

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.

16th July, 1920.

The Swami :—When I was dining to-day it at once struck me that bread won't agree with me, but I ate it on nevertheless. Just see the fun of it! We know that a certain course of action is wrong, but we do it all the same. Such is the magic spell of the Divine Mother! Again, a certain action appeals to us in the course of performing it. Haven't you heard that story—"It tastes nice as I eat it"? A son who is returned home from service has sat down to take his food. The old mother has cooked things for him, rather timidly. The son says, "Oh, Mother, what's this that you have cooked? It is simply horrible!" At this moment his wife comes out

and says, "What do you mean? Well, it's all *my* cooking!" "Indeed!" exclaims the startled young man. Then after a while he says, "Ah, it tastes nice as I eat it!" (*Laughter.*)

Nothing really is of any use in the world—people only go madly hither and thither in search of things in the fond hope of getting them.

There lived a courtesan in the kingdom of Janaka. One night she—poor woman—was waiting in suspense for someone to come and pay her a visit. When it was about two o'clock and no one turned up, she gave up the expectation. She said to herself, "There is no other more unfortunate woman in this whole kingdom than myself. Alas, what tortures have I suffered, deluded by hope! Enough! Let me now go and retire." Saying this she slept. An Avadhuta (itinerant monk) was near. He saw all this and said apostrophising the woman, "You have given up all hope and are happily asleep. I bow to you. You are my teacher." Saying this he went away.

Michael Madhusudan (the Bengali poet), has written some beautiful lines on Expectation: "When, O intoxicated mind, shall the day dawn in this garden of life?" and so on.

I saw in the papers that Sir James Meston found himself in a pretty fix. He says, "Such a great storm (the Mahomedan conquest) blew over the Hindu society, but how could it retain its individuality in the teeth of it by absorbing all? Whence could such vitality come? The Mahomedans preached proselytism at the point of the sword, but still they could do nothing to injure it!"

Our relations are with Brahman. It is therefore quite in the fitness of things that we should possess vitality. Sir James says, "The Hindus will adapt themselves well to the democratic form of government, too." The authorities perhaps thought that when the Hindu Society was given a democratic government, it would lose much of its consistency. But it was not to be.

Someone from among the audience said, "They say that though they have failed to make us actual converts to Christianity on a large scale, yet they have succeeded in christianising our ideas as a whole."

The Swami : The race idea is becoming so prominent that some day they may even eschew Christ as an Asiatic ! They have now got their philosophy of the Superman—like the Kaiser, for instance. Well, you have seen what a state of things a Superman could bring about !

I have received a letter from ——— Babu. He wrote to me when his son died. From his letter I could clearly see what the Gita meant by "that grief which shatters the senses." He is reading the Tantras now. The Tantras are practical, while the Upanishads are theoretical. In many respects the Tantras go ahead of the Upanishads. For instance, you have the Upasana (meditation or worship) in the Tantras, which is very grand. Show me the man who has not recognised Sakti (the Lord's Power). Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Even the Incarnations worshipped Sakti and then, with Her grace, they preached religion."

Sankara, too, was a great believer in Sakti. He has written numerous hymns on Her. You know that story, I suppose. One day Sankara was returning from his

bath in the Ganges. He had not much faith in Sakti then. Sakti lay down on his way in the form of an old woman, and when Sankara came, she told him about her miseries. Sankara touched her. But immediately all his power vanished. He then understood that this was Sakti, and began to sing Her praises in a hymn. That was the origin of the *Ananda Lahari*. Pleasing Sakti with that hymn, he got back his power.

The *Mahimna Stotra* is the best of all hymns. I used to read it daily while I was at Kankhal. I also read Madhusudan's commentary on it. There was a Gandharva called Pushpadanta who, treading on some flowers that had been offered to Shiva, lost his power of going through the air. Then he chanted those verses and got back his power. It is a grand hymn.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

“First of all our young men should be strong; religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends. That is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. * * * You will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger.”—Thus did the great Swami Vivekananda appeal to our young men to pay proper attention to their physical culture. Really the time has come when we should take up this question more seriously than before. It is not at all an exaggeration that we are going down every day as regards manhood. This degeneration, if not remedied in time, will bring utter ruin to the nation. It is already threaten-

ing the vitality of our national life. If we take into consideration the general health of our people, we shall see that the majority are bodily weak and debilitated. Diseases like dyspepsia, short-sightedness, nervous breakdown, tuberculosis, diabetes and so on, that were once rare, are now becoming more common and frequent. A comparative estimate of the general health of all nations will reveal that we are almost the poorest in point of stature, physical constitution and longevity. Even in the very prime of life an average Indian has a pale, cloudy face and lack-lustre eyes. He has the look of a prematurely old man and leads generally a sickly and unhappy life. Of course, there are cases of giant athletes who can stand as equals to the world's strongest men, and of whom India can justly be proud. But they are exceptions and few and far between.



The body, the vehicle of the soul and the instrument for the realisation of the Eternal Verity, was never so neglected in India as in modern times. Its culture was considered by the ancient sages as of primary importance for the fuller growth and evolution of man. The old maxim,—शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम्,—“Attention to the body is the first requisite for the practice of Dharma,” proves this fact beyond doubt. The Gurukul system of those days used to enjoin a hard and rigid discipline on all students in order to mould them into a generation of graceful, healthy and robust citizens who could afterwards take upon themselves the duties and responsibilities of the householder's life, and perpetuate the race by begetting healthy children. Physical prowess

and military skill were ever encouraged and developed systematically through training as much as intellectual and spiritual achievements.

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But with the change of time and circumstances we neglected the culture of our body, and consequently we stand to-day physically weak and degenerated. As the body and the mind always go together, this deterioration has told heavily upon the mentality of the nation. The sturdier virtues that go to make military heroes are becoming rarer nowadays. And we are getting timid and effeminate as well as unfit for the struggle for existence that is growing keener and keener every day. To our shame and disgrace it must be said that at times we cannot even protect our life, property and honour as we should, and fall easy victims to the molestations of notorious people. Instances without number may be cited to show how we suffer insults and humiliations from different quarters simply on the score of our bad physique and weak mind.

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Our present educational system, which gives very little scope for the practice of Brahmacharya and the culture of the limbs, is largely responsible for this degeneration. It is the unanimous opinion of all doctors and physiologists that chastity, external and internal, is the first condition of health and vigour. Rightly does Patanjali declare—
ब्रह्मचर्यप्रतिष्ठायां वीर्यलाभः—“Continen-
 ce rightly practised leads to strength.” It develops the muscles, invigorates the tissues and helps the formation of the finest brain. And thus it is the *sine qua non* of a successful

intellectual and spiritual life. The ancient Gurukul system has long become extinct, and the students of our modern schools and colleges are mostly left to themselves during the most critical period of adolescence. Neither the parents nor the teachers have time or inclination to see what their young hopefuls do and read. Naturally exposed to the temptations of bad company and profane literature, it is no wonder that many show a tendency to go astray and spoil their career even at an early age.

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Again, in schools and colleges, or at home, our boys do not get sufficient encouragement for physical exercise that is so very essential for the preservation of health. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy—goes the proverb. This is too true in the case of Indian students generally. They would rather spill their life-blood drop by drop for obtaining university degrees and diplomas by undergoing any amount of intellectual strain than spend some time daily for sports and games. The result is that they keep indifferent health and lose their vitality even while quite young. And when they take to some profession they cannot prosper, and have to lead a miserable existence all through life. During the early days of the present national movement it was a pleasure to see in our young men a marked enthusiasm for physical culture. Almost every place, specially in the province of Bengal, could then boast of a Samity or association turning out boys expert in wrestling, boxing and similar manly sports and games, indigenous and foreign. This not only improved the health and vitality of the boys but served

as a stimulus to acts of self-sacrifice and service. But unfortunately this enthusiasm is now on the wane.

