

Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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Notwithstanding all this, a voice of warning for India against the great political temptation rose about a decade and half ago,—the voice of an inspired messenger from On High, who closed his career of world-wide activity almost with that of the nineteenth century with its triumphant apotheosis of political nationalism. That undying voice of Swami Vivekananda lives as an inspiration for all futurity and the warning still rings clear. When it was first uttered after the Swamiji's first return from the West, the Western wine of political aspirations was just coursing through the blood of educated India, and they slid down too soon, from visions of spiritual glory for their country which the inspired eloquence of the speaker conjured up, into the sphere of political ambitions that lay closer to their choice. But in this there was no occasion for losing heart, for wine must have its action, only let it not be the drunkard's dose, but the patient's. Before this, the heart of the Indian people had been falling fast into the fatal sleep of *tamas* and a new spirit of activity was required to be infused into it at any cost. So it was a kind Providence that brought down over it the rude shock of conflicting Western ideals, and from the confusion of conflict and the tumult of self-adaptation, the keynote of a new awakening was heard in the revived sentiment for collective interests and collective life, that welled up in the bosom of educated men with the promise of a long lease of new life for India. It was of the highest moment then that that sentiment after this its new birth should live to grow and deepen, and a comparatively less value attached at that stage to the question of a proper direction. So this sentiment, cut off from all those forces that gave it direction and scope in the historic past but now lay dormant, had to depend for nourishment and support solely on a common political outlook and a common imported culture which the British rule brought with it, and naturally caught the contagion of that political impulse which runs rampant in the West. The political spirit is fraught with the excitement of conflicting rights and is therefore fraught

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Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Uba. I. iii. 14.

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the 'Goats' reached.

-SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOL. XXXII.]

JANUARY, 1927.

[No. 1.

TALKS WITH SWAMI TURIYANANDA, AT BENARES

11th February, 1921

It was the day following the anniversary festival of Swami Brahmanandaji's birthday. The Swami said in reference to J— : "He came to see me sometime ago. He is a staunch believer in *purushakara*—free-will and free agency. I put the other side, that of destiny, before him. I said, 'We have seen both these aspects, and therefore look upon the Divine will as the stronger factor. You perhaps have not seen failure in life. That is why you are so emphatic about free-will.' But he frankly and naively upheld his thesis. He had come to congratulate us on our works of service. When I said that they were possible through the gracious will of God, he replied, 'No, not through God's will, but through your own efforts.' He remarked that Sadhus have brought ruin on the country by their preaching of Vairagya. But he is a fine man and I like him."

12th February, 1921

The talk this morning turned on N— whom the Swami praised very highly. Referring to Y—, he said: “He wants to put by some money before retiring from the world. The idea of begging one’s food frightens him. But then his won’t be true renunciation. ‘Wander about living on alms.’ Begging is holy, it teaches reliance on God. And one comes to feel that all places are His and that one gets only when He gives. One cannot otherwise get rid of fear and reliance on men.”

The Swami spoke of D—, how he used to be troubled by a detective. He and the detective were once seated before the Swami, when the Swami said, “Why do you allow him to enter your house? Can you not kick him out?” These words gave D— courage and he feared no more.

“Some are alarmed,” the Swami remarked, “at the idea of sharing their things with others. There was a Sadhu who used to live in a forest. To him once came a king seeking God, having renounced his kingdom. The Sadhu became alarmed at this prospective partner of his daily bread. So he said to the king, “You must give up all company. Go deeper into the forest where it is perfect solitude.’ The king took the words in an earnest spirit and left him and retired into the deep forest. In a short while there came a man bearing food for two persons, out of which he gave his usual portion of bread to the Sadhu. The Sadhu found that the man had reserved a gold dish laden with delicacies and asked him whom it was meant for. ‘It is for him,’ he replied, ‘who has been a king.’ The Sadhu flared up,—‘What! mere bread for me who am so old a Sadhu and all these delicacies for a novice!’ The man said, ‘I do not know all these. But he who sent me had said that if you are not satisfied with the bread, you may take to the scythe.’ The Sadhu had been, before he renounced, a grass-cutter. The idea was that if he and the king did not feel content with their present life, they might go back to their old occupations, the Sadhu to grass-mowing and the king to his kingdom. Why then should not the king be carefully served?”

“This is a fine story, profoundly significant.

“It was in the first days of the Shanti Ashrama. The railway station nearest to the Ashrama was fifty miles off, and the nearest neighbour, a postmaster, five miles. Water had to

be carried up in barrels from a place three miles distant. When I observed these conditions I felt extremely dejected. How, I thought, could about fifteen people live in a place like this? Anxious thoughts filled my mind in the morning. At night I had a kind of vision in which I saw a mother-bird feeding her young as described in the *Chandi*, and I was given to understand that the Mother had pre-arranged everything. Next day came a friend of one of the party, who was a water-diviner.

“In the meantime I had a good rebuke from a lady member for my anxiety, who said that I had less understanding than even ‘Baby’ inasmuch as I had no faith in the Mother. ‘Baby’ was the name given by Swamiji to a very devout girl. The rebuke seemed to me to have come from Mother Herself. It so happened that the water-diviner returned after two hours’ stroll in the Ashrama grounds and reported that there were as many as three sources of water there. The nearest source was chosen, and he dug a little and discovered a fine spring of water. And thus everything was gradually all right in the Shanti Ashrama.

“It is He who is doing everything. Only the One exists, none else. It is extremely difficult to see ‘the Atman in all things and all things in the Atman,’ and ‘God as existing equally in all beings.’ We talk glibly about it and preach it to others. But how very hard to practise it! Everything is within us. Joy and sorrow have no objective existence. We project joy from within us and associate it with certain things....

“The Jnani speaks and thinks of the ‘I’ as identical with the Atman. We identify it with the body. To perceive the Divine in one’s consciousness is nothing but merging the ego in the Atman. ‘As pure water poured into pure water, becomes the same, so becomes the self of the sage, O Gautama, who knows the unity of the Atman.’ ”

NORTHWARD HO !

BY THE EDITOR

On the threshold of the new year, to our readers and sympathisers, greetings! *Prabuddha Bharata* also enters now the thirty-second year of its life. How we would like to feel that its life has not been in vain! It was about twenty-eight years ago that Swami Vivekananda brought it from Madras to this Ashrama in the heart of the Himalayas, and blessed it saying :

“The world in need waits, O Truth!
No death for thee!
Resume thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever
Forward! Speak thy stirring words.”

Our great Leader's behests have ever been before our mind's eye as we have worked from year to year. Yet perhaps we have failed to rise to the noble heights whereon the Swamiji placed our ideal. Maybe we have sometimes faltered and have lacked that “untiring strength which is Infinite Love.” For, though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. But amidst all these the Swami's great blessings have been our unfailing inspiration. And often perchance we have brought light into darkness, filled the desolation of despair with roseate hope and infused strength into flagging spirits. Of these our readers alone can tell. We are content with doing our best. We have tried to sound the unvoiced longings of our readers and responded to them in the light of wisdom that has been vouchsafed to us by the great seers, “the fathers of the race.” Our work has not been easy. It has been our fate to walk against the prevailing current of thought. The Western civilisation that the British occupation imported into India has been scarcely a blessing. It came at a time when the national consciousness

was tired after its gigantic labours at assimilating the Islamic culture. And it was so sudden in coming and so unfamiliar ! For years we lay dazed under the passing whirlwind. And it is only lately that the awakening has come with efforts at regaining the lost balance. That critical attitude and deep historical sense with which the vanquished should face the dominating culture, were sadly wanting and are even now rare. Ours has been a struggle against this obstinate apathy and ignorance.

But we do not despair. We have faith in the future. We *know* India cannot die, she has yet to fulfil great things in the life of humanity. And we shall be unsparing in voicing the truth for which India lives, the message of the spiritualisation of life. We shall tirelessly repeat our warnings to our West-infatuated countrymen till the true glory of India is revealed to their vision and the nation comes into its own.

We do not look upon our nation as an irreconcilable element in the scheme of humanity. We are the only people who are national and yet international. For, the ideals of our nation are the same as those of humanity, and by being truly national we become also truly international. And no nation can fall in a line with the larger movements of internationalism unless it makes its ideals purely spiritual. Anything less than that would be prejudicial to the realisation of the brotherhood of men which is the brightest dream of the age. Our plea to both our eastern and western readers has been the same : Be truly spiritual, wherein lies both individual and collective salvation. No greater message can we conceive of in this juncture of history than the call to the life and the truth of the Spirit. All our present complications are traceable ultimately to the neglect of our spiritual nature. We stand on the widest basis of spirituality, on which alone the diverse nations of the world can be made one. And surely ours cannot be the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

As we write these lines, the snows are falling, falling steadily around us in the midst of a preternatural silence. The hills have become all white and the plants are covered and overladen with the white flakes. There is not the slightest breath of wind, and the silence is so profoundly deep that we seem almost to hear the whispers of the gods, and to gaze on

the effulgent white form of the Great God Shiva in the innermost depths of meditation. We are no longer on the earth, we seem transported into the very heart of the Absolute! Wonderful these Himalayas, sublime and transcendent! How we wish our readers could be with us at this moment to drink deep of this supremely spiritual experience! For, verily the Himalayas are a symbol, a symbol of the secret essence of India! Where indeed is a place more sacred than these sacred mountains where the Lord of Eternity dwells for ever? "This is the land in which was born Parvati, the Mother of India. This is the holy land, where every ardent soul in India wants to come at the end of his life, and to close the last chapter of its mortal career. On the tops of its mountains, in the depths of its caves, or the banks of its rushing torrents, have been thought out the most wonderful thoughts, a little bit of which has drawn so much admiration even from foreigners and which has been pronounced by the most competent judges to be incomparable. This is the land where rishis lived and philosophy was born." Yea, every inch of these mountains is holy. The very air is surcharged with spirituality which even the most obtuse mind can tangibly feel. The attractions of the chequered plains seem insipid before the soul-enthraling beauties of this Abode of Shiva. What sojourner in these mountains has not felt the calming influence of their sublime grandeur? Even the most turbulent heart softens at their unseen touch and feels as it has nowhere felt the truth and reality of things spiritual.

It is impossible to describe adequately the variegated charms of these great mountains upon whose crests, "exultant, bold and free, is stamped the imprint of eternity." There is no end to their beauty by day or by night. One described these hills once as the very person of Shiva enwrapped in the beatific vision of the Eternal. So indeed one perceived them in a moment of transcendental vision. The premier poet of India called the Himalayas *devatatma*, "God-souled." Verily we seem, as we look on their sky-kissing crests rising tier after tier, calm and majestic, and breathe their cool and fragrant air, almost to sense God. The forests of pines and deodars; the seasons of flowers, with their feasts of rhododendrons, cosmos blossoms and roses; the infinite number of song-birds, one of which comes every summer to our Ashrama to remind us of

our wasted hours by reiterating in an unwearied song, *tumi kee kachcho goh*—"what are you doing" ; the placid view of fleecy clouds sleeping in the mornings among the blue mountains, sometimes shrouding the hills and defiles in grey mists and again falling in continuous torrents for hours, till innumerable cataracts flow in booming waters from every summit and the hills echo *Har Har Om, Har Har Om*; then the sudden coming of the autumn, which the Vedic rishis evidently dwelling in the Himalayas declared of yore to be the queen of seasons, for, verily then the sky is suddenly cleared of all clouds, the blue assumes its gladdest tint, the sun becomes golden, and all nature laughs in the serene content of leafy luxuriance, and flowers of variegated hues bloom in millions and the hill-sides look like the embroidered scarf of the queen of the year ; by and by the deepening of cold with the searing and falling of leaves and the hills appearing splashed all over with green, yellow, russet and red ; and at last the advent of the grim winter with its cutting blasts and freezing sleet, its hails and snow-falls subjecting the mountains to austere restraint and ascetic discipline ; and the return of the spring with its warming breath and song and flowers ;—all these and many more, who can ever do proper justice to their beauties ? They make one their willing captive and the throbbing heart is thrown under their magic spell. Yet the seen is but a fraction of the unseen, and the unseen can be felt only in the silence of the soul.

