

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Or Awakened India



उत्तिष्ठत. जाग्रत प्राण्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जायत



प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Katha Upa. I. iii. 14.

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

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

VOL. XXXIII.

JANUARY, 1928.

No. 1.

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

FROM THE DIARY OF A LADY DISCIPLE

On Friday morning, Sreeman — came to me at my Patal-danga house and asked me to keep myself ready for a visit to the Holy Mother next day. I could not sleep that night. At last I was going to see her, after fourteen years' stay in Calcutta! Indescribable was the eagerness that filled my heart as the carriage conveyed me to the Udbodhan Office at Bagh-bazar, lifting Sumati from the Brahma Girls' School on the way. Upstairs, we found Mother standing on the threshold of her shrine. As we saluted her, she enquired who I was. Sumati who had been known to her before, said that I was her elder sister. Mother looked at me and said: "Just see, mother, what a plight I am now in.—My sister-in-law, niece, Radhu, all are down with fever; and there is no one to attend on them. Just wait a little,—I am coming after washing my clothes." She returned in a while, and filling my hands with sweets, said: "Give some to daughter-in-law (*i.e.*, Sumati) and take the rest yourself."

I could not stay longer that day,—Sumati had to return to her school. So we made our parting salutations to her and came away. "Come again," said Mother, as we departed.

But this short visit did not satisfy me.

I went again to see her on the 30th Magha, of the Bengali year 1317 (1910 A. D.). Mother had gone to Balaram Babu's house. But she soon returned. After I had saluted her, she asked me smilingly: "Whom have you come with?" "With a nephew," I replied. "Are you well?" she asked again. "Is daughter-in-law well? Why did you not come all these days?—I feared you were unwell." I felt surprised that she remembered me even after a single day's short meeting. My eyes filled with tears of joy.

Mother sat down on a bedstead and asked me to sit by her. I obeyed. She said affectionately: "I seem to have seen you many times before,—methinks I have known you long." "But," said I, "I came here only once for a few minutes." She smiled and praised our devotion highly. By and by many women devotees came; and it was delightful and wonderful to me to watch them intently and devoutly gazing at the smiling and affectionate face of the Holy Mother. Soon, however, word was brought that my carriage was at the gate. Mother got up, brought some *prasada* and holding it before my mouth, asked me to take it. Then, seeing that I was feeling too shy to eat it before the assembly, she said: "Do not feel shy. Take it." I took it in my hand. I saluted her. "Come again," she said, "can you go downstairs alone? Shall I come?" So saying she followed me to the stairs. I said: "Mother, I can go alone. You need not come." "All right," said she, "come one day in the morning."

That day my heart was full. How wonderful was her affection!

On the last day of Vaisakha, 1318, I went again to see Mother. As soon as I saluted her, she said: "You are come, mother! I was wondering why you did not come so long. What was the reason?"

Myself.—I was not in Calcutta,—I had gone to my father's place.

Mother.—Why does not daughter-in-law (Sumati) come? Is it because of her studies?

Myself.—No, my brother-in-law was not here.

Mother.—But she has been going to school.....

A mat had been spread on the floor for Mother. She gave me a fan to cool myself with and said: "How hot! You have hurried to me just after meal,—now lie down near me." I hesitated to use her bed. But she said: "What of that? Lie down,—I tell you." So I lay down quietly by her. I

REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

thought she was almost asleep when a few lady devotees and two nuns entered, and she asked without opening her eyes: "Is it Gauridasi?" "How could you know, Mother?" asked the younger nun. "Oh, I could feel," explained Mother and sat up presently. The younger nun said: "We had been to the Belur Math. Swami Premanandaji feasted us sumptuously. One cannot return unentertained while he is there." Mother rebuked her mildly for not wearing the vermilion mark on her forehead.

By and by Gauri-Mâ, the older nun, learnt all about me from Mother and requested me to go to her school to teach sewing to the girls. Accordingly, with Mother's permission, I went there one day. She received me very kindly and asked me to teach her school one or two hours daily. In spite of disabilities, I had to accede to her importunate request.

One afternoon, after the school was over, I came to Mother. It was a hot summer day and I was a little tired. I found Mother sitting among a crowd of lady devotees. On my saluting her, she looked at my face, and taking a fan from the top of a mosquito-curtain, began to fan me. She urged me to take off my jacket quickly so that the air might play on my body. I was greatly charmed by her affectionate solicitude, but also felt a little embarrassed at this marked attention to me, with every one looking on. I asked her repeatedly to hand over the fan to me, but she would not. "Let it be," she said, "just cool down a little." And she was not satisfied till I had taken some sweets and a glass of water which she had brought for me.

The carriage was waiting outside. I exchanged a few words with Mother and returned home.

The 18th of Sravana, 1318.—On that day I went to Mother with the intention of receiving *deekshâ*, initiation, from her, taking all necessary things with me. Going up, I found her deeply absorbed in the worship of Sri Ramakrishna. When the worship was over, Gauri-Mâ who had accompanied me, spoke to her about my intention. I also had a talk about it with Mother on a previous occasion. She asked me to spread an *âsana* (seat) on her left and sit down on it. I said that I had not that day bathed in the Ganges. But that did not matter since I had pure clothes on. I sat there with my heart throbbing wildly. All else were asked to leave the room. Mother then said to me: "Tell me what you got in dream." "Shall I write it down or speak it out?" I asked. "Speak out," she replied..... At the time of the Deeksha, Mother explained to me the mean-

ing of the *mantram* I had got in dream and asked me to repeat it first. She then gave me another *mantram* and said: "Next repeat this one and meditate." Before she explained the *mantram*, I found her meditating for a short while. As she gave me the *mantram*, my body began to shake and I began to cry I did not know why. She put a large mark of red sandal paste on my forehead.

Mother looked very grave all this time. At last she got up from her seat and asked me to repeat the *mantram*, meditate and pray for some time. When I had finished, I also got up and bowed down before Mother. As I raised myself, she blessed me, saying: "May you have devotion!" This her blessing has become the hope of my life.

(To be continued)

THE WAR OF IDEALS

BY THE EDITOR

Do we feel that the Orient, especially India, is just now the target of the determined attack of a most insidious form of Western materialism? It has been said that the motive power behind "Mother India" is a sinister anti-Indian organisation which set this woman already made notorious by her "Isles of Fear" to the writing of the book. This may or may not be true. But it cannot be denied that the book has been very cleverly exploited by the enemies of India. This political motive is obvious. But behind this there is another force of which this is but an effect and expression. This greater force is trying subtly to undermine the spiritual powers of the world and are seeking to render civilisation more and more secular and material. Naturally, therefore, this sinister power is launching its attacks against those who stand primarily for a spiritual outlook on life. The attack on India is an aspect of that original aggression. The West is deliberately seeking to dominate the world, not only politically and industrially, but also culturally. And no country in the world has to fear so much from this as India.

This aggressive materialism is not new born. It is as old as the birth of science. It has its roots in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We know what a virulent form it took in those times. Later on, however, it seemed to be slowly yielding to the truths of the spirit and science also did not

seem so destructive of religion. These were vain hopes. In one respect materialism has taken a more sinister form now than ever before. Those early materialists, however strong their academical views, did not forsake idealism: they were yet too near the decaying religious traditions. They felt the need of some kind of idealism in the conduct of life, and the urge of a super-secular outlook. But as time went on, the outlook of Western civilisation underwent a slow change. This change was scarcely felt before the war broke out. Then the inner rottenness of the Western civilisation became at once apparent. The war burst upon the world like an avalanche from hell. The allies cried out at the real and imagined barbarities of the Germans. They were filled with indignation at their use of the poison gas and other nefarious destructive devices. These, they said, were Hunnish and against international morality. But what are the allies themselves doing now? Every one of them is engaged, if the press reports are not false, in devising the deadliest poisons and other scientific means of mass destruction. The very things which the allies protested against during the war, they are now avidly engaged in acquiring and perfecting. They now no longer remember their hypocritical declarations during the war that they were fighting for the safety of civilisation. Now many of the best intellects of the West are engaged in the preparation for the next war, another game of hell. This itself now appears to them to be the aim of civilisation. It was naively thought that the war would result in a mighty spiritual upheaval in the West, convinced as the West was of the danger and futility of building a civilisation on material basis. False hope. The allies, in spite of untold hardship and loss of men, came out of the war more prosperous and powerful than before, and this has but whetted their blood-thirstiness and earth-hunger. How to grab more and more of earth, how to exploit the helpless peoples of the world more and more, how to build up an effective organisation for the most successful perpetration of these hellish projects,—these are now the dreams of the mighty Western nations. Idealism has been flung to the winds. They hold conferences for the reduction of armaments, not because they are sick of war and want peace, but because even in hell there must be a check to competition. While the Governments are thus engaged—not secretly, but openly, to the knowledge of their respective nationals—the peoples are eagerly supporting them. When it is needed to crush a rising China, they eagerly enlist in the armies. They have still as

much zest for killing and destroying as they had during the war. The blood-thirstiness has only increased. We sometimes hear Westerns expressing horror at the war-lust of their rising generations. But then, one should not all the time support Government in exploiting other peoples and raise hands in horror when war, the necessary consequence of the policy of exploitation, becomes necessary. The motive, in peace and war, is the same. The whole of the West is practically engaged in material aggrandizement,—we mean the bulk of the population. May be, they are unconscious of the actual inhumanity which their apparently honest pursuits mean. They are victims of a system. But even when they become conscious of it, they do not seem to mind.

The post-war conditions have brought to the surface what lay all along festering deep in the mind of the West,—the tendency to a complete secularisation of life and a denial of spiritual values. The practical consequences of materialism are manifesting themselves more and more clearly with the passing of days: spiritual ideals are now being openly challenged. Religion is discarded as a concern of the effete. The so-called able and the active are assiduously engaged in the worship of other gods, the molochs of lust and gold. No doubt there are some who are intellectually convinced of superior ideals and are preaching them indefatigably. But many of them do not hesitate to forego their philosophy on specious grounds at the time of action. There are yet others who are actually highly spiritual both in profession and practice. They are the hope of the West. But alas, they are too few to have any appreciable influence on the insurgent animality at present.

We find two main currents in the progress of the Western life. One is towards material development, towards greater and greater acquisition of physical comforts by extending its political and economical power all over the world and by the complete industrialisation of its socio-economic life. And the other is towards the acquisition of secular knowledge (*aparā vidyā*), towards the development of science. We in the East are often fascinated by the latter tendency and conceive therefrom an exaggerated idea of the value of the Western civilisation. It is true that intellectualism, the pursuit of knowledge, is a high function of human life. But intellect by itself is not a guide to life. It is correct *feelings, emotions*, that conduce to the true development of life. We judge the excellence of a man not by the amount of knowledge he

possesses, but by the emotional reactions he makes to his circumstances and aspirations of life. This constitutes his *character*. Even so of a nation. It is not by its intellectual activities, but by its emotional reactions to the national and international circumstances and the philosophical and religious ideals that we know its true worth. Religion is character. For emotions in their primary origin and final reaction are always personal. We do not feel for an idea, but for a person, a conscious being, connected with the idea. Our altruistic feelings, therefore, must have reference to a super-person, call him God or Absolute. Mere ethical ideals, unrelated to religion, are a half-way house. They do not lead to the absolute fulfilment. The permanent moral ideals, the eternal verities, are all derived from the Divine. Truth, non-violence, chastity, selflessness,—these and similar other moral principles are direct expressions of the Absolute perception and find full scope only in relation to God. A man or a nation is therefore truly measured only by the religion that it practises. Science has not yet given the West a religion. The West has lost faith in Christianity, but has not found a substitute. Therefore the intellectualism of the West, praiseworthy in itself, is little proof of its sanity and reliability. Its material aggrandisement shows that it has not yet succeeded in developing the right kind of emotions in the popular mind. The world evokes in it the lust of acquisition and exploitation; the weaker peoples do not inspire it with the desire to serve them but fill it with the brutal pleasures of destroying them.—Life itself is only an opportunity for enjoyment and not for the realisation of truth. The two tendencies of material aggrandisement and intellectualism are twin aspects of materialism and have combined to produce a change in the Western mind, which is nothing else than the substitution of religion by science and of ethics by psychology.

