

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA.

27th July, 1920.

In Samadhi there is complete destruction of the mind, but it must be a Nirvikalpa Samadhi. To transcend the mind is fully to manifest the intellect. It is not that the mind is altogether annihilated, but the mind which formerly had relations with the phenomenal world is gone. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the pure mind and the pure Self are one. The mind gets purified as soon as its worldly character is destroyed. A pure mind is that which, fully believing in the unity of Self, sees the same Atman in all, and deals with them accordingly. In the Gita and the Upanishads you will find that words like धीरः, आत्मवान्, प्रशान्तधीः (meaning steady and well-balanced) are repeatedly used. Such a state happens when the mind has become pure.

28th July.

At the time of death an outer power struggles with the inner power. These two powers are not different. They are like one circle within another, the bigger one trying to destroy the other. Once when I was at the point of death at Puri, I perceived this distinctly. As if I had one foot outside the door and another inside. I could see both sides. Death is no more terrible when there is no attachment. One must keep out attachment. All the trouble is due to love being centred on specific objects. When you dive into the Ganges you don't feel any weight, although there are tons of water overhead. But one feels so burdened when one places a cask of water on one's head! Even the spine may give way. You may love all the beings in the world and not be at all under bondage, but the moment you allow your love to be centred on any special object, you are bound. If you can get rid of these loads, then only you can attain to peace and liberation. Constant discrimination sharpens the intellect. Truth surrenders itself to a man who is always discriminating to attain to it. One must always keep the sword of discrimination ready at hand. The Lord says in the Gita that we must cut down the deep-rooted Aswattha (of Samsara or the relative world) with the sword of non-attachment, and seek to enter that blessed state from which there is no more return.

The Swami next cited the parable of the pigeon from the Bhagavata* and said, "When the pigeon saw that all others had fallen into the trap, he was overcome with

* Book XI. ch. vii.

delusion, and allowed himself to follow suit. It is thus that men come under delusion and die.”

Then he quoted a song : ‘Such is the charm the Divine Enchantress has spread, that everyone is caught in it. Not to speak of petty creatures, even the World-Gods like Brahmâ and Vishnu are infatuated.’

Continuing he said : “Not only the common run of men, but even the Jnanis lose their heads, through the will of the Divine Mother.” He quoted from the Durga Saptasati some verses delineating how the Divine Mother, through Her unthinkable power, projects, maintains and dissolves the universe, deludes even the greatest, and again, out of Her Grace, confers liberation on people. Then he said : “If you succeed in purifying the mind, everything is set right. The pure-minded have things pre-arranged for them in the external world. They find everything ready for them.

“When Swamiji went to America for the first time, I accompanied him to some distance on his way to Bombay. In the running train, Swamiji said to me in all seriousness, ‘Well, all that preparation that you see going on (in America) is for this (pointing to his own body). My mind tells me so. You will see it verified at no distant date.’

“Take for instance the case of Sri Ramakrishna. The Kali Temple at Dakshineswara was kept ready for him. All that arrangement was made for him beforehand.”

(Concluded.)

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

In a healthy, living organism, the different vital parts of which it is constituted are full of vigour and perform their respective functions smoothly and in co-ordination with one another. If the parts be diseased or decaying, the whole system is affected thereby, and it grows weaker and weaker day by day. Similar is the case with a social body which, too, is a living whole and is as complex a system. It is made up of individuals, each thinking, feeling and willing in his own way, each having an ideal of his own. To ensure the progress of a society, it is necessary that its constituent units get opportunities for self-expression and work together in amity and harmony. There should be self-help as well as a mutual understanding and co-operation amongst the members. None should live at another's expense; none should be domineering or interfering with the liberties of another. A policy of self-aggrandisement and exclusiveness extensively practised is bound to be suicidal—it will spell disaster and ruin to society. What is needed to be encouraged is the salutary principle of allowing freedom to every man or woman, restrained only by the wider considerations of communal interests with which is linked the welfare of the individual. Such a course will vitalise society, further its progress and resuscitate all the avenues of its life and activity. The history of the different races bears ample testimony to the truth of this fact.

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The Hindu Society of the good old days was on the principle of an amicable division of labour. The

people were then simple and lived together in peace and harmony. According to their individual predilections, they chose their respective callings and tried to excel in their own lines, without any quarrel or fight. Some, with a spiritual bent of mind, became proficient in religious practices, and they clubbed themselves together and formed the priestly class—the Brahmanas. Others, having a warlike disposition, took upon themselves the task of defending society against external and internal aggression and became known as the military class—the Kshatriyas. A third section looked to the economic interests of the people and had agriculture, commerce and industry for their professions, and they were called the Vaisyas. While the rest took to menial service and were known as the Sudras. This is the genesis of the institution of castes which has nowadays become, in its degraded form, the subject of so much criticism and discussion. Originally, it was highly useful and efficacious. There was at that time no question of 'high and low,' for each of the castes had its rightful place and function in the social economy. But as society began to deteriorate, the castes also became gradually stereotyped, irrespective of individual merit or efficiency. Birth alone was made the criterion for determining the social position or status. Those who were at the helm of society—the first three castes, became self-centred and appropriated to themselves all the advantages; while the rest of the people, comprising the fourth caste, were cornered and put under a ban, and so they suffered all sorts of inequities. A yawning gulf, separating the classes and the masses, came into being. The higher culture became circumscribed within the narrow limits of the privileged few. And our national

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 life degenerated a great deal and society came to be, what it is now—a breeding place for superstitions, inequalities and corrupt practices.

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Our religion is not at fault for this degeneration. It stands on the bed-rock of the universal, synthetic principles of the Upanishads and the Gita, and is liberal and rational. It proclaims emphatically, as no other religion does, the unity of life and the Divinity of man. We hear nowadays of democracy—the so called democracy of the Western nations, which is a high sounding word meaning nothing but a political make-shift—a contract improvised for maintaining the order of society. It has no spiritual basis. Hinduism, on the contrary, advocates the liberty, fraternity and equality of men on the stronger ground of the Divinity of all creatures and not from the pragmatic considerations of 'utility.' So the blame fathered upon Hinduism that it gives sanction to the inequalities and abuses that we now find in our society, has no justification whatsoever. It is the selfishness and narrow-mindedness of our social autocrats that is responsible. They, in their ignorance, have misunderstood the spirit of our religion and the true import of the caste system and made a travesty of them by inventing canons and rules to delude and oppress those who are not strong enough to defend themselves. Thus the masses—the poor and the unfortunate, have come to grief in India. They have been ostracised from society as 'untouchables' and denied the right of studying the Vedas, the storehouse of higher wisdom and culture. Even the doors of the temples and shrines, where everyone should have free entrance to offer

worship unto the Deity, have been closed against them. It is not strange, therefore, that many of our depressed classes—the Panchamas, the Namasudras and so forth, should renounce Hinduism and seek shelter under the fold of Christianity or Islam, where they get greater sympathy and better treatment. The Hindu Society is thus getting thinner and thinner day by day. The time has come when the leaders of our society should retrace their steps and do penance by remedying the existing evils and setting right the wrongs done.

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At this critical stage of our national existence, the problem of our masses—the teeming millions, should primarily receive our serious consideration. Political emancipation or advancement after which we are striving, is out of the question unless and until there be an awakening of the masses of our country, for they, and not the middle class or the aristocrats, constitute the bulk of our population. Truly speaking, the Indian nation lives in the humble cottages and not in palaces or stately mansions. The strength and vitality of our national being is in those who are called 'depressed' according to our social phraseology—the masses. It is the masses who undergo all sorts of hardships and add to our national wealth and prosperity. They are the tillers of the soil and raise our crops; they work as labourers and run our industrial concerns. Again, it is they who form the bulwark of the country in times of national danger and calamity. Is it not a pity that their interests should be so much neglected and they should be looked down upon? They are pouring out their hearts' blood for the national well-being, and what do they get in return? The deplorable condition

in which they are beggars all description. Deprived of the light of education and of all the amenities of life, they drag on, from day to day, a miserable existence. Poverty, starvation, disease and suffering are their lot. Added to these, social tyranny and injustice is crushing them like a dead weight, suppressing all individuality and growth. Worst of all is the dehumanising and debasing effect that continued misery has brought upon them and their mentality. They have lost self-respect and forgotten that they too are men and are entitled to have their God-given rights. In the face of this discouraging state of things is it not strange that most of our social, political or religious movements are not concerned with the mass problem, as they should? It is only lately that the Indian National Congress has taken up, in its programme, the question of removing the ban of untouchability. The removal of this social inequity alone will not solve the matter. The condition of the depressed classes should be so improved by an all-round, sustained propaganda of help and service that they may raise up their heads and lead decent, worthy lives.