The long range of snows, spread before our window for a continuous three hundred miles, is a magic field of colours. Scarcely does the dawn peep through the dark upon our side of the mortal world when the snow-mountains flush light pink. And lo ! in a few moments the pointed crest of *Trisul*, white and burnished like a silver tabernacle, is shot with dazzling fire, and in a trice the whole range is flooded with gold. Then as the sun rises high, the snows grow whiter and whiter, looking the very emblem of Divine purity and majesty against the deep blue of the sky. By and by the day declines and the evening sun enwraps them with its golden rays and the golden mountains hang between heaven and earth like a mystic dream become real.

Yea, this golden vision is not of this earth. It is the symbol of the Divine in His serene and playful moods. To

the ancient seers as they looked on it, and to those who have heard the call of the Eternal, it is the vision of Shiva eternally united with His Divine Consort, Parvati. The austere and pure white—this is Shiva, and the golden flush that animates it is Parvati Herself. And our soul kneels in adoration before the beatific revelation of our Eternal Father and Eternal Mother, and we sing with the great Sankara :

“O Mother, thou grantest refuge to thy hapless sons, O Father, thou destroyest the universe with thy mad dance. O Mother, thou createst the joys of life, but thou, O Father, destroyest them with the burning gaze of thy wisdom-eye. O Shivâ, our salutations to thee, O Shiva, to thee our salutations !

“Thy person, O Mother, is of the hue of the golden *champak*, and thine, O Father, is camphor-white. Thy locks flow in profuse curls, O Mother, but thine, O Father, are matted. To thee our salutations, O Shivâ, O Shiva, to thee our salutations !

“Thy hair, O Mother, is black like the darkest cloud, thy body, O Father, is smeared with white ashes. O Shivâ, thou art the mother of the universe, and thou, O Shiva, art its father. To thee our salutations, to thee our salutations !

“O Mother, thou art the eternal companion of Shiva, and thou, O Father, art the eternal companion of Shivâ. O ye Inseparables, to ye our salutations, our salutations !”

And Swami Vivekananda placed *Prabuddha Bharata* in the cradle of these mountains and uttering solemn benedictions :

“Then start afresh

From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,
For working wonders new. The heavenly
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song ;
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.

And all above,

Himala's daughter Umâ, gentle, pure,
The Mother that resides in all as Power
And Life, who works all works, and
Makes of One the world, whose mercy
Opes the gate to Truth, and shows

NORTHWARD HO !

The One in All, give thee untiring
Strength, which is Infinite Love."

Those blessings have not been in vain. Yes, we have felt the Himalayas to be our unfailing inspiration. They have been before us as a perpetual reminder of the supreme ideals of India and of life, for the Himalayas are indeed the image and symbol of spiritual ideals. For, what are India's ideals? What is the keynote of the music of her life? The call of the Infinite, the quest of the Beyond, of the Spiritual as the only ideal—this has been the eternal burden of her song. To seek and realise God, that is the aim towards which she has directed all her efforts, individual and collective. No man or nation can strive after and have *all* things. One cannot serve both mammon and God at the same time, one must choose between them. And India made her choice once for all on some blessed day in the ancient past and installed God on the altar of her worship, and prepared herself to forego, if need be, the comforts and profits of earthly things in fealty to her Divine ideal. Not that therefore she denies earthly prosperity to *all* equally. In her scheme of life, realism and idealism have each their legitimate place. Her *Varnashrama Dharma* has conceived life as a travelling onward through the experiences of life to its final denial. For life's experiences have their ultimate value in revealing the futility of themselves and the glimpse of That which is beyond life. So India does not deny life in the ordinary sense. It rather enjoins everyone to strive and struggle and gain according as one's nature, *swabhava*, prompts, but always with the restraining consciousness of the ultimate ideal. Life is therefore, in the Indian conception, both *bhoga* and *tyaga*, but ultimately only *tyaga*. *Tena tyaktena bhunjithah*—"enjoy it through renunciation." This is the fundamental principle of the *Varnashrama dharma*. Human nature must express itself in action. To deny nature is to stunt it, not to annihilate it. It has been found to conform to four fundamental types, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, each of which has its characteristic tendencies and congenial activities. They must be allowed free scope to work out these tendencies in fit actions. But mere expression is not beneficial unless it is in the right direction. Therefore actions must be moulded by *samyama*, in reference to the ultimate ideal of spiritual self-

realisation, the realisation of the Divine. The whole life is therefore, consciously or unconsciously, a quest after the Divine realisation, and all experience and action must be subsumed under that ideal. The ideal must be maintained intact at all costs, even at the sacrifice of material interests. And so India has held to her ideal through weal and woe, through sunshine and storm. Hers has not been always an easy and smooth career. Great disasters have sought to strangle her life. Alien ideals have often sought to estrange her children from her. And she has seen her sons and daughters reduced to the worst straits because of their love for her and her ideals. But she has patiently endured all these till the sun has shone again and God has smiled and her sufferings have been rewarded by an abundant increase of her original strength. She has never faltered in her faith in her God-appointed ideal.

Not only in her own home has she consolidated her ideal, but she has also carried her message of spiritual self-realisation and the power, peace and joy thereof, to lands far beyond her borders; and almost the whole of Asia bears eloquent testimony to her loving ministrations to her less fortunate sisters. She sent out in every age legions of her children to preach the spiritual evaluation of life to peoples entangled in the meshes of lesser considerations. She preached the ideals of God-realisation, the spiritual integrity of man, peace, love, service, non-violence and renunciation as the only worthy ends to be pursued by mankind. And wherever her messengers went, life was made more ample and perfect by their instructions and example, nobler ideals prevailed and an unwonted sweetness and purity permeated thought and action. The outlook was changed not under the aggression of the new thought but as a fulfilment and expansion of the original outlook. "Her influence has always fallen upon the world like that of the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest flowers of the earth." For, to the bearers of her message, the message was not a verbal affair, but one of their own inmost experience. Behind their words and deeds were the living realisations of their teachers and themselves. They gave out of the fulness of their heart. Had they not seen their Masters giving themselves away for the love and service of others? Had they not found in the passion of that self-sacrifice the acme of spiritual

wisdom and the pinnacle of self-realisation? So that impelled them out of themselves to go far and wide and act likewise, to water barren soil with the blood of their heart. Their thought, word and action all proclaimed the vanity of earthly pursuits and the reality of the Spirit.

Nor is this all that she has done for her step-children. She has gone out to help them, but she has with still greater self-sacrifice, allowed the savage and the turbulent, the civilized and the semi-civilized, the trampled and the arrogant, of all colours and creeds, to enter her hospitable home that by living within her steadying and purifying spiritual precincts, they might be reborn into a better and more glorious life. What a long story of martyrdom has been hers from the dawn of history up to the present hour! They came in hordes, mad with the lust of blood and plunder, pillaged her temples and townships, laid smiling lands waste and wiped off all marks of culture and refinement. The mother of nations patiently bore these inflictions. And slowly her patient love bore fruit in the toning down of their savage nature. Lo! in a few generations, the turbulent are filled with the sweet wonder of a new life and revelation. They see glimpses of another world infinitely superior to their greediest dream. And to-day they, in the same line with India's ancient hosts, are wending their way along the path of life's pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Divine. Was the patience of our great mother due to weakness and lack of power to repel? Do we not see that the moment a strange race or culture enters her sacred precincts, she goes about, alert and wide-awake, preparing for effectively encountering the visitors? No, she does not order out a military general. She sends out a prophet, a spiritual marshal. She sleeps no nor is she weak. It is a blasphemy to think this way of our great mother. She has her own way of encountering the crises of history. Have we not seen how long before we even scented the danger of the impact of western civilisation and its disintegrating effect on our national culture and outlook, India brought forth in Sri Ramakrishna the leader and the general who would fight her battle to victory? If India were really weak, could she produce Sri Ramakrishna or Swami Vivekananda? Therefore let us not forget where our strength truly lies and seek for it in unaccustomed places. This is not our way. Our way is always open to us and no power in heaven or earth can

ever block it. Political depressions were necessary, for otherwise the foreign nations could not come to India's hermitage to learn their spiritual lessons. India stands for the Aryanisation, that is to say, spiritualisation of all people. Therefore all must come, east or west, north or south, to mingle among her children and realise the only true unity, the spiritual solidarity of mankind. Therefore India bows low from time to time to let the new hosts pass in. This is the inwardness of India's political subjection. This is not to her shame. Shame indeed, a great shame will it be, if her sons and daughters forget the one aim, the one purpose, of their life, its spiritualisation.

These sky-kissing white peaks of the snow-mountains tell us ever of the eternal goal of India. As they stand in their awful majesty and austere grandeur, they remind us of the unchanging and adamant nature of the motif of India's life, and our knees bend down in adoration. To look on them who stand like guardian angels overlooking India's plains, is to be perpetually filled with the intense truth of India's spiritual ideal. And as the rays of the sun enwrap them with their golden splendour, we seem to feel that India's life with all its varied activities and aspirations has ever behind it the stern reality of the spiritual life. The golden mist comes and passes anon, but the white majesty ever remains. So also life's experience with all its vicissitudes comes and goes, but India knows and declares that behind the passing show of life, lies the Real, the truth of the Spirit, whose realisation is the only end towards which all efforts must stretch themselves. This is the eternal warning of the Himalayas. And this is the message which the great Swami laid on us to declare :

“And tell the world—

Awake, arise, and dream no more!

This is the land of dreams, where Karma

Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,

Of flowers sweet or noxious,—and none

Has root or stem, being born in naught, which

The softest breath of Truth drives back to

Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face

The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,

Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,

Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.”

There is a tradition among the Hindu monks that they must ever travel northwards till they have lost themselves in the sacred silence of the Himalayas. Yes, our life is a journey northwards. From the plains and jungles of life's multiple experience to the calm snow-peaks of unitary consciousness, from worldliness to the world beyond—that is the one infinitely long journey along the chequered path of life and death, till we reach the Kailash of Self-realisation wherein dwells the Great God, Shiva Mahadeva, enshrined in the Silence of Eternal Peace and Blessedness! Om Shantih! Shantih!! Shantih!!!

THE IDEALS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE RAMKRISHNA MISSION.*

By PRINCIPAL KAMAKHYA NATH MITRA, M.A.

Rajendra College, Faridpur, Bengal

It is in obedience to the wishes of His Holiness, the Swami Shivananda Maharaj, the head of the Ramkrishna Math and Mission, that I venture to rise before you this afternoon to offer a few observations on the aims, ideals and activities of the Mission and at the same time to place before you a few suggestions for its expansion and improvement. I feel it a rare privilege to participate in the deliberations of this august assembly for a parallel to which we cannot think of anything less than the first Buddhist Council convened at Rajgriha in the remote past immediately after the *mahaparinirvana* of Lord Gautama of hallowed memory. The parallel cannot be to anything less than this, for it is my deliberate conviction that Ramkrishna and Vivekananda are the heralds of a new era in the history of mankind such as Lord Buddha was about two millenniums and a half ago. It is they who have revealed to me the Truth which I "searched with many sighs" and that I am proud to call myself a Hindu to-day is due entirely to their message and lives. They it is who have instilled a new spirit into the palsied

* Author's own slightly amplified English version of the Bengali address delivered by him at the public meeting of the first Convention of the Ramkrishna Math and Mission held at Belur on the 3rd April, 1926.—Ed. P. B.

heart of Hinduism—and I firmly believe that if the Hindu wants to rise again after centuries of torpor then he will have to stand under the banner unfurled by Ramkrishna and Vivekananda. The religion of the Hindu can be a living reality exactly in proportion to the inspiration he derives from their example. The centres of their creative energy are these Maths and this Mission. As long as these will remain healthy and strong, so long the Hindu will hold his head high, his life will vigorously grow, he will be in the vanguard of civilisation and confer untold benefits on mankind by distributing his spiritual wealth from one end of the world to the other, irrespective of caste, colour and creed. It is this duty that he discharged in the past. Earth-grabbing and exploitation never besmirched his name.

