jerusalem, six miles away, to present itself at the Temple there, Mary to be purified, and Jesus to be presented to the Lord. In Jerusalem they bought two pigeons as an offering, and mounting the stairs of the Temple presented themselves before the priest. The priest sprinkled Mary with blood and prayed over her. Then the pigeons were killed and placed on the altar.

While this was going on, two unexpected incidents took place. There lived at Jerusalem an old man of singular sanctity. It is said that he lived in constant communion with God. He had been told by a divine oracle that he would not see death until he had seen the Messiah sent by God. Drawn by divine inspiration he betook himself to the Temple. Seeing Mary with the Child he stretched out his arms and took Jesus to his bosom. And lifting up his eyes to heaven he praised God. "Now Lord," he said, "let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy words. For mine eyes have seen the Saviour whom thou hast sent to all people, a light to shine upon the nations." Then restoring the child to his mother's arms, he blessed the parents.

At that very moment a very old woman came up to the little group. She had been married when she was seven years and had now been a widow for 84 years. She was a devout worshipper of God, and stayed nearly all her days in the Temple praying. God had spoken to her also of the coming of Christ. And when she saw the infant she knew that it was He. In a loud voice she declared the glorious destiny of the Child, and gave praise and thanks to God. All who heard her wondered at her words for they saw only an ordinary couple with a baby, country people speaking the dialect of Galilee in the North.

Thus, even at that tender age, a few people recognised Jesus as the Messiah. There are other stories connected with the early life of Jesus but it would take too much space to

relate these now. The child grew and waxed strong in spirit. He also grew in wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

Jesus was thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was not a worldly king as the Jews had hoped for, He was a Saviour of man in the spiritual sense, a Liberator to those who take refuge in Him.

SWAMI ATULANANDA



SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 432.)

निष्किञ्चना मय्यनुरक्तचेतसः

शान्ता महान्तोऽखिलजीववत्सलाः।

कामैरनालब्धधियो जुषन्ति य-

त्तन्नैरपेक्ष्यं न विदुः सुखं मम ॥१७॥

17. High-souled sages, penniless, devoted to Me and unsmitten by desires, calm and compassionate to all creatures derive that bliss of Mine which they¹ only know who care for no gain, and not others.

[¹ *They &c.*—Their bliss is limitless. The construction is rather involved.]

बाध्यमानोऽपि मद्भक्तो विषयैरजितेन्द्रियः ॥

प्रायः प्रगल्भया भक्त्या विषयैर्नाभिभूयते ॥१८॥

18. Even a devotee of Mine who not being a master of his senses is troubled by sense-objects, is generally not overcome¹ by them, owing to his powerful devotion.

[¹ *Not overcome*—Even ordinary Bhaktas are blessed through devotion, not to speak of saints.]

यथाग्निः सुसमिद्धार्चिः करोत्येधांसि भस्मसात् ।

तथा मद्भिषया भक्तिरुद्धवैनांसि कृत्स्नशः ॥१९॥

19. As fire kindled into a blaze burns the faggots to ashes, so, O Uddhava, devotion to Me totally destroys all sins.

न साध्यति मां योगो न सांख्यं धर्म उद्धव ।

न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्यागो यथा भक्तिर्ममोर्जिता ॥२०॥

20. O Uddhava, neither Yoga, nor Knowledge, nor piety, nor study, nor austerity, nor renunciation captivates Me so much as a heightened devotion to Me.

भक्त्याहमेकया ग्राह्यः श्रद्धयात्मा प्रियः सताम ।

भक्तिः पुनाति मन्निष्ठा श्वपाकानपि संभवात् ॥२१॥

21. I, the dear Self of the pious,¹ am attainable by devotion alone, which is the outcome of faith. The devotion to Me purges even outcasts of their congenital impurity.

[¹ *Dear...pious*—It is the pious who realise this, whereas the worldly-minded forget Him altogether.]

धर्मः सत्यदयोपेतो विद्या वा तपसान्विता ।

मद्भक्त्यापेतमात्मानं न सम्यक्प्रपुनाति हि ॥२२॥

22. Piety joined to truthfulness and compassion or learning coupled with austerity, never wholly purifies a mind which is devoid of devotion to Me.

