

Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वराहविषोदते ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 4.

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA AT BENARES.

23rd December, 1920.

A small audience, consisting mostly of the Sadhus of the Order, gathered before the Swami, and he was talking freely with them.

“Can you tell me how to cure a disease of the mind?” said he. There was silence amongst the assembled people, and he continued—“I myself know it and can instruct others also how to do it. But the rub is that I myself am the victim of the disease now. I will just tell you a story.

“There was a man who could make a whole assembly of people split their sides with laughter. He was so full of wit and humour. But it so happened that the man himself came to have melancholia. He was robbed of all his fun and joy. To get rid of the malady he consulted a physician and tried various remedies. But all were to no purpose. At last the doctor not knowing who

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he was advised him to see the noted funny man, meaning the latter. 'Can you see that gentleman? You will be all right if you do,' said the doctor. He replied—'Yes, I can do that. But unfortunately I am the very person you refer to!' The doctor was abashed. Of course, the remedy suggested by him failed. My condition also is somewhat like that of the funny man."

*25th December.*

The talk this day was about retirement. It had been introduced as a spiritual discipline by the Swami at the Shanti Ashrama, California, U. S. A., when he had been there. He said—"The American devotees coming up and living there used to call it 'talking with the Self.' It helped them much spiritually, and they used to acknowledge it." Those who were sitting before the Swami and listening to him were much interested in the talk.

He continued—"But it was a rule that none was to remain with himself for more than three days. Once a lady, Miss B——, retired without my knowledge. I myself was then living like that, occupying an outhouse of the Ashrama at a distance. G—— was the only other male inmate at that time, and he used to bring me a cup of tea, a little toast etc. for my food. Of course, I made an exception in my case and was to be in retirement for a week."

He then described how that lady had made up her mind to be in seclusion for a week and observe the vow of silence and constant meditation with scanty food like himself. He said—"The seclusion soon became too much for her, and she was about to be out of her mind. I was then observing the vow of silence in my solitary cell. But something like a premonition told me that an untoward event was going to happen. I felt uneasy and had to come out on the fifth day of my retirement. Miss B—— was being served by a young woman. Her condition was really serious. I sent for her, and when she came I gave her a good scolding. She admitted her mistake and begged to be pardoned. I was thinking of asking her to



go away. But afterwards finding that she was repentant I let her remain."

The Swami went on—"She herself said soon after, 'I was about to die. Had I not been made to come out I would have actually died.' The lady was a woman of exceptional parts. For fourteen years she had been a platform speaker, addressing various audiences. At the age of sixty-two she founded an institution called 'The Home of Truth' and conducted it for some years. But she was very conceited."

The Swami said that at the Shanti Ashrama there were many like her, distinguished, but opinionative. Of course, they were all sincere. It was the Swami Vivekananda who had entrusted the Swami with the work of training these strong personalities, and he had done his work as best as he could. He admitted that they would wonder and say—"Swami! How can you manage to keep so many conflicting temperaments together and train them? We watch carefully every movement of yours, but find nothing defective in your conduct. It is as it should be." He then explained the secret of his training and added—"To manage an organisation well, one must behave like a mother, full of love and consideration."

He referred to the case of K—— who had joined the Order in India, but afterwards, failing to pull on with the inmates of the Ashrama where he had been placed, left it. The Swami remarked—"I was so sorry to hear that K—— had left. At the Shanti Ashrama I had similar experiences. Many times I had to scold the inmates. But as they were sincere, they obeyed me and stuck on.

"K—— was ill on the eve of his departure. He pined for his home and wanted that he should be served as tenderly as by the home people. Of course, he did not get that treatment and went away. It is not unnatural that a novice should think like that when he falls ill. But as he grows old in wisdom and experience, he learns to adapt himself to his environment and to the rigid life of a Sadhu."

The conversation went on. The Swami emphasised

love as the greatest binding force to hold the units of an organisation, saying—"What is needed is love. Even beasts appreciate it. It cannot be that a sensible being like man will not understand it. 'Why does the lamb love Mary? Because Mary loves the lamb.'" The party departed enthused and inspired by the stirring words of the Swami.

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### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

This is essentially an age of materialism. Naturally enough, religion is at a great discount. Persons are not wanting who pride themselves and glory in flouting religion. Even the vast majority of those who outwardly conform to the rites and forms of the particular religion in which they are born, do so more from habit and in deference to convention than from faith and inner conviction. In all ages, of course, there have been a few earnest and sincerely religious people. The conduct of these, of necessity, differs and even conflicts with that of their fellows. As might naturally be expected, these are a puzzle to the worldly-minded. Some of the latter, who boast of their knowledge and advancement, do not hesitate to rank the former among lunatics, neurotics, degenerates etc. To this method of explaining away the strange behaviour of God-intoxicated men, and the peculiar symptoms such as visions and trances which they have when the religious mood is on them, Prof. James gives the name of 'medical materialism'.

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It is unnecessary to examine in detail all the implications of this theory. The main point which the advocates of this theory lay stress upon is that there are material and organic causes for religious phenomena, as there are for physical. "Vice and virtue are products like vitriol and sugar." This theory "finishes up St. Paul by calling his vision on the road to Damascus a discharging lesion



of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic. It snuffs out St. Teresa as an hysteric, St. Francis of Assisi as an hereditary degenerate, and so on." This much can readily be admitted that in the lives of all those persons to whom religion is no mere dogma to be believed in or formal ceremonials to be gone through, but an intensely real and living affair engrossing their whole soul, there have been symptoms of nervous instability and abnormal psychical and emotional sensibility. They are also said to have fallen into trances, seen visions, heard voices and had such other strange experiences which the material scientists would describe as pathological. One writer goes so far as to say that "whenever a man's life is at once sufficiently illustrious and recorded with sufficient fulness to be a subject of profitable study, he inevitably falls into the morbid category. And it is worthy of remark that, as a rule, the greater the genius, the greater the unsoundness."

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The last statement is of too sweeping a nature to be of any practical value. To be strictly logical, it should take all productions of geniuses at a great discount as proceeding from a pathological source. But usually, in science, in arts and in industries, no one ever seriously tries to judge their merit by the standard of the constitutional peculiarities of their respective originators, but by the crucial test of experiments and actual results. Prof. James argues that these same tests should be applied in the case of religious phenomena as well, and in his happy phraseology puts it thus—"By their fruits ye shall know them, not by their roots." A pragmatist and empiricist as he is, he would accept their usefulness and validity on their immediate luminousness, in short, philosophical reasonableness and moral helpfulness.

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The Hindu philosophers would, no doubt, accept that in all cases of genuine religious exaltation this luminous-

ness, reasonableness and helpfulness are bound to be there. But they do not stop with these somewhat inferential tests simply. They point out that religion is realisation, being and becoming, and that all progress lies along the path of renunciation and universal love. The ultimate goal of all religions, according to them, is to help man to realise that Divinity which is his essential nature. Even though the aim is the same, the methods adopted may differ with different individuals and temperaments. That there should be or could be one universal form of religion with invariable rules of worship and uniform standards of conduct is, in their opinion, not only a vain dream but would be a calamity, if it could ever be realised. They have always recognised the supreme need for providing absolute freedom to individuals to attain to their highest ideals, and that however different and apparently conflicting the various forms might appear, there should be both universal toleration and mutual respect. The peculiar word which they use for these different methods is Yoga i.e. 'union', for they help man to be united with the Ultimate Reality. So we have four chief methods of union viz. (1) Karma Yoga—the realisation of man's Divinity through duty and unselfish works, (2) Bhakti Yoga—the realisation by means of devotion to and love of a Personal God, (3) Jnâna Yoga—the realisation through discrimination and right knowledge, and (4) Râja Yoga—the realisation through control and purification of the mind.

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For obvious reasons, it is impossible to say that any one of these Yogas is easier than the others or *vice versa*. Different individuals would find different methods most easy and best suited to them. Nevertheless, if it is remembered that the essence of any form of religious life is renunciation, the contrast in this respect of Bhakti Yoga with Jnâna Yoga becomes clear enough. The path of the Jnâna Yogin is to grow in the realisation that the entire material world with its multitudinous manifestations is an illusion. He has also to get himself firmly established in



the rational conviction that he is the Pure Soul and, as such, has neither lot nor part in the play of nature. In other words, he has to renounce most sternly every feeling, impulse and urge of nature. On the other hand, those who take to the Bhakti Mârga have not to commit any sort of violence to their natural tendencies. This, of course, is not to be identified with the blind indulgence of the natural man. The essence of his Sadhana is to give a new bent to all his natural emotions, and to substitute a progressively higher object of satisfaction. For instance, the love of sense-objects makes way for intellectual and other finer enjoyments. Lastly, these again are abandoned in favour of the bliss resulting from the contemplation and love of God. In this love of God, again, there are various stages, beginning with images, forms, rituals, temples, and other such numerous limitations, and culminating in that supreme devotion where all distinctions fall off. The devotee is now not conscious of any struggle with his rebellious emotions. Every one of his feelings is present there in a more vivid and intense form, but with this great difference that they all now flow towards God, the Ocean of Immortal Bliss.