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To regenerate the masses, we must, first of all, re-organise our rural life. India is pre-eminently a country of villages. The majority of her population, specially the cultivators, the craftsmen and the like, still live in rural areas, which are now becoming in many ways unfit for human habitation. It is only recently that a number of big cities and towns—centres of commerce and industry, education and litigation—have sprung up in India. For many hundred years, the communal life in the self-sufficient, self-governing villages was a special feature of the ancient



Hindu race. Its solidity protected the Hindu culture against all incursions of bigotry and racial hatred and preserved the economic stability of the country. Yes, the ancient village commonwealth, based on self-help and co-operation, was an ideal institution in many respects. In those days both the classes and the masses lived amicably together in their village homes. Life was simple and free from all the complexities and anxieties of our modern civilisation. Ill health, want of food and clothing, intemperance, strife and so forth which are rampant nowadays in the villages, were rare. The people used to be reminded of the higher ideals of life through merry-making and rejoicing by the communal Pujas and Yatras, Kathakatas and Sankirtans which are getting out of vogue in these days. Then the occasional visits of the bands of religious mendicants and fakirs, reciting stories from the Puranas and singing devotional songs, were the great sources of religious inspiration to the people. But with the flow of time and the changed conditions of life, these helpful institutions of ancient India are gradually disappearing. What is urgently needed at this hour is a rehabilitation of the old rural life with all its useful factors and humanising influences and an adaptation of it to our new environments and circumstances. It will establish peace and unity among the warring elements, solve satisfactorily the problem of the masses and help substantially towards the economic advancement of the country.

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In view of the appalling ignorance, extreme poverty and great moral degeneration that have come over the

country-folk, specially the common people, the task of rural reconstruction is a very hard one. It will require infinite tact, resourcefulness, patience and sacrifice to undertake and carry it to a successful close. Still, as the nation cannot afford to neglect it any longer, it must be taken up at once and at any cost. What is it that accounts for the sad disintegration of the village life? If we dive a little deep into the matter, we shall find that it is mainly the Western civilisation and its natural offshoots—industrialism and a growing craze for the town life, that are responsible for this break-down. With the introduction of some of the phases of the Western civilisation, industrialism also has come to stay and is gradually taking a firm root on Indian soil. Industrialism has, of course, its good points, and it is not an unmixed evil. But the greatest harm it has done is to create, out of the simple, ignorant village people—the peasants, a class of landless, wage-earning slaves who have nothing to cheer them in life. Tempted by false promises, they go and work year in and year out, in mills and factories, collieries and plantations, marts and markets, with no tangible recompense. They live, men and women, huddled together in ill-ventilated, insanitary, dungeon-like slums and barracks and become physical and moral wrecks. Again, side by side with these ‘proletariats,’ modern civilisation has brought into being in our towns and cities another class of people equally miserable and helpless—the ‘salarisats’; they come mainly from the middle class. To eke out a decent living, they leave their village homes and family circles and plod on as ill-paid clerks in some office in a city or town, open to all the corrupting influences of the urban life of modern times. As a natural consequence, the rural

parts which were once unparalleled in peace and plenty, simplicity and piety, are becoming deserted, jungly and insanitary. And the people who are still clinging to their ancestral homes pressed by circumstances, have the most unhappy time of it on account of constant disease, want, litigation, suffering and troubles of like nature. Hence in our work of rural reconstruction and reorganisation of communal life, we should see first of all that the villages offer to men and women of both the classes and the masses sufficient attraction in the shape of substantial food for their body as well as for their soul. Then they will never cherish the idea of forsaking their homes and going out, but rather will remain tied there in peace and contentment with the motto of the patriot-poet Dwijendra Lal : "In this country am I born, may I die here and here alone."

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## A PEEP INTO THE ANCIENT CIVILISATION OF EGYPT.

BY KHAGENDRA NATH SIKDAR, M.A.

Egypt may be called the cradle of material civilisation. Even at this advanced age of historical research and manifold achievements in the various spheres of human thought, ancient Egypt stands almost shrouded in impenetrable obscurity. Some of the Egyptologists and antiquarians have tried with some tangible results to lift the veil of obscurity that hangs over that mighty nation which developed in the Nile valley a material civilisation almost unprecedented in its grandeur and elaborateness. Standing even in the mid-day splendour of the materialistic culture of the West, we are irresistibly drawn into the

halcyon period of Egyptian history—away back where tradition even dares not peep,—when the children of Egypt, nursed and bred in the unusually elongated valley of the Nile, started a civilisation which, radiating its lustre and glow throughout the then known world, at last became submerged in the great world of Mediterranean power. The great but now extinct culture of this mighty race dominated the basin of the eastern Mediterranean in the age when Europe was just emerging from the primary to the secondary stage of its civilisation and coming into intimate touch with the culture of the early East. The currents of life from the West as well as from the East commingled in the Nile valley and forming a mighty stream flowed beyond it vitalising many lands. But how wonderful was this ancient civilisation of Egypt which existed four thousand years before Christ, can hardly be comprehended unless its different aspects are properly dealt with. According to Mr. Breasted, the calendar year of 365 days was introduced in Egypt in 4242 B.C., the earliest fixed date in the history of the world; and a united Egypt under Menes, the first recorded ruler, appeared in our historic horizon about 3400 B.C., though Mariette places the era of the first dynasty under Menes at about 5004 B.C. Whatever might be the actual date, it is a fact that the labours of the last fifty years have enabled us to have a peep into the ancient Egyptian civilisation which extended from that hoary antiquity down to the final conquest of the country by the Persians about 525 B.C.

In dealing with the various aspects of the Egyptian civilisation, the religious life of the people naturally arrests our first attention. Egyptian religion was a worship of the forces of nature. The solitudes of the desert, the illimitable expanse of the starry sphere above, the melodious warblings of the birds nestling in the trees and the sombre grandeur of the majestic hills—all these conspired, as it were, to work upon their plastic imagination so forcibly that their views of the great gods controlling and guiding the destinies of human beings were tinged with

sombreness. The earliest form of religion was no doubt monotheistic, but with the gradual expansion of life this monotheism degenerated into a gross and complicated polytheism at the hands of the greedy and unscrupulous priesthood of Egypt. Wilkinson enumerates seventy-three principal divinities, and Birch, sixty-three. But John Lord, the celebrated author of the 'Beacon Lights of History', adds that there were, besides, hundreds of lesser gods discharging peculiar functions and presiding over different localities. Their views of gods were partly formed according to the material necessities of the different ages, and the priestly class so much dominated over the rest of the people that at the first period of the "Empire" between 1580 and 1350 B.C. Egypt closely resembled Europe in the middle ages ruled by clergymen. But a flicker of light became visible in the horizon of Egyptian religion when Ikhnaton, the most remarkable of all the Pharaohs appeared on the stage. His bold departure from the standardised mode of thinking and traditional faith in the plurality of deities, marks him out as a unique personality in that age. A new spirit was breathed upon the dry bones of traditionalism in Egypt. He abolished the worship of the different deities and enforced in its place the worship of only one God called Aton (sun) the bright effulgence of which was, in his opinion, the very soul of the universe. But this monotheistic phase of religion could not obtain a firm hold on the people, and in a few years after the exit of that great hero of ancient times, the religion of Egypt lapsed again into a degraded polytheism.

But far more important were the achievements of the Egyptians in the domain of art and architecture in which the materialistic outlook of the country found an adequate expression. It is interesting to note that the development of their architecture was inextricably blended up with the growth of their religious notions. Their belief in metempsychosis engendered in their mind an abiding desire to create a permanent resting place for the royal dead, and this exerted a very powerful influence in the development

of the art of building. Egypt may safely be called the source of columned architecture, for "at the close of the fourth millennium before Christ it had solved the fundamental problem of great architecture, developing with the most refined artistic sense and the greatest mechanical skill the treatment of voids and thus originating the colonnade." The effects of Egyptian architecture were always imposing, massive and grand owing to the hugeness of the structures. The very ruins of the temples of Karnak and of the palaces of the Pharaohs at Thebes extort even now the unstinted admiration of the modern world. As already stated, the Egyptian architectural skill was displayed in the erection of a vast, impenetrable and indestructible resting place for the body of the king. Consequently huge pyramids began to spring up in Egypt, illustrating therein the most ponderous masonry which amazes the modern beholder by its fineness as well as by its dimensions. The biggest pyramid built by Khufu about 2800 B.C. demanded, according to Herodotus and Petrie, "the labours of a hundred thousand men during twenty years." It is still inexplicable to many how those huge structures could at all be raised to such an airy height!