The signs are very hopeful indeed. Only thirty-two years have elapsed since the memorable session of the world's Parliament of Religions at Chicago ; yet already not only a few Vedanta Societies have been established in America but a veritable Hindu Temple at San Francisco is an accomplished fact. Here is the first missionary enterprise of the genuine Hindu outside India since the close of the era of Buddhist missions. A momentous event like this has not happened in the history of Hindustan in the course of about a millennium and a half. Hundreds of men and women in the western world have embraced with enthusiasm the doctrines of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda and after the passing away of the illustrious Swami his fellow-monks and disciples have been preaching the Religion Eternal in the West with a zeal which is the admiration of the world. This propaganda in foreign countries is what the Swami called his Foreign Policy. How inestimable is its international value is known to all acquainted with the reports and organs of the Ramkrishna Mission.

Such extensive and intensive propagation of a faith in a period so brief beats all record in history. No political power stands behind this missionary movement such as stood behind the spread of Buddhism and Christianity. It has never had to depend on any aid that is extraneous and adventitious. It stands firmly on its own feet and is great in its own glory. The secret of its expansion is its inherent strength. That tremendous spiritual force which, manifested in the previous avatars, revived India age after age whenever a danger was impending, manifested itself once more in Ramkrishna-Vivekananda to raise her

from a fall before which all her previous falls shrink into insignificance. The centre of this spiritual force is the Ramkrishna Math, the nursery and training-ground of learned Brahmacharins and Sannyasins of a character bold and intrepid—Brahmacharins and Sannyasins who through the grand organisation of the Ramkrishna Mission are foremost in the service of humanity. In its wider sense the Mission includes all the Maths and Ashrams with their propagandistic activities but in its narrower sense it means only those institutions, educational and philanthropic, so well known to the world. Though no hard-and-fast line of demarcation is drawn between the Maths and the Mission, yet the distinction just noted we had better bear in mind to be able to understand the relation between the Maths proper and the Mission as it is ordinarily understood. The soul of the Mission in its narrower sense is the Math and the soul of the country lies in the educational and philanthropic institutions of the Mission. The future of the country is quite assured as long as the ideals of the Maths and the institutions of the Mission remain unimpaired. This is the Domestic Policy of the great Swami Vivekananda. His Foreign Policy and Domestic Policy together constitute what the spiritual hero has designated his Plan of Campaign. It is for the worthy monks who have renounced all and dedicated their lives to the cause of their Master to discuss the internal affairs of the Maths and Ashrams. It will be my endeavour to discuss everything else in connection with the Ramkrishna Mission.

Though my proper subject is as stated above, yet I may be permitted to say this much about the Maths and Ashrams that these noble institutions are very efficiently conducted. Competent Sannyasins are skilfully trained here for preaching the message of their Master at home and abroad. The Brahmacharins and Sannyasins belonging to these Ashrams are very ably editing the excellent Bengali monthly, *Udbodhan* and the excellent English monthlies, *Prabuddha Bharata* and the *Vedanta Kesari*.* They are also editing the *Morning Star*, an English weekly and three more papers in three different Indian vernaculars, namely, the *Samanvaya* in Hindi, the *Prabuddha Keralam* in Malayalam and *Sri Ramakrishna Vijayam* in Tamil. Besides they have already created and are still creating a vast

* Another English monthly, *Voice of Truth*, has been recently started from our Kuala Lumpur, F. M. S. Centre.—Ed., P. B.

religious literature which to many is the solace of life and solace of death. Knowledge is assiduously cultivated in the Maths and Ashrams, the libraries attached to them are steadily expanding, and I have every reason to believe that these libraries will soon assume dimensions large enough to fully satisfy the intellectual needs of the monks and neophytes. Outside India four chief centres have been opened at New York, San Francisco, La Crescenta and Boston in America with several branches affiliated to them and one such Ashram has also been established at Kuala Lumpur in the Federated Malay States, another quarter of the globe. At Boston, † the Athens of America, is published the *Message of the East*, an ably conducted monthly periodical and it is the Boston Centre again that publishes many books and pamphlets on the Vedanta philosophy. The achievement of the Ashrams so far is very gratifying no doubt and cannot but fill every Hindu heart with pride and joy, but still a great deal more has to be done as otherwise the need of India and the world will not be fully satisfied.

From the propagandistic side of the Ramkrishna Mission I come now to its humanitarian activities which have proved such a blessing to the country. The Maths or the Ashrams are meant exclusively for the Brahmacharins and Sannyasins but this branch of the Mission is a department open to all. The chief function of the Sannyasins here is to co-operate with the laymen, to keep constantly before their eyes the true ethics of work—the lofty ideals of renunciation and service, to educate them in system and method and after taking the initiative to see that everything passes smoothly ; or, in other words, to put it in a nutshell, the aim of the Mission is to build up a nation of strong and selfless character through the discipline of true work. The humanitarian activities of the Mission are of two kinds. Under the first head comes the work of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and nursing the sick and under the second head that of imparting sound education on a religious and moral basis to the youths and maidens of the country and also affording regular help to the poor and deserving students. Under the first head again there are two sub-heads—permanent institutions and temporary

† Now at La Crescenta.—*Ed.*, P. B.

measures. Of the permanent institutions, the admirable *Sevashram* at Benares deserves special mention. Temporary relief centres are opened in times of unforeseen calamities and they are closed when these calamities are over. The thoroughness and zeal with which the Ramkrishna Mission relieves the distress of people afflicted by famine, plague, flood and cyclone at different times in different parts of India are well known to all readers of newspapers. It may be said without the least fear of contradiction that before the establishment of the Ramkrishna Mission noble work like this had never been undertaken on such a scale by any man or body of men in the British and Muhammadan periods of Indian history. It is just as it should be. From whom else to expect service so arduous and loving unless it be from the children of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda? It is a very happy augury no doubt that other philanthropic organisations have been recently formed by other bodies of men inspired by the example of the Ramkrishna Mission.

The second humanitarian work of the Ramkrishna Mission is educational. The educational methods and ideals of the Mission differ widely from those obtaining in the ordinary schools of the land. Secular knowledge is imparted in intimate relation to religious and moral culture. The students live in constant touch with their *gurus* who are all men of noble character. The lessons of the books are made living and special attention is paid to physical culture combined with practical training in agriculture, arts and industries so that the students may be self-supporting and self-reliant after the course at school is finished. There are orphanages and boarding-houses for boys without means. There are night schools and free schools for the depressed classes and working men. There is again an important Students' Home at Calcutta. The largest educational institution of the Mission has been established at Madras at a cost of several lakhs of rupees. The Vidya-pith at Deoghar also deserves special mention. The number of schools for boys and young men maintained by the Ramkrishna Mission is twelve in number.

Of Girls' Schools there are only three—the main institution at Calcutta established by the late, lamented Sister Nivedita, with two branches, one at Bally and the other at Comilla. These schools are specially suited to the requirements of Hindu

girls who are trained in the Hindu ideals of womanhood and who are taught Sanskrit and English with their vernacular. Many more such girls' schools have yet to be founded to remove the serious want of the Hindu community. Swami Vivekananda was keenly alive to this necessity, for he felt within his heart of hearts that true national progress would never be possible without the education of Hindu women on the right lines and so it is for this purpose that he specially employed Sister Nivedita. The real obstacle to the higher education of women in our country is the early marriage of our girls. Their higher education will be possible only in proportion to the degree to which their marriageable age will be raised. It is a happy sign no doubt that their marriageable age is steadily rising. That all women are destined for marriage is an idea also that is gradually disappearing and it is most gratifying to note that a few highly-educated nuns have dedicated themselves entirely to the cause of the women of India. While on the subject of the education of girls, I should be failing in my duty were I not to specially mention Sree Sarada Mandir, a noble institution where women-teachers are being trained.

The vision of a Hindu University like the famous ancient universities of Nalanda, Taxilla, Odantapuri and Vikramsila constantly floated before the eyes of Swami Vivekananda. It was his earnest desire to lay the foundation of such a university or failing that, a college after his own ideal. I had occasion to go to Kashmir and stay there for some time a few years ago. While there I was credibly informed that Swamiji had made a serious attempt to establish such a college at Srinagar. His Highness the Maharaja was quite willing to grant him land for the purpose but unfortunately through certain adverse circumstances I need not detail here the scheme fell through. Be that as it may, it is the duty of the country to see that such a college is soon established at a suitable place. It is very expensive no doubt but nothing is denied to a dogged pertinacity. Such a college would be the best vehicle for the propagation of the ideas of Vivekananda. It is a pity the Swami passed away in the very prime of life. Had he lived a few years more he could have done so many things that they are beyond the utmost stretch of our imagination. But no useful purpose is served by regretting and imagining. It is the

bounden duty of all his children to see that his unfinished work is pushed forward as far as possible.

(To be continued)

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BENEDETTO CROCE.*

By KALYAN CHANDRA GUPTA, M.A.

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Benedetto Croce stands in the forefront of modern Italian Philosophy. It is mainly owing to the interest which his doctrines created that Italian Philosophy has attracted the attention of thinkers outside Italy. He was born in 1866. Unlike most philosophers he has never held a professional appointment in any university. He has sufficient wealth and leisure to enable him to devote his life to literary and philosophical pursuits. Thus his philosophy is singularly free from narrow academic bias and has a freshness and novelty of its own.

Before studying the details of his philosophical system it is essentially necessary to understand what Croce means by Philosophy and what he takes to be its proper subject-matter.

Ordinary common-sense looks upon all objects as existing outside and independently of the persons who know them from time to time. That objects are known does not make any difference to them. All the qualities which we perceive in a thing belong to the thing itself and would remain unchanged even if nobody perceives them. It is true that the same thing may appear differently to different persons at the same time and also to the same person at different times. But this variability in the appearances of an object is thought to be quite consistent with its possessing a set of permanent qualities which do not change with the change of the percipient. Physical sciences,

* Benedetto Croce enjoys a great reputation in the philosophical world of the West. The West is trying to build up a philosophy which will be all-comprehensive and include all facts of life and reality. Croce's philosophy is one of the many attempts towards its realisation, and though it militates against many of the Vedantic ideas it is interesting and instructive as partially expressive of the present philosophical struggles of the West.—*Ed., P. B.*

however, make a distinction between the essential and non-essential attributes of things. The former are those which are inherent in things and would be there even if nobody ever had any knowledge of them, while the latter are those which things seem to acquire when they come into contact with the sense-organs of percipient beings. The world, as it really is, must be, according to these physical sciences, a collection of innumerable particles of matter devoid of all sensible qualities. The world as it is experienced in sense perception is not the ultimate reality inasmuch as it is distorted to a large extent by the peculiarities of our organisms, our dispositions, wishes and expectations. To know the real nature of the world it is necessary to get at something whose character is quite independent of the experiences of particular individuals. This alone really and ultimately exists. Everything else is reducible to it and can be explained by it. The presence or absence of percipient subjects makes no difference to it. It is the task of physical sciences to study the nature of this reality quite apart from what particular individuals experience it to be.