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Until the devotee's mind has attained to such a state of purity and love, where all thoughts of sense-enjoyments and other low pleasures are impossible, he has not attained his goal, *viz.* supreme devotion to the Lord. Sri Krishna in the Gita declares—"Those who, having offered up all their work unto Me, with entire reliance on Me, meditate on Me, and worship Me without any attachment to anything else, are soon lifted up from the ocean of death and ever-recurring birth, as their mind is wholly attached to Me." This is the explanation of the phenomenon of the blessed Gopis attaining to Absolute Freedom. According to the Vishnu Purana, the intense misery of soul in not attaining unto God washed off all the sinful propensities, and the intense pleasure in meditating on Him took away the binding effect of all good deeds, and so made

them free. One consequence of this blissful state is that the devotee comes to love all beings, and all things become sacred to him. To him all are God's children and everything is God's manifestation. Such a kind of intense all-absorbing love produces in the devotee absolute calmness and perfect self-surrender. In this state, everything, be it pleasure or pain, is welcome, proceeding as it does from the Lord who is all Love. No sacrifice, including that of his own life, is deemed too much. The goal of perfect Bhakti is that highest point where all sense of self is completely destroyed and the whole life of the devotee becomes a continuous stream of ever-ready and ever-willing self-sacrifice.

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But, say the critics, the ideal is true, noble and grand, no doubt. In practice, however, the introduction of the element of music, dance, eroticism and similar emotional colourings, which almost all schools of Bhakti adopt, has sown the seeds of demoralisation, and, in the long run, led to unethetical tendencies. Recently, we have come across a book\* dealing with one of the most notable movements of the Bhakti cult, *viz.* the Chaitanya Movement of Bengal. Before we proceed to a critical examination of the charges levelled against the Bhakti schools in general, a few words about the book may not be out of place. To the delicate and difficult task of description and critical estimate of personalities, customs, ideas and modes of life, which are alien to the author's religious outlooks, the writer has brought into play sympathy and imagination, and his performance is, on the whole, characterised by sincerity and fairness. Here and there, however, the author's Christian prepossessions have betrayed him into erroneous views and judgment, perhaps unconsciously. In spite of these few defects, the book

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\* 'The Chaitanya Movement, a study of the Vaishnavism of Bengal.'—By Melville T. Kennedy, M.A. Published by the Association Press (Y. M. C. A.), 5, Russell St., Calcutta.



gives a very good and full account of the various aspects of the Chaitanya Movement.



Such experiences as weeping, perspiring, the flowing of tears, hair standing on end, visions, trances etc., are all associated with many Bhakti schools, and to most Westerners, and to a certain section of Indian critics as well, these things appear as a 'wild orgy,' or at best as signs of a neuro-pathological condition. Regarding this latter view of the matter, enough has already been said in our criticism of the views of 'medical materialism.' In the Madhura Bhava, in which the Lord is worshipped as the Beloved, the divine lovers, no doubt, express their ecstatic union in the language of human love. Sometimes, this love is even compared with illegitimate love for the reason that that alone can, in a way, convey the intensity and passion of the divine love. Only those who are perfectly pure in mind can get a glimpse of this unique conception. But to all those who look upon it with a carnal eye, Saint Tulsidas gives an effective reply thus—"Where Rama is, there is no room for Kama (desire), and vice versa. Like light and darkness they can never be together."



Still some critics argue that few gifted persons succeed in reaching the pinnacle of devotion, *viz.* the Parâ Bhakti. In the large majority of cases, the erotic symbolism only affords a convenient cloak for disguising the sensual propensities. It must be admitted that in some of the Vaishnavite sects such a regular use is made of the purest and most sublime conception of the Madhura Bhava. But when one considers the matter in a dispassionate spirit, it is obvious that it is not the fault of the path of devotion or its numerous branches, if certain abuses have crept in, in the course of time. Nor is it in the Bhakti schools of Hinduism alone that the highest spiritual ideas are brought down to the low level of carnality. It is need-

less to hunt out parallels in other faiths and religions. The history of the world abounds in instances where the true spirit of the lives and messages of the great teachers, in course of time, has been lost sight of and even degraded and put to other uses which would have simply shocked the founders. The idea of self-surrender, which all the Bhakti cults emphasise, deserves to be brought into prominence especially at the present day, as the world is converted into a veritable hell by the demon of the worship of the body and of the things of the body, producing horrible selfishness, fierce competition, merciless exploitation of the weak, and a fiendish hatred of one another. If all this tremendous fight in life is understood to be but a blind struggle for that Eternal Bliss which is the Lord Himself—this is what the Bhakti Yoga teaches us,—then would peace, harmony and goodwill reign among mankind.

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## THE PREDESTINED FORCES OF THE FUTURE.

BY SWAMI ADWAITANANDA.

The great war has come and gone, leaving in front of us the face of an ambiguous future. The ideals which were so loud of mouth during the conflict, are now completely discredited. Humanity has the figure of a derelict vessel with a broken mast and rudder drifting on a stormy sea. Nowhere amongst the statesmen of the day do we find a just idea which would pacify the world. A great intellectual and moral bankruptcy has succeeded the delirium of massacre. The principle of self-determination so loudly proclaimed is now openly denied and summarily rejected by the victorious empires. The spectacle of subject peoples and protected nations demanding freedom and held down by military force continues to be the main feature of the day. The promised termination of militarism is as far off as ever. All these things were clearly foreseen by a few profound



thinkers who, while acknowledging the force and the value of idealism, had the clarity of vision to see into the future with a searching gaze.

This is, however, only one phase of the situation. It is the most obvious but not, therefore, the most important. The expectation of an immediate transformation of human nature was the outcome of a superficial observation. The task to be accomplished is too great to be so easy. One solitary experience, however painful and terrible, cannot renovate and purify the mind of humanity. It has a salutary effect. It has indelibly impressed upon the mind some wholesome lessons. Moreover, it was a colossal error to imagine that mere change of political machinery can ever be the sufficient panacea for the defects of civilisation. It is a change of spirit and therefore a spiritual transformation that can alone form the basis of a greater and better social existence. But it must be admitted that however great their outward appearance, the old principles show signs of weakness and have forfeited the promise of the future.

During the progress of the war, it was quite evident that the growing estrangement between capital and labour and the Asiatic question were the two great problems of the future. The war itself was a contest between the German idea and the middle-class liberation of the peoples of France, England and America, and during the settlement of that issue other questions were temporarily kept back. There was a truce between capital and labour which was brought about by false promises of reconciliation. The Asiatic question also was held in abeyance as enticing prospects of self-determination and independence were held out before their bewildered gaze. All this is now of the past. The natural and inevitable relations have reasserted themselves, and great questions are now coming to a head.

The two incurably antagonistic forces of socialism and capitalism are now confronting each other all over Europe, and we find their echo even in Asiatic countries. The old middle-class regime still holds the material power

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because of men's habit of preferring present ills to new adventures. But it has to face a very strong and powerful actuality in the form of a successful and revolutionary régime in Russia. In other countries the current of revolution is only checked for the time being, because the accumulation of forces and ideas that make for a revolution in our day is immeasurably greater. The materials of an immense political, social and economic upheaval or perhaps of a series of formidable explosions everywhere consolidate their position and their fighting strength.

The continued existence and unbroken success of the Russian revolution, in spite of the adoption of all measures, fair or foul, by other interested powers to limit its duration, promises to be a very significant event in human history. This is quite independent of the merits or demerits or the chances of survival of the present Bolshevik régime. The present dictatorship is admittedly an instrument of transition. It is a momentary concentration of revolutionary force. More important is the power of the idea that is behind these successes and has made them possible. A great nation has abolished its past foundations, cut itself off from its traditional moorings, replaced middle-class parliamentarism by a new form of government and used its potential energy to initiate a new experiment in the science of social construction. Acts of faith and audacities of this kind change or accelerate the pace of human progress. It does not necessarily follow that the form of social organisation adopted is desirable, but it is a certain sign that a phase of civilisation is beginning to pass, and a novel social order is in the course of preparation. The direction of the current is already clear. The present system of capitalistic industrialism has reached its limits and is condemned to perish. The issue of the future lies between a labour industrialism different only in organisation from its predecessor, some greater spirit or form of communistic society such as is being attempted in Russia, or else the emergence of a new and as yet unforeseen principle.



The second upcoming force that is full of great potentialities is the resurgence of Asia. The temperament of Asiatic peoples is radically different. The build and movement of their minds is of another character. At present the movement of revival in Asia is finding a predominant expression in attempts to throw off the foreign political and economic subjection. It is manifest in a variety of forms from Egypt to China. The Moslem States reject the theories of protectorates and mandates and claim absolute independence. In India there is a wide-spread and ever-growing dissatisfaction with half methods, and there is a persistent cry for 'Home-rule,' within the Empire. There is also a growing party which believes in the potency of idealism and therefore demands that absolute freedom should be placed before the people as a national objective. In the Far East obscure movements are in the process of formation. We also see the dawn of the idea that Asiatic federation is a *sine qua non*, if the political and economic exploitation of Asiatic peoples by the Western nations is to be put a stop to.

At the same time, there is involved, subconsciously as yet in the masses but already assuming a definite form in the minds of the cultured few, an ideal of spiritual and cultural independence and the defence against the European invasion of the subtle principle of Asiatic culture. This cultural onslaught is more degrading and detrimental to the interests of Asiatic nations. Thinkers of Asia have now begun to realise this fact, and the demand that is everywhere prevalent in Asia for a double, an inner and outer resistance, is an outcome of this conviction.