In sculpture Egypt showed also a remarkable genius. It is admitted on all hands that the Egyptians were the first who made any considerable advance in the execution of statues. The colossal statues of men and animals at Karnak, Thebes and Tanis embody the qualities of superhuman strength and imperturbable calm of which the Egyptian sculptor was so completely a master. But the sculpture of the Old Kingdom differed from that of the Middle Kingdom in point of freshness and vigour which the latter utterly lacked. But in spite of the marvellous symmetry and hugeness of these statues, there was practically no delineation there of those diverse sentiments which so beautifully found expression under the chisel of Phidias, Praxiteles or Lysippus. It was during the religious revolution of Ikhnaton that everything had a tincture of realism, and the sculptors only modelled those figures

which were true to nature. But with the decline of the Empire, the Egyptian art lost all its pristine simplicity and vivaciousness, and the period of Restoration only shows a frantic attempt to restore and rehabilitate the vanished glory of the golden days of the past. In painting the Egyptians were not so proficient. But a careful observation will show that in the realm of art practicality dominated the minds of the Egyptians, and they never beautified any objects otherwise than on grounds of utility. So the art, as a pursuit of the ideally beautiful, was unknown to the Egyptian mind. But the Egyptians achieved marvels in the domain of plastic art. Though in mechanical arts and in other articles of every day use, Egypt was far behind the modern world, yet their achievements in this respect were nevertheless great. The use of metals, of weights and measures was known to them. There were magnificent cities and fortresses, cornfields and vineyards, agricultural implements and weapons of war, extensive commerce, musical instruments, golden vessels, ornaments for the person, purple dyes, spices, stone-engravings, sun-dials, glass-blowing etc. In Egyptian houses furniture of various sorts even in such a remote antiquity testified to their fine artistic sense. The art of pottery reached its perfection in Egypt, and the porcelain vessels were valued for their rich colours and shapes. Tanning was not also unknown. The Egyptians were besides famous for the manufacture of linen, and like the Indians of pre-British days, they produced linen as fine as our muslin. Spinning on which a great stress has of late been laid by the Indians, was principally the occupation of women in Egypt. There were, again, various other articles of luxury and of every day use, which cannot be dealt with within such a narrow compass.

As Egypt was mainly an agricultural country, a vast and elaborate system of irrigation was universally practised, and at a very early date the men of the Nile came to a laudable solution of the complicated problems involved in the proper utilisation of the river. For the

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purposes of trade and communication, the Egyptians built boats, both large and small. Besides these, warships were not unknown. The two commanding figures of Egyptian history such as Thutmosis III and Ramses II gave a great impetus to ship-building, and it was Ramses II who might be reckoned as the first of the great conquerors of the world to have established a regular army and provided a large fleet to co-operate with his land forces. As the Egyptian government was mainly military, it will not be too much to state that "so far as the art of war consists in the organisation of physical forces for conquest and defence under the direction of a single man, it was in Egypt that this was first accomplished about seventeen hundred years before Christ by Ramses the Great." But we must remember that though the mode of warfare was not as scientific as it is now, though the greed for conquest was not as much an absorbing passion to the Egyptians as it is to the civilised nations of the modern European world, yet the international relations of those days were not only more honourable but also less blackened by political camouflage and hypocrisy of the present day politicians. The international treaty between Ramses II and Khetasur, the Hittite king, in 1272 B.C., reveals a marvellous development of international laws that obtained in those days and ensured peace and safety both on land and sea.

As the Egyptians were matter-of-fact men, their system of education was directed mainly to serve practical ends, and their children were trained in such a way that they might be of great service to society as well as to the country. They did not prove to be so many hangers-on on the family like the Indian youths hunting after services under their white masters even at the expense of honour and self-respect. The ancient Egyptian system of education, however defective it might have been, is indeed a fine commentary on the slave-manufacturing machines of India! The use of letters was known to the Egyptians, and it was probably transmitted to other nations of the East and West from Egypt. And we shall not be wrong

if we infer from the stamping of letters on tiles that the art of printing, of course in its crude form, was known long ago to the Egyptians. They, moreover, developed a kind of literature which reflected, in most cases, the life of the court and the nobles. But there were compositions which were couched in poetic language and were meant for the edification of the misguided rulers. In a word, their literature displayed a great wealth of imagery and fine mastery of form in the Middle Kingdom between 2160—1788 B. C. which can be reckoned as the classical period of Egyptian history. Even their scientific attainments were such as aided them in the daily transaction of business and government. Though their astronomical observations were not developed into a hard and fast system, yet they were sufficiently accurate to determine the positions of stars and other heavenly bodies for practical purposes; and from these raw materials the Greeks developed a regular system at a later age. Algebraical problems were solved; in geometry they were the first to master the simpler problems as far back as three thousand years before Christ. Though their medical science was inextricably connected with magical charms on which they greatly relied, yet their achievement in the process of embalming the body of the dead constitutes a triumph of genius and invests the Egyptian science of medicine with a halo of rare grandeur, extorting even now the admiration of the most scientifically-minded men of the modern world. Such was Egypt,—“the mother of inventions, the pioneer in literature and science, the home of learned men, the teacher of nations, communicating a knowledge which was never lost, making the first great stride in the civilisation of the world.”

But however grand and beautiful the mighty fabric of the material civilisation of ancient Egypt, may loom to the modern thinkers, it cannot be ignored that it lacked the much needed spiritual support without which no civilisation can stand and the proudest triumphs of human intellect avail nothing. The inevitable results of

gross materialism soon showed themselves in all their nakedness in every sphere of their activity ; and the Egyptian society, however simple and pure it was in its early stage, became the hotbed of corruption and vice in later years. No doubt, Pythagoras, Herodotus, Moses, Plato and other great luminaries of antiquity were indebted to the esoteric priestly coterie of Egypt,—no doubt, the contribution of the Egyptian intellect to the civilisation of the East and the West was immense, yet it cannot be denied that there was that utter lack of spiritual force, which was the curse of the dazzling civilisations of ancient Greece and Rome and is still the corroding canker of the modern vaunted civilisation of the West.

The gaudy fabric of the ancient civilisation of Egypt is no more. The vandalism of different ages and the bloody conquerors of the by-gone days had destroyed almost all the traces of the wonderful achievements of the children of Egypt. Their civilisation has now become only a subject of speculation and research. After the Persian conquest in 525 B.C., Egypt's great work was done. She has since then been living an artificial life and has become "a land of ancient marvels" to the modern tourist! Thus the words of the Hebrew prophet that 'there shall be no more prince out of the land of Egypt' have been literally fulfilled.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.*

BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA.

We Indians, who have been given the status of Pariahs by the community of nations, we Indians, whose very complexion is repulsive to the delicate taste of the dominant races, we Indians, whose social customs are branded as downright barbarism and whose religious observances are declared to be nothing but wild superstitions—we Indians have every reason to be proud when one of our own countrymen—the great Swami Vivekananda stands up boldly as a living challenge from Mother India and proves to the hilt that the estimate of the foreigners regarding India has been absolutely erroneous.

He declared at the top of his voice that India is not inhabited by savages without any history or culture at their back, who require to be reclaimed by the light of any exotic civilisation. He rather pointed out the fact that India had a history and a culture unparalleled in the world. Her history is to be reviewed not by decades or centuries but by scores of centuries. Even Buddha is six centuries ahead of Christ. And her culture is traced to an age when the ancestors of the modern races used to tattoo their limbs, live in caves and subsist on animals. Yes, even then India had her Vedas declaring in an unequivocal voice the highest and the most abstruse metaphysical abstractions:—एकं सत् विप्राः बहुधा वदन्ति, “One alone exists, sages call Him by various names”; सदेवेदमग्र आसीत्, “Pure Existence alone is at the basis of the phenomenal universe”; अयमात्मा ब्रह्म, “The self is identical with the Absolute.” Now, gentlemen, please note that this conception of unity, which even modern science and philosophy have not yet been able to reach but towards which they are steadily and surely converging—this conception of the fundamental unity of the

* Notes of a lecture delivered at Patna.

universe is there in the Vedas, whose origin is accepted to be thousands of years beyond the ken of historical research. Such a hoary history, such a glorious culture, India does possess.

The great Swami did not stop here. He proceeded further and discovered the fact that this culture is not only the oldest on earth, but also that it is a veritable treasure to human society. When his own countrymen, under the hypnotic spell of the materialistic civilisation of the West, were condemning everything Indian as something abominably superstitious and barbarous, when they were busy in disentangling themselves from Indian customs, Indian traditions and Indian culture, and were fast becoming imitators of the West in dress, food, manners, tastes, fancies and even in social customs, when association with any religious observance was being looked upon by Indians as something positively disgraceful—at this hour of utter self-forgetfulness of the Indians, this worthy son of Mother India stood up and declared that Indian culture is a veritable treasure on earth. He asked his countrymen to arrest their cultural march towards the West, for that portended a tremendous catastrophe to the history of the Indian race. The Swami pointed out that the very individuality of this race is in this culture. If this culture is given up, the very individuality of the race is lost, and the only natural consequence would be a total extinction of the race. Yes, this culture, based on the highest ideas and ideals of spirituality, is the very life-blood, the vitality of this race, and it cannot be parted with without precipitating the destruction of this race.

“But that is not to be,” says the great Swami. “India must live, because she has a message to deliver unto the world. Until this mission is fulfilled, India cannot die.” India has to deliver unto the world the treasure of eternal truths lying embedded in her civilisation, and it is for the presentation and distribution of this treasure that India has been allowed to outlive tremendous political cataclysms.

