Prabuddha Bharata

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत

प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।
Katha Upa. I. iii. 14.

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

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ROMAIN ROLLAND ON RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA

BY DILIP KUMAR ROY

Switzerland. The same old Switzerland with a smile of welcome and a lovely charm all its own.

Rolland had kindly invited me to lunch.

It was on the 25th of October. The autumn had not faded yet and winter seemed to be hesitating whether to come or not. The sun shone brightly. It was so bracing after the chary favours of the English autumn sun.

Mademoiselle Madeline Rolland received me at the gate. She had not changed much since I saw her last just five years ago at Lugano.

She led me into the drawing-room, and we had just launched into the preliminary commonplaces of a first meeting when Rolland entered.

The same face soft with kindliness and radiating gentleness. His personality had perhaps developed a shade of languor since I saw him last five years ago; but the mellow sweetness that he breathed through every word and gesture of his reminded me of a great English writer who has said: "We cannot look

upon greatness, however imperfectly, without gaining something from its contact.''

We sat at table, we four, Rolland, his octogenerian father, his sister and myself.

He enquired about my musical activities in India.

I told him I had been touring incessantly and writing musical diaries and criticisms, teaching a band of young hopefuls of India and so on.

"Having good response?" he asked.

"More than I deserve," I replied ; "I wish you could have attended some of my charity concerts and heard some of my young pupils, girls and boys."

"I fear I shan't have my dear wish fulfilled," he smiled, "for I see no near prospect of visiting your country. It is not likely to be given to me."

"But why—"

"I am really overwhelmed with work from morning till night."

"I know. But what sort of work exactly are you just now so occupied with, if I am not too inquisitive?"

"Not at all. Only I don't much care to come out with an impressive list of my own work. Suffice it to say that I do more than one work at a time."

"For instance?" I insisted.

"I am writing the last volume of my 'L'âve enchantée'—number one. Then I have been writing a voluminous critical work on four years of Beethoven's life—the period of his life which has been most productive."

"And then?"

"And then one cannot always avoid complying with the trivial requests of people to write introductions, answer questions and so on, that is, requests which are easy to make but often difficult to accede to."

"But why must you of all people be worried with such—"

"You see it is like this: The modern European celebrities are becoming so self-centred daily that one has often, in spite of oneself, to expiate vicariously for their sins of omission. For instance, I had to write the other day a rather bitter article for an American journal denouncing the caricature of justice which was responsible for the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti. This is not my work properly speaking, but nevertheless I could ill afford to ignore the request of the journalist when he assured me it would help the cause of justice and fair play."

"I wonder sometimes how the judges failed to appreciate that this caricature of justice was not likely to redound to the glory of America!"

"In a sense, however," put in Rolland ruminatively, "the bruiting about of the ingloriousness of such a procedure was necessary for America."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, you see, it has served to open the eyes of the self-complacent Americans a little as to the real state of affairs in so far as the American official mentality is concerned."

And then," he added after a short pause, "I am collecting material for writing a book about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda."

"When did you conceive the idea of writing this book?" I asked, warming up.

"It was a book of Dhan Gopal Mukerji," said Mademoiselle Rolland, "which first gave my brother the impetus. In this book Mr. Mukerji has painted Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in glowing colours and that attracted Romain."

"That is not the only reason," added Rolland. "Mr. Mukerji's encomiums on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have excited a lot of jealousy and heart-burning in certain quarters. One of my motives for writing this book is to counteract this venom."

"The West seems to be rather ill pleased with the East just now."

"Very. In Europe the pre-war nationalism and chauvinism have been gaining ground during the last few years with the result that our people are getting more and more prone to belittle wholesale all the great men of Asia. And they are gradually losing all interest in things Asiatic."

"But what is there to be surprised at in this, Monsieur Rolland?" I asked. "Surely you cannot have expected otherwise of men of whom the bulk is neither great nor mean, as you wrote to me once."

"Yes, but it is not a question of the common people here, don't you see? It is a question of the elite of Europe. I will give you an illustration. An article of mine, in which there was a fine quotation from Vivekananda, happened recently to have caught the eye of one of the big guns of the Schopenhauer Society. And do you know what it was that he asked me? He equired as to who the author of the fine utterance was. Fancy that!—A big gun of the Schopenhauer Society asking

who Vivekananda was! He is not one of your common people, mind you.

"Thus I feel this, a little too keenly perhaps, but none the less sincerely, as a regrettable feature of the trend of things in modern Europe. And it is one of my chief reasons for electing to write about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

"I wonder, Monsieur Rolland, how you could grow so enthusiastic about them even from this vast distance across the seas and in spite of your lack of knowledge of English!"

"But how could I be anything but enthusiastic about such great souls? The radiant strength, the glowing self-respect, nay, the fortifying confidence in the innate Divinity of Man, —are they nothing? They are assets to mankind, the value of whose inspiration can hardly be overrated;—but about Sri Ramakrishna, well, one must write a little cautiously about him. For he can never be entirely acceptable to Europe, you know. A good deal has to be presented in a new light—in a new interpretation, that is."

"But why?"

"For a variety of reasons, one of the chief of which is the bad atmosphere that has been created by Theosophy."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you see, Theosophy has served to vulgarise Hinduism. Thanks to it, a good many of your loftiest teachings sound like cheap commonplaces, odd, fantastic and bizarre. It has besides rendered it easy for people to scoff at Asia,—a pastime which affords unqualified delight to so many chauvinists in our country."

"Aurobindo has written in one of his books," I said after a pause, "that the birth of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda is to be looked upon as an event in India, of which but few of us have realised the full import so far."

"I fully agree," said Monsieur Rolland, "and I cannot but feel that we shall respond to the utterances of Vivekananda, if he is properly presented in Europe. You will be surprised perhaps to learn, Dilip, that Tolstoy was deeply impressed by Vivekananda towards the end of his life. Not only that. There are many people in Russia, like Tolstoy's great friend, Paul Birukoff, who treasure the messages of Vivekananda."

"I am so glad to hear it, Monsieur Rolland," I rejoined, "for I did not know that Monsieur Birukoff was such a fervent admirer of Vivekananda, though I know that Tolstoy had learnt to admire him."

"How did you know?"

"There is an old friend of mine, a Bengali Doctor, who has settled in London. He told me the other day that he had sent Tolstoy one of Vivekananda's books, entitled *Raja Yoga*, towards the early nineties. This book made such a deep impression on Tolstoy that he wrote back to my friend* to the effect that human thought had never yet soared higher in flights of spiritual thought. He—"

"Dilip," Rolland interposed eagerly, "could you get me a copy of the letter? I need it to write an article on."

"I can send you the portion my friend sent me the other day. He hasn't copied it out fully though—"

"I want the letter in full."

"I'll write to him to correspond directly with you. I think that will be the best."

"Right, only you mustn't forget."

"No, no, you can depend upon that."

"What is it exactly," I asked after a short pause, "that you admire especially in Vivekananda?"

"O so many things," he replied; "for one thing, the wonderful directness of his appeal, that serves as a sort of tonic. His words pierce the heart like arrows. And then his iridescent confidence in man, to say nothing of his marvellous power of achieving things once he sets his heart upon them. He strikes me as a Napoleonic character in the spiritual realm. And I marvel at the vision of Ramakrishna when he discerned greatness in the youthful stripling at the very first sight."

He stopped and then said: "Only I wonder why the great men of modern India do not feel a similar impulse in the direction of social service, I mean the sort of uplifting work for the masses, the task which Vivekananda had set his heart upon latterly and which he left unaccomplished due to his premature death. Why do not your great leaders, like Gandhi for instance, take more seriously to this urgent work that lies before you all?"

"What a soul!" he added very low, almost to himself as it were, "what deep compassion for the lowly! What pervading sympathy for the down-trodden! Above all, what reverence for the meanest of the mean, looking upon the dispossessed as God incognito! To me the dramatic aspect of

* The letter runs as follows:
Dear Sir, I received your letter and the book and thank you very much for both. . . . The book is most remarkable and I have received much instruction from it. . . . So far Humanity has frequently gone backwards from the true and lofty and clear conception of the principle of life, but never surpassed it.

Vivekananda's life seems elevating indeed,—the struggle that is, between the individual thirsting after personal salvation and the altruist craving for self-dedication for the suffering humanity !"

"True," commented Mademoiselle Rolland, "only it often seems to me that Ramakrishna never suffered from this sort of struggle."

"The reason is not far to seek," returned Rolland ; "for Ramakrishna, though grand in the realm of the Spirit was a far less complex personality comparatively speaking."

"Do you think that Vivekananda would appeal to Europeans in the near future?" I asked.

"I do ; but only to those who have feeling and imagination. His inspiring confidence in the ultimate Divinity of Man is bound to evoke a response in such people all the world over. His appeal is so direct and vibrant, don't you see? That is why I have decided upon writing a book about Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Only the difficulty is that the material that has accumulated is terrifying. To sort things out of such a voluminous collection is a task indeed."

"What is it in the messages of Ramakrishna that appeal to you most, if I am not too inquisitive?"

"His breadth and catholicity, the universality of his doctrines, which crosses all geographical limits. This is what I call real religion, real vision. A man who hardly knew how to read and write, a man who was by no means extraordinary in his analysis of matters secular, a man who was born provincial,—how could such a man have such marvellous vision and comprehension of things universal? Here he seems to me not only great but towering."

"You will be glad to know, Monsieur Rolland," said I warmly, "that Aurobindoo fully endorsed this view of yours. He says that a Yogi of such calibre is a rairity even among the elect of the mystics."

"I agree whole-heartedly," said Rolland.

THE ORIGIN OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S DOCTRINE OF SERVICE

By the Editor

We return to this theme this year again. But before we take up the discussion, it is necessary that we form a clear idea about the following two points.

Firstly, the subject of our discussion is not the origin of service but that of the *doctrine* of service: the two are quite distinct things. Service comes out of the fulness of heart, out of overflowing love, sympathy and pity. These are its origin. Surely the service that Swami Vivekananda did to the world, came out of his intense feeling for its miseries. And in this, he surely did not differ from Sri Ramakrishna. For Sri Ramakrishna also felt as keenly, if not more, for the suffering humanity. Sri Ramakrishna's sympathy was not of a passive kind. It was intensely active. There are several instances in which he actually engaged himself in "famine relief work"—he persuaded his devotee Mathuranath Biswas, son-in-law of Rani Rasmani, to feed starving people, give them clothes, and in one instance, to remit their overdue rents. And there is also the more important fact that the advent of such God-men into the world is solely for the welfare of mankind. There are many among the followers of Sri Ramakrishna, who look upon him as Divine Incarnation. Apart from its feasibility, this claim implies at least that none of his followers deny that the life of Sri Ramakrishna was fully dedicated to the succour of mankind ;—for service is traditionally looked upon as the impelling motive of Divine Incarnation. It is therefore superfluous to discuss the origin of Swami Vivekananda's service.