Philosophy studies the nature of Reality as a whole. The different physical sciences also study Reality but there is a great difference between the methods adopted by them and Philosophy. Reality for us is what it is experienced as. We can deal with Reality only in so far as it forms part of our experience. What the different sciences do is that they leave out the experiencing subjects and attempt to depict Reality as it is in itself, that is, apart from minds and their activities. Philosophy, on the other hand, has to keep in view the study of Reality as a whole and cannot ignore the experiencing subjects without mutilating Reality itself. Philosophy has to start from the fact that Reality is experience and then proceed to give an account of it.

Philosophy is, therefore, according to Croce, concrete, whereas sciences are abstract. Philosophy makes the living experience as a whole its subject-matter. If we dismember this living experience into two separate halves, mind on the one side and matter on the other, and investigate into each of them independently of the other and then bring the results of such investigations together that would not give us Philosophy in the true sense. Sciences deal with abstractions. The objects with which they have to do are abstracted from the whole of

experience and therefore they cannot give us a knowledge of Reality in all its fullness. They may have great practical utility but their method of investigation is wholly inappropriate to a correct understanding of the ultimate nature of Reality as a whole.

Philosophy is, for Croce, synonymous with Philosophy of mind. This may seem at first quite strange to us who are accustomed to find so many different things in the universe besides mind. Croce, however, does not regard mind as an entity existing side by side with other entities which stand over against it but as comprehending all Reality. Reality is mind, what is not mind cannot have any reality. Ordinarily we consider the object of knowledge as something that acts on the mind from without and which the mind has simply to accept as a given fact. Croce denies the reality of the so-called brute fact which the mind passively receives from without. If we analyse a piece of concrete experience we shall find that if we abstract from it all forms which are supplied by the mind nothing is left. The study of Reality is the study of experience and therefore of mind.

Here we must guard ourselves against one misconception. We must not understand by the term "Philosophy of Mind" what is known as Psychology. Psychology as an empirical science studies the states and activities of mind and tries to find out the laws which govern them. But in such investigations we treat mind as one of the many objects which constitute the universe. The phenomena of mind are studied in abstraction from the universe as a whole. Empirical Psychology is thus on a par with other positive and exact sciences which investigate only different parts of Reality. Philosophy of Mind, again, is not equivalent to what is sometimes called Rational Psychology. Rational Psychology investigates into the nature, constitution and origin of the human soul as a substantial entity separate from the phenomena of mind. According to Croce such a soul-substance is a mere abstraction, a concept of the mind and therefore an investigation into its nature or origin cannot take the place of Philosophy. Philosophy of mind, therefore, is the investigation of the nature of all Reality, that is, Philosophy in the true sense of the term.

Mind is ever active, its essence is activity. Knowledge is not generated out of the impact of two heterogeneous sub-

stances, the soul-substance and the material substance. It is the mind's activity in which the mind creates its own object. Croce rejects that view of mind, which looks upon it as a static entity standing over against its acts or as a synthetic principle of unity which is changeless and timeless. Mind is self-creating and self-creative. It does not require any foreign substance as material for its experience. To study Reality is, therefore, to study the various activities of mind.

Philosophy, therefore, becomes equivalent to the study of the different fundamental activities of mind; and as mind is co-extensive with Reality its activities are the different forms which Reality assumes. The task of Philosophy is to classify these forms of Reality or activities of mind, to determine their relationship to each other, to grade them in their proper order and to show what part each of them plays in the whole of Reality which they constitute. Philosophy is, therefore, essentially a science of order and arrangement.

It may be asked at this stage whether Croce means by mind, the mind of the finite individual and identifies the whole of Reality with it. Does every man create his own world out of himself alone? Croce's answer to this question would be that every individual consciousness is the embodiment of and is continuous with a universal consciousness. The subject of philosophical enquiry is not the consciousness of the individual in so far as he is a mere individual but the universal consciousness which is in every individual. Every individual's experience contains elements which he shares in common with other individuals. These are the universal forms of thought. Then again, if we examine the activity of a particular mind at a particular moment we shall find that it cannot be understood fully if we take only that moment into account. Every moment in the life of the individual mind carries within it an illimitable past that gives it its present character. It is generally our habit to look upon the past, the present and the future as composed of discrete spans of time coming in succession. In the living life-history of every individual the present, the past and the future merge into each other and form a continuous process. Every individual mind is thus continuous with that universal Mind whose activity is identical with universal history.

This universal Mind, however, should not be identified

with a static, timeless Absolute. It is a Life that is ever changing, that is eternally creating itself anew. The whole of Reality is to be regarded as free development or as History. Philosophy which is the interpretation of the activity of mind is itself a continuation of the same activity. Hence Philosophy is identical with History.

According to Croce, mind has two principal forms of activity, the theoretical activity and the practical activity. The theoretical activity is the activity of knowing. It is ordinarily supposed that in knowing or perceiving we are wholly passive. The external world stamps impressions on our minds and we cannot but know these impressions. But such a view of knowledge is altogether rejected by Croce. Even when the mind simply knows, it is active, because it creates its own object. Each of these forms of activity has two sub-forms.

The sub-forms of the theoretic activity are intuition and conceptual thinking. Our experience is composed of two factors—particular images and universal concepts. The images are the raw material of our knowledge whereas the concepts supply the form. Kant thought that the material of our knowledge comes from without in the form of sense impressions. According to Croce, however, the mind supplies both the material and the form of experience—the particular images and the universal concepts.

The formation of images is the first form of mental activity. This primary activity is imagination or intuition, it gives us the simplest kind of knowledge. We have to apprehend the images of particular things before we can have a knowledge of the world as a connected system. All the higher activities of our thought presuppose this kind of knowledge. At the same time, however, we have to bear in mind that there is a difference in kind between this primary activity and the activity of thought.

Croce calls the first form of mental activity the æsthetic activity and, in doing so connects his theory of art with his theory of Reality. The image-forming activity which every mind exercises is, according to him, essentially the activity of the artist. We may at first fail to apprehend any similarity between the act of perceiving an object and that of writing a poem, composing a song or painting a picture. When we perceive an object such as a chair or a table, it seems to be presented to

us from without, it does not seem to be created or in any way acted on by ourselves. It may, of course, look beautiful or ugly but beauty and ugliness also seem to be features existing in objects and affecting us. Artists on the other hand produce beautiful objects which bear the stamp of their creative genius. In order to understand what Croce means when he identifies the primary activity of imagination with the æsthetic activity we must bear in mind his views on the nature of knowledge and also of beauty. Even in sense perception, Croce holds, we are not confronted by a foreign 'something' which is thrust on our consciousness from without. The object of consciousness is a creation of the mind, it is mental. It appears to be external to the mind and to possess an independence of its own only when the mind imposes certain abstract concepts on its own creation. Beauty is also a thing of the mind. It does not reside either in the physical object which is apprehended in sense perception or in poems, pictures or statues considered as things outside the mind. When we perceive an object to be beautiful its beauty is our own creation. Every man is, therefore, an artist in virtue of the mere fact that he has the faculty of imagination. To find an object to be beautiful one must have an intuition of it. An object regarded merely as an element of the mechanism of nature is not an æsthetic fact but is the subject-matter of abstract sciences. Nothing is beautiful or ugly in the eyes of science. An object is beautiful only in so far as the mind grasps its individuality in intuition without the help of logical categories. When a man perceives ordinary objects of sense he has to exercise this simplest kind of activity which is essentially identical with the activity of artists.

Is there then no difference between ordinary men and great poets and artists? So far as the essential artistic activity is concerned there is no difference. The only difference is that ordinary men cannot give adequate expressions to their pure intuitions. Beauty is, according to Croce, nothing but expression. An intuition or image which is adequately expressed is beautiful. Ugliness is simply the want of expression. By 'expression' in this connection Croce does not mean only such external forms of expression as language or pictures and statues. Any manifestation of the intuition is its expression and the expression may be wholly mental. The

æsthetic quality of an intuition depends upon its vigour, distinctness and vividness. It is, however, a mistake to think that we can have the intuitions of a great poet or artist but may not possess their powers of expression. The excellence of an intuition and the adequacy of its expression go together.

The second sub-form of the theoretical activity is the logical activity. Just as the æsthetic activity creates the images of particular things so the logical activity supplies the universal concepts without which our experience cannot become systematic. Conception presupposes imagination or intuition and thus belongs to the second grade of mental activity. Just as *Æsthetics* is the science of the pure intuition so *Logic* is the science of the pure concept. Croce distinguishes between the pure or true concept and what he calls the pseudo-concept. All the things belonging to a particular group may be called by a common name and that name is often called a concept. Examples of such class names are 'House,' 'Dog' etc. Such class-names are not true universals of thought, they merely indicate the individuals that compose the group. True concepts on the other hand must be really universal. No number of individuals can exhaust the import of a true concept. It transcends any and every single presentation that we are aware of. At the same time, however, there can be no part of reality from which the concept is absent. 'Beauty,' 'Quality,' 'Development' are pure concepts.

A pure concept has three characteristics, it is expressive, it is universal and it is concrete. It is the expression of thought. We cannot think without concepts just as we cannot perceive without images. The universality of a concept implies that it cannot be exhausted by any number of particular individuals. It is concrete inasmuch as it is immanent in every presentation.

The pseudo-concepts have no importance from the philosophical point of view. Abstract sciences cannot, however, do without these pseudo-concepts. They are convenient fictions with which we label different groups of things for our practical convenience.

Logic understood as the science of pure concepts is something quite different from the traditional or formal Logic. In his *Logic* Croce does not give us rules for the guidance of our reasoning but discusses the most universal characteristics of

Reality. His Logic as he himself points out is thus a study of Reality and is identical with Metaphysics.

We now come to the second form of mental activity, viz., the practical activity. Man not only knows but also acts. This practical activity presupposes the theoretical activity and has two sub-forms, the economic activity and the ethical activity. Corresponding to these activities, again, there are the philosophical sciences of Economics and Ethics.

Just as an intuition and its expression cannot be separated, so also we cannot separate a volition and the outward action in which it issues. It is a mistake to think of volition as something purely internal and action as solely consisting of external physical movements. Just as there are no unexpressed intuitions so also there are no volitions which are not manifested as actions. Volition and action are two aspects of one concrete event.

Volition has two forms. The first form is based on the concepts of utility, the second on that of goodness. In the first form the object aimed at is something which is useful and in which only a particular individual or individuals are interested. The second form of activity is directed towards something universal, that is, the common good. The first is the economic activity and the second the ethical activity. The second presupposes the first form of activity. Though these two forms of conduct can be distinguished, yet they are not essentially opposed or mutually exclusive. Every act is at the same time useful as well as good. No act is a purely economic, self-regarding, individual act, on the other hand no act is a purely ethical, other-regarding, universal act. Every action embodies both the forms of utility and goodness.

So we get altogether four forms of the activity of mind or spirit and four philosophical sciences corresponding to them. These forms constitute a series in which each preceding form of activity is the prior condition of the succeeding one. Philosophy as the study of Reality or Experience as a whole comprehends all these sciences.

A BIOGRAPHICAL FICTION?

THE FACE OF SILENCE

by Dhan Gopal Mukerji. Published by E. P. Dutton & Co.,
681 Fifth Avenue, New York, U. S. A.