कथं विना रोमहर्षे द्रवता चेतसा विना ।

विनानन्दाश्रुकलया शुध्येद्भक्त्या विनाशयः ॥२३॥

23. How can the mind be purified without devotion characterised by a softening of the heart, the hair standing on end and tears of joy flowing out of the eyes ?

वाग्गद्गदा द्रवते यस्य चित्तं रुदत्यभीक्षणं हसति क्वचिच्च ।

विलज्ज उद्गायति नृत्यते च मद्भक्तियुक्तो भुवनं पुनाति ॥२४॥

24. A devotee of Mine whose speech is broken by sobs, whose heart melts and who, without any idea of shame, sometimes weeps profusely, or laughs, or sings aloud, or dances, purifies the whole universe.

यथाग्निना हेम मलं जह्वाति ध्मातं पुनः खं भजते च रूपम् ।
आत्मा च कर्मानुशयं विधूय मद्भक्तियोगेन भजत्यथो माम् ॥

25. As gold smelted by fire gives up its dross and gets back its real state, so the mind by means of a systematic devotion to Me winnows off its desire for work and attains to Me.

अथा यथात्मा परिमृज्यतेऽसौ मत्पुण्यगाथाश्रवणाभिधानैः ।
तथा तथा पश्यति वस्तु सूक्ष्मं चक्षुर्यथैवाञ्जनसंप्रयुक्तम् ॥२६॥

26. The more this mind is cleansed by listening to and reciting the sacred tales about Me, the more it sees the subtle Reality, like eyes through an application of collyrium.¹

[¹ *Collyrium*—supposed to improve the eye-sight.]

विषयान्ध्यायतश्चित्तं विषयेषु विषज्जते ।
मामनुस्मरतश्चित्तं मय्येव प्रविलीयते ॥२७॥

27. The mind of a man who thinks of sense-objects is attached to them, but the mind of one who remembers Me is merged in Me alone.

तस्मादसदभिध्यानं यथा स्वप्नमनोरथम् ।
हित्वा मयि समाधत्स्व मनो मद्भावभावितम् ॥२८॥

28. Therefore giving up the dwelling on unreal things, which are no better than dreams or fancies, concentrate the mind, clarified by devotion to Me, on Me.

स्त्रीणां स्त्रीसङ्गिनां सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा दूरत आत्मवान् ।
क्षमे विविक्त आसीनश्चिन्तयेन्मामतन्द्रितः ॥२९॥

29. The man of self-control should avoid from a safe distance the company of women as well as of those who associate with the latter, sit in a secluded and congenial place, and ever alert¹ think of Me.

[¹ *Ever alert*—without break. This is important.]

न तथास्य भवेत्क्लेशो बन्धश्चान्यप्रसङ्गतः ।

योषित्सङ्गाद्यथा पुंसो यथा तत्सङ्घिसङ्गतः ॥३०॥

30. No other association causes so much misery and bondage as that of women and those that associate with them.

(To be continued.)



REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

Thoughts from the Vedanta.—By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar, M. A., B. L. Published by Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, South India. Pp. xix + 181. Cloth-bound.

The author has tried to present in a popular style the basic conceptions of Advaita Vedanta, and has greatly succeeded in his attempt. He has dealt with the two different methods of the realisation of Brahman,—the direct method of Jnana or analysis and discrimination, and the indirect method of Upasana or devotion.

The book, we are sure, will be useful to those who may not have sufficient knowledge of Sanskrit to enable them to study the original works on the Vedanta.

Songs to Myrtilla.—By Sri Aurobindo Ghose. Published by the Arya Publishing House, College Street Market, Calcutta. Pp. 57. Cloth-bound. Price Re. 1-4.

This neat little volume includes mostly the early poems of the author, written between his eighteenth and twentieth years (1890-92). In some of the poems depicting English sights

and scenery, ideas and sentiments, we see the exclusive inspiration of the English Muse. While in others—"O Coil, Coil," "Radha's Complaint in absence," "Radha's Appeal," "Bunkim Chandra Chatterji," "Madhusudan Dutt,"—Sri Aurobindo is a typically Indian poet drawing his inspiration from the Indian Muse, the "white-armed mother," Saraswati.