But difficulty arises as soon as we come to the *doctrine* of service. The doctrine of service signifies that service is a method of Self-realisation, as potent as the well-known methods of Bhakti, Jnana, Yoga, etc. Of course the doctrine of service is no innovation of the present age ; it has been known for long ages in India as Karma Yoga. But it is a fact that Swami Vivekananda has laid special emphasis on this in his teaching. In his programme of work, which he bequeathed to his monastic order, to India and the world at large, and in the spiritual discipline that he instituted for the training of his followers, the doctrine of service occupies a pre-eminent place. He held it to be essential and specially suited to the present age. It is said that in the early days of the Ramakrishna Order, after Swami

Vivekananda had returned from the West and many young men had joined the monastery, one of his disciples often advocated Karma Yoga as the special message of Swami Vivekananda. This emphasis however was considered wrong by other disciples who thought Jnana, Bhakti, etc. to be more intended by the Swami. In order to clear the point, Swamiji was at last approached. Swamiji admitted that he held Karma Yoga to be the special requirement of the present age.

The problem that we want to discuss is whether this Karma Yoga or doctrine of service was endorsed by Sri Ramakrishna. *Did Swami Vivekananda derive it from his Master, or from other sources, or from his own mind?* The problem is made real by the doubt that has been expressed about the endorsement of Sri Ramakrishna. It is said that Sri Ramakrishna did not ask those who came to him to take to service as a means of Self-realisation ; there are instances on the other hand, in which he strongly repudiated it. The argument that Sri Ramakrishna's own acts of service and his injunction on some of his disciples to help mankind are themselves proof of his support, is not good enough. We must remember that Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples were men of Self-realisation which they had attained through means other than Karma Yoga, that is to say, by spiritual practices proper. Men of Self-realisation are free to do whatever they like. Their example may not be followed by novices. What is true of the men of wisdom, may not be true of the ignorant. Therefore the mere example of Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples does not warrant the inference that Sri Ramakrishna preached the doctrine of service ; we shall have to find other evidences. It is true that even an ordinary man is capable of sympathy and to that extent of service, and that therefore there is no difference of kind, but only of degree, between Sri Ramakrishna and any novice in this respect ; and that if sympathy could be motive enough for service with Sri Ramakrishna, it also may be such in regard to a novice. But is there only a *quantitative* difference between our sympathy and Sri Ramakrishna's sympathy? Sri Ramakrishna strongly repudiated the idea of *Daya,* sympathy and mercy. His own actions were inspired by love and not pity, though like pity they apparently looked. Until we realise the Divinity of man, it will not be possible for us to take up the attitude of men like Sri Ramakrishna. We look upon sufferers primarily as *men,* they consider them primarily as God : the angles of vision are dismetrically opposite. The similarity between their and our

sympathy for mankind is only apparent. The position of these world teachers has been nicely described by Swami Vivekananda, though in a different connection, in these words: "Any one and every one cannot be an Acharya (teacher of mankind) but many may become Mukta (liberated). The whole world seems like a dream to the liberated, but the Acharya has to take up his stand between the two states. He must have the knowledge that the world is true, or else why should he teach? Again, if he has not realised the world as a dream, then he is no better than an ordinary man, and what could he teach?" Therefore Sri Ramakrishna's example is not proof enough that Swamiji's doctrine of service is derived from Sri Ramakrishna. We must find other justifications.

Secondly, the objection to Swamiji's doctrine of service as being foreign to Sri Ramakrishna's teaching is based on the recognition of difference between kinds of service. Not all services are objected to. There can generally be four kinds of service: (1) physical help, with food, shelter, medicine, nursing, money, etc.; (2) saving life; (3) imparting intellectual (secular) knowledge; and (4) imparting spiritual knowledge. Orthodox Hinduism holds that the first three kinds of service are the special duties of householders, be they religious or not; whereas the last is the special duty of monks,—monks must not engage in the first three kinds of service. In fact the engagement of the R. K. Mission monks in works of secular service is considered by orthodox monks as a breach of monastic rules. It must not be understood, however, that orthodoxy requires monks to be stone-hearted or impervious to cries of agony. If a monk happens to meet a starving man and has means, he must help him; or if he finds a life endangered, he must save it. Such accidental and occasional acts of service are quite legitimate and desirable. What is forbidden is that a monk must make such works of service his *principal* or *essential* occupation which must be only pure contemplation and meditation. Regular secular services must be left to those who are householders. Next, it is maintained that when one feels an earnest desire for God-realisation, even if one is a householder, one should retire from external activity and devote oneself entirely to worship, repetition of Holy Names, contemplation, meditation, etc. The objection that is taken against the doctrine of service is that it draws this special class of religieux from their meditative retirement. The preaching of religion by them is not objected to, but their application

to secular services is considered to be harmful to their concentrated spirituality.

The objection to Swami Vivekananda's doctrine of service therefore arises from twofold reason: (1) It is not justified by Sri Ramakrishna's teaching and (2) it is heretical for monks and religieux to engage in secular works of service. The second cause of objection is, as we pointed in our last year's essay (*Feb.*, 1927), only on offshot of the ancient quarrel between Jnana and Karma, which however has been refuted once for all by Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Gita, though the solution may not have been as universally accepted as it ought to have been. Anyway, we need not attempt to refute it in the present article. Our main attention should be directed to answering the first charge.

Let us first pass the situation in review. What was Sri Ramakrishna's attitude towards the doctrine of service? Two opposite opinions have been held regarding it. There are many disciples of the Master, who hold that he never preached the doctrine of service and that there are rather instances in which he discouraged such works of service. The cases of Kristodas Pal and Sambhu Mallik are well-known. He retorted to Babu Kristodas Pal (when the latter remarked that doing good to the country was man's principal duty), "God alone can look after the world. Let man first realise God. Let him get Divine authority and be endowed with His power; then and then alone he can think of doing good to others." To Sambhu Mallik who wanted to build hospitals etc. for the poor, he said: "If God appears before you, would you seek schools and hospitals of Him, or beg for Bhakti, Jnana, etc.? Then give up these thoughts of hospitals and schools, and think of the Lord alone." There is also the case of Iswar Ch. Vidyasagar. Sri Ramakrishna went to see him, and in course of conversation remarked: "The 'gold' is in your heart, but you have not yet come to know of it. It is lying slightly covered with earth. But when you will know its existence, your other (philanthrophical) works will gradually decrease." We find that Sri Ramakrishna did not like to think or talk about other things than God, even though those might have reference to the welfare of people. Once M. and Swami Vivekananda were regretting the moral degradation of a section of Calcutta students. When Sri Ramakrishna came to hear them, he severely reprimanded them and enjoined them not to think of anything else than God. Speaking about Vidyasagar s selfless work, Sri Ramakrishna admitted that it was a means of self-purification,

but he added that when he would come to have devotion to God, he would cease from work. The same opinion was also expressed by him in connection with Swami Vivekananda, though in a different aspect. After Swami Vivekananda's realisation of Nirvikalpa Samadhi at Cossipore, the Master observed that when Swami Vivekananda would learn who he really was, he would at once give up the body. That is exactly what happened. During his last days at Belur, one of Swamiji's brother disciples once asked him if he had known who he was. The unexpected and solemn reply came that he had and Swamiji did not long survive this admission. During his last days, he felt no interest for any earthly thing, not even for work which had been so dear to his heart. Lastly, the impression that Sri Ramakrishna's personality and teaching left on his disciples, did not appear, in the beginning, to be in favour of the doctrine of service. It is a fact that many of the Master's householder and monastic disciples looked askance at the method and idea of work as enunciated by Swami Vivekananda,—they seemed so revolutionary and out of tune with what they then thought to be the significance of the Master's teaching. All these considerations point to the fact that Sri Ramakrishna did not apparently preach or favour the doctrine of service.

The other opinion however discovers this doctrine in Sri Ramakrishna's precepts and practice. First of all, certain instances of Sri Ramakrishna's work of service are well-known, —we have referred to them before. His solicitude for his disciples and for those who came to him was not limited to spiritual help only ;—he often helped them in material necessity also. His devotees bear ample testimony to his all-round service. All these instances however refer to his own practice of the doctrine of service. But he also asked others to do the same. One instance may be cited. He asked Manilal Mallik, a Brahmo, who was much devoted to Sri Ramakrishna and often visited him, to have a tank dug in a certain village where it had been reported to him that people were suffering for want of drinking water. But there are two utterances of Sri Ramakrishna, which are much more important than all these. One was what he often maintained, that *one cannot have religion in empty stomach*. Now, if it is true that Sri Ramakrishna's mission in the world was to give religion to the largest possible number of people, it is bounden on all who would carry out his mission to feed the hugry, clothe the naked, nurse the sick, that is to say, remove people's physical and intellectual needs before they can be brought to a position to appreciate

and practise religion. That this fact had great weight with Swamiji is proved by his constant reference to this saying of the Master in his letters to his brother disciples while he was organising them into the present form of the Order. The other is a more direct reference. We shall describe the incident in details. It happened in 1884. One day Sri Ramakrishna was explaining the three cardinal principles of Vaishnavism,—delight in uttering the name of God, kindness to living beings and service to devotees. He explained the first principle, but when he uttered the second one,—"kindness to living beings,"—he became at once silent in Samadhi. Sometime after, having partly regained external consciousness, he said: "'*Kindness* to living beings!' Fool! who art thou, an insignificant creature, to show *kindness* to them? No, no, not *kindness,* but *service* to them, looking upon them as God Himself!" Swami Vivekananda was present among the audience. Coming out of the room, he said to some devotees: "I have found a new light to-day. This ecstatic utterance of the Master has shown me that the Vedantic monism need not be a dry, other-worldly affair. If men look upon the world and all beings as embodiments of the Divine and behave with them as such in their daily life, they are sure to have their hearts purified even by the performance of their daily actions and realise themselves eventually as parts of God. This outlook will also make the practice of Bhakti easier and more perfect. For, by looking upon all these as Divine, men will be much nearer to the highest ideal of Bhakti,—the vision of the Universal God. Similarly also about Karma and Raja Yoga. If I ever get the opportunity, I shall proclaim this wonderful truth all over the world." This incident, it must be admitted, is very significant and propounds the central truth of the doctrine of service. But let us also note that it also indicates the underlying principle of the harmony of religions; for, as Swamiji explained it, the outlook on man as Divine is as essential and a grounding, and facilitates the practice, of all the Yogas. Does this not point to the inner connection of the doctrine of service with that of religious harmony?

If these two rival opinions are impartially compared, we must admit that the verdict goes to the first party. For, so far as *explicit* utterances go, it cannot be denied that Sri Ramakrishna did not expressly preach the doctrine of service; the indirect proof in favour of the doctrine, as quoted above, lose in importance before the overwhelming evidences to the contrary. This apparently leads one to the conclusion that the doctrine of service is an innovation of Swami Vivekananda. In

fact such it has been considered by many. There are many among the followers of the Movement, who consider that Swami Vivekananda has made many original contributions to the message left by Sri Ramakrishna. They therefore look upon Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda as joint authors of the Ramakrishna Mission Movement. Swami Vivekananda, in their view, is the complement of the Truth which was Sri Ramakrishna, and the whole is "Ramakrishna-Vivekananda."