Some five years back Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji came to spend a few days in the Ramakrishna Math at Belur, Calcutta. That was, as he says in his book, his "first experience of the followers of Sree Rama Krishna." He had been living for the last twelve years in America, and he evidently found much in the life of the Monastery to learn and question about. "And when I questioned them as to what had freed them from both pleasure and pain, they invariably pointed at the life and sayings of Shree Rama Krishna.....When all monks on each occasion pointed at the life of Rama Krishna I had to go and study it. 'It is better to examine the source of the fountain,' I was told. But I did not go to a printed page.....In order to study the life of Rama Krishna I began to look for its chroniclers and not the chronicle." (p. 7).

The result of that search is *The Face of Silence*. It has been beautifully planned. It is divided into sixteen chapters. Some of them purport to give the life-story of Sri Ramakrishna and descriptions of his intercourse with orthodox and reformed Hindus. Other chapters contain stories—as Mr. Mukerji knows them—of his disciples, "Vivekananda, Premananda and Lattu Maharaj," those of the living ones being left out through courtesy, and a conversation in which Sri Ramakrishna is represented as expounding the mysteries of spiritual experience, "describing the indescribable." We have also chapters on disciples expounding the life and teachings of their Master, and on Sri Ramakrishna's relations with a "wayward soul." There are also long descriptions of the life and doings of his monastic followers, and of the author's talks with the "Pundit" who is none other than "M," the author of the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. The plan of the book, it must be conceded, is nicely conceived and comprehensive. For to understand Sri Ramakrishna we must study not only his own earthly career and doings and utterances but also those of his disciples, as well as the movement that has originated from him. We have thus a plan of presentation before us which is highly commendable. And who can deny that such a book was really needed for the Western readers?

But alas for the execution of the plan! Never were we so sorely disappointed as in this book. It has been like looking on a fair face distraught with insanity. Mr. Mukerji wields a facile pen. He knows the art of book-writing. We have been long expecting this work, for we heard of his being engaged in its preparation. We knew he had indented authentic books on Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples and

their teachings, and we hoped that his book would be a welcome addition to the Ramakrishna literature. But such as it is, we wish it had never been published.

For it lacks the prime quality that a biography and an interpretation should possess, the quality of truth. The book is a strange medley of facts and unjustifiable fancies. And no greater harm comes of a book than when it is full of misrepresentations and when those statements are accepted by many as the very truth. It is impossible to dwell here on all the false things that have been accommodated within the range of 255 pages. They amount to no fewer than 260 (and in fact more) misstatements. A few samples will suffice :

“The stark clarity of the symbolism of Kali, that nothing abides but Renunciation, made Rama Krishna see through the pageantry of rituals and rites. How could he see the meaning of Her Presence and yet remain a prince of the church? Though not yet out of his teens he undertook her message and set out to shape his sacerdotal duties accordingly. First of all he gave up his silken vestments and gold-embroidered silver chudders. He refused to eat from plates of gold, waited on by a dozen servants. Last of all he moved from his sumptuously furnished residence into the little room near the servants’ quarters where he lived for the rest of his life. Having done that he set out to simplify some of the most ornamental services of the temple. No more did he put on himself the ceremonial garlands of pearls, dhoti, the vestment of scarlet silk, the chudder of gossamer blue shot with bits of diamonds like stars. He refused to wave censers of gold before his deity and gave up reading to the people from a book held between gold-embossed covers. As he whittled down the intricate pictorial rituals he concentrated more and more on learning and teaching his congregation the inner meaning of their worship.” (pp. 23-24).

Is that Sri Ramakrishna?

“He constantly meditated on the following sentence from the scriptures : Gold is clay ; clay is gold ! Sometimes to prove it in conduct, he gave away the gold and silver offerings that were brought to him by rich pilgrims. Thus he prayed and practised for nearly a year, yet reached no solution of the problem of money. He prayed and meditated for hours every day. As he says himself, ‘I was most deeply perplexed by the problem of money. Our religion teaches that gold and dust are one. Since I took my religion seriously, month after month every morning, I held a coin and a little clay together in my hand and meditated, ‘Gold is clay and clay is gold,’ yet that produced no spiritual experience in me. Nothing proved the truth of that statement. I do not remember after how many months’ meditation, one day I was sitting on the river bank very early in the morning. I prayed to the Mother to give me light. Lo ! suddenly I beheld the whole world in the radiant vesture of gold. Then it changed into a deeper lustre—the color of brown clay more beautiful than gold. With that vision deep down in my soul I heard like the trumpeting of ten

thousand elephants : 'Clay and gold are One to Thee.' Now that my prayers were answered I flung both gold and clay into the Ganges." (pp. 27-28).

Preposterously ingenious!

Here is the author's description of the early life of Lattu Maharaj—Swami Adbhutananda. He is described as "an untutored young servant of a merchant prince from the West country."

"So the next day the merchant and his servants set out for Dakshineswar. Behind him followed his servants.....seated in three other white boats, one of which contained Lattu who held a plate of solid gold covered with gems. This was the offering to be made to the Holy One.....So they ventured to enter, the merchant first and Lattu following with the offering plate of gold.....The merchant bowed and made some appropriate remarks. Then Lattu walked forward and put the offering at the Master's feet. The precious stone gleamed at him.....As soon as the day's ceremony was over, he and his master went away to sell the gems and the gold plate in order to give their proceeds to the poor." (pp. 141-143).

We wish we had space enough at our disposal to give the *facts* regarding the incidents referred to in the extracts. They will be found in *Life of Sri Ramakrishna*, published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, and compiled from authentic sources. A comparison of the author's version with the correct one will be a staggering revelation. Even the short sketch of Sri Ramakrishna's life as given by him, is *more fanciful than real*. In the chapter, "Orthodox Hindus and Rama Krishna," we are given a conversation of the Master with Ishan Mukherji, a householder. The *actual* conversation of which a record was preserved by a disciple is truly inspiring, being full of the fire of devotion and renunciation. A translation of it was published in the August number of *Prabuddha Bharata* of the year 1924. But what have we in Mr. Mukerji's book? A sad caricature of it: only a few sentences are taken from the original record, the rest of it, words and ideas, is purely his own creation. In another chapter, "Description of the Indescribable," we find the same method followed, the description has little correspondence to truth. The subject discussed herein is very abstruse, the soul's journey from the conscious to the Super-conscious Transcendental. Any one having the least sense of responsibility would have hesitated to be flippant about it. But our author's fancy is uncontrollable, and we have consequently an exposition which has little to do with either Sri Ramakrishna's words or any authoritative scripture on the subject. Then there is another chapter, "A Recent Initiation," which deals with the method and process of initiation of the new recruits to the Ramakrishna Monastery. It will be granted, we hope, that we know something of the matter. But alas, in the author's description we do not recognise our experience.

It may be reasonably asked, why, if the author was in possession of the correct details, he has indulged in these vagaries of fancy. The author himself has furnished the reason. We read in the second

chapter that he went to pay a visit to the "Pundit" who is a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The "Pundit" asks him: "What do you wish to learn of Rama Krishna?.....Do you seek the Rama Krishna history or the Rama Krishna legend?" The author answers: "I seek just enough facts to enable me to gather all the trustworthy legends together."

" 'Good!' shouted my host with joy.....'Rama Krishna legends have not been gathered together. They contain more of the truth about him than all the authentic facts that I have written down. Legend is the chalice of truth. Facts are so veracious and so dull that nobody is uplifted by believing in them.' 'But history is most necessary and most trustworthy,' I exclaimed. 'Yes, it is necessary. Because on and around history will grow legend. As raw material for legend there is nothing finer than history. That is why I have written the Rama Krishna Chronicle. Five hundred years from now my work will find its fulfilment when a great poet will use it to create the Rama Krishna legend as deathless as my Master himself.' 'Are there many Rama Krishna legends extant now?' I asked. He shook his head and said 'Yes, some. Go to Dakshineswar and all the surrounding villages. Call on their oldest inhabitants; then ask them questions, etc.' "

We read in the last chapter again of the author's meeting with the "Pundit" in which the latter asks him, "Are the Rama Krishna legends that you have gathered tall enough? The legends ought to measure up to His sky-humbling stature."

"I said 'No, they are not tall. They seem to me quite natural and normal. They are mostly based on reality.' 'I do not mean that,' he rejoined,.....'I mean whatever legend grows up about him will become true.' 'I do not understand you.' I was puzzled. 'It is simple enough,' the Pundit ejaculated. 'Look at Christ: even His birth without any earthly father became a reality. Why? Because His Being was so living and so tall that in order to explain Him they had to invent Immaculate Conception. The same was the case with Buddha.....The same thing is happening to Rama Krishna. He was so spiritual that in order to explain him, people have to resort to many supernatural explanations.' "

This is the reason why facts have been discarded in favour of "legends." Facts are too dull! And this is the philosophy, ascribed to the "Pundit," which induced the author in collecting *legends* about Sri Ramakrishna and his Order. We are not quite sure whether the "Pundit" actually propounded this strange theory. He is not unknown to us, and we have never heard him dwelling on it. Of course if one takes it into one's head to write about the *legends*, and not the *facts*, of a great modern prophet and a living and a growing religious movement, one cannot be checked. But even in presenting legends, there must be truth, these must be *actually current* legends and not fancied ones. But we are sorry to remark that Mr. Mukerji is not up to even this second-rate truth. He has simply created stories about Sri

Ramakrishna and his disciples. We repeat that many of the strange, fanciful things that he has put in his book had their origin nowhere else than in his own brain. He says that the legends he collected were mostly based on reality. From whom did he collect them? Will he name them?

As regards the fantastic idea that truth is dull and nobody is uplifted by believing in them, if that is the moral the author has derived from the study of Sri Ramakrishna's life, we can only say that that is not the fault of truth, but of the vision that is too blind to perceive the sublime beauty of that transcendent life. Strange that where millions find the solace of life and the realisation of their highest dreams, our author finds little to inspire him unless he is stilted up by fancy! But perhaps he wanted through his fancies and distortions to draw out the hidden beauty and significance of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and his Order. But did not Mr. Mukerji feel in his inmost heart that to touch them in the way he has done was an unpardonable sacrilege?

We shall be excused, we hope, if we state that the author has done a great injustice to his readers by not telling them clearly the true nature of his book. The average reader will not know that he was reading merely a prose-poem, a biographical fiction. And herein lies the greatest mischief of the book. Perhaps Mr. Mukerji did not all wish that the illusion should be broken. Or why did he not add a few lines by way of preface telling the readers that he was not writing the history and truth of Sri Ramakrishna and his Order, but only his own fancies based on the skeleton of a few facts? Did he not owe this courtesy to the public and to the Order for which he professes so much regard? Surely he, so experienced in the affairs of the world, knew that unless duly warned, his readers would not understand the strange theory of legend that underlies his narrative.

That our fear is not unjustified is evident from the way in which the publishers of the book announce it. We are told that it "is Mukerji's enthralling story of his visit to the Monastery and of the gathering of the legends concerning Rama Krishna's early life, etc." and again that "this is the sublime *record* of religion in practise of a holy man, Rama Krishna, living only a generation ago." (Italics ours.) The publishers have forgot to make a distinction between *legends* and *record*. We recently came across an American review of the book, in course of which the reviewer says, "This new book by Mr. Mukerji gives us a summary of the life, legends and teachings of the modern Indian saint etc." So to this reviewer, the life and the teachings as given therein were true to facts. Could there be anything more insidious?

The least that is expected of a chronicler of a great life and movement is fidelity to truth and sympathetic understanding. It is in fact almost impossible for a man who does not merge himself in the truth of that life and movement to truly depict it. Unfortunately Mr. Mukerji had no patience or time to go deep into the truth of the

life and movement which form his subject. And it is no wonder that his performance has been so imperfect and unhappy.