The conflict of science and Christianity has been both a loss and a gain to the West. If Christianity had been a scientific religion, that is to say, based on correctly ascertained data, there would not have been this conflict. But Christian beliefs being often unscientific, it succumbed to the advance of science. And it is well that it did so, because nothing so stunts the growth of men as artificial dogmas and false and stereotyped beliefs. This has been the gain. But Christianity is not all wrong. Its fundamentals are true, though they may be presented in unscientific forms. These fundamentals men can ill spare in their life. In the fundamentals we include belief

in the existence of a supra-mental being and in the essential relation of man and of his destiny with it. These beliefs in one form or another constitute the essence of all religions. By denying these science has robbed life of its greatest ennobling and idealising force. This has been a serious loss. It has done yet another great harm. The characteristic viewpoints of religion and science are diametrically opposite. Religion starts with God the highest reality and conceives of man and his duties in relation to Him. The standpoint of religion is supernatural. But the standpoint of science is essentially material. Science begins with the sensible and the natural. Its standard of knowledge and judgment is fundamentally sensuous. This conflict of standards could not but have its effect on the Western mind. The growth of science unfortunately, synchronised in the West with the natural decay of Christianity. Men's minds were already out of touch with active and living spirituality,—they were lost in the quagmire of dead beliefs and rituals. The high standards of religion seemed to them shadowy and unreal. Life itself and human aspirations were considered by them to have no connection with the supra-mental realities. The outlook of science proved easily irresistible. This change of viewpoints could not but have a disastrous effect on the morals of the people.

The methods and spirit of science are undoubtedly correct and noble. Unfortunately, the constructive progress of science has not been commensurate with its destructive effect on the spiritual life of the West. If science could develop a system of beliefs as noble and as ethereal as religion, it to-day would have been unimpeachable. This, however, it has not yet done. The birth and growth of science was contemporaneous with an unwonted physical and mental freedom in the Western life. The Papal authority had lost its tight grip on a large section of Western peoples. Renaissance and Reformation had set in. America had been discovered and the whole of Europe had become mad for gold, commerce and kingdoms. Commerce with Asia developed, followed by the gradual possession of large tracts of America, Africa and Asia by Western nations. The new knowledge, science, that developed with this tremendous upheaval of physical powers and aggrandisement of the animal man, naturally could not become idealistic in its aim. It could not become disinterested enough. Science became a hunt after Nature's secrets *in order that* they could be employed to the service of the animal in man. Science ought to have been philosophical in its outlook to be able

to serve the purposes of the higher man. But it failed to become so. It could not therefore build up to the measure that it destroyed. The Westerner therefore has become more and more sensuous in his outlook, and science has helped him in becoming an efficient earth-grabber. We know that it has also given a strong intellectual impetus. But we have seen already that intellectualism is of little help to the higher interests of man *unless* it is inspired by spiritual idealism. Science has not yet given us those data which would help the development of that idealism.

We have referred to the sensuous standpoint of science. Having deprived the conduct and duties of man of their supersensuous basis, it is now trying to base them on material and sensuous foundations. Man's nature is not derived from a higher reality, but is evolved from a lower existence. His feelings and emotions are but the outgrowth and relics of his animal ancestry. Religion is an extraneous superimposition,—it is not an expression of man's inner reality; and in so far as it is a growth from his past, it is trivial and thus not binding. Morality is mere convention and has no absolute value. Chastity deserves to be laughed at.—Thus dictates science. The inevitable result has been that no absolute, permanent standard of judgment is being recognised. How to regulate life? What is the ideal towards which man must aim at through weal and woe? What is that by which conduct and mind are to be regulated? Having lost the absolute spiritual standard through the grace of science, the Western mind assumes the natural to be the only standard. That is how psychology has taken the place of ethics. Material aggrandisement naturally makes efficiency its practical ideal. So the regulative ideal in the West has become efficiency through natural development. This ideal, it cannot but be admitted, makes Westerners able and tough fighters in the battle of animal life. But it ignores the higher functions of man and his higher, spiritual, purpose.

We must admit that like the substitution of religion by science, the substitution of ethics by psychology also has its redeeming features. In fact, whoever is acquainted with the growth of education and invention of new educational methods in the West, cannot but recognise the value of the scientific and psychological outlook on life. Ethics propounds absolute standards. These in their application on individual lives must vary if they are to produce the desired results. Here is the need of psychological insight. Psychology recognises the

variations of individual moral cognitions and expressions. But the trouble arises with the *aim* towards which psychological evolution should be made to tend. Those who hold to the spiritualisation of life as the aim, will manipulate psychology accordingly. Those who, however, do not believe in the spiritual ideal and have on the other hand efficiency as their aim, will train young minds accordingly. Thus psychological insight by itself is no guide,—it may lead any way. Of course certain moral virtues are deep-rooted in every Western mind. Truthfulness and selflessness in the private and national life, virility, endurance, courage, etc. are there. But as these cannot lead us anywhere without being devoted to a higher ideal, the earnest efforts of Western educationists are failing to produce anything better than efficient citizens of materially aggressive nations. They are training up mostly *natural* men and women. What is wanted, however, for the fruition of life, is that men and women should be made to reach up to *superconscious* existence. Here comes the claim of religion and its derivative, ethics. They indicate the heights of the Eternal, which man must climb to realise himself truly and fully. The psychological outlook without the illumination of spirituality is a *cul-de-sac*. We know that high spiritual realisations are everywhere, even in India, rare. But the effort towards them must always and universally be there. The moment we recognise spirituality as the aim of individual and national life, we have to mould all lesser ideals and social and national institutions in its favour. Even to achieve these rare results, the whole nation has to strive for eternity.

But the real mischief of the psychological outlook is that men and women are giving too much attention to the momentary details of their mental working. This age is peculiarly “over-psychological”. The changes and difficulties of the mind are receiving undue attention. The moral standards may be too inflexible; but psychological oversensitiveness often leads to stagnation and frittering away of energy. We are too much afraid of reaction; and that cant of naturalism is over-fastidious about moral rigour and self-control. Psycho-analysis is frightening people with the supposed consequences of the so-called suppression of desires. These fears are only partly true. But the mischief is that it is often forgotten that there is a higher fact which moral endeavour represents. Suppression of desires is not all bad. Self-discipline does not always stunt growth. In fact, these, when they are inspired by moral and religious ideals, elevate man high above the twilight level where

psychological sores fester. It may be that the pursuit of moral ideals may restrict our animal functions. But it grants a higher freedom, opening infinite vistas to the mind to work and flourish along. We lose nothing in energy and efficiency; on the other hand, we feel more and more fulfilled and become citizens of a vaster, sweeter and nobler world. The fact is, ethics and religion propose that man should cross the dark valley where passions and desires seethe and give rise to strange and various psychoses, by the bridge of self-discipline. The modern man is wallowing in that seething valley and creating untold troubles for himself and the world and eagerly seeking for ways of improvement. Religion and morality teach a kind of beneficent cruelty to self, by which the psychological oversensitiveness arising from sensuousness, is mercilessly crushed. But out of this ruin rises a nobler, brighter life, which reflects the light of the eternal.

Sometime ago a teacher in a State University of America writing in the *Harper's Magazine* (New York), on the changing mind and standards of judgment of American youths, observed that "salvation", "sin" and "wicked" have lost their connotation to them and that "righteous," "pious," and "saintly" have acquired new and very different meanings. The word "moral" itself is going into ill repute. As for "conscience," one young-man assured the teacher gravely that he knew he kept his conscience in his stomach, for every time he ate hot dogs at midnight he was sure to have a bad spell with it. "When they appeal to you for advice, you must take care not to put the advice on the grounds of abstract right and wrong." The post-war Western youth is not altruistic, not sentimental, not romantic. "Our standard to-day is prudence, practicality, caution." "To me," remarks the writer, "the saddest thing about the generation which is now growing up is its ennui. . . . It has nothing, except a search for pleasure, to which it can give itself freely and fully." The teacher cannot suggest any other way out of this impasse than an appeal to the youth's æsthetic sense;—morality and religion will not do. This is what we mean by the substitution of ethics by psychology. Our sense of the beautiful is very brittle and fickle. It may lead to either heaven or hell according as our conception of beauty may be. And it will not be far wrong to maintain that it is leading rather to the latter place than the former. For what do we find? In literature, sex-morbidity has reached its extreme. During the last decade, sex literature has grown to enormous proportions, and all over the world this is being consumed with unparalleled shamelessness

and avidity. When the common man assumes the psychological outlook, he is naturally drawn to sex mysteries. Free from moral compunctions, the modern mind is tending more and more towards a sex atmosphere ; and when the sex-consciousness becomes strong in a man or people, it is a sure sign that that man or nation is nearing its ruin : men incline towards gross physical enjoyments and become incapable of noble achievements. If we closely study the fall of nations, we shall often discover want of chastity as one of its potent causes. Fortunately the extreme of pleasure-seeking in the West is combined with tremendous activity and virility. This has saved the West from impotence and stagnation. It has however given birth to a new philosophy of life. People are eager to enjoy life, by which they mean hair-raising adventures, entailing tremendous courage and endurance and also sometimes sex experience. Old standards of judgment naturally find little scope in this philosophy. Experience, provided it is of an unusual character, is its own justification. It is because of such an outlook on life that books like *Trader Horn* take whole countries by storm. This also has made possible for books like *Hypatia* and *The Right to be Happy* by Mrs. Bertrand Russel and *Hymen* by Dr. Norman Haire to be published. Mrs. Russel maintains that "the path to our regeneration and happiness, if there be such a path, lies through our animal nature." She says : "That matter is not solid lumps but tenuous and shifting, that mind is not pure spirit but a construction with a physical basis, come dimly over to modern men and women from the discoveries of science. Perhaps this knowledge may at last persuade them to believe—what long since common sense might have taught them—that the secret of happiness is the fusion of the mental and bodily life both in the individual and the community." So this is her advice and for aught we know the attitude of the modern West : "Away with hypocrisies, timidity, doubts. Away with the darkness of ignorance. Let those men and women who know, who enjoy and who are unafraid, open the prison gates for the rest of mankind. . . . Let such men and women build a human society in the image of human beings, vivid, warm and quick with animal life, intricate and lovely in thought and emotion. . . . Such a society, like the human beings that composed it, would be at home in the world, . . . perpetually devising new forms and new sources of delight."