But this conclusion, in our opinion, is not deep and illumined enough. For it attributes a separateness to Swami Vivekananda, which is not real. And there are certain facts which lead us to think that though Sri Ramakrishna may not have openly and expressly preached the doctrine of service, it lay in a subtle and potential form within his teaching and was only *developed* by Swami Vivekananda. We admit that the facts are not articulate enough, but they are surely full of hints. The following occult facts will at once convince those who believe in the Divinity of Sri Ramakrishna that Swami Vivekananda's doctrine of service, and of course, his whole programme of work, is not against the intention of the Master, but has on the other hand Sri Ramakrishna's full support. We may, to begin with, mention Swami Vivekananda's own admission to his disciple, Sarat Ch. Chakravarti, that Mother Kali made him do all that he did. We may also remember that shortly before his passing, Sri Ramakrishna had transmitted all his powers to Swami Vivekananda. Is it not natural to infer that it was the Master's own spirit that was formulating scheme and preaching, among other things, the doctrine of service? We know his going to America was with the sanction of Sri Ramakrishna. It is said that while he was yet undecided about his duty, he, one night, had a dream in which he saw the figure of the Master walking from the seashore into the waters of the ocean, beckoning him to follow him. We have also the evidence that while in America, he received directions from Sri Ramakrishna as to at least some details of his work. Thus in one letter which he wrote to a brother-disciple at Belur from America in 1895, there occurs the sentence: *"Thakur ballen* —The Master *has* told me, etc." That letter contained details about the organisation of the Math and referred to the latent organising capacities of one of his brother-disciples. Then, we must not forget the mystic significance of Swami Vivekananda's birth. Sri Ramakrishna himself narrated to his disciples that Swami Vivekananda was one of the famous seven Rishis immerged in Advaita consciousness, and that Sri Ramakrishna

had gone to him and awakened him from his Samadhi, described to him the miseries of the world and entreated him to come down to its succour. We have no reason to disbelieve this story. But what is noteworthy in it is that Sri Ramakrishna meant Swami Vivekananda to be a powerful instrument for the relief of the world's suffering. And how could that be, if he did not propound the doctrine of service? For, any other path of God-realisation, though quite potent in the individual cases, would leave a vast majority of mankind outside its beneficial influence. The story is told of a lady-disciple of the Master, who saw him some years back in a vision, standing with legions of ochre-robed monks behind him. She enuqired who they were and was told by the Master that they were his *officers*,—a very significant expression. And it is a fact that many workers in the vineyard of Sri Ramakrishna, engaged in apparently secular service, have felt his guidance in their work and his direct intervention in critical moments. We may also infer the will of Sri Ramakrishna from the effects the different ways of propagating his life and teachings have produced on the public mind. It is well-known that before the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna began preaching his message, a householder disciple, Ramchandra Datta, preached him in Calcutta and other places. In those days he wielded a great influence. He had his monthly organ, wrote books on Sri Ramakrishna and his teachings and delivered lectures to large audiences. His theme was mainly Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual teachings proper,—Bhakti, Puja, Japa, etc. He did not think that the doctrine of service was one of the Master's teachings. The result was what we see now. Though his interpretation of the Master attracted and satisfied some, it could not produce a lasting result or strike roots in the heart of men, and it died of inanition. We see, on the other hand, the ever widening and deepening influence of the interpretation as given by the Ramakrishna Order. Does it not clearly reveal the greater authenticity of that interpretation? All these we mention in order to prove the general fact, as we have said before, that the present activities of the Ramakrishna Order, its practice of the doctrine of service, are not against the intention of Sri Ramakrishna, but are rather in consonance with his will and spirit. It is for us to discover from which explicit teaching of him the doctrine of service emanated. We have to find out the psychological connection.

It may be asked: If the doctrine of service was intended by Sri Ramakrishna, why, then, did he not, while he lived,

directly and expressly preach it and order his disciples accordingly? The answer is simple, as the President of the Order, Swami Shivananda, observed in one of his letters: "It was naturally not always possible for one like Sri Ramakrishna ever dwelling on high spiritual elevation to relive the earthly sufferings of the poor, but it will be wrong therefore to think that he was unmindful of them. What he himself practised and gave out in aphoristic utterances were and are being subsequently realised and practised by Swami Vivekananda and others. It was impossible for him to look after even his own person while dwelling on the high spiritual planes. He therefore transmitted his spiritual ideas, apparently under Divine guidance, to those who were fit to quickly assimilate those high spiritual truths and devote them to the welfare of mankind. The greatest of them was Swami Vivekananda . . . In fact Swamiji was the greatest interpreter of the Master's life and a commentary on the Master's aphoristic utterances on deep and noble spiritual principles." *Sri Ramakrishna was a Power, and there was that in that Power, which, being amplified and analysed, becomes the doctrine of service as surely and conclusively as the doctrine of religious harmony. He was the spirit and essence of that which when applied to the details of humanity becomes the motive power of all good, physical, mental and spiritual. This spirit he infused into his disciples, and in doing this, he did all that was needed for the upliftment of the world.* As to the *details* of how that spirit was to be translated into the actualities of individual and collective life, he did not preach much. Nor was that necessary. For the spirit was bound to express itself in suitable forms. One of the forms is the doctrine of service. Our main task therefore is to indicate the psychological and inner connection of this doctrine of service with the *spirit* of Sri Ramakrishna ;—this we sought to do in our last year's article.

How does God promote the welfare of mankind? Does he go about instructing the *details* of the works to be instituted by philanthropists for the service of men? God acts as the motive power in the heart of the good. He is the inspiration, indeterminate, but abiding, stimulating them to acts of service, the details they themselves think and work out. *Similarly Sri Ramakrishna established himself in the heart of his disciples as the fountainhead of inspiration,*—for, man, as they approach God become more and more like him in nature, ways and influence. *He did not need to specify himself.* Therefore as Swami Shivananda observes, he sought out fit disciples for

receiving his spiritual powers and his main task, during the last years of his life, became the training of those disciples. It is well-known how shortly before his passing, he transmitted all his powers to Swami Vivekananda. This is also the reason why to all who approached him and whom he found fit, his one advice was to devote themselves to the realisation of God. For only in so far as one realises God, does one become fit and potent to do good to men. He often said that endowed with the power of God man can accomplish wonderful things, but devoid of that, even a whole life's efforts prove barren. This does not indicate that he was against doing good. The reasons why he wanted the spiritually-minded to give themselves solely to spiritual practices proper were several. We find that the instances in which Sri Ramakrishna advised against works of service fall under three heads: (1) There were those who were extremely egoistic in their outlook ; their doing good was a sort of profession which they had taken to just as they would have to any other. This attitude does little good to the doer and incalculable harm to the society ; for, thinking themselves manipulators of social forces, they often destroy things and introduce others which prove ultimately harmful. To this class, Sri Ramakrishna's retort was extremely sarcastic and bitter: he wanted them to remember that there was a God to look after the world. (2) There was another class as represented by Vidyasagar, Sambhu Mallik, Ishan Mukherji, etc., who really felt for the suffering humanity and thought service to be an end in itself. Sri Ramakrishna found that that idea was standing in their way to higher realisations. Hence his remarks about Vidyasagar, his exhortation to Ishan to cease from all work, and his sarcastic question to Sambhu Mallik whether he would ask God for schools and hospitals when he met him. He wanted to remind them that doing good was only a *means* to a higher realisation—the realisation of God, that philanthropy was not an ultimate aim. Here the unerring instinct of the ideal Hindu spoke through Sri Ramakrishna. Hinduism never forgets that even the highest altruism falls short of the highest truth ; even in that there is ignorance and egoism. This also must be transcended. We have already referred to this fact, that sympathy must be converted to worship, to God-vision. The element of pity and the consciousness of the object of service being human, must be eliminated. (3) There was a third section, his intimate disciples, whom he wanted to devote themselves solely to God-realisation. The reason was that he wanted to make them masters of the highest

wisdom and fit recipients of his puissant spirit, so that they might afterwards devote themselves effectively to the service of men. It is for these reasons that he personally did not preach the doctrine of service. *He was busy with the quintessence of the whole spiritual scheme.* He sowed the seed, knowing that the soil was fertile and the tree would grow of itself. The doctrine of service was *implied* in his life and teachings.

We said that Sri Ramakrishna did not circumscribe himself by fixed doctrines. But the essentials of his spirit found general expression in two teachings; (1) Man's sole duty is the realisation of God or Truth ; and (2) the various well-known creeds are all ways to God or Truth. We find these two teachings emphasised again and again in his life and precepts. The first is fundamental. For it implies a spiritual view of life, the view that all whatever man does must be made into pathways to God. From this it follows that every man's duty is a worship. But that, though partly so, is not fully the doctrine of service. Duty generally signifies domestic duty. The average man has his scope generally limited by his domestic concerns, leaving a thin margin of social duties. The doctrine of service implies much more than that : it makes the service of all suffering mankind, in the neighbourhood, the country or the world, one's duty. It widens the horizon considerably, so that the mere spiritualisation of one's duties whatever they be, is not the doctrine of service,—there is the new element of added duties. This addition cannot be derived from the first teaching of the Master. That, in our opinion, is derived from the other teaching, that of the harmony of religions. It was a unique teaching of Sri Ramakrishna. It must be mentioned however that it is not an entirely spiritual teaching. The doctrine of religious harmony teaches that other creeds than what one professes are also as good means of God-realisation as one's own, and that therefore one should not be fanatically disposed towards them but should on the other hand respect them. Suppose one does not follow this teaching ; will that obstruct one's personal Self-realisation? No ; for we know there have been many Christians of God-realisation, even though they looked upon us as deluded heathens. Fanaticism may not be always harmful to one's spiritual progress. But it warps the intellect and has bad social reactions. It breeds social disharmoney and misunderstanding. So this teaching of religious harmony is calculated *mainly* to bring about social, national and international unity and harmony. This is what

we mean by its being not intrinsically spiritual. Here then we have one teaching of the Master which was meant more for social service than spiritual. Has it anything to do with the doctrine of service?

But let it not be understood that the doctrine of religious harmony has no spiritual bearing at all. It has an aspect in which it teaches a new spiritual ideal. The ordinary idea is that every man should realise a single aspect of God. This teaching wants that every man should realise as many aspects of God as possible. That parable of Sri Ramakrishna, in which a dyer produces various colours from the same tub of dye is very significant. Each of us has to be like this dyer, capable of realising God in all his aspects. This is the type of man the new age wants, a man capable of universal sympathy, not merely sympathising but identifying himself with all religions just as Sri Ramakrishna did. But it will be of little utility, if the doctrine of harmony referred to only *religious* sympathy. For in the intercourse between men and men, the religious aspect does not form even a hundredth part. Has it not also a bearing on the ordinary intercourse of mankind? When we meet ordinary persons in our daily life, are we not also to practice harmoney then? Sri Ramakrishna at least did so. He knew how to identify himself with the standpoint of every man, be it spiritual or worldly. What was the secret? It was his vision of the Divine in the process of manifestation in every man. To him every life was a religion. It was in this spirit that Swami Vivekananda exclaimed: Would that there were a religion for every man! He said in one of his lectures that every life was a religion. To so look upon man was to truly realise religious harmony; and only then will the true purpose of this teaching of the Master, the establishment of universal peace, be fulfilled. This new attitude towards man is the same as the worship of man as God. For, unless we look upon every life as the manifestation of God, we cannot be truly harmonious, and cannot also truly serve. Here then is the psychological connection: for both these attitudes, of harmony and service, arise out of the consciousness of man's inherent Divinity. This was what we sought to maintain in our last year's article. In fact, it is our conviction that unless there is this spirit of service, religious harmony will become verbal and hollow. For the spirit must not only permeate thought but also action; and when it has done so, it will have this twofold manifestation :—they are but aspects of the same reality. As our revered President

observed, Swami Vivekananda was the interpreter of Sri Ramakrishna's life, the commentary on the aphoristic teachings of the Master. The Master infused his spirit into his disciples,—that spirit is nothing less than the unitary vision of reality and the universe. This vision, when it truly and fully permeates a man, finds dual expression on the noumenal and phenomenal planes. On the transcendantal plane, it is unity with the Transcendental Divine ; in the phenomenal, it is play with God as he variously manifests himself in the variegated forms of the universe. This phenomenal aspect again takes the dual form of harmony and service. The ground is the Advaita consciousness. These are the fundamental psychological facts, and we can well discover in them the source of Swami Vivekananda's doctrine of service. Service originates from love and sympathy in the ordinary plane. But when by constant practice, our sympathy is purged of its earthly taints, when we learn to look upon suffering humanity as only God in different forms (assumed by him in order to offer us opportunity to serve him, as Swami Vivekananda says), we find that the consciousness of the Divine in men is the motive of service, and such service becomes a potent means of God-realisation : *this is the doctrine of service.* Its origin, so far as the Ramakrishna Order is concerned, is traceable to that psychology which underlies Sri Ramakrishna's whole teaching and especially his teaching on the harmony of religions. The fact is that both Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda taught and exemplified a certain attitude towards life and reality ; religious harmony and service both come out of that attitude, and also that other doctrine of Swami Vivekananda that there is no sin. They all rise out of the monistic consciousness.