These two forces which, it is quite clear, will lead the future, for the moment, tend to form a moral alliance. The labour and socialistic parties in the politically dominant nations strongly condemn the aggressive policies of their governments and extend their support to the claims of dependent peoples. Bolshevik Russia has tremendous influence in the States of Central Asia and lends moral support to all countries striving for political freedom. This tendency may be short-lived. The forces in

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action are invariably opportunist and avail themselves for the time being of help from any quarter. Such mechanical alliances are fragile and ephemeral. But this much is clear that the present scheme of things is opposed to the spirit of the times and is menaced by the growth of two formidable world-forces.

The evolution of a socialistic society and the resurgence of Asia are sure to introduce radical changes, but it is doubtful whether they will realise the highest human aspirations. Socialism will surely conduce to a more equitable distribution of wealth, will give sufficient leisure to all for intellectual and cultural pursuits, but it will be merely a mechanical change. The resurgence of Asia, also, if it merely means a shifting of the balance of international forces, will not be a substantial move forward. Of course, an international equality is much better than the present order of domination and exploitation, but it is merely a framework. The underlying spirit also must undergo a complete transformation, because that alone can be the decisive factor. Nothing can be real in life that is not made real in the spirit. The idea and the sentiment are not enough. They undergo constant fluctuations and are combated by deep-seated nature and instincts. There must be an immense spiritual advance, if freedom, equality and unity are to be made the internal and external possession of all. Only a spiritual change can bring this about, and the intellect of Europe laboured by Hellenism is beginning to see the necessity of a spiritual change. A mere rational formula still holds the sway, but a movement in the direction of the spirit has already begun in Europe.

Asia in the past made no great endeavour for social progress. Her main occupation was the discovery of a spiritual and inner freedom and not an external perfection. Outwardly, she tried for a secure social framework and a fixed economic system. The result was a sharp discrepancy between her inner and outward life. In India this attitude of mind found expression in the seclusion of the best who lived in the spirit. But the

commingling of the two great streams of thought, Eastern and Western, has forced Asia to face the life-problem with a broader vision. She is at liberty to imitate the Occidental experiment or to reject entirely all the achievements of the West and rest satisfied with her glorious but insufficient past. But in that case her resurgence will in no way benefit either herself or humanity in general. Looking to the nature of the forces working in Asia, however, we find that the probability is that the contact of these two halves of the mind of humanity will get up a more powerful connection between the two poles of our being and result in a full synthesis of the highest ideals of each, subjective and objective freedom and equality.

THE REVIVAL OF HINDUISM AND SWAMI DAYANANDA.

(Continued from p. 261.)

Regarding the caste system, Dayananda's teaching is that the caste of a person should be determined by his or her character, education and habits of life, that it should be settled after the completion of education *i.e.*, at the age of twenty-five in the case of boys and sixteen in the case of girls, that the State should provide persons with suitable children whenever their own children have been placed in other castes in accordance with the above method, and that the State and other responsible persons should see that all the castes discharge their duties faithfully. About these strange notions it is enough to say that no Arya Samajist has, as yet, been found to observe these rules. The impracticability and absurdity of any such arrangement must be patent to everybody.

Many Arya Samajists are, however, found in practice to be eager to get themselves included among the higher castes without any of the prescribed qualifications. Not unoften do we find their preachers proclaiming that caste should be determined by Guna and Karma (quality and action), but how and who is to determine these is con-

veniently ignored. Nor is it at all possible to devise any meter or gauge to indicate impartially and accurately the varying shades and fluctuations of Guna and Karma. Neither is the problem solved by declaring, as do some reformers, that caste is doomed and it should be abolished. We are, as blind admirers of any institution, regardless of its merits or utility. The caste system has become much disorganised and petrified, and the present day conditions do require many thorough-going alterations in that institution. No one can prescribe any cut and dried plan but must be guided by the time-spirit and experience. Our own idea is that the determination of caste according to Guna and Karma could be made only in matters spiritual, while birth alone must continue to be the guiding principle in such matters as inheritance, marriage etc. In the eyes of law, so far as all political, civic and public affairs are concerned, questions of religion and caste should not come in either to confer privileges or to impose disabilities. Some such arrangement seems to be the most satisfactory way out of the tangle of the caste system as it exists to-day.

There are a few other matters such as the Shrâddha ceremony performed by the orthodox Hindus to which the Arya Samajists take exception. We do not consider it necessary to enter into the details of this question. The propagation of the Vedic religion (which to the Arya Samajist means following the 'Dayananda Smriti' or 'Satyârtha Prakâsh'), and the Shuddhi or the conversion into Hinduism are the main functions of the preachers, who are generally paid and whose duty is to preach and to officiate at the ceremonials. It is claimed that many superstitious beliefs of the people and much of the darkness of the ages have been cleared up through their agency. We have no desire to dispute this claim. Nevertheless, we have grave doubts whether in moral and spiritual matters any permanent and lasting results can be achieved by the preachings of men who rarely possess any extraordinary spirituality or for the matter of that even secular knowledge, whose domain and extent have be-

come so vast to-day and are rapidly widening with the march of time. The work of the Christian missions, aided with all the resources of wealth, power and organisation, even after a thousand years of activity, has not been able either to banish the superstitions or to dispel the darkness of the human race. If any real service is rendered to humanity, it is through the teachings of great spiritual giants and pure and holy men, whose lives have been an embodiment of unselfish love and service.

Then, as regards conversions, we believe it is more a matter of the change of heart and spirit than a change in one's name, creed, church, or dogma. It is a familiar fact that when persons whose capacity to understand any religion has not been developed to any appreciable extent, are converted, the change is effected through other than religious motives, and consequently they become no better, except that they add to the numerical strength of the community in question.

We shall now turn to a consideration of the personality of Swami Dayananda, and his contribution to the age in which he lived. We have nothing but respectful regard and veneration for his personality. It is a fact of no mean consideration that quite an appreciable number of persons who came in personal contact with him have felt themselves blessed, have been saved from falling into the abyss of atheism and materialism, and have felt the call to dedicate their lives to the cause of their country and fellow-men. Even at the present day, his name is a force capable of rousing thousands of people from their slumber to rally round his banner, and his words bring solace and peace in their lives. We bow to his vast learning and erudition, his patriotism, his boldness and fearlessness, his sincerity and honesty of purpose, his steadfast devotion to truth, his love of humanity and in particular of the oppressed and down-trodden people, his hatred of shams and falsehood wherever found, his strict Brahmacharya and rigorous life of renunciation and above all his manly independence and contempt for wealth and power. Yet all these do not blind us to the fact that some of his

theories and conclusions and methods of work are not only not convincing but also seem to us to be opposed to reason. Regarding the Vedas, Dayananda holds that they are books revealed by God, and he quotes with approval from Shatapatha Brahmana—"In the beginning, God revealed the Rik, Jajur, Sama and Atharva to Agni, Vayu, Aditya and Angira respectively." To the question 'Is there any necessity for a supernatural revelation and cannot the human mind acquire knowledge by itself?'—Dayananda replies that there are no such initial inherent powers or possibilities in man. His argument is that both the savages and men of civilised communities need to be instructed before they become educated. "The first inspiration must therefore come from God at the very beginning of creation." Before we proceed to a consideration of these views, we may refer to another peculiarity of Dayananda, viz. his method of interpretation of the texts of the Vedas. This is a matter for the expert Pandits, and it is sufficient to note that many competent scholars disagree with his interpretations. Now as to the Vedas themselves. The Hindus, in general, no doubt, believe in the revelation of the Vedas, but they hold they are without beginning and without end. Of course 'no books are meant by the Vedas but the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. Only the discoverers of these laws are called Rishis.' Regarding all knowledge, whether secular or spiritual, the Hindu idea is that knowledge is inherent in man and that all learning is nothing but taking the cover off his own soul which is a mine of infinite knowledge. In many cases the covering is not completely removed, and all differences that are found among men are due to the differences in the degree of this process of 'uncovering.' To argue that a man has to be taught before he can know anything and deny, on this ground, the inherent nature of all knowledge seems to be illogical. For, all external aids are merely the suggestion or occasion which sets one to study one's own mind, and by a process of reasoning and rearrangement of ideas a further

advance is made in knowledge. As Swami Vivekananda beautifully expresses it—“Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man, and religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.”

Dayananda's declared object was to re-establish the Vedic religion. But strangely enough we are told that the Arya Samaj is opposed to Vedanta, and it calls it 'Neo-Vedanta.' We confess we are unable to understand what it could possibly mean. Quotations from Rig-Veda are given to support the view that God, soul and Prakriti are three distinct eternal and independent existences. We do not know how this could be reconciled with the clear and unambiguous teaching of the Upanishads of only One Existence except on the supposition that the Vedas do not represent one single perfected idea, but an ascending series of evolving ideas which finally culminate in the grand generalisation—“The Reality is one, though people call it variously.” Throughout the Samhitas there are many examples of hymns sung in praise of different gods, Devas or the bright ones, but along with everyone of these gods is the idea of an Infinity. That is to say they begin as gods but are subsequently raised to a conception of the Being in whom the whole universe exists and who is the Ruler of that universe. The monotheistic idea of the Samhitas appeared to the Aryan mind as much too human and useless, and there is a struggle for a more philosophical and transcendental concept or idea until this culminated in the grand generalisation referred to above. Studied in the light of this evolutionary character of the Vedic conceptions, the finest flower of the Vedas is the Upanishads whose teaching is Advaita. Dayananda, in his 'Advaitavâda-Sameekshâ', in the 'Satyârtha-Prakâsh' gives the curious explanation that Sri Shankarâchârya in order to refute the Jains advanced the views which later came to be known as Advaita, and that if Shankarâchârya really believed in it himself, it was wrong. We are amused at this explanation of Shankara's views. Everybody knows that Shankara refutes not only the Jains but the Sankhyas, the Dvaitins, the Visishtâdvaitins and other

orthodox Vedic schools of thought as well ; also that his philosophical views and conclusions are not mere intellectual soundings but based on spiritual illumination and realisation, which could be the only satisfying test.