It is such a West, with such aspirations and ideals, that has invaded the spiritual dominion of the world. This essentially

animal outlook is the very antithesis of spiritual idealism. We are not blind to its merits,—it certainly promises more immediate happiness and self-expression,—and we would certainly have hailed it with delight if we had not known that man is essentially spirit and that it is by conquering and eliminating the animal in him that he really fulfils himself. Because we know that and because India has come to this truth after millenniums of various experiences, therefore we find in the aggressive animal outlook of the present Western mind a menace to the welfare of mankind. It is because of the essentially spiritual integrity of man that we have little sympathy for the exaggeration of the modern finds of human psychology which psycho-analysis, behaviourism, etc. make so much of. We know that the psychological difficulties that these fear from religious and moral inhibitions are mere nothing to a determined and exalted moral sense. What is wanted is that this psychological morass should be crossed over with one single stride of moral idealism ; it is on the other side that life should be made to flourish and blossom. It is useless, we know, to ask the West to hark back to religion ; *it requires to be brought back to the lost ideal by the round-about process of quick development of science and psychology. If science and psychology, by being half developed, have given rise to these problems, they again, will, when fully grown, lead men to the realms of Spirit, now lying ignored. The West wants a religion that is science and a psychology which has also investigated the higher strata of the mind.*

Of course we must also mention that mere perfection of science and psychology will not bring about the desired change unless also the West curbs its greed of gold and power. One cannot serve both God and Mammon at the same time. But will that golden hour of renunciation ever come? Meanwhile India groans under the impact of Western aggression. The West may have many fine features at home. But the West that has invaded our country is a menace to spiritual culture and civilisation. It spurns it and is deliberately seeking to throttle it. Till very recently, we had at least the consolation to know that we possess one treasure which the world covets, the treasure of spirituality. The world was not yet so shameless as to deny its supreme value. Now even that consolation is going away. India has nothing to her credit! Spirituality is nothing! The animal is the supreme god. And if India worships that god, she may have at least a subordinate place on the globe, other-

wise she is a plague-spot and the sooner she is wiped out, the better for the rest of the world!

Shall we take this challenge lying down? Shall the animal bestride the world and mock God in the face? No, no, India must rise in the power and glory of her spiritual dominion and give this fiend battle. This, Readers, is our new year's greetings to you. It is no message of peace. For till the world is brought back to spirituality, there can be no peace for India. And as the very first step we must redeem ourselves. The present world is not in a mood to accept any philosophy which does not promise power, joy and perfection. Our external and internal poverty seems to mock our own ideal. Let us therefore *live* the ideal intensely, revive our nationhood on the spiritual basis, filling it with infinite power and perfecting it in all details, economic, political, social, cultural and religious. Then our life itself will be the most trenchant chastisement to the presentday glorification of the animal. And the sooner we do this, the better. Mere talk will not do. What is the use of empty talk about the spirituality of India, unless each one of us *lives* that spirituality? The world wants nothing so much as the demonstration of the supreme worth and excellence of the spiritual ideal. It lies on India most of all to fulfil this want. Above all, beware of the charm of the animal ideal. It has already infected us greatly, unless we rescue ourselves early, it will mean the surrender of all that is best in us to the inferior culture of the West and consequently our cultural suicide. Let not the Bull, as the Bengali proverb has it, break his horns in order to mix with the calves.

Month after month, we have been pleading the cause of India's ideal—the ideal that alone can save the world—in the pages of *Prabuddha Bharata*. We remind our readers again in the beginning of the new year of the precious heritage of our sacred motherland. Hark to her constant call to the realm of the Divine! India is not a geographical entity. Wherever men seek to realise the spirit and to spiritualise life, there is India. For India's ideal is verily this universal spirituality. *We call upon all the citizens of this spiritual India, wherever they may be physically dwelling, in the East or in the West, to strive intensely to win the war that is now being waged between God and the animal. On that depends the future welfare of humanity.*

THREE SONGS

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(1)

कर्नाटी—एकताला ।

ताथेइया ताथेइया नाचे भोला, बोम् बव बाजे गाल ।
डिमि डिमि डिमि डमरु बाजे दुलिछे कपालमाल ॥
गरजे गङ्गा जटामांके, उगरे अनल त्रिशूलराजे,
धक् धक् धक् मौलिबन्ध ज्वले शशाङ्क भाल ॥

[Siva is dancing, lost in the ecstasy of Self, sounding his own cheeks.

His tabor is playing and the garland of skulls is swinging in rhythm.

The waters of the Ganges are roaring among his matted locks. The great trident is vomiting fire, and the moon on his forehead is fiercely flaming.]

(2)

कानाड़ा—सुरफाक्ता ।

हर हर हर भूतनाथ पशुपति ।
योगेश्वर महादेव शिव पिनाकपाणि ॥
ऊर्ध्व ज्वलत जटाजाल, नाचत व्योमकेश भाल,
सप्तभुवन धरत ताल, टलमल अवनी ॥

[Lo, the Great God is dancing,—he, Siva, the all-destroyer, the lord of creation and of Yoga, and the wielder of *pinaka*.

His flaming locks have covered the sky. The seven worlds are dancing in rhythm and the earth is sinking into dissolution.]

(3)

मुलतान—कावाली ।

मुझे बारि बनवारी सेंइया जानेको दे ।
जानेको दे रे सेंइया जानेको दे (आजु भाला) ॥
मेरा बनवारी, बान्दी तुहारि,
छोड़ चतुराइ सेंइया जानेको दे (आजु भाला, मोरे सेंइया) ॥
यमुना कि नीरे भरोँ गागरिया,
(कर) जोड़े कहत सेंइया जानेको दे ॥

[O Krishna, O friend, allow me to go to the water, O let me go to-day.]

O my Krishna, why play with one who is already thy slave? O friend, let me go to-day.

I have to fill my pitcher in the waters of the Jamuna. I pray thee with folded hands, let me go.]

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION—I

BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA

STATE OF EDUCATION IN THIS COUNTRY

The state of education in this country is appalling. Just a fringe of the vast population comes within the pale of literacy. At the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, when most of the Western nations have well-nigh brought education within the reach of all classes of people in their states, it is really heart-rending to note that in a province like Bengal barely ten per cent. of the population can be supposed to be literate. In the advanced countries of the West, education has long ceased to be a cultural luxury of the privileged few; it has been universally recognised as a necessary equipment for national progress. In Germany, for instance, every child of the soil has to go through the elementary course of eight years and even after joining work the ordinary labourer has to attend night-schools attached to the various industrial and commercial concerns for the sake of specialisation as well as general culture. While in India millions go without any education!

Of the few, who are blessed with literacy, barely a handful get what is styled high education and even this education, miserably meagre as it is in quantity, is hopelessly defective so far as its quality is concerned.

Swami Vivekananda defined education to be the manifestation of the perfection already in man. As a matter of fact since the pedagogic revelations of Pestalozzi and Froebel, Western countries in the nineteenth century have been trained to accept such a conception of education. Education means to them a development of the various faculties of man so that he may contribute his best towards the uplift of his environment. Systematic efforts are made to prepare, out of each

pupil, a healthy and efficient unit in the community by rousing, with the minimum of effort on either side, all the latent powers of observation, reflection and execution, and also extreme care is taken to culture the heart in such a way that each such unit may ever remain devoted to its own country, community, culture and tradition.

Unfortunately, in this land education falls far short of such a comprehensive ideal. It is absolutely unrelated to the life and environment of the pupil. Lord Ronaldshay observes in his "Heart of Aryavarta" that "the whole system of education is completely divorced from Indian culture and tradition. High School and undergraduate courses are essentially Western courses, unrelated to Indian life as it was lived before the advent of the British. They are rigidly mechanical, and altogether lack that intimate relationship between the teacher and taught, which was an outstanding feature of the indigenous system. The university training of the Indian student 'is almost wholly unrelated to the real thoughts and aspirations of his mind.' "

Education in this country does not touch important phases of pupils' development. It aims purely at developing only the intellect. Lord Ronaldshay observes :

"The (Saddler's) Commission was much struck by other contrasts between conditions in Bengal and in Great Britain. In the latter country education was many-sided. By far the greater number of students was engaged upon vocational courses, a comparatively small proportion devoting itself to purely literary studies. Bengal, on the other hand, was 'unlike any other civilised country, in that so high a proportion of its educated classes set before them a University degree as the natural goal of ambition,' a goal which they sought by means of 'studies which are almost purely literary' in character, and which therefore provides scarcely any direct professional training.' "

Thus, losing all faith in anything Indian and acquiring nothing that may be of any help in life's struggle, most of the young men come out of the University after an educational career extending over 25 years. Cultural suicide and economic helplessness are found to be the surest issues of the present system of education, and this is called high education !

Even the intellectual training imparted by the present system is far below the mark. Our schools are still sticking to unnatural, unscientific and even injurious methods which have long become obsolete in Western countries.

Thus want of education on the one hand has made the unnumbered masses a constant prey to disease, poverty and social

tyranny, while improper education on the other has subjected the privileged few to physical deterioration, economic helplessness, cultural estrangement and often moral perversity. We shall realise the situation more clearly if we discuss some of the glaring omissions in the present system of education.

GLARING OMISSIONS DEMANDING URGENT IMPROVEMENTS

(I) PHYSICAL AND PRACTICAL

Any educational programme will remain hopelessly incomplete if special provisions are not made to make our people fully active. How to make our people healthy, strong, hardy, energetic, thoroughly practical and efficient is a great problem with us. The problem before the educationists of other lands is to direct the national energy, which is already vigorously at work, along channels most suited to the immediate aspirations of the nations. But here the problem begins with the awakening of the racial energy before it may be directed in any channel.

Looking at Bengal, one shudders to see how the race is becoming physically weak, lazy, ease-loving and fond of depending on others. Love for work has almost ceased to be a moral impulse. We work only when we are compelled by necessity and even then we grudge, grumble and feel no scruple even to deceive our task-masters by all sorts of unworthy tricks.

One does not receive either at home or at school any training that may instil into him a love for sound health as well as active and well-regulated life. At home he grows mostly in surroundings divorced from all considerations of sanitary and aesthetic requirements. Laws of hygiene have scarcely anything to do with his food, clothes or surroundings. Physical exercise is usually set apart for specialization by stupid and unruly ones. What is more dangerous, he is usually relieved of all kinds of physical labour by his affectionate relatives or servants, and he is supposed to remain an everlasting baby in leading strings. Thus in most of our middle class homes body-building is left absolutely to nature's care, and the most elementary discipline of self-help in personal concerns is denied to the growing child. Naturally he becomes careless, irregular, unpractical, idle and often slovenly in his habits, and these habits become more deep-rooted when in college life he contracts a fancy for snobbishness and a positive aversion for any kind of physical work.

In schools and colleges the education imparted is purely

academic. The only ambition of the guardians is to furnish their wards with degrees and the only business of educational institutions seems to be catering to this demand. The individual's growth is nobody's concern.

In an article published in the "Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science," Booker T. Washington, the late renowned Educationist and Negro Reformer of America, wrote :

"Education, which did not directly or indirectly connect itself with the practical and daily interests of daily life could hardly be called education. Education, far from being a means of escaping labour, is a means of raising up and dignifying labour, and thus indirectly a means of raising up and dignifying the common and ordinary man."

On another occasion while addressing the students of the Tuskegee Institute he said :

"A race or an individual which has no fixed habits, no fixed place of abode, no time for going to bed, for getting up in the morning, for going to work, no arrangement, order or system in all the ordinary business of life, such a race, such an individual are lacking in self-control, lacking in some of the fundamentals of civilisation."

We too are seriously lacking in some of the fundamentals of civilisation, and our educational system seems to be blind to this fact. Our education is absolutely unrelated with the practical and daily interest of our everyday life. A few extracts from a book entitled "Education in the Century," published in the Nineteenth Century Series of America, are quoted below to show how educationists in the advanced countries became conscious of the importance of physical culture and training of the power of execution during the last century and made epoch-making changes in their old educational system.

"It was an epoch in the history of the race when the Universities in the last quarter of the century began to appoint professors of physical culture for the development of the bodily powers of their students. *The time cannot be long delayed when physical development will be taken into consideration of the granting of University degrees.*"

"Knowledge becomes power when its acquisition aids in the development of man's executive tendency, when it is woven by self-activity into the individuality of men and women, and used by them as a means of revealing a greater self-hood."