Such is our comprehension of the problem. Sri Ramakrishna may not have expressly asked Swami Vivekananda and other disciples to undertake secular works for the service of man and to propound the doctrine of service by which a universal spirit of service could be evoked helping on the one hand the national regeneration in its various aspects and purifying on the other hand the hearts of the workers and leading them on to Self-realisation, the only one goal of human life. But there is that in Sri Ramakrishna's teaching, which directly and *inevitably* leads to them. If Sri Ramakrishna's teaching was the seed, in the fertile life of Swami Vivekananda and other disciples, this has become a mighty tree, of which this doctrine of service is a main branch.

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

By Swami Nirvedananda

(Continued from the last issue)

(II) Cultural and Economic

We have already stated that education under the present system is not suited to the cultural and economic requirements of our people. Before suggesting improvements we need try to understand these requirements clearly.

India has a distinct culture of her own. The entire structure of her civilisation rests on certain ideas and ideals of human life, which have been discovered after many centuries of patient research by the Rishis of old. These ideas and ideals are related to the spiritual growth of man.

It is on the growth of the inner man that the well-being of the individual as well as the society does depend. One has to rise triumphantly above the brute impulses of his mind before he can taste real happiness or contribute substantially towards the happiness of others. As every individual wants happiness and every society wants peace, the life of every individual should be one continued struggle for self-purification, otherwise there cannot be peace or happiness for anybody. After self-purification one becomes truly divine. His higher Self shines forth in all its splendour of boundless love, knowledge and bliss. This is the goal, the consummation of spiritual growth towards which every human being needs consciously advance.

Every phase of life in Hindu society was adjusted to meet this primary demand for spiritual growth. Such a social structure was raised that made it possible for every individual to contribute his maximum towards the common weal and at the same time to advance steadily towards perfection. Life was looked upon as an organic whole, and all its phases were regulated to advance both society as well as the individual towards an ideal perfection.

Social status was measured not by wealth or military powers but by spiritual growth. The custodians of spirituality, namely, the Brahmans, were placed on the top of the social scale. Arms, capital and labour represented by the Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras were all regulated by laws framed by the spiritually advanced group. Thus the various social groups were not

allowed indefinitely to develop either military despotism, or commercial greed or lapse into servile inanity—the various social forces were controlled and directed towards the central demand of indivdual perfection and common weal. The life of every individual of the cultured classes was practically a graded course of renunciation and service through four stages of spiritual discipline. To the householder marriage was not a charter for sensuality, it was a necessary discipline for individual perfection as well as social well-being. Property was held as a trust and not merely as a means for endless sense-enjoyment. Men were not to live for the purpose of eating, drinking and making merry. They were not to spend their entire energy and stake their nobler instincts for mere material aggrandisement. Men were to eat so that they might live for the purpose of evolving spiritually. India realised that the inner man should not be starved for fattening the grosser self ; for that is sure to bring sufferings into the individual as well as collective life. So both the acquisition and use of wealth were so adjusted that they might not disturb the inner growth.

In the economic field, therefore, strife and struggles, fights and competitions were minimised to a degree. Each village community was made almost a self contained unit. Different vocations were distributed among distinct caste-groups, and farming was an almost universal source of supplementary income. Bread-earning was made a smooth affair and everybody could find time for self-culture. Thus in the calm surroundings of villages lived our forefathers their simple, contented lives with the minimum of anxiety for bread winning and maximum of devotion to spiritual growth.

Thus renunciation and service were made the channels through which our racial life has been flowing for thousands of years. Certainly there have been at times ebbs and even stagnation in this racial stream due to natural gravitation of our grosser self towards selfishness and sense-enjoyment. But spiritual leaders have never been too late to appear and inspire the race to march on its chosen path. Forms, ceremonials, details of social structure were, of course, readjusted from time to time to suit the demand of changed environments, but the ideals of human perfection, the principles of truth, purity, love and devotion and the methods of renunciation and service have never been forsaken.

At present we stand on the brink of a cultural catastrophe. The advanced nations of the world have dazzled us with their material prosperity and we are being lured out of our cultural

rut. With them wealth and power are first principles on which their civilisation rests. Self-aggrandisement is the key-note of individual and national life. With many, religion is tending to be a ceremonial meant for diversion, and morality an accidental ornament of private life. Life is supposed to be bounded by the senses and intellect. The success of an individual or a nation is measured by the wealth it has hoarded or the power it wields over others. So instead of renunciation and service, self-aggrandisement and competition are the channels through which the modern nations move. Upon such a culture is based our present system of education. No wonder, therefore, that educated India under the hypnotic spell of modern education is about to receive this culture with open arms.

A bulk of our educated countrymen do not find anything good or distinctive in Indian culture, and is prepared to reshape our entire socio-economic structure in the lathe of the modern nations.

While another section of our community though clinging obstinately to every bit of forms and structural details has lost sight of the central demand for spiritual growth through self-purification. Attachment to externals without a vision of spiritual life has given rise to a cultural paradox. Hatred, jealousy, intolerance, cruelty, hypocricy, selfishness are all masquerading in the name of religion. This has let loose disruptive forces within the community. Sects are fighting with sects and castes with castes because they have lost the thread of central unity. Individuals ignorant of the import of our glorious culture have become spiritually enfeebled, and the lower self is becoming uppermost in their thoughts. Without real spiritual culture every day they are drawing closer and closer to a self-centred materialistic outlook of life, and they are becoming more and more liable to be swept off their cultural groove by any lure of wealth or power. The motion has already commenced and our present social structure is too dismantled to arrest this motion. One wing of our society is consciously leaving the central ideal of spiritual growth, while from the fossilised fingers of the other wing the ideal is unconsciously slipping away. And there is no accepted authority within the land that can save the society from the impending danger of a thorough cultural alienation, which means extinction of this race.

Such is the state of our society when the combined industrialism of the advanced nations have made it well-nigh impos-

sible to preserve the self-contained structure of our village community

Science has wrought miracles. Foreign nations have actually become our next-door neighbours. Natural barriers can no longer insulate a country from the rest of the world. Economic life of a nation is no longer limited within a particular country. It has to adjust itself with the economic forces of the world. Even the cart-driver in an out-of-the-way Indian village has to shake hands with Mr. Ford of America and enlist himself in the army of motor-drivers. The American motor-prince presses him more heavily than his neighbouring cart-men.

The entire world has literally become one huge market where open competition alone determines the life or death of a nation. This world-market is practically held and controlled by the advanced nations. Ceaselessly to expand their economic domain seems to be their vital concern, and for this they are concentrating untold capital, raising the efficiency of labour by systematic training, utilising applied science for economising labour and building up gigantic organisations of industry and commerce. Every corner of the earth is being ransacked by them for raw materials and no contrivance is left untouched to find a market for their finished commodities.

Who can now draw a magic circle round a group of villages and stop the egress and ingress of commodities? The people do not feel the necessity, as they have lost sight of the central principle of their village structure. Moreover bread-problem has become extremely keen. Their age-old vocations do not pay ; they have to compete with foreign manufactures which are cheaper and more attractive. Plain living and high thinking is every day becoming a thing of the past. Modern world has made our life complex and our tastes delicate. We are eager for fine things and we must have them cheap. With all our gates wide open to the cheap and attractive commodities of other lands, who can lock up the tastes and fancies of this vast nation within the four corners of ancient or even medieval India? Porcelain, glass and enamel are replacing earthenware ; the classic wheel of the potter is going to stop and find a place in the museum. Mills and factories produce cheap goods—they are going to dislodge our craftsmen. The weaver does not find a market for his textiles, nor can the blacksmith stick to his vocation. They must find out new avenues of income or they will die. For the sake of bare existence they are being driven out of their vocation, their village home,

probably to join the labour corps of some mills or factories. They will not mind leaving their social groove where they are unable to support themselves.

Thus under the impact of modern economic forces India is slowly, yet surely gravitating towards big-scale industrialism. Mills and factories are springing up and they are actually attracting hordes of labourers from the peasantry and craftsmen. They seem to have come to stay and spread in this land like any other gift of modern science and accomplish the total disruption of our village structure. Men like Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar think seriously that under modern conditions we cannot live, unless we start *ad infinitum* big industries even with foreign capital and recast our entire socio-economic structure in the moulds of the advanced countries. The tidal wave of industrialism is thus advancing in rapid strides, and the people are not in a mood to resist it, nor in a position to do without it.

We are between the horns of a dilemma. It seems as if we cannot help courting industrialism for our very existence. Neither can we live without our cultural ideals which seem to be fundamentally opposed to industrialism. For industrialism is sure to usher competition and fight within and without the nation. Modern history is a harrowing account of ceaseless fight between capital and labour, unscrupulous exploitation of weaker races on the point of bayonet, bloody struggles between advanced nations for industrial booty, systematic culture of greed, indolence, luxury and ferocity among dividend-holders, and degeneration of poor labourers into criminal types or human automatons. And these are the issues of industrialism. Industrialism brings bread, but it does not bring peace to humanity. How can we preserve our cultural ideals and yet accommodate this pernicious industrialism?

This is undoubtedly a puzzling problem and it has given rise to a good deal of controversy. One school of thinkers hold that we should give up our cultural ideals altogether and vote solidly for industrialism, without which they believe we are bound to be economically unfit for existence under modern conditions. While another school of thinkers prescribe that we should summarily dismiss industrialism as a bane of human civilization, stick to our own cultural ideals and revive our ancient socio-economic structure with or without any modification whatsoever. This wholesale rejection, either of industrialism or of our cultural ideals prescribed by the two opposing schools seems to be poor attempts at the solution of the problem.

A higher synthesis of the two contradictory elements and not a mere short-cut by eliminating one of them seems to be the only rational method of solving the problem.

We are perfectly confident that Swamiji suggested such a rational procedure when he laid down the following injunction :

"Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now and decide. We are to put the chemicals together and the crystalisation will be done by nature according to her laws."

Industrialism versus civilisation has become a world-problem. Gigantic labour movements on the Continent are trying to evolve new structures which can make a nation prosper without hurting anyone within or without it. Of these we have yet to see the result.