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The remedy is to reform our existing educational system on the model of what we had in ancient times. It means that the ideals of Brahmacharya and of plain living and high thinking should be revived and inoculated into our educational institutions. As a preliminary step towards it, residential schools and colleges manned with able teachers and professors who will combine in their life all that is noble and great, should be started in healthy places far away from the temptation, and dust and din of the city life. There the students will grow up under the direct care and attention of teachers who will impress upon their tender minds the ideas of self-culture grounded in chastity. There they will have greater opportunities for play and pastime, which will give them an additional zest for their studies. Above all, there they will have more scope for moving freely in a pure, salubrious atmosphere and for living under the ennobling influence of Nature, which is so needful for an all-round growth. It is a hopeful sign of the times that our countrymen are seriously thinking of a thorough overhauling of the present educational machinery which is unsatisfactory in every respect. There have already been started some ideal educational enterprises doing sound work for the making of a healthy generation of young men.

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The pernicious custom of early marriage can also be held answerable to some extent for the physical degenera-

tion of the nation. In direct violation of the spirit of the Shastras, Indian parents give their sons and daughters away in marriage before they are quite mature, and become thus the indirect cause of much social misery. Many boys who get married early, beget children early and become embarrassed with big dependent families and the cares and anxieties involved in maintaining them even during their very student career. It is quite natural that placed in such a predicament they cannot devote their attention wholly to their studies. And when somehow or other they come out of the portals of the university, they find themselves stranded in poverty and misery and in ruined health and spirits. Similarly, the girls married early become mothers when they are physically unfit for it and are quite ignorant as to how to rear up children. In the first place, the children thus brought into existence become weak and sickly, and in the second place, they do not get the necessary care and nourishment from their mothers. Fortunately for the country, this evil custom of early marriage is being discountenanced by our educated people and is slowly dying out.

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Finally, the grinding poverty under which both the middle classes and the masses are groaning, does not allow them to have sufficient nutrition so necessary for the upkeep of health. The economic condition of the country must therefore be improved in order to conserve and strengthen the manhood of the nation. We should see that there are sufficient openings for our young men other than the government service and the legal profession which are already overcrowded. God helps those who help them-

selves. We should build our destinies on our own individual efforts, and the grace of the Lord will be on us. Instead of going for service that so often implies dependence and humiliation, let us give up the false notion of dignity and take to such profitable callings as agriculture and industry. This will not only solve our economic problem, but, involving as it does much manual labour will also preserve our health and cheerfulness.

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That the necessity of physical strength and vigour is urgent for the regeneration of the nation is admitted on all hands. At this psychological moment of national awakening, India badly needs the services of a generation that possesses muscles of iron and nerves of steel and is ready to bear the cross of the country from day to day with infinite patience and devotion. Our national self-realisation which we are struggling for will be impossible so long as we remain a nation of weaklings and cowards. Let us listen to what the Upanishads say, **नायमात्मवलहीनेन लभ्यः**, "The Atman cannot be realised by the weak," and gird up our loins to improve the health and vitality of the nation.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND NARENDRANATH.

[Adapted from Swami Saradananda's *Lila-Prasanga*.]

Narendra Nath began to pass his days happily at the feet of the Master. By his silent influence Sri Ramakrishna gradually captured his heart. He was a past-master in the art of imparting spiritual knowledge to his disciples. At a glance he would know what particular

course would suit a particular devotee and set himself to mould his character accordingly. Like the master athlete before the novitiates, he would proceed with great caution and restraint, now owning defeat at their hands to strengthen their spirit of self-reliance, now putting forth wonderful energy to overpower them in the struggle. Seeing in all the repository of infinite strength that only required proper guidance to manifest itself, he would look upon a pigmy as a giant. By intuition he knew that a glorious future awaited his disciples, though they were hardly conscious of it at the time. Holding that bright picture before their eyes, he would encourage them to stick to their path and warn them against dangers. He kept himself minutely informed about their activities and always exerted his beneficent influence in regulating their youthful impetuosity. And all this was done silently and unobtrusively. Again and again he would ask his disciples to test his own realisations. To Narendra he once said, "Test me as the money-changers do their coins. Your path is not to accept me until you have tested me thoroughly." One day when the Master was absent in Calcutta, Narendra came to Dakshineswar. There was no one in his room. A desire arose in his mind to test the Master's renunciation of wealth. He took out a rupee from his pocket and secreted it under his bed. He then went to the Panchavati for meditation. After a while Sri Ramakrishna returned. He proceeded to the bed, and as soon as he touched it he started back in great pain. Wondering he was looking round. In the meantime Narendra had come to the room. He watched the Master's plight silently. An attendant hastened to examine the bed, which disclosed the presence of a rupee. "A rupee! How could it get in there!" exclaimed the attendant. The Master was also surprised. Narendra silently walked out of the room. The Master came to know all about it and was glad that Narendra had tested him.

In the earlier part of 1884 a catastrophe happened in the life of Narendra Nath. His father, who was the earn-

ing member of the family, suddenly died of heart disease. He had spent more than he had earned and at his death the family was faced with dire poverty. The creditors were knocking at the door. Narendra's relatives, who were so indebted to his father, turned his enemies and tried to oust the family from their ancestral home. Narendra must feed six or seven mouths. So he was out for a job, but everywhere he was met with a blank refusal. Three or four months passed in this way. It was the darkest period of his life. The following is his own description of these dreadful days :

“Even before the period of mourning was over I had to knock about in search of a job. Starving and bare-footed, I wandered from office to office under the scorching noon-day sun with an application in hand, one or two intimate friends accompanying me sometimes. But everywhere the door was slammed in my face. This first contact with the reality of the world convinced me that unselfish sympathy was a rarity—there was no place in it for the weak, the poor and the destitute. Those who only a few days ago would have been proud to help me, now turned their face against me, though they had enough means at their disposal. Seeing all this, sometimes the world seemed to me to be the handiwork of a devil. One day I was particularly tired of walking in the sun, and had some blisters on my soles. I sat down in the shade of the Monument in the Maidan. A few friends of mine happened to be there ; one of them sang a song about the abounding grace of God, perhaps to comfort me. It was like a blow on my head. I remembered the helpless condition of my mother and brothers, and exclaimed in bitter anguish and despondency. ‘Will you stop that song? Such imaginations may be pleasing to those who are born with a silver spoon in their mouth and have no starving relatives at home. Yes, there was a time when I too thought like that. But to-day before the hard facts of life, it sounds like a grim mockery.’

“My friend must have been wounded. How could he fathom the dire misery that forced these words out of

my lips? Sometimes when I found that there was not enough provision for the family and my hand was empty, I would go out, telling my mother that I had an invitation, and would remain practically without food. Out of self-respect I could not disclose the fact to others. My rich friends sometimes requested me to come to their homes or gardens and sing songs, with which I had to comply. But I always kept my woes to myself. Nor were they inquisitive except one or two. Only one got information about my real state and put me under a deep debt of gratitude by sending my mother anonymous donations.

“Some of my old friends, who earned a livelihood by unfair means, asked me to join their company. Only one or two, who had learnt by bitter experience, sympathised with me.

“In spite of all these troubles, however, I never lost my faith in the graciousness of God. Every morning I left the bed taking His name and reflecting on Him and went out in the hope of getting a livelihood. One day my mother overheard me and said, ‘Hush, you fool, you are crying yourself hoarse for God from your childhood. And what has He done for you?’ I was stung to the quick. Does God really exist, I thought, and if so, does He really hear the fervent prayer of man? Then why is there no response to my passionate appeals? Why is there so much woe in His benign kingdom? Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar’s words—‘If God is good and gracious, why then do millions of people fall into the jaws of death for a few morsels of food, during famine?’—rang in my ears with bitter irony. I was exceedingly cross with God. It was a fit moment for doubt also to enter into my heart.

“It was ever against my nature to do anything privately. On the contrary it was a habit with me since boyhood not to hide my thoughts even from others, through fear or any other reason. So it was quite natural for me now to proceed to prove before the world that God was a myth, or even if He existed, there was no need to call upon Him, as it was fruitless. Soon the report gained

currency that I was an atheist and did not scruple to do whatever I pleased.