"Every element that enters into a man's qualification for effective life-work along productive lines should receive training in educational institutions, and should be considered in its full relative value in making promotions from school to school, and in the final gradation rank with which a man is turned out to begin his life-work."

“The greatest advance in teaching was made when teachers realised that education was very imperfect, so long as the child was not trained to be executive along the lines of its special individual power or self-hood.”

“Without the training of his executive power a child becomes a poor agent for good in any sphere. They are called unpractical; they are negative, not positive; they lack force and energy, and definiteness of purpose; they have not a true faith in their own self-hood; they do not recognise their own best power; they are shut into themselves, they fail to influence society, or the church or their national life for good, as they should do; they leave little evidence behind them, when they die, that they have ever lived.”

“The spread of the ideal, that the child should be trained in his operative power, has led to the almost *universal adoption of manual training* as a part of popular education in Europe and America. At first it was introduced for economic reasons; to qualify the child to make a living. At the end of the century men have learned to value manual training as an important educational agency for the development of brain power, for the co-ordination of the brain and hand, for the culture of the observant powers, for the development of the power of definite, purposeful thought, for making the child a practical, self-active, independent, original being and for training his moral nature by preserving his creatively operative tendency, and stimulating him to productive effect.”

From the above it is clear how physical culture as well as development of the power of execution have become prominent factors of “education” in the West. In the elementary schools of Germany, children are made to sit in different drill-postures during different periods of the school-hour. Some sort of military drill and physical exercise are compulsory for all. They are now trying to find out a system of involuntary physical exercise for little babes, who have not begun to talk or even to walk. Then, for awakening practical aptitude, the curriculum of every school provides for a graded course of manual work. Paper-folding, paper-cutting, paper-tearing, sand-work, clay-modelling, carpentry, painting form various items for manual work. This manual work is made more interesting and useful by co-ordinating it with text-book lessons or lessons on History and Geography. Pupils are required to illustrate their lessons with their own models made of paper, cardboard, sand, clay, sticks or other accessories. Hundreds of games have been introduced which develop the power of observation and quicken the inventive genius of every child and help him to be prompt, alert and precise. Besides, all these pupils are made to maintain a high standard of cleanliness with respect to their own persons and clothes. One with a shabby dress or unclean teeth is taken

seriously to task at school. At home also even infants are trained to be neat, orderly and self-reliant. An infant casting off its shoes while strolling about the house is actually made to pick them up and follow the attendant and place them properly on the shoe-stand. The training in obedience and discipline which the children receive in this connection both at home and at school, and the awakening of a sense of self-respect and responsibility so early in their life, are undoubtedly mighty factors contributing immensely to the virility and efficiency of their national life.

The clue to this phase of Western education may be had from the following utterance of Booker T. Washington :

“Text books are at best but tools, and in many cases ineffective tools, for the development of man. . . . The teacher who with tact can teach his pupils to keep even threadbare clothes neatly brushed and free from grease spots is extending the school influence into the home and is adding immeasurably to the self-respect of the home. The cleaning of rooms and washing of dishes have much to do with forming of characters.”

We have to take a leaf out of their book. Our schools must make it incumbent upon them to develop the physique and train the power of execution of every child. *Physical exercise, some sort of military drill, manual work, strict discipline* for inculcating habits of *cleanliness, regularity, punctuality* and *self-help*—all these must find as much prominence in our schools as in the schools of the advanced countries. Thus our schools must contribute a good deal towards making our people strong, active and efficient.

(To be continued)

WOMEN OF INDIA*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Some present desire to ask questions about Hindu Philosophy before the lecture and to question in general about India after the lecture, but the chief difficulty is I do not know what I am to lecture on. I would be very glad to lecture on any subject, either on Hindu Philosophy, or on anything concerning the race, its history or its literature.

* Delivered at the Shakespeare Club House, in Pasadena, California, January 18, 1900. Hitherto unpublished in *Prabuddha Bharata* and not included in the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.

If you, ladies and gentlemen, will suggest anything, I would be very glad.

QUESTIONER: I would like to ask, Swami, what special principle in Hindu Philosophy you would have us Americans, who are a very practical people, adopt, and what that would do for us beyond what Christianity can do.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: That is very difficult for me to decide. It rests upon you, if you find anything which you think you ought to adopt, and which will be helpful, you should take that. You see I am not a missionary and I am not going about converting people to my idea. My principle is, that all such ideas are good and great; so that some of your ideas may suit some people in India, and some of our ideas may suit some people here; so ideas must be cast abroad, all over the world.

QUESTIONER: We would like to know the result of your philosophy: has your philosophy and religion lifted your women above our women?

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: You see, that is a very invidious question: I like our women and your women too.

QUESTIONER: Well, will you tell us about your women, their customs and education, and the position they hold in the family?

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Oh, yes: those things I would be very glad to tell you. So, you want to know about Indian women to-night, and not philosophy and other things.

I must begin by saying that you may have to bear with me a good deal, because I belong to an Order of people who never marry; so my knowledge of women in all their relations, as mother, as wife, as daughter and sister, must necessarily not be so complete as it may be with other men. And then, India, I must remember, is a vast continent, not merely a country, and is inhabited by many different races. The nations of Europe are nearer to each other, more similar to each other, than the races in India. You may get just a rough idea of it if I tell you that there are eight different languages in all India. Different languages—not dialects—each having a literature of its own. The Hindi language, alone, is spoken by 100,000,000 people; the Bengali by about 60,000,000, and so on. Then, again, the four northern Indian languages differ more from the southern Indian languages than any two European languages from each other. They are entirely different; as much different as your language differs from the Japanese; so that, you will be astonished to know, when I

go to southern India, unless I meet some people who can talk Sanskrit, I have to speak to them in English. Furthermore, these various races differ from each other in manners, customs, food, dress, and in their methods of thought.

Then, again, there is caste. Each caste has become, as it were, a separate racial element. If a man lives long enough in India, he will be able to tell from the features what caste a man belongs to. Then, between castes, the manners and customs are different. And all these castes are exclusive; that is to say, they would meet socially, but they would not eat or drink together, nor intermarry. In these things they remain separate. They would meet and be friends to each other, but there it would end.

Although I have more opportunity than many other men to know women in general, from my position and my occupation as a preacher, continuously travelling from one place to another, and coming in contact with all grades of society (and women, even in northern India, where they do not appear before men, in many places would break this law for religion and would come to hear us preach and talk to us), still, it would be hazardous on my part to assert that I know everything about the women of India.

So, I will try to place before you the ideal. In each nation, man or woman represents an ideal, consciously or unconsciously being worked out. The individual is the external expression of an ideal to be embodied. The collection of such individuals is the nation, which also represents a great ideal; towards that it is moving. And, therefore, it is rightly assumed that to understand a nation you must first understand its ideal, for each nation refuses to be judged by any other standard than its own.

All growth, progress, well-being, or degradation is but relative. It refers to a certain standard, and each man to be understood has to be referred to that standard of his perfection. You see this more markedly in nations; what one nation thinks is good might not be so regarded by another nation. Cousin-marriage is quite permissible in this country. Now, in India, it is illegal, not only so, it would be classed with the most horrible incest. Widow-marriage is perfectly legitimate in this country. Among the higher castes in India it would be the greatest degradation for a woman to marry twice. So, you see, we work through such different ideas that to judge one people by the other's standard would neither be

just nor practicable. Therefore we must know what the ideal is that a nation has raised before itself. When speaking of different nations, we start with a general idea that there is one code of ethics and the same kind of ideals for all races ; practically, however, when we come to judge of others, we think what is good for us must be good for everybody ; what we do is the right thing, what we do not do, of course in others would be outrageous. I don't mean to say this as a criticism, but just to bring the truth home. When I hear Western women denounce the confining of the feet of Chinese ladies, they never seem to think of the corsets which are doing far more injury to the race. This is just one example ; for you must know that cramping the feet does not do one-millionth part of the injury to the human form that the corset has done and is doing—when every organ is displaced and the spine is curved like a serpent. When measurements are taken, you can note the curvatures. I do not mean that as a criticism but just to point out to you the situation, that as you stand aghast at women of other races, thinking that you are supreme, the very reason that they don't adopt your manners and customs shows that they also stand aghast at you.

Therefore, there is some misunderstanding on both sides. There is a common platform, a common ground of understanding, a common humanity, which must be the basis of our work. We ought to find out that complete and perfect human nature which is working only in parts, here and there. It has not been given to one man to have everything in perfection. You *have a part to play ; I, in my humble way, another ; there is one who plays a little part ; here, another.* The perfection is the combination of all these parts. Just as with individuals, so with races. Each race has a part to play ; each race has one side of human nature to develop ; and we have to take all these together ; and, possibly in the distant future, some race will arise in which all these marvellous individual race perfections, attained by the different races, will come together and form a new race the like of which the world has not yet dreamed. Beyond saying that, I have no criticism to offer anybody. I have travelled not a little in my life ; I have kept my eyes open ; and the more I go about the more my mouth is closed. I have no criticism to offer.

Now, the ideal woman, in India, is the mother, the mother first, and the mother last. The word woman calls up to the mind of the Hindu, motherhood ; and God is called Mother. As children, every day, when we are boys, we have to go early

in the morning with a little cup of water and place it before the mother, and mother dips her toe into it and we drink.

In the West, the woman is wife. The idea of womanhood is concentrated there—as the wife. To the ordinary man in India, the whole force of womanhood is concentrated in motherhood. In the Western home, the wife rules. In an Indian home, the mother rules. If a mother comes into a Western home, she has to be subordinate to the wife; to the wife belongs the home. A mother always lives in our homes: the wife must be subordinate to her. See all the difference of ideas.

Now, I only suggest comparisons; I would state facts so that we may compare the two sides. Make this comparison. If you ask, "What is an Indian woman as wife?" the Indian asks, "Where is the American woman as mother? What is she, the all-glorious, who gave him this body? What is she who kept me in her body for nine months? Where is she who would give me twenty times her life, if I had need? Where is she whose love never dies, however wicked, however vile I am? Where is she, in comparison with her who goes to the divorce court the moment I treat her a little badly? Oh, American women, where is she?" I will not find her in your country. I have not found the son who thinks mother is first. When we die, even then, we do not want our wives and our children to take her place. Our mother!—we want to die with our head on her lap once more, if we die before her. Where is she? Is woman a name to be coupled with the physical body only? Aye! the Hindu mind fears all those ideals which say that the flesh must cling unto the flesh. No, no! Woman! thou shalt not be coupled with anything connected with the flesh. Thy name has been called holy once and forever, for what name is there which no lust can ever approach, no carnality ever come near, than the one word, mother? That is the ideal in India.

I belong to an Order very much like what you have in the Mendicant Friars of the Catholic Church; that is to say, we have to go about without very much in the way of dress and beg from door to door, live thereby, preach to people when they want it, sleep where we can get a place—that way we have to follow. And the rule is that the members of this Order have to call every woman "mother;" to every woman and little girl we have to say "mother;" that is the custom. Coming to the West, that old habit remained and I would say to ladies, "Yes,, mother," and they are horrified. I couldn't

understand why they should be horrified. Later on, I discovered the reason: because that would mean that they are old. The ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood—that marvellous, unselfish, all-suffering, ever-forgiving mother. The wife walks behind—the shadow. She must imitate the life of the mother; that is her duty. But the mother is the ideal of love; she rules the family, she possesses the family. It is the father in India who thrashes the child and spansks when there is something done by the child, and always the mother puts herself between the father and the child. You see it is just the opposite here. It has become the mother's business to spank the children in this country and poor father comes in between. You see, ideals are different. I don't mean this as any criticism. It is all good, this what you do, but our way is what we have been taught for ages. You never hear of a mother cursing the child; she is forgiving, always forgiving. Instead of "Our Father in Heaven," we say "Mother" all the time; that idea and that word are ever associated in the Hindu mind with Infinite Love, the mother's love being the nearest approach to God's love in this mortal world of ours. "Mother, Oh Mother, be merciful; I am wicked! Many children have been wicked, but there never was a wicked mother:" So says the great saint Ramprasad.