The poems reveal the poetic genius and the youthful imagination of Sri Aurobindo Ghose. The printing and paper of the book are excellent.

Poems by Indian Women.—Edited by Margaret Macnicol.

The Heritage of India Series. Published by the Association Press, 5 Russel Street, Calcutta. Pp. 99. Price—Cloth Re. 1-8; Paper Re. 1.

This little volume contains one hundred and ten poems sung or written under varying circumstances by fifty-six women in fourteen distinct languages and in different ages—ancient, mediæval and modern. The anthology does not claim to contain fully representative selections. But still it is a work of unusual interest, as it reveals the soul of India's women, and brings home to us the part they have been playing in moulding the life and thought of the Indian people by their valuable contributions to the poetic literature of the land.

Among the poetesses there are women of various types and stages of life. We find in the volume under review representatives of those who kindle the sacrificial fire and sing hymns in praise of the Gods; who tend the hearth-fire and at the same time speak of Love Divine; who as nuns embrace the glorious life of renunciation and meditation; who while adorning the throne as empresses, sing tender songs to their lovers on earth; who despising the splendours of the world speak of their passionate love for their Lord and lose themselves in a rapturous communion with their Beloved. The ancient and mediæval poems are mostly connected with religion in some form or other. But modern poetesses write on a variety of subjects, human as well as Divine.

Release from worldly bonds and realisation of the state of Bliss is the central theme of all religious poems. "The deliverance sought," writes the Editor in the General Introduction, "is from birth and re-birth and bondage to action and its fruits—not deliverance from sin as the Christian understands it." An Indian Christian writer has truly observed that "the Indian nature is not much attracted by the psychology of sin; it requires, on the contrary, the symbolism of form, colour and music." The Hindu does not, therefore, care to dwell much on sin. He worships the Lord, sings hymns to Him and meditates on Him, and then—as Andal, the woman saint of South India says—

"The sins that we committed in the past and those that
still wait to assail us,

All become like dust in the fire."

As the Hindu understands it, there is no sin but worldly desire and selfish action, and these bring about transmigration. It is for this reason that he tries to remove the root-cause of all evils comprising sin as well as relative virtue, both of which are bonds from the highest stand-point. He tries to purify the mind from all forms of earthly attachment and conquer birth and re-birth—thus to attain to his true Divine nature or union with the Universal Spirit. Hinduism believes in the Divinity of man—of the saint and the sinner alike, and looks upon desire and its effects, which include all sinful thoughts and actions, as mere accidents. Therefore when a Hindu speaks of release from all cramping circumstances—all limitations, mental and physical, he includes sin and much more that cannot possibly come under the category of sin.

The book contains a valuable introduction which besides giving a short history of Indian poetry from the Vedic age down to the present times, acquaints us with the main facts of the poetesses and their works. There have also been added tables of poetesses in chronological order, their poems and the languages in which these were written. Twenty-five translators have contributed to make the volume a great success.

Matwala.—Edited and published by Mahadev Prasad Seth, 23 Sankar Ghose Lane, Calcutta. Annual subscription, Rs. 2.

This is a newly started political weekly in Hindi pledged to the non-co-operation movement. As its very name implies, it is conducted throughout in a lighter vein. It seeks to serve the country by correcting its evils through the instrumentality of humour and wit. It is thus a new departure in Hindi. Its writings are thoughtful and forcible. It is also enlivened with fine poems and cartoons. The printing and paper are good. We wish the paper an extensive circulation.

REPORTS AND APPEALS.

The Reports of the Sister Nivedita Girls' School, the Vivekananda Women's work and the Sarada Mandir, Baghbazar Calcutta, for 1919-1922.

Under the inspiration and guidance of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, his spiritual daughter—the Sister Nivedita, who had consecrated her life to the service of India, took upon herself the noble cause of educating the women-folk of the country and worked for it with whole-souled devotion. In her labour of love she got the active co-operation and assistance of Sister Christine, an American disciple of the Swamiji as also of a few sacrificing and devout Indian ladies.

The work for the education of children originally started by Sister Nivedita has since developed into a flourishing institution that includes the Girls' school, the Vivekananda Women's work and the Sarada Mandir. Combining the practical methods of education followed in the West with the higher idealism and spiritual traditions of the Hindu race, this institution aims at producing ideal women on the models of Gargi, Maitreyi, Arundhati, Sita and Savitri.