“A garbled report of the matter soon reached the ears of the Master and his devotees in Calcutta. Some of these came to me to have a first hand knowledge of the situation and hinted to me that they believed in some part of the rumour at least. A sense of wounded pride filled my heart to reflect that they could think me so low. In an exasperated mood I gave them plainly to understand that it was cowardice to believe in God through fear of hell, and argued with them about the non-existence of God, quoting several western philosophers in support. The result was that they took leave with the conviction that I was hopelessly gone,—which made me glad. I thought that perhaps Sri Ramakrishna also would believe their version. The thought again raised my indignation to the boiling point. ‘Never mind,’ I said to myself, ‘if the good or bad opinion of a man rests upon such flimsy foundations, well, I don’t care for it.’ But I was amazed to hear later on that the Master had received the report coldly, without expressing his opinion one way or the other. But when one of the favourite disciples, Bhavanath, told him about it amidst tears,—‘Sir, I could not even dream that Narendra would go so low,’—he grew furious and said, ‘Hush, you fool! Mother has told me that it can never be so. I won’t be able to look upon your faces if you again tell me like that.’

“But notwithstanding these forced atheistic views, the vivid memory of divine visions I had experienced ever since my boyhood and especially after my contact with Sri Ramakrishna, would lead me to think that God must exist and that there must be some way to realise Him. Otherwise life would be meaningless. In the teeth of all troubles and tribulations I must find out that way. Thus days passed on, and the mind continued to waver between doubt and certainty, making the chance of attaining peace as remote as anything. Pecuniary wants also remained just the same.

“The summer was spent and the rains set in. The

search for a job still haunted me. One evening after a whole day's fast and exposure to rain I was returning home with tired limbs and a jaded mind, when I was overpowered by exhaustion and unable to move a step forward, sank down on the outer plinth of the nearest house, like a lump of dead matter. I can't say whether I was insensible for a time. Various thoughts crowded into my mind and I was too weak to drive them off and fix my attention on a particular idea. Suddenly I felt as if by some divine power the coverings of my soul were removed one after another. All my former doubts regarding the juxtaposition of divine justice and mercy and the existence of misery in the creation of a Blissful Providence, were solved immediately. By a deep introspection I found the meaning of it all and was glad. As I proceeded homeward I found there was no more fatigue in my body, and the mind was refreshed with infinite strength and peace. The night was well-nigh spent.

"Henceforth I was perfectly deaf to the praise and blame of worldly people. I was convinced that I was not born like humdrum people to earn money and maintain my family, much less to strive for sense-pleasures. I began secretly to prepare myself for renouncing the world like my grandfather. I fixed a day for the purpose and was glad to hear that the Master was to come to Calcutta that very day. 'It is lucky,' I thought, 'I shall leave the world touching the holy feet of my Guru.' As soon as I met the Master, he pressed me hard to spend that night with him at Dakshineswar. I put forth various pleas but to no purpose. I had to accompany him. There was not much talk in the carriage. Reaching Dakshineswar I was seated for some time in his room along with others, when he got into a trance. Presently he drew near me and touching me with great tenderness began to sing a song, with tears moistening his eyes.

"I had repressed my feelings so long, but now they overflowed in the shape of tears. The meaning of the song was too apparent. He had come to know about my intentions. The audience marvelled at this exchange

of feelings between us. When the Master regained his normal mood, some of them asked him the reason of it, to which he replied with a smile, 'Oh, it was something between him and me.' Then at night he dismissed others and calling me to his side said, 'I know you have come for Mother's work, and won't be able to remain in the world. But for my sake, be in it as long as I live.' Saying this he burst into tears again. Next day with his permission I returned home. A thousand thoughts about the family again assailed me. I began to knock about again for a living. By working in an attorney's office and translating a few books, I got just enough means to live from hand to mouth, but got no permanent job, and there was no fixed income to maintain my mother and brothers decently.

"One day the idea struck me that God listened to Sri Ramakrishna's prayers. So I would ask him to pray to the Lord for the removal of my pecuniary wants—a favour which he could never deny to me. I hurried to Dakshineswar and insisted on his making the appeal on behalf of my starving family. He said, 'My boy, I can't make such prayers. But why don't you go and ask the Mother yourself? All your sufferings are due to your disregard of Her.' I said, 'I do not know the Mother, you speak on my behalf. You must.' Tenderly he replied, 'My dear boy, I have already done so again and again. But you do not accept Her and so She does not grant my prayer. All right, it is Tuesday—go to the Kali temple to-night, prostrate yourself before the Mother and ask any boon you like. It will be granted. Take my word for it. She is Knowledge Absolute, and is the Inscrutable Power of Brahman, and by Her mere will She has given birth to this world. Everything is in Her power to give.' I believed every word of it and eagerly waited for the night. About 9 o'clock the Master commanded me to go to the temple. As I went I was filled with a divine intoxication. My feet reeled. My heart was leaping with the prospective joy of beholding the Living Goddess and hearing Her words. I was full of the idea.

Reaching the temple, as I cast my eyes upon the image, I actually found that the Divine Mother was living—was conscious, She—the perennial fountain of Divine Love and Beauty. I was caught in a surging wave of devotion and love. In an ecstasy of joy I prostrated myself again and again before the Mother and prayed, O Mother! Give me discrimination! Give me renunciation! Give unto me knowledge and devotion! Grant that I may have uninterrupted vision of Thee!’ A serene peace reigned in my soul. The world was forgotten. Only the Divine Mother shone within my heart.

“As soon as I returned, Sri Ramakrishna asked me if I had prayed for the removal of worldly wants to the Mother. I was startled at his question and said, ‘No, Sir, I forgot all about it. But is there any remedy now?’ ‘Go again,’ said he, ‘and tell Her about your wants.’ I again set out for the temple, but at the sight of the Mother again forgot my mission, bowed to Her again and again and prayed only for love and devotion. The Master asked me if I had done it this time. I found out my mistake and said what had happened. He said, ‘How thoughtless! Couldn’t you restrain yourself a bit and say those few words? Well, try once more and make that prayer to Her. Quick!’ I went for the third time but on entering the temple a terrible shame overpowered me. I thought, ‘What a trifle I have come to pray to the Mother for! It was, in the words of Sri Ramakrishna, as foolish as to ask a gracious king for a few vegetables! What a fool I am!’ In shame and remorse I bowed to Her respectfully and said, ‘Mother, I want nothing but knowledge and devotion.’ Coming out of the temple I understood, it was all due to Sri Ramakrishna Deva’s will. Otherwise how could I fail in my mission no less than thrice? I came to him and said, ‘Sir, it is you who cast a charm over my mind and made me forgetful of my object. Now please grant me the boon that my people at home may no longer suffer the pinch of poverty.’ He said, ‘Such a prayer never comes out of my lips. I asked you to pray for yourself. But you

couldn't do it. It appears it is not in your lot to enjoy worldly happiness. Well, I can't help.' But I would not let him go. I insisted on his granting that prayer. At last he said, 'All right, they will never be in want of plain food and clothing.' "

Needless to say that the above incident marked the opening of a new chapter in Narendra Nath's life. Hitherto he had not realised the significance of the Motherhood of God and His worship through images and symbols. He had had nothing but contempt for such worship. But all this was now changed. The secret of the worship of Personal God was brought home to his mind and lent a fulness and breadth to his vision. How glad Sri Ramakrishna was over this incident will appear from the following narration of an eye-witness.*

"Coming to Dakshineswar at noon I found the Master alone in his room, while Narendra was sleeping outside. Sri Ramakrishna was in a joyous mood, and as soon as I saluted him he said, pointing to Narendra, 'Look here, that boy is exceptionally good. His name is Narendra. He would not accept the Divine Mother before, but did so yesterday. He is in straitened circumstances nowadays. So I advised him to pray to the Mother for riches, but he couldn't. He said it put him to shame. Returning from the temple he asked me to teach him a song on the Mother. I taught him one. The whole of last night he sang that song. So he is sleeping now.' Then with unfeigned delight he said, 'Isn't it nice that Narendra has accepted the Mother?' I said, 'Yes.' After a brief pause he repeated the question, and thus he went on for some time, with evident signs of satisfaction.

"At about 4 o'clock Narendra came to Sri Ramakrishna. It seemed he would take his leave to go to Calcutta. But no sooner did the Master see him than he came closer and closer to him and sitting almost on his lap said, pointing first to his own body and then to Narendra's, 'Well, I see I am this and again this. Really,

* Vaikuntha Nath Sanyal.