ESSENTIALS OF VEDANTISM.

[THE VEDANTASARA]

INTRODUCTION

The *Vedântasâra*, as the name implies, is the essence of the Vedanta Philosophy and is one of the authoritative books on the subject. On account of the succinct and lucid statement of the subject-matter it is regarded as one of the best books of its kind. The ordinary readers of the Vedanta generally expose themselves to confusion while studying the Upanishads and the Vedanta Sutras with their commentaries on account of intricacies of arguments and apparently contradictory statements. For such readers the *Vedântasâra* is an excellent book to begin with.

The reputed author of the book is Sri Sadananda Yogindra Saraswati who flourished in the fifteenth century, about 750 years after Sankara. He has embodied in his book all the theories of the Vedanta that have been developed since the time of Sankara by such famous scholars as Padmapada, Sureshwara, Hastamalaka, Sarvajnatmamuni, Vachaspati Mishra, Sri Harsha, Chitsukha, Vidyaranya and others. Madhusudan Saraswati, Brahmananda Saraswati, Appaya Dikshit, and a few more noted Adwaita Philosophers have been left out on account of their subtle logic which baffles ordinary understanding. Many scholiasts have written commentaries on the *Vedântasâra*. Three commentaries known as *Subodhini*, *Bâlabodhini* and *Vidwanmanoranjini*, ascribed to Sri Nrisinha Saraswati, Apodeva and Sri Ramatirtha respectively are generally in use.

The *Vedantasara* is not only a useful *vade-mecum* for the study of the Vedanta Philosophy, but it also gives the aspirants practical suggestions for the realisation of the *summum bonum* of life. Beginning with the qualifications of the pupils who would take up the study of the Vedanta, the book has dealt with various aspects of the philosophy such as the theory of creation, the theory of God, the five sheaths, the three bodies, the Supreme Self, the duty of the aspirants till his realisation of the Brahman and lastly the description of the liberated souls

in the blessed state of Samadhi. Our apology for publishing the translation of the text with notes on technical terms in the light of the three commentaries mentioned above is that it may be useful to those readers who are eager to learn of the great philosophical realisations of the ancient Indian sages but cannot read the original books on account of their deficiency in Sanskrit and want of time, and also that it may help them in forming a systematic and comprehensive idea of the various conclusions of the Vedanta Philosophy.

अखण्डं सच्चिदानन्दमवाङ्मनसो गोचरम् ।
आत्मानमखिलाधार त्रयेऽभीष्टसिद्धये ॥ १ ॥

1. I take refuge in the Self,¹ the Indivisible, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, beyond² the reach of words and thought and the Substratum³ of all, for the attainment of my cherished⁴ desire.

[1 *Self*—It means here the Highest Self or the Paramatman. The word Atman is also used to denote the individual self or Jiva which in essence is identical with Brahman.

2 *Beyond etc.*—Comp. a similar passage in the Taittiriya Upanishad II, iv, 1. “Whence the words come back with the mind without realising the Truth.”

3 *Substratum etc.*—The Pure Brahman without attribute is the First Cause from which the universe has evolved, when looked at from the standpoint of creation. Therefore Atman is described here as the ‘substratum of all.’ Comp. “यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते”—“From which have been produced all these created beings.”

4 *Cherished desire*—The summum bonum, or it may mean the fulfilment of the particular desire of the author, viz., the right expounding of the subject according to the scriptures.]

अर्थतोऽप्यद्वयानन्दानतीतद्वैतमानतः ।
गुरुनाराध्य वेदान्तसारं वक्ष्ये यथामति ॥ २ ॥

2. Having worshipped¹ the Guru who on account of his being free from the illusion of duality justifies² the meaning of his name Advayananda, I undertake the task of expounding the essence of the Vedanta according to my light.

[1 *Worshipped*—The scriptures enjoin salutation to the Guru before undertaking a work.

2 *Justifies etc.*—The name of the spiritual guide of the author is Advayananda which literally means the embodiment of unity and bliss. The Guru fully justified the name on account of his highest realisation. The word also signifies Brahman. Thus by this couplet the author salutes both Brahman and his Guru.]

वेदान्तो नाम ?—उपनिषत्प्रमाणं तदुपकारीणि शारीरकसूत्रादीनि
च । ३

3. What is Vedanta?¹ It is the evidence² furnished by the Upanishads, as well as the Shariraka Sutras³ and others⁴ that help in the correct expounding of its meaning.

[1 *Vedanta*—It literally means the concluding portion of the Vedas. The real meaning is the best or the Knowledge portion of the Vedas.

2 *Evidence*—The Sanskrit word *Pramâna* literally means the instrument of *Pramâ* or Knowledge. The Vedanta Philosophy acknowledges the following six classes of evidence : (a) *Pratyaksha* (Direct perception), (b) *Anumâna* (Inference), (c) *Upamâna* (Comparison), (d) *Shabda* (Scriptural affirmation), (e) *Arthâpatti* (Presumption), (f) *Anupalabdhi* (Privation). The evidence furnished by the Upanishads falls under the *Shabda Pramâna*.

3 *Shariraka Sutras*—The words mean the body of Badarayana Sutras as interpreted by Sankara, which forms the basis of the Advaita school of philosophy. Literally the words signify the body of aphorisms which rightly determine the nature of the 'embodied creature.'

4 *And others*—The commentaries on the Upanishads and the Gita etc.]

अस्य वेदान्तप्रकरणत्वात् तदीयैः एव अनुबन्धैः तद्वत्तासिद्धेः न ते
पृथक् आलोचनीयाः । ४

4. On account of its¹ being recognised as a *Prakarana*² treatise of the Vedanta, the *Anubandhas*³ (moving considerations) of the latter just serve its purpose. Therefore they need not be discussed separately.

[1 *Its*—Of the *Vedantasara*.

2 *Prakarana etc.*—The book which forms a part of a scripture and thus serves a special purpose of it.

3 *Anubandha*—Every Hindu scripture at the very outset deals with four questions, viz., (1) *Adhikâri*—the qualifications that make the student competent to enter upon its study, (2) *Vishaya* or the subject-matter, (3) *Sambandha* or the connection between the subject-matter and the book itself, (4) *Prayojana* or the inducement or motive for entering upon the study at all. The answer to each of these questions is called an *Anubandha*.]

तत्र अनुबन्धो नाम अधिकारि-विषय-सम्बन्ध-प्रयोजनानि । ५

5. The moving considerations of the Vedanta are the determination of the competency of the student, the subject-matter, its connection with the book and the inducements to its study.

(To be continued)

ANGULIMALA

By SWAMI ATULANANDA

Now it happened when the Blessed One, Lord Buddha, walked on earth, bringing Light to those who lived in darkness, that there was born in the household of the brahmin priest to the king of Kosala one who would become a cause of terror to every wayfarer in the land. His birth took place during the middle watch of a night filled with evil portents. The wind now howled, now moaned, the clouds poured down torrents of rain, lightning rent the skies, and thunder crashed, shaking the city to its very foundations. And in the jungle the jackals wailed like lost souls. And wonder of wonders, defying the racing clouds and the darkness of that terrible night, one single constellation shone ominously in the pitch-dark sky. It was the most feared of all constellations, the Constellation of the Robbers. And that night, the night of Angulimala's birth, all the armour in the town shone with a mysterious crimson light.

Awakened by the tumult of the night, and seeing his armour glow like fire, the king in his palace trembled with fear. The State astrologers were summoned. What did it presage? With beating heart the king awaited their verdict. Then the eldest among the astrologers spoke: "O King! Fear not, for though this night has given birth to one who will become a fearful robber, he will not attempt to usurp the throne. And his reign of terror will be of short duration." Thus pacified the king rested in peace.

Now, after many calculations and searchings of holy script it was brought to light that the future robber was no other but the new-born son of the king's priest. But his mind having been put to rest the king sent word to the distracted father that the child would be allowed to live.

The boy Angulimala was born with marvellous strength, and as he grew up his strength equalled that of a young elephant. He was sent to study under the first teacher of Takasila, where, with other brahmin boys, he was kept under close surveillance. Proud, arrogant and mischievous he, however, bullied his fellow-students beyond all endurance and none dared oppose him, for his temper was irascible, and on

the slightest provocation his muscular arms would crush the offender. It was then a happy day for the other students, when at last the teacher addressing Angulimala, said, "My boy, you have now completed your studies, go and live in peace. May your strength and courage be your friends, may these not act as your enemies." But such good counsel was altogether wasted on the turbulantly minded youth.

Released from the restraint of the student life, and scorning the entreaties of his parents, Angulimala gave now free reign to his pent up ruthlessness. Providing himself with knives and bludgeons and swords he entered the Jalini forest in Kosala. There from a cliff near the highway he watched the passers-by, and rushing down killed them and robbed them of all they possessed. Nay, in his arrogance he cut off the thumbs of his murdered victims, and making a garland of the finger-bones hung it round his neck. It was his avowed boast that this garland should not be complete till it contained one thousand thumbs. When this became known the people called him Angulimala (Finger-wreathed). But his real name was Himsaka.

Now it came to such a pass that no traveller was safe on the road by day or by night. The highway became deserted as the people kept close to their homes fearing to meet the cruel robber. Then the king to protect his subjects proclaimed: "Let a strong force go out and capture the bandit."

Angulimala's mother hearing the proclamation and fearing for the life of her son, said to her husband, "Our son is in great danger, send for him, and bid him stop doing harm to the people." But the husband replied; "I have nought to do with such a son ; let the king do as he will." Then she, her heart filled with pity, set out alone to bring her son and save him from harm.

Now it happened that the Exalted One, the Buddha, he who knew all things inward and outward, was residing on the outskirts of a village some leagues from the Jalini Wood. And the Compassionate One seated in contemplation beneath a banyan tree, in a vision had revealed to him all things concerning Angulimala, his past, his present and his future. Then he thought, "This day if Angulimala meets his mother he will do her great injury, for his heart is cruel, and to complete his finger-wreath only one more thumb is wanting. Surely the ruthless youth will cut off her thumb to make good his boast.

This, however, is his last birth. If I do not go to him there might be great loss. I will speak to him." So after he had gone the rounds of alms and finished his morning meal the Buddha set out alone for the Jalini Wood.

Now when Angulimala saw his mother approach he was reckoning on her finger to make up his number. But suddenly the Exalted One stood between them. Then thought the son, "Why should I kill my mother? Let me rather go for that ascetic's thumb." And drawing his sword he went for the Blessed One. But the Buddha had already directed his steps toward the jungle.

Then Angulimala followed the Blessed One, stalking him as a lion might stalk a deer. Hidden by brush and trees he made his way, till with a great leap he stood behind the Buddha. And raising his sword he brought it down with great force, intending to split the Buddha's head. But the sword, without touching the Exalted One, deflected to the right and embedded itself into the earth. Extracting his sword, Angulimala ran up to the retreating Buddha, once more intending to split open his head. But this time the sword deflected to the left and embedded itself into the earth. At this the robber stood dumbfounded. "Does my trusty sword refuse me service?" he thought. Then taking up his sword again, he found it so heavy that he could scarcely lift it. The Buddha in the mean time walked on majestically looking neither to the right nor to the left, nor even once turning his head.

Angulimala thought, "Who is this wretched monk? He is exerting his magic power," and leaving behind his now unwieldy sword he ran after him purposing to kill the ascetic with one blow of his iron fist. But though he ran and panted, and the sweat began to pour from his body, he could not overtake the monk who walked on at his usual pace. Then, suddenly, Angulimala could run no more. He was unable to lift his feet. Standing as if nailed to the ground, in wild anger, he cried, "Stop, ascetic! Stop!"