There she is—the Hindu mother. The son's wife comes in as her daughter, just as the mother's own daughter married and went out; so her son married and brought in another daughter, and she has to fall in line under the government of the queen of queens, my mother. Even I, who never married, belonging to an Order that never marries, would be disgusted if my wife, supposing I had married, dared to displease my mother. I would be disgusted. Why? Don't I worship my mother? Why should not her daughter-in-law? Whom I worship, why not she? Who is she, then, that would try to ride over my head and govern my mother? She has to wait till her womanhood is fulfilled; and the one thing that fulfils womanhood, that is womanliness in woman, is motherhood. Wait till she becomes a mother; then she will have the same right. That, according to the Hindu mind, is the great mission of woman—to become a mother. But Oh, how different! Oh, how different! My father and mother fasted and prayed, for years and years, so that I would be born. They pray for every child before he is born. Says our great law-giver, Manu, giving the definition of an Aryan: "He is the Aryan, who is born through prayer." Every child not born through prayer is ille-

gitimate, according to the great law-giver. The child must be prayed for. Those children that come with curses, that slip into the world, just in a moment of inadvertence, because that could not be prevented—what can we expect of such progeny? Mothers of America, think of that! Think, in the heart of your hearts, are you ready to be women? Not any question of race or country, or that false sentiment of national pride. Who dares to be proud in this mortal life of ours, in this world of woes and miseries? What are we before this infinite force of God? But I ask you the question to-night: “Do you all pray for the children to come? Are you thankful to be mothers, or not? Do you think that you are sanctified by motherhood, or not?” Ask that of your minds. If you don’t, your marriage is a lie, your womanhood is false, your education is superstition, and your children, if they come without prayer, will prove a curse to humanity.

See the different ideals now coming before us. From motherhood comes tremendous responsibility. There is the basis, start from that. Well, why is mother to be worshipped so much? Because our books teach that it is the pre-natal influence that gives the impetus to the child for good or evil. Go to a hundred thousand colleges, read a million books, associate with all the learned men of the world—better off you are when born with the right stamp. You are born for good or evil. The child is a born god or a born demon: that is what the books say. Education and all these things come afterwards—are a mere bagatelle. You are what you are born. Born unhealthful, how many drug stores, swallowed wholesale, will keep you well all through your life? How many people of good, healthy lives were born of weak parents, were born of sickly, blood-poisoned parents? How many? None—none. We come with a tremendous impetus for good or evil: born demons or born gods. Education or other things are a bagatelle.

(To be continued)

THE WORK OF SWAMI TRIGUNATITA IN THE WEST

[PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.]

BY HIS WESTERN DISCIPLES

When a World Teacher whom men look upon as a Divine Incarnation, is born on this earth of ours, he brings with him a number of pure souls who are his direct disciples.

These are members of the inner circle of his love and teaching and enjoy an intimate relationship not common to other disciples and devotees. He bequeaths to them the internal sacred fire and carefully prepares them to follow on with his work. They in turn transmit the awakening touch to their disciples, until like the stone which rolled down from the mountain, spoken of in the Bible, a wave of spiritual power gushing forth from his feet, fills the whole world. Thus it was with Jesus and his disciples, the Lord of Enlightenment and his disciples, the Lord Sri Krishna, the Lord Gouranga, and all the other Incarnations of God. Again, in the nineteenth century, a great World Teacher was born in the form of Sri Ramakrishna, combining in himself all the powers and messages of all the Incarnations of the past, but with the new unique statement of Truth that not only all the paths that have been revealed in the past lead to Him ; but that every path was equal to any other when God was its objective ; that all that ever could be revealed in the present or in the future lead to the same goal; that all are equally effective to fulfill for every one the great purpose of existence, Realization.

Soon, one by one, Sri Ramakrishna gathered around him a number of chosen ones, who, through the years until he gave up the human body, lived in the smile of his face, constantly bathing in the ocean of his realization. Here they were trained individually and collectively until each was ready to take up the task of carrying on the mission laid down by their great Master. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel" was also his teaching to whom no barriers of sect or creed or caste could ever for a moment interfere with his all-absorbing love for humanity.

Laying down his life as a loving sacrifice, what wonder before the compelling power of this divine example, that all his disciples became inspired with the same spirit of sacrifice and service to every human soul?

When he finally returned to that realm from which he had descended to take on human form for the salvation of humanity, these same disciples gathered themselves into a brotherhood, occupying an abandoned house near Calcutta, within walking distance of the Temple at Dakshineswar. There they could renew their devotion at the feet of the Mother of the Universe, the Divine Mother of their beloved Master, receiving renewed spiritual inspiration to continue their ministrations to those thirsting for the waters of life.

Here, under the chosen leadership of their brother, the immortal Swami Vivekananda, the greatest disciple of their Master, and a spiritual descendant of the ancient Rishis, they were imbued with the principle given him by his Master that the body is a temple of God and that in supplying the spiritual needs of humanity, they must also minister to their bodily needs. As Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) often said, the cry of famine and disease is louder than that of the spirit and no man can be truly spiritual on an empty stomach.

Then began the long record of those errands of mercy that have made the Ramakrishna Brotherhood a household word all over India. Wherever the flood-waters poured their devastating waves, imperilling the lives and bringing to ruin the lands and homes of thousands, wherever famine and disease claimed their helpless victims, they were sent. Following a life of strict discipline as true monks, their lives were a constant and loving offering upon the altar of the many-phased needs of their brother Narayanas.

Standing foremost in every act of relief and mercy was the Swami Trigunatita. He counted his life as nothing in the balance, in the joy of service. Whatever the danger or privation, he unhesitatingly obeyed the call, no matter where it led. In the famine areas his tender heart could not brook the thought that others would starve that he might eat, and often, giving away his allotted portion, he was reduced to one banana a day and some days not even that could be obtained. Contagious diseases and all the other ills that the flesh is heir to held no terrors for him, secure in the consciousness of his Master's presence and protection.

He was an untiring pilgrim. From the earliest period of his Sadhana the desire for pilgrimage was so strong that it could not be held in check.

During the life of the Master naturally the opportunities for pilgrimage were limited, but afterwards he indulged this desire to the full. In the length and breadth of the land of Bharata (Sanskrit name of India) there was not a temple of any note or a sacred place of pilgrimage that he did not visit. Under the burning rays of the tropical sun, over the thrice heated sands of the desert wastes, where every step is torture, through the trackless jungle filled with wild beasts, across wide flowing rivers, up the snowy mountain heights of the Himalayas—through all of these conditions and experiences, with their attendant perils, the spirit of pilgrimage draws the pilgrim on. None of these could daunt the Swami. Naturally of an adven-

turous spirit, danger seemed only to be an incentive to further endeavor. One pilgrimage ended only for another to begin. Many and varied were his experiences on these pilgrimages, in which was accorded divine protection and miraculous intervention in moments of great peril.

His first pilgrimage of note was the result of a resolution on the part of his parents to bring about his marriage. When Swami, or Saroda, as he was called, heard of this he was at first stunned. After a few hours he determined to leave home. for he had decided never to marry. Putting his few belongings in order, he left a note explaining his absence, which was found by his grief-stricken parents that same day. The Swami had told no one, not even his Master, from whom he had taken his leave, where he was going, so they had no clue whatsoever. A visit to Sri Ramakrishna, however, consoled them, and they set in motion every means to find his whereabouts. Finally they learned that Saroda had started for Puri. Through friends they were able to intercept him and sent his brother to urge him to return home. On hearing that his father had promised to release him from any marriage obligations, Saroda agreed to their great joy to return.

It was on this pilgrimage that the Swami received his first manifestation of the Divine promise: "Lo, I am with you always." One day, as evening was drawing near, he came to the edge of a dense wood through which his path led. As he entered the wood, the light grew less and less, until at last he was overtaken by almost total darkness. Weary and hungry, he climbed a huge tree and, laying his head on one of its branches, soon fell asleep. A few hours had elapsed when, to his surprise, he was awakened by someone calling him. Looking down, he discerned the form of a man who said: "I have brought you some sweetmeats with which to appease your hunger." Saroda took the sweetmeats and while eating them was again surprised to see the man return, this time with a drink of water. Swami thanked him gratefully and he took his departure. With the first morning light, Swami descended from the tree and searched the wood in a wide circle, but not a trace of the man, or any other person, or of any habitation could he find. His heart then filled with joy, for it was revealed to him that this was no less than the Lord Himself, who, in human form, had come to the aid of His devotee in the time of need.

He returned eventually to his family, but no ties could long hold him whose life had early been dedicated to humanity.

Gradually the family ties fell away and his life become a whole-hearted sacrifice to his Ideal.

On a later pilgrimage, also at evening, he found himself on the bank of a wide river, with no way to cross except over an old ruined dam. It was moonlight and he determined to essay the crossing. Here and there he had to jump over small breaks in the dam, through which poured the swiftly flowing current. All went well until he reached the center of the stream when, to his dismay, the moon, which had been almost as bright as day, became suddenly obscured by a dense bank of clouds. Standing on a stone partially covered by the water, he dared not move a step. In his extremity he cast himself on the will of the Mother. Standing where one misstep meant certain death, he calmly waited. "Follow me," he heard a voice say, and he went forward. Before he could realise it his feet touched the firm ground of the other shore. Just then the clouds disappeared and the moon shone forth with all her former brilliance. No one was in sight, and once more his heart filled with gratitude in the consciousness that his Master's grace and protection were still with him.

On another occasion he lost his way at night in a pouring rain and without knowing it had come near a railway station. Overcome by hunger and weariness he lay down to sleep in the rain, covered by nothing but his blanket. Here he was discovered by the lantern light of the railway porter on his way home, who, when he found it was a monk, insisted that Swami accompany him to his home where he satisfied his hunger and gave him warm, dry clothing for the night, starting him on his way in the morning, renewed in body and mind, only asking a blessing in return.

Swami often related incidents of his Master's love for the truth even when speaking in jest and he himself possessed this trait to an uncommon degree. This led him to be very skeptical regarding undue claims to the miraculous and so far as lay in his power he tested such claims to a conclusion.

Once in his travels he came to a place where lived a fakir near a small spring, which flowed over the top of an overhanging rock. The fakir for a small sum of money claimed to make the water flow at will. Many people paid the price, and sure enough, after waiting a length of time, the water would flow. Swami was not so easily convinced. When all the others had left and he was sure that no one would arrive for some time, he climbed up around the rocks until he found the source far up the hillside, and discovered it to be an inter-

mittent spring. It was thus that the indefatigable mind of Swami tested every claim to the supernatural.

He was particularly skeptical with regard to ghosts and stories of haunted houses. He visited a number of such places and found nothing to substantiate their claims. This aroused in him a determination to see a ghost, if one really existed. At last he heard that something might be seen in an old house, in a certain room and at a certain hour of night. He was living at the Brotherhood home at the time and, without giving any inkling of his purpose, made his preparations to visit the haunted house that night. He went two hours ahead of the indicated time to be sure that he would not be too late. The hour the ghost was supposed to appear was midnight, and as time passed he had almost given up hope, when, in a corner of the room, a faint light appeared, gradually growing brighter until, in the center of that light, there appeared an eye, so piercing in its power and with such deadly malevolence that, although it could not shake his dauntless spirit, Swami felt his blood dry up in his veins and his body wither like a green tree before a forest fire in the baleful light of that eye. His senses were leaving him and he was about to surely perish, when before him appeared his Master, and his failing senses were checked in their downward flight. Sri Ramakrishna held out his hand for Swami to rise and said: "My child, why are you so foolish to take such chances with certain death? It is sufficient to keep your mind fixed on Me." His spirit at once revived and his curiosity on the subject of ghosts was satisfied forever.