I feel no difference,—as a stick floating on the Ganges seems to divide the water, but in reality the water is one. Do you see my point? Well, whatever is, is Mother. Isn't it?' After talking a few minutes like this, he wished to smoke. I prepared tobacco and gave him the *hookah*. After one or two puffs he said he would smoke from the *chhilim*. After a few puffs at it he offered it to Narendra saying, 'Pull at it through my hands.' Narendra of course hesitated. How could he defile the hands of his Guru by touching them with his lips? But Sri Ramakrishna said, 'What a foolish idea you have got! Am I different from you? This is myself and that too is myself.' He again put forth his hands towards the lips of Narendra, who had no other alternative but to comply with the request. He had two or three puffs in that way and stopped. Finding he had finished, Sri Ramakrishna himself proceeded to smoke. Narendra hurriedly interfered, 'Please wash your hands before smoking, Sir.' But his protest was in vain. 'What silly differentiating ideas you have got!' the Master said, and he began to smoke without washing the hands, talking variously all the while in an exalted mood. I was surprised to see Sri Ramakrishna, who could not take any food part of which had already been offered to somebody else, making the remarkable exception in the case of Narendra Nath. It gave me an idea of his love and kinship to Narendra. At about 8 o'clock, when he was in his normal mood again, Narendra and I took leave of him and walked to Calcutta."

Afterwards Narendra was often heard to remark, "Sri Ramakrishna was the only person who, ever since he had met me, believed in me uniformly throughout—which not even my mother and brothers could do. It was his unflinching trust and love for me that bound me to him for ever. He alone knew how to love another. Worldly people only make a show of it for selfish ends."

THE MENACE OF INDUSTRIALISM.

The time has come for us to estimate correctly the values of the industrial system that is being rapidly introduced throughout the land. This system is bringing into being large wage-earning classes, landless and homeless, working year in, year out, in mills and factories, in collieries and plantations, in marts and markets, and all this without a ray of hope for future betterment. Besides these new creations of modern civilisation, there are the old tillers of the soil, labouring the whole day to raise a crop, of the profits of which the lion's share goes to the blood-sucking money-lender and to the unscrupulous middleman and trader caring only for the economic exploitation of the poor. No wonder then that a half-starving and semi-naked people is all that exists in place of the agricultural communities living in peace and plenty in days not long gone by. The wealthy few are getting enormously rich, and the teeming millions are coming every day to the verge of utter economic ruin. Even in the midst of such a deplorable condition, most of the leaders of political thought are concerning themselves with the problems of the aristocratic and middle classes only, and seem to be little inclined to devote their main attention to the welfare of the people. Such is still the trend of our political movements that one may ask in despair with Swami Vivekananda—"Who constitute society? The millions, or you, and I and a few others of the upper classes?"

It is a long-exposed deception, still practised by many an economic sophist upon the unwary people, to

show that the prosperity of the country depends on the increase of the so-called national wealth. But as a matter of fact the well-being of the nation depends not upon the fortune amassed by a handful of men belonging to the so-called higher strata of society, but upon the welfare of the common people; not upon the concentration of wealth into the hands of the upper ten, but upon its equitable distribution among the masses of the people. Judged from this standpoint the condition of the main bulk of the Indian population, called the lower classes in our social phraseology, is going from bad to worse. The very foundation of our social edifice is being badly undermined. And the chief reason is the gradual breaking down of the self-supporting village republics—the admirable products of the genius of the Indian people. It is these village communes which Mr. E. B. Havell speaks of in the following terms in his 'Ancient and Medieval Architecture of India'—"The organisation of the village community, which was the bed-rock of Aryan Society, remained unshaken for at least five thousand years, until the middle of the last century. From the days of Chandragupta Maurya every empire which remained secure in the affection of the Indian people built upon that foundation. Its solidity preserved Indian culture from all the attacks of bigotry and racial hatred, and maintained the country's economic stability throughout centuries of devastating foreign invasions."

The West has tried to base her polity more or less on the city life. India, on the other hand, has all along attempted to build up her political constitution on her rural life—the unit of the Indian form of democracy

The main task in our national reconstruction is, therefore, the restoration of the communal life of the village. But this should be done in a way suitable to the changed circumstances and environments. Our old political system failed, not simply because of the onslaught of the Western political system, but also because of some of its inherent defects. For in spite of its manifold merits, our ancient communal polity tended to breed petty jealousies and rivalries, and often failed to unite in one spirit both the village communities and the central government. This defect must be remedied first of all. And therefore one of our main problems now is, as Dr. Radhakamal Mukherjee says in a thoughtful article contributed to the *Viswa Bharati Quarterly*, "to incorporate the local and communal life into the substance of the national state, to create as much and the same interest and enthusiasm in national, as in local and communal problems." But to do this successfully it is essential to check the onrush of industrialism, which by the absorption of life in the big cities is tending to sap the very vitality of the Indian people.

The indentured labour system devised by inhuman profiteers has been ended—thanks to the selfless and untiring activities of our great social workers—Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. C. F. Andrews and others. No longer need the Indians go to any British Colony to lead the life of a wage-slave living in barracks—the hot-beds of immorality and vice. The question of the Indian labourer abroad has been solved to a great extent. But greater problems are crying for solution at home. The mad rush from the village to the city is doing untold injury to our

national life. Apart from the economic ruin it is bringing to the rural areas—the centres of our national being, it is effecting a moral degeneration of the industrial labourers, and is breaking down the ancient ideals of the family life, that deeply actuated the whole body of India's agricultural population. The working classes—men, women and children—are to live herded together like beasts in the slums of the city, in the barracks of the plantations, and in the dungeons of the collieries. The healthy influence of the communal life of the village does no longer exist there, and naturally the labourer falls an easy prey to the manifold temptations that surround him in the town. The evils are daily on the increase with the growth of industrialism. And what is worse, the contagion is spreading even to the villages. Observes Mr. Andrews with a sorrowful heart—"The old domestic morality of the Indian agricultural life is breaking down in every direction, wherever close contact with the larger city life, and even with the smaller townships, owing to new industrial conditions, has occurred..... People talk glibly about the coming industrial expansion in India. Do they realize *at what a cost* that expansion is already being carried out in many of our cities?" There is no doubt that industrialism has come to stay in India. And at the present state of our social order it seems to be an unavoidable evil, though certainly not an unmixed one. But whatever it is, there is absolutely no justification for the wide-spread introduction of a system that is not suited to the higher instincts of humanity in general, far less to the genius of the Indian people.

All thoughtful social workers in the West are labouring hard to fight the evils of the industrial system,

at least to minimise its unwholesome influence on individuals as well as on society. Industrialism has greatly increased the material prosperity and well-being of the Occidental nations. Says an American writer—"To the industrial system must be credited as beneficent the elevation of material standards. Sanitation, public cleanliness, the combating of disease by prevention and remedy, hospitals, control of epidemics, prevention of famine and flood, have been made possible by industrialism. They could not exist without industrialism. Without high technological skill and complicated machinery there could not be sewers, and the character of modern life has been shaped by sewers more than by schools and churches." The writer also takes stock of what he thinks to be the evils of the system. It has robbed life of its leisureliness and tranquillity, and with these much of the happiness of man. Besides these, industrialism has led to "absorption in quantity and size, outraging of instincts by the drive of machinery, standardisation, the drugging of personality, and the slaying of beauty." Fully conscious as he is of both the bright and dark sides of his own civilisation, this "Easternised" writer, who has resided long in China to study critically as well as sympathetically the problem of the East, very truly observes—"For the material benefits brought to mankind through industrialism there have been compensating evils. Every material good has its price. The price may be too large for the good, it may not. Every man will reach his own decision by his own method of argument and according to his own temperament. My own belief is that it is too large. If I were a Hindu, a Turk, an Egyptian, a Chinese, or a Siberian, I should inoculate

my social system against industrialism as I should against the plague.”

To safeguard our national regeneration it is necessary not only to protect the remnants of our self-governing units from further disintegration, but also to reconstruct them on the traditional ideals suited to the temperament and genius of our race. But to accomplish this object we must have a broader outlook upon life, and apply the ideals to a wider field of activity than in the past. The old communal spirit, which often was confined within the four walls of the village republic, must now pervade the whole length and breadth of the country. It must be made the most potent force in linking up the individual units with one another and with the whole organism of our body-politic. Ireland, like India, is mainly an agricultural country. And what A. E. says of Ireland in his “National Being” holds equally true of this country. He observes—“The chief problem in Ireland—the problem which every nation in greater or lesser measure will have to solve—is how to enable the countryman, without journeying, to satisfy to the full his economic, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs.”