Regarding the existence of God as the Creator and Sustainer of this universe, 'the millions of the worlds hanging in space, our wonderful world teeming with life and animation, the wonderful tabernacle which man has been provided with' and such miracles are advanced as proofs. These are known in philosophical terms as the design theory. All that it can prove is that this external world requires a builder, but it could in no way explain this universe. Even this God, which the theory proves, after all turns out to be not very respectable ; for the materials of the world existed before Him, and He must be limited by these materials. For, He could only build what the materials enabled Him to do. That is to say, He is not only limited, but He is not even independent.

Dayananda laid much stress on the performance of Homa and held that no Vedic ceremony could be complete without it. The reasons which he gave for this ceremony were that man pollutes the air he breathes and soils the place he lives in, and that he should do something to purify and sweeten the air and the place. If these are the only reasons, we are surprised at the Samajist's persisting in wasting ghee, sugar, sandal-wood and other costly things, when modern sanitary science has devised so many cheaper and more efficient deodorants and disinfectants.

Whatever might be one's views regarding Dayananda's philosophical contribution, even the most partial of his followers and admirers cannot help regretting the fact that in attacking his opponents he had been needlessly severe, and we believe his cause would have gained rather than suffered had he adopted a gentler tone in his criticisms. We know that he is defended on the score of his having simply hated the sin but not the sinners. Even granting that such a fine and delicate distinction could have been made by him, there is no denying the

fact that such excuse could hardly be advanced by his followers when they imitate him in this respect. It is easy to talk of separating the sin and the sinner, but very few can realise it in practice. It amounts to distinguishing between quality and substance, and anyone who could do this would be a perfect man.

What is the attitude of the Arya Samaj towards politics? We find this question answered in the book, 'Swami Dayananda Saraswati—His life and teachings', published by Ganesh & Co. It says—"Has the Arya Samaj any political aim? As we have said elsewhere, the Arya Samaj is composed of mostly educated men; and almost all of them are clear-headed, honest men, who do not entertain and cannot tolerate hypocrisy, double-mindedness and unreasonable views. It is this disposition which has made them leave the old fold and join the Arya Samaj. A clear common-sense is their fate. They know their numerical weakness. They know how they are regarded and looked upon by their neighbours of other persuasions. They know that their very existence depends upon and is due to the protection afforded by the British Government. And as clear-headed men they must know that any attempt to overthrow the British Government can only mean to them disgrace, disaster, suffering and total effacement. And if there is any body of workers in India that has done good practical work for the masses, it is the Arya Samaj. Is it reasonable to expect that such a body of sensible practical men should lend themselves to any illusion?" Regarding the nature of the British and their rule in India, we are told in the same book that 'for a long time the English were not desirous of dominion', that 'the English fought not so much with their swords as with their wisdom and beneficence, and they came just in time to rescue the country from anarchy and were, therefore, gratefully hailed as deliverers', that 'the new administration was characterised by honesty, truthfulness and justice', that 'Government was no longer weak, rapacious, arbitrary, irresponsible', that 'the servants of Government showed a sense of duty that was never observed before'

and that 'the greatest benefit that the British conferred was to give us education.' These quotations speak for themselves. Justice demands that due acknowledgment should be made of the praiseworthy change that has come over the attitude of some of the prominent leaders of the Samaj.

In biographies, one normally meets with some amount of exaggeration in the claims of their respective heroes and their achievements. In the instance before us the verdict of the biographer, even when due allowance is made for generous and liberal self-estimate, proves too much, for we ought to have reached the millennium already. For our part, we have no desire to grudge the Samajists their claim for glory. It might, however, prove instructive to examine in what respect and to what extent, if any, an ordinary Arya Samajist is superior to an ordinary orthodox non-Samajist. We shall suppose both of these are illiterate, and not much skilled in thinking and reasoning on such abstruse matters as the Vedas, God, the distinction between Sâkâr and Nirâkâr etc. In practice, what happens is this. The orthodox man believes in his Purohit and Panda, makes pilgrimages and worships in the temples and follows the leading of his caste elders. The Samajist, on the other hand, no doubt, does not go to the temples to worship the images, nor cares for pilgrimages and Shrâddhas, but he, too, has his temple—the Samaj Mandir, his images—the iron brazier and the Homa fire, and his pilgrimage—the various Gurukul Utsavas and anniversaries, where he pays his tithes etc. The educated and advanced thinkers, in both communities, no doubt display commendable force of character, courage of conviction, and zeal and enthusiasm for reforms. But the Arya Samajist reformers are not able to influence the less courageous and slow-moving bulk of the masses, as they have become a kind of a separate sect. Whenever the example of an Arya Samajist in breaking pernicious customs is pointed out, the ordinary orthodox man would simply reply—'Oh, he is an Arya Samajist and not one

of us, and so he might do anything. But I can't imitate him.'

Consciously or unconsciously, the Samaj, instead of becoming the one national universal religion (this is its claim) by fusing all the sects, has practically become a new and by no means popular sect of Hinduism. The reason for this is not difficult to seek. With the exception of their various educational and philanthropic works, the bulk of their Prachâr work has been devoted to violent criticism and destruction. Might we be permitted to make an earnest appeal to the Arya Samaj brethren to consider that Hinduism is broad enough to contain not only those that believe in the Vedas and one supreme God, but even the Sikhs, the Jains, and the Buddhists as well? Nor is idolatry in Hinduism compulsory at all. We have attempted to prove that, far from being a sin or a hindrance, image-worship is and might be a stepping-stone to a higher spiritual life. On all such questions as adult marriage, widow marriage, female education, untouchability etc., many Hindu associations consisting of all classes of men are doing excellent work. Also there is perfect unanimity about the removal of real abuses in the name of caste and religion. Except in the matter of the interpretation of the Vedas, Shrâddha and idolatry, which, we believe, are but minor considerations, the Arya Samajists have no valid reasons to hold themselves aloof. Higher national interests demand that all differences should be buried and all classes and communities should work shoulder to shoulder as comrades. In any Hindu revival, it is idle to hope that it will take exclusively the colour and form of any particular persuasion, as the Sanatanee, the Samajist etc. Not only this, but it must also become liberal and universal enough to tolerate and respect all religions of the world, with love and service as its watchword.

(Concluded.)

THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.*

BY ERIC HAMMOND.

When one of Britain's hymn-writers sang, "Time! What an empty vapour 'tis!"—he expressed a thought which is both Christian and Vedantic. When the first phrase of an important notice affixed to the last December number of this periodical stated, "From January, 1925, begins the 30th year of the Prabuddha Bharata," the ephemeral quality of time was strongly accentuated. The years have indeed passed like a watch in the night, like a tale that is told.

It seems incredible that three decades have come and gone since Swami Vivekananda trod London streets and impressed large London audiences with his dignity, his eloquence and his spiritual fervour. Concerning the Prabuddha Bharata, one clearly recollects his enthusiastic preparations for its birth and upbringing. He emphasised the necessity for it. He prophesied about its utility and the momentous monthly message it would offer to the world. In the midst of one memorable discussion, his sense of humour prevailed over all seriousness, when he heartily laughed at the present writer's mispronunciation of the title of the proposed magazine.

Naturally, those who loved him and revered him, tried, after their poor fashion, to lisp Hindu words and sentences. Their first efforts usually proved more amusing to him than satisfactory to themselves. But he corrected them with extreme gentleness and courtesy—he whose command of English was nothing less than marvellous. He had taught them so much of his philosophy, encouraged their faint faith and lifted many of them out of the depths of fear and despair.

They, even then, could only dimly foresee the wonderful way in which his surety of unity would

* Written in December last.—Ed. P. B.

permeate the spoken and printed word of to-day, especially among English-speaking peoples. Then, thirty years ago, it was frequently remarked, "The Swami has cleared my thinking for me. Until he came, my religion was doubtful at best. The current opposition of the creeds left me unsatisfied and lukewarm. He showed me the underlying principle of all the creeds. Now, I find, in my customary form of religious expression, that there, too, is unity, and that all religion has one source, one centre and one circumference."

Pride of intellect fell before the supremacy of his intelligence. They who heard him, those thirty years ago, bring to mind his winged words, his stirring utterances, his unswerving belief, his entire certainty of the ground on which he stood.