The ever increasing rush for seats speaks of its growing appreciation and supreme usefulness in the country. During the period under review the number of students, including the women's department, came up to 245. And on account of the limited accommodation in the school building many applications from guardians for admission of their wards had to be rejected. The institution has established two branch centres, both of them thriving, one at Bally and the other at Comilla.

We must observe here that this educational work, manufacturing as it does model Hindu women devoted

to the ideals of renunciation and service, helping poor Purdah ladies to support themselves by personal earnings by means of sewing, needlework and so on and giving the best education possible to girls reading in the school there, promises to be the nucleus of a grand intellectual movement of far-reaching issues regenerating the motherland.

The newly built premises at the Nivedita Lane, Baghbazar, where the institution has been shifted of late could not be completed owing to the inadequacy of funds. Persons desirous of perpetuating the memory of their deceased relations may erect new blocks or add new wings or rooms and help the noble cause. Contributions should be sent to Swami Saradananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, 1 Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

The Annual Report of the Vivekananda Society, 78/1 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta, for the year 1922.

Among the various useful activities of the Society the following deserve special notice. It contributed its mite towards the North Bengal flood relief fund, organised 41 public lectures on religion and philosophy, celebrated the birthday anniversaries of Srimat Swami Vivekananda and Bhagāvan Buddha. It further arranged a special meeting to do honour to the sacred memory of the late Srimat Swami Brahma-nandaji Maharaj after his Mahasamadhi. Besides, 12 religious conversation classes were held in different parts of the city and 22 poor students were helped with stipends. The total receipts during the year including the previous year's balance amounted to Rs. 4838-3-6, and the total disbursements to Rs. 2583-0-9, leaving a balance of Rs. 2255-2-9, of which Rs. 1335-5-0 is deposited for the building fund.

It has been a long cherished desire of the Society to erect a suitable building with a fairly large hall, which, while accommodating the growing spheres of its activities, may be regarded as a fitting memorial to the great Swami in whose loving memory the Society has been founded in the town of his nativity. We hope our generous countrymen and the numerous admirers, followers and disciples of the Swami will freely help this noble undertaking. Contributions may be sent to the Hony. Secretary of the Society.

NEWS AND NOTES.

Mr. Andrews at the Assam Students' Conference

Seldom do we meet with Europeans who are liberal enough to heartily appreciate great things in all, irrespective

of creed and nationality. Mr. Andrews and a few others like him are really exceptions. With the sincere conviction that "Christ was more truly understood in India than He was in Europe," Mr. Andrews has adopted India as his motherland and has consecrated his life to her service. He has all along been a true friend and guide to the Indian student community in their weal and woe.

Recently he presided over the Students' Conference in Assam and gave the students many a valuable advice which, if translated into action, is sure to stand them in good stead. Drawing his inspiration from the eternal verities of the Vedanta, he emphasised on that occasion amongst other things the practice of the lofty Vedantic principle of the Divinity of man, in the service of suffering humanity. "I would ask you here," said Mr. Andrews, "who are students, to practise in your own daily life the faith in the Advaitam. When the cholera-stricken patient is before you and you are afraid to touch him for fear of infection, say to yourself—this poor cholera-stricken man or woman is the Divine Self in human form ; he or she is myself ; 'Tattvamasī'—'Thou art That.' * * * When the outcast comes to you,—the untouchable, the Namasudra—say to yourself the same thing, 'Tattvamasī'—'Thou art That.' For all spiritual life is one. The Upanishads tell us that the Advaitam is 'Avarna.' He is without colour or caste distinction."

Mr. Andrews brought out nice parallels from Sufism and Christianity, expressing in mystical form, the same lofty truth. "I knocked at the door of the heart of my Beloved," says a Sufi poet, "and a voice said, 'Who is there ?' I said, 'It is I,' but then came no answer. I suffered and pined away with grief, then knocked again and a voice said, 'Who is there ?' And I said, 'It is Thou,' and the door opened. * * * Christ stands before his true disciples in the midst of the poor and the needy, the prisoner and the stranger, the sick and the afflicted, and says in their names : 'I was famine-stricken and athirst, was hungry and naked ; I was in prison and a stranger. In as much ye did service unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.'"