Now let us for a moment judge the intrinsic worth of our culture. There are two different types of culture in the world, based on two fundamental cultural ideals, namely, श्रेयः (the good) and प्रेयः (the pleasing). These are the two ideals towards which all activities of the human society are directed. The first ideal, namely श्रेयः inspires man to restrain his brute impulses and manifest the Divinity within him ; it prescribes for man the gradual transformation of the brute-in-man into God-in-man. The other ideal encourages man to remain a brute magnified and refined, a brute with all his greed, lust and ferocity, whose only business is to cater to the senses—to propitiate the lower self. These are the two ideals on which the two different types of civilisation rest.

India has chosen the श्रेयः ideal and raised the entire structure of her society on this. India discovered even in the Vedic age that this ideal alone can bring peace to mankind. Man is swayed by brute impulses of lust and ferocity, but they have to be transcended, otherwise there cannot be any peace on earth. The other ideal involves a fight for sense-enjoyments, and miseries untold are its necessary concomitants. And this is the ideal on which all materialistic civilisations are based. Underneath them all you will find the greed and ferocity of the brute only magnified, refined, organised and even sanctified by diabolical reasoning. Yes, the evils of militarism, capitalism and imperialism are the offsprings of the प्रेयः ideal on which the materialistic civilisations are based, and these are eating into the vitals of humanity. And what is the remedy? The remedy is surely in substituting the प्रेयः ideal by the श्रेयः ideal in the cultural structures of the West ; otherwise peace, individual, national or international, will ever remain an absurdity, and the votaries of materialistic civilisation will have to march to oblivion tracing the footsteps of the ancient Romans, the Greeks, the Assyrians, and the Babylonians. They have raised splendid struc-

tures no doubt but all on the loose sands of the द्रैयः ideal.

The great Swami felt as if the entire civilisation of the West was on the top of a volcano, which might burst at any moment. He felt that unless the Western civilisation be based on spirituality, the entire structure will come down like a tower on sand. So he proclaimed to them, "Do not give up faith—do not give up religion. Scepticism will lead you to utter ruin—your intellect is too weak to avert the calamities that are bound to come in the train of unrest and sense-pleasures proceeding from faithlessness. Let the manifestation of the Divinity in man be your ideal, and according to this ideal make a thorough readjustment of your entire civilisation. In the light of this ideal overhaul all your structures—social, economic and political. You have to subordinate the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras to the dictates of religion. In other words, arms, capital and labour—all have to be subordinated to the dictates of the higher ideal of श्रेयः. Unless they are restrained, arms are bound to bring in arrogance and tyranny over the weak, capital is bound to bring in greed and grinding of the poor, and labour is sure to react and retaliate. Religion has to be reinstalled in her proper place in the structure of your society—for that alone will protect the arms, capital and labour from corruption and direct them all to contribute their strength and resources towards the peace of mankind. I have come not to make converts to Hinduism but to make Christians better Christians, Mahommedans better Mahommedans, Buddhists better Buddhists, and Hindus better Hindus." This is the need of the hour. All religions on earth have to rise triumphantly over materialism.

The Swami found that modern science and philosophy contributed a good deal to the strength of the materialistic civilisation. He found that empirical science and rational philosophy made an unholy alliance to shake the very foundations of faith in religion. So he proceeded to vanquish them first. He challenged the

empiricist saying, "Supposing there is a God, a Creator of even time, space and causation, is it possible for you to prove His existence by experiments in the laboratory with the test-tube or the crucible?" He challenged the rationalist saying, "Supposing there is the Absolute, is it possible for the intellect to catch Him within the network of syllogisms?" And after this challenge to the utter dismay of the scientist as well as the rationalist followed the bold assertion of the Swami: "The Absolute does exist, and this is not a theory, this is not a hypothesis—this is a fact—a fact of experience—a fact of direct realisation—and no amount of scientific experiments or metaphysical arguments can disprove it, simply because it is a fact realised. It is on this fact of realisation that all the religions on earth are based. The existence of God is a fact realised by Christ, and it is on this realisation that Christianity is based. Similarly Mahomedanism is based on the realisation of Mahomed and Buddhism on that of Buddha. All religions are resting on this fact realised, namely, that the Absolute, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient—does exist, and the only rational course open to the sceptic to test the validity of this statement, is to proceed to realise It himself by adopting one or other of the methods prescribed by religion." Thus did the Swami corner science and philosophy and sound the death-knell of faithlessness, and thereby rescue the entire human society from the devouring jaws of faithlessness. He declared that so far as the fundamental principles are concerned all religions are unanimous—the difference is only in details—in the methods prescribed by the different religions for the realisation of the same ideal. The Swami pointed out that all these methods are equally correct and useful, because they are so many different paths to the same truth. They are different only to suit the different tastes, capacities, environments, cultures and traditions of the different peoples on the earth. So he invited all religions to stand united on this ground and form a brotherhood,

as it were, to fight materialism to a finish—materialism, which is the common enemy of all.

Then regarding religion, the Swami asked us to take note of the fact that often the real spirit of religion lies buried under a heap of externals. Forms and ceremonies alone do not make up religion—they are but the outer crust. Now, it is a fact that all fights between different creeds ensue only when people lose sight of the spirit of religion and attach undue importance to forms and ceremonies—taking them to be the whole of religion. God exists ; real peace after which we are all thirsting, can be had in Him and Him alone ; the senses betray us ; we have to restrain them and transform ourselves into real images of God. Then alone we shall be able to taste of this peace. If we want to taste of this peace, we have to manifest the Divine in us—love, forgiveness and purity have to be cultured. This is the spirit of religion underlying all forms, all ceremonies. Look at Christ. He prayed for the pardon of his assassins even when he was being nailed on the cross. What a lesson to humanity who are cutting one another's throat for a word or syllable uttered against their accepted opinion ! Yes, gentlemen, let us look at Christ and learn the real spirit of religion. Let us always be prepared to accept the cross and that without any curse on our lips. This is what our Swami demanded of us. We have to do away with all sorts of fanaticism, sectarianism, for they are the breed of hatred, animosity and jealousy—they do not tally with the real spirit of religion. Difference in the spiritual ideal (that is, in forms ascribed to God), in dress, in food, in social customs, cannot bar any individual from manifesting the Divine in him, because the Divine is beyond all forms.

The Swami emphasised the fact that man is essentially Divine—only he is not aware of this. So he asked all not to condemn a sinner, but rather to induce faith in the sinner in his essential Divinity and help him to manifest it. He asked us all to look upon men as images of God. He went so far as to introduce the service of humanity as a positive form of worship of the Divine.

Gentlemen, please contrast this idea with the maxim of the survival of the fittest. The Swami pointed out that the principle of the survival of the fittest is surely a law with the lower animals, but with men this law does not hold good.

For, the operation of this law can produce supermen of the Asura type, like Jarasandha, Kichaka and the like. But that will spell extinction of humanity. For the well-being of the human society, supermen of the Deva type, like Buddha and Sankara, are a positive necessity, but they cannot be produced by the operation of this law. It is a brute law—it can produce at the most a gigantic brute preying upon humanity. Gentlemen, for the human society law may be a necessity. The Swami, however, pointed out another law which has produced our Christs and our Buddhas—the law of self-denial for the good of others. You are strong, well, don't exert your strength, so that the weak may go to the wall—rather sacrifice yourself, so that the weak may live. Remember, gentlemen, how Buddha offered his head for the life of a goat. This is the Divine maxim which we have to obey for the well-being of our race, and it is this maxim which the great Swami has immortalised by the inauguration of Seva of the Daridra-Narayanans, Murkha-Narayanans and Rogi-Narayanans. Renunciation and service are our national banner, and the Swami unfurled it once again and held it aloft, so that the world may see it, accept it and do away with the brute doctrine of might and selfishness. There is an idea that this search after peace, this doctrine of renunciation and service, this devotion to religion, will make men inert. Far from it,—inactivity, weakness and cowardice can never be prescribed by religion. Only those who look upon the outer crust of religion as the whole of it, may think that way. But those who know the real spirit of religion, are bound to be heroes and heroes of the highest type. Those who can sacrifice themselves for Dharma, for the good of humanity, are certainly infinitely stronger than those, who risk their lives for personal gain. They are the real heroes. Moreover,

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what is religion if not a manifestation of the Divinity within man? And Divinity includes Omnipotence. So, religion means elimination of all sorts of weakness, physical, intellectual and moral. That is why the Swami said, "If there is any sin on earth, it is weakness." Religion encourages men to develop their strength in all directions, but only warns them not to apply this strength in crushing the weak. Strength is for protecting the weak. Look at the Pauranika records and see how religion made ideal kings, like Janaka, Ramachandra and Yudhisthira possible, how religion left unlimited scope for heroes, like Lakshmana and Arjuna. Even the historical period supplies us with heroes like Asoka and Shivaji whose strength lay essentially in religion.