The vast city of London, the meeting-place of all races, finds room, in the immensity of its embrace, for the exponents of every phase of religious and philosophical experience. Verbal tournaments constantly occur on its platforms and in the columns of its journals. Its pulpits are occupied by professors of this creed and of that. Missionaries from near and far attract great congregations, and the scope and method of all the various types of belief and unbelief are set forth. So much so is this the case that citizens of the metropolis often find themselves "consumed by things to do" and confused by things to hear. London is the centre of innumerable interests, sometimes converging, sometimes conflicting. Because of the very multiplicity of her affairs she is unable to concentrate, as perhaps she should, on vivid and vital matters. Political movements, mercantile adventures, imperial ideals, democratic pronouncements—all these, and more, clamour for her attention.

Thus, the Vedanta, expounded by its greatest advocate, Swami Vivekananda, was right gladly hailed by many of her residents and visitors. His speeches were acclaimed as inspiring and reviving. His meetings were crowded by enthusiastic listeners. It was conjectured by his adherents that his star would shine

resplendent over Great Britain and America and would in effect, transform the religious outlook of the world.

That such a transformation has occurred, or rather is occurring, one cannot doubt. But the stream of its content has, for the most part, moved more silently than tempestuously. The thousand and one things to do and to hear that have arrested passing attention, have many of them, "had their day and ceased to be." Yet the sense of unity which impelled Swamiji and by which and for which he lived, spreads wider with the days and the years.

Writ large, so that they who run may read as they run, signs of that unity are everywhere perceptible, signs of a season when men shall no longer sow seeds of dissension but plant the healing herbs of wholesome spiritual agreement. Uniformity of ritual may, hardly, be anticipated, because men differ in temperament and in method. However different, they are advancing toward the knowledge that each flower of the field, with its various colouring and perfume, is fed and sustained by one life-principle. Faith, like the flowers, shows itself in many ways, but its essence, under each manifestation, is one, even though it be called by many names.

Schools of religious thought, accustomed to expressing themselves in rigid and unyielding forms, are searching for ways and means by which professors and students of one school may comprehend and appreciate the teaching of the others. As an immediate instance, we may note that a leading Nonconformist has recently preached in Canterbury Cathedral, and the Dean of Canterbury is advertised, by way of salutary exchange, to occupy a Free Church pulpit. This is a remarkable concession on both sides, since it implies an acknowledgment that conformity and non-conformity are, underneath the terms, fundamentally one.

It will be more encouraging still, when Western priests openly and frankly vocalise their indebtedness to Eastern origins. Slowly but surely the leaven moves. It is true, and, sometimes, it is depressing, that the

Prabuddha Bharata, as an example of oriental piety has but few subscribers in Great Britain. One wishes, with all one's heart, that thousands of copies were persistently demanded. When one remembers the floods of periodic literature that monthly and daily pour upon the people, one cannot be surprised.

“Hope on, hope ever,” is a helpful and inspiring saying. One has to remember also, Swami Vivekananda's gracious attitude of self-surrender—“What matter if my name be forgotten! What matter if I pass out of the memory of men! My message can never pass away. In the Lord's own time it will replenish the soul of mankind. I shall escape from the bondage of my body, but the truth will prevail, and the word that I was born to proclaim shall be proclaimed.”

His portrait, posed Buddha-like, reflects the sincerity, the irrevocability of his message. Calm, unshaken, possessed of infinite courage, infinite patience, he awaits the fulfilment of his vision.

MAHARANI SARAT SUNDARI OF PUTHIA.

BY AN ADMIRER.

(Continued from p. 275).

Maharani Sarat Sundari had a very tender heart, and she could not bear the sight of distress even from her early childhood. When she was in her father's house, she would seldom come to the Cutchery of her father, as such an ordinary occurrence as a severe rebuke to a tenant would make her burst into tears. On one occasion when a tenant was beaten by the orders of her father for some serious offence committed by him, she fainted away at the sight.

On the occasion of her Jagaddhâtri Puja every year, all the people of the locality were invited and fed sumptuously. Many Brahmins were engaged to serve in these feasts. At one of these Pujas a Brahmin was detected

stealing a large quantity of sweets, and there was a great row amongst the officers over it. Some were for giving him a good beating, others for fining him heavily and then driving him from the service. The matter eventually was brought to the notice of the Maharani Mata. She at once called the officers concerned to her presence and enquired of them if sweets were wanting to feed the people invited. On getting a reply in the negative, she, appealing to their good feeling, said, "The poor fellow is already mortified at being caught in the act of stealing. Why do you think of punishing him further? Moreover, the sweets were meant for feeding people. He has stolen them for no other purpose than feeding his wife and children. Just give him a little more and hush up the matter for God's sake. The row you have already made is a sufficient punishment for the poor fellow."

Her delicacy of feeling was simply admirable. At the time of her son's marriage, two girls, out of many inspected, were thought fit for final selection. They were both brought down to Puthia for the Maharani Mata's approval of one of them. When she had to reject one of these girls, she was much moved on her account, specially thinking of the feelings of her parents. She had her, therefore, married in a good family and most liberally bore all the expenses in connection with her marriage celebration.

Manomohan Kar, nephew of Radhikanath Bakshi, an officer of the Raj estate, read in the same class with Kumar Jatindra Narayan Roy. One day as they were playing cricket during the recess at school, a ball bowled by Manomohan hit the Kumar hard near one of his eyes. At this the Kumar lost his temper and abused him severely. The boy Manomohan, however, was not one to brook an insult. He threatened the Kumar, saying, "I shall just see to it when you go home from school." Now, when the school was over, the Kumar was being borne in a palanquin, escorted by two Durwans. Manomohan lay in wait on the path lying between two tanks, a little way from the school. As the Kumar's

palanquin approached him, the boy, with all alacrity, gave a hard push to one of the Durwans who fell down the steep bank of one of the tanks, and threw a handful of dust into the other's eyes. All this he did in the twinkling of an eye. Then finding the door of the palanquin open, he gave a few blows to the Kumar and ran away. The news of this assault on the Kumar was soon spread on the wings of the wind in a much exaggerated form, and the whole of the Rajbati was in a great commotion. Only the Maharani Mata had retained her calmness of mind. She summoned her son, the Kumar, to her presence and by means of questionings elicited from him the fact that he had been the first to give offence to Manomohan by abusing him when the ball had struck his eye. The Maharani took her son to task for abusing the boy for no fault of his, as the ball hit him accidentally. "Accidents are accidents, my boy," said she, "you did him a great wrong by insulting him for nothing. To-morrow when you go to school, be sure to get reconciled to him and play with him again. Otherwise, I will not touch any food the whole day." The Kumar did as he was bid by his loving mother, and she was greatly satisfied at it. Henceforth the Maharani Mata took a special care of the boy, Manomohan, and when once he fell seriously ill, she sent her Kaviraj, Dharanidhar Roy, to treat him carefully, so that the boy's life might be saved.

A certain property, Mehal Chatutia, in the district of Mymensingh, was bought by the Puthia Raj in partnership with Jahnavi Chowdhurani of Santosh. When the Maharani Mata was in Benares, the lady of Santosh was also there. The latter wished very much to enhance the rent of this new Mehal. But as that could not be done without the co-operation of her co-sharer, the Maharani, she went to pay a visit at her house at Howli Pande. After accosting each other as they met, the Chowdhurani laid before her the proposal for which she came. On this the following conversation took place between them :
Maharani—Are the tenants of Chatutia well off, mother,

and will it not impose any hardship upon them if we enhance the rent?

Chowdhurani—Surely, mother, it must entail some hardship upon at least a section of the tenants. But the rate of rent of this Mehal is much below that of the surrounding ones.

Maharani—May I enquire, good mother, how many children you have got?

Chowdhurani—Alas! mother, I have no children but a widowed daughter-in-law and her only daughter.

Maharani—As bad luck would have it, mother, that is exactly the case with me also. But may I enquire what is the income of your estate?

Chowdhurani—Only about two lacs and a half yearly. May I know yours?

Maharani—Mine is a little more. But, good mother, may I ask you one thing? If we, with only so few members, cannot maintain ourselves properly with two or three lacs a year, how can the poor tenants do so with an infinitely smaller income, many of them having a lot of children to maintain? I, for myself, have no desire to enhance the rent. I think what we have got already should be sufficient for us. If our heirs and successors find it hard to pull on with this present income, they may do as they like.

Jahnavi Chowdhurani was not a little surprised at the line of argument the Maharani Mata had taken and went away without being able to convince her of the necessity of carrying out her proposal.

The Maharani Mata used to send out two of her most faithful maid-servants, Anna and Bishu Dasi, to enquire secretly and know which people had not enough to eat, who had not sufficient clothes, and which people were ill and had to go without medicine and diet for want of money. On learning the particulars from them, she made arrangement for meeting their respective wants.

The Maharani had a keen sense of justice and a well-balanced mind. Seldom was she found to strike off

any item of expenditure when accounts were submitted to her by the officers. But one day she did so regarding an item involving only eight annas. On being questioned by her Dewan as to why she was so particular about that insignificant sum, she replied, "As it is spent upon a commission in connection with my sister's property, it should, in all propriety, be charged to her estate. Why should my son's property be made liable for it?"

She was a great patron of learning. She made a liberal contribution to the Rajshahi College and maintained a Middle Vernacular School at Puthia and a Middle English School at Lalpur. Her generous contributions to various *tols* are also well known.

Apart from giving such helps to many poor students as the price of books and their University fees, she regularly supported a large number of poor students throughout their educational career. Most gladly she bore all their expenses in this connection. Verily she was a mother to them all, often enquiring about their wants and fulfilling them immediately. During the vacation she invited them to come and spend it at Puthia. At the time of going back to rejoin their institutions, they were provided with new cloths, wrappers and towels.