Mr. Andrews also referred to the indebtedness of the youth of modern India to the illustrious Swami Vivekananda for "the renewal in practical life of this faith in the Advaitam," and spoke highly of the Ramakrishna Mission workers in the words : "I have watched with joy how they have learnt to identify themselves with the sick and the suffering and the outcaste."

Vedanta Work in New York (U. S. A.)

Swami Raghavananda who is now at the Vedanta Centre,

New York, will be in charge of the Vedanta work there during the absence of Swami Bodhananda, the head of the institution, who is shortly expected in India after years of successful work in America. We are glad to give below extracts of a letter, dated October 8th, from Swami Raghavananda, which, we have no doubt, will be highly appreciated by our readers:—

“* * * It is when we go outside of India that we really understand the glory of our Motherland. Where shall we find such spirituality, such devotion to God and such peace of mind! The atmosphere of America is quite different. Here one does not find such peace. And what to say of Europe! America, at least, is not so restless. Many are coming now from Europe to America. And the American papers say, ‘Thank God for the Atlantic Ocean!’

“Swami Bodhananda and myself went to a place called Grand Isles in Vermont, close to the Canadian line. We were there two weeks the guests of a lady from New York, who has a nice home there. Sister Christine also went there.

“Our class and lecture season opened on September 9th, and Swami Bodhananda set me to work. Every Sunday at 3 p. m. we have a service open to the public. First we have prayer, then a sermon of forty-five minutes and then prayer again. The subject of the sermon is announced on the previous Sunday. We had already four lectures on the following subjects: Principles of the Religion of the Vedas, Nature of the Soul, Psychology of Religion, and God, Personal and Impersonal. The subject for next Sunday will be, Ethics and Religion. Through the grace of the Lord things are going on fairly well.

“This month we have begun two classes, a Gita class on Tuesday and Patanjali’s Yoga-Sutras and meditation on Thursday. Swami Bodhananda has given the charge of these classes to me. He is trying to go to India, so he is training me that during his absence I may be able to conduct the work here.

“There are many kinds of societies here for preaching religion—Christian Science, New Thought, Psycho-analysis, Ethical Culture, Theosophy etc. There are good lecturers here but I have not heard them yet. People of different countries come here for propaganda work. Among them many are politicians. Mr. Lloyd George has come to America and lectured in New York.”

The Late Srijut Aswini Kumar Dutt

India, specially Bengal, is distinctly poorer to-day by the passing away of Srijut Aswini Kumar Dutt of Barisal. The

melancholy event took place on the 7th November last at Bhowanipur, Calcutta where he had lately come for treatment. For some years past he had been ailing from a serious type of diabetes, but the finale of his great career was brought about by a sudden failure of heart.

His was a towering personality combining in a sweet harmony all the noble qualities of head and heart that make a man really great. A sincere patriot, a literary man of no mean order, and above all a man of rare integrity and spiritual depth Srijut Aswini Kumar won a unique place in the hearts of his countrymen.

The people of Barisal, specially the student community of the place, found in him their 'uncrowned king' and drew inspiration from him in all their activities. The Brajamohan College of Barisal founded and maintained by him as an ideal institution will ever speak of his achievement in the field of education. In the domain of literature his great work—'Bhakti-Yoga,' is a masterpiece that has brought peace and solace to many a struggling soul.

We have no doubt that our countrymen will ever cherish the memory of his noble life that is sure to guide and inspire them in hours of darkness and despondency.

Miscellany

There being no necessity for further relief, the Ramakrishna Mission has closed its centres in the flooded area in Behar. No more contributions will be required for the above purpose from the public.

Srimat Swami Sharvananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is delivering a series of lectures and discourses at the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Santa Cruz, and in different parts of the city of Bombay. The lectures and discourses are being highly appreciated by the Bombay public, many of whom are being attracted towards the universal and inspiring teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

We are glad to learn from a cable received from London that Srimat Swami Bodhananda, head of the Vedanta Centre at New York (U. S. A.) and Sister Christine of the Sister Nivedita Girls' School, Calcutta, have reached London from America, and are on their way to India. We are anxiously waiting to welcome the Swami and the Sister back to India after years of absence in America.