At times during his Sadhana he had a great desire to perform certain Tantrik ceremonies one of which entailed a midnight visit to a graveyard. This desire culminated in a settled purpose after the Brotherhood had come together in the old house near Calcutta. Knowing that Swami Vivekananda would not give his permission if he knew, he revealed his purpose to no one and made his plans to visit the graveyard on the appointed day and auspicious hour. When the day arrived he patiently waited for evening, ate his meal with the rest and later on retired with them to sleep. He lay still until their breathing assured him that all were asleep, then carefully arose and was about to silently leave the room, when, to his utter astonishment and disappointment, he heard the voice of Swami Vivekananda calling out, "Where are you going?" Swami stood speechless and Swami Vivekananda went on to say: "Sri Ramakrishna appeared to me in my sleep and told me where

you were going, that you should not go, that he has done all these things for us and that it is quite sufficient for us to keep our minds fixed on Him." Of course this was the end of his attempted Tantrik experience, for he would not ignore a command from his Master.

While travelling in the hills on a pilgrimage he came across a village, on the outskirts of which was a ruined temple. The temple had a courtyard which was enclosed by a wall, the gates to which were always closed at sundown. Swami inquired the reason for this, as there was nothing of value that could be taken.

The villagers told him that, with the approach of dusk, dense clouds of mosquitoes descended within the temple compound and he who remained at night would surely be bled to death by them. Some unfortunate travellers had met their death in this way in the past, and therefore the gates were always closed at night. Swami's skepticism was at once aroused and he determined to see for himself if it were true and if there were any other reason. Against all remonstrances he maintained his resolution and the gates were closed. Scarcely had the sun disappeared below the horizon of the hills when a shadow was cast from above his head heralding the approach of a cloud of mosquitoes which descended on the compound. Then began a night of struggle and torture that he had never before experienced. There was no escape, no refuge anywhere. Protected only by a thin blanket, he crouched in a corner, or rushed hither and thither in an endeavour to escape their onslaughts. Only by a superhuman exercise of will and ceaseless effort was he able to continue his struggle through the long hours of the night. He eagerly watched for the first faint approach of dawn, as he thought he could endure the attacks no longer. Finally the night passed and just before sunrise the mosquitoes quickly disappeared and the gates were opened by the anxious villagers, who did not expect to find Swami alive. Only the thought of his Master had sustained him during that night. It was fully a week before he was sufficiently recovered from the experience to proceed on his way.

This incident again illustrates his indomitable determination to allow nothing to stand in the way of his purpose, and no danger, no hardship, could swerve him from his course. In fact, he tested his will and his strength in every conceivable way. His great purpose was that his will should dominate every aspect of matter, the Spirit to rule triumphant.

(To be continued)

BRAHMANISM—THE RELIGION OF JUSTICE

BY THE REV. J. TYSSUL DAVIS, B. A. :

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‘Alas, alas that all men should possess divinity, be one with the Great Soul, and that possessing it, the divine should so little avail them.’

‘Pervading all, yet transcending all; of all the within, of all the without; what none thinks with the mind yet what is in the thinking of the mind, what none sees with the eye, yet what gives seeing to the eye, that know thou as Brahman.’—*Upanishads*.

‘Whenever there is decay of righteousness and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I myself come forth, for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age.’ (All the Avatars, all the incarnations of deity, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, etc., are one and the same.)

‘However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for all the paths men take are mine. The same am I to all beings. Even the devotees of other gods, who worship with true devotion, in ignorance worship me.’

Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;

Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams!

Birthless and deathless and changeless remains the spirit for ever;

Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!

—*Bhagavad Gita*.

As an Aryan people, we must be naturally interested in the Aryan religions, though destiny has made us nominal believers in the Semitic faiths. Celt and Saxon, Greek and Persian, Scandinavian and Hindu have all sprung from a common ancestry. It is to the religion of our common forefathers that the most ancient Vedic Hymns take us back, and to a period before the great emigrations from the North of India began. These emigrations swept across Persia and Syria and Asia Minor, over Greece and Italy and Gaul, and in successive waves carried our Celtic and Saxon and Norman forefathers into the Isles of the West.

The life of the primitive Aryan people reflected in the most ancient Sanskrit hymns is that of a simple agricultural people, who lived in happy consciousness of the bounty of Nature, and expressed their gratitude in delightful songs to the benignant Powers they felt around them.

With the stage of deeper reflection came the conviction that all the forces of Nature, all the creative, preservative and destructive powers, all the gods are only manifestations of the One, ‘the only being that exists.’ (Rig-Veda).

'He who is our Father that begot us, he who is the Creator,
He who knows all places and all creatures,
He who gave names to the Gods, being one only,
To Him all other beings go, as suppliants.'

So, though certain Gods became favourites ; Indra, Agni, Mitra, Varuna are just so many forms of the One God.

It is significant that the name given to the oldest Aryan Scriptures is *Veda*, 'Knowledge'. The Hindu religion is based on the assumption that the truths of religion may be known at first hand, that they form a demonstrable science, and are not matters of faith or belief or tradition.

God, the soul, immortality, all the facts of spirit are matters to be experienced at first hand, not to be taken on trust. All knowledge is based on experience. Science is that which any man under given conditions can demonstrate, prove re-discover for himself. Somebody once knew the facts. What once happened may happen again. 'Christ knew. The Buddha knew. The Hindu Rishis knew. Why take things on trust, on faith?' asks a modern Hindu.

No wonder then, that when our missionaries go to India, offering not what they know, but only what they have been told, they win but slight response from the disciples of Brahmanism. Their own Vedas have taught them that in the Great Quest a man must go beyond the books, and attain Truth for himself.

For over 4,000 years, the Sages of India have followed a system of obtaining direct Truth. On the basis of the Divine Immanence, God is present in his fulness at every point. To be able, therefore, to reach the inner core, the kernel, the real substance of anything, is not merely to get at its divine essence, but to get at That which is the Divine Source and Origin and Life of everything.

When Tennyson addressed the flower in the crannied wall, he said to it '*Little* flower, but *if* I could understand what you are, root and all, and all in all, I should know what God and Man is.' That is the fundamental teaching of Hinduism. Only Hinduism goes farther, says there is no *if* about it, but such knowledge is possible, man has the capacity for it, and such knowledge is the only thing worth possessing.

The key of the system is to get at the divine essence of the thing nearest to man, his own nature. By deeper and deeper consciousness, sink into the depths or rise into the heights of your own divinity.

'Truth is within ourselves,
There is an inmost centre of us all
Where Truth abides in fullness.'—*Browning.*

There in the secret Holy of Holies, man meets the Eternal face to face. Whereas in the West men have been more prone to seek without, to gaze outward for Truth, the Easterner and the mystic everywhere, have penetrated within.

The training of the truth-seeker in India therefore is a rigorous discipline of the powers of the mind and the will in order to lift the range of his consciousness up to that upon which God thinks his thoughts and man may think them after him. A whole body of sciences and arts dealing with mental concentration, meditation and contemplation have been evolved to help the disciple.

The first qualification for the task is a complete ethical equipment. There must be perfect unselfishness, subjugation of the ordinary desires, greeds, ambitions. The things upon which Ethics lay stress, gentleness, kindness, forgiveness, purity, love are only preliminaries. Saintship is only a preparation. A realization of God, of one's own divinity is the goal. Union with God, 'I and my Father are One'—that is the end. For the human spirit is in essence identical with God. That is why we love. The Divine Self in me seeks the Divine Self in you. That is why the Beauty of Nature attracts. That is why the wine of fellowship is so intoxicating. To all things that stir the spirit within us, we may say: *Tat twam asi*—'Thou art That.' Where, but in India, could the victim turn to his murderer and say, as the Yogi who broke a vow of silence kept for fifteen years, in order to say to the man who stabbed him: 'Thou also art He'—Thou also art God!

The tendency of this spiritualisation of the nature of things is to make the physical body of no account. It is merely a portion of the physical world under the control of the Dweller in the Body. The True Self is also distinguished from the mind. Man is not the mind, but uses the mind as its instrument in the world of thought. The Soul in the same way is the passional, affectional Vesture of man in the world of Desire and Emotion. To transcend these worlds, and enter into the peace and serenity of man's spiritual home is the religious aim of Brahmanism.

But to distinguish the Divine Reality from that which is not reality, is to create a dualism. How is this dualism to be reconciled with the doctrine of the Divine Unity constantly reiterated? This is one of the most difficult tasks which Hindu

philosophy has attempted, seeing that thought itself is impossible without the antithesis of subject and object. Still the Hindu will have it that there is only One Reality, and all else is Maya, Illusion, Appearance. Just as dreams are true while they last, so is the world-dream, the projection from the mind of God, an appearance lasting only as long as God imagines it. The Universe is God clothed in this veil of Illusion.

Why God called it into being, why God made the universe is, of course, the ultimate problem. The answer Brahmanism offers is on the following lines. Why does the bird sing? Why does the artist create a beautiful thing? So God made the world for the sake of *lila*, for joy, for fun, out of a happy creative impulse, the pleasure of doing it. The universe came into being as an act of free joyous sacrifice, a love of giving, of spending himself. That is why life is normally such ecstasy, such wonder, such bliss. We were born out of the Divine joyousness.

But as to the Why of Everything, the Brahman prefers to answer with his finger upon his lips. We may know something of what God is in the world, of his Wisdom, his Power, his Love, in fact, all that we do know, is a knowledge of God, but of what is behind, the Eternal Unconditioned and Unmanifest, of Parabrahman, better be silent.

In this way place is found for the transcendent Deity of Hebraism, and the Immanent Deity of Pantheistic Hellenism, and reconciliation of the Unknowable of Herbert Spencer with the personal God of the Christian.

Hinduism lays no obstacle in the way of those who need comfortable gods. Men are at all stages of Evolution. Give milk to babes. Give toys to children. Saints and Saviours, Ministering Angels, Nature-Spirits, these you cannot revere and adore without revering and adoring the Bliss and Wisdom which they express and embody. There is no gap in the Beneficent Order between man and the archangel. This desire to meet all tastes, to satisfy all needs, this attempt to exclude nobody and to include all truth, to accept all that God accepts from snakes to seraphim, marks Hinduism as the most catholic, and in this respect 'the most important religion in the world.' (*Fairbairn*).

But this toleration of every form of childlike faith and practice had led to gross abuse and superstition. The counter-acting advantage is that it is able to keep the most ignorant within the restraining influence of religion. And there are ever waiting, for those ready, the cogent appeals of the most

subtle Vedantist philosophy. The gods arrive when the half-gods go. And one must judge of a religion not by the tastes of the idol-makers, which have furnished such a stumbling-block to the severe monotheism of Islam and Judaism, but by its highest and best. Brahmanism has been described as less a religion than a cycle of religions, a congeries of worships, unified by a comprehensive theory of the universe.

With this comprehensiveness goes perfect freedom of opinion. It is orthodoxy of conduct rather than of belief that Hinduism chiefly concerns itself with. You may think as you will in matters of theology, but for the sake of the stability of the social fabric, you must preserve the purity of the family life, you must not marry beneath your caste.