One of these boys was unfortunate enough to get plucked in the Entrance Examination two or three times. He then gave up his studies in despair and out of shame avoided the notice of the Maharani Mata. She, however, enquired about him through a son of her Dewan, Srijut Srish Chandra Majumdar, and on learning about his misfortune, asked him very feelingly, "Then what will become of this poor boy? Srish, can't you think of a plan by which he may be made a useful member of his family?" Srish Chandra then suggested that it would be useless for him to try any more for the Entrance Examination, but if she would bear the necessary expenses, he might join the Campbell Medical School in Calcutta and turn out a medical practitioner. Readily did she agree to it. The boy successfully came out of the Medical

School and earned his living by practising as a physician in his own village in Pabna.

She had a great sympathy for the education of women as well. When Srijut Srish Chandra Majumdar wanted to open a school for girls at Puthia, she gave her whole-hearted support to the scheme. But, owing to a vigorous opposition by the bigoted section of the community, it could not be carried out at that time.

Her liberality was wide-spread and spontaneous. Dr. Nishikanta Chatterji related that while he was in Russia, once he found himself in great straits for want of funds. He then remembered to have heard of the Maharani Mata's liberality and wrote to her asking for help. And he received the money asked for in Russia, sent by the Maharani Mata from Puthia.

Although she was a strict Hindu widow, she was never found lacking in making contributions to the building of a Brahma Mandir, a Mosque or a Church, whenever she was appealed to for it.

A Mussulman tenant was once brought down to the Cutchery on a charge of cow-killing. He was heavily fined and confined in a cell underneath the Cutchery building. The matter at last reached the ears of the Maharani Mata. She at once called the Dewan to her presence and vehemently protested against their proceedings, saying, "I am very sorry that you have done such injustice to the poor tenant. He killed the cow for a religious rite. We Hindus sacrifice buffalo-calves and goats for religious rites and think nobody has any right to interfere in it. Then why should we not allow the Mussulmans to do as their religious injunction requires? Please see that in future no such injustice is done to anybody else."

A Brahma gentleman once came to Puthia to preach his religious doctrines. Everywhere he met with a violent opposition, and nobody would receive him in his house. The Maharani Mata, on hearing this, sent for him, gave him quarters in the palace, allowed him to conduct his prayers in his own way and fed him sumptuously as long

as he stayed there. On coming to learn that the preacher was a vegetarian, the Maharani cooked some of the dishes with her own hands. It is said that the dishes served were so many in number that the gentleman could not get at them from his seat. A Brahmin attendant got them near him one after another.

She was seldom seen to touch coins with her hands. Only on occasions when her spiritual preceptor came to pay her a visit she would take gold coins in her hands, put them before his feet and lie prostrate before him as the Hindu custom requires.

She had correspondence with Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. His memorable measures for widow re-marriage had the full sanction of her heart. She used to say that the measures, if properly followed, would put a stop to many a heinous crime in the Hindu society.

When the Local Self-Government Act was passed by the benign Government of Lord Ripon, she was the first to convene a meeting and express her great satisfaction at it. The meeting was presided over by her Dewan, and she with other ladies, watched the proceedings from behind a Purdah. The news of this meeting was first published in a weekly edition of the 'Bengalee'. Then the other newspapers followed suit and began to publish articles in praise of this act. When she heard of these, and of the news that Babu Ananda Mohan Bose had referred in glowing terms to this meeting of Puthia convened by her in his speech at the monster Town Hall meeting in Calcutta, she felt very much abashed. She always loved secrecy about good acts and was really annoyed at this trumpeting of her act.

The Maharani Mata had a great predilection for cloths made in her own country. The cloths she wore were made to order by her weaver tenants of Mymensingh.

Indeed the virtues of this good lady were many-sided and numerous. Had she belonged to the Metropolis, I am sure she would have been immortalised in various ways. It is greatly to be regretted that no complete record of her good deeds can be found now.

A short life has been written by Srijut Srish Chandra Majumdar. At first it appeared as a serial in the 'Bangadarshan' under the title of 'Raj Tapaswini'. Subsequently it was published in a book form by its author. Another sketch of her life was written by Srijut Girish Chandra Lahiri of Natore. Srijut Bhudev Chandra Mukherji had a great affection for this august lady and looked upon her as his daughter. He has also written a few pages about her in his book 'Sadalap'.

(Concluded.)

MAMMON AND MARRIAGE.

The philosophy and religion of the Hindus are as broad, elevated and comprehensive as those of any other people in the world. The intolerance and persecution indulged in by the people of the West in the name of religion have never been heard of in India. But in social matters, the Hindus enjoy little or no freedom as compared with the Westerners. Almost in all phases of social life, customs which have long outlived their utility and purpose are blindly observed. It is this want of freedom and tyranny of tradition in social matters which baffle the attempt of the reformers.

Under the impact of Western civilisation, many institutions and traditions have begun to give way. Even while the old forms and observances are outwardly conformed to, the spirit has disappeared, and Mammon is the all-regulating factor in every aspect of life. The joint family, the relation of parents and their children and marriage are some instances in point. Commenting upon a vehement denunciation of the practice of demanding extortionate sums of money from parents of girls by the bridegrooms, the 'Indian Social Reformer' observes—
 "Unfortunately, however, the men who talk most of the spirituality of the Hindus have often the most materialistic and even degrading views of marriage, and it is such men who are largely responsible for the demoralising practice,

etc." The explanation for this must be sought in the fact that the Hindus have all along been conservative and hide-bound in social matters.

Regarding this practice of demanding money in marriage, in some cases by the bridegroom's party and in others by that of the bride, the truth seems to be that it has nothing to do with religion, culture or enlightenment. It is purely a matter of demand and supply. As the 'Reformer' itself points out, those who have received English education are most affected by this practice. For, the competition is very keen for bridegrooms possessing University degrees. Hence it is but natural that the results are determined by the inducement of the highest bid. Almost invariably those very parents who suffered most from this form of evil in getting their daughters married never hesitate to extort the highest possible amount they can, in the case of their own sons. We refer to this not so much to justify the practice but only to draw the moral, viz. that it is a natural economic product of the highly inflated value set upon University degrees in the marriage market. This is bound to disappear as the value of degrees is considerably deteriorated in public services.

Whatever be the ultimate result, it behoves us to consider what steps should be taken to improve the situation. The advice of the 'Social Reformer' to parents of girls is to make a stand against extortionate demands and spend the money that would be required to buy a bridegroom in educating their daughters to fit them, if need be, to earn their own living. We are afraid that few parents have got so much enlightenment, and what is still more rare, the moral courage necessary to act upon this advice, and face the opprobrium of society in allowing their daughters to grow up unmarried. It must also be pointed out that in all the discussions of this question, the interests of the party most affected, viz. the girls, are more or less ignored. Considered purely from the point of view of the welfare and interests of the girls it appears to us that some such steps as the following will have to

be taken :—(1) The marriage of girls before they attain the age of majority and without their full and free consent should be discouraged. (2) The girls should have the same right of inheritance of their parent's property as the sons, if they remain unmarried, and half the share of the son in case of their marriage. With regard to the former, public opinion is not advanced enough to take it as within the range of practical politics. But, nevertheless, nothing short of this could effectively free the girls from the numerous disadvantages which they are labouring under according to the existing marriage system. The other suggestion has justice and equity on its side. Neither can there be any objection to this on the score of religion.

It is a notorious fact that the large sums of money which are extorted by the party of the bride or bridegroom, instead of providing a reserve fund for the married couple, are squandered away in all sorts of entertainments on the occasion of the wedding. Not only this but the advantages and security which the ancient practice of giving 'Stree-dhan' afforded have also disappeared. The conferring upon the daughters of the right of inheritance as enjoyed by the sons seems to us to be the only effective remedy for the many anomalies of the existing marriage system.

SRI KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA.

CHAPTER XVI

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

य एतान्मत्पथो हित्वा भक्तिज्ञानक्रियात्मकान् ॥

क्षुद्धान्कामांश्चलैः प्राणैर्जुषन्तः संसरन्ति ते ॥ १ ॥

The Lord said :

1. Those¹ who discarding these three ways of devotion, knowledge and work taught by Me, feed through their restless organs their petty desires, pass on from birth to death.

[1 *Those &c.*—This is a class of utterly selfish people who are distinct from both men of realisation and the seekers after truth, described in the preceding chapter.]

स्वे स्वैऽधिकारे या निष्ठा स गुणः परिकीर्तितः ॥

विपर्ययस्तु दोषः स्यादुभयोरेष निश्चयः ॥ २ ॥

2. The steadfastness¹ to the duties of one's particular sphere is described as merit, and the reverse is defect. This is the criterion about them.

[1 *Steadfastness &c.*—i.e. no action is by itself right or wrong.]

शुद्धाशुद्धी विधीयते समानेष्वपि वस्तुषु ॥

द्रव्यस्य विचिकित्सार्थं गुणदोषौ शुभाशुभौ ॥ ३ ॥

3. O sinless one, with a view to test¹ the fitness of things, purity and impurity, merit and defect, and conduciveness to well-being and its opposite are enjoined even with regard to things² of the same group, for the sake of piety,³ of practice,⁴ and of the maintenance⁵ of life respectively.