We, too, need try to solve the problem in our own way, not on paper but in the economic field. We have no authority to thrust any paper programme upon the society, which is lying at the mercy of the disruptive influence of modern socio-economic conditions, as mentioned above. We cannot control the village market, we cannot eliminate competition with foreign goods. Nor can we command the tastes of our people, nor force them to remain within the vocational grooves of different castes. Lack of faith in our cultural ideals on the one hand and tremendous economic pressure on the other have set in a chaotic motion within the society. Who can arrest this motion now? The people alone can do it and will do it only when they will be made to feel the necessity The people are the only authority on whom the future of the country entirely depends. They have to be properly equipped and allowed to compare, contrast, reject, accept, modify and adopt things and finally find out a solution of the puzzling socio-economic problem.

Education, therefore, at the present moment is required, just to equip our people for this momentous experiment. The task of the educationist is to make our people culturally self-conscious by broad-casting spiritual ideas and ideals, and at the same time throw open to them all the ways and means of economic well-being as yet discovered and leave them to a natural process of self-adjustment. Demand for spiritual growth and culture of all noble virtues that help this growth have again to be made vital factors of our life, and at the same time we have to be initiated into the mysteries of modern science.

Our country is mainly agricultural, so the educationist needs

make it a point to enlighten everybody as to what science has contributed towards the improvement of *agriculture*. Our craftsmen immediately require a lift, so that they may produce cheaper and more attractive goods and cater to our changed tastes. Hence they need have a thorough knowledge of what science has done for the improvement of *home-industries* by introducing hand machines or small power machines. Education must make our masses conversant with up-to-date principles of *hygiene and sanitation* so that they may fight successfully with disease. They need know how *co-operative organisations* have worked miracles in other lands, and how they have actually commenced to work in this country.

These our people need immediately know, and along with all these they have to be taught to love, adore, and practise the noble ideas and ideals of our glorious culture. The real spirit of religion adapted so nicely in Hinduism to suit various temperaments and stages of spiritual growth has again to be made a living theme of Hindu life. This is the dual task before the educationist, this is the equipment for the great experiment out of which will emerge a new socio-economic structure suited to our country.

For economic and cultural education, vocational training and character building are essential ; but the present system of education has made very little provision for these.

(To be continued)

TO SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

By Dr. V. J. Enos

How like the fragrant rose,
Whose perfume ladens all the air
And e'en till her last petal blows,
Intrigues the mind within fancies rare,
Art thou !

How like the full fair moon,
Showering the Earth with liquid light,
Transforming the heart of deepest night,
With beauty for outrivalling the noon,
Art thou !

Oh love, Oh bliss, O life divine,
What chord within my heart was struck,
Which sounds so mad, so sweet a tone,
I fain would know no more of Earth?*

THE WORK OF SWAMI TRIGUNATITA IN THE WEST

[PERSONAL REMINISCENCES]

BY HIS WESTERN DISCIPLES

(Continued from the last issue)

BIRTH, YOUTH AND MONKHOOD

Swami Trigunatita was born on Monday, the 30th of January, 1865, at 10 P.M., at Nourah, in the Pai Khati, of 24 Pergonas, Bengal. His maternal grandfather, Babu Nilkamal Sircar, was a powerful Zemindar of Pai Khati. Both his father, Babu Shib Kristo Mittra, descendant of Mittra Bonso of Katore, Sub-division Barasat, 24-Pergonas, Bengal, and his mother came of a Zemindar family.

Saroda Mittra's (Swami Trigunatita's) birth date and time were regarded as very auspicious by all the astrologers. In the opinion of the astrologers, the child was to become a great ascetic (Yogi), learned as well as all-beloved in the future. The astrologers told his parents that saints are generally born at such auspicious moments, and they predicted that their son would be a spiritual giant.

He began to develop in every sense of the word day by day. When he was six months old the *Annaprasan* ceremony was performed, and he received his name and first meal, according to the rules of the Hindu Shastras. He was named Saroda Prasanna Mittra. Saroda's good qualities captivated the village. At the age of three he was brought down to his father's Calcutta residence and then the family removed permanently to Nandan Bagan. At twelve he was admitted to Seal's College of Calcutta, and the teachers were struck with wonder at his extraordinary intellect.

From his very childhood Saroda had been a great devotee. His father and mother were both very religious, the former

* Swami Prakashananda passed away on the 13th February, 1927—*Ed.*

[redacted] whole days in worship. Beginning with his ninth year, Saroda helped his father in worship. They would both arise very early in the morning, Saroda going into the garden to pluck various flowers and then arranging them with Sandal, *Atapa* rice and other offerings for the services. When everything was ready he would sit at his father's side and listen attentively to the *mantras* and prayers. Saroda's memory was so powerful that within five years, from his ninth to his fourteenth year, he had memorized one hundred and eight Slokas with *pranams* and prayers. Furthermore, he could chant most beautifully the greater portions of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Upanishads, Chandi, and other sacred books. Thus his mind became more and more susceptible to the Divine Inspiration. When he finally came to sit at the feet of the Master, his real training for spiritual character began. To the illuminated vision of Sri Ramakrishna, of course, the contents of every mind were revealed in every detail. All weaknesses were at once apparent, and sooner or later he applied the specific remedy for their healing. It was only natural that each disciple, irresistibly drawn to the Master through a strong desire to realize the truth, should also carry with him as a heritage from his former life, tendencies which must be corrected or they would stand in the way of his spiritual progress.

In the home of Swami there had always been servants who did all the menial tasks and other work of the household. Unconsciously and otherwise as a result of this early training, Swami had held himself above menial tasks and brought this defect with him to Sri Ramakrishna. One unusually hot day, while visiting the Temple at Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna said: "Please bring some water and wash my feet." Swami stood stock still, rooted to the ground, a deepening flush rising to his forehead. Had he heard aright, were there not servants for such things? Seemingly not noticing his confusion, the Master repeated the request, and notwithstanding the presence of friends and others there was nothing to do but to comply. With this single act, through the Master's grace, the pride of caste was forever broken and the true spirit of selfless service, which was really one of his innate qualities, was from that time on placed at the disposal of his Master and all humanity.

Of the many wonderful experiences while living with the Master, which were to prepare him for his life work in carrying the truth to the world, one stands out in marked relief. One of the last arms of the ego to be cut off is sex, with all

of its subtle ramifications and years of practice and asceticism are often necessary for its eradication. Swami had set his will to conquer this great foe, but the task seemed endless until, on a certain day, as he sat in meditation, he felt a definite motion of the Master's grace within and the idea of sex began to disappear like a mirage, never to return.

While he was attending college, he would frequently absent himself to go to the Temple at Dakshineswar. Suddenly he left the institution without the knowledge of his parents and began to work for the public good. Naturally this made him inattentive to his home and his parents tried to adopt means to end a state of things so foreign to their natural affections. This caused Saroda much suffering even at the outset of his life's mission. Nothing, however, could daunt his purpose. He was determined to offer his whole life to the service of humanity. This alarmed his parents, as they were endeavouring to have him marry. Saroda, however, would not listen to this, as his heart's desire was to relieve the distress of the wretched and the only way he considered that this could be accomplished was to help them to reach the state of Universal Truth. On January 3rd, 1886, he fled from his home, going to Sri Ramakrishna, but only stayed a short time with him and then left for Puri. Before leaving home, Saroda arranged all his affairs, even putting in many of his books slips denoting the parties from whom he borrowed them. He left this brief letter: "My dear parents, I will remain single throughout my life, as I do not wish to be entangled in any worldly conditions. Where my eyes and heart direct me, there will I go."

After this pilgrimage to Puri, Saroda returned to his home on February 12th, 1886, and at his parents' earnest request, as he was away only a month, he tried for and passed the First Art Examination. But the Voice called him again, and this time he left the worldly life completely to sit at the feet of the Master. No more entreaties could bring him back to the worldly life. He took the sacred vow and visited the holy places of Northern India. His father died shortly afterwards, yet though his love for kindred was deep, he was now a Sannyasin and he did not go into mourning.

Saroda's self-restraint and self-control were phenomenal. A single plantain a day would be his sole diet for a month, then again he would take about six pounds of food at a sitting without being affected in the least. On one occasion after a heavy dinner he ate four pounds of sweetmeats. Similar

incidents furnished the proof that he had his body and mind under absolute control.

After his pilgrimage to Puri, he traveled to other holy places, among them a number ordinarily inaccessible, but to him their inaccessibility was only an added incentive for accomplishment. Returning to Calcutta, he wrote the details of his journeys for the "Indian Mirror." He spent his time from then on reading and writing. In 1899, with the approval of Swami Vivekananda, he started publishing and editing the fortnightly magazine, "Udbodhan," containing articles on religion, social philosophy, science, agriculture and art. He kept this up for four years and, before leaving India for America, he had made the magazine very popular and well established, leaving it in the hands of Swami Suddhananda. For two years after his arrival in America, he continued to contribute articles until the growth of the work in San Francisco made this impossible.

When by reason of ill health, it became necessary for Swami Turiyananda to return to India, Dr. Logan, the president of the Vedanta Class at that time, wrote to Swami Vivekananda asking him to send another Swami to take charge of the Vedanta center. After a few months Swami replied saying that a new Swami, Trigunatita by name, was coming. Shortly thereafter a student received the following letter from Swami Turiyananda.

The Math,
Belur P.O.,
Howrah, India.
The 10th Sept., 1902.

My dear Prasuti:

Your kind letter came to hand. I think you ever so much of your words of sympathy at a time when I need them most. I am sorry I could not write to you in acknowledgment ere this. I was laid up after I reached here and have not recovered yet. The blow (the death of Swami Vivekananda) was very very hard for me as you rightly imagined. It was more so on account of my not being able to see him again even for a minute although I was on my way. However the will of Mother comes to pass always and we must learn to submit to Her decrees. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) gave up his body in Samadhi and we cannot call it an ordinary death. He has gone to enjoy the rest he needed so very badly after his hearty play. Those who shall prove faithful to his teachings will have all help from him still. Swami Trigunatita will start for San Francisco the next month. He is such a beautiful soul. He will be of great use to you all in matters Spiritual

and I am sure you all will spare nothing to make him feel quite at home when there. I hope you all are doing well in every way.

Kindly remember me to all the friends there and give them my best wishes and love.

With best wishes and love to you and yours as ever,

Yours in the Mother,
TURIYANANDA.

When the great call came to Swami Trigunatita from the Belur Math to leave the Motherland and cross the ocean to carry the message to America, he responded in the spirit of a Sannyasin and after a farewell reception, left Calcutta for America via Ceylon and Japan, arriving in San Francisco on January 2nd, 1903. The matter of dress for the new country he settled by going in oriental costume. On the question of food, he determined to maintain a strict vegetarian diet and not being able to get accurate information as to the vegetables and fruits grown in America, he went on his voyage with the resolution to live on bread and water if necessary. He afterwards found, of course, that vegetables and cereals of all kinds are grown in America in great abundance but he came prepared to undergo any privation in his zeal for the cause.

(To be continued)

WOMEN OF INDIA

By SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(Concluded from the last issue)

Thus say our books: direct the pre-natal influence. Why should mother be worshipped? Because she made herself pure. She underwent harsh penances sometimes to keep herself as pure as purity can be. For, mind you, no woman in India thinks of giving up her body to any man; it is her own. The English, as a reform, have introduced at present what they call "Restitution of Conjugal rights," but no Indian would take advantage of it. When a man comes in physical contact with his wife, the circumstances she controls, through what prayers and through what vows! For that which brings forth the child is the holiest symbol of God himself. It is the greatest prayer between man and wife, the prayer that is going to bring into the world another soul fraught with a tremendous power for good or for evil. Is it a joke? Is it a simple nervous satis-

faction? Is it a brute enjoyment of the body? Says the Hindu: No, a thousand times, no!