In this connection, we are also to do away with the illusion that religion brings in indifference to this world, and hence religion means a negation of all social, political and economic structures. Far from it. This illusion springs from ignorance of the spirit of religion. In India religion declared the necessity of the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras, that is, of arms, capital and labour. Only it added another group, the Brahmanas—the custodians of eternal truths, to direct and control the remaining three according to the dictates of religion. Please refer to the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata and see for yourselves how a complete structure—social, economic and political, can be erected on the basis of religion. Only look at the records of art left by Buddhism and dispel this illusion. Indian history illustrates the fact that here arts, science and literature flourish only when there is an upheaval of the real spirit of religion.

We have to do something more than what was possible in our past. On the basis of spirituality, we have to erect a new structure suited to the requirements of the modern age. We have to utilise every bit of the material knowledge that modern science has discovered, we have to utilise the power of organisation and resourcefulness of the West and build on the solid rock of spirituality a magnificent civilisation—evolving new economics, new

sociology and new politics. On this spiritual ideal of the East the structures of the West also have to be fitted. This is the renaissance which the great Swami Vivekananda heralded.

Why do you call the Swami Vivekananda merely an orator? Why do you call him merely a politician? Do you not see that his is the work pre-eminently of a Yuga-Acharya? He came with a divine message to deliver unto the world, which was about to be swept off by the rushing tide of materialism. The Swami was veritably a pillar of fire to show humanity the way out of the bewildering maze of faithlessness and selfishness, to Peace Eternal. He came for all, felt for all and sacrificed for all. "Peace unto mankind"—was his only thought, and this thought made him restless, sleepless, nay, almost mad, till he delivered his message and laid the foundation-stone of the edifice of peace in all corners of the earth.

Gentlemen, let us not forget, that even this pillar of fire was but a spark out of the Great Fire that blazed at Dakshineswara—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. So let us conclude by making with all reverence our obeisance to him—to whom we owe our Vivekananda. And let us pray that we may have the glory and privilege of being the instruments of the Divine Will and work for the glorious renaissance of humanity which has already commenced.

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## SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

BY SWAMI ATULANANDA.

(Continued from p. 503).

Francis had the rare quality of losing himself in deep absorption in God. Even when travelling, it happened sometimes that he was so absorbed in thought that he became entirely oblivious to what was going on. He would pass through cities without noticing it, and did not even perceive the noisy enthusiasm of the people, when they

saw him. He had a truly humble heart. One of the Brothers, wanting to test his modesty, said to him: "Why does everybody follow thee? Why do they desire to see and hear and obey thee? Thou art neither beautiful, nor learned, nor of noble birth."

Hearing this, Francis, full of joy, his eyes raised to heaven, replied: "It is because the Most High has willed it thus. His holy eyes have not found among sinners any smaller man, nor any more insufficient and more sinful. He chose me, because He could find no one more worthless. And thus He wishes to confound the wise and learned, the strong and beautiful, and those whom the world esteems high. Thus He accomplishes His marvellous work."

In contradistinction with the tendency of his time, Francis performed very few miracles, and then only in exceptional cases to relieve the suffering of men. These miracles were acts of love. But more often people forgot their suffering coming in his holy presence, meeting his gentle, compassionate glance. "Sinners can perform miracles," he would say, "but they cannot be faithful to God, which is the one thing needful."

When he sent his companions out to preach, he said: "Set forth and walk two and two, humble and gentle, praying to God in your hearts, carefully avoiding every vain and useless word. Meditate as much while on this journey as if you were shut up in a hermitage or in your cell, for wherever we are, wherever we go we carry our cell with us. Brother, body is our cell, and the soul is the hermit who dwells in it, there to pray to the Lord and to meditate."

And on one occasion he wrote: "I, little Brother Francis, desire to follow the life and the poverty of Jesus Christ, our most high Lord, persevering therein until the end. And I beg all and exhort you to persevere always in the most holy life and poverty, and take care never to depart from it upon the advice or teachings of anyone whomsoever."

Francis' humility and simplicity stand out all through

his life. One day, when weak and exhausted, unable to continue his journey on foot, he mounted an ass. One of the Brothers followed him, when suddenly Francis perceived what was passing in his companion's mind. "My relatives," the Brother was thinking, "would not have associated with Bernardone, and now I am obliged to follow his son on foot."

Francis dismounted and said: "Brother dear, take my place, it is not right that thou, who art of noble birth, should follow me on foot." The Brother, much confused, threw himself at Francis' feet, and begged his pardon.

It happened once that Francis and his companions were going on a preaching tour. They had to make a voyage by sea. But the owner of the boat would not take them all in his boat. Francis called his companions and said: "The owner of the boat refuses to take all of us, and I have not the courage to make choice among you as you might think that I do not love you all alike. Let us therefore try to learn the will of God." And he called a child who was playing near by, and the little one pointed out with his finger the eleven Brothers who were to set sail.

One day Francis and a Brother went out into the country. The Brother walked a little ahead and when coming to a place where three roads met asked Francis which road they would take. Francis replied: "By the road which God shall will." Said the Brother: "And how can we know the will of God?" Answered Francis: "Stand on the cross-way and turn round and round as little children do." And the Brother turned round and round till he was quite giddy. Then said Francis: "Stop, Brother, and do not move." And when he stopped, Francis said: "Proceed, Brother, in the direction thy face is turned; that is the way that God would have us go."

Francis kept close watch over his own conscience. There was one Brother, very holy, with whom he often went to converse on matters spiritual. Coming to the place where the Brother stayed, he found him gone to the

woods for prayer. Francis called him, but the Brother did not answer. Being in deep contemplation, his mind was lifted above the things of this world. Francis after waiting a while called again. But the Brother did not hear him. Francis felt a little disappointed that the Brother had not answered his call. Then he prayed to God to make known to him why the Brother had not answered. And as he prayed there came a voice from God which said: "O poor little man, wherefore art thou troubled? Should a man leave God for a creature? The Brother when thou calledst him was joined unto Me and could therefore not hear thy call."

Being thus answered of God, Francis straightway with great haste returned to the Brother, humbly to accuse himself of the thought he had had concerning him. And the Brother, seeing Francis approach, threw himself at his feet. Then Francis lifted him up and told him with great humility the thought and trouble of mind that he had had concerning him. "And now Brother," said Francis, "I command thee by holy obedience that for punishment of my presumption and the heat within my heart, when now I throw me on the ground upon my back, thou set one foot upon my throat and the other on my mouth and thus three times pass over me from side to side, crying shame upon me and contempt, and chief of all, bespeak me thus: 'Clodpoll, lie there, thou spawn of Bernardone, whence comes such great pride to thee that art a thing most vile?'"

And the Brother, out of holy obedience but right grievous, with as much courtesy as he could, fulfilled the bidding of Francis.

One day Francis asked one of the Brothers where he came from. "From your cell," replied the brother. Francis who wanted to follow Christ in absolute poverty, refused to occupy the cell again. "Foxes have holes," he said, "and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay his head. When the Lord spent his days in the desert praying and fasting, he had

neither cell nor hut, but took shelter at the side of a rock."

But there were times when Francis' heart was sad, especially when the Brothers wanted to make the rules of the Order easier. He would have sleepless nights, and doubts and regrets would assail him. One night the thought that he exaggerated the importance of asceticism and poverty and that he did not count enough on God's mercy, suddenly made him regret the use he had made of his life. He had a vision of the happy, peaceful home he might have had. The vision was so tempting and beautiful that he felt that he would give way. He chastised himself with his girdle till blood came out. But the vision remained. Then he ran outdoors without his garment and gathering up from the ground great heaps of snow, he placed them in a row and said: "Here is thy wife and here are sons and daughters and a maid and servant." Then he rushed into these images and trampled them under foot. The temptation left him.

One of the Brothers asked Francis to allow him to possess a psalm-book. Francis took a little dust and sprinkling it on his own head and that of the Brother, said: "Brother dear, first you want one book, and then you will desire another, and then you will aspire to become a learned man and teach others. And you will sit in a chair and say: 'Bring my psalm-book, bring my Bible, bring this and bring that? God is served best in humility and simplicity and purity of heart. Be careful that the spirit of holy prayer be not extinguished in you, and then you will require no books.'"