[1 *Test &c.*—so as to put a check on man's natural proneness to them.

2 *Things &c.*—viz., place, time, things, agent, Mantra and action, dealt with later.

3 *Piety &c.*—e.g. pure things conduce to piety (by which formal religion is meant), and impure things to its opposite.

4 *Practice &c.*—In the absence of specific declarations, what great personages do is also right, and the reverse is wrong.

5 *Maintenance &c.*—One may have just as much of even a questionable thing as will save one's life, but no more.]

धर्मार्थं व्यवहारार्थं यात्रार्थमिति चानघ ॥

दर्शितोऽयं मयाऽऽचारो धर्ममुद्धृतां धुरम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. For those¹ to whom piety is but a burden, I² have laid down the above rule of conduct.

[1 *Those &c.*—i.e. grossly selfish people.

2 *I &c.*—As Manu and other law-givers.]

भूम्यम्बग्न्यनिलाकाशा भूतानां पञ्च धातवः ॥

आब्रह्मस्थावरादीनां शरीरा आत्मसंयुताः ॥ ५ ॥

5. Earth, water, fire, air and ether are the five com-

mon factors of the bodies of all beings from Brahmâ down to a tree, etc., and they are equally connected with a soul.¹

[1 Soul—so from both standpoints they are alike.]

वेदेन नामरूपाणि विषमाणि समेष्वपि ॥

धातुषूद्धव कल्प्यन्त एतेषां स्वार्थसिद्धये ॥ ६ ॥

6. O Uddhava, though their bodies are thus similar, yet for their¹ own good the Vedas have fashioned diverse names and forms for them.

[1 Their &c.—in order that they may attain the end of their life by regulating their propensities.]

देशकालादिभावानां वस्तूनां मम सप्तम ॥

गुणदोषौ विधीयेते नियमार्थं हि कर्मणाम् ॥ ७ ॥

7. O foremost among good people, with a view to circumscribe work I enjoin merits and defects regarding things in accordance with the exigencies of place,¹ time, etc.

[1 Place &c.—See note 2 on verse 3.]

अकृष्णसारो देशानामब्रह्मण्योऽशुचिर्भवेत् ॥

कृष्णसारोऽप्यसौवीरकीकटासंस्कृतेरिणम् ॥ ८ ॥

8. Of lands those that are devoid of spotted antelopes and where, in particular, devotion to Brahmanas is absent, should be considered as impure. And even if they are rich in antelopes, tracts designated as *Kikata*¹ and those that are not swept, or are barren, should be held as impure, unless² there be worthy people in them.

[The purity or impurity of the six items is set forth in verses 8—15, as helping piety.]

¹ *Kikata*—Probably Behar, the lower part of East Bengal and the northern portion of the Madras Presidency.

² *Unless &c.*—This in any case is the chief determining factor.]

कर्मण्यो गुणवान्कालो द्रव्यतः स्वत एव वा ॥

यतो निवर्तते कर्म स दोषोऽकर्मकः स्मृतः ॥ ९ ॥

9. That time is efficacious which owing to the abundance of requisite materials, or through inherent properties

of its own, is conducive to any particular work ; while that in which work stops¹ or is prohibited² is considered unfit.

[1 *Stops*—owing to the scarcity of materials, or for political unrest, etc.

2 *Prohibited*—by the scriptures. For example, those attending child-birth or death in the family.]

द्रव्यस्य शुद्धाशुद्धी च द्रव्येण वचनेन च ॥

संस्कारेणाथ कालेन महत्त्वल्पतयाऽथवा ॥ १० ॥

शक्त्वाशक्त्वाऽथवा बुद्ध्या समृद्ध्या च यदात्मने ॥

अधं कुर्वन्ति हि यथा देशावस्थानुसारतः ॥ ११ ॥

10—11. The purity or impurity of a thing is determined by other things,¹ by the verdict of competent persons, by specific acts, by durations of time,² by its greatness³ or smallness, by strength⁴ or infirmity, by knowledge,⁵ and by affluence⁶ or otherwise. They bring demerit on a person according to place and circumstances.

[The purity or impurity of 'things' (the third item) is described in verses 10—13.

1 *Things*—coming in contact with it.

2 *Time*—e.g. rain-water collected in a tank is considered pure after the lapse of ten days. Food, on the contrary, loses its value on being stale.

3 *Greatness &c.*—e.g. a jar of water is easily defiled, but not a tank.

4 *Strength &c.*—Infirm people are generally made certain allowances over the able-bodied ones.

5 *Knowledge*—e.g. if a man comes to know of the birth of his son within ten days, he comes under the usual ban of uncleanness, but not after that period.

6 *Affluence &c.*—e.g. wearing tattered clothes will be wrong for a rich man but not for a poor man.

7 *According &c.*—i.e. under normal conditions. In exceptional circumstances the strictures should be relaxed.]

धान्यदार्वास्थितन्तूनां रसतैजसचर्मणाम् ॥

कालवाय्वग्निमृत्तोयैः पार्थिवानां युतायुतैः ॥ १२ ॥

12. The purity of corn, wood, bone,¹ textiles, liquids, metallic wares, skins and earthen things² is effected, as

the case may be, by time, air, fire, earth and water, either singly or in combination.

[1 *Bone*—such as ivory.

2 *Earthen things*—including unmetalled roads, mud, etc.]

अमेध्यलिप्तं यद्येन गन्धं लेपं व्यपोहति ॥

भजते प्रकृतिं तस्य तच्छौचं तावदिष्यते ॥ १३ ॥

13. That through which a thing coated with some impure stuff gives up its foreign smell and coating and returns to its natural state, is considered a purifying agency for that thing, and should be made use of till the desired result is produced.

[1 *That &c.*—Different means should be adopted according as it is made of wood, or metal, or cloth, etc.]

स्नानदानतपोऽवस्थावीर्यसंस्कारकर्मभिः ॥

मत्स्मृत्वा चात्मनः शौचं शुद्धः कर्माचरेद्द्विजः ॥ १४ ॥

14. Ablution, charity, austerities, ceremonies¹ and observances² performed according to stages of life and strength, and remembrance of Me, serve to purify a person. Thus purified, a twice-born³ should perform religious acts.

[The means of purification for the agent are being described.

1 *Ceremonies*—such as the investiture with the holy thread.

2 *Observances*—such as evening prayers and meditation.

3 *Twice-born*—explained by Sridhara and other commentators as including the Sudra also.]

मन्त्रस्य च परिज्ञानं कर्मशुद्धिर्मदर्पणम् ॥

धर्मः संपद्यते षड्भिरधर्मस्तु विपर्ययः ॥ १५ ॥

15. The purity of a Mantra consists in its being duly understood¹; that of work in being offered unto Me. The purity of the above six factors leads to piety, and the reverse of it to impiety.

[1 *Understood*—from a qualified teacher.]

(To be continued.)

REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

RAMBLES IN VEDANTA.—By Rajam Aiyar. Published by S. Ganesan from Triplicane, Madras. Pp. 888. Price, Rs. 5/-.

This nicely got-up volume of about nine hundred pages is a new reprint of the contributions to the *Prabuddha Bharata* by its late gifted editor in the years 1896-1898. As the title itself shows, the book proposes to give in a popular, scientific method some idea about the philosophy and religion of Vedanta.

No logic-chopping or parade of intellectual gymnastic is there. The abstract theories that often appear to an ordinary intellect dry and stale, have been cleverly sauced with concrete illustrations, and there is a continuous supply of fables and anecdotes as well as actual incidents from the lives of saints and sages. As one goes through the pages of this volume, one finds that it is full of humorous touches as well as deep learning and study. We assure our readers that if they begin reading it, they will not be able to stop till they come to the end. The style of the writer is excellent, at once graphic, simple and forcible.

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION (TAMIL).—Copies can be had of Mr. K. Navoratnam, Sirampiadu Road, Jaffna, Ceylon. Price, Rs. 2/-.

This is a Tamil translation of the original book published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas. The printing is good, but the price is much too high.

THE STORY OF SWAMI RAMA TIRATH.—By Puran Singh. Published by Messrs. Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 291. Price Rs. 3.

The story of the life-incidents of a saint is ever the source of unflinching inspiration to ordinary mortals who struggle to live the life of the spirit. It is specially true

in a place like India where religion forms the guiding force of individual and collective aspirations. In India men and women, whether young or old, idolise saints and shower over them their sincerest feelings of love and devotion. They turn to the life of a saint for help and guidance, and they find strength and peace which they seek.

Swami Rama Tirath was such a saintly character who now is being venerated as the poet-monk of the Punjab. He was a man whose one occupation in life was to attain the Supreme Bliss and share it with others. An apostle of Vedanta, he tried to live the highest spiritual ideal and realise the God-head, the Unity in variety. But unlike so-called Vedantists who talk of the unreality of the world and are unfeeling, dry intellectualists, he had a heart that was full of love and sympathy. Another peculiar feature that marked him out from ordinary Sadhus was his genuine patriotism. The political and economic salvation of the motherland was a theme that was dearest to his heart and, like the great Swami Vivekananda, he served the country as best as he could.

The volume before us records the impressions of a disciple regarding this great man, and we have no doubt that it will be welcome by all who love and admire the saint. The portraits and the collection of the letters of the Swami have made the book attractive.

THE TWENTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MAYAVATI CHARITABLE DISPENSARY.