But then, following that, there comes in another idea. The idea we started with was that the ideal is the love for the mother—herself all-suffering, all-forbearing. The worship that is accorded to the mother has its fountainhead there. She was a saint to bring me into the world; she kept her body pure, her mind pure, her food pure, her clothes pure, her imagination pure, for years, because I would be born. Because she did that she deserves worship. And what next follows? Linked with motherhood is wifehood.

You Western people are individualistic: I want to do this thing because I like it; I will elbow every one. Why? Because I like to. I want my own satisfaction, so I marry this woman. Why? Because I like her. This woman marries me. Why? Because she likes me. There it ends. She and I are the only two persons in the whole, infinite world, and I marry her and she maries me; nobody else is injured, nobody else responsible. Your Johns and your Janes may go into the forest and there they may live their lives; but when they have to live in society, their marriage means a tremendous amount of good or evil to us. Their children may be veritable demons, burning, murdering, robbing, stealing, drinking, hideous, vile.

So, what is the basis of the India's social order? It is the caste law. I am born for the caste; I live for the caste. I do not mean myself, because, having joined an Order, we are outside. I mean those that live in civil society. Born in the caste, the whole life must be lived according to caste regulation. In other words, in the present-day language of your country, the Western man is born individualistic, while the Hindu is socialistic—entirely socialistic. Now, then, the books say, if I allow you freedom to go about and marry any woman you like, and the woman to marry any man she likes, what happens? You fall in love; the father of the woman was, perchance, a lunatic or a consumptive. The girl falls in love with the face of a man whose father was a roaring drunkard. What says the law then? The law lays down that all these marriages would be illegal. The children of drunkards, consumptives, lunatics, etc., shall not be married. The deformed, humpbacked, crazy, idiotic—no marriage for them, absolutely none, says the law.

But the Mohammedan comes from Arabia and he has his own Arabian law; so the Arabian desert law has been forced upon us. The Englishman comes with his law; he forces it upon us, so far as he can. We are conquered. He says, "To-morrow

I will marry your sister." What can we do? Our law says, those that are born of the same family, though a hundred degrees distant, must not marry, that is illegitimate, it would deteriorate or make sterile the race. That must not be, and there it stops. So, I have no voice in my marriage, nor my sister. It is the caste that determines all that. We are married sometimes when children. Why? Because the caste says if they have to be married any way without their consent, it is better that they are married very early, before they have developed this love ; if they are allowed to grow up apart, the boy may like some other girl, and the girl some other boy, and then something evil will happen ; and so, says the caste, stop it there. I don't care whether my sister is deformed, or good looking, or bad looking : she is my sister, and that is enough ; he is my brother, and that is all I need to know. So, they will love each other. You may say, "Oh, they lose a great deal of enjoyment—those exquisite emotions of a man falling in love with a woman, and a woman falling in love with a man. This is a sort of tame thing, loving each other like brothers and sisters, as though they have to." So be it, but the Hindu says, "We are socialistic. For the sake of one man's or woman's exquisite pleasure we don't want to load misery on hundreds of others."

There they are—married. The wife comes home with her husband ; that is called the second marriage. Marriage at an early age is considered the first marriage, and they grow up separately with women and with their parents. When they are grown, there is a second ceremony performed, called a second marriage. And then they live together, but under the same roof with his mother and father. When she becomes a mother, she takes her place in turn as queen of the family group.

Now comes another peculiar Indian institution. I have just told you that in the first two or three castes the widows are not allowed to marry. They cannot even if they would. Of course, it is a hardship on many. There is no denying that not all the widows like it very much, because non-marrying entails upon them the life of a student. That is to say, a student must not eat meat or fish, nor drink wine, nor dress except in white clothes, and so on ; there are many regulations. We are a nation of monks—always making penance, and we like it. Now, you see, a woman never drinks wine or eats meat. It was a hardship on us when we were students, but not on the girls. Our women would feel degraded at the

idea of eating meat. Men eat meat sometimes in some castes ; women never. Still, not being allowed to marry must be a hardship to many ; I am sure of that.

But we must go back to the idea ; they are intensely socialistic. In the higher castes of every country you will find the statistics show that the number of women is always much larger than the number of men. Why? Because in the higher castes, for generation after generation, the women lead an easy life. They "neither toil nor spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them." And the poor boys, they die like flies. The girl has a cat's nine lives, they say in India. You will read in the statistics that they outnumber the boys in a very short time, except now when they are taking to work quite as hard as the boys. The number of girls in the higher castes is much larger than in the lower. Conditions are quite opposite in the lower castes. There they all work hard ; women a little harder sometimes, because they have to do the domestic work. But, mind you, I never would have thought of that, but one of your American travellers, Mark Twain, writes this about India : "In spite of all that Western critics have said of Hindu customs, I never saw a woman harnessed to a plow with a cow or to a cart with a dog, as is done in some European countries. I saw no woman or girl at work in the fields in India. On both sides and ahead (of the railway train) brown-bodied naked men and boys are plowing in the fields. But not a woman. In these two hours I have not seen a woman or a girl working in the fields." In India, even the lowest caste never does any hard work. They generally have an easy lot compared to the same class in other nations ; and as to plowing, they never do it.

Now, there you are. Among the lower classes, the number of men is larger than the number of women ; and what would you naturally expect? A woman gets more chances of marriage, the number of men being larger.

Relative to such questions as to widows not marrying : among the first two castes, the number of women is disproportionately large, and here is a dilemma. Either you have a non-marriageable widow problem and misery, or the non-husband-getting young lady problem. To face the widow problem, or the old maid problem! There you are ; either of the two. Now, go back again to the idea that the Indian mind is socialistic. It says, "Now, look here : we take the widow problem as the lesser one." Why? "Because they have had their chance ; they have been married. If they have lost their

chance, at any rate they have had one. Sit down, be quiet, and consider these poor girls, they have not had one chance of marriage.'' Lord bless you! I remember once in Oxford Street, it was after ten o'clock, and all those ladies coming there, hundreds and thosands of them shopping, and some man, an American, looks around and he says, "My, how many of them will ever get husbands, I wonder!" So the Indian mind said to the widows, "Well, you have had your chance, and now we are very, very sorry that such mishaps have come to you, but we cannot help it ; others are waiting."

Then, religion comes into the question ; the Hindu religion comes in as a comfort. For, mind you, our religion teaches that marriage is something bad, it is only for the weak. The very spiritual man or woman would not marry at all. So the religious women say, "Well, the Lord has given me a better chance. What is the use of marrying? Thank God, worship God, what is the use of my loving man?" Of course, all of them cannot put the mind on God. Some find it simply impossible. They have to suffer ; but the other poor people, they should not suffer for them. Now, I leave this to your judgment ; but that is their idea in India.

Next, we come to woman as daughter. The great difficulty in the Indian household is the daughter. The daughter and caste combined ruin the poor Hindu, because, you see, she must marry in the same caste, and even inside the caste exactly in the same order, and so the poor man sometimes has to make himself a beggar to get his daughter married. The father of the boy demands a very high price for his son, and this poor man sometimes has to sell everything just to get a husband for his daughter. The great difficulty of the Hindu's life is the daughter. And, curiously enough the word daughter in Sanskrit is "duhita." The real derivation is that, in ancient times, the daughter of the family was accustomed to milk the cows, and so the word "duhita" comes from "dooha," to milk ; and the word "daughter" really means a milkmaid. Later on, they found a new meaning to that word, "duhita," the milkmaid ; she who milks away all the milk of the family. That is the second meaning.

These are the different relations held by our Indian women. As I have told you, the mother is the greatest in position, the wife is next, and the daughter comes after them. It is a most intricate and complicated series of graduation. No foreigner can understand it, even if he lives there for years. For instance, we have three forms of the personal pronoun ; they are a sort

of verbs in our languae. One is very respectful, one is middling and the lowest is just like *thou* and *thee*. To children and servants the last is addressed. The middling one is used with equals. You see, these are to be applied in all the intricate relations of life. For example, to my elder sister I always throughout my life, use the pronoun *apani,* but she never does in speaking to me ; she says *tumi* to me. She should not, even by mistake, say *apani* to me, because that would mean a curse. Love, the love toward those that are superior, should always be expressed in that form of language. That is the custom. Similarly, I would never dare address my elder sister or elder brother, much less my mother or father, as *tu* or *tum* or *tumi*. As to calling our mother and father by name, why, we would never do that. Before I knew the customs of this country, I received such a shock when the son, in a very refined family, got up and called the mother by name! However, I got used to that. That is the custom of the country. But with us, we never pronounce the name of our parents when they are present. It is always in the third person plural, even before them.

Thus we see the most complicated meshwork in the social life of our men and our women and in our degrees of relationship. We don't speak to our wives before our elders ; it is only when we are alone or when inferiors are present. If I were married, I would speak to my wife before my younger sister, my nephews or nieces ; but not before my elder sister or parents. I cannot talk to my sisters about their husbands at all. The idea is, we are a monastic race. The whole social organization has that one idea before it. Marriage is thought of as something impure, something lower. Therefore, the subject of love would never be talked of. I cannot read a novel before my sister, or my brothers, or my mother, or even before others. I close the book.

Then again, eating and drinking is all in the same category. We do not eat before superiors. Our women never eat before men, except they be the children or inferiors. The wife would die rather than, as she says, "munch" before her husband. Sometimes, for instance, brothers and sisters may eat together ; and if I and my sister are eating, and the husband come to the door, my sister stops, and the poor husband flies out.

These are the customs peculiar to the country. A few of these I note in different countries also. As I never married myself, I am not perfect in all my knowledge about the wife.

Mother, sisters—I know what they are ; and other people's wives I saw ; from that I gather what I have told you.

As to education and culture, it all depends upon the man. That is to say, where the men are highly cultured, there the women are ; where the men are not, women are not. Now, from the oldest times, you know, the primary education, according to the old Hindu custom, belongs to the village system. All the land from time immemorial was nationalized, as you say—belonged to the Government. There never is any private right in land. The revenue in India comes from the land, because every man holds so much land from the Government. This land is held in common by a community, it may be of five, ten, twenty, or a hundred families. They govern the whole of the land, pay a certain amount of revenue to the Government, maintain a physician, a village schoolmaster, and so on.

Those of you who have read Herbert Spencer remember what he calls the "monastery system" of education that was tried in Europe and which in some parts proved a success ; that is, there is one schoolmaster, which the village keeps. These primary schools are very rudimentary, because our methods are so simple. Each boy brings a little mat ; and his paper, to begin with, is palm leaves. Palm leaves first ; paper is too costly. Each boy spreads his little mat and sits hpon it, brings out his inkstand and his books and begins to write. A little arithmetic, some Sanskrit grammar, a little of language and accounts, these are taught in the primary school.

A little book on ethics, taught by an old man, we learned by heart, and I remember one of the lessons :

> "For the good of a village, a man ought to give up his family ;
> For the good of a country, he ought to give up his village ;
> For the good of humanity, he may give up his country ;
> For the good of the world, everything."