When the Aryans entered India, populated by an inferior aboriginal race, it was necessary that they should be protected from a lowering of the standard of Aryan integrity. The laws of Manu made provision for this contingency. Upon them the Hindu caste-system is founded. Its vindication is the natural inequality of men, due to the fact that souls born into this world are at different grades of development. Young souls have to be guided by their elder brethren. It is the oldest and strongest who must bear the heavier burdens. And it would be fatal if the lower should have power over the higher.

According to Hinduism, Birth like other natural phenomena, is under the operation of law. There is no chance. Heredity and Environment are only two of the determining factors. The most important is the third—*Karma*, the principle of Cause and Effect in the moral world, which directs that a spirit shall be guided into a condition suitable to its needs of experience and to its deserts. It is man himself by his conduct in a former existence who decided the kind of life he should have in this life. The law works out equitably, without favour. A man's poor circumstances, delicate body, slender capacities are the outcome of the use and misuse of the opportunities accorded in former lives. You get what you ask for. Only in the course of a multitude of lives you learn to ask wisely. God is kind. He offers endless chances.

In the doctrine of Rebirth, Hinduism offers a solution to the apparent injustices and inequalities implied in the wide disparities of human destiny. The Purgatories and Heavens through which the soul passes are essential phases of development, the discarnate experiences between two incarnations. School is not left till its lessons are learnt. One does not pass into higher worlds until all that this world can teach is learnt.

One does not pass from the kindergarten to the university by an act of faith.

So let men not gird at life's anomalies, but resolve to do better, to deserve better. This doctrine gives courage and confidence to the most unfortunate, the most miserable. For it cheers them with the promise: 'Where the highest and purest now stand, you shall climb.' The road of the saint and the sage is open to all. Absolute Justice rules the affairs of mankind. There is no luck, but inexorable law. Play the man, you cannot fail, or miss your way. One day you shall arrive.

The sage and the saints being what they are without grace or favour, are appraised at their true worth. 'Those who can, do; those who can't teach'—not so in India. It is only those who can, whose teaching is heeded. These are the men who have attained. The respect paid to them is sincere. High officers of state and royal personages will go and pay reverence to a naked ascetic, who possesses nothing, is outwardly un-gainly. He is the symbol of the true greatness of India, of the wealth of India.

For he is the witness that there is something more precious than riches, or science, or social rank—and that is spiritual power. He is the actual proof that a knowledge of the mysteries of life, a command over the forces of Nature, a contempt of Heaven, are still possible to men. To attain to his indifference to worldly things, to require nothing from men, to laugh at destiny, to be a king over himself, master of his fate, to front the world and be able to say 'I want nothing, for I have God!'—that is the dream of the Hindu devotee, and the ambition of the philosopher and the wonder of those still held in the toils of the vanities of Maya.*

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Is Democracy a Failure ?

'Is Democracy a Failure' was the subject sometime ago of a debate at Mecca Temple in New York under the auspices of the Discussion Guild, between Dr. Will Durant, author of "The Story of Philosophy" and Bertrand Russel, English philosopher and scientist. Dr. Durant maintained that democracy is a failure since it is not the people, but the politicians, that rule. He said:

"It is conceivable to me that some form of democracy should be

* From *A League of Religions*, with the writer's permission.

a success, but our question is whether democracy is now a failure or something else. If there is any one here who thinks that the people rule in this country—that they decide war and peace, agricultural policy or tariff rates or nominations—such a person belongs to a different century from the one in which I am living.

“Democracy has failed of its original purpose to establish government of the people by themselves. In various degrees and places it exists, but in the large any tyro, any sophomore, knows that the government of America is not the people. If democracy had even given us not a government by the people but a government by the best, then we might have forgiven it a great deal. But if there is any form of Government in history that has failed to attract the best into office—failed to bring men of ability and integrity into public places—it is democracy. Such men have got into office in the last 100 years through epochal accident only.

“What I see before me as the fundamental reality is that the economic freedom of the individual has disappeared, that the economic equality of opportunity has disappeared, that even economic fraternity and brotherhood has disappeared. And with the decay of democracy has come a growing complexity of government.

“A government is a laborious and clumsy mechanism for the adjustment of thousands of disputes among hundreds of warring groups. Yet we deliberately disqualify educated people for office in democracy by arranging that nobody shall get into office except by life-long servitude to a machine, and no educated man will pay the price, and the result is visible right here in New York State. Only those who follow the machine can advance themselves.

“Every State, every party and every trade union is ruled by a small minority that devotes all its time to the mechanism of the machine. In the decay of democracy it has developed mechanisms, politicians, parties, nominations and congresses. The people who devote all their time to the machine are called politicians; their function is to promise what the people want and to do what the invisible government says; the only issue on which they are divided is as to which group should hold the office.”

Mr. Russel, arguing for the negative, said that his test for democracy was a simple one,—Are the democratic countries of the world on the whole happier, more intelligent, more progressive? He said :

“If you compare the happiness of the average citizen in your country with the happiness of the average citizen of past times, or of undemocratic countries, it is hardly possible to resist the conclusion that democracy has been a contributing factor in the general distribution of the welfare. If you are going to say that democracy is a failure you must not compare it with some remote ideal. When one looks at the Governments that have been in past times, the undemocratic systems that have existed, ask yourselves, have they been wise men who have governed the world? I think not.

"Democracy has certain very great merits which to my mind make it well worth preserving. It is in the first place the educational merit, and that educational merit is an enormous one. Do you suppose that if in this country you had a government of the best people, and by the best people, I mean the 5 per cent. who have the most money, because this is what it will always be in practice, do you suppose if you had a government of that sort, there would be anything like the money spent upon education that is now spent upon it?"

"The second great merit is that it prevents certain forms of gross cruelties. In all the cases that history has ever shown us at the present day, where one set of men has the power to govern another set of men, those who will have power will exert the grossest cruelty they can use. If you are going to have people with self-respect, who are not viewed with contempt, you must endow them with their share of power, for power is the one thing which in the long run brings the respect of others in the mass; and any class which is destitute of power will be despised and accused of every kind of crime, and harried and ill-treated and subjected to cruelty.

"There is a third reason which I think in the present state of the European world is very visible and obvious, and that is that democracy makes a more stable form of government and more easy to put up bulwarks against civil war and strife than any other form of government. In undemocratic countries you get insurrections, revolutions, all sorts of change of government by violent means, and the only way I know of to prevent a change of government by violent means is to have a rule that the majority shall have the law-making power, because then if you do have an appeal to force, then the victory would go to the constituted authorities."

In our opinion, democracy has been a failure in so far as it has failed to realise the hopes that it ideally inspires. Not merely a happier and more intelligent, but also a *nobler* life is aimed at for the people by democracy. The highest achievements and purposes of men should be made real in the lives of many. Can we say this of the British and American democracies? We in India aspire after such a noble democracy, one not merely happy but also spiritual, and meant not for the exploitation of weaker foreign peoples but for their service.

Hindu Regard for Cow

By the time this reaches our readers, the Madras session of the Indian National Congress will have revised the Hindu-Moslem unity formula on conversion, music and cow-killing, as devised by the All-India Congress Committee in its Calcutta sitting. So far as we can feel, the sense of the Hindu India is against the clause on cow-killing. It thinks that too much latitude has been granted to Mussalmans. We ourselves also hold that opinion. But we must also remind our co-religionists that we should not make too much of the cow. The sanctity of the cow must not be allowed to overwhelm our duty to mankind. It is wrong history to maintain that the cow has been always held in this extreme

regard by Hinduism. Swami Vivekananda was of opinion that the sanctification of the cow was the outcome of mainly Buddha's teaching. Nor is it correct to maintain, as Mahatma Gandhi does, that regard for the cow is an essential of Hinduism.

Need for Revision

It is necessary that we revise our attitude towards the cow in consideration of national well-being. Human welfare must have precedence to even that of the sacred cow. This is not the age of Buddhistic or Jain revival with their extreme stress on the sanctity of animal life. This is pre-eminently the age of man. And if *necessary*, animals must be sacrificed to the welfare of man. The following report of a conversation which Swami Vivekananda had with a preacher of cow-protection, may be illuminating :

* * * At the announcement of this preacher of cow-protection Swamiji came out to the parlour room. The preacher saluted Swamiji and presented him with a picture of the mother-cow. Swamiji took that in his hand and making it over to one standing by, commenced the following conversation with the preacher :—

Swamiji : What is the object of your society ?

Preacher : We protect the mother-cows of our country from the hands of the butcher. Cow-infirmaries have been founded in some places where the diseased, decrepit mother-cows or those bought from the butchers are provided for.

Swamiji : That is very good indeed. What is the source of your income ?

Preacher : The work of the society is carried on only by gifts kindly made by great men like you.

Swamiji : What amount of money have you now laid by ?

Preacher : The Marwari traders' community are the special supporters of this work. They have given a big amount for this good cause.

Swamiji : A terrible famine has now broken out in Central India. The Indian Government has published a death-roll of nine lakhs of starved people. Has your society done anything to render help in this time of famine ?

Preacher : We do not help during famine or other distresses. The society has been established only for the protection of mother-cows.

Swamiji : During a famine when lakhs of people, your own brothers and sisters, have fallen into the jaws of death, you have not thought it your duty, though having the means, to help them in that terrible calamity with food ?

Preacher : No. This famine broke out as a result of man's Karma, their sins. It is a case of 'like Karma, like fruit.'

Hearing the words of the preacher, sparks of fire as it were scintillated out of Swamiji's large eyes; his face became flushed. But he suppressed his feeling and said : "Those associations which do not feel sympathy for men, and even seeing their own brothers dying from

starvation do not give them a handful of rice to save their lives, while giving away piles of food to save birds and beasts, I have not the least sympathy for them, and I do not believe that society derives any good from them. If you make a plea of Karma by saying that men die through their Karma, then it becomes a settled fact that it is useless to try or struggle for anything in this world; and your work for the protection of animals is no exception. With regard to your cause also, it can be said—the mother-cows through their own Karma fall into the hands of the butchers and die, and we need not do anything in the matter.”

The preacher was a little abashed and said, “Yes, what you say is true, but the Shastras say that the cow is our own mother.”

Swamiji smilingly said, “Yes, that the cow is our mother, I understand; who else would give birth to *such* accomplished children?”.....

Swamiji: I am a Sannyasin, a fakir. Where shall I find money enough to help you? But if ever I get money in my possession, I shall first spend that in the service of man. Man is first to be saved; he must be given food, education, spirituality. If any money is left after doing all these, then only something would be given to your society.....

A Reminder to Miss Mayo

Apropos of the sexual morality of the West, the following excerpt from a recent letter of the London correspondent of the *Madras Hindu*, is illuminating :

As a further pendant to what has recently been said about the contrast between Christian morality and the morality of the East (especially India) I will quote some figures which have recently been published in the religious press, showing the increase in divorce cases in this and other countries during the last 22 years. In the United States of America—the home of Miss Katharine Mayo—divorce has advanced during that period from one in 17·0 to an average of one in 7·6 marriages. The total number of divorces granted in the United States during the last fifty years was 2,250,069, which means the breaking up of over 2¼ million homes in that eminently Christian land. Clearly the moral and social condition of the United States calls for Miss Mayo's earnest attention.

It is worth while giving the following table, which shows the existing ratio of divorce in various countries, including Japan :—

Canada	...	1	divorce to every	161	marriages.
Great Britain	...	1	„	96	„
Sweden	...	1	„	33	„
Norway	...	1	„	30	„
Germany	...	1	„	24	„
New Zealand	...	1	„	24	„
Denmark	...	1	„	22	„
France	...	1	„	21	„
Switzerland	...	1	„	16	„
Japan	...	1	„	8	„
U. S. of America	...	1	„	7	„

The divorce courts in this country were never so congested with "business" as they are to-day. There is, it would be seen, plenty of work for crusaders of the Mayo school to do outside India.