What is it that induces the village-folk to forsake the plough and rush to the city in order to drudge there as a wage-earner? The reason is that the countryside with its economic degradation offers little charm to the villager. Nay, as it sometimes happens, it is unable to supply even the barest necessities of his life, and in a way drives him out of his ancestral home. The whole question thus points to the one fact—the restoration of the economic life of the village. This can be achieved by properly

encouraging and organising the agricultural pursuits and home industries, and thereby making them profitable and attractive. And "unless," as A. E. observes, "the countryside can offer to young men and women some satisfactory food for the soul as well as body, it will fail to attract or hold its population, and they will go to the already overcrowded towns; and the lessening of rural production will affect production in the cities and factories, and the problem of unemployment will get still keener." How can we make the rural areas so economically sound and self-supporting that none will care to migrate to the city? On the satisfactory answer to this question will depend the future well-being of our people, nay, the well-being of the whole human race, the chief occupation and support of the main bulk of which is—Agriculture.

SOME RELIGIOUS POETESSES OF INDIA, ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL.

In ancient India, as everywhere in old times, the usual place and activities of woman were in the seclusion of her home. But in this land of the Aryans, although she tended the hearth fire and performed the manifold duties of her daily life, she also kept ablaze the sacrificial fire, offered oblations, sang hymns in honour of the Gods in heaven, and joined in all religious functions as man's true partner in life. As mother of the race she contributed to domestic happiness by her loving care and compassionate service to those around her. But this was not all. Her achievement in the field of religious poetry was by no means insignificant. She was the Rishi or "Seer" of

many a Vedic hymn, and had her share in the creation of the most ancient religious literature of the land. Vivaswara of the lineage of Atri, Gosha—the daughter of King Kakshivan, Romasha, Lopamudra, Surya and others were the “poet-priests” of a number of hymns invoking the gods to shower their blessings on their devotees on earth. No doubt the motives that gave birth to most of these prayers and thanksgivings were mainly of a material nature, like those of many other hymns attributed to men. But side by side with the women mostly caring for domestic happiness and earthly boons, there were others—the Brahmavidushis or “knowers of Brahman,” who spoke eloquently of divine realisations and spiritual visions. Thus we find in the Rigveda a remarkable hymn attributed to Vak, the daughter of the great Rishi Ambhrina, who was herself a Rishi of the highest type. This wonderful lady identified herself with the Supreme Spirit and thus declared at the very dawn of human civilisation :—

“It is I who am the ruler of the universe and granter of wealth. To me Brahman is known as my Self. I am the foremost among those to whom offerings should be made. The offerers of sacrifice put me in many places. I assume many forms and make all creatures re-enter the Self.”

“He who eats food does so through me. He who breathes, sees and hears does so through me. Such men as do not know me thus, go the downward way. Oh learned one, listen to what I say. Of that which can be learnt only through great faith and devotion I speak to thee.”

The age of the Upanishads produced many remarkable women like Gargi—the Brahmavadini, and Maitreyi—the ideal wife who was also a great inquirer into the knowledge of Brahman. The former was a nun highly versed in the Vedas, and entered into discussions on subtle religious topics in an assembly of learned men held at the court of King Janaka. It is she who in an open contest challenged the sage Yajnavalkya, saying—“O Yajnavalkya, as the son of a warrior from the Kasis or Videhas might string his loosened bow, take two pointed foe-piercing arrows in his hand and rise to battle, I have risen to fight thee with two questions. Answer them.” Maitreyi, the saintly wife of Rishi Yajnavalkya, realised the evanescence of the world through the practice of the duties and disciplines of the family life. On being asked by her husband, about to retire from the world, to take charge of her share of wealth and possessions, she replied—“What should I do with that by which I cannot become immortal? What you, my lord, know of Immortality, tell that to me.” The literature of this period seems to have been composed mostly in prose, and little is known of the poetic genius of the women of these glorious days of Hindu civilisation.

It is the Buddhist nuns, who, truly speaking, were the cultural descendants of the Brahmavadinis of old, that made up the deficiency in the poetic literature of the previous age. This they did by their wonderful contribution to the religious poetry of the momentous days that saw the ascendancy of Buddhism in India. The valuable poems embodied in the Therigatha—“The Psalms of the Sisters,” as Mrs. Rhys Davids calls them—speak to us of

the strivings of the saintly women to follow the noble Eightfold Path of Buddha and to attain to Nirvana—the highest goal of human existence. Nanda was a highly gifted lady and a thinker of no mean ability. The following psalm attributed to her clearly speaks of her tasting the Bliss of Nirvana :—

“I, even I, have seen, inside and out,
 This body as in truth it really is,
 Who sought to know the “what” and “why” of it,
 With zeal unfaltering and ardour fired.
 Now for the body care I never more,
 And all my consciousness is passion-free.
 Keen with unfettered zeal, detached,
 Calm and serene I taste Nibbana’s peace.”

(Translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids.)

Sangha, another great Sister of the Buddhist Order, thus sang of the highest freedom, and how it was to be realised through the renunciation of all earthly possessions and desires :—

“Home have I left, for I have left my world !
 Child have I left, and all my cherished herds !
 Lust have I left, and Ill-will, too, is gone,
 And Ignorance have I put far from me ;
 Craving and root of Craving overpowered,
 Cool am I now, knowing Nibbana’s peace.”

(Translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids.)

Besides these, there were many other poetesses—Sukka, Dhammadinna, Mutta, Patachara and others. Many of them attained to great spiritual eminence and were great preachers of the sacred laws as propounded by the Enlightened One.

The mediæval age produced a large number of poetesses who mostly sang their devotional songs. Truly speaking, they were devotees first and poetesses afterwards, their poems being the spontaneous expressions of their unbounded devotion and passionate love for the Lord. They enriched the religious literature of the land, and their works still speak of the great achievement of women in the field of religious poetry, and continue to influence the religious life and thought of the Indian people.

Andal—the daughter of a priest, was one of the twelve Vaishnavite saints of Southern India. Thus did she speak of her unflinching love for her Lord—

‘O cuckoo, who singest merrily, playing with thy
 beak in the Shenbaka flowers, laden with honey,
 The god, who holds a white conch in his left hand,
 has not shown his form to me, but has entered
 into my heart and has made me suffer sorely.
 Wilt thou sing, but not too loudly, so that he may
 come to me?’*’

Mukta Bai was a great poetess and devotee of Maharashtra. Her poems breathe the highest philosophy, and in some of them she sang of her deliverance and attainment of Divine ecstasy—

“Where never darkness comes my home I’ve made,
 There my delightful lodging ever find.
 That perfect shelter cannot fail our need,
 Going and coming trouble us no more.

* This and the following poems are taken from “Poems by Indian Women,” edited by Margaret Macnicol (Association Press, Calcutta).

Beyond all vision, and above all spheres,
 He, our delight, our inmost soul, indwells.
 He, Mukta says, is our heart's only home."

The God-intoxicated Rajput princess, Mira Bai, found it impossible to follow the forms and conventions of society. She renounced the world for the sake of her passionate love for Sri Krishna, and thus gave vent to the pangs of her separation from her Beloved in one of her remarkable songs :—

"For lack of the vision of him my eyes are aching.
 Ah, my Lord, ever since thou hast been separated from
 me my heart has found no rest.

Hearing thy voice, my heart begins to tremble.

Thy words are very sweet to me.

My eyes are fixed on the way of thy coming.

One night seems to me like six months.

Oh my companions, to whom shall I tell the pain of
 separation?

The whole night is passed by Mira in restlessness.

O my Lord, when shall I find thee,

So that thou mayst remove my pain and give me
 happiness?"

The majority of the poetesses of this period belonged to the Bhakti school. Some were swayed by their passionate love for Krishna, while others had heir soul overflowing with the quiet type of Bhakti. But it is not in the province of Love alone that women excelled. They had also access to the mysteries of the Vedanta. Guzrat produced a great Vedantic poetess, Gavri Bai, who attained Samadhi, and taught about the One Spirit pervading the whole universe—

“Be it known to you that one who, having experienced Brahma, has nothing left but the ethereal body. That one alone has attained to the perception that the real nature of the human soul is one and the same with the Divine Spirit animating the universe.