Such verses are there in the books. We get them by heart, and they are explained by teacher and pupil. These things we learn, both boys and girls together. Later on, the education differs. The old Sanskrit universities are mainly composed of boys. The girls very rarely went up to those universities ; but there are a few exceptions.

In these modern days there is a greater impetus towards higher education on the European lines, and the trend of opinion is strong towards women getting this higher education. Of course, there are some people in India who don't want it, but those who do want it carried the day. It is a strange fact that Oxford and Cambridge are closed to women to-day, so

are Harvard and Yale ; but Calcutta University opened its doors to women more than twenty years ago. I remember that the year I graduated several girls came out and graduated—the same standard, the same course, the same in everything as the boys ; and they did very well indeed. And our religion does not prevent a woman being educated at all. In this way the girl should be educated ; even thus she should be trained ; and in the old books we find that the universities were equally resorted to by both girls and boys, but later the education of the whole nation was neglected. What can you expect under foreign rule? The foreign conqueror is not there to do good to us ; he wants his money. I studied hard for twelve years and became a graduate of Calcutta University ; now I can scarcely make $5.00 a month in my country. Would you believe it? It is actually a fact. So these educational institutions for foreigners are simply to get a lot of useful, practical slaves for a little money—to turn out a host of clerks, postmasters, telegraph operators, and so on. There it is.

As a result, education for both boys and girls is neglected, entirely neglected. There are a great many things that should be done in that land ; but you must always remember, if you will kindly excuse me and permit me to use one of your own proverbs, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." Your foreign-born ladies are always crying over the hardships of the Hindu woman, and never care for the hardships of the Hindu man. They are all weeping salt tears. But who are the little girls married to? Some one when told that they are all married to old men, asked, "And what do the young men do? What! are all the girls married to old men, only to old men?" We are born old—perhaps all the men there.

The ideal of the Indian race is freedom of the soul. This world is nothing. It is a vision, a dream. This life is one of many millions like it. The whole of this nature is *maya,* is phantasm, a pest house of phantasms. That is the philosophy. Babies smile at life and think it so beautiful and good, but in a few years they will have to revert to where they began. They began life crying, and they will leave it crying. Nations in the vigour of their youth think that they can do anything and everything: "We are the gods of the earth. We are the chosen people." They think that God Almighty has given them a charter to rule over all the world, to advance His plans, to do anything they like, to turn the world upside down. They have a charter to rob, murder, kill ; God has given them this,

and they do that because they are only babes. So empire after empire has arisen, glorious, resplendent, now vanished away—gone, nobody knows where: it may have been stupendous in its ruin.

As a drop of water upon a lotus leaf tumbles about and falls in a moment, even so is this mortal life. Everywhere we turn are ruins. Where the forest stands today was once the mighty empire with huge cities. That is the dominant idea, the tone, the colour of the Indian mind. We know you Western people have the youthful blood coursing through your veins. We know that nations like men have their day. Where is Greece. Where is Rome? Where that mighty Spaniard of the other day? Who knows through it all what becomes of India? Thus they are born and thus they die; they rise and fall. The Hindu as a child knows of the Mogul invader whose cohorts no power on earth could stop, who has left in your language the terrible word "Tartar." The Hindu has learned his lesson. He does not want to prattle, like the babes of to-day. Western people, say what you have to say. This is your day. Onward, go on, babes; have your prattle out. This is the day of the babes, to prattle. We have learned our lesson, and are quiet. You have a little wealth to-day and you look down upon us. Well, this is your day. Prattle,.babes, prattle —this is the Hindu's attitude.

The Lord of Lords is not to be attained by much frothy speech. The Lord of Lords is not to be attained even by the powers of the intellect. He is not gained by much power of conquest. That man who knows the secret source of things and that everything else is evanescent, unto him He, the Lord, comes; unto none else. India has learned her lesson through ages of experience. She has turned her face towards Him. She has made many mistakes; loads and loads of rubbish are heaped upon the race. Never mind; what of that? What is the clearing of rubbish, the cleaning of cities, and all that? Does that give life? Those that have fine institutions, they die. And what of institutions, these tin-plate Western institutions, made in five days and broken on the sixth? One of these little handful nations cannot keep alive for two centuries together. And our institutions have stood the test of ages. Says the Hindu: "Yes, we have buried all the old nations of the earth and stand here to bury all the new races also, because our ideal is not this world, but the other. Just as your ideal is, so shall you be. If your ideal is mortal, if your ideal is of this earth, so shalt thou be. If your ideal is matter,

matter shalt thou be. Behold! our ideal is the Spirit. That alone exists. Nothing else exists, and like Him, we live forever."

THE WEST TURNS TO THE EAST FOR LIGHT

By Harold Callender

The lure of the East has, ever since the Crusades, exerted a powerful attraction over the imagination of the West. The enticement of splendor and riches, the fascination of the exotic and mysterious, hold a perennial appeal. But this lure has acquired, in the last few years, a new and special glamour. If the caravans and galleons that once set off in quest of gold and spices, of ivory, apes and peacocks, have been succeeded by less picturesque vessels bearing less adventurous pilgrims to lands of rubber, oil and copra, the roads to the Orient have served again—as in the Middle Ages—to bring into contact two remote and very different types of culture. European philosophers and writers, disillusioned and dispirited by the plight of war-enfeebled Europe, have turned their faces to the East is search of light and inspiration.

George Canning, on a historic occasion slightly more than a century ago, determined to call in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. To-day the Old World is urged to appeal to a still older one—not to restore a deranged political equilibrium, but to supply the spiritual stimulus for the creation of a better European civilization than that which went to smash, as some believe, between the years 1914 and 1918.

As a consequence of this debacle in the Occident, and the revelation of Western weaknesses that it signified for the Orient, the "changeless East" apparently has lost some of its respect for Europe. Various writers familiar with Asia have prophesied a revolt against Western ideas and Western rule. Lothrop Stoddard has supplied an alarming vision of a "Rising Tide of Color"—of yellow, brown and black races, all impatient to throw off the yoke of the white man. This is taken to be the result partly of the loss of European prestige entailed by the war, partly of the implanting in Oriental minds of the Western conceptions of democracy and self-determination which formed part of our wartime ideology. When British transports loaded with troops were being hurried to China a few months ago Winston Churchill made a speech in which he accused American missionaries of stirring up the Chinese.

While the Western World—particularly those parts of it possessing political and economic interests in the East—is thus disturbed by the spectres of Lenin and Gandhi there come from European prophets the summons and the warning that if Europe is to survive its present disabilities it must take lessons in philosophy from the East. To Kipling the Orient represented a curious and colorful setting for the display of British military valor and administrative genius. To Conrad it offered a useful background for the study of human character and emotions, Eastern and Western. To Pierre Loti it supplied a sensually enticing escape from accustomed surroundings. To officials in London and Washington it is chiefly a political problem. But to those Europeans who have been captivated by the Vedas and Upanishads the East holds a promise of a vital renewal and a spiritual force which Europe desperately needs but is now incapable of supplying for itself.

After two centuries of Crusades had blazed the paths to the East and taught Europeans how to organize expeditions to get there, Europe began to stir from its medieval lethargy. Merchants followed soldiers. Fleets crossed to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, whence caravans brought variegated wares—among them a novel material called cotton—from Asia. The newly opened intercourse with the East led Columbus to seek a shorter route by sailing westward. The whole Mediterranean Basin, and even the interior of Europe, were galvanized into activity. Trade throve and flowed into new channels. The fairs of Lyons, the Champagne, Flanders and Germany blossomed from the impulse of the rediscovered East. The Europe of to-day, if not on the verge of another dark age, as has been suggested, is at any rate badly battered and shell-shocked. It needs, if it ever did, a faith in its own future, a reassuring impulse from somewhere. And once more there is a hopeful scanning of the roads leading to the East.

Nearly a year before the armistice Lord Lansdowne wrote a public letter urging that the war be stopped as soon as possible, while there still was something left of Europe. What was left in Germany at the end of the war has been succinctly described by Thomas Mann. "The German people," he wrote in 1925, "are far from having completely recovered from a physical and moral collapse such as has doubtless never been known before in the entire course of history." And again: "After extraordinary exploits the force for the performance of which was their belief in themselves," the Germans gave in to two "terrible weapons"—the blockade and the propaganda that

understand their morale. "What followed was an unexampled downfall, an unconditional capitulation, the yielding of a moral fotress. * * * The demoralization was complete. It was manifest in the profound and almost moral anxiety of an entire people which despaired of itself, of its history, of its supreme values."

If the Germans, for a time, lost faith in themselves and in their culture, many in the allied countries lost faith in Europe and its civilization, the unity of which had been so thoroughly shattered by the conflict. The recent gay parade of the American Legion under the Arc de Triomphe led a French writer to observe, addressing the Americans: "For you the war was an incident. It is now past and you can hold a jollification. But we French have not yet come out of the war."

Germany was not the only nation that suffered a moral wound that heals slowly. Among the French today one finds a great deal of disquietude as to the future of France. The number of times that the word "security" has been used in French discussions of international affairs may be taken as a measure of this state of mind.

At the very moment when Europe was at its lowest point of doubt and depression a prophet appeared with the comforting message that it was no use worrying, since the Occident was about done for in any case. "The comparative study of cultures," announced Oswald Spengler, author of "The Decline of Western Civilization," "proves that we are in our old age. The hour of destiny has sounded, inexorable destiny against which it would be folly to rebel." So he undertook to formulate "the final philosophy of the Occident," which should serve to prepare for the end by "re-educating in us the social instinct of death."

History, said Spengler, is the story of the rise and fall of cultures, each following a fairly fixed cycle. Ours approaches its finish. He examined all the previous cultures at great length to make the case quite clear, so that no informed person need pass a happy life in the foolish illusion that European civilization had a future worth mentioning. The book supplied a kind of rational justification of the existing despair and consequently proved very popular and provoked much discussion.

Europe—that is, a large number of the intellectually curious—then began to take a new interest in the East. If Western civilization was about to go under, the reasonable course was to take Spengler's tip and try to hook up with some going concern. After all, the Orient did exhibit odd powers of resist-

ance. Did not half a dozen Indian fakirs go about Europe pouring molten lead into their mouths and sticking knives into their bodies? Rabindranath Tagore toured Europe and found many sympathetic listeners. Romain Rolland, who had done biographies of Michelangelo, Tolstoy and Beethoven, now wrote a life of Gandhi. Coomaroswamy responded to the curiosity about the East with books on Oriental philosophies and religions. Europeans and Americans made pilgrimages to Santiniketan, Tagore's home in India, and to other revered places in the East.

Henri Massis, in his essay, "Défense de l'Occident," recently published in Paris by the Librairie Plon, presents a scholarly analysis of the views of the more influential contemporary writers who have come under the spell of Eastern thought and civilization.

Europe, whether it was to fulfill Spengler's program or not, was regarded by some as a very narrow and stuffy place. "There are a certain number of us in Europe for whom the civilization of Europe no longer suffices," confessed Rolland, and Count Hermann Keyserling found that "Europe does not stimulate me any longer. It is a world that is too familiar to supply new forms to my existence ; it is too limited. All of Europe today is of but a single mind. I want to escape toward spaces where my life, in order to subsist, must transform itself."