It happened during the latter part of Francis' life that he went for seclusion to a mountain retreat to meditate on the suffering of Christ. And with prayer and fasting and beating of the breast, he called on Jesus, the Spouse and delight of his soul. And he spake with Jesus now as his Lord and Master, then as his Judge, again as his Father and Friend. And with tears and cries he besought God to have mercy on sinners. And one of the Brothers having secretly crept near Francis heard him call out:

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“Who art Thou, O most sweet my God? What am I, a vile worm and Thine unprofitable servant?” And this, Francis repeated again and again. And the Brother in great fear and humility asked Francis to explain these words he had uttered. And Francis, after rebuking the Brother gently, told him that in contemplation he had seen the depth of his own vileness and the infinite greatness of God. And among other things that God had spoken to him, He had asked of Francis to give Him three gifts. And Francis had answered: “My Lord, I am wholly Thine; Thou knowest that I have only the tunic and the cord and breeches, and even these three things are Thine; what then can I offer to Thy majesty?” Then God said: “Search in thy bosom and give Me what thou findest there.” So Francis searched and found three balls of gold which he offered to God. And the Lord spoke to him: “These three offerings are holy obedience, most high poverty and glorious chastity which thou hast observed so perfectly.”

After this, Francis with still greater fervour meditated on Christ crucified. And the vision of the Crucified One took possession of his soul, and he was quite transformed into Jesus by love and compassion. And after passing the night alone in prayer, towards the morning he had a vision. He perceived one who was man, and yet greater than man, coming towards him. And the figure stood, and his body was fastened to a cross. The face was beautiful beyond all earthly beauty; yet it was the face of suffering. And Francis was filled with joy unspeakable, seeing the beautiful face, and then with great pity because of the pain of the Crucified One. And as the figure retreated, Francis understood who it was that had come to him. And then he felt a great pain, and he perceived on his own body the stigmata—the marks of the wounds of the crucified Christ. These marks he retained to the last.*

* In his hands and feet were the scars of wounds, and in the scars were the impressions of nails; there was also a mark at his right side. The marks indicated the wounds of Jesus on the cross.

Francis knew that his days on earth were drawing near their end. He had become feeble, and at times he was blind, and he suffered great pain. But his spirit was strong as ever. He rejoiced in the fact that soon he would be freed from the body. When a Brother asked him whether a martyr's death would not have been preferable to such a long drawn-out daily suffering, Francis replied: "My son, that to me has been and is dearest and most acceptable, which it pleases God to let happen to me. Yet my suffering is far more grievous than any martyrdom." Every member of his body was in pain; and as he was unable to move himself, he depended entirely on those who tended him. There were moments of great depression and doubt and despair. But these were fleeting moments.

When the hour of his death drew near, Francis called the Brothers and bade them lay him upon the bare ground and remove his mantle, thus once more pledging his faith to his 'Lady Poverty'. "Welcome, Sister Death," he said. And turning towards the physician he added: "She is to me the gate to life." He asked a Brother to read the Gospel, and when the reading was over he bade the Brothers to sprinkle him with ashes. "I have done my duty," he said, "may Christ teach you yours. God is calling me. I forgive all my Brothers their offences and faults. Bless them all in my name."

At sunset, Francis' soul left the worn-out body. Outside the cell the larks were singing joyously. Within the cell a strange thing took place. Francis' body, so long contracted with pain, became supple and straight, and light seemed to shine in his eyes. And then for the first time, most of the Brothers saw the five wounds of the stigmata. And it seemed to them as though they were gazing upon the body of Christ Himself.

HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION.

Every month I read your journal as well as one other from India. From this American continent of efficiency and progress I try to see through the pages of the Indian periodicals, and wonder if I am really anywhere near the realities of India of the present time. Assuming that the written words represent the inward trend of events that are taking place in our country—assuming also that the present social unrest is absolutely authentic, I am yet at a loss to make out the necessity for so much talk. The devastating amount of verbiage that is poured out in half the dailies, weeklies and monthlies tends to leave one cold, particularly when I think of one important issue.

I do not dispute their absolute claims. Far from it. I agree that we must abolish (1) caste (in its degraded form), (2) seclusion of women, (3) Golami in educational institutions, and (4) arrogance in our governing classes. In other words, we must do our level best to bring about a political and social revolution through moral and peaceful means. Examples have been set by untold men and women for the rest of us to imitate. If we want a model social revolutionist, all we need to do is to point at Mahatma Gandhi. To him, again, we can point as an ideal political revolutionist. He is the apex of a vast pyramid. He is not a solitary example, but the symbol of hundreds of little Gandhis scattered throughout India.

So, not only in words but also in the matter of personal examples, Indian revolution that is impending lacks nothing. Yet in spite of every promise, there is something disheartening in the present unrest in our country. I mean the Hindu-Mohammadan tension. It thrives on such unimportant matters as musical processions going by a mosque, or, the killing of a calf. Why do we shed so many tons of crocodile tears on a cow when there are thousands of Pariahs who are our brother men and yet are treated worse than dogs? Is the holiness of a beast superior to the sanctity of Man in whom we perceive the

largest magnitude of Brahman? Imagine also those religious Mohammadans whose meditation on God can be interrupted by music. Pretty poor meditation! God does not want such cheap religious outlook. Can you conceive a man so religious and so deeply given over to praying that no sooner he hears some music than he runs out to kill men *who are images of God on Earth*? What an application of the teachings of a religion! Such a cheapening of the messages of Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammad is a spectacle over which one should laugh were it not for the fact that at present it makes the very angels weep.

Something must be done to point out the absurdity of it all. I propose that we should start to ridicule it. If we discuss the Hindu-Mohammadan tension seriously, it will become grimmer than ever. It is a disease that must be more than cured—it must be killed. And nothing can kill it so surely as ridicule. Let us level the heavy artillery of laughter against all theologies and the doctors thereof who preach killing men in order to abolish music-processions going by a house of God. Let us pulverise with laughter those unctuous persons to whom a cow is more sacred than their fellow-men. Let us mock into self-criticism and self-control those who think lip-service and “don’t-touchism” to be the acme of religious life. Let us, in one word, laugh at the whole crew of officials, office-holders, self-seekers, and misleaders of men till they learn and behold themselves as perverters of Truth. In this grim hour of India’s revivification, let us call upon that gracious God of laughter who kills evil without destroying the evil-doer. We have had enough of weeping and wailing. They have borne fruit. Now let us see what can be done by ridicule. It too, like the thunderbolt, is a weapon of the Lord.*

* Extracts from a letter written to us by Dr. Dhan Gopal Mukherjee from New York, U. S. A. The words within brackets are ours.—Ed., P. B.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from p. 520).

बुधो बालकवत्क्रीडेत्कुशली जडवच्चरेत् ॥

वदेदुन्मत्तवद्विद्वान्गोचर्यां नैगमश्चरेत् ॥ २६ ॥

29. Though wise, he should play¹ as a child ; though expert, he should move² about like an idiot ; though erudite, he should talk³ like a lunatic ; and though well-versed in the scriptures, he should live⁴ as if he were a cow.

[1 *Play &c.*—without considerations of position.

2 *Move &c.*—not having any definite plans.

3 *Talk &c.*—not seeking applause from people.

4 *Live &c.*—following no established code of conduct.]

वेदवादरतो न स्यान्न पाखण्डी न हैतुकः ॥

शुष्कवादविवादे न कंचित्पक्षं समाश्रयेत् ॥ ३० ॥

30. He should not be fond of upholding the ritualistic portion of the Vedas, nor be a heretic,¹ nor be given to barren argument ; in disputes arising out of empty discussions, he should take neither side.

[1 *Heretic*—acting contrary to the injunctions of the Srutis and Smritis.]

नोद्विजेत जनाद्धीरो जनं चोद्वेजयेन्न तु ॥

अतिवादांस्तितिक्षेत नावमन्येत कंचन ॥

देहमुद्दिश्य पशुवद्वैरं कुर्यान्न केनचित् ॥ ३१ ॥

31. The sage should not be vexed by people nor vex them himself. He should put up with vilifications and never insult anybody. For the sake of the body he should bear enmity to none, as beasts do.

एक एव परो ह्यात्मा भूतेष्व्वात्मन्यवस्थितः ॥

यथेन्दुरुदपात्रेषु भूतान्येकात्मकानि च ॥ ३२ ॥

32. The One Supreme Self alone dwells in the bodies of all beings and in one's own body, as the moon is reflected in so many vessels of water. And all bodies are of the same nature.

[A twofold reason for practising non-injury is furnished: First, as Atman, all creatures are one; and secondly, there is no essential difference between one body and another, all being composed of matter.]

अलब्ध्वा न विषीदेत काले कालेऽशनं क्वचित् ॥

लब्ध्वा न हृष्येद्दृतिमानुभयं दैवतन्वितम् ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Possessed of steadiness, he should not be sorry when he gets no food, nor be delighted when he gets it, for both these are controlled by destiny.

आहारार्थं समीहेत युक्तं तत्प्राणधारणम् ॥

तत्त्वं विमृष्यते तेन तद्विज्ञाय विमुच्यते ॥ ३४ ॥

34. He should strive¹ to procure his food,² for continuity of life is desirable. Through it one can reflect on Truth, knowing which one becomes free.

[1 Strive &c.—He should not leave this also to destiny.