REVIEW

THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION CONVENTION, 1926. *Published by the Asst. Secy., Reception Committee. Sri Ramakrishna Math, P.O. Belur-math, Dt. Howrah, Bengal. Pp. 304. Price Rs. 2/-.*

The Convention of which the book under review is a report, was held in April, 1926 at the Headquarters of the R. K. Order, the Belur Monastery. The Report is a nicely printed volume containing maps and 28 half-tone pictures of the different centres of the Ramakrishna Order and of Swamis Shivananda, Saradananda and Suddhananda. It contains a detailed account of the origin of the idea of the convention and the daily proceedings during the session, a full account of the speeches of the Reception Committee Chairman, the President and many other prominent speakers, as also full reports of the papers read at the Convention. The fifth chapter of the book gives concise accounts of the institutions represented and the appendices II & III give classified lists of the different affiliated and non-affiliated centres of the R. K. Movement. The book, besides giving an account of the Convention itself, gives a comprehensive idea of the principles of the R. K. Order and its activities. Whoever intends to know thoroughly about the R. K. Order cannot do better than peruse this Report.

PLANT AUTOGRAPHS AND THEIR REVELATIONS by Sir J. C. Bose, F.R.S., with portrait and 120 illustrations in the text. *Published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., London. Pp. 231. Price 7s. 6d. net.*

This latest publication of Sir J. C. Bose, which has already attracted wide attention all over the enlightened world, is a connected and popular account of the researches carried out by the great scientist into the mysteries of plant-life. His conclusions are well-known. These are the results of experiments in which plants were made to write their own account on sheets of paper or glass without any extraneous intervention, by means of highly sensitive automatically recording apparatus devised by Sir J. C. Bose himself. Hence the title of the book. What are the revelations that plants have made? To quote the summary given by *The New York Times*:

Briefly, he comes to the conclusion that the life-substance of plants is closely allied to the life-substance of animals, and, further, that the physiological machinery of plants resembles that of animals far more closely than has hitherto been recognized. He begins by demonstrating the close kinship of life-substance, showing that various stimulants and poisons produce very much the same effect on plants and animals; ether and chloroform render plants unresponsive to electrical stimulation; alcohol causes the vital processes of the plant to stagger, or, as Sir Jagadis himself puts it, "The ludicrously unsteady gait of the

plant under intoxication could, no doubt, be effectively exploited in a temperance lecture!" Finally, poisons which are fatal to animals are fatal to plants life also, though in minute doses they may act as stimulants, as they do also in the case of animals. So much for identity of life-substance.

When it comes to the physiological activities of plants, as Sir Jagadis describes them, we can easily understand the early misgivings of the Linnean Society. For he presents us with excellent reasons for believing that plants are endowed with a nervous system, a dual system of sensory and motor nerves very like our own; and also that plants possess a circulatory system closely resembling that of the heart with its arteries. A great many of his experiments were carried out with the sensitive plant *Mimosa pudica*, prettily named in Bengali "coy maiden," which swiftly folds its paired leaves and droops its branches when it is subjected to even a slight shock, as, for example, when it is gently stroked or blown upon. Using his delicate instruments, he finds that there is an active tissue somewhere in the interior of the plant, the pulsation of which effects the propulsion of the sap, just as the pulsation of the heart maintains the circulation of the blood in the animal. Therefore, he concludes, there must be something like a primitive "heart" in the plant, but not so centralized and highly differentiated as in the higher animals. In the lower types of animals, he tells us, as also in the embryo of the higher, the heart is an elongated organ, the contained nutrient fluid being propelled forward by peristaltic contraction. He reaches the conclusion that the propulsion of sap in plants is due to a similar peristaltic action. As the pulsating mechanism in plants is not so highly differentiated as in higher animals, the propulsive organ is likened to an elongated "heart," using that term in a broad sense. The propulsive system of plants may thus be said to correspond to the heart and arteries of animals. That the rise of the sap is not due to purely physical action, such as capillary attraction, he holds to be proved by the fact that this rise may be checked or hastened by cardiac depressants and stimulants applied in liquid form. These would be acted upon in exactly the same way by capillary attraction. But the one checks the flow of sap, while the other increases it, showing the action of physiological causes. The rise of sap is thus a function of living tissue.

The experimenter then set himself to probe for the pulsating layer, his electric probe, a fine platinum wire in a glass tube drawn to a point, being in circuit with a sensitive galvanometer. When the probe reached the depth of three-tenths of a millimeter marked pulsations were shown, whose "autographs" are fully illustrated. And it was further shown that stimulants and anesthetics affected these pulsations exactly as they affect the heartbeats of an animal.

Equally striking are the experiments which indicate the nervous system of plants, with afferent and efferent nerves. Again using his electric probe, he localizes the nerve imbedded in non-nervous tissue, at a depth of one-twentieth of a millimeter from the surface of the

mimosa leaf-stalk, in the cellular tissue called phloem. This is the sensory nerve. And the second layer of the same tissue, somewhat deeper, forms the motor nerve.

Thus we are led to infer the identity of life-substance and of certain vital activities and functions in the plant and the animal, each step being carefully recorded by delicate automatic instruments.

Every age has its peculiar form of thought-expression. Of this age, it is assuredly science. Indian wisdom is deeply indebted to Sir J. C. Bose for scientifically demonstrating one of its fundamental conclusions, the unity of life.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Birthday of Swami Vivekananda

The Birthday Anniversary (Janma-tithi) of Swami Vivekananda falls this year on Saturday, the 14th January.

Ananda-Ashrama Activities

A correspondent writes :

Although Ananda-Ashrama was founded by Swami Paramananda less than five years ago as an extension of his long established Boston Centre, it has already become widely known and visitors of importance from all over this country and abroad come to it. A recent visitor of note was Leopold Stokowski, famous Russian musical director and composer. He conducts the largest and most important Symphony Orchestra in America and has an international reputation as a musician of rare gifts. He came to the Ashrama to a meeting and was so deeply impressed by the Swami and his work that he returned for a longer visit at the Guest House of the Ashrama. He is planning to spend the present winter in India in order to study Indian methods of music. He is also strongly urging Swami Paramananda to accompany him and the Swami may do so.

It is not easy for the Swami to break away from the many demands upon him in California and Boston. The present summer has been a specially fruitful one and has resulted in the re-constitution of the Los Angeles Vedanta Centre and the establishment of a Library and Reading Room in connection with it. Daily meetings are held there by one of the Swamiji's assistants and there is also a more important meeting on Wednesday evening of each week. At the outset of the resumption of the work of the Los Angeles Centre, Swami Paramananda delivered three public lectures in Symphony Hall. The first Sunday the hall was full, the second it was crowded and the third it was packed. His subjects were "India's Gifts to the World," "The Great Yoga System of India" and "Karma and Involuntary Healing." The Swami was urgently requested to continue this course of lectures, but his departure for Boston cut the lectures short.

A Library and Reading Room as a branch of Ananda-Ashrama have been established also in Pasadena. They are occupying temporary quarters while waiting for their permanent quarters in a large and beautiful Arcade Building on the main thoroughfare of Pasadena. It is expected that the Library and Reading Room will be installed there by the first of November. Meanwhile a weekly class is held every Thursday evening. So far it has been extremely well attended.

Matri-Mandir, Jayrambati

Swami Parameswarananda, of the Matri-mandir, Jayrambati, P.O. Desra, Bankura, Bengal, has sent out an appeal for funds in order to improve the Charitable Dispensary, and the School, which the centre has been conducting. Jayrambati is the birthplace of the Holy Mother and the centre has been established in her sacred memory. The locality is very insanitary being infested with malaria. Medicine is scarce in that out of the way place and the villagers are mostly ignorant. The Charitable Dispensary and the School therefore are serving useful purpose. The Swami wants to buy a piece of land for the School and also to equip it properly. Any money sent to him will be of great help to the needy villagers.

K. K. Tapovan, Bithoor

Br. Panchanan, Hon. Secy., R. K. Tapovan, Bithoor, Cawnpore, U. P., has appealed for Rs. 6000, in order to build a hospital (with 6 beds, a surgery ward and a separate room for infectious diseases) in connection with the Charitable Dispensary which he has been conducting for the last two years. The Dispensary has been doing good work and any gift towards the hospital will be of immense benefit to the suffering people.

Ramakrishna Mission Relief Work

ACCOUNTS OF ORISSA FLOOD RELIEF WORK

(From 19th September to 10th December, 1927)

We beg to announce that the Ramakrishna Mission has closed its relief operations in Orissa, after giving the last distribution of rice at Hanspat on the 5th December and blankets at Dehurda on the 10th December. From these two centres 1726 mds. 21 seers of rice, 191 pieces of blankets and 40 pieces of new cloths were distributed to the distressed inhabitants of 89 villages.

The accounts given below will show that the total expenditure of the work is Rs. 10,175-0-9, while we have received by donations from the public Rs. 5,961-9-6 only. So exhausting our Provident Relief Fund, which is mainly intended for emergency and for giving a start to some relief work in the beginning, we had to make an advance of Rs. 1,825-8-9 from the other funds of the Mission.

We appeal to our generous countrymen for their kind help to make up the deficit amount and also fill up the Provident Relief Fund and

put us in a position to continue our work in future. Contributions may be sent to the President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math P.O., Dist. Howrah.

ACCOUNTS

Receipts—Received by donations Rs. 5,961-9-6. By sale proceeds of articles Rs. 148-12-3. From Ramakrishna Mission Provident Relief Fund Rs. 2,239-2-3. Advance from other funds of the Mission Rs. 1,825-8-9. Total Rs. 10,175-0-9.

Expenditure—Rice for recipients Rs. 8,714-7-6. Other food grains Rs. 9-15-3. Sacks Rs. 96-4-0. Transit Rs. 334-4-9. Travelling Rs. 245-11-6. Equipments Rs. 69-5-0. Worker's expenses (for 9 workers) Rs. 348-7-6. Establishment Rs. 89-14-0. Stationery Rs. 12-12-6. Postage Rs. 51-9-9. Medicine Rs. 24-13-0. Blankets Rs. 166-0-3. Pecuniary help Rs. 4-7-3. Miscellaneous Rs. 7-0-6. Total Rs. 10,175-0-9.

Sd/- SUDDHANANDA

The 19th December, 1927.

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission.

R. K. Veda-Vidyalyaya, Bhawanipur, Calcutta.

The first anniversary of the R. K. Veda-Vidyalyaya, attached to the Gadadhar Ashram—a branch of the R. K. Math—Bhawanipur, Calcutta, was celebrated on the 1st December last with the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Manmatha Nath Mukherjee in the chair. Among those present were Prof. Surendranath Das Gupta, M.A., Ph.D., Dr. Abinas Ch. Das, M.A., Ph.D., Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Pramatha Nath Tarkabhusan, etc.

The Vidyalyaya was started in July, 1922, with a small class of 9 students. Gradually the interest in the work grew, and in 1926, a Pandit was engaged to lecture on Philosophical Texts. During the last few months the work has largely expanded. Classes are held throughout the day, attended by 40 students in varying groups. The subjects taught are Samaveda, Gita, Panini, Ancient Nyaya, New Nyaya, Yoga and Vedanta.

The financial support of the work is derived from public subscriptions and donations as also from a small government grant. But much greater help is needed in order to develop the Vidyalyaya. It is managed by a committee of which the president is Prof. Surendra Nath Das Gupta, the world-renowned savant and exponent of Indian philosophy. Help may be sent to Secy., R. K. Veda-Vidyalyaya, 84A, Harish Chatterjee Street, Bhawanipur, Calcutta.



SWAMI TRIGUNATITA.