Gavri has realised that spirit and Supreme Spirit are one, and yet some will not relinquish the belief that they are two.

Only one who has had the experience can understand the mystery of Brahma.”

It is practically impossible to speak of the numerous poetesses of this period, who were great devotees at the same time. The mention of only a few representative ones is enough to bring home to us the great part which women have played in creating a rich religious literature in India, and in spreading the highest spiritual culture of the Hindu race among all classes of people, the rich and the poor, the high caste and the low caste alike. The women saints and devotees flourishing in both the ancient and mediæval ages still continue to nourish the souls of their spiritual children, and to show them the way to Peace and Immortality.

“RECLUSE.”

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

(Continued from page 226.)

विश्वावसुः पूर्वचित्तिर्गन्धर्वाप्सरसामहम् ।

भूधराणामहं स्थैर्यं गन्धमात्रमहं भुवः ॥ ३३ ॥

33. Of the Gandharvas and Apsaras I am Viswavasu and Purvachitti (respectively). I am the stability of mountains and the primary¹ smell of earth.

[1 Primary—i.e., unadulterated.]

अपां रसश्च परमस्तेजिष्ठानां विभावसुः ।

प्रभा सूर्येन्दुतारानां शब्दोऽहं नभसः परः ॥ ३४ ॥

34. I am the sweet taste of water, and the sun among the resplendent. I am the lustre of the sun, moon and stars, and the subtle sound in ether.

ब्रह्मण्यानां बलिरहं वीराणामहमर्जुनः ।

भूतानां स्थितिरुत्पत्तिरहं वै प्रतिसंक्रमः ॥ ३५ ॥

35. Among the worshippers of Brahmanas I am Bali,¹ and among heroes I am Arjuna. I am verily the origin, maintenance and dissolution of all beings.

[1 Bali—the king of the nether regions, who, in the teeth of his Guru's opposition, knowingly gave away the suzerainty of the earth and heaven and even his own body to Vishnu disguised as a Brahmin boy.]

गत्युक्तुत्सर्गोपादानमानन्दस्पर्शलक्षणम् ।

आस्वादश्चुत्यवघ्राणमहं सर्वेन्द्रियेन्द्रियम् ॥ ३६ ॥

36. I am the motion,¹ utterance, rejecting, taking, enjoyment, touch, sight, taste, hearing and smelling of the organs: I constitute their functions.

[1 Motion &c.—The first five are functions of the organs of action, and the last five of the organs of knowledge.]

पृथिवी वायुराकाश आपो ज्योतिरहं महान् ।

विकारः पुरुषोऽव्यक्तं रजः सत्त्वं तमः परम् ।

अहमेतत्प्रसंख्यानं ज्ञानं तत्त्वविनिश्चयः ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Earth, air, ether, water, light, the ego, and Cosmic Intelligence ; the sixteen¹ modifications of Prakriti ; Purusha and Prakriti; Sattva, Rajas and Tamas ; and the Supreme Brahman,—all these am I. I am also their enumeration, their knowledge² and the realisation of Truth.

[1 Sixteen &c.—The five primary elements, the ten organs and Manas or mind.

2 Knowledge—theoretical knowledge of the distinctions of the above, which deepens by practice into realisation.]

मयेश्वरेण जीवेन गुणेन गुणिना विना ।

सर्वात्मनापि सर्वेण न भावो विद्यते क्वचित् ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Nothing¹ whatsoever exists without Me in My twofold aspect of the Lord and the Jiva, attribute and substance, and the indwelling Spirit and gross and subtle bodies.

[1 Nothing &c.—i.e. the Lord is everything.]

संख्यानं परमाणूनां कालेन क्रियते मया ।

न तथा मे विभूतीनां सृजतोऽण्डानि कोटिशः ॥ ३९ ॥

39. I can count the atoms of the (primary) elements in course of time, but not My manifestations, for I am creating crores¹ of worlds.

[1 Crores &c.—and in each of these there are countless manifestations of Mine.]

तेजः श्रीः कीर्तिरैश्वर्यं ह्रीस्त्यागः सौभगं भगः ।

वीर्यं तितिक्षा विज्ञानं यत्र यत्र स मेऽशकः ॥ ४० ॥

40. Wherever¹ there is power, beauty, fame, prosperity, modesty, sacrifice, agreeableness, luck, strength, fortitude or knowledge,—there am I manifested.

[1 Wherever &c.—He gives a general hint.]

एतास्ते कीर्तिताः सर्वाः संक्षेपेण विभूतयः ।

मनोविकारा एवैते यथा वाचाभिधीयते ॥ ४१ ॥

41. All these manifestations of Mine I have described to thee in a nutshell. They are but modifications¹ of the mind, and are somehow expressed in speech, (that is all).

[1 *Modifications &c.*—Apart from Me there is no reality in them. An echo of Chhandogya VI. i. 4.]

वाचं यच्छ मनो यच्छ प्राणान्यच्छेन्द्रियाणि च ।

आत्मानमात्मना यच्छ न भूयः कल्पसेऽध्वने ॥ ४२ ॥

42. Control¹ speech, control the mind, control the Pranas and organs ; control also the impure intellect by the purified intellect. Then thou wilt no more return to the world.

[1 *Control &c.*—He advises introspection with a view to realising Him in Samadhi.]

यो वै वाङ्मनसी सम्यगसंयच्छन्धिया यतिः ।

तस्य व्रतं तपो दानं स्रवत्यामघटाम्बुवत् ॥ ४३ ॥

43. For the monk who has not fully controlled his speech, mind and intellect,—vows, austerities and charity leak out¹ like water from an unbaked jar.

[1 *Leak out &c.*—Without introspection everything is futile.]

तस्मान्मनोवचःप्राणान्नियच्छेन्मत्परायणः ।

मद्भक्तियुक्तया बुद्ध्या ततः परिसमाप्यते ॥ ४४ ॥

44. Therefore, being¹ wholly attached to Me, one should control speech, mind and the Pranas by the intellect endowed with devotion to Me. Then one attains the goal.

[1 *Being &c.*—This is important. Then the whole thing becomes easy.]

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

BENGALI.

Swami Turiyanander Patra.—Parts I & II. Published by the Udbodhan Office, 1 Mukherjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta. Pp. XV+133 & 142. Price 14 As. each.

These are the first two volumes of the invaluable letters of Srimat Swami Turiyananda—one of the greatest monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. The inspiring epistles reflect the ideal life the Swami lived, his burning renunciation and highest realisations, his vast erudition and deep penetration into the spirit of the scriptures. They also breathe his passionate love for his motherland and his keen solicitude for the welfare of his countrymen. The letters speak in glowing terms of the unique harmony of head and heart and the remarkable union of the highest Jnana and Bhakti that found their realisation in the wonderful life of the Swami.

A short but well-written biographical sketch of the Swami has been appended to the first part of the book. There is also a beautiful picture of his as frontispiece. The sale-proceeds of the book will be devoted to the upkeep of Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, founded by the illustrious Swami.

The present volumes will be followed by subsequent parts, the publication of which we are eagerly awaiting. The book is sure to prove to be a valuable companion and a mighty source of inspiration and strength in one's practices and strivings for the life of the Spirit.

Kavir Swapna.—By Radha Charan Das. Published by the author from the Rajani Kanta Library, Pabna. Pp. 30. Price As. 4.

A beautiful analysis of Rabindranath's well-known poems 'Kheya'. There is a ring of vigour and pathos in the style of the writer. The booklet is sure to find favour with the admirers of the poet.

Karma Kausal.—By Swami Vivekananda. Published by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Ramna, Dacca. Pp. 17 and 15. Price As. 3.

A Bengali translation of the famous lecture—"Work and its Secret"—delivered by the Swami at Los Angeles, California, U. S. A. in 1900. The original lecture in English is also annexed at the end.

HINDI.