2 Food—not delicacies.]

यदृच्छयोपपन्नान्नमद्याच्छ्रेष्ठमुतापरम् ॥

तथा वासस्तथा शय्यां प्राप्तं प्राप्तं भजेन्मुनिः ॥ ३५ ॥

35. The sage should eat food, good or bad, which comes of itself, and use clothes and bedding just as he obtains them.

[This verse suggests that a Paramahansa should not be anxious to avoid comforts when they chance to come.]

शौचमाचमनं स्नानं न तु चोदनयाचरेत् ॥

अन्यांश्च नियमान् ज्ञानी यथाहं लीलयेश्वरः ॥ ३६ ॥

36. The man of realisation should observe cleanliness, wash his mouth and bathe, and go through all other observances, but not¹ because of scriptural injunctions, as I, the Lord, do everything of My free will.

[1 But not &c.—He should do them with perfect non-attachment.]

नहि तस्य विकल्पाख्या या च मद्दीक्षया हता ॥

अदेहान्तात्कचित्ख्यातिस्ततः संपद्यते मया ॥ ३७ ॥

37. He has no perception of differences, and if he ever had any, it has been removed by his realisation of Me. Till the dissolution of his body he sometimes has a semblance of it, and after that he is united to Me.

[This verse gives the reason why he is not a slave to scriptural injunctions.]

दुःखोदकेषु कामेषु जातनिर्वेद आत्मवान् ॥

अजिज्ञासितमद्धर्मो गुरुं मुनिमुपाव्रजेत् ॥ ३८ ॥

38. A man¹ who has got sick of works that produce only pain, and is possessed of self-control, but has not inquired into the religion that leads to Me, should go to a sage as to a Master.

[1 A man &c.—Verses 38 and 39 deal with an aspirant after realisation.]

तावत्परिचरेद्भक्तः श्रद्धावाननसूयकः ॥

यावद्ब्रह्म विजानीयान्मामेव गुरुमादृतः ॥ ३९ ॥

39. Until¹ he has realised Brahman, he should serve the Teacher like Me, with care and devotion, having faith in him and never carping at him.

[1 Until &c.—After that he should behave like a Paramahansa, as described in Verses 20—37.]

यस्त्वसंयतषड्वर्गः प्रचण्डेन्द्रियसारथिः ॥

ज्ञानवैराग्यरहितस्त्रिदण्डमुपजीवति ॥ ४० ॥

सुरानात्मानमात्मस्थं निहुते मां च धर्महा ॥

अविपक्वकषायोऽस्माद्मुष्माच्च विहीयते ॥ ४१ ॥

40—41. But one¹ who has not mastered his passions, whose intellect—the guide to his sense-organs—is wild, and who is devoid of discrimination and renunciation,—such a man taking up the monk's triple staff for the sake of subsistence, is a destroyer of religion, and cheats the gods,² cheats himself, and Me who reside in his self.

With his impurities unconsumed, he is deprived of both this life and the life to come.

[1 *But one &c.*—Unqualified intruders into monasticism are condemned.]

2 *Gods*—to whom sacrifices are made.]

भिक्षोर्धर्मः शमोऽहिंसा तप ईक्षा वनौकसः ॥

गृहिणो भूतरक्षेज्या द्विजस्याचार्यसेवनम् ॥ ४२ ॥

42. The duties¹ of a monk are control of the mind and non-injury; those of a forest-dwelling hermit are austerity and discrimination ; those of a householder are preservation of the lives of animals and performance of sacrifices ; while the duty of a Brahmacharin is service unto the Teacher.

[1 *Duties*—i.e., principal ones.]

ब्रह्मचर्यं तपः शौचं संतोषो भूतसौहृदम् ॥

गृहस्थस्यापृतौ गन्तुः सर्वेषां मद्गुपासनम् ॥ ४३ ॥

43. Contenance—with the option of deviating from it at prescribed times,—austerity,¹ purity, contentment and kindness to animals are also duties for a householder. Worship of Me is a duty for all.

[1 *Austerity*—explained by Sridhara Swami as *Swadharma*, or performance of one's duties.]

इति मां यः स्वधर्मेण भजन्नित्यमनन्यभाक् ॥

सर्वभूतेषु मद्भावो मद्भक्तिं विन्दतेऽचिरात् ॥ ४४ ॥

44. He who¹ thus worships Me constantly and exclusively, through the performance of his duties, knowing My presence in all beings, soon attains to a steadfast devotion to Me.

[1 *He who &c.*—This and the next two verses set forth the result of the performance of one's prescribed duties.]

भक्त्योद्धवानपायिन्या सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ॥

सर्वोत्पत्त्यप्ययं ब्रह्मकारणं मोपयाति सः ॥ ४५ ॥

45. O Uddhava, through his undying devotion he

comes to Me, the great Lord of all beings, the originator and destroyer of all, their cause, the Brahman.

इति स्वधर्मनिर्णिकसत्त्वो निर्जातमद्गतिः ॥

ज्ञानविज्ञानसंपन्नो नचिरात्समुपैति माम् ॥ ४६ ॥

46. Having his mind thus purified by the performance of his duties, and knowing My Divinity, he becomes endowed with knowledge and realisation and soon attains to Me.

वर्णाश्रमवतां धर्म एष आचारलक्षणः ॥

स एव मद्भक्तियुतो निःश्रेयसकरः परः ॥ ४७ ॥

47. All this duty, consisting of specific rites, of those belonging to the castes and orders of life, if¹ attended with devotion to Me, becomes supreme and conducive to liberation.

[1 If &c.—Without the devotion it would merely lead to the Pitriloka, the sphere of the Manes. *Devotion* implies surrender of the fruits of work to God.]

एतत्तेऽभिहितं साधो भवान्पृच्छति यच्च माम् ॥

यथा स्वधर्मसंयुक्तो भक्तो मां समियात्परम् ॥ ४८ ॥

48. So I have told you, my friend, what you asked me about, viz., how a person attending to his duties becomes a devotee and attains to Me, the Supreme Being.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

THE VIGIL.—By Swami Paramananda. Published by the Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass., U. S. A. Pp. 112. Price : Handsome flexible binding \$2.00 ; cloth binding \$1.50.

This nicely got up book is the second volume of the 'Poetry Series' written by Swami Paramananda. As is mentioned in the preface by Sister Daya, "The Vigil' springs from the first volume like a flower from its branch." Hence he who would like to enjoy the full

beauty must go through 'Soul's Secret Door. In both the volumes, the devotion—the intense love of the human soul for the Divine, is the central theme ; but in 'The Vigil' there is here and there a note of Oneness which is the culmination of true Bhakti.

As we read the poems, we were charmed with the simplicity of their form and the mystical grandeur of their content. We quote the following for the benefit of our readers :

I keep Vigil,—

My altar-light burns day and night with the hope
of Thy coming.

I know in my inmost depth that no mortal light
can reveal Thy immortal face ;

Thou art seen only in Thine own effulgence.

Yet with yearning hope in my heart,

I keep my little altar-lamp

Day and night, burning—burning !

How beautiful the lines are ! All the poems seem to be the spontaneous outpourings of a Sadhaka communing in his Soul with God—the Essence of life and creation.

THE FUTURE OF INDIAN POLITICS.—By Dr. Annie Besant.

Published by the Theosophical Publishing House,
Adyar, Madras. Pp. 351. Price not mentioned.

This publication of the 'Asian Library Series' is a hand-book on Indian politics. It gives us a short survey of the relations between India and Britain and gradually leads us to the complex questions of our national evolution and political emancipation. In it we find discussed all those problems which must be solved—specially the important issues like the complete independence of India, or her partnership in a commonwealth of free nations under the British Crown, or the like, which now exercise the minds of our leaders.

Coming as it does from the pen of one who has studied India critically, the book has a value of its own and may be liked by the students of Indian politics.

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS OF DEMOCRACY.—By Wilfred Wellock.

Published by S. Ganesan from Triplicane, Madras, S. E. Pp. 310. Price not mentioned.

The book under review opens with a thoughtful introduction by Mr. Bertrand Russel and deals with the all-important problem of which humanity must make a satisfactory solution if it is not to die out. The author exposes therein the achievements of the modern civilisation and shows how it has failed to bring peace and happiness to the world. For, as is evident, the progress of science, the greatest contribution of this age, has increased the material comforts of the wealthy minority and perfecting the engines of destruction, become the indirect cause of international quarrels and fights.

The author has, however, the vision of a brighter prospect for humanity before him. He gives some practical suggestions which may serve as the basic principles of a future spiritual democracy. It is, according to the author, the discovery of a science of right living, embodying the universal ethical and religious ideals that may rid society of its disruptive evils, redeem men who have gone crazy with an insensate lust for power, and thus recreate the world.

“The dawn of a new day is at hand, the day of our civilisation. Love triumphant approaches love, that opens the door to the greatest thing in the world-life ; love, that is of God, and that, like God, is infinite and eternal.”—Thus does the author nicely close the last chapter of his book. May his vision come true.