Then the Buddha neither turning nor changing his pace, said, "Though I walk, yet have I stopped, and do you, Angulimala, also stop!"

"Passing strange!" the robber thought, "This man has thrown a spell over me. These Sakiyan ascetics are held to speak the truth, yet he says he has stopped while he is walk-

ing, and he tells me to stop who am standing still. What can he mean?" So he called: "Thou who art walking, friar, dost say: 'I have stopped!' and me, who have stopped, thou tellest to stop! I ask thee, what is the meaning of thy words? How sayest thou that thou hast stopped, but I have not?"

To this the Buddha replied: "Yea, I have stopped, renouncing violence towards all living beings. Thou holdest not thy hand against thy fellow-men. It is therefore, I have stopped, but thou still goest on." Then turning round the Buddha with a friendly gesture motioned to Angulimala to approach. That instant the robber's feet were free to move, and he approached the Exalted One.

Then the Buddha taking Angulimala by the hand made him sit beside him under a tree, and began to teach him The Foundation of the Kingdom of Righteousness. He revealed to Angulimala that no arbitrary heavenly power, but our own hearts alone with our thoughts and deeds cause us to be born, at one time on earth, at another in heaven, and then again in hell. He spoke of the misery of this round of rebirth caused by ignorance, and of the bliss of Nirvana, the incomparable peaceful state, free from corruption, and attainable through right understanding.

Angulimala listened attentively, his head bent in shame and remorse. And the Enlightened One continued: "That for which wise men spend many lives of renunciation and contemplation, has become your happy lot, Angulimala. Only few created beings attain to humanity in comparison with the far more numerous creatures who in lower kingdoms come into existence. So also but few men are on the earth at the same time as a Buddha, in comparison with the far greater number in whose time no Buddha lives on the earth. And again, but few individuals among these men are so fortunate as to see the Blessed One, in comparison with the far greater number who do not see him. But thou, Angulimala, hast been born as a man, and that at a time when a Perfect Buddha has appeared on earth, and thou hast seen him, and art with him, even with the Enlightened One."

Then Angulimala had clear vision. Suddenly the veil of ignorance was removed, his insight reached maturity, rapture pervaded his being, and he knew that he sat beside the Compassionate One, Gotama, the Buddha. 'In exaltation he ex-

claimed, "Great is the lion's roar! To help me the Exalted One is come hither! Hail, thou noblest of beings! Thou hast had pity on the worst! I pray thee, wilt thou suffer me to abide with thee?"

Placing his right hand on Angulimala's head, the Buddha consented and he spoke: "Even as there are among the few who see the Buddha but few who hear his doctrine, so among those who hear the doctrine there are but few who comprehend it. Thou, Angulimala, wilt hear the doctrine and wilt comprehend it. Come, Bhikkhu, be my disciple and follow me!"

Then Angulimala collecting his swords and knives and bludgeons threw them down a cliff, and followed the Master, and following he composed these stanzas:*

The conduit-makers lead the stream,
 Fletchers coerce the arrow shaft,
 The joiners mould the wooden plank,
 The self 'tis that the pious tame.
 Some creatures are subdued by force,
 Some by the hook, and some by whips;
 But I by such an One was tamed
 Who needed neither staff nor sword.

Once an obnoxious bandit I,
 Known by my name of Finger-wreathed,
 Till toiling mid the awful flood,
 I refuge in the Buddha found.
 Once were my hands imbrued with blood;
 Known was my name as Finger-wreathed.
 O see the Refuge I have found,
 With every craving rooted out!

He who in former days a wastrel living,
 In later day no more so spends his time,
 He goeth o'er the world a radiance shedding,
 As when the moon comes free in clouded sky.
 To whomso'er the ill deeds he hath wrought,
 By a good life are closèd up and sealed,
 He goeth o'er the world a radiance shedding
 As when the moon comes free in clouded sky.

* The stanzas are from "Psalms of the Brethren," by Mrs. Rhys Davids.

The Master hath my fealty and love,
 And all the Buddha's ordinance is done.
 Low have I laid the heavy load I bore :
 Cause for rebirth is found in me no more.

Angulimala became known as Ahimsaka (the Harmless), for in sweetness and gentility of temper he surpassed all other monks. Many years he abode with the Master serving him in great humility and when the Blessed One was no more in this world he retired to woodland solitude. There he dwelt in the bliss of emancipation, and there, at last, he entered into Final Peace.

“When in the lowering sky thunders the storm-cloud's drum,
 And all the pathways of the birds are thick with rain,
 The brother sits within the hollow of the hills,
 Rapt in an ecstasy of thought :—no higher bliss
 Is given to men than this.
 Or when by rivers on whose banks together crowd
 Garlands of woodland blossoms bright with many a hue,
 With heart serene the brother sits upon the strand,
 Rapt in an ecstasy of thought :—no higher bliss
 Is given to men than this.”

HINDU PEACE AND CHRISTIAN POWER.

BY JANE ALDEN

Hinduism—Christianity : the greatness of the eastern, as contrasted with the western religious ideal! How is one to express one's small, personal feeling about a subject as vast as that? There is a story that can help to express it for me.

On Christmas Eve, at the mission home in Calcutta where I was staying, there appeared a brown-faced up-countryman, with a note. It was from the headman of an obscure village, some twenty miles off from the railroad; and this is what it said: “We have heard that to-morrow is a great festival for a god of our foreign friends. We do not know which god this is or why you worship him at this particular season; but we beg that you will honour us and our humble village by coming here to our temple and allowing us to worship your god with you at this time.”

I heard this brotherly invitation, thinking: “Who but Hindus could have written it? What Christian sect or denomination the world

round would have shown such amazing tolerance or religious breadth of sympathy?" And I turned from hearing it, to behold in the doorway, the beaming face of the native Christian pastor. Like the great majority of the five million Christians in India, this man, one of the finest and best-looking people I ever saw, had been a pariah, an Outcaste, condemned by the inflexible Hindu social law to remain forever outside of self-respect and an equal chance with his fellow men. The Christian missionary came. And to him and these millions like him, as if from God in Heaven, was given the teaching that, in the eye of the Christian Ruler and Father, they were rated as no less precious than any twice-born Brahman.*

"Madame, will you come and see the children in the Sunday-school? They are delighted with the tree and the little presents. Soon the fathers and mothers will be coming, and we shall have rice and sweetmeats, for the whole Christian family, in the courtyard."

I went with him—radiant, energetic, shepherding his equally radiant flock of happy, well-dressed people—first to the simple service in the Sunday-school room and then to the holiday feast, beloved by Indians, in the mission courtyard. In my mind I saw the people of those pariah villages I had visited—the rags, the misery, the abasement; the thousands of dull, hopeless faces one met in the streets everyday. And then I looked around me at the clean, clear-eyed, confident and truly "redeemed" company of "the Christian family."

What had Hinduism done for these?

So there, in those two prevailing incidents of my Indian Christmas Eve, I found my answer to the question: Which is superior, the Hindu or the Christian system? And the answer is: Neither, but each complementary to, fulfilling and rounding out, the other. Christian civilization can do for mankind what the Hindu has not done, and vice versa. But few Christians will admit the vice versa!

My own journey to India had been undertaken because of disillusion with the current religious offerings of the West and simultaneous attraction to the spiritual strength and security perceived in Hindu philosophy. But fate postponed the teaching I had actually come for, meanwhile placing me in various situations where I should be made to see the whole, instead of just Hinduism, and to realize some greatnesses in my own Christian West that I had not appreciated before.

Thus I welcomed, rather than revolted against, the same wise fate that set me down first, not in the Hindu monastery that was my goal, but in a Christian missionary home. The monks could not receive me at their guest house until another woman student should come to live with me. An English lady wanting to study with them was expected about the first of January. In the meantime, since all Calcutta hotels were overflowing in the Christmas season, I set myself to see life from the angle of the missionaries.

* But not so, we regret to note, in the eyes of the Christian Church; witness the separate churches for the blacks and the whites.—*Editor, P. B.*

Everyone who comes back from the Orient is asked, "Do you approve of foreign missionaries?" One might as well be asked, "Do you approve of people?" Missionaries are just like everybody else—good, bad, indifferent; little and big, petty and great; greedy, generous, cowardly, heroic. Everett Dean Martin rightly says: "Little men do not become great men when they become religious; nor do superior people become common-place." We all know the sacrifices made by the courageous regiment of missionary expatriates: the gallant pioneering; the obscure day-to-day drudgery in far distant places; the fevers, dangers and thousand and one petty difficulties and privations; hardest of all perhaps, the long years of separation from their children, sent back to school and college. Yet never a word of complaint! Who am I, who is any of us, to launch wholesale invective against such men and women on the say-so of some disaffected tourist or disgruntled consul?

And yet—and yet! Never have I heard such hostile criticism as I heard from missionaries. I came down to my first breakfast at the mission home, to catch it—on the very echo of the "Amen" at morning prayers. Rabindranath Tagore, Annie Besant, Vivekananda—those and other noble names were on the list of the censured. At every meal I heard some other than Christian teacher, or, some other than Christian cause, held before that uncompromising tribunal and summarily despatched with a few caustic sentences. My own Indian friends who came to the mission were not exempt. I was asked whether or not they were "heathen" or supported Theosophy or the non-Christian movements. And had it been known that I contemplated staying at a Hindu monastery—!

What stood out very clearly in all this critical comment was that either the denounced had got members or they had got money—in either case their organization had got power and prestige away from the Christian organization. But was it a powerful organization that Christ came to preach?

There is this passion for the power of the organization, but for themselves—missionaries and Christian workers—the most selfless effacement and devotion. No hour is too early or too late for them to be tirelessly about their various labours. No sacrifice is beyond them. For "the work" they will lay down their lives and frequently do. After those conversations, I would leave the table, boiling, and go with Miss Moulton to her school, Dr. Jessup to his hospital, Miss Shearer to her rescue home or Dr. Gibs to his pariah boys' agricultural training-camp—and be lost in respectful admiration. Where power really is, it never has to make claims for itself. And the power of the Christian Church and of most Christians, is in action: the practical carrying out, into all fields and departments of life, of the supremely Christian ideal of service to one's neighbour. The ideal is a great one. It would be greater still if it included recognition of the greatness of other ideals and their equally precious services.

The outstanding work of the missionaries in India, as I saw it, is

social work : education, healing of disease and the teaching of cleanliness and self-respect, improvement of the position of women and the outcasted—in short, the giving of value to individuality. I have never met any Orientals to whom the metaphysic of Christianity was an especial boon—because that of course came from the Orient, and they have plenty of it. But when to one of these submerged millions, as to a slave of old, comes the news—under the Christian formula—that he is free, free spiritually and free intellectually and materially as fast as he can take the education and other opportunities that Christian messengers hold out to him, it would be a strange slave indeed who did not respond with whole-hearted acceptance of the Christian religion. What have the philosophic subtleties of his exclusive Hindus done for him?*

But there is sometimes a risk in suggesting to a missionary that some of the benefits of Christianity may be the benefits of democracy and the developing social solidarity of the newer civilizations. Or that the Hinduism, Buddhism and other ancient creeds of a socially backward Orient may have something to offer the Westerner.

When I ventured to hint as much to Miss Shearer, the most progressive of my missionary friends, she shook her head, strongly dissenting. "No," she replied. "But I'm not narrow. Our missionary training isn't narrow—we had a course on Hindu philosophy from our Christian professors at the training school."

"But if an Indian girl wanted to study American literature, should you send her to Miss Sorabji or Lady Bose?" I asked.

"That's beside the point. Religion is a very different matter. We want to see everything through Christian eye."