Bharatiya Shasanpaddhati, Parts I and II.—Compiled and edited by Pandit Ambica Prasad Bajpeyi. Published by the Indian National Publishers Ltd., 159/B, Mechuabazar Street, Calcutta. Pp. 136 and 228. Price As. 9 and Re. 1-8 respectively.

The two volumes under notice are reprints with a few additions and alterations here and there. As their title shows, they contain a series of articles on British Rule in India, its merits and demerits, with ample suggestions for reform and improvement. As hand-books on Indian politics they will undoubtedly be useful to those who are not acquainted with the internal workings of the administrative machinery in India.

Anamika.—By Pandit Suryakanta Tripathi. Published by Navajadiklal Srivastava, 23 Sankar Ghosh Lane, Calcutta. Pp. 40. Price As. 4.

This nice little book is a collection of several poems some of which appeared in distinguished Hindi periodicals. The author has the genius of a poet and wields his pen at ease. In his poems we get some idea of his originality in thought and style. It is evident that Tripathiji is an adept in rhyme and metre. Some of the poems, written altogether in new metres, have become the object of harsh criticisms in some quarters. But in our opinion this novelty is desirable and commendable, and it forms a unique achievement in the Hindi literature. We wish the book an extensive circulation.

 ENGLISH.

Reflections on Woman.—By Mahendra Nath Dutt. To be had at Sri Sri Saradeswari Ashrama and Balika Vidyalaya, 7-2 Beadon Row, Calcutta. Pp. V. & 111.

The author wants to make the Indian woman a "Devi" endowed with all the noblest womanly virtues. According to him the chief object of the education of women should be "so to train them up that they might be good wives and good mothers." The author speaks sympathetically of the fallen women, and gives some practical suggestions about their regeneration. The book is nicely got up. Its sale-proceeds will be devoted solely to the interests of Sri Sri Saradeswari Ashrama and the girls' school attached to it.

Gandhi and Non-violent Resistance.—Compiled by Miss Blanche Watson. Published by Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. XX+549. Price—Paper cover Rs. 2-8.

This is a fine compilation of a number of articles and letters about Mahatma Gandhi and the Non-co-operation movement published in the Press of the United States. We are sure the book will be welcomed by the English-reading public.

(From S. Ganesan, Publisher, Triplicane, Madras.)

1. THE STORY OF MY LIFE—By Bhai Paramanand. Translated from the Hindi by N. Sundara Iyer, M.A., B.L. Price Re. 1-8. The book gives an interesting account of his early life, travels and sufferings.
 2. THE FUTURE OF INDIAN FISCAL POLICY—By D. V. Divekar, B.A. (Hons.). Price As. 12. Gives an instructive account of the tariff systems of the leading countries in the world and the applications of those principles to the conditions of India.
 3. THE APHORISMS OF NARADA
 4. THE SAYINGS OF KABIR
 5. THE SAYINGS OF TULSIDAS
- By Kanno Mal, M.A. Price As. 8 each.

Useful and instructive booklets. Their value would have been much enhanced if the original texts were also given.

6. **THE NEED IN NATIONALISM AND OTHER ESSAYS**—By Sri Aurobindo Ghose. Price not given. As is usual with all the writings of Sri Aurobindo Ghose, the essays are forceful and illuminating.
7. **FOOD, MIND AND HEALTH**—By Bernard Houghton, I.C.S. (retired). Price As. 8. A collection of eight articles familiarising the reader with the utility of a diet of fresh fruits and vegetables.

GAYA AND BODH GAYA—By Manoranjan Sinha, M.R.A.S. (London). Published by R. Cambay & Co., Calcutta. Pp. 103 (demy). Cloth-bound. Price Rs. 3. The book contains several illustrations and inscriptions. The author has collected information from various sources bearing on the topography, origin of the pilgrimage etc. The price appears to be too heavy.

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1. **The Mystical Theology of Dionysius the Areopagite.** Price 1s. 3d.
 2. **The Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus.** Price 2s. 3d.

These are published by the Shrine of Wisdom, London. Printing and get-up good.

SOAP MANUFACTURE—By J. S. Narula, Principal, Hawaid College of Business, Rawalpindi, Punjab. The author has tried to make his lessons practical so that any layman can follow the hints and manufacture soaps of different kinds. The method does not involve any costly machinery.

Meditations from "At the Feet of the Master"—Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras.

The Real and the Unreal—Convention Lectures, 1922. Published by the same.

TWENTIETH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

We have the pleasure to submit a brief annual report of the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary for the year 1923, the twentieth year of its existence. It is a record of humble service done to the diseased Narayanas in Kumaon, in the shape of outdoor and indoor hospital relief. The number of patients treated during the year was much in excess of that of the previous year, the total number coming up to 3,545. The much-needed overhauling of the roof of the Dispensary was undertaken in this year against overwhelming odds. We give below some tables which will indicate the nature of the work the Dispensary has done:—

(a) *Outdoor Hospital Relief.*

Altogether 3,485 cases were treated from the outdoor dispensary, excluding repetitions.

(b) *Indoor Hospital Relief.*

The number of patients admitted into the indoor ward was 60, of whom 11 were partially relieved and 49 were fully cured of their respective ailments.

(c) *Statement of Diseases treated from January to December, 1923.*

Names of diseases	Outdoor	Indoor	Total
Cholera	5	...	5
Dysentery	89	...	89
Leprosy	2	...	2
Malaria	611	10	621
Rheumatic fever & Rheumatism	111	...	111
All other infective diseases	11	...	11
All other general diseases	764	12	776
Diseases of the nervous system	83	...	83
„ Eye	377	4	381
„ Ear	72	...	72
Pneumonia	9	1	10
Tubercle of the Lungs	10	1	11

(c) *Statement of Diseases treated from January to December, 1923.*

Names of diseases	Outdoor	Indoor	Total
Other diseases of the Respiratory system			
... ..	99	1	100
Dyspepsia	176	2	178
Diarrhoea	32	6	38
All other diseases of the liver ...	55	3	58
Male diseases	21	3	24
Ulcers	92		92
Diseases of the Skin	61	1	62
Other local diseases	122		122
Operations	19	2	21
Fever	664	14	678
	3485	60	3545

(d) *Statement of the Religion and Sex of the Patients.*

OUTDOOR.		INDOOR.	
Hindus	2938	Hindus	55
Mahomedans	282	Of other religions ...	5
Of other religions ...	265		
	3485		60
Men	1345	Men	23
Women	903	Women	13
Children	1237	Children	24
	3485		60

(e) *Statement of Receipts and Disbursements during 1923.*

	Rs.	A.	P.
Last year's balance	102	15	10
By subscriptions and donations (detailed elsewhere)	385	1	0
Realised by unclaimed deposits	211	4	6
By sale of pamphlets	0	10	0
	699	15	4

(e) *Statement of Receipts and Disbursements during 1923.*

DISBURSEMENTS.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Allopathic Medicines	206	9	3
Homœopathic Medicines	21	8	0
Railway freight and coolie hire for Medicines	37	9	0
Materials for Repairs of the Dispensary roof	300	15	3
Labour for Repairs (part)	105	8	0
Railway freight and coolie hire for Building Materials, etc.	216	4	0
Outfit for Dispensary	41	3	0
Postage	5	4	0
Doctor's Maintenance	200	0	0
	<hr/>		
	1134	12	6
MINUS BALANCE ... Rs.	434	13	2
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The minus balance tells its sad tale. It shows that despite our appeals the receipts during the year were far less than the expenditure. Though the Government Forest Department kindly gave us four deodor trees free of charge, for which we heartily thank them, yet the heavy cost of the other necessary materials for repairs, such as corrugated iron sheets etc., as well as of medicines, has involved us in a debt of several hundred rupees. This debt has further increased as the work of repair was continued after December and the expenses of the new year had also to be met. We are urgently in need of a sum of Rs. 2,000 for clearing the debt and for the general upkeep of the Dispensary. It is superfluous to point out the extreme usefulness of an institution like the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary in this backward region of the Himalayas. In the name of suffering humanity we earnestly appeal to the generosity of the public for funds to carry on this labour of love, and

sincerely trust that we shall get a ready response. Contributions, however small, will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged in the Prabuddha Bharata by the undersigned.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA,
 President, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati,
 Via Lohaghat, Dt. Almora.