THOUGHTS OF THE GREAT.—By G. S. Arundale. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 222. Price Cloth Rs. 2/-; board Re. 1/8/-.

The advantages of the company of great men are too well-known. When such a rare privilege is not within easy reach, one may help oneself by reading the thoughts of great men and meditating upon their true import. It is with this purpose in view that Mr. Arundale has brought

out his 'Thoughts of the Great'. The quotations are from many eminent books and persons mostly of Europe. The book may be useful and instructive to many.

SEVEN MYSTERIES.—By Wayfarer. Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 58. Price: Board Re. 1/-; wrapper As. 12.

The seven mysteries dealt with in this booklet are death, freedom, silence, beauty etc., and they are well written.

(1) Creative Power of Silence; (2) Faith as a constructive Force.—By Swami Paramananda. Published by the Vedanta Centre, Mass., U. S. A. Pp. 82 and 80 respectively. Price 75 cents each.

These form part of the 'Practical Series' published by the Vedanta Centre of Boston, dealing with such spiritual subjects as concentration and meditation, faith and self-reliance, and so forth. These two booklets consist of articles reprinted from the Vedanta monthly, 'The Message of the East'. To those who are familiar with the Swami's writings not much introduction is necessary. We recommend these two booklets to those who are interested in spiritual discipline and progress.

RED OLEANDERS.—By Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore. Pp. 87. Price Rs. 3/-.

This drama in one act is published as the special Sharadiya (autumn) number of the Viswa-Bharati Quarterly in aid of the Pearson Memorial Hospital Fund. As is characteristic of all of Tagore's writings, one finds in this drama also a rare charm and subtle skill of a master-artist. The images brought forth by the Poet are so full of life and expression that one forgets that one is merely reading a play.

In the 'Red Oleanders', the craze for wealth is most vividly represented in all its hideous aspects, and the inevitable doom resulting from this inordinate passion comes in as a great relief.

Truly the Voice confesses: "I keep myself apart that it may become easy for me to plunder the world's big treasure-houses. Nevertheless, there are gifts that your flower-like fingers can easily reach, but not all the strength of my body,—gifts hidden in God's closed hand. That hand I must open some day." It is impossible to resist the temptation to quote, but we must content ourselves with assuring the readers that the play affords an instructive and enjoyable reading.

DJAWA.—A quarterly journal in the Dutch language. Published by the Java-Instituut at Weltevreden, Java.

This is a special issue published in honour of the President of the Java-Instituut, Prince Praboe Prangwado on the occasion of his fortieth birthday and assuming of his new name Mangkoenagoro. Some of the articles of this number are devoted to the life of the illustrious Prince. Other articles on different phases of Javanese culture with plates and photographs add to the value of this interesting publication.

CURRENT THOUGHT, VOL. I, No. I.—A monthly magazine edited and published by Mr. S. Ganesan from Triplicane, Madras, S. E. Annual subscription: Inland Rs. 5/- ; foreign Rs. 7/-.

We welcome this new monthly journal, mainly devoted to a 'comprehensive review of the latest productions in the world-thought.' This number contains a number of thoughtful and readable articles from the pen of some eminent writers. We wish the paper all success.

THE BUDDHIST ANNUAL OF CEYLON, VOL. II, No. 2.—Edited by Messrs. S. W. Wijayatilake and S. A. Wijayatilake. Published by W. E. Bastian & Co., Colombo, Ceylon. Price Re. 1-50.

This annual review, dealing with the life and teachings of the Lord Buddha, contains several interesting articles and some beautiful illustrations which will be appreciated by all admirers and followers of the Prophet of Love.

NEWS AND NOTES.

TOWARDS PEACE.

Every one interested in the welfare and progress of our country must feel deep pain at the existing communal differences which so often end in ugly scenes. Mahatma Gandhi and some other patriotic souls have been trying all they can by writings and personal influence to put an end to such disasters and lay the foundation for a permanent state of peace and amity amidst all sections. But some of the recent happenings here and there proved too much for Mahatmaji, and as a leader he took upon himself the whole responsibility and for personal penance and purification underwent a long fast for twenty-one days. His fast immediately necessitated the sitting of a conference of our representative men. At Delhi a large number of them met and discussed how best to eliminate the sickening communal strifes. The conference came off successfully. And it is no doubt assuring to a certain extent that so far as the leaders at least are concerned a common basis and method of action have been secured.

But so far we have only arrived at the beginning of the problem. As a matter of fact, pelting of stones and breaking of bones are indulged in not by the class of men who assembled at Delhi, but by men who are sunk in ignorance and liable to be inflamed by blind and fanatical priests and other similar parasites. For almost invariably at the bottom of each communal quarrel we find some non-essential aspect of religion magnified and misunderstood as the real factor that starts the mischief. It is obvious, therefore, that the only effective remedy would be to bring about the different religious priests and preachers together and provide opportunities for exchange of views.

One practical step in this direction would be to found an All-India Institute of comparative religions. Another attempt towards the same goal may be made by establishing in each of the towns of the various provinces a Humanity Hall where on different days of the week prayers, sermons, lectures etc. would be conducted by different religionists. For instance, Sunday may be set apart for Christians, Friday for Mahommedans and so on. A third step would be to organise Seva Samitis which will conduct games, reading rooms, service and other aspects of social welfare. The members of these associations will, of course, consist of the youths of all communities. We hope these suggestions will attract the attention of the leaders and elicit helpful criticism.

THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, CALCUTTA.

The Society, located at present at 78/1, Cornwallis Street, has for its object the propagation of the synthetic principles of the Sanatana Dharma as lived and taught by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda among the people of Calcutta. The report of the year 1923 states that in order to carry out this end it organised 35 public lectures on religious and philosophical subjects and also celebrated the birthday anniversaries of Swami Vivekananda and Lord Buddha. Besides, during the year under review, it had its usual monthly religious sittings in the different parts of the city, as well as its weekly classes in its own premises.

The total receipts of the year, including the last year's balance, were Rs. 5,085-2-9, and the total disbursements were Rs. 2,608-3-9. The balance was Rs. 2,476-15-0 of which Rs. 1,519-0-6 belongs to the Building Fund of the projected Swami Vivekananda Memorial Hall.

The Society appeals to our generous countrymen for funds, so that it may materialise its plan of building the Memorial Hall. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary of the Society at 1, Lakshmi Dutt Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

THE R. K. MISSION INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, BELUR, HOWRAH.

The usefulness of an Industrial School, imparting technical education, specially instructions in spinning, weaving and the like to our youths at this time of India's economic stress, is admitted by all. Owing to its limited scope and funds, the Industrial School at Belur can take at present only a small number of boys who are taught weaving and carpentry in the main. As the institution is a free one supplying the boys with all their necessaries together with free board and lodge, the strain upon its resources is great

From the report of the year 1923 we come to know that so far, about a dozen of boys came out as experts in weaving and went home ; there were nine students in the roll of that year. The expenses of the school and the boarding house are met by public subscriptions and donations.

Located at present in a temporary hut in the Math compound, the institution is in urgent need of a permanent house of its own and of funds for its general upkeep. Contributions in aid of this noble enterprise will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the President, R. K. Mission, Belur, Howrah.

THE R. K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA, BANKURA.

Since its foundation, this Sevashrama has been doing a great deal towards the service of the poor, suffering people of Bankura by nursing and rendering medical relief and other kinds of help. But unfortunately the floods of the year 1922 in the Gandheswari devastated the greater portions of the Sevashrama buildings, and made the work of service almost impossible.

Owing to their poor resources, the authorities of the Sevashrama have not as yet been able to repair the damaged buildings and give effect to their schemes of constructing new buildings. They appeal to our charitably-disposed countrymen for funds in the name of

suffering humanity. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary of the Sevashrama.

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK.

Our readers are perhaps aware from newspapers of the flood relief work that is being conducted by the R. K. Mission from various centres. We give below a short report of the work done:—

At Bhagalpur we have distributed 300 mds. of seeds to the peasants. Distribution of food grains has been curtailed, and our workers are giving monetary helps to the poor people for building huts.

In the district of Saharanpur which was seriously affected, we have opened three centres. At Ferupur and Kankhal we have given pecuniary help to 38 and 16 families respectively. Six blankets have been distributed to the Sadhus who were saved from the flood at Hrishikesh.

At Brindaban, which also was badly ravaged, we are giving medicine, diet and pecuniary help to the distressed people from our Sevashram there.

Winter is fast approaching, and the extreme necessity of food, clothing and huts to live in is being keenly felt everywhere. Help in the form of money and clothes, old and new, will be thankfully received at the following addresses: (1) The Secretary, R. K. Mission, 1, Mukherji Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta; (2) The President, R. K. Mission, Belur, Howrah.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY.

The *Tithi* of Swami Vivekananda's sixty-third nativity falls this year on Saturday, the 17th January, 1925. We hope all public and private bodies celebrating this birthday will kindly send us their reports at an early date.