In December, 1924, the Mayavati Charitable Dispensary completed its twenty-first year, and we have much pleasure in submitting a brief report of its activities during the period for the information of the public.

The Dispensary treated 55 indoor patients and 2,478 outdoor patients, making a total of 2,533, comprising men, women and children of different denominations. The range of diseases treated was varied. We omit details as superfluous.

Thanks to the generosity of some kind-hearted friends and sympathisers who contributed their quota through Swami Nikhilananda, the Dispensary has been able to tide over its extreme financial difficulty. Notable among these helpers are Their Highnesses the Thakore Sahebs of Limbdi and Morvi (who have promised recurring annual donations), and Seth Purushottamdas Kinariwalla of Ahmedabad. A complete list of acknowledgments has already appeared in these pages. Dr. P. Venkatarangam of Bangalore kindly presented the Dispensary with allopathic medicines and dressing materials worth several hundred rupees. We are deeply grateful to all these kind benefactors of the Dispensary.

The following is a summary of accounts for the year 1924:—

RECEIPTS.

	Rs.	A.	P.
By subscriptions and donations ...	3,639	10	0

EXPENDITURE.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Previous year's deficit ...	434	13	2
Doctor's maintenance ...	240	0	0
Medicines, allopathic and homœopathic, with freight ...	378	11	9
Expenses for collection of donations	120	0	0
	<hr/>		
	1,173	8	11
Balance in hand ...	2,466	1	1
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It is sincerely hoped that the Dispensary will always receive the support of the generous public, so as to be placed early on a secure foundation. Contributions may kindly be sent to the following address.

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

NEWS AND NOTES.

DESHABANDHU DAS.

By the inscrutable laws of Providence, Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das was prematurely taken away from the scene of his earthly activities. The news was so sudden and unexpected that for a time it was hardly possible to realise that the great son of Bengal had really passed away. When the heart is full words fail. The sense of sorrow and grief has so overwhelmed the country that just at the moment it cannot realise what his death really means. Fate has, indeed, been very cruel to the country in snatching away the man who was one of its main supports, on whom it built its future hope. Specially at a time when India is passing through a great crisis, all eyes were confidently looking up to Deshabandhu to pilot the bark of the nation safely through all dangers and difficulties. But all on a sudden this untoward event happened to the great misfortune of the country.

The details of the life of Chittaranjan are too well-known to need any recapitulation here. His was a magnetic personality combining qualities that might be called rare in this world. The magnanimity of his soul, manifesting itself in a fervid patriotism, unbounded generosity, overflowing love of the poor and a keen sense of justice and fair play, deserves special mention. His heroic sacrifice for the sake of the country is a glowing tribute to his memory. It will remain fresh in the imagination of his countrymen and inspire them to higher and nobler ideals of life.

Renunciation is the crucial test of all greatness in man, and judged by this standard, not many have risen to the level of Deshabandhu's eminence. For his beliefs and convictions nothing was too costly for him. No amount of suffering, not even death, could force him to forsake the path of duty and truth. He was literally a poor man's friend. In his charity and benevolence he was most unostentatious. It may be truly said of him that his right hand did not know what his left hand gave.


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He was a versatile genius. His forensic skill, his literary and poetic talent and his statesmanship were all of a high order, any one of which would have made his name worthy of being cherished by the posterity. Though brought up in luxury and imbued with the Western culture, it may not be known to many that he had rare piety and devotion.

In him his relatives have lost one who was nearest and dearest to them, his friends a warm and genial companion, his followers an inspiring leader, his colleagues a cheerful comrade and a resourceful ally, the poor a ready and helping hand and India one of her most valuable sons. May his soul rest in peace!

### THE COW PROTECTION.

The hearts of all those interested in the protection of the cow and the improvement of the breed should feel considerably cheered and filled with new hope from the fact that Mahatma Gandhi has shouldered the responsibility of conducting the All-India Cow Protection Organisation recently inaugurated at Bombay. The provisional committee, we are told, have undertaken to enlist over 200 members before the end of July. With a view, perhaps, to make it possible even for the poorest to become members, it has been settled that the subscription, which is Rs. 5 per year, may be paid in cash, or in the form of 2000 yards of hand-spun yarn per month.

In spite of the fact that for the majority of the people of this country, viz. the Hindus, the cow is an object of worship, "the cattle of India are miserable-looking, ill-treated, underfed, over-burdened, deteriorating and are even said to be a burden on the land. Nowhere else on earth are milch cattle led to the slaughterhouse, because they go dry long before they should. Nowhere else perhaps do cattle give less milk than they cost to feed and keep."

Although we believe that a spiritual outlook would help people to discharge more faithfully even their daily duties of life, the cause of cow protection should be

advocated on purely business, economic and national considerations. For the importation of passion, sentiment and religious prejudice into this question is likely to widen the breach between the Hindus and Muslims.

Until and unless every Indian could be convinced that it is more profitable to improve the breed of his cattle, and to feed, house and treat them well, instead of neglecting them or sending them to the slaughterhouse, mere appeal to the religious sentiment of the Hindus will not be productive of much good. Medical men have calculated that every individual for the replenishment of the body's waste needs  $1\frac{1}{4}$  seers of milk per day, and according to the 'Welfare' the people of Bengal scarcely get half a chhatak of milk a day. The low vitality of the people, the high rate of 'infant mortality' and the large rise in the number of wasting diseases etc. should in part at least be attributed to the deterioration of cattle in India. The intimate connection of the efficiency of cattle with the success of agriculture is too obvious to need any elaborate argumentation.

Let those who have reverence for the cow as a sacred animal, serve it as they ought to, consistently with their faith. But, for our own part, we would place before every Indian, whatever be his caste or creed, the imperative necessity of improving his cattle if he desires health, vitality and happiness for himself and his offspring.

### THE BEGGAR PROBLEM.

India is the proverbial land of charity, and consequently the problem of pauperism and beggary, in the forms in which one meets with it in Western countries, is practically non-existent here. But with the rise and growth of overcrowded cities, the introduction of huge machines and the multiplication of mills and factories, the growing keenness of the struggle for existence, the depopulation of villages, the rise in prices and scarcity of foodstuffs and other similar conditions and features of modern life, we are now seriously faced with a growing menace of beggars, professional and otherwise. Already



in the provinces of Bombay and Madras, it has been found necessary to appoint committees to formulate proposals for the prevention of the beggar nuisance.

The first question that must be solved before any satisfactory solution can be arrived at is how far and under what condition is beggary sanctioned and approved by the various religions. According to the Committee recently appointed by the Corporation of Madras, although begging is permissible in the case of those Hindus who really renounce the world, the present methods of most of the beggars, which amount to a nuisance, are thoroughly unjustifiable. It is also pointed out that most of the beggars who assume a religious garb do so without any qualification and are also not under the control of any religious heads. The Hindu scriptures, no doubt, disapprove of indiscriminate charity, but popular sentiment rarely, if ever, discriminates. Regarding Islam, there is a difference of opinion, but there seems to be a preponderance against professional begging. The Committee is of opinion that any system of licensing religious mendicants, and State interference with private charity in places of public worship, bathing ghats, and in private houses is undesirable. Regarding able-bodied beggars, they suggest the establishment of a beggar colony or settlement, as to the infirm, special provisions for their treatment, and lastly regarding the juveniles, protection and training in a home of children.

In the great majority of cases, owing to numerous difficulties in earning an honest livelihood, begging offers an easy and ready-made solution, and popular feeling based upon mistaken notions of charity and religion, lends practical encouragement. Every one will readily admit that the most serious aspect of begging is not so much the waste of labour and energy as in the case of the able-bodied and juveniles, but the moral degradation and dwarfing of the human personality which begging engenders. We are, no doubt, aware that so long as any form of indiscriminate charity persists, it is bound to breed some kind of fraud and cheating, even

in the name of religion. But to suggest, as some advanced reformers do, that private homes and places of religious worship etc., should form no exception to prohibited areas of begging seems to us to go too far, and it would, under the existing conditions of society, even amount to an unwarranted interference with the rights of private individuals. Another fact to be remembered in this connection is that there does exist a class of genuine Sadhus, however much opinion might differ regarding their number and percentage. So long as a satisfactory test has not been devised to sift the real from the false Sadhus, a wholesale abolition of all forms of begging would mean an unjustifiable encroachment upon the rights and privileges of the most revered and useful institution of Sannyasins, monks, nuns, faquirs etc. With all their faults, this class of mendicants has been and is rendering much free service, and society cannot afford to be deprived of the services of this class, whose possibilities are unlimited.

#### THE BIRTHDAY ANNIVERSARY OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE HINDU TEMPLE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, U. S. A.

The ninetieth birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on the 1st of March at the Temple with usual fervour and devotion. The life-size portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was decorated with evergreens and flowers. A special alter was erected for the occasion.

The morning service was conducted by Swami Prakashananda. It opened with a harmony of Sanskrit chants led by the Swami and followed by others. Then the Swami gave benediction and recited a soul-stirring song translated from Bengali, after which he delivered an illuminating discourse on Sri Ramakrishna.

The evening service was conducted by Swami Prabhavananda. After a chant and a song, the Swami spoke at length on 'Sri Ramakrishna—the Fulfilment of the Age' and thrilled the audience by his lecture.

Those who attended the celebration were much interested to hear about the life of the great Master.