NEWS AND NOTES

THE FUNCTION OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

The man in the street has neither the capacity, nor the leisure, nor the intelligence necessary to discover and formulate the ideals of the nation in the several departments of life. Before the advent of the modern era of science and reason, it was the clergy or the priestly class that undertook the function of thinking for the whole nation. This was no doubt a good arrangement under the conditions in which the priests formed the only literate and educated class. With the spread of education and enlightenment, individual conscience and reason secured freedom from the shackles of tradition, custom and priestly domination as well. Each man began to think and act for himself, and the old unquestioning obedience to authority and tradition gave place to a free and enlightened pursuit of chosen and accepted ideals.

Although this change has been most welcome and beneficial, so far as those who could profit by the spread of education are concerned, the average run of men or the masses in general have only shifted their worship and adoration from one idol to another. In the case of India although the priestly class did exercise an amount of influence on the daily conduct and ideals of the masses, it was the philosophers, who were also great saints and

sages, that gave the lead to the national aspirations as a whole. It is no doubt true that in the past this role of the philosophers has been exaggerated very much to the detriment of free development of the social organism. Nevertheless to admit this does not amount to a denial of all utility to the functions of philosophers in general.

In the West, where the sway of reason and science is supposed to be most extensive, there is a feeling that the progress of civilisation has suffered since the middle of the nineteenth century for want of proper philosophic guidance.

Glenn Frank writes in the "*Century*" as follows—
 "The house of civilization in which the Bill Joneses and the John Smiths live is tumbling down about their heads because the philosopher, for the last seventy-five years, has not been furnishing to business men, politicians, preachers, educators and scientists, sound and saving general ideas about life and society which can knit all their separate plans and purposes together into harmony and save mankind from the death dance of conflicting interests which to-day is giving us wars, revolutions, sterile politics, anæmic education and argumentative religion.....Before the middle of the nineteenth century," continues the writer, "the philosopher furnished the raw materials for popular thought. He flung out the broad conceptions that actually dominated the business, the politics, the religion and the social life of his time.Now the tragedy is that.....the philosopher has abdicated his job as a thinker on current issues..... The philosopher has dozed in his watch-tower and slept on his beat, while civilization has been drifting into ruthless wars, wasteful revolutions and pointless politics."

The writer is not blind to the excellences of democracy and free thought and discussion, for he observes—
 "Free discussion gives the masses self-respect and enables them to hold a check over the vagaries of irresponsible thinkers and selfish autocrats, and though they may now and then abuse this power, the net result is good. But the more democratic an age becomes, the more rein it

gives to free discussion, the more it needs a 'general staff' of thinkers in the background."

After pointing out that specialists and scientists are no certain guides, and that some of the most hollow talk about political, social and religious problems comes from distinguished specialists, he concludes thus—"Our hope must be pinned to a new art of philosopher who knows sciences to enable him to play ring-master to the specialists, bringing them into a contact that makes each fertilize the social mind of the other and welding them all into a fighting fraternity for the common good."

This is no doubt an ideal scheme ; but how could it be realised in actual practice? Will the new type of philosopher command respect and attention?

It is scarcely possible. That is why in the ancient Hindu polity, the sages and saints who were men of character and realisation, and who had no axes of their own to grind were invested with the function of the friend, philosopher and guide of the country.

SWAMI NARAYANANANDA.

We announce with a heavy heart the sad news of the passing away of Swami Narayanananda, a young promising worker of our Mission. The unfortunate event took place on the 12th of April last at our Brindaban Sevashrama of which he was lately in charge. The circumstances of his death were very remarkable. He had clear premonitions of his coming end, as will appear from the following unfinished letter written by him at 2-30 P.M., on the day of occurrence to a friend at Rangoon :—

"Since yesterday I am having some peculiar experiences. Last evening, as I was coming from the interior of the town along the bank of the Jumna. I suddenly heard someone calling me in an endearing tone, 'Come, come away.' The voice was exceptionally sweet, but I could not trace its origin, for there was nobody by. I returned to the ashrama and had my supper. At

night I had a strange dream. I saw as if I was in the presence of Sri Maharaja (Swami Brahmananda) and the Holy Mother. Oh the joy of it! That call is coming constantly to my ears since this morning, and my mind, too, seems to be longing to go somewhere. I am feeling no more attachment to anything of this world. I do not know what it all means.

“Ah! I hear that call again. It is so sweet! Such a bliss I never experienced before in my life. Can you tell me who it is that calls me? Ah! Ah! Such sweetness! Such joy! It seems as if I am drifting somewhere—somebody is carrying me in his arms. A peculiar sensation is in my heart! It is unique. Again, what soul-ravishing strains of music!—‘Behold the Blissful Region!’ ‘Let us go to that City!’ Glory be unto the Lord! Mother, Mother! Bliss, bliss, bliss ineffable! What a marvellous experience it is! It seems the world does not exist, nay, it never did. Was it but a dream? I see that I am ever in the arms of the Mother. Glory unto the Divine Mother! I cannot write any more.—”

He had attended to his usual duties in the morning, after which he had shut himself in his room and sung some devotional songs. After taking his meals, he was busy settling the accounts. In the evening some visitors came and there was Bhajan, in the midst of which he had an occasion to go near the bank of the Jumna. On his return shortly after, he said that he had been bitten by a snake. The marks of the bite were distinctly visible. Being certain of his imminent end, he had his rosary brought and began to repeat the name of the Lord, asking, besides, a worker to take over the charge of the Ashrama. The deadly poison began to do its work, and soon he became unconscious. All available means were tried, but nothing could restore him to consciousness. His spirit left its mortal tenement and sped to the eternal presence of the Lord. Surely such a death is most enviable and shows the intense spiritual nature of the late Swami. All we can say about it is—‘The Lord’s will be done!’

THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION RELIEF WORKS.*The Punjab Relief Works.*

Our workers at Lahore, have for the present, undertaken three different types of work :—(1) Nursing in the Plague Hospitals ; (2) House to house help with diet, doctor and medicines ; (3) Cleaning and disinfection of houses. Total number of houses disinfected up till 1st May is 577.

Five workers of the Mission have also gone to Rohtak to open a centre, where, on account of close habitation and uncleanness, the disease took a very serious turn. Our workers at first tried to segregate the patients, but owing to severe objections from the people, they began house to house relief by giving medicines, disinfecting and nursing.

Fire Relief in Birbhum.

In the village of Valian pecuniary help was given to about eighty families for building huts, and at Fatehpur our workers have rendered necessary help to many families distressed by fire. Besides this, doles of rice were distributed among many needy families.

Gauhati Fire Relief.

At Shoalkuchi about 100 families received help for building huts. During the conflagration many boys and girls lost their books, and 85 such boys and girls were helped with money to buy new books.

Jyanti Cholera Relief.

On receipt of a telegram from a gentleman of Jyanti (E. B. Ry.) that a cholera epidemic has broken out among the poor coolies there, a band of workers has been sent. They have reached the locality and inspected the area. There were about 125 cases of infection and about 90 patients have died. Many poor

coolies have left the locality out of fear. The Mission has been rendering help to the victims.

We received the above report in the first week of May. Since then the Mission has wound up its work at all other places except at Lahore.

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

The contributions to the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary from January to July, 1923, have been previously acknowledged in P. B. Those from August to December, 1923, are now being acknowledged with hearty thanks:—

Amar N. Vaid Esq., Delhi, Re. 1; Natavar L. M. Sah Esq., Baroda, Rs. 10; Ram Saran Dau Esq., Mussoorie, Rs. 5; R. D. Ingle Esq., Jubbulpore, Rs. 5; A. Sham Rao Esq., Raichur, Rs. 10; Hari Ram Dhasmana Esq., Champawat, Rs. 4; Jivananda Punetta Esq., Foorty, Rs. 2; D. K. Natu Esq., Poona City, Rs. 8; Jamsetji Hiralal Bharucha Esq., Rs. 7; Miss B. E. Baughan, N. Z., Rs. 40-9; Some Bhaktas, Rs. 25; Gopaldas Wadhva Esq., Rs. 2; A Bhakta, Re. 1; Miss Jean Dow, N. Z., Rs. 14-4; Subedar Major Ram Kishen Rana, Rs. 25. Total, Rs. 159-13.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA.