"Yes, I know. Those books you gave me to read—exposition of Indian religions by Christian writers—always present a subject through the lens of the man who has settled his point of view beforehand. If the beliefs and practices aren't good, they aren't Christian. If they are good, whatever is good in them is borrowed from the Christian religion. Why need we assert so clamorously that all the good and truth in the world belong to us? Surely there were good and truth in it before two thousands years ago!"

"Not the pure truth as Christ taught it," said Miss Shearer firmly.

"But you've read the pure truth taught by the Buddha and by Sri Krishna, whose words the poet of the *Bhagavadgita* records—"

* One is tired of such cheap and shallow criticism. The writer forgets that it is the genius of the Hindus—their "philosophic subtleties"—which, long long before Christianity came to India or even before it was born, evolved out of a heterogeneous population, most of whom were on the threshold of civilisation, the cohesive organisation known as the Hindu society, even the lowest strata of which can give points to the average Westerner in respect of refinement and morality ; and that that process of assimilation is still going on, not remarkable because of its slow workings. Surely Christianity cannot claim that this wonderful assimilative genius of the Hindus was *her* gift to Hinduism. The reason why there are untouchables among the Hindus has to be sought elsewhere than in their so called social exclusiveness.—*Editor, P. B.*

“Don’t mention Sri Krishna to me, my dear! The practices of the Krishna cults, today—and the rites in the Kali temples, the scenes at the Jagannath festivals—you have only to study the degeneracies of modern Hinduism and Buddhism to be convinced of the imperfection of the teachings.”

“I don’t see that. Degeneracy is a peculiarity of all human institutions not excepting religious organizations. How should you like Christianity to be judged on its witchcraft, burnings, and hangings, its Inquisition horrors, its superstitions and degeneracies? And for a really fair comparison, we should have to wait till the Christian Church is five thousand years old!”

“The pure gospel of Christ will never degenerate,” said Miss Shearer stiffly.

“Certainly it will not—nor the pure gospel of the Buddha and the other great religious teachers. And how startlingly alike all the original teachings are! Five hundred years before Christ, the Buddha preached: ‘Practise the truth that thy brother is the same as thou..... Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good..... Do no injury to any living being, but be full of love, and kindness. That which is most needed, is a loving heart.’ I challenge anybody to find more lofty and inspiring, or more helpful and practical, teachings, than are to be found in the gospel of the Buddha!”*

(To be continued)

NEWS AND REPORTS

Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda

The birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda falls this year on Tuesday, the 25th January. Public celebrations will naturally come off on the following Sunday, the 30th January. We shall be glad to receive reports of celebrations.

A Noble Work among the Khasis in Assam

The following is the report of a very interesting and significant work that is being carried on by some members of the Ramakrishna Order among the Khasis of Assam. The work is still in an incipient stage. But the field is vast, and the output though not large is very promising. It has created great enthusiasm among the people amidst whom it is being done. These are all happy signs of the reawakened sense of the responsibilities of Hinduism towards the half-civilised hill-people who live on her borders and are easy prey to the propaganda

* From ASIA, New York.

of alien missionaries. The work just now requires proper financing and we are sure the Hindus will render unstinted help to this noble cause.

The Report says :

It is well-known that owing largely to the propaganda of the Christian missionaries carried on among the backward classes, especially the inhabitants of the hill-tracts of Assam, thousands have left the fold of Hinduism and embraced the Christian faith. With a view to diffuse amongst them a true knowledge of Hinduism, of the religion of Vedanta as propounded by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekanānda, by placing before them an active and creative ideal through self-sacrifice and service, which is calculated to stimulate their progress, an experimental centre was started by us at Dissang Shella, Khasi Hills, Assam, early in 1924. The institution aims at the realisation of its objects without offering any kind of opposition to the Christian missionaries working among the Khasis.

The present activity of the Centre is mainly three-fold : (1) educational, (2) philanthropic and (3) religious.

Educational : From the very outset the work of the Centre has been predominantly educational. A free Middle English school of the Shella State is being managed by the Centre with two paid Khasi teachers. Though the school belongs formally to the Shella State, yet for all practical purposes it is left entirely in the hands of the Centre. This arrangement has been found to be most convenient inasmuch as it causes the least resistance and creates greater confidence among the local people. The State bears the entire expenses of the school by an annual subsidy of Rs. 500. To offer the Khasis greater facilities for higher education, the starting of a residential boarding house in the neighbourhood of Sylhet is in contemplation.

A word of explanation is necessary as to the need of starting our school when there are hundreds of them already existing among the Khasis through the agency of the Christian missionaries. A careful observer will not fail to notice that a great discontent prevails among the major portion (only one-sixth of the population being Christians, vide *The Presbyterian Church Report* for 1925) of the Khasis, who look upon the Mission schools as an infringement on their ancient traditions and religious beliefs, as the schools impart mainly the Christian theological education which they rightly look upon as detrimental to the realisation of their own religious ideals.

Our school provides scope for all Khasi students irrespective of caste and creed, without any way wounding their religious susceptibilities. It teaches along with the subjects pertaining to the M. E. standard, the Bengali language the knowledge of which is a great desideratum. The leading Khasis also keenly feel the need of a knowledge of the provincial languages of the plains. A Khasi monthly, *Ka jingstai Ka Gospel*, edited by Mr. J. J. M. Nichols Roy, observes in its last February issue : If the Khasis do not sufficiently educate themselves within the coming twenty years and do not learn Bengali and Assamese, they will find it impossible to compete for Government service.

We have provision for girl students also in our school. The number of boys and girls at present on the roll is 60. Let us mention here that the authorities of the Ramakrishna Mission have agreed to grant stipends to one or two girls intending to go over to the *Nivedita Girls' School*, Calcutta, for receiving higher education. We are also going to start a boarding house near our Ashrama by the beginning of 1927, for the accommodation of students coming from distant homes.

Besides the M. E. school, we conduct a night school for the benefit of the adult population.

Philanthropic : Homeopathic and Bio-chemic medicines are given to the poor free of all costs. During the years of work altogether 2257 cases were treated of which 808 were new cases and the rest repeated.

Religious : Books are read and discussed, conversation classes are held and occasional lectures are delivered in the Khasi language, on religion, morality and education. The Sunday sittings are held in different places to suit the convenience of the attending villagers. Bengali music and devotional songs are also popularised. The birthday anniversaries of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are duly observed, as also such Hindu festivals as *Ratha-yâtra*, *Jhulan* and *Dol-yâtra*, all of which the Khasis enjoy immensely.

Miscellaneous : We take occasional trips to other Khasi states and speak to the people on the aims and objects of the Ramakrishna Mission and also on other useful topics. All these prove highly interesting to the people..... A small library containing the publications of the Ramakrishna Order has been opened. It contains also some monthlies, weeklies and bi-weeklies.

As regards the income of the Centre, besides the grant of Rs. 500 mentioned before, we receive occasional donations from friends far and near. The donations of the public of Sunamganj, Sylhet, have enabled the Ashrama to secure an orange garden on 30 years' lease, which is expected to be in near future a source of steady income. A gentleman from Kathiawad has recently sent us a donation of Rs. 100. To all these kind donors and sympathisers, the Ashrama is grateful. It specially mentions with grateful thanks the financial help it has received from the Sylhet Sri Ramakrishna Seva-Samiti.

Prospects of the Work and its Present Needs : By this time we are thoroughly acquainted with the customs and conventions of the Khasi people. They are perfectly Hinduistic, though of a crude type. Some of us have also mastered their language. We find that paid workers do not pull on satisfactorily with the people among whom they work. We want more and more of selfless, bold workers. For the opportunities are vast and the work glorious. Very easily the work may be extended all over the Khasi Hills. We are trying to train local Khasi workers. Ours is quite a new move among the Khasis and two years of patient and steady work have given it a good grounding. Now we want only workers and money to make it a big and far-reaching success. We want a permanent fund to support the workers to be placed in different parts of the Hills as also to main-

tain a batch of reserve and propaganda workers. We want a magic lantern with plenty of slides for our schools. We want funds to equip the library properly and to publish books in the Khasi language which is so necessary for the wide propagation of our ideals. We also want a house of our own, the present one being rented.

We know the output of our work is not yet striking in magnitude. But it must be conceded that we have laid on ourselves a very heavy responsibility to fulfil a neglected function of our religion and society. Would we apathetically look on when thousands of our brethren are being taken away from our religious fold? We appeal to all who feel for their religion and society to come forward with their best help, in kind or coin, in support of our work. Contributions may kindly be sent to me.

Sd. SWAMI ACHYUTANANDA,
In charge of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama,
Dissng Shella, P. O. Laitkynsew,
Khasi Hills, Assam.

Sir P. C. Roy at the Madras Sri Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home

Sir P. C. Roy was kind enough to visit the Home on the evening of Tuesday, the 30th November. He was taken round the building by Swami Saswatananda, the Resident Warden. He took more than an hour to visit the several departments and evinced keen interest in all the things shown round. After attending *puja* he addressed the students of the Home on the impressions of his visit. In the course of his address he made the following observations :

“With the permission of the Swamiji, I should like to address you this evening though I am not quite well. I have visited many educational institutions in various parts of India managed by the public as well as by the Government; but nowhere have I seen an institution of this type. I have been taken by surprise and I could not even dream that I would see such things as I saw here to-day. Everything I have seen seems to be “Maya.” I could not believe my eyes. Wherever I go, I am struck with the spotless cleanliness of the place. You know “Cleanliness is next to Godliness” and I feel as if the whole environment was surcharged with a divine atmosphere. I consider this day of my visit to your institution a red-letter day in my life. And I congratulate you all on your good fortune in having come under the roof of a noble institution where you are trained to make no distinction between “high and low.” One noble feature of this institution is the

endeavour put forth to make you self-supporting. I have noticed with great pleasure that you are taught carpentry, weaving, carpet-making, smithy, and rattan work here. I am also glad to note that every one washes his own clothes and plates. I always make it a point to wash my clothes myself. And I am happy that everyone here tries to be self-reliant. One defect of all Hostels and Homes, as far as I have observed, is that boys who go there are struck with the palatial buildings and take to the life of luxury so strongly that they return to their villages after their study only to be invariably disgusted with their old life and surroundings. But in this institution, I find that menial work, simply because it is such, is not considered beneath one's dignity. The dignity of labour is a thing never to be forgotten. As I am in this building, I am appropriately reminded of Booker T. Washington who managed an institution for the Negroes and who devoted his life for their freedom and uplift. I hope you have a copy of his inspiring book, *Up from Slavery*, in your library. Your duty is to carry the spirit which you have imbibed here to the world outside when you go away from this institution. The motto of your life should be "Service to your Country." I am very glad that the Gita which is full of noble precepts is being studied here by you all. You should cultivate the spirit of patriotism, of genuine love for your country. By sacrifice alone real patriotism will be roused. In Japan, patriotism is the religion of the people. The same family may have members of diverse faiths, but they one and all profess the same religion—patriotism. I have been really struck with the catholicity of view in this place, especially the *puja* hall, where there are paintings of the teachers of all religions. I am glad you are taught that in all religions the fundamental principles are the same.

"You live in a clean and moral atmosphere. Each one of you should rise as an electric light of unlimited candle power. When you go out after training, I am sure you will, with your radiating effulgence, illumine the depths of the darkness of the masses. In particular, the work which is awaiting you in India to-day is the spreading of mass education and the uplift of the suppressed classes. Finally I must not forget to thank the Swamiji for the great opportunity he has given me to visit this premier institution. I assure you that the memory of my visit to this noble institution will be for ever strongly imprinted on the tablet of my heart."

On behalf of the students and the staff, Swami Saswatananda thanked in adequate terms the honoured visitor of the evening.