So Keyserling escaped to the larger and more congenial East. It happened that shortly afterward another philosophic Marco Polo who entertained no very high estimate of Europe did likewise. He was Bertrand Russell. One of the most curious aspects of this new cult of the Orient in Europe is the fact that it has been embraced in different ways by both Keyserling and Russell. It would scarcely be possible for two men to possess more widely divergent temperaments or habits of thought. Yet Russell, the mathematician and realist, and Keyserling, the mystic, agree in the conviction that Europe requires a new or very much changed civilization and that it can profit by studying the manner in which the problems of life are met in the Orient.

Russell believes that the way to discover truth is by the application of disciplined thought. In philosophy he undertook to introduce the logic of pure mathematics into the realms of metaphysics and psychology. His was a mind that one might have expected to prove entirely immune to the spell of the East, which is permeated by the occult. Russell did not, of course, derive any such psychic thrills as Keyserling did from the intuitive philosophies of the Orient, but he came back an

admirer of the Chinese. He referred in one of his essays to the "instinctive happiness which makes China a paradise after the fierce weariness of our distracted and trivial civilization."

"China," he concluded, "has shortcomings which to us are very obvious, but it also has merits in which we are deficient. What is to be hoped is not that China should become like ourselves, reproducing our Napoleons and Bismarcks and Eminent Victorians, but that a new civilization should be developed, combining our knowledge with Chinese culture. The Chinese are capable of that. * * * If their development can be left free, I think they can give the world a new civilization to carry on the arts and sciences after Europe has perished in a sea of blood."

Keyserling is perhaps better known in the English-speaking countries than any of the other apostles of Oriental mysticism. In his "Travel Diary of a Philosopher," a fascinating book, he has described his absorption in the East and its thought. He is high-strung, nervous, a typical mystic. He regards himself as a prophet whose mission it is to enable those capable of understanding him to achieve "perfect self-realization," upon the principles of the Eastern mystics. While he often talks for hours at a time, he calls discussion "a sin against wisdom." It is personal contracts that count. One does not acquire the truth through the intellect, nor communicate it by that means.

"I had," said Keyserling, "the mentality of the European who, to be born to historic life, required at last that all the old States of Europe collapse. So I sought to ignore the war and during a year I lived in a state of interior detachment. My personality acquired more vigor. Like a volcano, it hurled forth its energy. * * * My spiritual dynamism is so strong that it is impossible to endure it more than three days."

Keyserling says: "We are entering upon a new epoch, similar to that which marked the first centuries after Christ. Then all sorts of reactions took place, and the Orient and the Occident united. And now, as then, the result will be an enlarging of the bases of life."

At the School of Wisdom in Darmstadt, Keyserling permits his devotees to profit by his experiences and his insight into the processes of history. Thus they may give "new significance" to their lives. The meeting at the school in 1921 "solved the problem of the relationship of eternal significance toward the ever-changing appearance of outward fact and form." Tagore was present and no doubt helped in the task. The following year another problem, that of "the heroic

Western modality of life," was disposed of without great difficulty.

Maurice Maeterlinck has referred to the Western and Eastern cultures as two lobes of the human brain. "The one produces reason, science, consciousness ; the other secretes intuition, religion, the subconscious. One reflects the infinite and unknowable ; the other heeds only what it can limit, what it can understand. * * * * They have tried more than once to interpenetrate, to join, to work in concert ; but the Western lobe, at least on the most active part of our globe, has so far paralyzed and almost annihilated the efforts of the other. * * * It is time to reawaken the paralyzed Eastern lobe."

"Asia will conquer us as Rome and Athens once conquered—by the mind," predicted Rolland. "The night falls upon Europe," wrote Walter Rathenau shortly before his death. "More and more everything obliges us to look to the East. * * * Here is the great result of the war, the great tragedy that our children will not even understand."

"Examine the poetry of to-day," said Hermann Hesse. "You will see everywhere the same affinity with Dostoievsky. The ideal of the 'Brothers Karamazov,' and old Asiatic ideal marked by occultism, is becoming little by little the European ideal and tends to overwhelm the Occidental spirit."

"The awakening metaphysical conscience," wrote professor Robert Ernt Curtius of Bonn, "sought in the spirit of the East a sanction, a nourishment, a fecundating force. Taoism is at present the secret religion of an élite of our youth."

"The columns of German-Latin civilization are quaking," wrote Dr. Paquet in the Neue Rundschau six years ago. "The work of Slavic-German reconstruction progresses. Under the spiritual influence of the Orient, which is reawakening and animating Europeans with the feelings of primitive India and its millennial wisdom, a new moral order is forming in the Occident."

Having suffered defeat, the Germans seem to have been especially susceptible to the call of the East. "The German mind, like the German territory, is open towards both the West and the East," said Curtius. Russian art has taken a prominent place in Germany, and the German Republic's political policies wavered for a time between the West and the East. Some of the most enthusiastic utterances in favour of Slavic and Oriental ideals have coincided with the tendency toward a German-Russian alliance, but the re-establishment of comparatively normal relations between Germany and her former

enemies has been reflected in a diminution of emphasis upon the value of Eastern ways. "During and after the war," said Mann, "we gave ourselves to the Orient of Dostoievsky. * * * The rectification of a tendency whose exclusivism was dangerous to the national mind has undoubtedly begun. Germany begins again to look to the West."

The protagonists of a sympathetic study of Eastern thought represent it as a return "to the alma matter," to first sources. Did not Christianity and our own civilization develop from Eastern origins? Western civilization has broken down and must go back to its base for repairs, so to speak. It has run out of inspiration and must send to the East for a new supply. Comparing the "dissolution of personality" that he finds manifest in the writings of the young disciples of Proust and Gide with the attitude of the Eastern mystics, M. Massis adds: "Lassitude of a generation prematurely stricken, which no discipline of intelligence and heart defends against a feeling of powerlessness—here is where Orientalism threatens." He recalls the cultural unity of Europe in the Middle Ages and urges a return to Latin culture and the Church.

Being largely a product of the disillusionment and the moral damage caused by the war,* the European cult of the East may decline with the recovery of Europe—especially if this recovery is accompanied by the achievement of reasonable guarantees against the disruption by another war of the degree of unity and the sense of common interest that the continent now possesses.†

REVIEW

ART AS WILL AND IDEA *by C. Jinarajadasa. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 197. Price wrappers 14 as.*

The booklet is a collection of six short essays and lectures, all dealing with art from various angles of vision. To Mr. Jinarajadasa art is akin to religion, nay religion itself. Art, according to him, is the method of elevating the everyday realities and experiences to the spiritual level. And he very ably points out its supreme function in the individual and national life. Mr. Jinarajadasa always writes fascinatingly. This small book is quite pleasant and profitable reading.

* But the European cult of the East is of much earlier origin and born of quite other causes than the last war.—*Ed., P. B.*

† From *The New York Times Magazine.*

THE RELIGION OF ZARATHUSTRA *by I. J. S. Taraporewala, B.A., Ph.D. Bar-at-Law. Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, Pp. 180. Price wrappers Rs. 1/12.*

The learned writer has attempted in this book to present the essential elements of his Faith to non-Zoroastrians. The nine chapters dividing the book gives an account of the ancient Iranians, of the Prophet Zoroaster, his doctrines, the "Holy Immortals" and "Adorable Ones" of the Faith, its rites and ceremonies and its past and future. The writer has often pointed out the fundamental unity of Zoroastrian Faith and Vedic Religion. The work is interesting and instructive and we recommend it to all who want a general idea of this ancient religion. It is furnished with an appendix and index.

THE BHAGAVAD- GITA OR THE LORD'S SONG *with the Text in Devanagari and an English translation by Annie Besant. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Price 4 as.*

This translation has become well-known so much so that already ninety-five thousand copies of it have been sold. The publishers have done a great service to the Hindu religion by making such wide circulation possible by their cheap prints. The present, sixth, edition has brought out 10,000 copies. We do hope these will be soon sold out. By the way, could not the publishers use better paper?

THE THEOSOPHIST'S ATTITUDE TO DEATH AND THE UNSEEN; TO NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM; TO SCIENCE AND ITS MESSAGE; AND TO ART AND THE ARTS. *Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Price wrappers Re. 1/- Pp. 104.*

The book contains four lectures delivered respectively by the Rt. Rev. C. W. Leadbeater, the Rt. Rev. G. S. Arundale, M.A., LL.B., D.L., Yadunandan Prasad, M.A. (All. and Cam.), B.Sc. (Lond.) and C. Jinarajadasa, M.A. at the Theosophical Society's Convention at Benares in December, 1926. The subjects as the title of the book implies have been treated from the Theosophical standpoint. The lectures are thought-provoking.

THE PATH TO PEACE *by James H. Cousins, D.Litt. Ganesh & Co., Madras. Pp. 60.*

The sub-title of the booklet is "An Essay on Cultural Interchange and India's Contribution thereto with a Prefatory Note on 'Mother India.'" The preface was widely published in the Indian press sometime ago. *The Path to Peace* is a noble homage to India's greatness. The writer has studied India with penetrating intelligence and sympathetic imagination; and hence his sure grasp of India's true nature.

The essay which was published in July, 1926, in *The New Orient* (New York), though small in size, is full of insight and reveals a clear grasp of the world-situation. We are inclined to think that the subtitle is not quite apposite; for it is not so much an *interchange* of culture that the author pleads as the need of acceptance by the West

of the intuitional culture of India. He finds the civilisation of the West inadequate. He points out by a rapid survey of modern Europe how the effect of Western civilisation has been "to invert the pyramid of life; to depress the spiritual apex and exalt the material base."

There are several kinds of cultures;—pre-eminently physical; æsthetic, as of Greece; mental as of modern West; and intuitional, as of India. "The lesson of Greece is the insufficiency of the æsthetical. Man cannot live by art alone. The lesson of modern Europe is the insufficiency of the commercial. Man cannot live by business alone." "A mental civilisation is an organised individualism. Its motto is, 'Every man for himself.' . . . Its political expression is imperialism; its intellectual expression is science. . . . Its main concern is with the materials of life and the organisation of their production and transit for personal profit. Its motto is, 'Business is business.'"

"Is there any hope? Beyond the civilisations that have sprung from the emotional and mental aspects of life is there possible another civilisation . . . rising . . . from the spiritual root of humanity? . . . Such a civilisation must be elaborated out of the response of the intuitional aspect of humanity.... . . ." "Such a civilisation," answers the author, "is that of Vedic India."

Yes, the Vedantic culture is the hope of the West and of mankind. Every Indian should carefully read this small profound book.

THE PATH TO PERFECTION *by Swami Ramakrishnananda. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 23. Price 4 as.*

This is the 3rd edition of this beautiful booklet, giving within a short space the quintessence of the Vedantic quest. The get-up is excellent.

NEWS AND REPORTS

Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna

The birthday anniversary (*Janmatithi*) of Sri Ramakrishna falls this year on Thursday, the 23rd February.

Vedanta Centre at St. Louis

We are glad that mainly through the efforts of Swami Prabhavananda, a new Vedanta Society has been established at St. Louis in U. S. A. The Swami went there on invitation last October and during his short stay there delivered a series of lectures and held several classes, which were all very well attended. The enthusiasm which was evoked encouraged him to organise a permanent Society, and already quite a large number have become its members. The Swami were to visit Chicago also for the purpose of Vedantic propaganda; but he fell ill and had to return to Portland which is the permanent centre of his activity. It is expected that a Swami will soon take charge of the St. Louis centre.
